

GENERAL LEAGUE RULES

Updated as of August 13, 2026

The USTA Heart of America Health & Safety Policy

We encourage all players to use discretion regarding their possible exposure to communicable diseases while playing USTA league. Additionally, players experiencing signs of illness should refrain from playing. Captains should include a substitute in match lineups so matches can proceed as scheduled in the event of illness or injury. In the event our local communities implement any health-related protocols, we will quickly inform captains of any league rule revisions that might follow.

2027 USTA Heart of America Rule Change Highlights

- 3.D - Player residency – Players whose in-district status is questioned can be required to provide adequate proof of residency within 48 hours of request.
- 5.L – Match Rescheduling – Teams may be required to reschedule a match when in the best interest of the league.
- 5.N.3.c – Total Team Default – Two total team defaults during a season will prevent the captain from being a captain the next season of that league.

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1. OFFICIAL LEAGUE RATING PROGRAM

The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) is the official system for rating levels of competition for the USTA Heart of America Tennis League Program.

2. ELIGIBILITY FOR PLAYERS

- A. AGE ELIGIBILITY** – Players must be 18 years of age prior to participating in a USTA league. All players shall have reached the respective age designation of each league (40 & Over, 55 & Over, 65 & Over) prior to or during the calendar year in which they play their first match. (Note: Players may not exceed 39 years of age in the 18-39 League.)
- B. USTA MEMBERSHIP** - All participating players must have valid USTA memberships through the individual league season in which they are participating. Any non-USTA member participating in a USTA League match will forfeit all matches played as a non-member.
- C. PLAYER REGISTRATION** - All players must be registered online in TennisLink prior to playing a match or be subject to default. League fees must be paid online.
- D. NTRP RATING** - Any player registering for a league who does not have a valid NTRP rating must Self-Rate. The Self Rate Questionnaire can be accessed at the point of team registration or by logging into [TennisLink.usta.com/leagues](https://tennislink.usta.com/leagues) and clicking on the blue “Self-Rate” button. TennisLink will then assign a self-rating to the new player. If the player disagrees with the assigned self-rating, he/she has the option to appeal this rating on-line. The USTA Missouri Valley NTRP Self-Rate Appeals Committee will review the appeal and issue a decision to grant or deny the request.
- E. PLAYER REGISTRATION DEADLINE** - Players may be added to rosters throughout the season as long as there are two opportunities to play before the end of the season in order to qualify for post-season play. For leagues such as Tri-Level which require fewer matches played for post-season advancement, players may be added prior to the final match.
- F. EARLY START RATINGS** - Players wishing to participate in a 2026-27 season Early Start League (season beginning prior to Year End Ratings Publication) will compete at their year-end rating issued December 31, 2026. Players in the Winter early start leagues who get bumped UP when year-end ratings are published in early December 2026, may finish the Winter session with that team, but cannot advance to any post season play (i.e., District, Sectional and National Championships) with that team. If their 2026 year-end rating is determined to be “significantly above level,” they will be notified and must play at that new NTRP level effective immediately.

Any player who gets bumped DOWN when year-end ratings are published in early December 2026, can finish the Winter session with that team and it will not affect the team’s 50% at level standing (see 3A). They may also choose to register for a Winter team at the lower level IF there are at least 2 matches left in the season. Please note that as of January 1, 2027, players must register at their new year-end computer rating for any new leagues, i.e., ratings issued December 1, 2026.

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- G. DYNAMIC DISQUALIFICATION** - A player receiving three strikes (results indicating above level play), anytime during the 2027 season (18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over, 65 & Over), will be immediately promoted to the next higher level. The three matches that caused the “promotion” will be defaulted and considered 6-0, 6-0 for the opposing team. Computer-rated players, players with a Mixed exclusive rating or a Tournament exclusive rating are not subject to dynamic disqualification.
- H. CONFIRMING NTRP ELIGIBILITY** - Captains and players are responsible for checking NTRP ratings and ensuring that all players for each match are eligible to play. An ineligible player results in default for that individual court.

3. TEAM COMPOSITION

- A. TEAM REGISTRATION** – Captains must register as a player and pay team registration fee in the “Captains League” according to the deadline set on the registration flyer. Captains receive a discount on their fees and they will automatically be transferred as a captain and player to their team with no further registration. If a captain drops out of the league within 3 weeks of the start of the league, or after the league schedule is published (whichever is first), registration fees will not be refunded. Captains with repeat offenses may be declared ineligible to act as a captain as determined by the Adult Play Committee.
- B. NUMBER OF PLAYERS** - Each USTA Heart of America league has a specified minimum and maximum number of players. With the exception of 5.0 level leagues which require 40% at level, at least 50% of the players must have a rating equal to the level of play. The 50% rule does not apply to teams that move up together as a result of qualifying for Nationals, or to combination leagues. All combination rating leagues (i.e., 55 & Over, 65 & Over, and Mixed Leagues) are required to have a minimum of 3 courts of players appropriately at level for the combination rating.

LEAGUE	MINIMUM PLAYERS	MAXIMUM PLAYERS
18 & Over – 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 40 & Over	8	18
18 & Over – 2.5, 5.0 & Open	6	12
55 & Over	8	18
65 & Over	8	12
Mixed & Tri-Level	8	18

Subject to approval, teams at their player limit may replace players who have not played a match, if they have been injured, or have a personal circumstance that prevents them from playing.

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Teams must meet the minimum player registration requirements as well as the team composition 50% (40% for 5.0 leagues) at level requirement prior to the start of the season and must maintain those requirements throughout the entire season. Teams failing to maintain required composition may be subject to default of matches or removal from league play.

C. MOVE UP/SPLIT-UP RULE – Please refer to Attachment A for details.

1. For 18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over, 18 & Over Mixed, and 40 & Over Mixed Teams that qualify for a National Championship may play together as a team if they move up one NTRP team level. For those teams to compete at the same NTRP level, no more than 3 players may play together on a team within the same Division and Age Group. For example, a team that qualifies to go to the 4.0 Women's 18 & Over Nationals, may not have more than 3 players on a team in the 4.0 Women's 18 & Over League the following year. However, more than 3 players from the National team may play together on a 4.0 Women's 40 & Over League the following year.
2. For Tri-Level - Teams that qualify for a National Invitational Championship may not have more than 3 players on the same team the following year. This applies to teams who qualify for the current year League Season National Invitational (to be held early the following year).
3. For 65 & Over – Teams that qualify for a National Invitational Championship may play together as a team if they move up one NTRP team level. For those teams to compete at the same NTRP level, no more than 50% of a National team may play together at the same level the following year. This applies to 65 & Over teams who qualify for the current year National Invitational (to be held early the following year).
4. Move-up/Split-up does not apply to the following leagues: 18 & Over Open, 55 & Over Mixed.
5. The District will provide a “National Player” report so that captains can check the status of players who may be counted as a “National Player”. For a detailed explanation of this ruling, please see Attachment A.

- D. PLAYER RESIDENCY** - A team may have no more than three players who are considered Out-of-District. Each of these players must be computer-rated. To be considered a Heart of America player, the player must maintain a permanent residence, or be enrolled as a student at an educational institution within the boundaries of USTA Heart of America. **A player whose in-district status is questioned can be required to provide proof of residence within 48 hours of request,** (such as a mortgage payment statement, a rental lease agreement, a tuition statement, vehicle registration form, current driver's license) to a USTA Heart of America Adult Council member, Executive Director, District League Coordinator or Grievance Committee Member. Any challenges to a player's eligibility must be filed before the conclusion of the local league season to be affected in that season.
- E. NTRP PLAYING UP** - A player may play at their current NTRP level or up only one NTRP level (for example - a player with a 3.5 NTRP rating may play on 3.5 and 4.0 USTA teams, but not on 3.0 or 4.5 USTA teams).
- F. CONSEQUENCES OF BREAKING A RULE** - If a team breaks a rule, even if unintentionally, the team may be declared ineligible for postseason play.

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4. COMPETITION

A. COMPETITION FORMATS - Competition formats for USTA Leagues (from National Regulation 2.01C)

1. Full Round Robin: Each NTRP level within a local league may play at least one Full round robin competition wherein every team plays every other team.
2. Partial Round Robin: Each NTRP level within a local league may play a partial round robin competition wherein every team plays the same number of matches against randomly selected opponents. A minimum of the top two teams shall progress to a single elimination playoff to establish a local league champion for that NTRP level.

B. TEAM MATCH - Each team match will consist of:

LEAGUE	MATCH FORMAT
• 18 & Over Summer 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5	2 Singles & 3 Doubles
• 18 & Over Summer 2.5, 5.0	1 Singles & 2 Doubles
• 18 & Over Open (Summer & Winter)	1 Singles & 2 Doubles
• 18 & Over Winter • 55 & Over • 65 & Over • All Mixed Doubles • Tri-Level	3 Doubles
• 40 & Over	1 Singles & 3 Doubles

1. Individual Match: An individual match is any singles match or doubles match played as part of a team match.

C. TEAM STANDING – Team standing in the league is determined in descending order and reflected in TennisLink by:

1. Winner of most team matches
2. Individual match wins
3. Winner of head-to-head matches
4. Fewest sets lost
5. Fewest games lost

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D. DISTRICT CHAMPIONSHIP ADVANCEMENT (See Attachment B for details)

1. 18 & Over Leagues

- a. In the 18 & Over Leagues, winners of the Winter Weekend, Winter Daytime and Summer Leagues will advance to the District Championships. Dates and places for the District Championships are on the USTA Heart of America District calendar.
- b. The number of advancing teams will be determined by the size of the league or flights:

District Championship Advancement Guidelines	
# of Teams Participating at Each League or Flight	# of Teams Advancing to District Championships
5 & Fewer	1
6 - 12	2
13 & Greater	3

- c. Players may only play for one team at a given NTRP level at District Championships. For example, if a player qualifies with a Winter Daytime 3.5 team and a Summer 3.5 team, they can only play for one team at the District Championships. They can participate in a 4.0 Championship match but may not be accommodated in the Championship match schedule.
- d. Teams can only advance to District Championships if they can fill all courts for each match scheduled.
- e. If the winning team in the division cannot attend with the minimum number of players needed, then the district will invite the # 2 team in that flight. If the # 2 team cannot fill all courts at every match, the # 3 team will be invited and so on until a representative is found or the district declines to invite additional teams.
- f. Only teams with winning records will be extended an invitation to be an alternate for the District Championships (i.e. more match wins than losses)

2. All Other Leagues

- a. Winners of leagues with only one league or flight (e.g. 55 & Over, 65 & Over, Mixed, and some 40 & Over) will advance directly to Sectional Championships.
- b. Any seasons with multiple leagues (e.g., 40 & Over Daytime and Weekend), or large leagues that contain multiple flights will qualify for a District Championship. The number of advancing teams will be determined by the size of the league or flights and follow the District Championship Advancement Guidelines in D.1.b above.

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E. POST-SEASON PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

The chart below provides the minimum number of matches players must complete to be eligible for each level of post-season play. For advancement to Invitational Tournaments (e.g. Tri-Level and 65 & Over), criteria may vary.

Type of NTRP Rating	Qualification Requirements *		
	Districts	Sectionals	Nationals
Computer Rated Players Mixed Exclusive **	2 matches 1 can be a Default	2 matches 1 can be a Default	3 matches 1 can be a Default
Self-Rated Players Appealed Players Self-Rate Appealed Players Tournament Exclusive **	2 played matches	3 played matches	4 played matches
* Matches must be on the same team & season ** Applies only to Mixed and Tri-Level Leagues			

5. RULES OF PLAY

- A. HOME TEAMS & BALLS** - The Home team shall be listed first on the schedule. For all indoor leagues, the clubs will provide one can of balls per court. For outdoor leagues the Home team shall provide the balls. **Captains should check with the host facility at least 24 hours prior to all matches to verify the court reservation and determine any necessary safety protocols.**
- B. ALLOTTED MATCH TIME** – The maximum time is two (2) hours, unless circumstances like finishing a third-set tiebreak take more time. Note: If the time is up and the court is still available, teams should complete the match. If another team is taking the court after your match, you must relinquish the court at their match time. Check with the club to see if another court is available. If so, move to that court and finish the match or reschedule for another time. All matches must be completed. No match shall be recorded as incomplete. If the club charges you for the extended period, ask for a receipt and submit it to USTA Heart of America for reimbursement. These situations are rare but do occur. If two teams refuse to reschedule, league coordinator will flip a coin to determine winner.
- C. OFFICIAL CLOCK** – A timing device at the home facility, or any other agreed upon device, shall be designated as the official clock prior to each individual match.
- D. LINEUPS & SCORESHEETS**
- Each team must have a captain or acting captain present at every match.
 - Home team captain must disclose which courts are to be used for each line on the scorecard prior to the exchange of written lineups.
 - Team captains shall simultaneously exchange written lineups using the TennisLink scoresheet prior to the scheduled starting time of the match. Lineups can be exchanged just prior to the later individual match(s) for split match times.

Note: Line-ups must be exchanged prior to match time. In irregular circumstances, e.g., a scheduling conflict occurs at a club or there are split match times, and court(s) must be

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played at different times or days, it is permissible to wait to exchange line-ups for the later matches just prior to the matches because there could be unknown problems that may arise. If captains put the entire line-up in writing and exchange it prior to the first match played, then the opposing captain can hold that captain to that line-up. However, in the spirit of sportsmanship, we encourage captains to work together and exercise flexibility in cases where there are staggered times/dates.

4. Upon completion of the match, both captains should verify scores and players.
- E. **ORDER OF STRENGTH** - Teams are not required to assign players to courts in order of strength.
- F. **WARM UP** - Maximum warm-up is ten (10) minutes (including serves).
- G. **PLAYER SUBSTITUTION** - No substitution may be made in an individual match after the lineup has been presented except for injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player prior to the start of such match. The first serve which starts the first point of the match is considered the start of the match. The USTA Missouri Valley Section and USTA Heart of America District authorize no further circumstances for substitution. The default principles outlined in the USTA League Regulations are applicable with no modifications.
- H. **LATE ARRIVALS** - USTA penalties for lateness to a match or resumption of a suspended match will apply. **THE CLOCK STARTS AT THE SCHEDULED MATCH TIME.** (Ref: USTA Friend at Court, Table 16, Penalties for Lateness)

5:00 Minutes or less	Loss of toss plus one game
5:01 – 10:00 Minutes	Loss of toss plus two games
10:01 – 15:00 Minutes	Loss of toss plus three games
15:01 or More	Default

1. Late arrivals are limited to the remainder of the 10-minute warm-up.
2. An individual match is defaulted at 15 minutes past the scheduled match time.
- I. **ELECTRONIC DEVICES** - All electronic communication devices (cell phones, pagers, etc.) must be silenced while on court. Players are forewarned about cell phones ringing on the court via league rules. Once a match begins and an electronic communication device rings, there will be a point penalty. The player should immediately turn off the electronic communication.
- J. **CONTINUOUS PLAY** - Play is continuous. Players are allowed 25 seconds between points and 90 seconds on changeovers.
- K. **COACHING** - No coaching will be allowed at any time during a match.
- L. **MATCH RESCHEDULING** – Captains should make every attempt to adhere to the schedule as posted on TennisLink. However, if Captains have a valid reason to reschedule a match, they may ask for permission **in advance** from the District League Coordinator or respective league coordinator. The coordinator will approve or disapprove the request based upon the merit of the request. If it has been found that a match has been rescheduled without prior approval, both teams may be subject to double default and prohibited from post-season play. The District/League/Level Coordinator must be notified of the rescheduled date and time within one week of

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the original match, and must be completed prior to the end of the season. If a rescheduled date and time is not reported within a week, the District/League coordinator will assign a date and time which must be played as scheduled under penalty of default.

In addition, the District League Coordinator may require captains to play a scheduled or rescheduled match when, in the coordinator's judgment, doing so is in the best interest of the league. The coordinator's decision is final, and both teams are expected to comply under penalty of default.

M. SCORING

1. Regular scoring
 - a) If the first or second set score reaches 6-6, play a 7-point set tie-break (first to 7 with a 2 point margin **using Coman procedures**).
 - b) If teams each win a set, play a 10-point match tie-break (first to 10 with a 2-point margin) in lieu of a third set **using Coman procedures**.
 - c) Tie-breaks count as one game. (For example, Tennislink will reflect the score of a set ending in a tie-break as 7-6.). After the tie-break, change sides. The next server is from the team that received the first point of the tie-break.
 - d) **Coman Procedures:** Change sides after the first point, and then after every four points. Switch sides at the conclusion of a set tiebreak.
2. **Timed Match Procedures:** Time will be called after **1 Hour, 45 Minutes** from the designated match time. All games in progress shall be completed (a game is in progress after the first service ball is struck). Any team ahead by two games shall be awarded the win for that set.
 - a) If the match is in the first set and tied, or neither team is ahead by 2 games, play a 7-point tie-break (first to 7 by 2) using Coman procedures. The winner of the set will be declared the winner of the match. Enter the score of the one set only.
 - b) If the match is in the second set and tied, or neither team is ahead by 2 games, play a 7-point set tie-break (first to 7 by 2) **using the Coman procedures**.
 - c) If sets are split after a second set tie-break, play a 10-point match tie-break (first to 10 by 2), **using Coman procedures**.
 - d) Indicate on the scoresheet that the score reflects a Timed Match.
3. At the end of the match both captains (or their designees) will complete the scoresheets and verify the names and scores.
4. **No Team Match Will End In A Tie.** The team winning the majority of the individual matches will be awarded the win.

In matches with an even number of courts, if the teams are tied at the end of play, the tie shall be broken by broken by the first of the following methods (from National League Regulation 2.03E):

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- 1 Sets – Loser of the fewest number of sets
 - 2 Games – Loser of the fewest number of games
 - 3 Game Winning Percentage – total games won divided by total games played
 - 4 Winner of #1 Doubles match
5. Verifying, entering, and confirming or disputing scores is a shared responsibility.
- a) **Both captains** (or their designees) must verify all score sheets prior to leaving the match. League Suspension Points as determined by the Grievance Committee will be assessed for falsifying incorrect scores and/or players names.
 - b) **Either the winning or losing captain** should enter the scores on TennisLink within **48 hours**. Captains should agree upon who will enter the scores into TennisLink prior to leaving the match.
 - c) Scores must be confirmed or disputed within **96 hours from the time of the scheduled match**. After 96 hours, the scores and players will stand. To dispute a score, send an email including the match number from TennisLink to the level or league coordinator and copy the opposing captain for their confirmation.
 - d) If **either captain does not enter match scores within 96 hours**, the match may be entered as a Double Default on each court. Captains should notify their League or Level Coordinators of any extenuating circumstances.

N. DEFAULTS

1. Court Default

- a. As soon as a Captain is aware that they will have to default a court, they need to notify the opposing captain, the league/level coordinator, and the club/facility. Notification must be in writing to be binding. If a court has been defaulted and then the remaining match is later rescheduled, the defaulted court will stand.
- b. Any team defaulting a court(s) in advance is responsible for calling the applicable Club to cancel the court. Captains should cancel 24 hours in advance. If canceled later than that, and there is a fee, this will be deducted from the team deposit.
- c. Except for Tri-Level leagues, the default should be recorded on the score sheet on the lowest court, e.g., Court #3 for doubles or Court #2 for singles in the 5-court format.
- d. If a late player is the cause of a resulting default, the default should be recorded to the court to which that player was assigned at the time of the line-up exchange, i.e., if the late player is assigned to Court #1, the win is to the opposing team on Court #1. It is not necessary to “move up” players from Court #2 to Court #1 and from Court #3 to Court #2. Once players have been assigned courts and started warm-up, they should continue to play on their assigned court.
- e. Ineligible Player - If an ineligible player plays on a court (i.e., a player not registered on TennisLink), that court will be considered a default. If any portion of the match was played, the player names and scores should be entered on TennisLink for rating purposes.

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2. Default Scoring

- a. Default with No Games Played - In case of a default, the non-defaulting party shall be credited with such number of additional games as would have been won if the match was completed and the non-defaulting party won every subsequent game (6-0, 6-0). If a default occurs, write the names of all players of the non-defaulting team on the scorecard. Do not list the players of the defaulting team.
- b. Default with Games Played – If a default occurs after games have been played, enter the names of all the players and the scores. An example would be if after the match, it is discovered that one of the players was not registered at the time of the match. The non-registered player's team would be assigned the loss, but all players and the score would be entered into TennisLink for rating purposes.

3. Team Default

- a. To avoid defaulting an entire match, the match must be “legal”, that is, players must be eligible team members, registered in TennisLink, and present for play in at least 3 of 5 courts, 3 of 4 courts, or 2 of 3 courts, depending on league/level format.
 - b. For each league session, all teams will send a check to their Level Coordinator as a deposit. The deposit amounts will be posted along with Captain's Registration Information. At the end of the season, all deposit checks will be shredded, unless cashed due to a team defaulting an entire match or if fees are charged for a court default without adequate club notification. Any remaining deposit will be returned to the captain.
 - c. At the conclusion of local league play, any team that has defaulted an entire team match may be ineligible for post-season competition. Furthermore, any captain who defaults an entire team match **twice** during the season will not be permitted to captain in that same league/division the following season.
 - d. To determine final team standings in the event a team defaults an entire match, all matches of the defaulting team already played in a completed round robin will be counted. Matches played within an incomplete round robin will only be counted if all teams with a mathematical chance to advance have played the defaulting team in good faith. All matches played by the defaulting team will be used for rating and advancement purposes.
4. Player Default - Players follow the Friend at Court and must adhere to sportsmanship rules during match play. No umpires are permitted to officiate unless required by grievance outcomes. If a player leaves the court during a match, they must disclose the reason to their opponent. Any reason other than a bathroom break or clothing malfunction is not acceptable. Only reasonable time (5 minutes) will be allowed for such absences. If a player is absent for more than reasonable time, they will be presumed retired, and the match will be recorded as a loss (retired) at the current score.

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6. GRIEVANCES

- A. **ADMINISTRATIVE GRIEVANCE** - Any grievance with the administration of the USTA Heart of America District Leagues may be filed with the USTA Missouri Valley Section. All grievances must be in writing. The written grievance must be sent to the USTA Missouri Valley Section's Manager of Adult Leagues, who will submit it to the Section's League Grievance Committee. An administrative grievance may be filed within one year of the incident.
- B. **NTRP GRIEVANCE** – Any self-rated player who is playing at an NTRP level lower than his/her actual skill level is subject to an NTRP Grievance (National Rule 3.03E). NTRP Grievances should be filed in writing with the USTA Heart of America League Coordinator who will forward them to the USTA Missouri Valley Section's Manager of Adult Leagues. The grievance will be administered by the USTA Missouri Valley League Grievance Committee. In addition, a player who inappropriately self-rates, and captains and others who condone inappropriate self-rating, may be subject to additional penalties under the League Suspension Point System. An NTRP Grievance may be filed at any time. A player with a valid NTRP computer rating or a player granted automatic appeal of a computer rating is not subject to an NTRP grievance.
- C. **LOCAL LEAGUE GRIEVANCE** - Captains may file a grievance in writing for other circumstances (e.g., un-sportsmanlike conduct), against an opposing team or player through the District's Executive Director to the District's Grievance Committee. Local League grievances must be filed prior to the commencement of the next team match in that flight involving such individual or team, or within twenty-four hours after the local league commences play, whichever occurs first. Note: The grievance form may be found at:
https://www.usta.com/content/dam/usta/pdfs/usta_league_grievance_070915.pdf

7. INCLEMENT WEATHER

- Weather related (ice, snow, rain) rescheduling decisions should not be made more than 3 hours prior to the scheduled match time.
- The two captains can have an alternative plan (indoor back-up courts, or alternative dates at the same facility), but **DO NOT** make this the definite plan until 3 hours prior to match time. (Players are responsible for indoor court fees when matches move inside.)
- Captains should use discretion and common sense in unsafe conditions. If one or both captains believe the weather puts their players in danger, the match should be rescheduled.
- Once you are closer to match time, if the two captains agree to reschedule, they must contact their Level Coordinator or League Coordinator.
- Contact the site where the match was to be played to cancel the courts so no fee is charged. Home captain is responsible for court costs if they are not cancelled.
- Within 7 days, decide on a new match date and notify the League/Level Coordinator. The rescheduled match should be played at the same site where the match was originally scheduled. If new match date is not scheduled within 7 days, League/Level Coordinator will schedule a match date/time which must be played under the penalty of default.

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- Complete the match on the new date and notify the Level Coordinator of its completion.
- All make-up matches must be completed by the end of the season.

8. EXTREME HEAT RULE

If, within three hours of match time, the National Weather Service Heat Index Chart predicts that the court location's heat index will reach 105 degrees during the match (https://www.weather.gov/ar/heat_index), the captains may agree to take the match indoors (at the cost of the players) or reschedule the match within one week. Captains need to notify the League/Level Coordinator at once of any rescheduling. Failure to agree on a rescheduled date within 7 days will result in the Level Coordinator rescheduling the match, which must be played as rescheduled under the penalty of default.

WEB RESOURCES

The most recent USTA National League Regulations and the USTA Missouri Valley Tennis Rules & Regulations will be the official basis for rules not covered by these USTA Heart of America League Rules.

These rules are subject to change as USTA National and USTA Missouri Valley Rules are finalized later in the year. Captains will be notified of Rule Updates.

Web Resource	Hyperlink	QR Code
<i>Webpage to find the most recent version of USTA Heart of America Rules & Missouri Valley Tennis Rules & Regulations</i>	<u>USTA Missouri Valley Leagues Website</u>	
<i>Webpage to find the most recent National League Rules and other resources</i>	<u>USTA League Resources</u>	
<i>"The Code" shall be used for all matches played without officials. "The Code" and "Friend at Court"</i>	<u>2026 Friend at Court</u>	

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ATTACHMENT A

**MOVE-UP/SPLIT-UP Regulations from USTA National League Regulations for 18 & Over,
40 & Over, 55 & Over, 18 & Over Mixed and 40 & Over Mixed**

2.05E(2) and 2.05E(3).

2.06 MOVE-UP/SPLIT-UP.

2.06A National Championship Teams.

2.06A(1): Move-Up - Teams and team members that advanced to, or qualified for, any National Championship may play together as a team, in whole or in part, if they move up one NTRP team level.

2.06A(2): Split-Up - No more than three (3) players who were on the roster of any team that advanced to, or qualified for, any National Championship team the previous year may play together in the same Division, same Age Group and at the same NTRP team level as the National Championship team(s), if their NTRP rating allows. Split-Up requirements only apply to all players other than Self-Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed Players players who participated in three (3) or more matches (one default received shall count) and Self-Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed players who participated in at least four matches (no default received shall count), for that team during the championship year.

2.06A(3): If a Section has a regulation that limits the number of players on a roster that are at a specific level, the Section must suspend that regulation for one year for any team that advanced to, or qualified for, any National Championship the previous year and chooses to move up one NTRP team level.

**USTA Missouri Valley MOVE-UP/SPLIT-UP Regulations relating to
65 & Over and Tri-Level**

Adult 65 & Over (Page 15)

a. Move-Up - Teams and team members who advanced to or qualified for the 65 & Over National Invitational may play together as a team, in whole or in part, if they move up one NTRP team level.

b. Split-Up - No more than 50% of the players on the roster of any team that advanced to or qualified for the 65 & Over National Invitational the previous year may play together in the same Division, same Age Group, and at the same NTRP team level as the National Invitational team(s), if their NTRP rating allows. These Split-Up requirements only apply to players and rating types who participated in at least two matches (only one default counts as a played match) for that team during the championship year.

c. If a district has a regulation that limits the number of players on a roster at a specific level, the district must suspend that regulation for one year for any team that advanced to or qualified for the 65 & Over National Invitational the previous year and chooses to move up one NTRP team level.

Tri-Level (Page 17)

15. Split-Up: For current year teams that advance to or qualify for Nationals.

a. 2.06A: Split-Up - No more than three players on the roster of a team that advanced to or qualified for Tri-level National Invitational the previous year may play together on the same Tri-Level team for the following league year. These Split-Up requirements only apply to players, and rating types who participated in at least two matches (only one default counts as a played match), for that team during the championship year.

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ATTACHMENT B

USTA Heart of America LEAGUE DISTRICT
ADVANCEMENT GUIDELINES

District Championship Advancement	
# of Teams Participating at Each League or Flight	# of Teams Advancing to District Championships
5 & Fewer	1
6 – 12	2
13 & Greater	3

SEASON(S) WITH MULTIPLE LEAGUES OR FLIGHTS

- This chart for District Championships applies to **18 & Over leagues**: 18 & Over Winter Weekend, 18 & Over Winter Daytime, and 18 & Over Summer leagues.
- This chart also applies to any season with either multiple leagues or leagues with multiple flights (e.g. 40 & Over divisions that have both daytime and weekend leagues, or any large league that has multiple flights within its league)
- Players may only play for one team at a given NTRP level at District Championships. For example, if a player qualifies with a Winter Daytime 3.5 team and a Summer 3.5 team, they can only play for one team at the District Championships. They can participate in a 4.0 Championship match but will not be accommodated in the Championship match schedule.
- Teams can only advance to District Championships if they can fill all courts for each match scheduled.
- Teams advancing to the District Championships and/or Playoffs must have a winning record, i.e., more wins than losses (at issue when session winners cannot field a team to advance).
- The USTA Heart of America Adult Council reserves the right to amend the rules and/or regulations should any unforeseen circumstances arise that may affect the playoff format.

OTHER LEAGUES

- Any league or division that has a single season or a single league (e.g. 55 & Over) will not advance to a district playoff. The league winner will automatically receive the district's invitation to the Missouri Valley Sectional Tournament.

USTA Heart of America Questions & Answers

Q.1. What is considered “just-in-time” for rescheduling outdoor matches because of rain, and why is this the best policy?

A.1. Many captains hastily reschedule matches at the first sign of rainy when the conditions could eventually clear up. To avoid unnecessary rescheduling, please follow these guidelines.

- When you wake up the day of a match and it is raining, **DO NOT** reschedule your match! It may stop later in the day and courts could be dry by the time of your match.
- If it is raining the day of your match, both captains wait until 2-3 hours before the match to see if the rain has stopped, and then decide what to do.
- If you want to reserve indoor courts earlier to have courts available, that is fine. But **DO NOT** make this the definite plan with the other captain or tell your players you have indoor courts. You still need to wait to see if the rain will clear out. (Players are responsible for indoor court fees when matches move inside.)
- If the rain has stopped at the 2-3 hour mark before the match, you simply plan to play your match outside as scheduled.
- If the rain has not stopped at the 2-3 hour mark before your match, you either reschedule the match at that time with the same facility, or plan to play inside (at the players’ expense).
- Be sure to notify your league or level coordinator of any rescheduled matches right away.
- These same guidelines can apply to hazardous weather conditions, such as snow/ice for indoor matches. Streets may be cleared or treated, and matches can still be played as scheduled.
- Captains should use discretion and common sense in unsafe conditions if the 2-3 hour advance notice is unrealistic. If the match is rained out, or one or both captains believe the weather puts their players in peril, the match will be rescheduled.

Q2. What happens to the line-ups when two teams arrive for a match, but it must be postponed due to inclement weather?

A2. Whether or not line-ups have been exchanged, if the inclement weather occurs before the first point is played, captains may change their line-ups for the make-up match. However, if even one point has been played on a court, then the individuals playing on that court must remain the same for the rescheduled match and any or all **other** players in both line-ups may be modified or kept the same. If a point has not been played on a given court, then the line-up may change for that given court for the rescheduled match.

Q3. What happens when two teams must re-schedule due to inclement weather but they cannot mutually agree upon a time/date?

A3. Captains must notify their Level Coordinator who will consult with each captain and set a final makeup date. If one team does not show for the rescheduled date, that team is defaulted. If both do not show, it will be a double default.

Q4. If a captain calls another captain prior to a match and says he/she must default one court and to cancel the court at the facility, how binding is that call?

A4. Captains should get that information *in writing*. Once a captain sends a message that he/she is forfeiting a court and canceling the court, then that message is binding. If there is a last-minute change and both captains agree *in writing* to play the match, then that message will be binding. We hope that all matches are played and that every effort is made to make it happen. Just get it *in writing*!!

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Q5. If a player on a team going to Nationals does not play Districts, Sectionals, or Nationals, does that player count as a "national player"?

A5. If a player on a team that qualifies for Nationals has played enough times to be considered "qualified" to advance to Nationals, then that player is counted as a "national player" and will be affected by the move-up, split-up rule.

Q6. How many matches must a player have to be eligible to advance to post season play, and when does a "default" count as a match played? (For advancement to Invitational Tournaments (e.g. Tri-Level and 65 & Over), criteria may vary.)

A6.

	Qualification Requirements Matches must be on the same team & season (*per National Regulations)		
Type of NTRP Rating	Districts	Sectionals	Nationals
Computer Rated Players	2 matches 1 can be a Default	2 matches 1 can be a Default	3 matches 1 can be a Default
Self-Rated Players Appealed Players Self-Rate Appealed Players	2 played matches	3 played matches	4 played matches

Q.7. What is the rule for exchanging and/or changing line-ups in irregular circumstances (such as a scheduling conflict at a club or split match times)?

A.7. Line-ups are to be exchanged prior to match time. When some courts in a team match must be played at different times or days, it is permissible to wait to exchange line-ups for the later matches "just-in-time" because of unknown problems that may arise. If captains put the entire line-up in writing prior to the first match played, then a captain can hold that captain to that line-up. However, in the spirit of sportsmanship, we encourage captains to work together and exercise flexibility in cases where there are staggered times/dates.

Q.8. What is the course of action when teams have run out of time before completing a match?

A.8. If the time is up and the court is still available, teams should complete the match. If another team is taking the court after your match, you must relinquish the court at their match time. Check with the club to see if another court is available. If so, move to that court and finish the match or reschedule for another time. If the club charges you for the extended period, ask for a receipt and submit it to HOA for reimbursement. These situations are rare but do occur. Unfinished individual matches must be completed and cannot be recorded as a tie.

Q.9. Does the USTA Heart of America require players to use a certain color of tennis balls for league matches?

A.9. While the National rules list ITF designated colors as yellow or white, the USTA Heart of America requirement is that players use yellow balls for all league matches.