

## Proposed Amendments to USTA Regulations

Note: Words underlined are proposed to be added. Deleted text is shown in strikethrough. References are to the 2023 Friend at Court, unless otherwise noted.

### R1. Proposed by USTA Mid-Atlantic Foundation Kathy Renzetti, President

**PASSED**

Part 1. Amend USTA Regulation I.B., C. and D. (pp. 45-49) as follows:

#### I. PRE-TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

#### B. Application for Sanction and Appointment of Tournament Committee

Before the start of a tournament, the applicant shall apply for a sanction (see USTA Regulation XVII). and If the sanction is approved, shall appoint a Tournament Committee of at least ~~three~~ two persons shall be appointed. The ~~Tournament Chair, the~~ Tournament Director, and the Referee shall be members of the Tournament Committee. The sanctioning authority may appoint additional members to the Tournament Committee. ~~Neither the Tournament Chair nor the~~ The Tournament Director may not serve as or assume the responsibilities of the Referee or Deputy Referee ~~unless specifically authorized by other USTA regulations.~~ except as authorized in USTA Regulation I.C.2.b.

#### C. Tournament Committee

1. *Tournament Committee duties.* The Tournament Committee supervises all administrative details of the tournament, including the appointment of the Referee and the extent to which other officials will be used. It has broad discretionary powers in carrying out its functions in all cases not covered by the ITF Rules of Tennis or USTA Regulations. The responsibilities of the Tournament Committee include the responsibilities listed in Table 2.

~~2. *Tournament Chair.* The Tournament Chair is the head of the Tournament Committee. This person is the official representative of the Tournament Committee to the USTA, Sectional Associations, and District Associations. Normally a Tournament Committee submits its sanction application through its Tournament Chair. The Tournament Chair may not serve as or assume the responsibilities of the Referee or Deputy Referee unless specifically authorized by other USTA regulations.~~

~~2. 3.~~ *Tournament Director.*

a. *Responsibilities.* The Tournament Director serves as the chief executive officer for the Tournament Committee; is the official representative of the Tournament Committee to the USTA, Sectional Associations, and District Associations; and is directly responsible for the administrative details of the tournament. ~~In many, but not all, tournaments the Tournament Chair also serves as the Tournament Director.~~ The Tournament Director may not serve as or assume the responsibilities of the Referee or Deputy Referee unless specifically authorized by other USTA regulations.

b. Assumption of Referee role by Tournament Director at Sectional Association and District Association Tournaments.

i. Assumption of Referee role by Tournament Director. The Tournament Director of one of the following tournaments may also serve as Referee provided that the person has fulfilled the required training set forth by the USTA Officiating Department:

- Junior, Adult, and Family Tournaments designated as Level 7; and
- Wheelchair Tournaments designated as Level 5.

ii. When assumption of Referee role may be authorized.

(A) Authorized tournament levels. A Sectional Association may authorize the Tournament Director of one of the following tournaments to also serve as Referee provided the person has fulfilled the required training set forth in USTA Regulation I.C.2.b.ii.(B):

- Junior Tournaments designated as Level 3, 4, 5, and 6;
- Adult and Family Tournaments designated as Level 4, 5, and 6; and
- Wheelchair Tournaments designated as Level 4.

If permitted by a Sectional Association, a District Association may make this authorization.

(B) Training required. A Tournament Director authorized to serve as Referee must fulfill the required training set forth by the USTA Officiating Department, which shall be level-appropriate.

**FAC Comment I.C-2:** A Tournament Director who is certified as a Referee by the USTA meets the training requirements referred to in USTA Regulation I.C.2.b.ii.(B) to serve in the dual role of Referee.

**FAC Comment I.C-3:** Regulations defining and governing the various Levels of Junior, Adult, Family, and Wheelchair Section and District Ranking Tournaments can be found in the following publications:

- USTA Junior Tournament, Ranking and Sanctioning Regulations;
- USTA Adult and Family Tournament, Ranking and Sanctioning Regulations; and
- USTA Wheelchair Tournament, Ranking and Sanctioning Regulations.

3. *Referee and Deputy Referee.* Each tournament shall have a person serving in the position of Referee. Upon appointment, the Referee becomes a member of the Tournament Committee. The Referee is the official who is responsible for assuring that the competition is fair and played under the ITF Rules of Tennis and USTA Regulations. The Referee supervises all aspects of play, including, but not limited to, the conduct and actions of players, coaches, parents, spectators, officials, groundskeepers, and administrative crew. A Deputy Referee is an official appointed by the Referee or Tournament Committee to assist in the performance of the Referee's duties or to assume these duties when the Referee is absent. A Deputy Referee who makes the draw should also be a member of the Tournament Committee. The Referee's responsibilities include the responsibilities listed in **Table 3**.

- a. *Presence of Referee or Deputy Referee.* [unchanged]

**FAC Comment I.C-42:** The Referee should be on site during the tournament. The Deputy Referee steps in only during those short periods when the Referee is off site or is playing a match in the tournament. Because of the requirement of being present during play, an official may not simultaneously serve as the Referee or Deputy Referee of multiple tournaments unless they are held at the same site.

- b. *Referee's discretion.* [unchanged]
- c. *Certification required for Referees and Deputy Referees of USTA National Championships at National tournaments sanctioned by the USTA.* The Referee of each ~~USTA National Championships~~ tournament sanctioned ~~by the USTA~~ pursuant to **USTA Regulation XVII.D., E. and F.**, shall be a Referee certified by the USTA; each Deputy Referee shall be an official certified by the USTA.
- d. *Certification of Referees of other tournaments.* The USTA recommends the use of Referees certified by the USTA; ~~however, certification is not required, in all other USTA sanctioned tournaments.~~ Whenever a non-certified Referee or Deputy Referee is used, such person or persons must comply with the requirements of Safe Play, including clearing USTA background screening and successfully completing Safe Play education (see [usta.com/safeplay](https://usta.com/safeplay) for Safe Play requirements).

#### **D. Tournament Appeals Committee**

The Tournament Committee shall appoint a Tournament Appeals Committee to decide player appeals of the Referee's disqualification or unilateral default of a player. The Tournament Appeals Committee shall be comprised of at least two members. The Referee (including a Tournament Director who is serving as the Referee) may not serve on the Tournament Appeals Committee. Time is of the essence in deciding appeals. Upon being notified by a player that the player wishes to appeal the Referee's decision, the Referee shall immediately contact at least two members of the Tournament Appeals Committee. Once two members have convened to decide an appeal, they need not wait for other members before reaching a decision. There are no formal notice requirements for assembling the Tournament Appeals Committee, and two members of the Committee constitute a quorum. The Tournament Appeals Committee may meet in person, by conference telephone call, or by other means that will facilitate a prompt decision. ~~The Tournament Committee may serve as the Tournament Appeals Committee, except the Referee shall not serve as a member of the Tournament Appeals Committee.~~ Decisions of the Tournament Appeals Committee are final.

Part 2. Amend **USTA Regulation I.H.** (pp. 57-58) as follows:

#### **I. PRE-TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS**

##### **H. Entry Process**

2. *Entry form.* Before entries open, the Tournament Committee shall place the following information on its entry form and its website:
- The specific events and the eligibility requirements;
  - The specific limit, if any, on the size of the draws;
  - The process for selecting players;
  - The locations and dates of play (including rain dates, if any);
  - The sanctioning bodies;
  - The entry fee;
  - The draw formats and whether any consolation is mandatory;

- The time and place of the draw;
- The match format for the main draw, consolation, and doubles;
- When applicable, a statement specifying the method of seeding used;
- When applicable, a statement of the type of Match Tiebreak used in lieu of the deciding final set;
- The entry deadline (the date by which entries must be received by the Tournament Committee);
- If applicable, a statement that the Tournament Director is authorized to serve in the dual role of Referee;
- If applicable, a statement that the Referee is not certified by the USTA;
- The mailing or electronic address where the entry form should be sent;
- Any clothing or shoe restrictions;
- The time and place of any player meeting and how to notify the tournament if a player is unable to attend;
- The ball type (brand name not required) that will be used;
- The number of balls for play and the ball-change policy;
- The type of court surface; and
- When applicable, a statement that the tournament will play Red, Orange, or Green Ball Tennis (including the specific court dimensions, ball type, and racket size allowed).

See **USTA Regulation II.B.7.** for additional information that is published once a decision has been made to separate an event into multiple draws

It is recommended that the Tournament Committee include additional information, such as how first match information may be obtained, the names of the Referee and other members of the Tournament Committee, and the requirement for a player to deliver written verification or description of the reasons for a withdrawal.

Part 3. Amend **USTA Regulation VII.F.** (pp. 124) as follows:

## **VII. OFFICIATING**

### **F. Court Monitors**

Court Monitors are not USTA-certified officials. Under the guidance of the Referee, USTA-sanctioned tournaments are authorized to use Court Monitors. Court Monitors assume limited duties and responsibilities to ensure fair and sportsmanlike play in conformity with the USTA regulations, The Code, and the Rules of Tennis. All persons serving in the role of Court Monitor must comply with the requirements of Safe Play, including clearing USTA background screening and successfully completing Safe Play education ([see usta.com/safeplay](https://www.usta.com/safeplay) for Safe Play requirements).

**Effective Date:** January 1, 2024

**Rationale:** The Mid-Atlantic supports and requires the use of USTA certified officials whenever possible. Many USTA sections including Mid-Atlantic are not requiring the use of USTA certified officials at lower level events such as Junior Level 6 events. The frequency, locations, and size of these events is such that always requiring USTA certified officials is impractical and cost prohibitive. As Friend at Court is currently written, the use of non-certified officials is permitted, and those individuals have no training requirement.

USTA Mid-Atlantic is proposing changes that would support trained tournament directors being allowed to serve in the role of the Referee when a USTA certified official is not available. The intent is not to permanently replace the role of the Referee with a Tournament Director serving in a dual role, but to authorize this dual role at the Junior and Adult Level 6 (similar to what is currently permitted for Junior Level 7 and Wheelchair Level 5) and allow sections to authorize the dual role on a case-by-case basis when there is an urgent need at higher Levels in order to have a tournament run in a manner that is consistent with USTA regulations.

The proposed amendments empower the Sectional Associations (and if permitted, their District Associations) to authorize the Tournament Directors of tournaments they sanction to serve in the dual role of Referee provided training has been completed. This is already permitted without any authorization at the lowest level tournaments (Level 7 Junior, Adult and Family tournaments; Level 5 Wheelchair tournaments), and the proposal moves such Level 7/Level 5 policy from the separate sets of USTA regulations into the USTA Regulations so that all regulations regarding Tournament Directors serving in a dual role of Referee are in one location.

In determining the training requirements for Tournament Directors serving in the dual role, Mid-Atlantic seeks to work cooperatively with the USTA Officiating Department. In deference to the Officiating Departments' concerns regarding the language specific to training requirements, Mid-Atlantic has agreed to revised language in **USTA Regulation I.C.2.b.ii.(B)**. The final language clarifies that the USTA Officiating Department will produce the training, with the understanding that the content and duration shall be vetted by the Sectional Associations to ensure the training is reflective of the realities of how Section Level events are executed. Currently, the USTA has a training module for the lowest Level 7/Level 5 Tournament Directors that was rolled out effectively in 2021. Mid-Atlantic believes the existing training is likely appropriate for the next higher Level, possibly with minor additions. A more comprehensive training is needed for the higher Levels (such as Sectional Championships). Mid-Atlantic will support the Officiating Department in assembling a group of subject matter experts, to include Sectional Association representatives, to determine the content and duration of these training modules. It is the intent that the training modules are level appropriate, reasonable in duration, easily accessible, and that completion can be documented and tracked by the Sectional Associations.

In order to ensure transparency with the customer (particularly those from Sections that continue to require certified Referees that cross borders to play in Open tournaments), the proposal also requires a statement be placed on a tournament entry form and website announcing when a Tournament Director is serving in this dual role, along with a similar disclosure requirement when a non-certified Referee is being used.

The Call Item also permits a Sectional Association or District Association to appoint one or more additional members of the Tournament Committee as part of its sanctioning process. This will empower the Sectional Associations and District Associations to guarantee there are experienced individuals who are assisting with the administration of tournaments to better ensure a quality event.

The proposal requires that all National tournaments use a Referee and Deputy Referee certified by the USTA, not just the USTA National Championships. This is consistent with the requirements that have been put in place by the Junior Competition, Adult Competition, and Wheelchair Tennis Committees as part of each committee's sanction process.

Finally, the Call Item codifies that all non-certified Referees and Deputy Referees, and Court Monitors be Safe Play approved. This will result in all policies in the USTA Regulations regarding persons that have authority over players on a tennis court remain consistent.

**Additional Information from Proposer:**

1. Please provide financial impact or budgetary costs of this change, if applicable:
  - a. Response: Expenses associated with IT modifications.
2. What IT requirements are needed:
  - a. Response: Per **Regulation 1.C.3.d.**: *“Certification of Referees of other tournaments. The USTA recommends the use of Referees certified by the USTA in all other USTA sanctioned tournaments.”* As such the individual acting as the Referee is not required to be certified, however only certified referees may be listed as the Referee in Serve Tennis. As a result, the Digital Team will need to modify Serve Tennis to afford the Tournament Director to enter as a Referee. In addition, they will need to ensure that whomever accesses the system has been Safe Play approved.
  - b. Response: Per **Regulation I.H.2.**, IT will need to make modifications to the sanctioning entry form that is completed and how it will be displayed front-facing for the consumer in order to ensure that the entry form discloses whether the Tournament Director is serving in a dual role and whether the Referee is certified or not.

**Note to Friend at Court Editors:**

- If this Call Item passes, the definition of Tournament Chair needs to be eliminated from the Friend at Court Glossary.
- If this Call Item passes, the definition of Tournament Committee needs editing. A suggestion follows: **Tournament Committee.** The Tournament Committee is the committee that is responsible for putting on the tournament on behalf of the organization that holds the tournament sanction. At a minimum, the committee includes the Tournament Director, ~~Tournament Chair~~, and Referee.
- If this Call Item passes, the definition of Tournament Director needs editing. A suggestion follows: **Tournament Director.** The Tournament Director is the official representative of the Tournament Committee to the USTA, Sectional Associations, and District Associations, the chief executive officer for the Tournament Committee, and is directly responsible for all administrative details. ~~Often the Tournament Director and the Tournament Chair are the same person.~~

**Note to Junior Competition, Adult Competition and Wheelchair Tennis Committees:** If this Call Item is adopted, it effectively endorses these committees to take steps to amend their respective Tournament, Ranking, and Sanctioning Regulations to remove the provision that permits a Tournament Director to serve in the dual role as Referee at the lowest level of tournament, as this provision will now be a part of the USTA Regulations.