

# SUMMARY OF THE 2017 NATIONAL JUNIOR COMPETITIVE STRUCTURE



Revisions have been approved by the USTA Junior Competition Committee to the national junior competitive structure that will become effective on January 1, 2017. These revisions are built upon the foundation of our existing tournament structure and the valuable input of the Sectional Associations, maximizing the finest of our current events, but also making modifications that will broaden the competition landscape in a number of important ways. In all its work, the Committee has sought:

- To put the needs and well-being of the child first;
- To dramatically increase the number of youth participating in competition;
- To facilitate the development of players; and
- To increase overall customer satisfaction among players, parents, coaches and event administrators.

## **Revisions Include:**

- **Additional Tournaments.** Several new events have been added to the schedule that are conceived to meet the evolving needs of America's junior tennis players. These include:
  - ◇ USTA National Indoor Championships, to be held in late November, in support of the vast number of players that play and train indoors during the winter months and in recognition of the prevalence and importance of indoor play. It also will expose players who play less frequently on this surface to one that is widely used in college tennis, and provide a college recruiting opportunity just after the mid-November signing deadline when coaches learn of whether they have openings in their lineups.
  - ◇ USTA National Spring Championships as a National Level 1 Gold Ball tournament. For many years the "Easter Bowl" has been one of the strongest tournaments on the national schedule, and this designation returns the event to the highest-level national ranking status. The BG18 tournament will continue to be an ITF tournament, governed by ITF Regulations, but the top finishers will receive Gold, Silver, and Bronze Balls.
  - ◇ USTA National Level 3 Tournaments, which will be sanctioned up to 6 times per year in each division. One or more tournaments will be held in these date blocks with up to 192 total draw spot offerings in each division.
  - ◇ Split of USTA National Spring Team Championships, creating a separate tournament for 18/16/14 division players and 12 division players. The split will create a more age-appropriate event for 12 division players that includes more in this division able to compete (96 boys and 96 girls). It will also permit both events to have a tournament format that mirrors the college tennis dual match format.
- **Increased Flexibility.** The National Junior Tournament Schedule offers an increased number of date blocks on which national tournaments are held, particularly National Level 3 Ranking Tournaments. The Committee has concluded that more options for play on the calendar will permit players to choose a schedule of national tournaments that best meets the varying academic demands, work schedule, and Sectional requirements that is different for every player and their family. The intent is to provide a menu of options that allows players to make customized decisions about their development. A list of the national tournaments and their 2017 date blocks is on the final page of this summary.
- **Replacement of Concurrent National Tournaments.** The Open and Closed USTA Regional Tournaments (Level 4) have been eliminated from the schedule and have effectively been replaced by USTA National Level 3 Tournaments that are held on weekends that have no other concurrent national tournaments. While concurrent National Selection and Regional Tournaments were intended to give players that could not make it into the National Selection Tournaments an opportunity to earn their way to a higher level, the pathway wasn't perceived as a reality and introduced one of the most complex aspects of the previous structure - entering multiple tournaments and the Freeze Deadline - the date by which a player must decide whether to remain on the alternate list of the higher-level tournament, or commit to the lower level tournament.
- **New Selection Processes for USTA National Championships.** While the intent of the existing schedule to drive play back to the Sections rightly set the standard that players should succeed locally before venturing to play nationally, the shift from many players selected from the National Standings List (NSL) into USTA National Championships to no players selected from the NSL was too severe. It weakened tournaments on the national schedule, narrowed choices for some high-level players who rightfully sought to play national tournaments for their development, and had an adverse impact on strong Sections with smaller quotas. The new selection process seeks to have a better balance to both encourage Sectional play, but also to value L2 and L3 national play. To that end new selection processes have been put in place for 2017 that seek to correct these issues. This includes re-introduction of the NSL and qualifiers from National Level 2 Tournaments as a pathway. It also includes treating the selection processes of the smaller 64-draw tournaments (Spring and Indoors) slightly differently.

## **In Conclusion:**

The changes summarized in this document came as a result of a goal assigned by President Katrina Adams to the USTA Junior Competition Committee to create a world-class junior competitive structure in the US. The revised national tournament structure is a major step forward.



Together with these changes, the national Committee is looking to incorporate the use of ratings to improve the method of seeding tournaments. It is also considering modifications to the ranking system to facilitate the aging up process. The national ranking points tables are being reviewed to ensure players have the ability to gain access to the higher levels as they improve their games.

A key to the success of a nationwide, world-class competitive structure in the US, is a commitment to principles that impact tennis from the local to national level:

- The depth of the talent pool among 8 to 14 year olds is critical to our country's ability to develop world-class tennis players.
- A critical problem facing our organization is our inability to retain players in this age range and incentivize them to play more tournaments or other competitions at the level they and their families choose.
- Traditional tournament models do not work for players and families who need to be cultivated at the local level in environments that are fun and social. If sanctioning bodies and organizers that control these competitions continue to offer traditional tournament models, we risk losing the momentum we have gained with the ten and under tennis rule change, facility conversions, and teaching and coaching paradigm shift.

The tournament structures put in place in Sections and Districts are critical to the success of the USTA establishing a world-class junior competitive structure. The Association has already reached broad agreement on the building blocks for structures that will improve retention and participation growth, and customer satisfaction surveys have identified what families are looking for as they enter our game. Events must:

- be fun;
- be affordable (both in terms of distance from home and entry fee);
- provide competitive matches;
- be short in duration; and
- provide a way for players to meet other like-minded kids who also enjoy playing tennis.

When developing a new pathway for 8 to 14 year olds, the USTA Junior Competition Committee recommends that Sections and Districts do the following:

- Commit to fully adopting the alignment principles of the USTA's Youth Player Progression, entry-level tournaments that are non-elimination and non-ranking and permit non-members to participate, and all aspects of competition (tournaments, USTA Junior Team Tennis, and Play Days) that utilize right-sized equipment, courts and balls.
- Sanction more tournaments, with an emphasis on increasingly localized play at the lower levels in all age divisions.
- Experiment with different tournament formats for younger players and lower level tournaments, including most importantly events that can take place during one day and a half-day periods.
- Experiment with ROG match formats at entry-level Yellow Ball and higher tournaments.
- Incorporate and emphasize team competitions, not just in the USTA Junior Team Tennis arena. This includes promotion of participation on Zonals teams, sanctioning inter- and intra-sectional team competitions that model a collegiate dual match and count for rankings, and holding competitions on college campuses.
- With the assistance of USTA Player Development and USTA Youth Play, educate parents and coaches on the pathway, as well as the optimum amount of match play, training, participation in other sports, and rest.

## **USTA NATIONAL RANKING TOURNAMENTS**

Players must meet the eligibility requirements of USTA Regulation IX.C.1. to enter and play in the National Ranking Tournaments described below, except that Sectional Associations may relax these requirements for the Section tournaments that count for national ranking.

*Note, the list of tournaments below does not include:*

- USTA International Tournaments (USTA tournaments played using ITF tournament regulations and permit the selection of international players); and
- ITF tournaments held in the US.

*These tournaments will also count for national ranking, and it is anticipated they will have the same ranking levels as today.*

## LEVEL 1

### USTA National Championships



Draw Sizes and Draw Formats				
Tournament	18 Divisions	16 Divisions	14 Divisions	12 Divisions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USTA National Spring Championships*</li> <li>USTA National Indoor Championships</li> </ul>	Singles Draw of 64, Feed-In Championship through Quarterfinals (FIC) Doubles Draw of 32, Single Elimination (SE)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>USTA National Clay Court Championships</li> <li>The USTA National Championships</li> </ul>	SG Draw of 224, FIC through Quarterfinals DB Draw of 112, Single Elimination		SG Draw of 192, FIC through QF with losers of FIC Round 1 fed into a separate SE draw DB Draw of 96, First Match Consolation	SG Draw of 128, Compass DB Draw of 64, Single Elimination
USTA National Winter Championships	Singles Draw of 128, FIC Doubles Draw of 64, Single Elimination			
* The USTA National Spring Championships in the 18 Divisions is also sanctioned as an ITF tournament. The draw size, selection process, and other tournament regulations are dictated by the ITF tournament regulations.				

### Selection Process

The selection process for the USTA National Championships is as set forth below.

Method of Acceptance	USTA National Spring Championships			
	BG18*	BG16	BG14	BG12
ITF List	40	0	0	0
National Standing List (endorsement not required)	6	52	52	52
BG18 ITF Qualifier Players	8	0	0	0
L2 Qualifiers	0	8	8	8
International Spring Championship Finalists	2	0	0	0
Wild Cards	8	4	4	4

Vacancies are filled with players from the National Standings List (endorsement not required)

64	64	64	64
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\* The USTA National Spring Championships in the 18 Divisions is also sanctioned as an ITF tournament. The draw size, selection process, and other tournament regulations are dictated by the ITF tournament regulations.



Method of Acceptance	USTA National Clay Court Championships and The USTA National Championships			
	BG18	BG16	BG14	BG12
Direct Acceptance List	32	16	16	0
L2 Qualifiers	8	8	8	8
Sectional Quota (minimum quota of 2)	134	134	116	102
Endorsed Players from National Standing List	42	58	46	10
Wild Cards	8	8	6	8
Vacancies are filled with endorsed players from the National Standings List	224	224	192	128

Method of Acceptance	USTA National Indoor Championships			
	BG18	BG16	BG14	BG12
National Standing List ( <i>endorsement not required</i> )	33	33	33	33
Sectional Quota ( <i>minimum quota of 1</i> )	27	27	27	27
Wild Cards	4	4	4	4
Vacancies are filled with players from the National Standings List ( <i>endorsement not required</i> )	64	64	64	64

Method of Acceptance	USTA National Winter Championships			
	BG18	BG16	BG14	BG12
Direct Acceptance List	16	16	16	0
L2 Qualifiers	8	8	8	8
Sectional Quota (minimum quota of 2)	77	77	77	102
Endorsed Players from National Standing List	23	23	23	14
Wild Cards	4	4	4	4
Vacancies are filled with endorsed players from the National Standings List	128	128	128	128

## Section Quota

Sectional quotas shall be based on the ratio that a Section's junior membership and number of players in the Top 150 in all divisions bears to the total junior membership and total players in the Top 150 in all divisions. The quota calculations are based on the total junior membership of December 31, 2013 and final rankings as of the December 31 of the previous year. Each January, the USTA will publish to the website the quotas for each of the USTA National Championships. For informational purposes only, below are projected Section Quotas for the 2017 tournaments that are based on the rankings as of December 31, 2015. These are not official, and will be adjusted based on the rankings as of December 31, 2016.



Section	Hard Courts & Clay Courts <sup>1</sup>			Indoors <sup>2</sup>	Winters <sup>1</sup>	
	BG18/16	BG14	BG12	All Divisions	BG18/16/14	BG12
Caribbean	2	2	2	1	2	2
Eastern	11	10	9	2	6	9
Florida	13	11	10	2	7	10
Hawaii Pacific	2	2	2	1	2	2
Intermountain	4	4	3	1	2	3
Mid-Atlantic	7	6	5	1	4	5
Middle States	5	4	4	1	3	4
Midwest	16	13	12	3	9	12
Mo. Valley	4	4	3	1	2	3

Section	Hard Courts & Clay Courts <sup>1</sup>			Indoors <sup>2</sup>	Winters <sup>1</sup>	
	BG18/16	BG14	BG12	All Divisions	BG18/16/14	BG12
New England	5	4	4	1	3	4
Northern	3	2	2	1	2	2
NorCal	9	7	7	2	5	7
Pacific NW	3	3	2	1	2	2
Southern	22	19	16	4	12	16
SoCal	13	12	10	2	8	10
Southwest	4	3	3	1	2	3
Texas	11	10	8	2	6	8
Total Quota:	134	116	102	27	77	102

<sup>1</sup> Minimum Quota of 2

<sup>2</sup> Minimum Quota of 1

## USTA National Doubles Championships

This USTA National Doubles Championships is a Level 1 tournament that awards the 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers with Gold, Silver and Bronze Balls. The draw is 32 teams in the 16s and 14s divisions only, with a Compass Draw format. Players must enter as teams by the entry deadline. The selection process is as follows:

1. Up to one team that has been endorsed by each of the 17 Sections (up to 17 total teams) shall be selected.
2. Up to 13 teams based on the combined standing of the players comprising a doubles team using the most recently published National Doubles Seeding/Selection List of the division of the event. Combined standing is determined as follows: Player A holds the #1 standing and Player B holds the #10 standing, the Team of A&B would have the combined standing of 11; for the purposes of determining the combined standing of a team when one or both players has no standing in the division, such players shall be assigned a standing equal to one less than the lowest player on the list.
3. Up to 2 teams may be awarded wild cards, provided the team has submitted a wild card application by the entry deadline.
4. If fewer than 2 wild cards are awarded, the Tournament Committee shall fill the remaining spots in the draw based on the combined standing of the players comprising a doubles team using the most recently published National Doubles Seeding/Selection List of the division of the event.

5. Alternates shall be ordered based on the combined standing of the players comprising a doubles team using the most recently published National Doubles Seeding/Selection List of the division of the event. Late entrants shall be placed on the alternate list in the order received after timely entries. Late entries received at the same time shall be ordered by lot.



## USTA Team Championships

- **USTA Boys' and Girls' 18 National Team Championships:** Teams comprised of 6-7 players from each section compete in separate competitions for boys and girls in a team compass draw format. To better mirror the collegiate dual match experience, the singles matches shall continue to be Best of 3 Tiebreak sets, but the doubles will now play a shortened 6-game set with No-ad Scoring. Additionally, in line with the collegiate dual match model, the team winning a majority of the doubles matches will earn one team point and all singles matches will earn one team point for the winner. All matches will continue to be played to completion.
- **USTA Boys' and Girls' 16 and 14 Intersectional Team Championships:** Teams from each section comprised of 3-4 boys and 3-4 girls compete in a round robin competition that has the top finishers play off for the championship. To better mirror the collegiate dual match experience, the singles matches shall continue to be Best of 3 Tiebreak sets, but the doubles will now play a shortened 6-game set with No-ad Scoring. Additionally, in line with the collegiate dual match model, the team winning a majority of the doubles matches will earn one team point and all singles matches will earn one team point for the winner. All matches will continue to be played to completion.
- **USTA National Spring Team Championships:** Beginning in 2017, this event will be split in two, with players in the 18, 16, and 14 divisions playing in one tournament and players in the 12 divisions playing in a separate tournament. The tournament will continue to earn National Level 1 ranking points, but will no longer award Gold, Silver and Bronze balls to the first, second, and third place finishers, respectively. The older division tournament will continue to select 32 players in the 18, 16, and 14 (96 total boys and 96 total girls) and waterfall these players onto 16 teams in the boys' event and 16 teams in the girls' event using the same method for creating teams that has been in use since 2014. Up to 4 Wild Cards may be awarded. The remaining players shall be selected using the most recently published National Standings List. The younger division tournament will select the 96 players in each division and waterfall these players onto 16 teams in the boys' event and 16 teams in the girls' event. The water-falling method will be similar to that used at the USTA Zone Team Championships when a Sectional Association has multiple teams. Up to 4 Wild Cards may be awarded. The remaining players shall be selected using the most recently published National Standings List. The competition will be modeled after the college format (doubles 6-game sets with No-ad Scoring followed by Best of 3 Set singles matches) using a Compass Draw format.

## LEVEL 2

### USTA National Level 2 Tournaments

Four segments of four concurrent tournaments shall be sanctioned as Level 2 National Ranking Tournaments and these events effectively replace the USTA National Selection Tournaments. The top 2 qualifiers in each tournament (except the BG18 tournament immediately preceding the USTA National Spring Championships) will qualify for the subsequent USTA National Championship. Note that there is no segment of tournaments that qualify for the USTA National Indoor Championships. The draw sizes shall be as follows:

Draw Sizes for USTA National Level 2 Tournaments				
Immediately Precedes this USTA National Championship	18 Divisions	16 Divisions	14 Divisions	12 Divisions
USTA National Spring Championships	32	32	32	32
USTA National Clay Court Championships	64	64	32	32
The USTA National Championships	64	64	32	32
USTA National Winter Championships	32	32	32	32

The draw format will be the FIC through the R16 format for singles and single elimination for doubles and it will permit the FIC to be played through the finals. The USTA Junior Competition Committee will be determining the selection process during 2016. Players may continue to enter up to 4 tournaments and up to 2 divisions.

## USTA Boys' and Girls' 16, 14, and 12 Zone Team Championships

These events have been moved to after the USTA National Clay Court Championships, no longer concurrent with the Intersectionals. These events shall use the same format as existed prior to 2017 with boys and girls competing together as a team. To better mirror the collegiate dual match experience, the singles matches shall continue to be Best of 3 Tiebreak sets, but the doubles will now play a shortened 6-game set with No-ad Scoring.



## LEVEL 3

### USTA National Level 3 Tournaments

One or more tournaments in each division with 192 total draw spots per division will be sanctioned up to six times per year (see the six date blocks on the final page of this summary). The USTA Junior Competition Committee is currently entertaining bids to host these tournaments and at this time, it is not know how many tournaments and draw spots will be sanctioned. Additionally, the Committee is asking for organizations to consider innovative draw and match formats. Examples of tournaments that could be sanctioned in a date block include:

- One 192-draw tournament in each division in a date block.
- One 128-draw tournament and one 64-draw tournament in each division in a date block.
- Two 64-draw tournaments and one 32-draw tournament in each division in a date block
- Six 32-draw tournaments in each division in a date block

It is the Committee's intent to select the best available bids that it believes will provide the highest quality experience for players. To ensure this quality, not all date blocks may offer the full 192 draw spots in every division.

The USTA Junior Competition Committee will be determining the selection process for each of the USTA National Level 3 Tournaments during 2016.

### Sectional Ranking Tournaments - Level 3

Each Section shall have two tournaments designated as national Level 3 tournaments. One of these tournaments shall be sanctioned in May or June of each year. Beginning in 2017, the first place finishers in May/June singles events shall no longer qualify for acceptance into The USTA National Championship held in August.

## LEVEL 4

*The Open and Closed USTA Regional Tournaments (Level 4) have been eliminated, but replaced with the USTA National Level 3 Tournaments - see above.*

### Sectional Ranking Tournaments - Level 4

Each Section shall have four tournaments designated as national Level 4 tournaments. They may be sanctioned at any time during the year.

## STATEMENT ON USE OF RATINGS

The use of ratings to seed and select players has grown in recent years as the Sections and the USTA have incorporated them into the competitive structures and studied the results. Feedback received:

- following the 2015 pilot use of ratings as a tool for seeding some USTA National Championships,
  - in the use of ratings for selection and seeding at the USTA New Balance National High School Championships,
  - as well as the experiences shared by Sections that use ratings to select players,
- support broadening the use of ratings at the national level. It is anticipated that a final decision on how ratings may be used beginning January 1, 2017 will be made by October 2016.

## 2017 National Junior Tournament Calendar

The list of tournaments below does not include:

- USTA International Tournaments (USTA tournaments played using ITF tournament regulations and permit the selection of international players); and
- ITF tournaments held in the US.



These tournaments will also count for national ranking, and it is anticipated they will have the same ranking levels as today.

		Nationals	Team	Level 2s	Level 3s	Section
<b>Week</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>2017 Sanction Dates</b>				
3	Reserved for Section Level 3/4 Tournaments	January 14-16 (Martin Luther King Weekend)				
4	USTA National Level 3 Tournaments	Up to 3 Days: January 21-23 (Sat-Mon) Up to 192 draw spots per division in one or more tournaments.				
7	USTA National Level 2 Tournaments Qualifier for USTA National Spring Championships	3-Day Tournament (32 Draws): February 11-13 (Sat-Mon)				
10	USTA National Spring Team Championships (Level 1)	5-Day Tournament: March 4-8 (Sat-Wed) BG18/16/14: 32 players per division; BG12: 96 players per division				
13	USTA National Level 3 Tournaments	Up to 3 Days: March 25-27 (Sat-Mon) Up to 192 draw spots per division in one or more tournaments.				
13	USTA National Spring Championships (Level 1)	BG18: March 27 - April 6 (Mon-Sun) (64 Draws) BG16: March 27-31 (Mon-Thu) (64 Draws) BG12/14: March 25-29 (64 Draws)				
17	USTA National Level 3 Tournaments	Up to 3 Days: April 23-25 (Sat-Mon) Up to 192 draw spots per division in one or more tournaments.				
19	USTA National Level 3 Tournaments	Up to 3 Days: May 6-8 (Sat-Mon) Up to 192 draw spots per division in one or more tournaments.				
21	USTA National Level 2 Tournaments Qualifier for USTA Ntl Clay Court Championships	BG18/16 - 4-Day Tournament (64 Draws): May 20-23 (Sat-Tue) BG14/12 - 3-Day Tournament (32 Draws): May 20-22 (Sat-Mon)				
22-26	Reserved for Section Level 3 Tournaments	Month of June: Sections must hold one of the tournaments that count for National Level 3 Ranking during May or June.				
27	USTA National Level 2 Tournaments Qualifier for The USTA National Championships	BG18/16 - 4-Day Tournament (64 Draws): July 1-4 (Sat-Tue) BG14/12 - 3-Day Tournament (32 Draws): July 1-3 (Sat-Mon)				
27	USTA BG14/16 Intersectional Team Championships (Level 1)	July 1-5 (Sat-Wed)				
28	USTA National Level 3 Tournaments	Up to 4 Days: Any time between July 8-14 Up to 192 draw spots per division in one or more tournaments.				
29	USTA National Clay Court Championships (Level 1)	BG18/16: July 16-23 (Sat-Sun) (224 Draws) BG14: July 16-22 (Sat-Sat) (192 Draws) BG12: July 17-22 (Sun-Sat) (128 Draws)				
30	USTA BG 12/14/16 Zone Team Champ. (Level 2)	July 27-31				
31	USTA BG18 National Team Champ. (Level 1)	B18: July 29 - August 1 G18: July 30 to August 2				
32	The USTA National Championships (Level 1)	BG18/16: August 4-13 (Fri-Sun) (224 Draws) G18/16: August 5-13 (Sat-Sun) (224 Draws) BG14: August 5-12 (Sat-Sat) (192 Draws) BG12: August 6-12 (Sun-Sat) (128 Draws)				
34	USTA National Doubles Championship (Level 1)	August 24-26 (32 Team Draws)				
39	USTA National Level 3 Tournaments	Up to 3 Days: September 23-25 (Sat-Mon) Up to 192 draw spots per division in one or more tournaments.				
41	USTA National Level 2 Tournaments Qualifier for USTA National Winter Championships	3-Day Tournament (32 Draws) (Columbus Day): October 7-9 (Sat-Mon)				
42-46	Reserved for Section Level 3/4 Tournaments	Weekends of Oct. 14-15, 21-22, 28-29 and Nov. 4-5, 11-12				
47	USTA National Indoor Championships (Level 1)	4-Day Tournament (Thanksgiving): (64 Draws) Nov 18-21 (Sat-Tue) or Nov 24-27 (Fri-Mon)				
52	USTA National Winter Championships (Level 1)	December 27 - January 2 (Wed-Tue) (128 Draws)				