

## **I. Governing Principles**

- a. Friend at Court is the book of rules and regulations under which tennis is played in the United States. It includes the ITF Rules of Tennis, The Code, and United States Tennis Association (hereinafter "USTA") Regulations. It is recommended reading for players, parents, coaches, teachers, tournament directors, league officials and anyone who wants a finer understanding of the game. A link to the current version of Friend at Court and the incorporated ITF Rules of Tennis, [The Code](#), and USTA Regulations can be found on the USTA website [here](#).
- b. As set forth in Friend at Court, USTA Regulations control all play in all USTA sanctioned tournaments and sanctioned matches (collectively, "Events") and include sections on:
- i. Setting up and conducting a tournament;
  - ii. Player responsibilities and conduct;
  - iii. Officials and officiating;
  - iv. Ranking regulations.
- c. All players participating in USTA Eastern Section (hereinafter "USTA Eastern") Events agree to abide by USTA Regulations, including but not limited to the Player Responsibilities and Conduct Regulations set forth at USTA Regulation IV (see Friend at Court pp. 103-116).
- d. As set forth in USTA Regulation IV.C.18, players shall not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes:
- i. Verbal abuse. Swearing at an official, a spectator, or an opponent in a voice that can be heard by any person;
  - ii. Visible or audible profanity or obscenity. Use of profanity or insulting, abusive, or obscene language in any way that may be heard by any person or use obscene, insulting, or abusive gestures;
  - iii. Racquet abuse. Throw or break a racquet other than in the normal course of play;
  - iv. Ball abuse. Deliberately hitting, throwing, or kicking a ball that is not in play if the ball:
    1. leaves the playing area;
    2. hits or comes close to hitting any person; or
    3. could cause damage or harm.
  - v. Physical abuse. Threatening or inflicting bodily injury to anyone; or
  - vi. Other unsportsmanlike conduct.
- e. In addition, all players are expected to know the rules for playing a tennis match, including how to keep score, play a tiebreak and be familiar with the general rules of fair play contained in The Code.
- f. USTA Regulations specifically state that players shall follow The Code and The Code shall apply to all matches except to the extent to which an official assumes some of the players' responsibilities.
- g. Players also are responsible for the conduct of anyone associated with the player at an Event, including but not limited to parents, coaches, and relatives (hereinafter, "Player Associate(s)"). If any Player Associate engages in unsportsmanlike or inappropriate conduct, or conduct in violation of

USTA Regulations or The Code, at an Event, the player shall be penalized as if the player committed the misconduct him or herself. Such misconduct by a Player Associate may result in a Point Penalty or Suspension Point being assessed against the Player. Lack of knowledge of the USTA Regulations or The Code by a Player Associate shall not be grounds for a player to appeal or challenge a penalty assessed against the player. It is the responsibility of the player to ensure that all of his or her Associates are aware of and agree to abide by all applicable USTA Regulations and the Code.

## **II. Point Penalty System**

- a. The Point Penalty System set forth in USTA Regulation IV.D shall be applied to all USTA Eastern Events. (See Friend at Court pp. 107-111.)
- b. Code Violations and Penalties are set forth at Table 14 of the USTA Regulations; Time Violations are set forth at Table 15 of the USTA Regulations; and Penalties for Lateness are set forth at Table 16 of the USTA Regulations.

## **III. Suspension Point System**

- a. The USTA Junior Suspension Point System (the "USTA JSPS") set forth in USTA Regulation IV.F shall be applied to all USTA Eastern Events. (See Friend at Court pp. 113-116.)
- b. Suspension points shall be assessed in accordance with Table 17 of USTA Regulation IV.F.
- c. As set forth in USTA Regulation F.1, the USTA JSPS applies to player and Player Associate conduct:
  - i. During all matches (main draw, compass draw, consolation, qualifying and doubles);
  - ii. During tournament activities;
  - iii. At tournament facilities; and
  - iv. At facilities, such as hotels, dormitories, and homes where players stay.

## **IV. Appeal of Suspension Points**

- a. Applicable Regulations
  - i. In accordance with USTA Regulation IV.F.6.a and IV.F.10.b, a Sectional Association, at its discretion, may adopt a procedure for permitting a player to appeal suspension points assessed at USTA Eastern sanctioned tournaments. Notification of Notice of Suspension shall be governed by USTA Regulation IV.c.
  - ii. If any suspension points are assessed at national tournaments and/or ITF Tournaments, players must follow the procedures set forth at USTA Regulation IV.F.10.a. players must follow the same procedures if suspension points are assessed at tournaments sanctioned by multiple Sectional Associations.
  - iii. If all suspension points are assessed by the USTA Eastern, players must follow the procedures set forth herein. A player may appeal suspension points assessed at eastern tournaments only after the player has accumulated sufficient points to be suspended. See Player Suspension Regulation below IV.b.
- b. Player Suspension

- i. First suspension. If a player receives 10 suspension points within a 12-month period, the player shall be suspended from competing in sanctioned tournaments for three months. Upon suspension these 10 points shall be cleared from the player's record. All other suspension points shall remain on the player's record and count toward a second suspension.
- ii. Second suspension. If a player receives 8 suspension points within the 12 months immediately following the first suspension, the player shall be suspended from competing in sanctioned tournaments for six months. Upon suspension these 8 points shall be cleared from the player's record. All other suspension points shall remain on the player's record and count toward a third suspension.
- iii. Subsequent suspensions. If a player receives 6 suspension points within the 12-month period immediately following the second suspension (and any suspensions subsequent to the second suspension), the player shall be suspended from competing in sanctioned tournaments for a period to be determined by the applicable committee or subcommittee. The suspension period shall not be less than one year and may be in effect for the remainder of the player's junior career. These 6 points shall be cleared from the player's record.
- iv. Player Suspension shall be governed by USTA Regulation IV.F.8

c. Notice of Suspension and Notice of Appeal of Suspension

- i. As set forth in USTA Regulation IV.F.9, the applicable Suspension Point Administrator shall send a Notice of Suspension by email, first class mail, overnight mail or certified mail (return receipt requested) to the player at the email address or address shown on the records of the Membership Department with a copy to the player's Section Association.
- ii. Any appeal shall be barred unless it is made in writing within 30 days of the serving of the Notice of Suspension. The Notice of Appeal shall be filed to USTA Eastern Attn: Grievances 70 W Red Oak Lane, West Harrison, New York 10604 or emailed to [grievance@eastern.usta.com](mailto:grievance@eastern.usta.com). In addition, all appeals of suspension can be submitted using this online form available here; [usta.com/easternresources](http://usta.com/easternresources).
- iii. The Notice of Appeal must state with particularity all relevant facts and arguments in support of the player's position. Any challenges to the factual record underlying any of the suspension points must be included in the Notice of Appeal or the right to challenge the factual record shall be deemed waived. Sufficient, detailed information and any witnesses with information related to the appeal should be provided. Any information included in, attached to, or otherwise referenced by the Notice of Appeal is not confidential and will be shared with the applicable grievance committee or subcommittee having jurisdiction and may be distributed to all parties involved with the grievance process.
- iv. A player may appeal suspension points only after the player has accumulated sufficient points to be suspended. Any Notice of Appeal filed prior to that time will be dismissed without prejudice as not yet ripe for appeal, and the player will have the right to re-file an appeal once sufficient points have been accumulated to trigger a suspension. After the player has accumulated sufficient points to be suspended, all suspension points are appealable.

**V. Effective Date of Suspension**

- a. If the player does not file a written Notice of Appeal, the suspension begins on the 31st day after the applicable Suspension Administrator provided the written Notice of Suspension on the Player. See USTA Regulation IV c.i Notice of Suspension and Notice of Appeal.

b. The player also may request his or her suspension begin immediately. The player shall email this request to [grievance@eastern.usta.com](mailto:grievance@eastern.usta.com). If the appropriate grievance subcommittee confirms that the player has accumulated sufficient points to be suspended, the suspension shall begin on the date that the email request from the player was sent.

c. If the player appeals the suspension, the player may continue playing in Events until the appeal is ruled on by USTA Eastern Section Grievance Committee (hereinafter “the Committee”) or appropriate grievance subcommittee.

d. If the appeal is denied, the suspension begins on the date the decision is emailed or mailed to the player unless the decision states otherwise or a stay is granted.

e. If the appeal is granted, in whole or in part, the player shall be notified in writing by email or mail.

f. All appeals of suspension, in which USTA Eastern has jurisdiction, shall be governed by the grievance procedures as set forth in VI. Grievance Procedure immediately following below.

## **VI. Grievance**

### **A. Grievance Committee**

i. The [USTA Eastern Grievance Form](#) is intended for use by a grievant concerning sportsmanship and conduct incidents that occur at USTA Eastern sanctioned play.

ii. The objective of USTA Eastern is to further the orderly and fair conduct of the game through the establishment of and adherence to the highest standards of conduct in all tournaments sanctioned by USTA Eastern. The Committee is charged with the responsibility of ensuring that this objective is achieved and to establish procedures to address violations of these standards.

iii. The Committee shall be charged with the responsibility of ensuring that these standards of conduct are adhered to through the establishment of procedures to address grievances involving the rules and regulations of the USTA and USTA Eastern, as well as the standards of conduct, fair play and good sportsmanship. The Committee shall be composed of at least seven (7) people appointed in accordance with the Eastern By-Laws. Initial Section grievances shall be heard by the appropriate grievance subcommittee duly established and shall consist of no fewer than three (3) Committee members.

iv. The appropriate grievance subcommittee shall address grievances concerning suspensions or unsportsmanlike conduct occurring at USTA Eastern sanctioned tournaments or events. The section staff may in its discretion refer any matter to the appropriate grievance subcommittee or the Committee as it deems necessary. The appropriate grievance subcommittee may impose penalties different from and/or additional to any penalties imposed by USTA officials at any tournament or sanctioned event under the Committee’s jurisdiction.

### **B. Filing Grievances**

- j. All decisions by the appropriate grievance subcommittee or the Committee are subject to the appeals process set forth in this document. Grievances may be filed against any member of the USTA; any parent, coach or other apparent representative of any such member; or any USTA Eastern official or organizer of an USTA Eastern sanctioned tournament.
- ii. Grievances may be filed by any person witnessing or having personal knowledge of the alleged violation, the Chairperson of the Committee, Eastern staff, or any tournament official.
- iii. All grievances must be in writing on the proper form, either 1) filed using the on-line form available on the USTA Eastern website; [usta.com/easternresources](http://usta.com/easternresources) or 2) signed and filed to USTA Eastern, Attn: Grievances, 70 W Red Oak Lane, West Harrison, New York 10604. The Committee or appropriate grievance subcommittee will make an effort to not disclose the name of the party filing the grievance; however, as noted on the grievance form, written grievances are not guaranteed confidentiality.
- iv. A written grievance filed by any person witnessing the alleged violation should file a written grievance within fourteen (14) days from the date on which the alleged violation occurred. The appropriate grievance subcommittee may, at its sole discretion, consider grievances filed more than fourteen (14) days from the date of the alleged violation. Grievances may be filed at any time by the Chairperson, Eastern staff, or any tournament official.
- v. It shall be the responsibility of the party filing the grievance to set forth all facts establishing a violation utilizing the form referenced above. This information shall include, but is not limited to, the name of the party against whom the grievance is filed and a description of the alleged violation. The grievance should also include the names and telephone numbers of any witnesses to the alleged violation and/or accompanying declarations of those witnesses, the date(s) of the alleged violation and the name of the tournament in which the violation occurred.
- vi. Failure to comply with any procedural rule for filing a grievance may result in such grievance being dismissed without consideration by appropriate grievance subcommittee or the Committee.

### C. Investigation and Disposition

- i. The appropriate grievance subcommittee shall consider every signed, written grievance that is timely filed. If the appropriate grievance subcommittee accepts a grievance for review, the grievance shall be investigated to the extent deemed necessary. The investigation may include, but is not limited to, telephone or in-person interviews, written statements from witnesses, a request for written response(s) regarding the alleged violation(s), or a hearing attended by all parties deemed necessary for a fair adjudication of the grievance. The appropriate grievance subcommittee, at its own discretion, may request the hearing to be held in person, by video conferencing or by telephone conference call. If a party to the grievance is unable to appear in person, the appropriate grievance subcommittee should accommodate any request for video conferencing or telephone conference call. The failure by the party against whom a grievance is filed to cooperate with investigation shall be taken into consideration by the appropriate grievance subcommittee in the adjudication of the grievance.
- ii. Grievances shall be decided by a majority of the appropriate grievance subcommittee ruling on the matter within either thirty (30) days from the date of a hearing, or no later than ninety (90) days of the filing of the grievance. If the appropriate grievance subcommittee is unable to make a decision within

ninety (90) days of the filing of the grievance, the Chairperson of the appropriate grievance subcommittee may grant a thirty (30) day extension. No further extensions may be granted.

iii. The appropriate grievance subcommittee shall not be required to hold any hearing prior to making any decision or taking any action upon such decision.

iv. The appropriate grievance subcommittee shall have the absolute discretion to determine the severity of an offense and to impose penalties, if any, or remedial actions for such violations.

v. The appropriate grievance subcommittee will provide notification of its decision as follows:

a. Within ten (10) days of the rendering of the decision, the appropriate grievance committee or subcommittee shall serve a copy of the decision on all parties to the grievance. The decision shall be provided either electronically by email, overnight mail or certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision shall include the rationale for the decision, will indicate the parties right to an appeal, and will refer the party to the appropriate site that explains the requirements for bringing an appeal.

b. In the event that a decision of the appropriate grievance subcommittee imposes probation or suspension, written notification shall be emailed or mailed to the appropriate party/s within ten (10) days of the date of the decision.

c. The appropriate grievance subcommittee Chairperson may, at their discretion, notify any appropriate party of their decision.

#### D. Types of Violations

i. Minor violations by a member or his/her player associate include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Use of profanity or obscene gestures;

b. Ball or equipment abuse;

c. Continuous or disruptive screaming or shouting;

d. Extended or impolite arguing with tournament officials, umpires and/or directors;

e. Spectator interference by relatives, coaches or friends of a player;

f. Unauthorized coaching;

g. Intimidation;

h. Intentional failure to compete to player's best ability (e.g., tanking);

i. Stalling or gamesmanship of any form;

j. Any conduct employed to gain an unfair advantage, including any unsportsmanlike conduct;

k. Defaulting a match in any sanctioned tournament without notification and/or substantial justification;

l. Entering two or more tournaments, matches or exhibitions scheduled to take place at the same time, in whole or in part, unless each tournament director involved consents in writing or the regulations state otherwise. Failure to comply will result in the player being assessed suspension points.

ii. Major violations by a member or his/her player associate include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Intentionally striking, threatening, or abusing in anyway any tournament official, player, spectator, or director;

b. Knowingly falsifying or forging information on any official USTA or USTA Eastern document, or on any written document filed to the USTA or USTA Eastern;

c. Committing multiple or repeated minor offenses after receiving warnings for such conduct, or after imposition of or in violation of prior disciplinary action;

d. Any conduct deemed detrimental to USTA Eastern and/or USTA.

## E. Penalties

i. Minor Offenses

a. First violation: verbal or written reprimand;

b. Second violation: placement on probation with appropriate terms and conditions;

c. Third and subsequent violations: placement on suspension Note: In circumstances that are deemed to be particularly flagrant, a single violation of the above "minor" offenses may constitute "aggravated" behavior and as such, shall result in the party at fault being placed on probation or suspension in appropriate grievance subcommittee or the Committee' sole and absolute discretion. In addition, while an investigation is being conducted or an appeal is in process, the party at fault may also be placed on probation or suspension in circumstances that are deemed to be particularly flagrant.

ii. Major Offenses

a. First violation: placement on probation with appropriate terms and conditions and/or suspension for a length determined by the appropriate grievance subcommittee or the Committee;

b. Second violation: placement on suspension for a length determined by appropriate grievance subcommittee or the Committee;

c. Third and subsequent violations: These violations will be dealt with in a severe manner, including possible permanent suspension.

## F. Appeals of Grievance Decision

- i. An appeal of any decision by the Committee or appropriate grievance subcommittee may be filed only if that decision results in the probation or suspension of a member or his/her Player Associate.
- ii. A party filing an appeal shall do so in writing within fifteen (15) days after the service of a written notice of decision by the appropriate grievance subcommittee. Such appeal shall be directed to USTA Eastern, 70 W Red Oak Lane, West Harrison, New York 10604 or emailed to [grievance@eastern.usta.com](mailto:grievance@eastern.usta.com). It shall be the responsibility of the appealing party to set forth all facts and arguments establishing the basis for the appeal. Failure to comply with any procedural rule for filing an appeal may result in such appeal being dismissed.
- iii. Appeals of the grievance decision shall be decided by the Committee. The Committee shall consist of no fewer than three (3) Committee members of which no member may have been part of the initial grievance decision. The decision shall be made by a majority of the Committee ruling on the grievance within thirty (30) days from the date the grievance is received. If the Committee is unable to make a decision within thirty (30) days of the filing of the grievance appeal, the Chairperson of the Committee may grant a fifteen (15) day extension. No further extensions may be granted.
- iv. The Committee shall not be required to hold any hearing prior to making any decision or taking any action upon such decision.
- v. The Committee shall have the absolute discretion to affirm, modify or remand the decision of the appropriate grievance subcommittee and to impose additional or less penalties, if any, or remedial actions for such violations.
- vi. The Committee will provide notification of its decision as follows:
  - a. The appealing parties shall be notified of the decision of the Committee within fifteen (15) days after a decision has been made.
  - b. In the event that a decision of the Committee affirms, modifies or imposes probation or suspension, written notification shall be emailed or mailed to the appealing party within fifteen (15) days of the date of the decision.
  - c. The Committee may, at its discretion, notify any appropriate party of its decision.
- vii. A party filing an appeal of the committee shall do so in writing within fifteen (15) days after the service of a written notice of decision by the committee. Such appeal shall be directed to USTA Eastern, Attn. Grievance, 70 W Red Oak Lane, West Harrison, New York 10604 or emailed to [grievance@eastern.usta.com](mailto:grievance@eastern.usta.com). It shall be the responsibility of the appealing party to set forth all facts and arguments establishing the basis for the appeal. Failure to comply with any procedural rule for filing an appeal may result in such appeal being dismissed.
- viii. The Eastern Section President shall have the sole and absolute discretion to resolve all appeals decided by the committee, in a manner he/she deems appropriate. The Eastern President shall not be required to hold a hearing, but may base his/her decision entirely on the findings of the committee and/or on the facts and arguments filed in writing by the parties to the appeal. The Eastern President may, among other requests, also interview Committee members, the appellant, other witnesses, or set a hearing requiring attendance in person, by video or telephone conference of one or both parties,

and/or witnesses to the appeal. The procedures for the hearing shall be set in advance by the Eastern President. The Eastern President may designate members of the USTA Eastern Board members to participate in his/her decision. The Eastern President shall have the power to affirm or modify the decision of the committee. If the Eastern President affirms the decision of the committee that decision shall be final and binding. If the Eastern President wishes to modify the decision of the committee such recommendation shall be presented to the USTA Eastern Board at a duly scheduled USTA Eastern Board meeting where a quorum is present. A simple majority decision of the USTA Eastern Board will decide the grievance. The decision of the USTA Eastern Board shall be final and binding. A copy of the final decision shall be promptly sent to all parties involved by email or by regular mail.

ix. A complainant may appeal to the USTA National Grievance Committee if his/her suspension is for a period of six (6) months or more (See USTA Bylaw 43, Section C). This appeal is subject to the procedures of the USTA National Grievance Committee with regards to timeliness and procedure.

x. Any matter can be referred to the General Counsel by the appropriate committee, President, or Board, as applicable.

### **IX. Reciprocity**

A. It is the policy of USTA Eastern to grant reciprocity for a suspension from play imposed as a result of the grievance procedures of other USTA Sections. Upon receipt of notice by the USTA Eastern Executive Director that a player's suspension within another Section has become final (all appeals have been concluded or the time for appeal has expired), the suspension shall apply within USTA Eastern as if it had been imposed by the grievance procedures of this section.