



MISSOURI VALLEY
ST. LOUIS

USTA ST. LOUIS

Junior Tennis Guidebook



Available
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Tennis and USTA

Why Tennis?

Tennis is one of the most popular sports worldwide, with millions playing every year. One of the advantages of playing tennis is that it can be played for a lifetime.

From junior tennis players who are just getting the hang of it to those competing at the highest levels, the USTA provides play formats and programs to give kids the best opportunities to succeed and keep playing tennis.

Through the USTA's American Development Model (ADM) framework, junior tennis players can learn to compete according to their age and ability, building self-confidence and having fun.

What is USTA and How is it Organized?

The United States Tennis Association (USTA) is the national governing body for the sport of tennis and the recognized leader in promoting and developing the sport's growth on every level in the U.S. from local communities to the crown jewel of the professional game: the US Open.

The USTA is organized into 17 geographical sections, and those sections are further divided into regions or districts.

The USTA Missouri Valley Section encompasses the five-state region of Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma, and is further divided into 7 districts. The districts include the 5 states plus 2 metro areas - St. Louis and Kansas City ("Heart of America").

The USTA St. Louis District serves the St. Louis metro area including 10 surrounding counties (Franklin, Jefferson, Lincoln, Perry, St. Charles, St. Francois, St. Genevieve, St. Louis, Warren and Washington), the City of St. Louis, and Illinois within a 30-mile radius of St. Louis City Hall.

Getting Started

Creating a Free Junior Player USTA Account

Your child will need a USTA junior membership account in order to register for programs like Junior Team Tennis or a sanctioned Junior Tournament. Visit this [link](#)* to join USTA and create a free Junior Membership Account.

* <https://www.usta.com/en/home/myaccount/create-child-account.html>

Find Tennis Providers and Programs in St. Louis

You can search for providers and programs online [here](#)** or reach out to USTA St. Louis for more information and guidance. Visit our website at www.ustastlouis.com or call us at 314-432-3990.

** <https://www.usta.com/en/home/play/play-tennis-near-me.html>

USTA Net Generation

What is Net Generation?

The USTA has created a youth brand called Net Generation - a celebration of a game where no one sits on the sidelines. Tennis is easy to learn and tailored for all ages and abilities, giving kids a game that will help them build friendships and learn skills they will use for life.

Net Generation PlayTracker

The Net Generation PlayTracker is for players aged 5-10 and their parents to track progress at USTA competitive events, all in one place. Using the ADM framework, players and parents will learn more about the recommended development pathway and earn digital incentives along the way.

10 and Under (10U) players and their parents can access their PlayTracker points within their usta.com account profile underneath the Family tab. Here, you will see a player's current competition ball color and total points at each competitive level. Players will collect points after playing in USTA Team Challenges, USTA Junior Team Tennis, and USTA Junior Circuits.

Visit <http://netgeneration.com/playtracker> for more information.

The Junior Pathway

Tennis grows with the player, with a wide array of racquets, balls and courts to match a player's level of play and athleticism.

Players must be at least 5 years old to play in a USTA competitive program (USTA Team Challenge, USTA Junior Team Tennis, USTA Junior Circuit, USTA Junior Tournament) and will graduate from the Net Generation PlayTracker at the age of 11, on the first day of their birthday month.

Ball level by color information and age recommendations:

RED BALL: Players aged 5-7

Red level tennis is named for the red foam or felt balls used at this stage. Red balls bounce lower and move more slowly through the air, giving beginning players a chance to set up and take a good swing at the ball. Courts are 36' x 18' with a 2' x 9' net. Players must use a racket that is no longer than 23 inches.

ORANGE BALL: Players aged 7-9

Once comfortable at the Red level, players graduate to the Orange level. Orange felt balls bounce higher and move faster than Red balls but lower and slower than green balls (see next level). Orange balls are a step toward the traditional yellow ball while remaining fun and manageable for players learning the game. Courts are 60' x 21' for singles and 60' x 27' for doubles. The net is 3' at the center and 3.5' at the net posts. Players must use a racket that is no longer than 25 inches.

GREEN BALL: Players aged 9-11

The Green level uses a green ball that is very similar to the traditional yellow ball but with a slightly lower compression so it rebounds lower off the court after a bounce. The Green level court is the same dimension as the Yellow level court: 78' x 27' for singles and 78' x 36' for doubles. The net is 3' at the center and 3.5' at the net posts. Players must use a racket that is no longer than 27 inches.

YELLOW BALL: Players aged 12 and Above

The Yellow level is what most people know as traditional tennis. The balls, courts and racquets at this level are used in most adult matches and at the professional level. The court size is: 78' x 27' for singles and 78' x 36' for doubles. The net is 3' at the center and 3.5' at the net posts. Players may use a standard racket, which can be no longer than 29 inches.

PlayTracker/Youth Progression

Players earn '**play points**' from USTA Team Challenges and USTA Junior Team Tennis, and '**win points**' from USTA Junior Team Tennis and USTA Junior Circuits for Orange Ball and Green Ball.

Players aged 7-8 with 1,000 '**play points**' in Orange ball are eligible for Green ball. A coach assessment is available for players who have the skills to advance to Green ball before the age of 9.

All Green ball players are required to meet 1,500 points to play in Yellow ball events. At least 1,000 of these must come from '**win points**'; as '**play points**' are capped at 500. At age 11 players will age out of the PlayTracker/Youth Progression model.

A parent/legal guardian is required to watch a short educational video before the player participates in a Net Generation program for the first time at each of the different ball color levels. These videos are accessible through the PlayTracker app.

Visit <http://netgeneration.com/playtracker> for more information.

USTA Junior Pathway



USTA Team Challenge

A fun, low-pressure, introduction to tennis competition

- Focus on character
- Level-based play
- De-emphasize results
- Short duration (1-2 hours)



USTA Junior Team Tennis

Local co-ed, team-based match play in singles, doubles and mixed

- Gain match experience
- Develop your match skills
- Focus on team results
- Flexible duration (4-8 wks)



USTA Junior Circuit Events

Perfect introduction to tournament play; non-elimination round robins

- Competitive environment
- Advance your skills
- Singles/doubles by age lvl
- Up to 1/2 day (2-4 hrs)



USTA Junior Tournaments

Competitive nationwide tournament structure by age/gender/level

- Standardized point system
- Showcase your skills
- Focus on ranking points
- L7 (1 day) to L1 (4+ days)



USTA Team Challenge

What is USTA Team Challenge?

USTA Team Challenge is your first step into tennis competition. Team Challenges offer a low-pressure team environment for beginner junior tennis players of all ages to develop their skills with others of similar experience. These events are not focused on winning and losing, and instead focus on positive teamwork.

Each event is approximately 60-90 minutes long. Players can sign up for a single-day event or a series of up to 6 events. Many local providers offer programs similar to the Team Challenge model. Contact us at 314-432-3990 for assistance finding programs.

Who Can Play in a Team Challenge?

Before playing in your first Team Challenge and beginning your tennis competition journey, players are expected to know some of the basics like bouncing and hitting the ball over the net. Once at a Team Challenge, you will learn how to hit and return the ball to a partner.

How Many Play Points can be Earned?

Players will earn 100 '*play points*' in Orange or Green Ball for participation in a Team Challenge event or series.

How do I find a Junior Team Challenge Event?

Look to see if any programs are scheduled near you or ask your local tennis facility when they will be hosting their next USTA Team Challenge.

Visit <https://playtennis.usta.com/Programming> to find USTA Team Challenges Near You.

USTA Junior Team Tennis

What is Junior Team Tennis?

USTA Junior Team Tennis, or “JTT”, brings together boys and girls, ages 5 to 18, to play singles, doubles and mixed doubles competing with other coed and/or boys and girls teams. USTA Junior Team Tennis is a competitive, level-based environment that promotes individual growth, social development and life skills.

The team concept emphasizes fun, fitness and friendship. The focus is on enjoying the exhilaration of exercise while refining the skills that make tennis fun for players of all ages and skill levels. All participants get the chance to play on a team, practice with friends and compete in matches together.

Who Can Play Junior Team Tennis?

USTA Junior Team Tennis teams offer options for players ages 5 to 18. Players who start on a JTT team are expected to be able to serve, maintain a rally and know how to keep score.

How Many Play Points/Win Points can be Earned?

Players will earn 100 '**play points**' in the PlayTracker for participation on a Junior Team Tennis team or in USTA Junior Circuit event. Players will earn '**win points**' for winning singles matches (100 points) and doubles matches (50 points) for Green ball only. PlayTracker: <http://netgeneration.com/playtracker>.

How do I find a Junior Team Tennis Team?

USTA offers JTT during both the indoor and outdoor seasons. For our current offerings visit (<https://tinyurl.com/ustastlitt>). In addition to local play, teams can also participate in a Section Championship Qualifier.

Contact us at itt@ustastl.com to find a team today!

USTA St. Louis JTT Guidelines and Regulations

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/ustastl-jtt-rules> for our complete district JTT Guidelines and Regulations.

USTA St. Louis JTT Local League Expectations

1. Teams shall be knowledgeable of the league rules and regulations and adhere to them.
2. The coach/team manager is responsible for holding their players accountable to play and act in accordance with the Rules of Tennis and The Code as outlined in the [Friend At Court](#).
3. Coaches, players and spectators are expected to display good sportsmanship and treat all players, coaches, and others in attendance with respect at every match.
4. USTA St. Louis expects the local league match environment to be free of drugs, tobacco and alcohol.
5. Teams must register ALL players participating in local league matches on TennisLink prior to their first match.
6. Once a team registers in TennisLink and commits to a local league schedule, they are expected to honor that commitment and bring at least 4 players to every scheduled match.
7. If a team is unable to field enough players for a team match, they shall notify the opposing coach at least 48 hours prior.
8. Teams shall attempt to reschedule all local league matches that could not be played on the original date.
9. Coaches, players, and parents are expected to express any concerns through the proper channels in a dignified manner.
10. Good sportsmanship from players, managers, parents and spectators is required at all times—both on and off the courts. Interference by parents or spectators is strictly prohibited.

USTA St. Louis JTT Code of Conduct

The highest level of sportsmanship is expected from every player, coach, and parent.

Players Code of Conduct

One of the responsibilities of playing tennis, and what makes our game so great, is the spirit of fair play. Promise to always play by the rules, to make every call honestly and to the best of your ability, and always give your opponent the benefit of the doubt.

- Appreciate that sportsmanship lies at the heart of our game and know your behavior during the match is a true reflection of that. Whether the match ends with your victory or defeat, promise to conduct yourself in a way that honors your opponents, your team, those who support you, and the game.
- Once you have registered for a JTT team, honor your commitment to play.
- Support and encourage your teammates.
- Respect your coaches and listen to their instructions.
- Put forth a full and honest effort regardless of the score or expected outcome.
- Maintain control over your emotions and behavior throughout the match. If you begin to lose your composure during play, try the following:
 - Take several deep breaths, exhale as slowly as possible, and feel your muscles relax.
 - Concentrate on your own game and behavior while ignoring distractions from your opponent or surroundings.
 - Be your own best friend—enjoy your good shots and forget the poor ones.
- If you have any doubt as to whether a ball is out or good, you must give your opponent the benefit of the doubt and play the ball as good.

- If you call a ball out and then realize it was good, you should correct your call.
- Do not stall, sulk, complain or practice gamesmanship.
- Shake hands (or tap rackets) with your opponent at the end of the match and congratulate them.

Parents Code of Conduct

Spectators—including parents, friends and team managers—are welcome to watch and enjoy matches. Your role, however, is clearly restricted to that of a passive observer with no involvement of any kind during the match.

- Do not try to assist in making line calls.
- Do not compare your child to their teammates or opponents.
- Maintain neutral body language – do not show frustration or disappointment – your child will notice!
- After a match, avoid critiquing your child's play. Ask them these questions instead:
 - Did you compete your hardest?
 - Did you represent yourself and your family well?
 - Did you have FUN?!!!
- Tell your child that you love to watch them play!

Coaches Code of Conduct

- Adhere to the 90 second time limit on coaching.
- Ensure equal playing time for your players.
- Teach, encourage, and support good sportsmanship.
Do not approach opposing players or parents about joining your team or club program at any time (not before, during, or after the match). If a parent or player approaches you, refer the parent or player to your website. At no time should you exchange numbers or emails while on the premises.

USTA Junior Circuit

What is USTA Junior Circuit?

The USTA Junior Circuit is an important transition point in the Net Generation Pathway. Orange, Green, and Yellow Ball players with different skill levels, experience and goals are in the process of determining a direction to take in the game, whether it be for recreation or higher levels of competition.

The USTA Junior Circuit is a district sanctioned, non-ranked event, offering non-elimination competition by playing matches against other juniors of similar ability. Players gain match experience in a tournament setting and see their individual results while learning and demonstrating good sportsmanship.

Who Can Play USTA Junior Circuit?

- Open to all eligible* players across all USTA sections
- Orange, Green and Yellow Ball players that are beginner-intermediate players and are new to USTA tournament play
- Players that compete in USTA Junior Tournaments (L1-L7) should not be playing USTA Junior Circuits

Players are recommended to play in either a USTA Team Challenge or on a USTA Junior Team Tennis team before participating in a USTA Junior Circuit. Players are expected to be able to serve, maintain a rally and know how to keep score plus have some competitive tennis experience.

* For full eligibility information please refer to Part 3; Section 1; Item G (and Table 4) in [Friend at Court](https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC) (<https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC>) which is the USTA Handbook of Rules and Regulations.

How Do I Find and Register for Junior Circuit Events?

Please refer to [Page 17](#) in this guide for instructions on finding and registering for junior circuits and junior tournaments.

USTA St. Louis Junior Circuit Format and Regulations

A USTA Junior Circuit is designed to be delivered as a single event, up to a half-day, with the objective of providing a competitive environment guaranteeing individual match play. Duration of events should last no more than one continuous block of four hours for each player.

PlayTracker points earned are the same as JTT ([see Page 8](#)). USTA Junior Circuits do not count towards earning national ranking points (see USTA Junior Tournaments on [Page 16](#)).

A USTA Junior Circuit can be played with orange, green or yellow balls. Court monitors will assist players in Orange Ball events, as needed; and Green/Yellow Ball events as time allows. Players enter a USTA Junior Circuit event based on ball color/age and must follow racket length limits (see [Pages 4/5](#)).

- 10* and Under (10U) will play co-ed Orange Ball
- 12 and Under (12U) will play gender-based or co-ed Green Ball
- 14 and Under (14U); 16 and Under (16U); 18 and Under (18U) will play gender-based or co-ed Yellow Ball

**Players aged 10 and under must play Orange 10U, Green 10U or Green 12U events to count in the Net Generation PlayTracker.*

NO LATE ENTRIES are permitted unless the Tournament Director has an incomplete draw and opts to allow late entry. Players must play in the ball color they have achieved (or lower) as determined by the Net Generation PlayTracker, and within any age division as long as they do not exceed the age limit.

Selection into a USTA St. Louis Junior Circuit is based on time of entry (first entered-first in). Maximum draw size is 16 players in singles and 8 teams in doubles. Players are grouped into flights to facilitate level-based play. Ratings are the most effective tool to group players by ability. When ratings are not available, players may be grouped based on the number of Net Generation

PlayTracker points or a visual evaluation. Consideration may also be given to a player's age, physical maturity, etc.

Players are **EXPECTED to arrive on time and complete all matches** out of respect for their opponents and the tournament.

Players are grouped in Round Robin brackets of 3, 4 or 5 players. Round Robin brackets of 4 players are the ideal group size. A Tournament Director may ask a player (if eligible) if they would like to change events after registrations close with the intent to facilitate better draw sizes and schedules for all players.

Draw Size	Sample Draw Breakdown
0-2	Draw merged with other gender to create a co-ed draw (<i>when possible</i>)
3-5	One Round Robin bracket
6-7	Two Round Robin brackets with Playoff (<i>4th place finisher in 4-draw pool will not participate in Playoff</i>)
8-10	Two Round Robin brackets with no Playoff (<i>there will be two 1st place finishers</i>)
11-15	Three Round Robin brackets with no Playoff (<i>there will be three 1st place finishers</i>)
16	Four Round Robin brackets with no Playoff (<i>there will be four 1st place finishers</i>)

Scoring Formats – No Ad Scoring is recommended for all formats:

- One short set to 4 games (no tiebreak is played; one game is played at 3 games all to determine winner)
- One 6-game set (no tiebreak is played; one game is played at 5 games all to determine winner)
- Best 2 of 3 short sets (one game is played at 3-games all to determine set winner); 7-point Match Tiebreak is played at 1-set all to determine match winner
- Timed Match of any length determined by the Junior Circuit Tournament Director using the Point or Game format

See [USTA Net Generation Pathway Regulations](#) for more details.

USTA St. Louis Junior Circuit Player Oath

Please refer to SPORTSMANSHIP section starting on [Page 29](#).

USTA St. Louis Junior Circuit Parent Oath

I confirm my child is ready to play USTA Junior Circuit. This means my child can serve, maintain a rally, knows how to keep score and has some competitive tennis experience (either through USTA Team Challenge, USTA Junior Team Tennis, or other avenues).

- I acknowledge that my role is clearly restricted to that of a passive observer with no involvement of any kind during the match. I will not try to assist in making line calls or keeping score. I will allow the players to work out on-court disputes.**
- I will maintain neutral body language and will not show frustration or disappointment while watching my child play.**
- I will treat everyone involved in this tournament – Officials, Coaches, Players, Tournament Staff, Fellow Parents – with the utmost respect.**
- I will set a positive example.**
- I will emphasize the importance of fair play and good sportsmanship.**
- I will cheer respectfully for winners and good points, not errors and double faults.**
- I will not compare my child to their opponent or friends.**
- After a match, I will avoid critiquing my child's play. Instead, I will ask them these questions:**
 - Did you compete your hardest?**
 - Did you represent yourself and your family well?**
 - Did you have FUN!!!!**
- I will tell my child that I love to watch them play!**

USTA Junior Tournaments

What are USTA Junior Tournaments?

After players have achieved consistent success in USTA Junior Circuit events, they may want to explore USTA Junior Tournaments. We strongly recommend beginning with Level 7 tournaments, an intermediate level competitive tournament that guarantees multiple matches in a short period of time.

There are seven levels of sanctioned USTA Junior Tournaments -- Level 7 (Intermediate) to Level 1 (Advanced) -- and a universal ranking system that distributes points consistently across the country based on a player's progression in a tournament.

Who Can Play USTA Junior Tournaments?

- Open to all eligible Green and Yellow Ball players across all USTA sections*, except CLOSED tournaments restricted to specific regions, sections or districts.
- Players that compete in USTA Junior Tournaments (L1-L7) should not be playing USTA Junior Circuits

Intermediate players who are ready to earn ranking points**, can start by playing in Level 7 (L7) and then Level 6 (L6) USTA St. Louis district events. A player should only advance to the next level if they are consistently winning more matches than they are losing.

As a player progresses, they can play [L5 to L3 USTA Missouri Valley section events](#). Ultimately players can advance to L2 through L1 USTA National Championship events.

* For full eligibility information please refer to Part 3; Section 1; Item G (and Table 4) in [Friend at Court](#) (<https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC>) which is the USTA Handbook of Rules and Regulations.

** Click [here](#) for information about the USTA National Junior Ranking system. Click [here for points tables and FAQs](#).

How Do I Find and Register for Tournaments?

All available USTA Tournaments, including Junior Circuits, are listed on <https://www.usta.com>. Hover over the **PLAY TENNIS** tab and click on **FIND TOURNAMENTS** or navigate directly to <https://playtennis.usta.com/tournaments>.



On the Tournaments tab, you can search by Keyword or USTA Section/District. You can also search by location (enter a city, state or zip code). You can use the filters on the left-hand side to further refine your search by distance, status, gender, age range, event type, court location, and court surface.

A screenshot of the USTA Tournament search filters page. At the top, there are two search boxes: "Search by Keyword" and "Search by USTA Section/District". Below these are dropdown menus for "Player category" (Junior (18 and under)), "Section" (Missouri Valley), "District" (St. Louis), and "Date period" (Today - Dec 31 2024). A "SEARCH" button is to the right. The main area is titled "FILTER BY:" and contains several filter sections: "Distance" (set to "Within 100 miles"), "Tournament status" (checkboxes for Registrations open, Registrations closed, In progress, Completed, Canceled), "Level" (checkboxes for Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 Open, Level 3 Closed, Level 4 Open, Level 4 Closed, Level 5 Open, Level 5 Closed, Level 6, Level 7, USTA Junior Circuit, Unsanctioned, WTN Tournament), "Gender" (checkboxes for Boys, Girls, Coed, Mixed), "Age range" (checkboxes for Open, 8 and under (8U), 10 and under (10U), 12 and under (12U), 14 and under (14U), 16 and under (16U), 18 and under (18U)), "Court location" (checkboxes for Indoor, Outdoor), and "Court surface" (checkboxes for Hard, Green Clay, Red Clay, Grass).

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/JrTournamentRegistration> for a complete guide on registering your child for a tournament, including finding a doubles partner.

Ranked Tournaments Comparison

USTA

Level 7		Level 6		Level 5		Level 4		Level 3		Level 2		Level 1 Gold Ball		
Event Duration	Up to 1 day	Up to 2 days*	Up to 3 days	Section/District	Section/District	Section	Up to 4 days	Section/National	3+ days	National	3+ days	National	4+ days	
Geographic Level	Section/District	Section/District	Section/District	Section/District	Section/District	Section	Section	Section/National	Section/National	National	National	National	National	
Recommended Skill Level	Intermediate		National Championships		National Championships		National Championships		National Championships		National Championships		National Championships	
Ball Colors	• 2	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Draw Formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round robin Round robin with playoff Compass draw Team format 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round robin Round robin with playoff Compass draw Team format 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round robin Round robin with playoff Compass draw Team format 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round robin Round robin with playoff Compass draw Team format 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round robin Round robin with playoff Compass draw Team format 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Round robin Round robin with playoff Compass draw Team format 			
Scoring Formats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single short set (first to 4 games) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Single set tiebreak Timed matches Best 2 of 3, 10-point tiebreak games Single set tiebreak Best 2 of 3, 10-point tiebreak games Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best 2 of 3 sets (3rd set is 10-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 sets (3rd set is 10-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best 2 of 3 sets (3rd set is 10-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 sets (3rd set is 10-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best 2 of 3 sets (3rd set is 10-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 sets (3rd set is 10-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) Best 2 of 3 short sets (3rd set is 7-point tiebreak) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 8 game pro-set (doubles only) 8 game pro-set (doubles only) Single set tiebreak Single set tiebreak 							

* A Level 6 event may last up to 3 days based on court availability and section discretion

** Sections have the option for green ball play for 12s divisions only

Note: Not all L7 and L6 scoring formats noted in this table may be offered in the USTA Missouri Valley section and its districts.

Tournament Pathway Skills

Level 7 District Tournaments	This player is learning to judge where the oncoming ball is going and how much swing is needed to return it consistently. Movement to the ball and recovery are often not efficient. Can sustain backcourt rally of slow pace with players of similar ability and is beginning to develop strokes. Becoming more familiar with basic positions for singles and doubles, and is ready to play social matches, leagues and low-level tournaments. Ability to keep score independently.
Level 6 District Tournaments	This player is fairly consistent when hitting medium-paced shots but is not comfortable with all strokes and lacks accuracy when trying for directional control, depth, pace or altering distance of shots. More comfortable at the net, has improved court awareness, and is developing teamwork in doubles. Players at this level may start to utilize mental skills related to concentration, tactics and strategy.
Level 5 Section Tournaments	This player can vary the use of pace and spins, has effective court coverage, can control depth of shots, and is able to develop game plans according to strengths and weakness. Can hit first serve with power and accuracy and place second serve. Good shot anticipation and frequently has an outstanding shot or attribute around which a game can be structured. Can regularly hit winners or force errors off of short balls and puts away volleys. Tends to overhit on difficult shots. Aggressive net play is common in doubles.
Level 4 Section Tournaments	This player has developed use of power and spin and can handle pace. Sound footwork, can control depth of shots, and attempt to vary game plan according to opponents. Can hit first serve with power and accuracy and place second serve. Tends to over hit on difficult shots. Aggressive net play is common in doubles.
Level 3 Section Tournaments	This player has good shot anticipation and frequently has an outstanding shot or attribute around which a game may be structured. Can regularly hit winners or force errors off of short balls and can put away volleys. Can successfully execute lobs, drop shots, half volleys, overheads and have good depth and spin on most second serves.
Level 2 Level 1 National Tournaments	This player has mastered power and/or consistency as a major weapon. Can vary strategies and styles of play in a competitive situation and can hit dependable shots in a stress situation.

USTA St. Louis Level 7 (L7) Format and Regulations

A USTA L7 is a district sanctioned, non-elimination, one day event for emerging intermediate tournament players. The objective is to provide a competitive environment guaranteeing individual match play.

- Divisions: Boys and Girls 18U, 16U, 14U, 12U; no co-ed draws
- Ball Color: Yellow (18U, 16U, 14U, 12U); Green (12U)
- Maximum Draw Size: 16 players in singles, 8 teams in doubles; unless a larger draw is possible and/or dictated by the tournament; 2 match minimum; 4 match maximum
- Selection: Bottom Up using the National Standings List (NSL); if more than 16 players have no ranking points, players will be selected based on time of entry (first entered-first in).
- **NO LATE ENTRIES** are allowed
- Seeding: Player WTN* will be used to group players; high confidence WTN ratings will be grouped first, followed by medium confidence and then low confidence

Players are grouped in Round Robin brackets of 3, 4 or 5 players. Round Robin brackets of 4 players are the ideal group size. A Tournament Director may ask a player (if eligible) if they would like to change events after registrations close with the intent to facilitate better draw sizes and schedules for all players. Doubles is single elimination unless it is a doubles-only tournament.

** WTN stands for ITF World Tennis Number, a globally recognized rating system for tennis players. The WTN is a scale from 40 to 1, with 40 representing a beginner and 1 representing an elite professional. It's used in over 170 countries, including the U.S., and is for all players, regardless of age, gender or ability. Players have a separate WTN for both singles and doubles. For more information visit <https://worldtennisnumber.com/>.*

Draw Size	Sample Draw Breakdown
0-2	Draw cancelled or merged with other age group
3-5	One Round Robin bracket
6-7	Two Round Robin brackets with Playoff (<i>4th place finisher in 4-draw pool will not participate in Playoff</i>)
8-10	Two Round Robin brackets with no Playoff (<i>there will be two 1st place finishers</i>)
11-13	Three Round Robin brackets with no Playoff (<i>there will be three 1st place finishers</i>)
14-16	Four Round Robin brackets with no Playoff (<i>there will be four 1st place finishers</i>)

Scoring Formats – No Ad Scoring is at the discretion of the Tournament Director for all formats:

- One short set (first to 4 games); 7-point tiebreak at 4-games all
- One set (first to 6 games); 7-point tiebreak at 6-games all
- Best 2 of 3 short sets (7-point Match Tiebreak at 1-set all)

Rules/Regulations

Court monitors and/or officials (when available) will assist players as needed.

Play is governed by [Friend at Court](https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC) (<https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC>) which is the USTA Handbook of Rules and Regulations.

Please also refer to the [USTA ST. LOUIS JUNIOR TOURNAMENT POLICIES](#) in this guidebook starting on [Page 24](#).

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

When a player is late in arriving for the player's scheduled match time and any court is available, the player is subject to Penalties for Lateness [Table 16 \(Penalties for Lateness\) in Friend at Court](#)

Players are subject to the Suspension Point system. Please refer to [Tables 14-17 \(Point Penalty System\) in Friend at Court](#).

USTA St. Louis Level 6 (L6) Format and Regulations

A USTA L6 is a district sanctioned, two-to-three-day event for intermediate tournament players. The objective is to provide a competitive environment guaranteeing individual match play.

- Divisions: Boys and Girls 18U, 16U, 14U, 12U; no co-ed draws
- Ball Color: Yellow (18U, 16U, 14U, 12U)
- Maximum Draw Size: 16 players in singles, 8 teams in doubles; 2 match minimum; 4 match maximum
- Selection: Hybrid -- first 12 by NSL (top down) and next 4 by WTN (see [Page 20](#)) (high confidence first, followed by medium confidence and then low confidence); if less than 16 players have ranking points or a WTN, remaining players will be selected based on time of entry (first entered-first in)
- **NO LATE ENTRIES** are allowed
- Seeding: Player WTN will be used to seed players (in confidence order as noted above in selection process)

Players are grouped in Round Robin brackets for divisions with 3-5 players, and a Feed-In Championship bracket for 6-16 players. A Tournament Director may ask a player (if eligible) if they would like to change events after registrations close with the intent to facilitate better draw sizes and schedules for all players. Doubles is single elimination unless it is a doubles-only tournament.

Draw Size	Sample Draw Breakdown
0-2	Draw cancelled or merged with other age group
3-5	One Round Robin bracket
6-12	Feed in Championships through Quarter Finals (QF) with 3rd/4th Playoff. Consolation Final TBD*.
13-16	Feed-in Championships through QF with 3rd/4th Playoff. Consolation Final will not be played.

**USTA national regulations only count 4 matches towards the player's ranking in an L6 tournament. Thus, a draw with 6-12 players can create a fifth match in the consolation finals. If this occurs, the player may play the match with the understanding it will NOT count towards his/her ranking. The player also has the option of not playing the match without penalty. Note: Byes do not count as a match.*

Scoring Formats – No Ad Scoring is at the discretion of the Tournament Director for all formats:

- Singles Main
 - Best 2 of 3 sets (10-point Match Tiebreak at 1-set all)
 - Best 2 of 3 short sets (7-point Match Tiebreak at 1-set all)
- Singles Consolation
 - Best 2 of 3 short sets (7-point Match Tiebreak at 1-set all)
 - 8 game pro-set (7-point tiebreak at 8-games all)
- Doubles (in Singles and Doubles Tournaments)
 - 8 game pro-set (7-point tiebreak at 8-games all)
- Doubles-Only Tournaments
 - Best 2 of 3 10-point tiebreak sets
 - Best 2 of 3 sets (10-point Match Tiebreak at 1-set all)
 - Best 2 of 3 short sets (7-point Match Tiebreak at 1-set all)
 - 8 game pro-set (7-point tiebreak at 8-games all)

Rules/Regulations

Court monitors and/or officials (when available) will assist players as needed.

Play is governed by [Friend at Court](https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC) (<https://tinyurl.com/USTA-FAC>) which is the USTA Handbook of Rules and Regulations.

Please also refer to the [USTA ST. LOUIS JUNIOR TOURNAMENT POLICIES](#) in this guidebook starting on [Page 24](#).

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

When a player is late in arriving for the player's scheduled match time and any court is available, the player is subject to Penalties for Lateness [Table 16 \(Penalties for Lateness\) in Friend at Court](#)

Players are subject to the Suspension Point system. Please refer to [Tables 14-17 \(Point Penalty System\) in Friend at Court](#).

USTA ST. LOUIS JUNIOR TOURNAMENT POLICIES

The USTA St. Louis rules, regulations and policies contained herein, as well as [Friend at Court](#) (the USTA Handbook of Rules and Regulations), the [USTA National Junior Tournament Regulations](#) and the [USTA Missouri Valley Junior Tournament Regulations](#) are in effect at all USTA St. Louis Junior Tournaments; and [USTA Net Generation Pathway Regulations](#) for all USTA St. Louis Junior Circuits. **It is a player's responsibility to know and understand all the rules.**

The USTA St. Louis Junior Play Committee Chair, USTA St. Louis Board Vice President of Juniors, and USTA St. Louis Junior Coordinator make up the USTA St. Louis Junior District Tournaments Committee.

This committee has the discretion to modify USTA St. Louis Junior Tournament Regulations for a USTA St. Louis Junior District Tournament. Examples of situations in which the Committee might exercise its discretion include but are not limited to: correcting administrative errors; change of tournament venue; adjusting for changes adopted by the USTA.

Registration

- **NO CONCURRENT REGISTRATION:** Do not sign up for concurrent tournaments unless written approval is granted by both tournament directors. This is a violation of the [Friend of Court \(Table 17 Point Penalty System\)](#) rules and regulations – suspension points may apply.
- **NO LATE ENTRIES ALLOWED:** Online application for entry is required for each tournament. The application must be completed before the entry deadline. If you have problems registering, contact the Tournament Director via phone or

email before the entry deadline. If you reach voicemail, leave a message so the Tournament Director can verify your call was received before the entry deadline. Do not wait until the last minute to register.

- **MAXIMUM EVENTS:** A player may play in only one singles and one doubles division per tournament (when allowed by the Tournament Director); and must play in the same age division for both, unless the doubles division does not fill (less than 3 teams) and the Tournament Director grants permission to move to an older age group for doubles.
- **NO REFUNDS:** No refunds after registration closes if a player withdraws from the tournament. It is considered a withdrawal when it occurs after the entry deadline but before playing the first match because of injury, illness, personal circumstance (which includes a personal emergency), or an administrative error made by the tournament.
- **WITHDRAWING:** A player who withdraws from a tournament shall immediately notify the Tournament Director of the reason for withdrawing. The Tournament Director shall notify the USTA St. Louis Junior Coordinator of all players who withdraw after the draw has been made. Players may be required to submit verification of the reason (doctor's note, written description, or other relevant information) before the last scheduled day of the tournament.
- **ALTERNATE LIST:** Order – 1) Current ranking on the national standing list; 2) If there are multiple players without a ranking, players will be ordered by WTN confidence level; 3) If multiple players do not have a National Standings List ranking or WTN, players will be ordered by registration date.
Selection – If there is an opening, the Tournament Director will contact the alternates, in order, and set the time limit in which the player has to respond before contacting the next player on the alternate list.

- **L7 and L6 DOUBLES REGISTRATION:** Players are selected into a USTA St. Louis L7 or L6 doubles draw based on the combined singles rankings of the team. Before the entry deadline, a team is paired in the doubles draw only after:
 - accepting an invitation to play from the other player through Serve Tennis; or
 - the Tournament Director receives confirmation from both players that they wish to be paired in the doubles draw before the deadline.
 - If both players do not confirm with the Tournament Director, the team is not accepted into the doubles draw.
 - If a player's partner no longer wishes to play doubles, the player has the responsibility to communicate with the Tournament Director and find a new partner before the entry deadline.
 - If a player is signed up for doubles and does not have a partner, the player will be placed in the blind draw unless the player withdraws from doubles prior to the entry deadline.
 - Players do not have to be in the singles draw to play doubles. If a player is not in the singles draw and wishes to play doubles, the player must still have applied for entry in the tournament and appear on the alternates list. Any player who was not selected for singles will be considered for the doubles draw only if the player informs the Tournament Director that the player still wants to play in the doubles draw.
 - If a player in the doubles draw withdraws and the player's partner still wants to play doubles, the partner may play with any other player who applied for entry in the tournament and is on the alternate list or any other player who is on the singles alternate list so long as the new team does not effect seeding. The player who seeks to play with a new partner is responsible for finding the partner and providing this information to the Tournament Director. The Tournament

Director is not required to substitute the new partner into the draw if the Tournament Director learns of the substitution less than one hour before the scheduled start of the first match in the doubles draw.

- A player must play in the same age division in singles and doubles, unless the doubles division does not fill (less than 3 teams). Only in this situation may the Tournament Director allow a doubles pair to play up in an age group, provided there are less than 8 teams already registered in that age group.

Scheduling

- **PLAYER SELECTION/SEEDING:** USTA St. Louis determines the selection process and seeding method for district tournaments, in accordance with section requirements. USTA St. Louis sanctions and administers these tournaments even though district tournaments that follow USTA St. Louis regulations are included in the USTA National Standings List.
- **INCLEMENT WEATHER:**
 - **Indoor court backup is not required** for USTA St. Louis events. If indoor courts are available players may be required to pay an additional fee, as determined by the Tournament Director.
 - The Tournament Director, after consulting with the USTA St. Louis Junior Coordinator may change the match format (for complete rounds) or cancel an event. When canceling, [USTA Regulation III.H.5.a.](#) is followed.
 - The decision to cancel a tournament will be made by the USTA St. Louis Junior Coordinator and the Tournament Director. Tournaments normally are not canceled or rescheduled based on a forecast.
 - Refunds (full, partial or none) for cancelled tournaments are at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

- **START TIMES:** USTA St. Louis Junior Tournaments will start no earlier than 8:00 am, provided that the Tournament Director may set an earlier start time if the Tournament Director determines inclement weather requires an earlier start. Tournaments will not start before 4:00 pm on Fridays during the school year. The district will follow scheduling guidelines in [USTA Regulation II.D.9.a.](#) when reasonably practical (e.g., play should not start after 8:00pm for 12/14s; and after 10:00pm for 16/18s).

Player Conduct

- **USTA SUSPENSION POINT SYSTEM:** Applies to all junior tournaments sanctioned by USTA St. Louis. It is a player's responsibility to know and understand the suspension point system and his or her status. Every effort is made to notify the player each time a suspension point is assessed. Failure to notify the player does not invalidate any penalties or points assessed. Please refer to [Tables 14-17 \(Point Penalty System\) in Friend at Court.](#)
- **PLAYING TO COMPLETION:** To play to completion means to play all the player's matches in a tournament including main draw, mandatory feed-in-championship (FIC), mandatory consolation, and mandatory place play-offs. A player will be assessed suspension points for any reason besides:
 - Retirement from a match because of injury, illness, or personal circumstance;
 - Inability to play because of injury, illness, or personal circumstance when the player's problem becomes apparent before the match or during the warm-up; or
 - Tournament administrative error.

The Tournament Director determines what constitutes a legitimate personal circumstance. The Tournament Director can require documentation as proof (e.g., doctor's note, etc.).

SPORTSMANSHIP

USTA St. Louis is committed to making all district junior tennis events a positive experience for everyone involved.

It is important that players, parents, spectators and coaches know and adhere to the rules at all times. Here are **some** reminders:

USTA Junior Player Oath

“I recognize that tennis is a sport that places the responsibility for fair play on me.

I promise to abide by the rules of the game, which require me to give the benefit of the doubt to my opponent.

At all times I shall strive to compete with the true spirit of sportsmanship, recognizing that my behavior on the court is a direct reflection of my character.

Whether my matches end with my victory or defeat, I promise to conduct myself in a way that honors my opponents, those who support me, and the game of tennis.”

Player Sportsmanship

- **Before the Match**

- Say hello to your opponent
- Introduce yourself to your opponent's family/coach
- Shake the official's hand prior to play
- Be ready to always try your best

- **During the Match**

- If you are the server, clearly call out the score before the point starts
- Wait to serve until your opponent is ready
- Always show RESPECT for your opponent, spectators, officials and tournament staff
- Give your best effort no matter what the score
- Congratulate your opponent's good shots

- Keep your racquet in your hand and avoid dropping or throwing it
- Avoid shouting in frustration, especially during your point
- Be GRACIOUS no matter the circumstances
- Act with HONESTY and INTEGRITY
- Calling shots correctly is not just considered good sportsmanship -- it is the RULE of the game; adhering to “The Code” in [Friend at Court](#) is the responsibility of all players, parents and coaches; Giving your opponent the “benefit of the doubt” or correcting a mistake you made is an example of good sportsmanship, it shows your CHARACTER and FAIRNESS toward your opponent.

- **After the Match**

- Before leaving the court, show HUMILITY in victory or DECENCY in defeat -- head to the net, look your opponent in the eye, shake hands or tap rackets and say “good match” or something else positive
- Avoid poor behavior (throwing your racquet, complaining about your opponent, or gloating after a win); win or lose, it’s important to end the match on a positive note
- Wish your opponent good luck in their future matches either in this event or upcoming tournaments

Parents, Spectators and Coaches Sportsmanship

- Introduce yourself to the opponent and their parents/family
- Be understanding and patient with new players as they learn the game
- It’s okay to celebrate a good shot, but NEVER an opponent’s forced or unforced error
- Reinforce having fun and a collaborative spirit of play
- Allow the players to make calls and talk out any disagreements with their opponent – do not interject

- If your player is doing something that should be corrected ask the tournament official or a coach about it
- Exhibit emotional control – set the example, don't be the problem
- Avoid being critical or negative about your player's performance during or after the match; later in the day, with a positive focus on having fun and getting better, talk about the match and what your player may have noticed or learned
- After the match congratulate the opponent and their family and stay positive

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Spectators have NO part in a match. Any attempt by a spectator to make a call or speak to a player, official, or tournament director regarding a line call or other ruling during match play shall be cause for immediate removal from the playing area and, if warranted, from the premises.
- Any spectator behavior deemed unacceptable towards a player, other spectator, official or staff member before, during or after any USTA Junior event shall be cause for immediate removal from the playing area and, if warranted, from the premises. Said behavior may also result in an automatic and immediate suspension of that spectator's right to attend any USTA St. Louis Junior events, for a period of time to be determined by the USTA St. Louis Grievance Committee.
- Unacceptable spectator behavior and/or refusal to adhere to a removal request shall trigger immediate enforcement of the Point Penalty System against the player with whom the spectator is involved including possible immediate default. Please refer to [Tables 14-17 \(Point Penalty System\) in Friend at Court](#).
- The onsite Official and/or Tournament Director are the SOLE judges regarding unacceptable behavior.

REMINDERS FROM THE KIDS

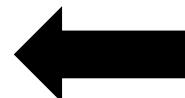
I'm a **KID**

I'm supposed to be having **FUN**
... it's just a **GAME!**

Officials, tournament directors,
spectators and my opponents
are **HUMANS**... be **NICE**

Set the **EXAMPLE**, don't be the problem

Remember, it is not my success or lack of success on the court that indicates what kind of parent you are. Being coachable, respectful, mentally tough, resilient and trying my best **IS** a direct reflection of your parenting.



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