

USTA NorCal Tournament Sanctioning Regulations



NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

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SUMMARY OF CHANGES SINCE JANUARY 1, 2023

- Submitting a Participation Waiver is now mandatory to play a USTA NorCal Sanctioned Tournament, and sanction holders are required to verify players have one on file. See Regulation 6.
- The special provisions for sanctioning Junior Level 3, 4 and 5 Tournaments now provide for an alternative process when time-sensitive decisions must be made to sanction these Tournaments. See Regulation 8.

1. Meaning of "Sanctioning". The USTA NorCal sanctioning process is intended to aid the public, the player, and the tournament organizer. It helps to assure uniformity of the rules of play; it permits the ranking of players on a basis of an accepted standard; it encourages an orderly schedule of tournaments that accommodates the reasonable needs of players, promoters, and sponsors; and it fosters the aim of providing the public with tennis of high caliber and ethical standards. Sanctioning pursuant to these USTA NorCal Tournament Sanctioning Regulations indicates that the tournament:

- Is an official USTA NorCal-approved tournament;
- Follows the applicable ITF Rules of Tennis;
- Follows the applicable USTA NorCal tournament regulations and the applicable USTA Regulations; and
- If sanctioned as a Level 1-7 Junior Tournament, a Level 1-7 Adult or Family Tournament, or as a Level 1-5 Wheelchair Tennis Tournament, results will be considered for ranking.

Notwithstanding the purposes of sanctioning, nothing prohibits any tennis promoter from holding a tournament in USTA NorCal without a sanction.

Regulation 1. Comment: Organization Members are permitted by the USTA to use the Serve Tennis platform to host non-sanctioned tournaments; however, in order for those tournaments to appear on the platform, a Sectional Association must give permission for a non-sanction tournament to be in the platform. USTA NorCal has established the following policies related to giving such permission:

- A \$50 fee will be charged, *except that* the fee will be waived for an Organization Member that is a non-profit corporation or a school.
- NorCal reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to refuse to give permission for a non-sanctioned tournament to be in the platform.

2. Definition of "Tournament". Unless otherwise stated, the term "Tournament" in these USTA NorCal Sanctioning Regulations refers to:

- A sanctioned tournament that counts for Junior, Adult, Family or Wheelchair ranking; and
- Any other tournament that is required to be sanctioned by USTA NorCal.

These Regulations do not apply to any Net Generation Program, including USTA Junior Circuit Events. See USTA NorCal Junior Circuit Event Regulations for information on sanctioning USTA Junior Circuit Events.

3. Eligible Applicants. Only the following may apply:

- Organization Members of the USTA as defined in the USTA Bylaws; and
- USTA NorCal.

4. Discrimination Not Allowed. Tournament sanctions will be awarded and sanctioned Tournaments will be conducted without regard to race, creed, color, national origin, or sexual orientation.

By submitting a sanction application, the applicant agrees that it will not discriminate against any participant based on the participant's race, creed, color, national origin, or sexual orientation. A violation of this provision may result in a refusal to issue any further sanctions for USTA Junior Circuit Events or USTA NorCal tournaments to the applicant.

5. Sanctioning Process. This process applies to all Tournaments, except those tournaments that USTA NorCal has determined, at its sole discretion, will not be put out for bid and will instead be assigned to USTA NorCal as the sanction holder.

A. Sanction Application. Only a person who is duly authorized by the applicant may submit an application. The application will be submitted on the USTA NorCal-approved sanction form to the USTA Sanction & Schedule Committee. An applicant may submit or be asked to submit other information in support of its Application.

Regulation 5.A. Comment: The USTA NorCal Application is submitted using the link below:
https://ustanorcal.formstack.com/forms/2025_tournament_sanction_application

- i. **Tournament Director Requirements & Responsibilities.** At the time of submission of the application, the person listed as Tournament Director must have a current USTA Membership and must be Safe Play Approved as set forth in the USTA NorCal Sanction Agreement. Failure to maintain Safe Play compliance will result in the removal of the Tournament Director or the revocation of the sanction.

If the tournament is sanctioned, the Tournament Director will be the person responsible, on behalf of the applicant, for all aspects of the Tournament. The Tournament Director will be the person with whom USTA NorCal will communicate regarding the Tournament, using the email address provided on the application.

It is strongly recommended that the Tournament Director be on site at the Tournament at all times during play. If the Tournament Director is not on site, that person must be accessible by telephone during all times of play, and at least one member of the Tournament Appeals Committee is on site at the Tournament at all times during play.
- ii. **One Application for Each Tournament.** Annually, one application must be submitted for each Level of Junior, Adult, Family, and Wheelchair Tournament during one date block. Tournament Levels are described in the applicable USTA NorCal Junior Tournament Regulations and/or USTA NorCal Adult, Family, and Wheelchair Rules (collectively referred to herein as "Tournament Regulations").
- iii. **Application Must Be Complete and Accurate.** It is solely the responsibility of the applicant to provide complete and accurate information on the application including, but not limited to, Tournament dates, sites, events, divisions, draw sizes, scoring formats, entry fees, and contact information, all of which must be in compliance with the applicable Tournament Regulations.
- iv. **Annual USTA NorCal Sanction Agreement.** Before consideration of a sanction application, the applicant must have submitted an annual USTA NorCal Sanction Agreement that will include, but not be limited to, terms that cover the following: Safe Play Approval; facility requirements; insurance; health and safety policies; event website posting requirement(s); conflict of interest disclosure; television, film, and radio rights; collection of participant evaluation data; notice and approval of changes to sanction; tournament cancellation, revocation and probation; indemnification; and, limitation of liability, waiver of right to sue, and arbitration.
- v. **Site Permission.** Submission of an application to use a specified number of courts controlled by applicant is an acknowledgment that those courts will be used by the Event or Tournament.
 - a. **Primary Host Site Not Controlled by Applicant.** If applicant does not control courts at the primary host site of the Tournament, applicant must submit by the application deadline a letter from the entity controlling the primary host site stating that applicant has permission to use the specified number of courts for the Tournament.
 - b. **Satellite Sites.** For any site that is not the primary host site, and that is not controlled by applicant, applicant is obligated to submit a letter from the entity(ies) controlling such site(s) stating that applicant has permission to use the specified number of courts at the site(s) for the Tournament; *however*, this is not a requirement that must be fulfilled as of the application deadline. Satellite Site permission letter(s) must be submitted by the deadline set forth in Regulation 5.F.
- vi. **Referee.**
 - a. **When USTA Certified Referee Not Required.** When the applicable Tournament Regulations do not require a USTA Certified Referee, the person named as Tournament Director will be presumed to be the person serving as Referee, unless an alternate person is named on the application or at a later time.

Regulation 5.A.vi.a. Comment: The following tournaments permit the Tournament Director to serve in the dual role as Referee:

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

- b. **When USTA Certified Referee Required.** When a USTA Certified Referee is required, it is recommended that the Referee is named in application and that written confirmation from the

Referee that he/she will be the Referee of the Tournament is received by the application deadline; *however*, this is not a requirement that must be fulfilled as of the application deadline. Written confirmation from the Referee must be submitted by the deadline set forth in Regulation 5.F.

Applicant may not submit the name of a Referee who has made a commitment to serve as Referee or a Deputy Referee) for another concurrent tournament (*except* if the person named is serving as a Deputy Referee solely for the purpose of doing the draw, scheduling, and/or doing score entry, *unless* they are held at the same site.

B. Sanction Application Deadlines.

- i. **Primary Application Period and Deadline.** Sanction applications for tournaments to be held the subsequent calendar year will be applied for between June 15 and August 15, *unless* another application period has been approved by the Sanction & Schedule Committee.
- ii. **Bi-Monthly Application Deadlines.** USTA NorCal will accept applications on an ongoing basis. Bi-Monthly Deadlines for these applications received after the Primary Sanction Deadline will be January 15, March 15, May 15, July 15, September 15, November 15.
- iii. **Other Application Deadlines.** From time to time a Tournament may need to be sanctioned in a timeframe does not fit within the deadlines set forth in Regulations 5.B.i. and ii. When this occurs, USTA NorCal may set an appropriate application deadline.

C. Sanction Application Approval Dates. No later than September 30, applications received by Primary Application Deadline will be considered for approval. Applications received after the Primary Application Deadline will be considered for approval on a bi-monthly basis following each Bi-Monthly Application Deadline. When a deadline is chosen by USTA NorCal that is different from the Primary or Bi-Monthly Application Deadline, applications will be considered for approval as soon as possible following after such deadline.

D. Approval Process. The decision and basis to approve or deny a sanction is at the sole discretion of USTA NorCal.

- i. **Preliminary Approval by Sanction & Schedule Committee.** The Sanction & Schedule Committee will be charged with the responsibility for voting to give preliminary approval to those sanction applications it has selected for approval from among those submitted by the applicable deadline. The Sanction & Schedule Committee may be comprised of USTA NorCal Board Members and non-Board Members.
- ii. **Notice of Preliminary Approvals to Applicants.** The Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee, or the Chair's designee, will notify all applicants of the preliminary approvals, including all applicants for which a sanction was denied. This Notice of Preliminary Approved Applications will be sent by email to the email address provided on the sanction application and will include:
 - A request for the approved sanction holders to formally accept the sanction within 7 calendar days of the date of the Notice, a statement as to the date an approval by the USTA NorCal Board will be made, and a statement that failure to respond to the request constitutes a decline by the applicant to accept the sanction; and
 - Advise denied applicants of their right to appeal - see Regulation 5.E. below.
- iii. **Approval of Accepted Sanctions by USTA NorCal Board.** All preliminarily approved sanctions that have been accepted by the applicant will collectively be presented as an Action Item to the USTA NorCal Board and to be voted on by the USTA NorCal Board, *except* those sanctions that are affected by an appeal. It is recommended, but not required, that the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee be present during the discussion of the Action Item.
- iv. **Ruling on Appeals.** Each appeal will be presented to the USTA NorCal Board, and a vote will be taken to uphold or deny each appeal. Any sanction that is not subject to an appeal, but that is affected by an appeal will be either approved or denied by the USTA NorCal Board.
At its discretion, the USTA NorCal staff and/or the Sanction & Schedule Committee may provide a rationale to the Board of Directors to consider when it rules on the appeal.
- v. **Sanction Approval Conditioned on Additional Requirements.** Regardless of whether a sanction has been approved by the USTA NorCal Board, a sanction is conditioned upon the approved applicant fulfilling the additional requirements set forth in Regulation 5.F.

E. Appeal of Denied Sanction.

- i. **Notice of Intent to Appeal.** An applicant whose sanction application is denied may appeal the decision to the USTA NorCal Board by advising USTA NorCal of the intent to appeal within 7 calendar days of the date of the Notice of Preliminary Approvals (see Regulation 5.D.ii.). The intent to appeal may be sent by replying to the email delivering the Notice of Preliminary Approvals.
- ii. **Appeal Fee.** The fee for appeal of a sanction is \$100 per appealed sanction application, which fee will be refunded if the appeal is upheld.
- iii. **Filing of Appeal.** In order for an appeal to be considered by the USTA NorCal Board, appellant must deliver to USTA NorCal by certified mail and postmarked no later than 10 days after the Notice of Preliminary Approvals, a written reason for the appeal, which must be supported by

specific information and/or documentation, and which must include the appeal fee. Appeals are to be sent to: USTA NorCal, Attn: Tournament Appeals, 1920 North Loop Road, Alameda, CA 94502-8018.

F. Additional Requirements. In addition to meeting the Safe Play Approval requirements set forth in the USTA NorCal Sanction Agreement, an approved sanction is conditioned on the applicant meeting the following additional requirements no later than the 1st day of the month two months prior to the start date of the Tournament (For example, if the Tournament start date is April 15th, the conditions must be met no later than February 1st).

- i. Serve Tennis Sanction Form.** One Serve Tennis Sanction Form must be submitted for each approved sanction application and must conform to the approved sanction and the applicable Tournament Regulations.
- ii. Required Junior Tournament Titles.** The following terms must be included in the titles of the following junior tournaments:
 - a. Level 3.** All Level 3 tournaments will include in the title "USTA NorCal," "Sectional Championships," and the age division(s). For example, USTA NorCal Boys' 18 & 18 Sectional Championships.
 - b. Level 4 Excellence.** All Level 4 tournaments will include in the title "Excellence," and the age division(s). For example, Boys' 18 & 18 Excellence.
 - c. Level 4 & Level 5 Super Series.** All Level 4 and Level 5 Super Series tournaments will include in the title "Super Series," and the age division(s). For example, Boys' 18 & 16 Super Series.
 - d. Level 4 & Level 5 Dominant Duo.** All Level 4 and Level 5 Dominant Duo tournaments will include in the title "Dominant Duo," and the age division(s). For example, Boys' 18 & 16 Dominant Duo.
 - e. Level 5 Championship.** All Level 5 Championship tournaments will include in the title "Championship," and the age division(s). For example, Boys' 18 & 16 Championship.
 - f. Level 6 Ratings Round Robins.** All Level 6 Ratings Round Robin tournaments will include in the title "Ratings Round Robin." For example, ABC Club Ratings Round Robin.
- There are no requirements for the titles of other Level 6 Tournaments and Level 7 Tournaments.
- iii. Insurance Certificate.** Sanction holder will procure, maintain, and submit to NorCal at the sanction holder's expense, the insurance described in the USTA NorCal Sanction Agreement.
- iv. Satellite Site Permission.** If not provided at the time the sanction application was submitted, the applicable satellite site permission letters as described in Regulation 5.A.v.b. must be submitted.
- v. Written Confirmation from Referee.** If not provided at the time the sanction application was submitted, the Referee must confirm in writing of their engagement to serve as the Referee.
- vi. Tournament Director Education.** Annually, Tournament Directors may be asked to participate in a training or workshop. Absent good cause shown, participation is mandatory.

6. Mandatory Participation Waiver Verification Required by Sanction Holder. At least annually, a Participation Waiver in the form determined by USTA NorCal, must be submitted to USTA NorCal in order for a player to participate in a USTA NorCal Sanctioned Tournament. Sanction holders must verify that each player competing in a USTA NorCal Sanctioned Tournament has a current Participation Wavier on file with USTA NorCal before the start of the player's first match.

7. Sanction Fees & NorCal Head Tax. The following fees are charged to applicants for sanctioned Tournaments:

A. Sanction Fees. Applicant will be charged the sanction fee shown below for each approved Tournament:

Tournament Type	2024 Sanction Fee	2025 Sanction Fee
Junior Level 3 Tournament	\$125.00	\$150.00
Junior Level 4 Tournament	\$100.00	\$125.00
Junior Level 5 Tournament	\$75.00	\$100.00
Junior Level 6 Tournament	\$50.00	\$75.00
Junior Level 7 Tournament	\$10.00	\$20.00
Adult and Family Level 4 Tournament	\$90.00	\$90.00
Adult and Family Level 5 Tournament	\$75.00	\$75.00
Adult and Family Level 6 Tournament	\$50.00	\$50.00
Adult and Family Level 7 Tournament	\$10.00	\$10.00

Tournament Type	2024 Sanction Fee	2025 Sanction Fee
Wheelchair Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 Tournaments	No Fee	No Fee

B. NorCal Head Tax. Each player is charged the Head Tax per player shown below, which is included in the fee charged when a player is selected for the tournament. The fee is charged once per Tournament, not per event in a Tournament.

Tournament Type	Head Tax
Junior Level 3, Level 4, Level 5, and Level 6 Tournaments	\$3.00
Adult Level 4, Level 5, and Level 6 Tournaments	\$1.00
Adult and Junior Level 7 Tournaments	No Fee
Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 Wheelchair Tournament	No Fee

8. Junior Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 Tournaments: Process for Sanctioning When No Application is Received, Bidder Declines Acceptance of Sanction, Tournament is Cancelled, or Sanction is Revoked. Each year the USTA gives USTA NorCal the opportunity to sanction a limited number of Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 Tournaments. These special provisions apply when no application is received, NorCal declines to award a sanction to the applicants, an applicant declines acceptance of a sanction, a tournament is cancelled or a sanction is revoked.

A. Time-Sensitive Approval. The USTA NorCal staff, in consultation with the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee, may determine that the approval of a sanction for a Junior Level 3, Level 4, or Level 5 Tournament is urgent based on the date designated for the tournament to be held. When such determination has been made, the Sanction & Schedule Committee may recommend to the Board, or the Board may take up the approval itself without a recommendation, without going through the requirements set forth in B. and C. below.

B. When No Application Received or No Application Approved. In the event that no bid is received for a Junior Level 3, Level 4, or Level 5 Tournament, or the Sanction & Schedule Committee declines to award a sanction from among the applicants:

- The USTA NorCal staff, in consultation with the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee, may request a previously approved applicant of a different Level Junior Tournament to change to the Level of the Declined or Cancelled Tournament or also organize this Tournament;
- NorCal may be assigned as the sanction holder; or
- If time permits, a notice will be sent out to all Organization Members inviting them to submit a sanction application by a specified deadline.

If the Tournament is put out for bid, as soon as possible after the deadline, the Sanction & Schedule Committee will vote to preliminarily approve a sanction from among the applicants.

C. When Applicant Declines Acceptance of Sanction or Cancels a Tournament, or a Sanction is Revoked. In the event that a sanction holder declines acceptance of a sanction to hold a Junior Level 3, Level 4 or Level 5 Tournament, or cancels a Junior Level 3, Level 4 or Level 5 Tournament, or a sanction is revoked, the Sanction & Schedule Committee will first review any other applications received to replace the declining applicant and vote to preliminarily approve a sanction from among the applicants. In the event there is no viable application to host the tournament:

- The USTA NorCal staff, in consultation with the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee, may request a previously approved applicant of a different Level Junior Tournament to change to the Level of the Declined or Cancelled Tournament or also organize this Tournament;
- NorCal may be assigned as the sanction holder; or
- If time permits, a notice will be sent out to all Organization Members inviting them to submit a sanction application by a specified deadline.

If the Tournament is put out for bid, as soon as possible after the deadline, the Sanction & Schedule Committee will vote to preliminarily approve a sanction from among the applicants.

9. Probation. Probation is a status indicating a sanction holder has failed to meet the minimum standards or there is evidence that the sanction holder has not acted in the best interest of the players. While the status is assigned based on the organization of a particular tournament, it applies to one or more future Tournaments organized by the sanction holder.

A. Report to Sanction & Schedule Committee. When there is reasonable evidence that:

- indicates an applicable regulation has been violated; or
- provides information of concern to the USTA NorCal staff, including a concern related to customer service,

USTA NorCal staff will make a report on the tournament to the Sanction & Schedule Committee.

B. Sanction & Schedule Committee Must Vote on Probation. After reviewing the staff report, the Sanction & Schedule Committee may vote to determine whether the sanction holder is placed on Probation, or may request additional information to be provided before it takes a vote. The vote will be exempt from the Committee Decision process of the USTA NorCal Board and will be considered final.

C. Terms of Probation.

- i. **Notice of Probation.** The Tournament Director will be sent a letter by the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee or the Chair's designee stating the sanction holder is on Probation, the Probation Period, the reason(s) for Probation and the need to correct the area(s) that caused the Probation. Probation may also include a requirement that the Tournament Director attend a training;
- ii. **Probation Period.** The Probation Period will begin as of the date of the Notice of Probation and will conclude with the completion of the next tournament organized by the sanction holder, or such longer period as is determined by the Sanction & Schedule Committee. In the event a sanction holder has not yet been approved for a future sanction, this provision in no way constitutes a guarantee of a future sanction.
- iii. **On-Site Review and Report.** USTA NorCal may conduct on-site review of the sanction holder's next tournament and, if conducted, a report of findings will be submitted to the Sanction & Schedule Committee.

10. Revoking of Sanction. USTA NorCal reserves the right to revoke a sanction for cause or for the sanction holder's inability to organize a Tournament as described in the USTA NorCal Sanction Agreement. The decision to revoke a sanction may be made by:

- USTA NorCal staff in consultation with the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee; and
- By vote of the USTA NorCal Board.

In the event a sanction is revoked, the Chair of the Sanction & Schedule Committee, or the Chair's designee, will notify the Tournament Director in writing by email to the email address provided on the sanction application. Sanction holders that have a sanction revoked may appeal the decision to the USTA NorCal Board within 14 days of the date of the notice.

11. Mileage and Concurrent Tournaments.

A. Adult Tournaments.

- i. **Adult NTRP Tournaments.** Where 4 events within a class have been applied for, the tournament will be requested to hold the fifth event also, if holding such event is within the limits of the number of available courts.

- ii. **Adult Age Division Tournaments.**

- a. **Date Blocks.**

- Adult Age Division Tournaments in the 30 through 55 Divisions follow date block procedures.
- Adult Age division Tournaments in the 60 through 90 Divisions have no required date blocks.

There will be no date conflicts with respect to tournaments holding the same event (s) without written approval from both tournaments that the conflict is agreed upon.

- b. **Consolation.** Consolation events in designated senior tournaments are optional.

- iii. **Adult Open Tournaments.** A second Men's Open Tournament may be sanctioned if it is at least 75 miles away from the first. A second Women's Open Tournament may be sanctioned if it is at least 75 miles from the first.

- iv. **Generation Gap Tournaments.** Generation Gap Tournaments will be sanctioned on different date blocks than Level 4 Super Series, Level 5 Super Series and Level 6 Ratings Round Robin Tournaments.

B. Junior Tournaments.

- i. **Level 5, Level 6, and Level 7 Tournaments.** The proximity of Level 5, Level 6, and Level 7 tournaments will be considered when sanction decisions are made.

- ii. **Tournaments Concurrent with Level 6 Ratings Round Robins.** The only equal or lower-level Junior tournament that may be sanctioned concurrent with a Level 6 Ratings Round Robin is a Level 7 Tournament.

- iii. **Concurrent Level 3 and Level 4 Prohibited.** No Level 3 Tournament may be sanctioned concurrent with a Level 4 Tournament.