

Minutes of the USTA NorCal JTT/Local Play Meeting December 3, 2024

NOTE: *These minutes were approved on January 21, 2025.*

Andrea Barnes, chair of the JTT/Local Play Committee, called the meeting to order at 12:05pm and roll call was conducted. The meeting was held by Google Meet video conference.

Committee Members Present: Andrea Barnes (Chair), Todd Dissly, Ogidi Obi, Gene Fortino, Pablo Alvarado, David Panconi, Carrie Zarraonandia. Gene rejoined the meeting @12:15pm. Ogidi joined at 12:28pm.

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Beth Workeneh, Sr. Manager, Junior Competition; Chris Samuel, Net Generation Programs Manager; Trey Astbury, JTT Manager

- 1. Approval of Minutes.** The Committee considered approval of the minutes of the meeting held July 16 2024. The following motion was duly made by Carrie Zarraonandia, seconded by David Panconi, and **approved** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the July Committee meeting held July 16, 2024 be approved as presented.

2. Chair Report

- **Section Connection:** Andrea congratulated staff on the event and commented that it was well run and attended. She mentioned that it would have been great to have recordings of sessions as there was a lot of important information shared with attendees.
- **Encouraging the Committee and coaches network to participate in local programs:** Andrea stressed the importance of having NJTL and grassroots involvement needed to create program growth as kids and organizations are missing out on these opportunities. Staff and the Committee discussed options to encourage growth from school outreach such as after school programs with red ball emphasis and to recruit more hosts to promote growth.

3. Staff Report

- **Section Connection Overview** Beth mentioned good attendance and the session variety along with the volunteer dinner.
- **November ED Report** Chris Samuel presented that numbers are up for Team Challenges and Junior Circuits. Not as much registration, although more hosts in smaller areas. Trey mentioned the Fall Season was the biggest league and we saw an uptick in registration numbers also with Orange.
- **2025 JTT Calendar** Trey shared the 2025 calendar and dates. He discussed plans for an Intersectionals event with SoCal, Intermountain, and Southwest and the plan to qualify 18U Int/Adv and 14U Int/Adv teams during the Spring Season. 18U Boys already qualified from Fall Sectionals. Beth mentioned costs will be discussed in January.
- **Summer Season Discussion** Discussing a summer league versus one-off events, the Committee recommended having one-off events and Local Leagues as an alternative to a summer season. Trey mentioned there is always a lack of player availability and defaults remain an issue every season. The Committee mentioned that a summer league is always a challenge. "In-House" leagues would be the opposite of a Travel League
- **Fall Sectionals Recap** Trey discussed the 2025 dates and that 36 teams participated in a timed format to keep matches on schedule. Ogidi mentioned the timed format was good and he wanted other teams to compete due to the strength of other area teams. He mentioned that players enjoyed the experience. Andrea asked about time "stalling" and some coaches and staff recognized some differences. Trey mentioned that timing was much better when it was taken off the captain's responsibility and implemented later on in the tournament.

Ogidi Obi joined the meeting during the Staff's report at 12:28pm.

- 4. Junior Awards Criteria.** This proposal sets out to approve the written criteria for the various awards that are given out at the annual Junior Player Party for the Junior Circuits and Junior Team Tennis programs. Up until this time the winners have generally been selected based on the criteria below, but no written criteria existed that was reviewed and recommended by JTT/Local Play Committee, or approved by the USTA Board.

Following discussion, the following motion was duly made by Ogidi Obi, seconded by Todd Dissly, and **approved** by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 recusals:

RESOLVED: That effective immediately, the following criteria for the Junior Awards is hereby approved:

- **Junior Team Tennis Player of the Year:** One player, who in the opinion of the USTA Staff, has the most successful record during the calendar year. Staff will look at win-loss records throughout the regular season, Sectionals, and other JTT standalone events (if applicable).
- **Junior Team Tennis Program of the Year:** Awarded to one program that has achieved a high level of success during JTT leagues and Section Championships. The program is an active promoter of team tennis, always trying to find innovative ways of getting players involved, while striving to improve quality.
- **Junior Team Tennis Captain of the Year:** Awarded to one captain who has produced teams through multiple seasons and across different divisions and has also had success at all levels of JTT (seasons and standalone events). Recognizing the coach that exhibits consistency throughout the year by being reliable and well-organized.
- **Junior Team Tennis Sportsmanship Award:** One boy or one girl with the most nominations from captains, players, and/or referees throughout the year. If it's a close decision between two players, the award may be given to multiple boys and/or girls.
- **Net Generation PlayTracker Player of the Year:** One boy and one girl from both the orange and green ball levels will be selected based on who tallied the most points in their divisions in a given year.
- **Junior Circuit Host of the Year:** This award is meant to recognize an outstanding Junior Circuit host who has consistently run high-quality events that impact many players. The number of JCs and survey feedback can also be taken into account.

RESOLVED FURTHER: That the USTA NorCal staff shall be authorized to select the winners of these awards based on the approved criteria.

- 5. Budget Approval - 2025 Net Generation Player Retention & Host Recruitment.** The Net Generation Team Challenges and Junior Circuits have proven successful in introducing recreational players to match play.

Over the past three years, host kits and player prizes have consistently enhanced the experience for new players, fostering their retention in the USTA pathway. However, recruiting more providers in local communities remains a significant challenge. Hosting these events often requires additional resources, including Court Monitors and training, to ensure quality execution.

To expand the Junior Circuit to more areas and reduce player travel distances, we propose supporting providers with standardized host kits that guarantee consistent event quality across all locations.

Following discussion, the following motion was duly made by David Panconi, seconded by Ogidi Obi, and **approved** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 recusals:

RESOLVED: That, effective immediately, \$38,500 be added to the Net Generation budget for the 2025 Net Generation Play Retention and Recruitment as follows:

Net Generation Player Retention & Host Recruitment	Total
Host Kits - Balls, court equip., supplies, signage, volunteer gifts, etc. - Event Expenses	\$15,000
Player Prizes & Giveaways - Giveaways Expense	\$14,500
Award Medals & Trophies - 1st & 2nd place - Awards/Trophies	\$8,000
Postage & Shipping	\$1,000
TOTAL BUDGET REQUESTED	\$38,500

Fiscal Impact: Budgetary impact as outlined in the resolution.

- 6. Budget Approval - JTT Program and Referral Incentive** - Since launching the JTT Program & Referral Incentive during the Fall 2024 season (the program and budget for Fall 2024 was approved in August of this year), NorCal has successfully recruited 14 new captains, supported by 6 referring/mentoring captains, and welcomed 33 first-time JTT players, contributing to the growth of our participation numbers. Some of the captains were from programs/areas that either had not participated in a while or were new to captaining.

Following discussion, the following motion was duly made by Todd Dissly, seconded by Ogidi Obi, and **approved** by a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 0 recusals:

RESOLVED: That, effective immediately in 2025, \$10,506 will be added to the 2025 JTT Budget for the JTT Program and Referral Incentive:

JTT Program & Referral Incentive (Per Season Costs are Below)	Total
\$25 Gift Card (20 new captains + 20 mentors x \$25)	\$1,000
\$50 JTT Captain Jacket/Sweatshirt (20 new captains + 20 mentors x \$50 approximate cost)	\$2,000
Registration/processing fees (4 new players x 20 teams x \$3.15 processing fee)* *This represents the portion of the TennisLink registration fee that will be covered by NorCal out of the total \$33.00 fee. The remainder is waived and results in no losses in revenue because these players and teams are not included in the original projections for budgeted income.	\$252
Postage & Shipping	\$250
TOTAL BUDGET REQUESTED FOR THREE SEASONS (Spring, Summer, Fall)	\$10,506

- 7. Budget Approval - In-House League Program** - In the past, USTA NorCal ran very successful In-House league programming through TennisLink. The leagues stopped during COVID and never officially restarted. These leagues were used as a feeder program for Travel Leagues and offered in areas where there weren't other teams to play against or for programs wanting to provide more supplemental match play for their players.

Based on piloting the league through Serve Tennis, we have the ability to manage leagues through the Junior Circuit platform as a workaround until the Junior Team Tennis platform on Serve Tennis is ready to be used.

This proposal seeks to:

- Allow for more match play opportunities (especially during offseasons like winter)
- Allow players to get Net Generation PlayTracker points and WTN credit where applicable
- Allow flexibility with formats and ability to charge their own program fee = more revenue that goes back into the program

Following discussion, the following motion was duly made by Carrie Zarronandia, seconded by David Panconi, and **approved** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, 0 abstentions, and 1 recusal (Ogidi Obi):

RESOLVED: That, effective immediately, the following budget for the In-House League Program is hereby approved:

In-House Leagues offer programs the opportunity to help develop their players internally without having to travel to play other teams in their area as they would in a Travel League. USTA NorCal will facilitate these League Programs through education and access to a platform to manage the league.

Organization of Program: Depending on the responses on the In-House League submission form, staff will determine how the league will operate, whether it's through Serve Tennis or TennisLink. Providers will be able to decide the cost of the player fee. Staff will facilitate the setup and training of the league and assist with any issues throughout the season.

Cost of Program: USTA NorCal will collect \$2 per player head tax for administration support from each In-House League Program. Any other fee associated with participating in the program is set and collected by the In-House League.

Program Requirements:

- Each Captain of an In-House League program must be Safe Play approved
- An In-House League must have a minimum of 12 players (3 players on each team)
- Each In-House League must have access to a minimum number of courts, as determined by USTA NorCal staff
- Players must have on file a current USTA NorCal participation waiver.
- All match scores must be entered in the platform used to facilitate the league (Serve Tennis or TennisLink)
- Must follow formats specific to the Junior Circuit space if using that module (standard six game set, short set to four, etc) and be open to the public

RESOLVED FURTHER: That, effective immediately, \$5,670 be added to the 2025 JTT Budget to implement the In-House League Program.

In-House League Program Support - 10 programs (per season cost is below)	Total
Case of Balls (x 10 programs at \$90 per case)	\$900
Medals (\$2 per medal x 240 gold/silver medals)	\$480
Gift card for end of season party (\$50 X 10 programs)	\$500
Postage & Shipping (Estimated)	\$250
Head tax collected per player (\$2/player x 12 player minimum x 10 programs)	-\$240
TOTAL BUDGET REQUESTED FOR THREE SEASONS	\$5,670

There being no further issues or discussion to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 1:31pm.

