

Minutes of the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 29, 2022

NOTE: *All minutes are final after approval by the committee and all approved resolutions are subject to final approval by the USTA NorCal Board.*

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Christine Costamagna, chair of the Adult Leagues Committee ("ALC" or "Committee"), called the meeting to order at 6:32 pm and roll call was conducted. The meeting was held by Google Meet video conference.

Committee Members Present: Andrea Barnes, Jeff Birkenseer, Christine Costamagna (chair), Marilyn Morrell-Kristal, Tuesdai Powers, Pam Sloan (president), Paul Startz

Guest Present: Sarah Robinson

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Michelle Wilson, Michael Lim

- 1. Introduction of Committee Members and Staff.** Being that this was the first Committee meeting of the new term, all committee members, staff and guest introduced themselves.
- 2. Adult Leagues Fee Increase for 2023.** The Committee was informed of the following league fee increases for 2023 were approved by the Board. Ms. Costamagna did share with the Board that the Committee felt a player registration fee increase was not warranted but understood it was ultimately a decision of the Board which is managing to a balanced budget.

Adult League Player Registration fee has increased from \$30 per player per league to \$32 per player per league.

Adult League Sectional Fees will increase by \$10 per line.

- The fee for 5-line leagues will increase from \$150 per team to \$200 per team
- The fee for 4-line leagues will increase from \$120 per team to \$160 per team
- The fee for 3-line leagues will increase from \$90 per team to \$120 per team

- 3. Approval of November 4, 2022 Minutes.** The Committee considered approval of the draft minutes of the meeting held November 4, 2022.

The following motion was then **APPROVED** by a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of ALC meeting held November 4, 2022 be approved as presented.

4. LLAR proposals/considerations

- a. Team Registration.** It was proposed to that when registering for a team, teams are required to have home courts for the season, with the ability to reserve these courts for league matches. Prior to the league starting, captains must have permission from the facility to use their courts. The Committee discussed this proposal and noted that this information was already on the team registration page. The question of whether it was needed in the rules since it was on the team registration page was asked. Staff mentioned that it was important to have it as a part of the rules since it is on the team registration page so it is known that it is a rule and the players could be asked for the permission if there was a need to ask if a potential issue arose.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule amendment be approved as follows (underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Team Registration. Any current USTA member in good standing may register a team. Teams are required to have home courts for the season, with the ability to reserve these courts for league matches. Prior to the league starting, captains must have permission from the facility to use their courts.

Rationale: As this rule was already on the team home page, it being added to the LLAR for consistency purposes and it emphasizes that permission is needed. At this point, permission will not need to be provided to USTA NorCal staff but will be needed should an issue arise.

- b. Rescheduling.** The Committee was informed that there is still confusion with the rescheduling rule when teams need to reschedule. It was noted that players are confused about how many different dates an opposing captain needs to offer when only one team needs to reschedule.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule be approved as amended (stricken through language is proposed deletion and underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Rescheduling. ~~A home or away team may change an initially scheduled or posted match only with the agreement of the other team. If a reschedule is necessary for both teams, unless the two captains agree otherwise, the home team shall offer the visiting team at least two different dates with times. These dates with times shall be offered at the same time and within seven days of the original match date. The dates offered cannot conflict with another league match in the same league on the same day. The visiting team shall choose one of the options within three days of receiving them; otherwise the home team may choose one of the dates with times by so notifying the visiting team. The opposing captain is under no obligation to comply, not complying with the request is not grounds for a sportsmanship grievance.~~

REQUIRED BY BOTH TEAMS: If a reschedule is necessary for both teams, unless the two captains agree otherwise, the home team shall offer the visiting team at least two different dates with times. These dates with times shall be offered at the same time and within seven days of the original match date. The dates offered cannot conflict with another league match in the same league on the same day for either team. The match needs to be played before the end of the local season. The visiting team shall choose one of the options within three days of receiving them; otherwise the home team may choose one of the dates with times by so notifying the visiting team.

REQUESTED BY ONE TEAM:

A home or away team may change an initially scheduled or posted match only with the agreement of the other team. The opposing captain is under no obligation to comply with a request for a new date: not complying with the request is not grounds for a sportsmanship grievance. The team that agrees to reschedule is not subject to the rules (above) that apply to a reschedule required by both teams as long as the match is completed by the season deadline.

Rationale: This proposed amendment is clarifying the current rule by separating out into different paragraphs what happens if a reschedule is required by both teams and what happens if a rescheduled is required by only one team.

- c. Withdrawal from Playoffs.** Staff explained that a clarification in the rules was needed for the following circumstances: 1) when USTA NorCal will attempt to replace the withdrawn team, and 2) withdrawn teams will not be replaced once the first round of playoffs have begun. The Committee discussed the proposed rule change and one member had concerns that the clarification may create extra and unnecessary work for staff. Staff noted that having the clarification will provide transparency to players/teams on the process around alternates. A concern was also raised that if a team withdrew after qualifying for Sectionals, an alternate would not replace the withdrawing team. Staff addressed this concern by informing the Committee that staff would try to find an alternate for that Sectional spot as that is a different segment of play.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 League Season, the following rule be approved as amended (underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Withdrawal from Playoffs. A team withdrawing from participation in playoffs must notify the USTA NorCal office no later than 24 hours after the deadline set forth in (NorCal LLAR) Initial Notification. USTA NorCal will attempt to replace the withdrawn team if the deadline stated above has been met. Withdrawn teams will not be replaced after the first round of playoffs have begun.

Rationale: This amendment helps to clarify when USTA NorCal will attempt to replace a withdrawn team for playoffs before local playoffs start. It also helps to clarify that after the first round of playoffs have begun,

a withdrawing team will no longer be replaced with an alternate and the recipient of the withdrawal will advance.

- d. Rest Time between Matches.** It was brought to the Committee's attention that the current rest time between matches rule of 30 minutes in the NorCal LLAR was no longer in compliance with the Friend at Court ("FAC") Rules. Staff noted that the rest period rules in FAC are now 60 minutes for NTRP 55 & Over as well as younger divisions and 90 minutes for NTRP 65 & Over and older divisions. It was also mentioned that FAC applies to all matches played in the USTA League and that it does not make sense to have a different rule on rest times.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 League Season, the following rule be removed from the NorCal LLAR (stricken through language is proposed deletion)

~~(NorCal LLAR) Rest Time between Matches. A player may receive a minimum 30 minute rest period between individual matches played for the same team.~~

Rationale: The rule regarding rest times between matches is outlined in FAC and the National Regulations state that FAC applies to all matches played in the USTA League (unless modified by these USTA LEAGUE REGULATIONS). The USTA League Regulations do not modify the Rest Time between Matches rule which means that FAC prevails. Removing rest times in the LLAR will prevent any rest time discrepancy.

- e. Championship Dynamic Disqualification.** Staff informed the Committee that National informed staff that playoffs are considered a part of the championship segment as opposed to being part of the local league segment of play. NorCal has been operating with playoffs being a part of the local league. The NorCal LLAR rule now needs to be amended to clarify when to calculate NTRP dynamic ratings during each segment of championship play. It was explained to the Committee that there are 2 segments of championship play (playoffs and sectionals), and that for playoffs, NorCal needs to make the determination if dynamic calculations are going to be run throughout playoffs or at the conclusion of the playoffs. NorCal's decision to run dynamic calculations following the conclusion of the Sectional Championship is already in the rules.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule is being amended as follows (stricken through language is proposed deletion and underlined language is proposed addition.)

2.04B(2) Championship NTRP Dynamic Disqualification. There will be no NTRP Dynamic Disqualifications processed at National Championships. Players who are NTRP dynamically disqualified at any championship including Nationals will be notified by the Sectional League Coordinator or designee and have the right to a review in accordance with procedures in Reg. 2.04C NTRP Dynamic Disqualification Review Procedures. The Section shall choose one of the following options for NTRP Dynamic Disqualifications at each Sectional Championship and below:

2.04B(2)a Run dynamic calculations and produce ratings throughout the championship. Through the conclusion of the championship event, notify and disqualify any player who meets the criteria for NTRP Dynamic Disqualification and reverse appropriate matches played. (See Regs. 2.04E(2)a and b for championship scoring procedures when NTRP Dynamic Disqualifications are done throughout the championship competition.)

2.04B(2)b Run dynamic calculations after the conclusion of the championship and disqualify those players who meet the criteria for NTRP Dynamic Disqualification. Matches played will stand. (See Reg. 2.04E(2)c for championship scoring procedures when NTRP Dynamic Disqualifications are done after the conclusion of championship competition.)

~~(NorCal LLAR) Dynamic Ratings at Championships. USTA NorCal chooses option 2.04B(2)b and will run dynamic calculations following the conclusion of the championship event.~~

(NorCal LLAR) Dynamic Ratings at Championships. USTA NorCal chooses option 2.04B(2)a for Playoffs and will run dynamic calculations and produce ratings throughout the playoffs championship.

Additionally, USTA NorCal chooses option 2.04B(2)b for Sectionals and will run dynamic calculations following the conclusion of the Sectional championship event.

Rationale: NorCal has historically operated with playoffs being a part of the local league. When confusion arose regarding the rule, National confirmed that playoffs is considered part of championship play as opposed to local league. Based on this clarification, NorCal now needs to clarify when dynamic calculations will be run throughout the playoffs. Running dynamic calculations during playoffs would continue to help ensure that players are playing at the correct level as they progress to sectionals.

- f. (NorCal LLAR) Grievance Filing Deadline.** The Committee was informed that the current grievance filing deadline for Adult League Grievances is 4 business days after the match. If a captain wants to file a grievance after the deadline and Adult League Grievance Committee decides to accept the grievance, a USTA NorCal staff needs to file the grievance. Amending this rule to allow the Adult League Grievance Committee to consider, at its discretion, a late grievance would eliminate staff having to file the grievance on behalf of the player.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule is being amended as follows (underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Grievance Filing Deadline. A grievance under 3.03B(1) must be filed within four business days of the match involving such player or team. The Committee may, at its discretion, consider grievances submitted more than 4 business days of the match.

Rationale: The rule needed to be clarified that the Adult League Grievance Committee has the discretion to accept grievances submitted after the deadline. With this proposed addition in place, staff would no longer need to file grievances on behalf of players. This step creates a lot of work for staff which can be alleviated by the potential acceptance of late filings.

- g. (NorCal LLAR) At-Level Player Requirement for Combo Doubles.** The At-Level Player Requirement of 4 at-level players for Combo Doubles was discussed. During the discussion, the Committee was reminded that teams only need 3 at-level players for a match and was informed that many teams were having trouble finding 4 at-level players. It was proposed to change the At-Level Player Requirement for Combo Doubles from 4 at-level players to 3 at-level players.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule is being amended as follows (stricken through language is proposed deletion and underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) At-Level Player Requirement. For the Adult 18 & Over division, all teams must have a minimum of 6 players for five-line leagues and 4 players for three-line leagues rostered at the team's NTRP level prior to the first match and throughout the league season. For the Adult 40 & Over divisions, all teams must have a minimum of 5 players for four-line leagues and 4 players for three-line leagues rostered at the team's NTRP level prior to the first match and throughout the league season. For the Combo Doubles division, all teams must have a minimum of ~~4~~3 players for three-line leagues rostered at the team's NTRP level prior to the first match and throughout the league season. In 18 & Over, 40 & Over, and/or Combo Doubles, if a team does not have the required number of "at-level" players rostered on the team at the time of any match, that team match will count as a loss with all individual team matches being scored as 6-0, 6-0 losses for the purpose of team standings.

Combo Doubles At-Level Rating:

5.5 is 3.0

6.5 is 3.5

7.5 is 4.0

8.5 is 4.5

9.5 is 5.0

10.0+ is 5.5

Exceptions:

"Move-Up" teams per ULR 2.06A(3) are exempt from this rule

Rationale: In the Combo Doubles Division, players only need 3 at-level players for each match. Lowering the number of at-level players to 3 will help with participation and many teams struggled to find 4 at-level players during the 2022 season.

- h. Wildcards.** Staff explained to the Committee that the current rule on how wildcards are selected to advance to Sectionals is ambiguous and hard to understand. A rule change proposal regarding wildcards was presented to the Committee for them to review. The Committee discussed the proposal and opinions were provided about how to determine which areas have the most teams and whether having multiple flights confuses this.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 4 in favor, 1 opposed, and 1 abstention:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule is being amended as follows (stricken through language is proposed deletion and underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Wildcards. Wildcards may be used to round out the number of teams that advance to ~~postseason play~~Sectionals. Wildcards are chosen at the beginning of the season ~~by random draw~~ from ~~area flights~~ with the greatest number of teams. If there are two or more flights that have the same greatest number of teams, the wildcard(s) will be selected randomly from those flights.

Rationale: Selecting the wildcards from the flights with the greatest number of teams is the most logical and fair as the teams playing in bigger flights will have more competition to play to get to Sectionals. This rule amendment also clarifies that random draws are only done when two or more flights have the same number of teams.

- i. Withdrawal from Sectionals.** Staff presented a rule change proposal regarding teams withdrawing from Sectionals and when NorCal will attempt to find an alternate. It was proposed to add to the rule "USTA NorCal will attempt to find an alternate by 1) inviting the teams in the flight the withdrawing team advanced out of in order of record 2) If none of those teams are able to attend, USTA NorCal will randomly contact a finalist of another flight." This addition clarifies when and how alternates would be selected. A committee member raised a concern of how this amendment would impact staff and staff time to comply.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule is being amended as follows (underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Withdrawal from ChampionshipsSectionals. A team must notify the USTA NorCal office of their withdrawal no later than 24 hours after securing a position in that event. USTA NorCal will attempt to find an alternate by 1) inviting the teams in the flight the withdrawing team advanced out of in order of record 2) If none of those teams are able to attend, USTA NorCal will randomly contact a finalist of another flight.

Rationale: This amendment clarifies how alternates will be selected if a team withdraws from Sectionals. In addition, the word "Championships" has been changed to "Sectionals". Beginning in 2023, playoffs will be considered part of Championships instead of local league play. By changing Championships to Sectionals, it clarifies that these are withdrawals from Sectionals.

- j. Overturning Matches Played by Player that Received Three Strikes and are Disqualified.** It was proposed to the Committee to amend the rule regarding overturning matches played by players that receive three strikes and are therefore disqualified for only the matches that generate strikes overturned to having all matches played by the disqualified player in the current segment of play overturned.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following rule is being amended as follows (underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Matches Overturned. In the event of an NTRP Dynamic Disqualification from a particular level of play, only those matches which generated strikes all matches in the current segment of play shall be considered a 0-6, 0-6 loss for standing purposes for the team who had the DQ'd player.

Rationale: If a player is disqualified because they are "clearly above level", and should not have been playing at that level, the team should not have receive the benefit of those wins by the disqualified player. Also, players and captains should have more incentive to appeal the self-rating up, if they discover the players are becoming too good at the current level.

Pam Sloan left the call at 8:10 pm

5. Unfinished/Incomplete Local League Matches that Affect Playoff Standings. It was proposed to the Committee to add information in the Adult Leagues FAQ to explain how a weighted draw is conducted when a local league match that affects local playoff standings has started but cannot be completed. The LLAR currently states "If a local league match that affects playoff standings starts play in the minimum number of individual matches required to win the match but is not completed, the winner of each unfinished individual match will be determined by a weighted draw done by USTA NorCal League staff." This rule does not explain how the weighted draw is conducted.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 1 abstention:

RESOLVED: That effective with the 2023 Leagues, the following procedure is added to the Adult Leagues FAQ:

Q: What happens when a local league match has started but cannot be completed, and could potentially affect playoff standings?

A: If a match has started and the minimum number of lines within the team match has started play but cannot be finished, then each game achieved within an individual match will count as one "chip". The USTA NorCal office will total up the number of chips for each team based on the number of games won and will blindly draw to determine the winner of the match. Each individual incomplete match will be submitted as a retirement win for the team who is deemed winner of the weighted draw. If the majority of lines has not started, then each individual line shall be submitted as a double default since the match would be considered invalid. Here's an example of the weighted draw:

Match score at the point of stopping: 6-4, 0-1

This example would mean that team A would receive 6 chips and team B would receive 5 chips.

Rationale: Adding this procedure to the Adult Leagues FAQ will clarify how a weighted draw is done for Unfinished/Incomplete Local League Matches that Affect Playoff Standings. Giving a chip for every game won gives credit for each game won when doing the random draw.

6. Adult League Credit Rule. Ms. Costamagna presented a revised version of the Adult League Credit Rule proposal that had previously been approved by the Committee. She provided background on this topic and noted that when the Committee approval was presented to the Board, it was referred to Jonathan Madison, USTA NorCal legal counsel, for review as the Board had concerns around enforceability. Mr. Madison provided additional language around the expiration of credits. A rule regarding existing credits was still being reviewed by Mr. Madison.

Following discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That effective January 1, 2023, the following rule is being amended as follows (underlined language is proposed addition.)

(NorCal LLAR) Registration Credit. A player who is rostered on a team and has not played any matches or received any default wins (and is not required for the at-level requirement) will receive a credit after the end of local league. The credit will ~~not~~ expire 12 months following the date the credit is issued, is not transferrable, has no cash value and will not include the processing fee charged by TennisLink. All such players expressly waive any and all rights to a transfer of the credit or to request a cash value refund of said credit, or to challenge or dispute this provision.

Rationale: By amending the credit rule to have the credits expire 12 months from the date the credit is issued gives the players one year to use the credit. More importantly, this minimizes the liability for USTA NorCal and helps the organization to better plan financially where credits are concerned as USTA NorCal will no longer be holding league credits for more than one year.

If this rule passes, staff will also ensure that players are well informed and reminded of this rule.

- 7. New Business.** Ms. Costamagna mentioned that the ACES event is scheduled for February and that Adult Leagues is one of the programs that selects recipients for specific awards. She noted that criteria for awards which was included in the meeting material needs to be approved and that then potential recipients would be presented to the Committee for review and approval. Due to the lateness of this meeting, she noted that the criteria would be sent to the Committee for approval by unanimous consent along with the Seeding/Placing Teams document and the Flex League Schedule (for purposes of the WTN pilot) that were tabled. She also informed the Committee that the next meeting would most likely be in early January.

There being no further issues or discussion to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:39 pm.