

## **Minutes of the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Committee Meeting Tuesday, November 4, 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, Henry Chang, Christine Costamagna (chair), Marilyn Morrell-Kristal, Michelle Nicholson, Paul Startz

**USTA NorCal Staff Present:** Michael Lim

- 1. Approval of October 4, 2022 Minutes.** The Committee considered approval of the minutes of the meeting held October 4, 2022.

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

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

- 2. FLEX League Rules.** It was explained that Staff has initiated updates to the FLEX League rules which will take effect in 2023. Ms. Costamagna noted that the substantive update was to update the grievance protocol. A discussion ensued whether this protocol followed the grievance protocol for other leagues. It was also suggested that the sportsmanship section be moved towards the end of the document.

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

**RESOLVED:** Effective January 1, 2023, the USTA NorCal Flex League Rules be approved as Exhibit A (underlined language is proposed addition and stricken through language is proposed deletion.)

Rationale: The Flex League Rules were presented to the ALC for consideration and approval. Exhibit A is the approved Flex Leagues which were updated from the 2022 season - the proposed additions and deletions are included. The significant change for 2023 is to clarify the Sportsmanship process which allows the USTA NorCal Flex League Administrator to decide whether to file a grievance against a player for sportsmanship the USTA NorCal Adult League Grievance Committee and would follow the same process as other USTA NorCal leagues.

The other updates to the rules clarifies what happens if a player needs to withdraw and when a player would be entitled refund.

- 3. Postseason waiver for players participating in Early Start Leagues.** Ms. Costamagna brought to the ALC's attention the concern a player raised regarding post-season eligibility for players who register for an early start league with a computer rating but experience a rating expiration as year-end requiring players to self-rate which changes their postseason match eligibility requirements. Staff noted that this is a rare situation and really came about because ratings were frozen during a period of time during the pandemic. The Committee felt that this was something that the player may have been unaware of at the start of the season and therefore should not be subject to the additional play requirements. They also agreed that this waiver should be just for this early start season. They requested that, going forward, Staff create a process to check players registered in early start leagues to see if any are subject to this expiration so that they can be advised on the self-rate minimum requirements.

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

**RESOLVED:** Effective immediately, players participating in the 2023 Early Start leagues that began the season with valid computer ratings which are set to expire at the end of 2022 and thus required to self rate during the season, will be subject to the computer rating minimum match requirements. This waiver is only applicable to the 2023 Early Start leagues and will not apply to any other league for the 2023 calendar year.

Rationale: Staff recently received an inquiry from a player currently playing in an early start 65 & Over League. When the player registered, he signed up with a valid computer rating. It was since discovered that this player's computer rating was set to expire at the end of 2022 thus requiring him to now self rate. This is an unusual situation but it has come up to the freezing of rating periods during the pandemic. Because of the self-rate situation, this player would have to have known at the time play started that he would have to meet self-rate minimum requirements rather than self-rate requirements. Furthermore, players wouldn't necessarily be notified in advance that their ratings would expire. Due to no fault of the player, the ALC felt that it was in the best interest to waive the self-rate requirements for the local league so that he could play post season. The ALC also recognized that this waiver would only be valid for the 2023 early start 65 & Over League. The ALC requested that the Staff develop a process to identify players who could run into this situation for the early start leagues so that waivers would not need to be granted in the future.

4. **One Flight Sectional Scheduling.** Mr. Lim brought to the ALC's attention the topic regarding implementing a one flight sectional scheduling format which is similar to what National does. A discussion ensued around the pros and cons of this potential change. Mr. Lim noted that a formal proposal would be provided to the ALC for review.
5. **Player Satisfaction Survey.** Ms. Costamagna noted that starting in 2023, there is a desire to survey players after each league season rather than having one annual survey at the end of the year. This will hopefully provide real time data and can address players and captains concerns in a timely manner. She asked for volunteers to review the current survey to determine if there should be any changes.
6. **Waiver to allow Adult 65 & Over Women's 9.0 team to participate in the National Invitational.** Ms. Costamagna noted that there were no Adult 65 & Over Women's 9.0 division teams registered for the local season. Subsequently a team was formed to participate in the Invitational. Because there was no local league play, the team is requesting a waiver of the participation requirements in order to be eligible for and compete at the Invitational. Staff and Ms. Costamagna feel that it is important that NorCal try to have team representation at events like these. Ms. Costamagna also noted that while this does not require a Committee vote, she wanted to see if anyone had an objection. It was noted that the team would also receive a stipend.
7. **Self rate complaints.** Ms. Costamagna shared an email from a player which raised concerns about the integrity of the self rating system. She noted that Staff does receive complaints from players and captains. She would like to engage the Committee to see how these issues can be addressed, and recognizing that some suggestions may need to happen at the National level.
8. **Boundary Project.** Ms. Costamagna noted that the Boundary Project would need to be addressed during 2023 as it is something that hasn't been done since 2017. She requested input from Committee members and Staff and how we could scope this project and how we could leverage our technology.

There being no further issues or discussion to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 pm.

## FLEX RULES

Last updated 3/21/2023

### WAIVER CLAIMS

Players, participants and any spectators or individuals that are participating in the USTA FLEX League acknowledge the risks associated with playing competitive tennis, accept those risks voluntarily, and in consideration of their acceptance in the USTA FLEX League Program, assume all loss or damage, and any claim or demand therefore on account of injury and/or exposure to infectious syndromes or diseases to the person or property or resulting in illness and/or death arising out of or related to their participation, whether caused by negligence or otherwise. By participating or attending a league event, the players, participants and any spectators assume all risks whether known or unknown. Furthermore, players, participants and spectators hold harmless the USTA, its affiliated Sectional Associations and Districts/Subdivisions and the host facility, their officials (Released Parties) and the Released Parties, employees and agents with respect to any injury or loss caused by negligence or otherwise to the fullest extent permitted by law.

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### REQUIREMENTS

Please join the league if you are committed to scheduling and playing 5-15 matches in a season. The number of matches is solely dependent on how many players are registered to a flight.

Coaching is not allowed in FLEX League.

Players must be age 18 or over prior to playing their first match and willing to play the league within the defined area.

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### RATINGS

FLEX League results do not affect NTRP ratings. Players with current NTRP Ratings in Tennis Link must use that rating. They may play no more than 0.5 above their rating level and may not play below their level. Players without ratings must self-rate according to the NTRP guidelines.

FLEX League does not accept NTRP related grievances. Players are expected to exercise the highest level of integrity while competing in this program.

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### MATCH SCORING

A round robin format is used with one match assigned per week. One or two additional weeks are included at the end of the season to make up missed matches if possible.

## FLEX RULES

Last updated 3/21/2023

Scoring format is best 2 of 3 sets with a 10-point match tiebreaker in lieu of a third set and scored as 1-0. If both players agree, the third set may be played out, but will still be scores as 1-0.

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### SCHEDULING

Our website offers an availability page where players can notify their opponents where and when they prefer to play. Please be flexible with a variety of available days/times.

FLEX League uses “play by” dates to encourage players to schedule weekly matches. Matches can be played at any time, in any order, as long as they are completed by the season deadline. Daytime only flights must play matches on weekdays (Monday-Friday) between the hours of 9 am-3 pm, unless otherwise agreed upon by the players.

The home player is responsible for initial contact to schedule the match but both players are encouraged to make contact. It’s recommended to contact all opponents at the beginning of the season to start the scheduling dialog. Some players’ schedules are more compatible than others. Schedule and play the most convenient matches first.

Player(s) listed as “home” should reserve the courts for their home matches and expect that the “away” player travels to them. The “home” player can offer to travel to the “away” player’s location if he/she chooses. The date, time and location of the match must be agreed upon by all the players.

If a match is rained out, it should be rescheduled and completed as soon as possible.

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### COURT

USTA NorCal offers a court finder service on our website.

Visit the courts you’re planning to use in advance for lights, condition, parking, time restrictions, etc. Communicate this to your opponents. Reserve courts for enough time to finish a match. Rescheduling an unfinished match can be difficult, especially for the visitor.

Your club/facility may have guest fees that apply to your opponent. If your club/facility does not waive fees for FLEX matches, the fee is your responsibility.

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## FLEX RULES

Last updated 3/21/2023

### FACILITY

During the COVID-19 epidemic California is enduring, facilities may prohibit non-members from coming to the facility. If your facility currently does not allow non-members in, you will need to find another facility to play your home matches out of within your designated area you registered for.

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### BALLS

During the COVID-19 epidemic California is enduring, USTA NorCal is requiring every player to provide a brand-new can of balls for every match they participate in. If both players agree, they can use one new can of balls for the match that the home player will provide.

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### DEFAULTS

Within 24 hours of the agreed match time, the player unable to play will default the match unless the player receiving the default win prefers to reschedule the match.

It is the home player's responsibility to ensure that the court is playable prior to the scheduled match time. If the visiting player(s) arrives and the court is not playable, the visiting player(s) may take a default win or ask to reschedule the match at their court.

If a player does not arrive within 15 minutes of the scheduled time, that player(s) will default the matches unless the opponent agrees to extend the time or reschedule the match.

Defaults can greatly impact standings in many ways but are sometimes unavoidable. Defaults will be scored as a 6-0, 6-0 win for the player receiving the default. Excessive defaults by players who do not withdraw will be monitored for future seasons.

Lack of communication is another method by which a player can earn a default. If you are unable to make contact with your opponent after three tries (two via email and one by phone):

1. Report the incident
2. Record the match as a default win (6-0, 6-0)

If your opponent communicates after you've taken steps one and two that they would like to play, it is your choice to reinstate the match. Contact your administrator to reset the Match.

## FLEX RULES

Last updated 31/21/20223

After three reports of a player being non-responsive; the player will be contacted, remaining matches will be scored as defaults wins for their opponents, and the player is suspended from playing the next season.

### WITHDRAWING FROM THE LEAGUE

If a player must withdraw from the league prior to the FLEX league administrator publishing completing the schedule, that player will notify the administrator and their opponents.

If a player withdraws prior to playing a match, all the player's matches will simply be deleted.

If a player withdraws in the flight after playing a match, all players in the group will receive a 6-0, 6-0 win against the withdrawing player. This rule attempts to credit players who played the withdrawing player without penalizing those who did not play the withdrawing player. The administrator will attempt to replace the withdrawing player with a substitute.

No refunds will be issued once the FLEX league administrator has published the schedules ~~have been posted.~~

### SPORTSMANSHIP POLICY

All players participating in FLEX League, as a condition of said participation, agree to abide by and be bound by The Code: The Player's Guide to Fair Play and The Unwritten Rules of Tennis. Tennis is a game of courtesy and honor. USTA NorCal expects the highest level of sportsmanship on and off the court. Players who ~~repeatedly~~ hinder the enjoyment of the game will be warned and ~~eventually~~ MAY BE suspended from the FLEX League program.

Please report unsportsmanlike conduct to [flex@norcal.usta.com](mailto:flex@norcal.usta.com) as soon as possible. All reported offences will be investigated by the FLEX League Administrator. What constitutes an offense will be deliberated on a case-by-case basis and at the sole discretion of the FLEX League Administrator.

- ~~1. First offense, players will be warned and flagged in our system.~~
- ~~2. Second and any following offenses, a grievance may be filed with the USTA NorCal Adult League Grievance Committee for them to review. All grievance decisions will be made by the Adult League Grievance Committee that may include, but is not limited to suspension. No refunds will be offered if suspended. offense, players will result in suspension from the current season and the following. No refunds will be offered if suspended.~~
- ~~3. Third offense, players will not be allowed back into the FLEX League program.~~

For any reported offenses, a grievance may be filed with the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Grievance Committee. All grievance decisions will be made by the Adult Leagues Grievance Committee and may include suspension from FLEX play.

## FLEX RULES

Last updated 3/21/2023

Any party(ies) to the grievance may appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee within the time fixed by the Grievance Committee. Upon receipt of an appeal of the decision of the Grievance Committee, the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Grievance Appeal Committee shall act promptly to resolve the appeal.

No refunds will be offered if suspended.

~~What constitutes an offense will be deliberated on a case by case basis and at the sole discretion of the FLEX League Administrator. Players who return after suspension are subject to a no-tolerance policy. Any further complaints on returning players are ground for permanent suspension from the league.~~

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### AWARDS

Flight winners will be determined by the standings on the last day of the season. In the event of a tie, tiebreaks will be broken in the following order:

1. Fewest number of sets lost
2. Fewest number of games lost
3. Winner of head-to-head matches
4. Coin toss