

Minutes of the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Committee Meeting Wednesday, January 4, 2023

NOTE: All resolutions in these minutes were approved by the USTA NorCal Board as of January 18, 2023.

NOTE: These minutes were approved on April 3, 2023.

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, Paul Startz

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Michelle Wilson

- 1. Approval of November 29, 2022 Minutes.** The Committee considered for approval the draft minutes of the meeting held November 29, 2022.

The following motion was then **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of ALC meeting held November 29, 2022 be approved as presented.

2. 2024 National Regulation Proposals

a. 1.04 E (2) – Adding to the rules only one membership.

The Committee review the proposal to amend 104.E (2) to clarify that "Individuals may only have one USTA membership account/USTA number. Individuals who obtain more than one USTA membership account/USTA number are subject to a grievance and such suspension penalties as outlined under the League Suspension Point System". It was noted that staff unanimously supports this proposed rule change.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to approve the Staff recommendation supporting this proposed rule change for 1.04 E (2).

b. 1.04E(3) Minimum Age Prior to Participating in Adult Leagues

The Committee reviewed the proposal to change 1.04E(3) from players needing to reach the minimum age prior to or during the calendar year in which such player participates in his or her first local league to players needing to reach the minimum age prior to participating in the USTA League type, according to age designation by USTA title. Staff unanimously opposes this proposed rule change. The Committee agreed that the current rule of reaching the minimum age prior to or during the calendar year in which such player participates in his or her first local league is what players currently know and it is less confusing than needing to be the minimum age prior to participating in the USTA League type, according to age designation by USTA title.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of opposing this proposed rule change for 1.04 E(3).

c. 1.04E(3) Minimum Age Prior to or during the Championship Year

The ALC reviewed the proposal to amend the rule to say that each player over the age of 18 shall have reached the required minimum age prior to or during the Championship year in which such player participates in their first local league. Staff unanimously opposes of this proposed rule change. The Committee agreed that the current rule of reaching the minimum age prior to or during the calendar year in which such player participates in his or her first local league is what players currently know and it is less confusing than the proposed amended rule.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of opposing this proposed rule change for 1.04 E(3).

d. Self-Rates for National Teams – Limit Teams to a maximum of 2 self-rated players.

The Committee reviewed the proposal to limit National teams to a maximum of 2 self-rated players per team. It was noted that Staff unanimously opposes this proposed rule change. During the discussion, the Committee agreed with the staff recommendation; however, the ALC felt that the overall rating issue and players playing out of level is a larger, broader issue that needs to be looked at as a whole. The Committee indicated that they would like to send this back to National to take a deeper look at the rating

system. It was also noted that adding a rule to limit teams that go to Nationals to a maximum of 2 self-rated players is a small change that does not truly address the bigger issue.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of opposing this proposed rule change to limit teams going to Nationals to a maximum of 2 self-rated players.

e. 2.01A(4) Option to have straight level Mixed Doubles for Sectionals.

The Committee reviewed the proposed rule change to allow sections to have the option to have straight level mixed doubles through the Sectional Championships and then adhere to the "combined" rating when they advance to the USTA National Mixed Doubles League Championships. It was noted that staff unanimously opposes of this proposed rule change. During discussion, the ALC agreed to support Staff's recommendation to oppose but suggested that straight level be piloted to determined participation levels.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of opposing this proposed rule change for 2.01A(4).

f. 2.03L Scoring of Full Team Defaults.

The ALC discussed the rule change proposal to allow each Section to decide that, in an event of a full team default, to file a grievance on the defaulting team and also choose that "All matches of the defaulting team already played shall be null and void when determining standings but will be used for ratings and advancement purposes. If all teams with a mathematical chance to advance have played the defaulting team in good faith, those matches shall stand as played when determining standings." Staff unanimously approves this rule as this gives Sections the option to choose to change or keep the current rule.

Following is the proposed rule change (stricken out language is proposed deletion and underlined language is proposed addition:

2.03L Scoring of Full Team Defaults. If a team defaults an entire team match for any reason during round robin play, that team is ineligible to continue play at that championship. ~~All matches of the defaulting team already played shall be null and void when determining standings but will be used for ratings and advancement purposes. If all teams with a mathematical chance to advance have played the defaulting team in good faith, those matches shall stand as played when determining standings.~~ The Sectional Association "or Championship Committee" may impose further penalties on the defaulting team. file a General Grievance on the defaulting team. The Sectional Association may choose the following: All matches of the defaulting team already played shall be null and void when determining standings but will be used for ratings and advancement purposes. If all teams with a mathematical chance to advance have played the defaulting team in good faith, those matches shall stand as played when determining standings.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of approving this proposed rule change for 2.03L.

g. 2.04 (B)5 Players who receive their third strike while playing early leagues.

It was explained to the Committee that it is being proposed that players who receive their third strike while participating in an Early Start League (ESL) must immediately adjust their NTRP level of play however, they may participate at the disqualified NTRP level in a previous year's championship for which they may have qualified. It was noted that currently if players strike out in an Early Start League, they may not participate at the disqualified NTRP level in a previous year's championship for which they may have qualified. It was also noted that Staff approves this rule as it is player friendly that if early start players qualified for a previous year's championship, they should be able to participate. Early start counts for the next year. During the discussion, it was noted that ALC saw the pros and cons of this proposed rule change. The Committee feels that more consideration should be taken before making this decision.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to abstain from supporting or opposing this proposed rule change on the National call.

h. 2.05B3(b-c) Players that are found to have a valid computer rating that places them at a higher level at which they are competing.

The ALC reviewed the rule change proposal to allow players that are playing in an early start league that get promoted when the year-end ratings are released to participate at the disqualified NTRP level in a previous year's championship for which they may have qualified. It was noted that currently, if a player gets promoted while playing an early start league, the player is not able to continue playing at the lower

level at Nationals. It was also noted that Staff approves of this proposed rule change as the players come against the year-end rating before the regular season would. Staff feels that this is punishing early start players from continuing a great season. During the discussion, it was noted that NorCal currently has a section specific rule that is more lenient than the current rule but stricter than the proposed rule change. The current NorCal rule is "In early start leagues, players may continue their participation at the lower NTRP level through the conclusion of Sectional Championships UNLESS their year-end rating reached the clearly above level mark." It was noted during the discussion that ALC saw the pros and cons of this proposed rule change. The Committee feels that more consideration should be taken before making this decision.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to abstain from supporting or opposing rule change on the National call.

i. 2.05D(1) Review Process of Medical Appeals.

The ALC reviewed the proposal to amend the Medical Appeal Process outlined in the National Regulations to remove the step of having the medical appeal that Section Medical Review Committee feels need further action to forward to the National Medical Appeal Committee for a final decision. Currently, the Section Medical Appeal Committee may deny a medical appeal and that decision is final and binding but if the Committee wants to approve a medical appeal, the medical appeal would need to be sent the National Medical Appeal Committee for them to review and make a decision. It was noted that Staff unanimously approves this proposed rule change as medical appeals that need further review by the National Medical Appeal Committee currently take about 2 months.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of approving this proposed rule change for 2.05D(1).

j. 2.06A Split-Up

The Committee reviewed the proposed rule change to the Split-Up Rule. Currently, the rule states "No more than three (3) players who were on the roster of any team that advanced to, or qualified for any National Championship team the previous year may play together in the same Division, same Age Group and at the same NTRP team level as the National Championship team(s), if their NTRP rating allows." The proposed change would only have the Split-Up Rule apply to the final four teams on championship Sunday. It was noted that Staff unanimously opposes this rule because not splitting up teams that qualify for nationals will allow for the same strong teams to qualify for future Nationals which would not encourage fair play and may cause other teams not to participate.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of opposing this proposed rule change for 2.06A.

k. 1.04D(5) Two Team Leagues

The ALC reviewed the proposal to amend the two team leagues rule to give the section the opportunity to determine the percentage of players at the designated NTRP level of play between 40% to 100%. The current rule states "If any Adult Division Age Group consists of only two teams in a level of play, each team must maintain its roster with at least 40 percent of its players at the designated NTRP level of play." It was noted that Staff unanimously approves this proposed rule change because this rule change is giving Sections the option to determine the percentage of players at the designated NTRP level of play between 40% and 100% but the section can choose to keep the 40% that is currently in place.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of approving this proposed rule change for 1.04D(5).

l. Adult 40+ League. Adult 40+ 4.5"+

The ALC reviewed the proposal to amend the rules to make the 4.5 division in the Adult 40+ League a 4.5+. It was noted that Staff unanimously approves this proposed rule change as this would promote play for the higher level players but is also level based conscious for the league.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of approving this proposed rule change to make the 4.5 division in the Adult 40+ League to again make it a 4.5+ league.

m. Adult 40 League – Allowing two 5.0s per team

The ALC reviewed the proposal to amend the regulations to allow two 5.0s per team in the 40 and over 4.5 division with only one 5.0 being able to play per match and only at the first singles or first doubles spot. It

was noted that Staff unanimously approves this proposed rule change as this promotes play for higher level players but is also level based conscious for the league.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of approving this proposed rule change of allowing two 5.0s per team for the Adult 40+ 4.5+ division.

n. Increase Time for Valid Rating

The Committee reviewed the proposal to increase the time a NTRP rating is valid from two to three years for individuals 60 years of age or older prior to or during the League Year and from three to five years for individuals 59 years of age or under, or until another valid NTRP rating level is generated. It was noted that Staff unanimously opposes this proposed rule change as they believe that 5 years is too long.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of opposing this proposed rule change regarding increased time for Valid Rating. It was agreed that Staff would make the recommendation to make the time frame 3 years regardless of age.

o. Limited Self-rates at Sectionals and below

The Committee reviewed the following proposal to limit self-rates at Sectionals and below.

Proposal:

Adult 18 & Over 3.0-4.5, 5 Courts- Up to 3 self rated players may participate in a team match.
Adult 40 & Over 3.0-4.5, 4 Courts- Up to 3 self rated players may participate in a team match.
Adult 55 & Over 6.0-9.0, 3 Courts- Up to 2 self rated players may participate in a team match.
Mixed 18 & Over 6.0-10.0, 3 Courts- Up to 2 self rated players may participate in a team match.
Mixed 40 & Over 6.0-9.0, 3 Courts- Up to 2 self rated players may participate in a team match.

It was noted that Staff unanimously opposes this proposed rule change because of the need to promote play and such restrictions may make it hard for captains to field teams and matches. It also makes it harder for self-rated players to get enough matches for post season eligibility with this proposed rule. For adult leagues, self-rated players will have the opportunity to DQ and maybe dynamic calculations should be run for all leagues. During the discussion, it was again noted that this is a bigger issue and that the ALC suggests that National look at the overall NTRP rating system as a whole.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to abstain from supporting or opposing this proposed rule change on the National call. The Committee asked that Staff inform National that self-rate issues need to be addressed on the whole rather than piecemeal.

p. Scoring from Full Team Retirements

The Committee reviewed the proposal stating:

If a team retires an entire team match for any reason during round robin play, that team is ineligible to continue play at that championship. All matches of the retiring team already played shall be null and void when determining standings but will be used for ratings and advancement purposes. Furthermore, the full team retirement will be considered as "poor sportsmanship" and could be sanctioned accordingly. If all teams with a mathematical chance to advance have played the retiring team in good faith, those matches shall stand as played when determining standings.

It was noted that Staff unanimously abstains from this vote because Staff believes that the rule needs to be rewritten for clarification. Staff has questions such as why is it an entire team match? What happens if you only have 2 retirements and a default? Staff also thinks that something needs to be done when a team wins a match and still has a match on court and the match on court retires to save themselves for the next match.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the Staff recommendation of abstaining from voting on this proposed rule change.

3. ACES Awards Recommendations

Staff presented the ACES Awards recommendations to the Committee. It was noted that recommendations were made based on the current awards criteria passed by the Committee.

Following discussion, with a motion was duly made and seconded and by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions, the recommendations in the following categories were approved:

League Facility of the Year
Local League Area Coordinator of the Year
Service to Leagues
League Volunteer of the Year
Adult League Captain of the Year (15 captains, 1 captain per area)

4. 3.03B(4)a Scoring of Eligibility Disqualification in Local League.

Staff informed the Committee that a 2023 National Rule Change now gives the Sections the option on when all matches played by the disqualified player shall be considered defaults and those matches shall be considered wins for the opposing players or doubles teams and scored 6-0, 6-0 for determining standings if it is discovered between 24 hours to 14 days after the end of the local league season. The Section option is to pick a time of when those matches shall be considered wins for the opposing players or doubles teams and scored 6-0, 6-0 for determining standings. Staff noted that the previous rule was 24 hours. It was explained to the ALC that National is giving Sections a choice, Section have to make a choice. It was explained that 24 hours is a good timeframe because 1) this is what the NorCal rule has been and there have been no issues, and 2) playoffs typically begin a week or two after the local league season which issues have to be addressed immediately.

During discussion it was mentioned that the ALC can go with the 24 hour rule for now but can also make a rule change at a later time.

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

RESOLVED: That effective immediately, the rule is being amended as follows (underlined language is proposed addition.)

3.03B(4) Scoring of Eligibility Disqualification in Local League.

3.03B(4)a In the event of an eligibility disqualification during the local league season **and up to a maximum of 14 days** after the end of the local league season, **but prior to any playoff**, all matches played by the disqualified player shall be considered defaults and those matches shall be considered wins for the opposing players or doubles teams and scored 6-0, 6-0 for determining standings. **Sections must determine the timeframe between 24 hours and 14 days.** The ineligible player will not be allowed to continue or advance. In case of an eligibility disqualification in single elimination, the last individual match played by the disqualified player shall be considered a win for the opposing player or doubles team and scored 6-0, 6-0 for determining standings. If a double disqualification results in a tie, the local tiebreak procedure shall be used to determine the winner of the team match. If no such local tiebreak procedure exists, Reg. 2.03H Procedures in the Event of a Tie shall be used in order to determine a winner of the team match.

(NorCal LLAR) NorCal chooses the timeframe of 24 hours after the end of the local league season for eligibility disqualifications to affect the scoring of local league matches in 3.03B(4)a.

Rationale: Being that playoffs typically start 1-2 weeks after the end of the local league season, there is little time to consider match reversals due to ineligibility defaults after the completion of the local league season. Reversing matches not only affects the team with the ineligible player but could potentially affect standings which could impact playoffs. The red lettering is showing what National added to the National Rule that has already been passed by National.

5. 2.06B Section Options for Move-Up/Split-Up.

It was explained to the ALC that there has been confusion on the Move-Up/Split-Up Rule as to whether it applies to just a league or the division that advances to Nationals. For example, a team goes to the Nationals in the Adult 18 & Over Women's 3.5 Division. When it came time for registering for the Adult 40 & Over Women's 3.5 Division, it was unclear whether the Rule applied to the league or division. It was clarified that the Rule only applies to the League and Division which advances to Nationals. The ALC agreed that amendments could be made to local rules now for further clarification but will defer those for when the Committee does a review of its local regulations.

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

RESOLVED: That effective immediately, the following rule is being amended as follows (stricken out language is proposed deletion and underlined language is proposed addition.)

2.06B Section Options for Move-Up/Split-Up.

2.06B(1) All Championships Below Nationals. Sections shall have the right to decide whether a team who competes at any championship level below the National Championships must move-up or disperse to form new teams for the next championship year and under what conditions.

NorCal LLAR) USTA NorCal Options. USTA NorCal additionally applies the Move-Up/Split-Up Rule in the following leagues that end at sectionals: Combo Doubles, Mixed 55 & Over, Adult 65 & Over, Adult 18 & Over (2.5 men only) Mixed 18 & Over (combined 5.0 only).

(NorCal LLAR) USTA NorCal Options – Exempt Teams. Teams in the following divisions are exempt from the Move Up/Split Up rule:

Adult DAYTIME Leagues

Adult 18 & Over 5.5+

Adult 40 & Over Men's 2.5+

Adult 40 & Over 5.0+

NorCal Adult 70 & Over

NorCal Combo 10.0+

NorCal Mixed 55 9.0

2.06B(2) Sections shall have the option to restrict crossover between Adult and Mixed Divisions and/or between some or all Age Groups notwithstanding Section 2.06A.

(NorCal LLAR) USTA NorCal Options. USTA NorCal does not restrict crossover between Adult and Mixed Divisions and/or between some or All Age Groups notwithstanding Section 2.06A. USTA NorCal additionally applies the Move Up/Split Up Rule in the following leagues that end at sectionals: Combo Doubles, Mixed 55 & Over, Adult 18 & Over (2.5 men only) Mixed 18 & Over (combined 5.0 only).

(NorCal LLAR) USTA NorCal Options – Exempt Teams. Teams in the following divisions are exempt from the Move Up/Split Up rule:

Adult DAYTIME Leagues

Adult 18 & Over 5.5+

Adult 40 & Over Men's 2.5+

Adult 40 & Over 5.0+

Adult 65 & Over

NorCal Adult 70 & Over

NorCal Combo 10.0+

NorCal Mixed 55 9.0

Rationale: The NorCal LLAR regarding which NorCal leagues are included in the Move Up/Split Up Rule and which are exempted needed to be moved to under **2.06B(1) All Championships Below Nationals** because that is the rule that refers to sections having the right to decide whether a team who competes at any championship level below the National Championships must move-up or disperse to form new teams for the next championship year and under what conditions. In addition, Adult 65 & Over was moved from exempt from Move Up/Split up rule to having the Move Up/Split Up rule apply because the Adult 65&Over Division now advances to a National Invitational. Additionally, a NorCal LLAR has been added to 2.06B(2) identifying that USTA NorCal does not restrict crossover between Adult and Mixed Divisions and/or between some or All Age Groups.

6. Seeding-Placing Teams at USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Sectional Events. The review of the Seeding-Placing Teams at USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Sectional Events was tabled until the next meeting.

There being no further issues or discussion to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 pm.