

Minutes of the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Committee Meeting Monday, November 25, 2024

NOTE: All resolutions in these minutes were approved by the USTA NorCal Board as of December 11, 2024.

NOTE: These minutes were approved on March 31, 2025.

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, Michelle Nicholson, Tuesdai Powers, and Paul Startz

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Michelle Wilson

Guest Present: Sarah Robinson

1. 2026 National Regulations Proposals

1) 2.01D Coaching – Allow teammate coaching during set changeovers

The Committee reviewed the proposal to allow coaching during set changeovers.

Following is the proposed change (language to be deleted in [brackets] and language to be added in "quotation marks.")

Players "are permitted" [shall not] to receive coaching during a match "by a USTA teammate" [except] during authorized breaks or as otherwise permitted by the rules of a specific tournament or event."

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to not support the rule change proposal to allow players to receive coaching during a match by a USTA teammate during authorized breaks or as otherwise permitted by the rules of a specific tournament or event.

Rationale: This proposal would be impossible to monitor and would, among other things, likely delay matches. It is further complicated without having officials on site to enforce the rules around coaching.

2) Methodology - Eliminate altogether the "auto process" for players who file a self-rate appeal.

The Committee reviewed the proposal to eliminate altogether the "auto process" for players who file a self-rate appeal. It was noted that the current process in place allows for the automatic appeals one level lower for "S" players (3.5 and below) that are new to the league program

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal of eliminating altogether the "auto process" for players who file a self-rate appeal.

Rationale: The Committee is not in favor of automatic appeals as this creates abuse and it is an unknown auto process that often results in players being underrated. It also questions the integrity of the system if an auto process is known and available.

3) Methodology – Start Rates for Granted Appealed Players.

The Committee discussed the proposal to have all granted appealed Computer-Rated player's start rates to be kept at their last dynamic rating generated, and not the assigned start rate.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal of having all granted appealed Computer-Rated player's start rates be kept at their last dynamic rating generated, and not the assigned start rate.

Rationale: Having players use their last dynamic rating generated will make play more fair to partners and opponents as they would be starting at the dynamic they earned not the defined start rate of the level they

appealed to which was granted. Their opponent's ratings would also be calculated more fairly as calculations against the granted appealed player would also be according to their last dynamic.

4) NTRP Dynamic Disqualification Table in Methodology

Staff explained to the ALC that this proposal is to add Computer and Mixed rated players as players who can be dynamically disqualified. As the Committee discussed this proposal, there were some who saw a benefit of having Computer-Rated players and Mixed-Rated players being able to be dynamically disqualified as it would be a step in the right direction to address some of the current rating issues as Computer-Rated players would no longer be safe dynamic disqualification. The Committee also realized this would not solve all of the rating problems. There were also some who were concerned that the proposed rule change would affect players who might naturally be playing well and not using any gamesmanship.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 1 opposed and 1 abstention (Birkenseer) to support the rule change proposal of adding Computer and Mixed rated players as players that can be dynamically disqualified.

Rationale: The ALC agrees that something needs to be done about players gaming the system. However, the Committee believes this is just one of potentially many ways to solve the problem.

5) 1.04 A – Include Red Ball/Foam Ball play opportunity

The Committee discussed the proposal to include Red Ball/Foam Ball play in the National Regulations as a league play opportunity.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal to include Red Ball/Foam Ball play in the National Regulations as a league play opportunity.

Rationale: This gives an entry way into League tennis by recognizing Red Ball/Foam Ball Tennis play.

6) 1.04E (3) – Clarify that players must be 18 years of age prior to "registering and/or" participating in the USTA League program

Staff explained to the ALC that it is being proposed to adjust the wording in the regulations to require that players must be 18 years of age prior to registering and/or participating in the USTA League program. It was noted that under the current rule, players could register before they turn 18 as long as they turn 18 before the scheduled start date of the league. It was also mentioned that if a Local League Coordinator changes the league dates to start earlier after a player registers, there would not be an easy way to identify if a player would be 17 at the start of the league with the new dates.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal of requiring a player to be 18 years of age prior to registering in a USTA League Program.

Rationale: Requiring players to be 18 years of age prior to registering in a USTA League Program would help to ensure that all players are 18 when they start playing Adult Leagues and would address Safe Play concerns.

7) 1.06G (4) – Adding language to allow a section to require a captain who qualifies to represent more than one team in championships in the same age group and NTRP level to choose which team he or she will represent."

The ALC reviewed a rule change proposal to allow a section to require a captain who qualifies to represent more than one team in Championships in the same age group and NTRP level to choose which team he or she will represent. During the discussion, Staff informed the Committee that currently NorCal does not allow a captain to manage or represent more than one team in a NTRP level within an age group during the same season. It was further noted that our current NorCal system helps to manage this.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal to allow a section to require a captain who qualifies to represent more

than one team in championships in the same age group and NTRP level to choose which team he or she will represent.

Rationale: Currently NorCal operates as suggested in the proposal. The way this rule is being proposed, it would be a section option. Also, if a captain qualifies to represent more than one team in Championships in the same age group and NTRP level, requiring the captain to choose which team to represent decreases the likeliness of gamesmanship. By allowing a captain to captain two teams, would give the captain the ability to make one team weaker than the other and it may be awkward if the two teams play each other.

8) 2.01D Coaching – Clarifying when coaching is allowed

It was explained to the Committee that a rule change proposal was submitted to help clarify when coaching is allowed. During discussion, Staff mentioned that there have been a number of situations where players have been confused about when coaching is allowed.

Following is the propose change (language to be deleted in [brackets] and language to be added in "quotation marks.")

2.01D Coaching. [When the scoring method is the best of three tiebreak sets and a 10 minute rest period is taken between the second and third sets, coaching is permitted only during this rest period.] " Coaching is not permitted unless the scoring method is the best of three tiebreak sets and a 10 minute rest period is provided between the second and third sets. Coaching is permitted only during this rest period"

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the proposed rule change to help clarify when coaching is allowed. The Committee also suggests further clarification that coaching is permitted only when a full third set is played at one set all; not a 10-point tie breaker.

Rationale: There are captains/players that do not understand when they can coach or receive coaching. It is good to clarify the rule and make it clear that coaching is only allowed when the scoring method is best of three tiebreak sets (a full third set rather than a 10-point match tiebreak).

9) 2.03 A(5) – Proposal to increase the minimum number of players required on a team at all championships to 1 player above the minimum number of players to field all lines and not display a specific number needed if a waiver is being requested.

The ALC reviewed a rule change proposal to increase the minimum number of players required on a team at all Championships to 1 player above the minimum number of players to field all lines and not display a specific number needed if a waiver is being requested. During the discussion, Staff explained that there has been an increase in teams attending Championships that do not have enough players and opponents are experiencing defaults which is unfair to all. It was also explained that waivers mentioned should not advertise ANY number allowed as the captains interpret that to be an okay number of players to attend even though they have not notified us or requested an official waiver.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to abstain from voting.

Rationale: Increasing the minimum number of players required on a team at all Championships by 1 player above the minimum number of players to field all lines does not resolve the problem but may reduce the number of defaults. There were also concerns of how this would be enforced as teams could register at least one 1 player above the minimum number of players to field all lines but it would be hard to track who is on site the day of play.

10) 2.03A(5) – If teams attend short of the required number of players without notification to the Championship Committee prior to arrival at Team Check In, the team and all the players may not be allowed to play in the championship.

The Committee discussed the proposal to not allow a team that attends a Championship short of the required number of players without notification to the Championship Committee prior to arrival at team check-in to play in the Championship. Concerns were raised about players possibly needing to withdraw at the last minute due to injury or illness, or due to circumstances beyond a player's control. The Committee felt removing a whole team from the Sectionals with no alternates would create several negative impacts.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 7 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to not support the rule change proposal of not allowing a team that attends a Championship short of the required number of players without notification to the Championship Committee prior to arrival at team check-in to play in the Championship.

Rationale: This proposal is overly punitive and does not take into account situations that do come up beyond a player's control.

Due to the time of the meeting, the Committee agreed to address the remaining National Regulations proposals as well as the Adult League Awards Criteria at the next Adult League Committee meeting scheduled for December 9.

There being no further issues or discussion to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 pm.