

Minutes of the USTA NorCal Adult Leagues Committee Meeting Monday, December 9, 2024

NOTE: *All resolutions in these minutes with the exception of the Adult League Sportsmanship Awards Program were approved by the USTA NorCal Board as of December 11, 2024. The Adult League Sportsmanship Awards Program was approved by the USTA NorCal Board as of January 15, 2025,*

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 6:34 pm and roll call was conducted. The meeting was held by Google Meet video conference.

Committee Members Present: Christine Costamagna (chair), Andrea Barnes, Jeff Birkenseer, Michelle Nicholson and Paul Startz

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Michelle Wilson (Sr. Manager, Adult Competition)

Guests Present: Sarah Robinson

1. 2026 National Regulations Proposals

1) 2.04B - NTRP Dynamic Disqualifications processed through all championships including [at] National Championships.

The Committee reviewed the proposal to process NTRP Dynamic disqualifications through all championships including at National Championships.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal to process NTRP Dynamic disqualifications through all championships include at National Championships.

Rationale: Rules need to be put in place to help with players being in level.

2) 2.05B3(c) Remove rule stating that players on a 2.5 team who are found to have valid computer ratings, after the appeal process, that place them higher than the 2.5 NTRP level may continue their participation through all championships at the 2.5 level UNLESS their year-end rating reached the clearly above level mark. If it did, they must immediately adjust to their new NTRP level. Prior team matches played are valid.

The Committee reviewed the proposal to remove the rule of allowing 2.5 players who are found to have a valid computer rating after the appeal process that allow them to still complete at Nationals if their year-end rating did not reach the clearly above level mark. It was noted that if players in other division that played an early start league received a rating higher than the level they started playing the early start league at, the player could continue playing the league through the Section Championships unless their year-end rating reached the clearly above level mark; however, they could not play in Nationals if their team advanced.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the proposal to remove the rule stating that players on a 2.5 team who are found to have valid computer ratings, after the appeal process, that place them higher than the 2.5 NTRP level may continue their participation through all championships at the 2.5 level UNLESS their year-end rating reached the clearly above level mark. If it did, they must immediately adjust to their new NTRP level. Prior team matches played are valid.

Rationale: This will help keep the 2.5 league more fair.

3) 2.06A Teams and team members that advanced to, or qualified for, any National Championship may play together as a team, in whole or in part, if they participate at their current level, but declare that they are exempt from post-season play."

The Committee reviewed the proposal to allow teams and team members that advanced to, or qualified for, any National Championship to play together as a team, in whole or in part, if they participate at their current level, but declare that they are exempt from post-season play.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to not support the rule change proposal of allowing teams and team members that advanced to, or qualified for, any National Championship to play together as a team, in whole or in part, if they participate at their current level, but declare that they are exempt from post-season play

Rationale: This would not make a good experience for local league. Move up/Split up is healthy.

4) 2.07 Championship Players – Expanding the rule to not allow any players that play in National Championships to appeal their rating the championship year that it is received.

The Committee discussed proposal of expanding the rule not allow any players that play in National Championships to appeal their rating the championship year that it is received.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support expanding the rule to not allow any players that play in National Championships to appeal their rating the championship year that it is received. Feedback was also given that players should not be able to appeal down but should be able to appeal up.

Rationale: If players advance to Nationals in a straight level league, their lowest rating should be what they went to Nationals at and be provided a benchmark. This will also help to keep the ratings more fair.

5) 3.03A(2) A and 3.03A(3) - An Administrative Grievance shall be filed within [one year] "90 days of the most recent" [of the] incident leading to the grievance, or the grievance shall be barred.

Staff explained to the ALC under the current rules a captain has one year to file an Administrative Grievance. It is being proposed to change the one year to 90 days of the most recent incident leading up to the grievance.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal to change the time frame of when an Administrative Grievance can be filed from one year to 90 days.

Rationale: If someone wants to file an administrative grievance, they should do it as soon as possible. By doing it as soon as possible, it would be fresh in everyone's minds. The sooner an administrative grievance is filed, the sooner that it could be addressed.

6) 3.03A Proposing to add "Regardless of any other regulation, a section league Grievance Committee may decide to hear and decide on any grievance at the local and district level."

Staff explained to the Committee that it is being proposed to add a regulation to allow a section league Grievance Committee to decide to hear and decide on any grievance at the local or district level. The example that was given of when a Section League Grievance Committee may hear and decide on any grievance at the local or district level is when there may be conflict of interest if all committee members know the parties involved in the grievance. During discussion it was mentioned that this proposed rule addition would not currently apply to NorCal because NorCal does not have any districts. The Committee also felt that more information was needed to make a decision.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to abstain from voting on the proposal to add "Regardless of any other regulation, a section league Grievance Committee may decide to hear and decide on any grievance at the local and district level." to the regulations.

Rationale: The proposed rule change does not apply to NorCal and the Committee feels more information is needed.

7) Section League Leadership

The ALC reviewed a rule change proposal to the term Section Leadership to the glossary of the league regulations as follows:

Section League Leadership: A committee, task force or subcommittee appointed by the Sectional Association to provide support in the implementation and administration of the USTA League at the Section level. Specific titles are at the discretion of Sections and may vary.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to not support the rule change proposal to add a Section League Leadership term to the glossary.

Rationale: There is a lack of information for this proposal and NorCal already has an Adult League Committee that handles this.

8) 3.04 Grievance Appeals

It was explained to the Committee that a rule change proposal was submitted to help clarify to the players when a grievance appeal should be submitted.

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

New Language is in blue, old language to be removed is struck out.

3.04 GRIEVANCE APPEALS.

3.04A General Procedures.

3.04A(1) Any party(ies) to the grievance may appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee within the time fixed by the Grievance Committee "in accordance with Reg.3.04A(3)". Upon receipt of an appeal of the decision of the Grievance Committee, the Grievance Appeal Committee shall act promptly to resolve the appeal.

3.04A(2) The party(ies) appealing shall file a written notice of appeal with the appropriate coordinator or designee, who shall send it to the Chair of the appropriate Grievance Appeal Committee, the Chair of the Grievance Committee whose decision is being appealed, the Local, District or Sectional League Coordinator, and to the other party(ies) involved in the grievance.

3.04A(3) The party(ies) appealing shall have an opportunity to submit, in writing, "new" facts and arguments in support of their respective positions. All information submitted shall be provided to all parties. "Grievance Appeals will only be accepted if they meet at least one of the criteria of Reg. 3.04A(3)a, 3.04A(3)b, or 3.04A(3)c"

3.04A(3)a A hearing was not held during the initial Grievance Process and is now being requested, based solely on new information. The Grievance Appeal form should include a summary of the new information being submitted and the Grievance Appeals Committee has the right to accept or reject the hearing request in its absolute discretion, if deemed appropriate.

3.04A(3)b Grievance Procedures outlined in USTA League Regulation 3.00 were not followed by the Grievance Committee. A detailed explanation must be included in the Grievance Appeal form outlining which Grievance Procedures were not followed.

3.04A(3)c A hearing was held during the initial Grievance Process and Grievance Procedures outlined in USTA League Regulation 3.00 were followed, however new facts and arguments are being submitted by the appealing party(ies). The Grievance Appeal form should include a summary of the new information being submitted and the Grievance Appeals Committee has the right to accept or reject the appeal request in its absolute discretion, if deemed appropriate.

3.04A(4) Play During Grievance Appeal Procedures.

3.04A(4)a If the grievance was upheld, the individual is subject to all penalties imposed by the Grievance Committee during the appeal process.

3.04A(4)b If the grievance was dismissed or denied and then appealed, the party(ies) may participate during the appeal process but must understand that the decision of the Grievance Committee may be remanded for reconsideration.

3.04B Grievance Appeal Committee Action.

3.04B(1) The Grievance Appeal Committee shall not be required to hold any hearing except as provided in Reg. 3.04B(2). Its decision may be based entirely on the findings of fact by the Grievance Committee whose decision is being appealed and on the facts and arguments submitted in writing by the party(ies) to the appeal.

3.04B(2) If the Grievance Committee did not hold a hearing, the Grievance Appeal Committee shall do so, provided any party involved in the grievance so requests in writing and "new information is submitted." However, the committee "may accept or reject the hearing request", hear such further evidence as it, in its absolute discretion, deems appropriate.

From the Grievance Checklist:

The Committee is required to hold a hearing if requested, in writing, by any party and if none was held by the Grievance Committee "and new information is submitted." However, the Grievance Appeal Committee "may accept or reject the hearing request", hear such further evidence as it, in its absolute discretion, deems appropriate.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal helping clarify to the players when a grievance appeal should be submitted.

Rationale: The rule change proposal adds clarity to something that we already do.

9) 3.04B(3) Clarification in the rules that once a grievance is remanded, the whole process starts over again so that all committees are handling it the same way.

The Committee reviewed a rule change proposal to clarify that once a grievance is remanded, the whole process starts over again so that all committees are handling it the same way.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to support the rule change proposal clarifying that once a grievance is remanded, the whole process starts over again so that all committees are handling it the same way.

Rationale: This makes sense and would make the process clear and uniform through the country.

10) Q and A- Proposer is requesting that National reg sub and NAG discuss this practice of players being able to have more than 1 rating at the same time.

The Committee discussed the proposal requesting that National reg sub and NAG discuss this practice of players being able to have more than 1 rating at the same time. During discussion, it was mentioned that this is referring to if a player is playing in a league and mid-season his/her rating expires and the player needs to self-rate to play in another league and the player self-rates higher and continues to finish the league at the lower level he/she is currently playing at but then needs to play future leagues at the new level.

Following discussion, a straw vote was taken with a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed and 0 abstentions to abstain from voting on the proposal requesting that National reg sub and NAG discuss this practice of players being able to have more than 1 rating at the same time.

Rationale: This proposal is a little unclear. The National reg sub and NAG can discuss what they want.

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.

2. **(NorCal LLAR) Dynamic Ratings at Championships.** When discussing the 2026 regulation proposal to process NTRP Dynamic disqualifications through all championships including at National Championships, the Committee was informed of the section options on when a section can run dynamic calculations throughout championships. The Committee was made aware that NorCal run dynamic calculations and will produce ratings throughout the playoffs championship but will run dynamic calculations following the conclusion of the Sectional championship event. During discussion the committee discussed running dynamic calculations throughout Sectionals to make things more fair and to add another step in helping to address the current rating concerns. The concern of players going all the way to Sectionals and paying expenses to get there to play were also discussed.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That, effective with the 2025 League season the ((NorCal LLAR) Dynamic Ratings at Championships be amended as follows (Stricken-through language is the proposed deletion and underlined language is the 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)a for Playoffs and Sectionals and will run dynamic calculations and will produce ratings throughout the playoffs and sectionals 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.~~In the event of an NTRP Dynamic Disqualification from a particular level of play, all matches that the DQ'd player played in, 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: The helps to ensure that players are playing in the correct level and keeps championships more fair. This is also a step toward address players concerns regarding rating.

3. **Adult League Sportsmanship Awards Program.** An Adult League Sportsmanship Award Program was presented to the Adult League Committee. The program includes NorCal recognizing a nominated player for good sportsmanship monthly and recognizing good sportsmanship at Sectional events. Staff mentioned that it would be nice to have a NorCal sportsmanship pin to award at Sectionals that is different than the National pin. The ALC also discussed how nominations at Sectionals may possibly be collected and whether Match Team Tennis App may be able to assist with this.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That, effective with the 2025 League season the Adult League Sportsmanship Awards Program be approved as Exhibit A

RESOLVED FURTHER: The Adult League Committee also requests from the Budget Committee \$3300 to support the Adult League Sportsmanship Awards Program for 2025 as described in Exhibit A

Rationale: Having a Sportsmanship Awards Program throughout the year, will help to promote and reward good sportsmanship.

Michelle Nicholson left the call at 8:10pm

- 4. 2024 Adult Leagues Awards Criteria.** The Committee reviewed the 2024 Adult League Awards and criteria that was presented. They discussed each award and the criteria.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 5 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That the 2024 Adult Leagues Awards and Criteria be approved as Exhibit B with the following 2023 awards being removed:

Best Win/Loss Ratio

Most Matches Played At Sectionals

Total number of time captaining a team to Sectional Championships

Rationale: The Committee reviewed the 2023 Adult Competition Awards Ceremony and the 2023 Adult League Awards and made changes to attempt to make the awards more meaningful and to place more emphasis on effort and service to leagues in addition to performance.

There being no further matters to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 pm.

EXHIBIT A

Adult League Sportsmanship Awards Program

USTA NorCal wants to focus on sportsmanship in the Adult Leagues program. To accomplish this, USTA NorCal wants to launch a sportsmanship program that recognizes great sportsmanship experienced at league events.

Proposal

1) Local League (12 - \$25 gift cards)

Players submit sportsmanship nominations year around for examples of great sportsmanship experienced during local league matches. Each month, NorCal recognize a nominated player with the sportsmanship recognition. For 2025, selected players would get a \$25 Tennis Warehouse gift card (on hand). For beyond 2025, gift card to the NorCal e-store would be given. The selected player would also be spotlighted on the website and/or in the Adult League monthly email. Other examples of great sportsmanship for those not selected may also be featured.

2) Sectionals

A. Pins – Give players the opportunity to nominate other players for great sportsmanship after their match or even during the event. The player nominating would complete a form after the match is over of how the player displayed great sportsmanship and the player displaying great sportsmanship would receive a pin. (Roughly 28 sites X 25 pins per site = 700 pins X \$4 per pin = \$2800)

B. At the end of the event for each division, recognize a player who exhibited great sportsmanship during the event. Players, officials, and staff would cast votes with the ultimate decision being made by the Event Committee onsite (site Lead, tournament desk staff, and umpires). Sportsmanship Award winners would receive the backpack that is yearly sponsored by Penn.

Overall Budget Impact

Year 1 - \$2800 for sportsmanship award pins. \$500 shipping cost to possibly ship out the backpacks if the player has already left the site. (Tennis Warehouse gift cards are already in hand and backpacks are sponsored by Penn through a National program.). Total Budget is \$3300.

Rationale

Currently, for Adult Leagues, the only sportsmanship award given is at the Annual Adult Competition Awards. Awarding more sportsmanship awards throughout the year will encourage great sportsmanship and will regularly recognize players which places an emphasis and focus on great sportsmanship. The impact on the budget for 2025 is \$3300 for this proposed program.

EXHIBIT B

Adult League Awards – Facility and Volunteers

Award Description	Eligibility Criteria	Process
League Facilities of the Year: Awarded annually to a League Facility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts at least 10 USTA NorCal Adult Leagues teams during the year • Offers to host a League Sectional Event • Facility and teams playing out of the facility be in good standing with USTA NorCal • Recipient cannot have been serving a probation or suspension within the last 12 months • Cannot win award 2 years in a row 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
Local League Area Coordinator of the Year: Awarded annually to a Local Area Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with League emails and show initiatives to resolve issues on behalf of the league staff. • Volunteer at League Events • Cannot win award 2 years in a row 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
Service to Leagues: Awarded annually to an individual who volunteers with Adult Leagues Staff Pick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goes above and beyond to make Adult Leagues better (i.e. length of service to leagues, years played, regular volunteer at league sectionals, etc.) • Cannot win award 2 years in a row 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
League Volunteer of the Year Staff Pick	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer time/efforts to make improving Adult Leagues • Volunteer time/efforts to increase Adult League numbers • Cannot win award 2 years in a row 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>

*** The Adult League Committee reserves the right to not select a recipient in any given category in any given year.

Adult League Awards Criteria - Players

Award Description	Eligibility Criteria	Process
Impact Player of The Year Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have played 15 matches in the calendar year (includes all NorCal Adult League programs excluding Flex Leagues.) • Most times advancing to Sectionals • Submission count and content of Sportsmanship awards • Could not have been DQed in the Championship season • Volunteer time within the community • Helping to grow tennis and the league program • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal. 	<i>Based off nominations. After the nomination deadline, staff will review nominations along with criteria and submit eligible candidates to the Adult League Committee to vote on.</i>
Most Matches Played: Awarded annually to one male and one female league player in the following age brackets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 18-39 ● 40-55 ● 55+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Player who played the most league matches played in the Calendar year up until Dec. 31. • No Defaults Count • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • One male, One Female in 18 age division leagues, 40 age division leagues, and 55 age division leagues • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
Most Improved Player: Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C rating only • Evaluated by start and end dynamics • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria and nominations submitted</i>

Sportsmanship Award Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility based off blue ribbon report • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i> Staff voted on these two recipients from a pool of 62 submissions.
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Adult League Awards Criteria - Captains

Award Description	Eligibility Criteria	Process
Adult League Captain of the Year: Awarded annually to an Adult League Captain in each league area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligibility based off blue ribbon report • Recipients must be current USTA member residing in Northern California. • Recipient must captain a minimum of two leagues during the season • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal • Most times advancing to Sectionals within a captain/co-captain role • Helping to grow tennis and the league programs • Cannot win award 2 years in a row 	Based off blue <i>ribbon</i> report. After the nomination deadline, staff will review nominations along with criteria and submit eligible candidates to the Adult League Committee to vote on.
Captain who Captained the most amount of teams Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on calendar year • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria and nominations submitted</i>
New Captain of the Year Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recipients must be current USTA member residing in Northern California • Eligibility based off blue ribbon report • First time captains • Must have completed entire season they captained • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal 	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>

*** The Adult League Committee reserves the right to not select a recipient in any given category in any given year.