

USTA Connect Innovation Challenge

Official Rules

These Official Rules govern the USTA Connect Innovation Challenge (the “Contest”). By entering, you (“Entrant”) agree to be bound by these Official Rules and the decisions of Sponsor and judges, which are final and binding.

1) Sponsor; Eligibility; Nature of Contest

Sponsor: United States Tennis Association Incorporated (“USTA” or “Sponsor”).

Eligibility: Open only to (a) individuals who are legal residents of the fifty (50) United States or the District of Columbia and who are at least eighteen (18) years old (or the age of majority in their state of residence, if higher) at the time of entry and (b) business entities that are validly organized or authorized to do business in the United States and enter through an authorized representative who satisfies the individual eligibility requirements and has authority to bind the entity. Teams may include eligible individuals and/or eligible business entities; each individual team member and each entity representative must satisfy the applicable eligibility requirements, and an authorized representative must accept these Rules on the team’s or entity’s behalf. Current USTA National employees and current USTA National vendors with active contractual relationships are not eligible. USTA Section employees, part-time employees, and USTA volunteers are eligible. Officers, directors, and employees of USTA National vendors with active contractual relationships are not eligible. Void where prohibited by law.

Skill-based contest; no purchase necessary: This is a skill-based contest. Winners are determined by a panel of judges using published criteria; there is no random drawing. No purchase or payment is required to enter or win, and a purchase will not increase your chances of winning.

Compliance: Participation is subject to these Rules, the datasets’ license terms and security requirements provided by Sponsor, and all applicable laws and regulations.

2) Contest Period; Key Dates

All times are U.S. Eastern Time.

- Call for Participants opens: June 15, 2026
- Entry Form Deadline: July 3, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET
- First Round: Applicant Vetting and Qualified Teams Selection (up to twelve (12) teams) by July 10, 2026
- Security Clearance Completed & Data Release to Qualified Teams: July 11, 2026
- Decisive Round Submission Deadline for Qualified Teams: August 9, 2026, 11:59 p.m. ET
- Decisive Round Presentations & Judging (virtual Decisive Round): August 10-14, 2026
- Finalist Showcase and Awarding (during the 2026 US Open Tennis Championships): September 3, 2026

Sponsor may adjust dates for reasons beyond its reasonable control; any material change will be posted with a revised date on the Official Rules page and will not retroactively disadvantage timely entries.

3) How to Enter

During the Call for Entrants, visit the Contest landing page and complete the entry form, including:

- Team/Entrant information (and authorized representative for any entity entrant);
- A summary of the proposed solution aligned to one or more focus areas (listed in Section 4);
- Identification of anticipated data sources (USTA-provided and any non-USTA sources);
- Links to code repositories or demos if available.

There is no entry fee. Limit one (1) entry per team; individuals may participate on only one team. Teams may update their submission until the Entry Form Deadline. Sponsor may disqualify materially incomplete, inaccurate, or non-conforming entries.

First Round and Vetting: After the Entry Form Deadline, Sponsor will conduct an initial review of all eligible submissions and may select up to twelve (12) potential qualifying teams (“Potential Qualified Teams”). Sponsor will notify Potential Qualified Teams by email using the contact information provided in the entry form. Potential Qualified Teams must successfully complete security and identity checks before being confirmed as “Qualified Teams.” Only Qualified Teams who pass such checks will receive access credentials to the datasets and secure APIs on or about July 11, 2026.

4) Challenge Scope; Focus Areas; Permitted Resources

Challenge: Build a usable prototype or proof of concept that either (a) functions as a standalone product or (b) integrates with and enhances an existing USTA platform, addressing one or more of the following areas:

Pro Tennis

- **Match Insights & Next-Gen Stat Development:** Transforming raw tennis metrics into advanced, actionable performance insights.
- **Live Match Engagement & Storytelling:** Creating immersive, data-driven visualizations to deepen fan engagement during live play.

Mission-Driven

- **Hyper-Personalized Player Experiences:** Leveraging technology to customize gear, training, or match-play to fit an individual’s unique playing style, skill level, and biomechanics.
- **Next-Gen Performance Analytics & Talent ID:** Utilizing computer vision, AI, and wearable tech to evaluate athlete movement, streamline scouting, and democratize access to elite analytics.
- **Democratizing & Scaling the Player Pipeline:** Building stronger, accessible tech pathways to smoothly transition grassroots and youth players into elite competitive tiers (collegiate/professional).

Open Category

- **35 Million Players by 2035:** Participants are invited to submit products or innovations explicitly designed to support and achieve the overarching USTA mission of reaching 35 million tennis players by 2035.

Open innovation: Entrants are encouraged to augment with non-USTA data (e.g., wearables, weather/climate, demographics, external video analytics), provided they have all rights necessary and comply with applicable laws and third-party terms.

5) Data Access; Security; Acceptable Use

- USTA Data: Sponsor will provide Qualified Teams with access to a selection of anonymized and/or aggregated tennis-related datasets (for example, facility information, historical play and ranking data, match statistics, and relevant tracking or sensor data) (collectively, the “USTA Data”). The exact datasets, formats, and delivery mechanisms will be determined by Sponsor in its sole discretion and may be supplemented, modified, or replaced during the Contest.
- Access: USTA Data and any sandboxed APIs will be provided only to vetted teams under credentialed access. Credentials are personal to the team and may not be shared beyond identified team members.
- Acceptable Use: USTA Data may be used solely for the Contest, in accordance with any dataset-specific terms (provided at or before access), and may not be used to attempt to identify any individual or to train generalized models for unrelated commercial use.
- Prohibitions: Entrants shall not, and shall not attempt to (i) defeat or degrade security; (ii) scrape or export USTA Data outside allowed interfaces except for ephemeral processing necessary to build the prototype; (iii) re-identify anonymized data; or (iv) share USTA Data with third parties outside the team.
- Deletion: Within thirty (30) days after the Contest ends (or earlier upon Sponsor request), teams must securely delete USTA Data and any derivatives containing USTA Data, except that teams may retain “Derived Data” consisting solely of de-identified performance metrics and model weights that do not encode personal data and that do not permit reconstruction or re-identification of USTA Data, plus minimal artifacts necessary to demonstrate the submission. Upon Sponsor’s request, teams will provide a proof of secure deletion. Any attempt to re-identify anonymized data is prohibited.
- Verification: Participation and eligibility to advance or win are conditioned on passing standardized information security and identity checks (which may include government-issued ID match, sanctions screening, and verification of authority for any entity or team representative), and complying with Sponsor’s security requirements. Sponsor or its service providers may collect and process information reasonably necessary to conduct those checks, subject to Sponsor’s Privacy Policy and these Rules. Entrants must timely provide requested documentation; Sponsor may allow a brief cure period for correctable mismatches. Failure to cooperate, a material red flag, or inability to satisfy requirements may result in disqualification in Sponsor’s sole discretion.

6) Decisive Round Submission Requirements

The Decisive Round submissions from each Qualified Team must include:

- A working prototype or proof-of-concept (executable demo, hosted instance, or code repository with build instructions);
- A written overview (up to five pages or equivalent) describing problem statement, approach, data used, model/architecture, privacy and security considerations, and roadmap;
- A Software Bill of Materials (SBOM) for the prototype;

- A 3–5 minute demo video or narrated walkthrough; and
- Disclosures of any open-source software and licenses used, third-party IP, datasets, and any known limitations or risks.

Prohibited content includes malware, unsafe code, prompt injection, model poisoning, data leakage into public LLMs, infringing or unlawful material, deceptive claims, or content violating privacy or publicity rights.

7) Judging; Criteria; Finalists

Judging process:

- First Round (July 6 – July 10, 2026): After the entry deadline, Sponsor will conduct an initial review and may select **up to twelve (12)** qualifying teams to advance to the Decisive Round. Sponsor reserves the right to select fewer than twelve teams in its sole discretion based on the Judging Criteria.
- Decisive Round (August 10 – August 14, 2026): Each Qualified Team will be scored virtually by a panel selected by Sponsor. This round determines the Grand Prize Winner and the Top 3 finalists.
- Showcase (September 3, 2026): The Top 3 teams will each deliver a live five-minute presentation at the US Open USTA Connect Event; the winner pre-selected in the Decisive Round will be announced and awarded.

Criteria and weights (100 points total):

- Accretive Impact on USTA Mission or Pro Tennis (50%)
- Innovation & Creativity (30%)
- Technical Feasibility & Data Execution (20%)

Judges will score based on the criterion above. Highest composite score determines ranking. Tie-breakers will be decided by the higher Accretive Impact score, then by majority vote of the judges. The judges or reviewers used for the First Round may differ from the judges used for the Decisive Round. First Round review may be conducted by Sponsor personnel or other reviewers designated by Sponsor, while Decisive Round judging will be conducted by the judging panel designated by Sponsor for that round. Judges may include representatives of USTA, IBM, and USTA Sections, and may change in Sponsor's sole discretion. Judges must disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest and will recuse themselves from evaluating any entry where they, their employer/Section, or an immediate family member has a financial interest or advisory/mentor relationship with the team. Sponsor may replace any recused judge and adjust scoring as appropriate to preserve fairness. Judges' decisions are final and binding, and the scoring rubric will be applied consistently across entrants. Sponsor will retain judges' score sheets and materials for a reasonable period for audit and recordkeeping.

Judging assignments: To ensure subject-matter expertise, Sponsor may assign judges to evaluate entries by focus area (e.g., Pro Tennis or Mission-Driven). Each eligible entry will be scored by at least two (2) judges using the same published criteria and rubric. Where entries are evaluated by different judging subpanels, Sponsor will apply a consistent aggregation and normalization process to ensure comparability across panels. The final rankings and Grand Prize selection will

be confirmed by the judging panel designated by Sponsor, and judges with actual or potential conflicts will be recused.

Confidentiality of results: Final rankings from the Decisive Round will be kept confidential until the public announcement on September 3, 2026.

8) Prizes; Winner Notification; Taxes

Grand Prize (1): Ten Thousand US Dollars (\$10,000), awarded to the winning team's designated representative or entity, subject to verification. Approximate Retail Value (ARV) of Grand Prize: \$10,000, exclusive of any finalist travel benefits described below.

Finalist travel: Sponsor will cover reasonable travel costs for finalists to attend the September 3, 2026 showcase, up to a maximum ARV of Four Thousand US Dollars (\$4,000) per finalist team, as described in finalist notifications. Actual value may vary based on departure city and dates of travel, and any difference between stated and actual value will not be awarded. Unless otherwise stated, coverage is limited to up to two (2) team representatives per finalist entry, booked by Sponsor or reimbursed (at Sponsor's option) subject to advance written approval, required documentation, and Sponsor's travel policy caps. Covered categories typically include round-trip domestic coach/economy airfare, standard hotel lodging, and reasonable ground transportation; incidentals and upgrades are excluded. Travel benefits may be taxable; if required, such benefits may be included in ARV and reported to the IRS.

Notification and verification: Potential finalists and the potential Grand Prize winner will be notified via the contact information provided and must complete required affidavits/declarations of eligibility, liability/publicity releases (where lawful), W-9, and pass any required security/identity checks within the stated time. If a potential winner fails to timely respond or is ineligible, Sponsor may select the next highest-scoring entry.

Taxes: Winners are responsible for all applicable taxes. If required, Sponsor will issue an IRS Form 1099-MISC (or equivalent) for prize value. Allow 6–8 weeks from verification for prize payment.

No substitutions/transfer: Prize is not transferable or assignable.

9) Intellectual Property; License; Independent Development

Entrant ownership: As between Entrant and Sponsor, Entrant retains all right, title, and interest in and to its submission and any pre-existing IP.

License to Sponsor: Entrant grants Sponsor and its affiliates a worldwide, royalty-free, non-exclusive license to use, reproduce, display, perform, and distribute the submission materials for the purposes of administering the Contest, judging, showcasing entries (including at the US Open event and in marketing), and internal evaluation. Any broader commercial use will be subject to a separate written agreement.

Representations and warranties: Entrant represents and warrants that (i) it has all rights necessary to submit the entry and grant the foregoing license; (ii) the submission does not infringe or

misappropriate any third-party rights; (iii) the submission complies with all applicable laws; and (iv) use of any third-party materials is properly licensed and disclosed.

Open source: Entrants must comply with all applicable open-source license obligations and may not include code subject to “copyleft” terms that would obligate Sponsor to disclose source code merely by evaluating the submission.

Independent development; no implied contract: Sponsor may already be developing, or in the future may develop, products or services similar to submissions. Entrants agree no contract other than these Rules is formed by submission, and no compensation is due except as expressly provided herein.

10) Publicity

Where lawful, by participating, Entrants consent to Sponsor’s and its designees’ use of Entrant’s/team’s name, likeness, biographical information, and submission materials solely for administering, judging, and showcasing the Contest, including identifying and publicizing finalists and winners. Any broader advertising, promotional, or publicity use of a non-finalist Entrant’s name, likeness, biographical information, or submission materials will require the Entrant’s separate consent where required by law. Where lawful, finalists and winners may be required to sign a publicity release before prize award or showcase participation. Upon reasonable request, Sponsor will consider removing or redacting sensitive personal details not previously made public by the Entrant, where doing so does not materially affect the integrity of Contest records or prior publications.

11) Code of Conduct; Disqualification

Sponsor may disqualify any Entrant that tampers with the entry process or USTA systems; attempts to circumvent security; engages in fraud, plagiarism, or misrepresentation; violates third-party rights; or otherwise acts in an unsportsmanlike, harassing, or disruptive manner. Sponsor reserves the right to remove content that violates these standards.

12) Privacy

Personal information collected in connection with the Contest will be processed in accordance with Sponsor’s Privacy Policy (available at <https://www.usta.com/en/home/about-usta/who-we-are/national/usta-privacy-policy.html>) and these Rules. Contest data will be used for administration, eligibility verification and security vetting, judging, communications, travel booking and reimbursement, tax reporting, publicity (where lawful), and recordkeeping, and may be shared with Sponsor’s affiliates, service providers, judging panel members, travel providers, tax/reporting vendors, security-vetting providers, and Contest partners, including IBM, in each case as reasonably necessary for those purposes. Entrants are responsible for obtaining any consents required to share team member information with Sponsor for these purposes.

13) General Conditions

- Right to modify/cancel: If the Contest cannot run as planned due to force majeure, fraud, technical failures, or any cause beyond Sponsor’s reasonable control, Sponsor may modify,

suspend, or terminate the Contest, and if terminated, select winners from among eligible, non-suspect entries received prior to the action or as otherwise fair and appropriate.

- Conflicts: In the event of any conflict between marketing materials and these Rules, these Rules control.
- Assignment: Sponsor may assign or delegate its rights and obligations under these Rules, in whole or in part.
- Sanctions and export controls: Each Entrant represents that neither it nor any of its team members is listed on any U.S. restricted-party list (including OFAC's SDN List) and agrees to comply with applicable U.S. export-control and sanctions laws (including the EAR) in connection with any software, technology, or technical data used or shared for the Contest. Sponsor may disqualify any Entrant if a sanctions/export issue is identified.

14) Limitation of Liability; Release; Indemnity

By participating, Entrants release Sponsor, its affiliates, partners (including IBM solely in its role as a partner/judge), and their respective officers, directors, employees, and agents from any and all liability for claims, costs, injuries, losses, or damages arising out of participation, submission creation, or prize acceptance/use, except to the extent caused by Sponsor's willful misconduct or to the extent such release is prohibited by law. Entrants agree to indemnify Sponsor against third-party claims arising from Entrant's breach of these Rules or infringement/misuse of data or third-party rights. Nothing in these Rules limits liability for death or personal injury caused by negligence, or for fraud.

15) Disputes; Governing Law

Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to these Official Rules and/or the Contest (including the validity, enforceability, or scope of this arbitration provision) shall be settled by binding arbitration administered by the American Arbitration Association under its Commercial Arbitration Rules. The arbitration will be conducted on an individual basis and not consolidated with any claim or controversy of any other party. The arbitration shall take place in the State of New York, County of Westchester.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, either party may seek equitable relief in any court of competent jurisdiction to protect intellectual-property rights or to enforce the arbitration agreement. Judgment on the arbitration award may be entered in any court having jurisdiction. These Official Rules and any disputes shall be governed by the laws of the State of New York without regard to its conflict-of-laws rules. To the extent any matter proceeds in court (including entering judgment on an arbitration award), the parties irrevocably consent and submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state and federal courts located in Westchester County, New York, and waive any defense of forum non conveniens. Where permitted by law, Entrants waive the right to participate in any class, collective, or representative proceeding.

16) Sponsor Partners and Judges

IBM is a strategic partner and may provide platform credits or technical resources to participants, and a representative may serve on the judging panel. Judges will be selected by Sponsor based on relevant expertise and may include USTA representatives, IBM representatives, and USTA

Section representatives. Sponsor may substitute or remove judges in its discretion. Judges' decisions are final and binding.

17) Winners List; Rules

A copy of these Official Rules will be posted at usta.com/content/usta/en/home/about-usta/usta-connect/the-usta-connect-innovation-challenge.html. A winners list (Grand Prize Winner and Top 3 Finalists) will be available upon request. For assistance, contact: ustacconnect@usta.com. To request a winner's list copy by mail, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Sponsor (Attention: USTA Connect Innovation Challenge – Winners List, USTA, 2500 Westchester Avenue, Suite 411, Purchase, NY 10577) within sixty (60) days after September 3, 2026.

18) Contact; Questions

Questions about the Contest may be directed to the email address listed on the Contest landing page. Do not submit entries to this address unless instructed.