

# **Rules for 2023 NoHo USTA League Play**

League play is governed by, in hierarchical order, the ITF Rules of Tennis and USTA Friend at Court, USTA National League Regulations and Interpretations, USTA Texas Section Operating Procedures, and these rules. Players are responsible for educating themselves and following all rules and regulations.

“The Code”—a guide for matches without officials that outlines tradition and etiquette— shall be followed at all times.

The definitions of terms used in this document are included as a Glossary.

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NoHo USTA leagues are governed by, in hierarchical order, the *ITF Rules of Tennis*, USTA League Regulations and Q&A Interpretations, USTA Texas Section Regulations, and the rules of the NoHo USTA. If NoHo USTA rules are in conflict with USTA regulations then USTA League Regulation shall prevail. USTA regulations maybe repeated or referenced in this document only if merited due to specific relevance or frequent questions. It is the responsibility of all adult league team captains and players to familiarize themselves with the National and Texas Section regulations governing USTA leagues. Refer to the USTA's Website ([usta.com](http://usta.com)) the Texas Section's website ([usta.texas.com](http://usta.texas.com)) or the NoHo website ([noho.usta.com](http://noho.usta.com)).

NoHo adult leagues will follow *he 2023 USTA League Regulations*, with any exceptions as noted in this document, and will always follow "The Code: The Players' Guide for Unofficial Matches."

## **NATIONAL TENNIS RATING PROGRAM (NTRP)**

The National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) is the official system for determining the levels of competition for USTA leagues. The USTA NTRP Computer Rating System assigns ratings based on play in the local leagues and at championship levels during the current league year. The USTA and NoHo USTA uses this system to determine player skill level eligibility for the various league types and Age Groups.

NTRP computer ratings are managed exclusively by the USTA. The NoHo USTA does not set or control NTRP ratings.

# 1.0 ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

## 1.01 PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1.01 (a) All players must meet the following requirements:

- (1) Have a USTA membership that is current through the end of the Local League season.
- (2) Must have reached the required minimum age set for the age division being played. All players must be a minimum of 18 years of age prior to league participation.

1.01 (b) A player will be considered illegal, and disqualified from any match, whereby:

- (1) The player is not registered in TennisLink for the appropriate team prior to the match.

## 1.02 NTRP REQUIREMENTS

1.02 (a) Team NTRP levels and league formats differ by league and Age Group. The table below shows the available options for USTA league play in North Houston (note that a minimum number of registered teams is required in any given season, Age Group, and NTRP level in order to schedule play at that level):

Available League NTRP Levels and Formats				
League	Division	Age Group	NTRP Levels	League Format
USTA	Adult	18 & Over	2.5, 5.0+, Open	1 ----- Singles 2 ----- Doubles
		18 & Over	3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0	2 ----- Singles 3 ----- Doubles
		40 & Over	3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0	1 ----- Singles 3 ----- Doubles
		55 & Over 65 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0	3 ----- Doubles
	Mixed	18 & Over	2.5, 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0, 10.0	3 ----- Doubles
		40 & Over 55 & Over	6.0, 7.0, 8.0, 9.0	3 ----- Doubles
	Special	Adult Team Combo	5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5	3 ----- Doubles
		Adult Tri-Level	3.0/3.5/4.0 3.5/4.0/4.5	3 ----- Doubles

1.02 (b) Returning USTA league tennis players will use the NTRP rating as shown for them in the USTA Computer Rating System. This rating can be found by logging into the [“My Tennis Page”](#) at the USTA TennisLink Website.

1.02 (c) Players with no current computer rating must self rate. Players with expired ratings will not be allowed to self-rate at a lower level than their last valid NTRP rating. For information about self-rating, see the USTA’s Website [www.usta.com/Adult-Tennis/USTA-League/ntrp/](http://www.usta.com/Adult-Tennis/USTA-League/ntrp/). Also see the *Frequently Asked Questions* items regarding NTRP ratings for additional information.

- 1.02 (d) A player may play one NTRP level above the player's current NTRP level.
- 1.02 (e) When straight NTRP levels are used for a league (e.g., 3.0, 3.5, 4.0), a player cannot have an NTRP rating higher than the NTRP level in which the player is competing.
  - (1) Leagues designated as Open level have no NTRP restrictions other than as shown in item 2.02(e)
- 1.02 (f) When combined NTRP levels are used for a league (e.g., 6.0, 7.0, 8.0), the combined NTRP rating levels of the doubles team cannot exceed the combined NTRP level in which the players are competing.
- 1.02 (g) When combined NTRP levels are used for a league, the following minimum player NTRP ratings apply: the minimum rating for a 6.0 team is 2.5; for a 7.0 team it is 3.0; for an 8.0 team it is 3.5; for a 9.0 team it is 4.0; and for a 10.0 team it is 4.5.
- 1.02 (h) The NTRP difference between members of an individual doubles team may not exceed 1.0.

### **1.03 REGISTRATION AND TEAM ROSTERS**

- 1.03 (a) Player registration will be online through the TennisLink team registration page.
- 1.03 (b) Teams will register at the NTRP level (flight) as appropriate for its players to meet eligibility requirements of the specific league and Age Group.
- 1.03 (c) A player may play on multiple teams in a NoHo USTA league and Age Group, so long as the teams are at different NTRP levels. A player may play on a NoHo USTA League and also other local USTA leagues for which they may qualify.
- 1.03 (d) A player may register for a team any time during the league season, as long as the team has two scheduled matches remaining in the regular season.
- 1.03 (e) A player may be moved from one team to another if the player has not played any
- 1.03 (f) NoHo does not offer refunds of registration fees. If the level entered has too few teams/players to allow that level to be scheduled in the upcoming league season, refunds will be addressed on a case by case basis.
- 1.03 (g) The minimum number of players required to field a team is shown in the following table. The minimum number of players must be registered one week before the first scheduled match for the league.

Required Team Composition				
League	Division	Age Group	Minimum Number of Players	Gender
USTA	Adult	18 & Over 2.5, 5.0+, Open	5	Same Gender
		18 & Over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5, 5.0 40 & Over	8 7	Same Gender
		55 & Over 65 & Over	6	Same Gender
	Mixed	18 & Over 40 & Over 55 & Over	3 Men 3 Women	Men and Women
	Special	Adult Team Combo	6	Same Gender
		Adult Tri-Level	6; 2 Players at Each of 3 Levels	Same Gender

## 2.0 SEASON STANDARDS

### 2.01 SCHEDULING

Items in this Section govern a team's published schedule for a season of play. Regulations for postponed, suspended, or delayed matches can be found in Section 3.03.

- 2.01 (a) NoHo USTA leagues play through the year as scheduled and posted on the nohousta.com website.
- 2.01 (b) League play will be in a format of one or more round robin cycles with the possibility of playoffs after regular season round robin play. See *USTA League Regulations* item 2.01C(1).
- 2.01 (c) A league season's round robin play will be considered completed one week after the last scheduled match for the overall league, not necessarily an individual flight or sub flight, or as otherwise determined by the League Coordinator.
- 2.01 (d) Once a team declares its home court venue for a given league season, that location cannot be changed without prior approval of the Local League Coordinator.
- 2.01 (e) With respect to scheduling, it is the responsibility of the home team captain and/or co-captain to ensure that all facility rules are followed, and all necessary and proper arrangements are made, including, but not limited to, court reservations.
- 2.01 (f) Morning team matches will begin at 9:00 am. Individual lines may start earlier than 9:00 am if both captains agree in writing. Mixed Doubles will be played on Sundays at 4:00 pm. A different time may be agreed upon by both captains.

Second round morning match(es) shall begin as soon as a court becomes available as a result of a first round match being completed or if an additional court becoming available at the host location. See 3.01(e) regarding minimum number of courts required to host a match.

The default clock for 2nd round matches shall begin the later of 10:15 or when a court becomes available.

Second round matches shall not be **scheduled in advance** to begin later than 10:30 am unless both captains have agreed in writing.

Any lines that are unable to begin before 12:00 pm because a court does not become available will be treated as a rain out unless both captains agree to start after 12:00pm.

For leagues involving singles played after May 1st, the singles lines shall always play in the first round.

Start times for rain makeup matches are to be agreed upon by both captains and may begin later than 9:00 am.

- 2.01 (g) Weekday evening team matches are to be played between 6:30 p.m. and 10:00 pm
- Items 1 through 3 below can be altered only on individual, case by case instances and only by prior written and mutual agreement between team captains. A team's published schedule shall not vary from the following:
- (1) Individual line matches in a team match shall not begin earlier than 6:30 pm unless agreed upon by both captains.
  - (2) In team matches with split start times, at least two individual line matches must be scheduled to start at 6:30 pm and no individual line matches shall be scheduled to start after 8:30 pm.
  - (3) In a team match where all individual line matches are scheduled to be played at the same time, the matches shall begin no later than 6:30 pm.

## **2.02 ADMINISTRATION**

- 2.02 (a) Each team shall appoint a team captain to handle administrative affairs and represent the team in USTA matters. Each team may also appoint a Co-captain who may serve as acting captain in fulfilling team responsibilities.
- 2.02 (b) A captain may only captain one team at a time in a league at a given NTRP level.
- 2.03 (c) A team may have a non-playing captain who may fall outside the NTRP eligibility requirements for that team. A non-playing captain will not appear on the team's roster of players. In order to register as a non-playing captain, you must contact the NoHo USTA Local League Coordinator directly.
- 2.02 (d) Teams must not default more than 25% of scheduled individual line matches. If a team defaults more than 25% of their individual line matches, the team and captain may face penalties ranging from written reprimand to suspension from future league play.
- 2.02 (e) Unless the majority of a team is computer rated at the NTRP level in which the team is playing, a team must win 30% of total possible individual line matches to compete on the same level the next league season.
- 2.02 (f) 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. The exception are the Adult Division 55 & Over and 65 & Over Age Groups that use combined NTRP rating levels and will not be required to comply with this rule.

## 3.0 CONDUCTING A MATCH

### 3.01 GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.01 (a) The home team captain will decide at what time and on which courts each individual line will play in accordance with the rules of the league and rules of the facility. (Also see Section 2.01)

For leagues that play 5 lines per team match:

- If a home team has 3 courts, 3 lines will play in the first round.
- If a home team has 4 courts, 4 lines will play in the first round.
- If a home team has 5 courts, all lines may play in the first round. The host or visiting captain may delay one line to a later start time but not later than 1 hour and 15 minutes from the first round scheduled start time

For leagues that play 4 lines per team match:

- If a home team has 3 courts, 3 lines will play in the first round
- If a home team has 4 courts, all lines *may* play in the first round. The host or visiting captain may delay one line to a later start time but not later than 1 hour and 15 minutes from the first round scheduled start time.

3.01 (b) The home team captain or co-captain must contact the visiting team captain or co-captain at least 96 hours prior to the scheduled match to provide individual line match times, directions, facility rules that might affect play, and any other pertinent information. If the visiting team captain or co-captain has not received this information 72 hours prior to the scheduled match, they may contact the home team captain or co-captain to obtain the information. Repeated infraction of this notification rule by a home team captain or co-captain may result in penalties or suspension from league play. (Also see 3.01(d)).

3.01 (c) If teams do not communicate with each other, the League Coordinator is to be contacted two (2) days prior to the scheduled match and will determine the match start and individual line times in accordance with league and facility rules.

3.01 (d) If the home team fails to explain facility rules in writing to the visiting team, resulting in the visiting team player(s) violating a facility rule and thereby resulting in a visiting team individual line match or team match default, such default shall be charged against the home team and awarded in favor of the visiting team.

3.01 (e) For each team match on the date scheduled, the home team captain must assure a minimum of two hard (indoor, outdoor or covered) courts, Clay courts are permissible provided the visiting team agrees in writing in advance.

See 2.01 (f) for scheduling 2nd round matches should the number of courts provided preclude starting all lines at the same time.

3.01 (f) A captain, or acting captain, must be present throughout the entire team match. Should a captain need to leave the match before the end of the entire team match, the captain shall appoint a teammate to act as captain. The captain shall notify the opposing team captain of the acting captain.

3.01 (g) Lineups must be exchanged simultaneously a minimum of 5 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the first line. All 1<sup>st</sup> round players should be on their assigned courts ready to play. Matches must be played as exchanged in the lineup. For exceptions see 3.01(h) through 3.01(j) and *USTA League Regulations 2.01C(5)*



3.01 (h) Fifteen-minute default rule

No Line shall begin match play prior to the 15-minute default time if any other scheduled player is absent unless both captains agree to proceed. (Also see 3.01(i) and 3.01(l))

Players must be present and ready to begin the first point of individual line match play no later than 15 minutes after the designated start time or, for 2nd round matches, when a court becomes available.

Any player(s) arriving more than 15 minutes late after match start time will be automatically defaulted.

Should one or more players from both teams in a given individual line match be defaulted by this 15-minute rule, the match shall be recorded in TennisLink as a double-default (i.e., 0 - 6, 0 - 6 for both teams). See the Glossary entry for the Fifteen Minute Default Rule.

If an individual line match results in a default due to this 15-minute rule, the match may be played for fun (i.e., no recorded score) only if it can be done so without any possibility of affecting the start of subsequent individual line matches or the completion of the team match.

3.01 (i) Once lineups have been exchanged, players cannot be moved on the lineup from one line to another. No player may be replaced or substituted except under the following conditions:

- (1) A player becomes ill or injured prior to the first point being played in that individual line match, and an eligible replacement (one not already listed on the lineup) can be made within the default time.
- (2) A player is not present and an eligible replacement (one not already listed on the lineup) can be made within the default time.
- (3) A team has only one player each for two lines of doubles, those players may then combine and play at whichever line is the highest of the two on the originally scheduled lineup.
- (4) A player or doubles team is defaulted under the 15-minute rule at a higher line and there is a player or players available on that team's exchanged lineup at the lowest scheduled line that can move up and complete the higher-level match.

3.01 (j) It is the responsibility of the team captains or acting captains to ensure their players are playing the correct lines on the courts assigned by the home team. Home team captains are encouraged to write the assigned court numbers on their lineup sheet. If a player or player(s) are on the wrong court and the discovery occurs before the first game of all matches affected has been completed, players are to go to the correct courts and begin the matches over. If the discovery occurs after the first game is completed on either affected court, the matches will be completed as started and count as matches played in good faith.

3.01 (k) Team captains may request photo identification of players.

3.01 (l) Team matches:

Ladies, Men & Mixed: Unless all captains in a division agree to an alternate format, all team matches will be scored best two out of three sets, with the third set, if required, being a 10-point match tiebreak. Also see the Glossary entry for Match Tiebreak.

- (1) Leagues playing regularly scheduled matches on weekday or weekend evenings (4:00 pm or later) may use "no ad" scoring. If both captains cannot agree, standard "ad" scoring will be used. Leagues playing regularly scheduled matches on weekday or weekend mornings will use standard "ad" scoring.
  - (2) The Coman tiebreak procedure will be followed for both the set tiebreak and match tiebreak (when used). Also see the Glossary entry for Coman Tiebreak Procedure.
  - (3) On court warm ups will be strictly limited to no more than 10 minutes other than as defined in item 3.01(h)(1), and in no case shall the warm up continue more than 15 minutes past the designated start time of the individual line match. Also see "The Code" items 3 and 4; *USTA League Regulations 2.01(C)5*; and the Glossary entry for WarmUp.
  - (4) The "spin" for serving/receiving or choice of side shall be done prior to warm-up.
- 3.01 (m) Unless otherwise instructed by the League Coordinator, the home team is responsible for providing one can of new championship quality, Type 2 USTA approved yellow tennis balls per individual line match to be played. The use of any USTA "transition" ball is prohibited.
  - 3.01 (n) The home team is responsible for all players' facility fees, including, but not limited to parking and court fees.
  - 3.01 (o) All matches are unofficiated and no linesmen or umpires will be provided or allowed. "The Code" *The Players Guide for Unofficiated Matches will be followed.*
  - 3.01 (p) Children or pets must be supervised at all times by someone not participating on-court in a match.
  - 3.01 (q) Unless otherwise informed by the league coordinator, home teams must provide ice and water. All facilities must have restrooms available to players.
  - 3.01 (r) Cell phones on court **must** be silenced. **No smart watches can be worn in a match unless all players involved in the match agree to allow smart watches.** Spectators in close proximity to the court should also silence their cell phones. A ringing cell phone or smart watch on court is considered to be a deliberate hindrance. If a player's cell phone **or smart watch** rings during a point, the opposing player may immediately stop and claim the point. The subsequent ringing of **any** player's cell phone or smart watch will result in an immediate default by the player whose phone subsequently rang. Player's may not "check" their cell phones for texts or missed calls during a match, including during changeovers.

## 3.02 COACHING AND SPORTSMANSHIP

- 3.02 (a) No coaching is permitted at any time
- 3.02 (b) The server shall announce the game score before the first point of a game the point score before each subsequent point of the game. If there is disagreement over the score, it shall be resolved by one of the following methods, listed in order of preference:
  - (1) Count all points and games agreed upon by the players and replay only disputed points
  - (2) Play from a score mutually agreeable to all players
  - (3) Spin a racquet or toss a coin.

- 3.02 (c) Spectators may not aid players in making a line call or in determining the correct score. A spectator is any person not playing the match; this includes team captains, teammates, and players on adjacent courts.
- 3.02 (d) Spectators may quietly watch a match in progress. They should not stand or sit on the courts which includes benches or seating areas designated for use by players. Spectators are never allowed on an active court unless rendering aid to a physically injured player.
- 3.02 (e) It is the responsibility of the captains to control the behavior of their teams and teams' spectators. Loud, boisterous, or unsportsmanlike behavior is unacceptable. If a problem arises, players should ask the spectator to refrain from the offensive behavior. If the behavior persists, the team captains should be summoned to handle the situation. If necessary, a grievance should be filed. Disputes should be settled between players as soon as they arise. All points played in good faith will stand. Players are to resolve any dispute themselves. If they cannot, they shall do the following:
- (1) The player will inform the opponent of the problem and intention to leave the court to obtain the assistance of the team captain. Racquets should be left on the court if a player must leave the court.
  - (2) The captain shall contact the opponent's captain and they will try to resolve the dispute. If one or both captains are involved in playing a match, the players may have to cease their play until the captains are available to assist them, or follow rule 3.02(f)(3)(A), below.
  - (3) If the captains and players cannot agree on resolution to a conflict, the offended player(s) may either:
    - (A) Continue to play the match, but do so under protest. The score and who was serving at the time of the protest must be indicated on the scorecard with the annotation, "played under protest" and signed by the captains. At the conclusion of the match, the offended player(s) may or may not file a grievance. If no grievance is filed, the results of the match stand as played.
    - (B) Stop play, ensuring both captains and the opponents know why. Indicate on the scorecard that the match was stopped in protest, note the score and who was serving at the time the match was stopped. Both captains should sign the scorecard. The offended player or the player's captain should file a grievance. If no grievance is filed within the required time frame, the match will be scored as a retirement by the offended player. All points played will be recorded in TennisLink. For information about grievances and the grievance process, see Section 5.00.

### **3.03 POSTPONED, SUSPENDED, AND DELAYED MATCHES**

- 3.03 (a) Postponed team matches prior to any individual line match commencement:
- (1) Without prior permission from the NoHo League Coordinator, do not postpone for rain until the day of the match, and not earlier than three hours prior to the scheduled start time or at a time mutually agreed upon between the two captains.

The home team captain is responsible for determining court conditions and court playability, and for communicating them to the visiting team captain. Both team captains shall attempt to reach a mutual agreement regarding match postponement. If mutual agreement cannot be achieved, the home team captain will make the final decision.

3.03 (b) Suspended matches after any individual line match has begun:

- (1) Incomplete matches must be continued by the same players and resumed at the exact place—set, game and point—they stood when play was suspended.
- (2) Defaults from the originally exchanged lineup will stand.
- (3) Substitutions of eligible players may be made in individual lines if play had not begun on those lines.
- (4) If the team captains cannot agree on a date to complete a suspended individual line match within the required time frame, the team captains will submit 2 dates/times that they can play the match. The League Coordinator will draw from those four dates to select the makeup date. If one team is unable to agree to the makeup date drawn by the League Coordinator, that team will take the loss and the match will be recorded with a status of "Retired" in TennisLink; all games previously played in good faith will stand. If neither team is able to agree to the makeup date drawn by the League Coordinator, the match will be recorded as a default for each team.

3.03 (c) Delayed matches:

- (1) If both team captains do not agree to suspend play, both teams (all players to play that team match) must be available at the site for 30 minutes beyond the scheduled match start time. After that period, if the courts remain unplayable, the match is automatically suspended.

3.03 (d) Rescheduling:

- (1) Team captains will have 48 hours to initiate negotiations to reschedule a postponed or suspended match. Lines do not have to be scheduled for the same makeup date but may be played separately.
- (2) Team captains have five (5) days to notify the League Coordinator of the rescheduled date via the Rain Makeup Report found on the nohousta.com website. BOTH captains will file the makeup report. If only one captain files the report, the dates and times in that report shall stand. Once a makeup match has been rescheduled, teams are committed to play on that date.
- (3) If captains cannot agree on a makeup date or dates (lines may be played separately) the League Coordinator will have discretion to select a makeup date. The coordinator may ask for up to 3 dates from each captain and set a makeup date by way of a blind drawing from the dates submitted.
- (4) Postponed or suspended matches must be played within, and scores recorded within, 14 days of the postponement/suspension or by the deadline set by the Local League Coordinator. If mutually agreed by both team captains, postponed/suspended matches may be completed at a different facility.

## 3.4 TEAM MATCH SCORING

3.04 (a) Team match results and standings for all USTA leagues will be determined, whether in round robin or single elimination competition, first by number of team matches won. A team match is won by the team that wins the most number of individual lines in a match.\* In the event of a tie in the number of matches won, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so:

- 1) Winner of the most individual lines.
- 2) Winner of the most head-to-head team matches.
- 3) Loser of the fewest number of sets.
- 4) Loser of the fewest number of games.

\*For leagues utilizing 4 lines, in the case of a split of 2/2, the winner will be determined by using the first in the following procedures that breaks the tie:

- 1) Loser of the fewest number of sets.
- 2) Loser of the fewest number of games.
- 3) Game winning percentage: Total games won divided by total games played
- 4) Winner of Line 1 Doubles

TennisLink will maintain the accurate team standings. Teams that have not completed all regular season matches before a playoff deadline will not be included in the playoff schedule. All regular season matches must be played, completed, and scores entered into TennisLink in order to calculate standings.

3.04 (b) Recording team match results:

The home team captain shall enter match results in TennisLink within 24 hours of the conclusion of the final individual line match. If the home team has not entered the scores within 24 hours, it becomes the responsibility of the visiting team captain to enter the match results in TennisLink within 48 hours of the conclusion of the final individual line match. The team that does not enter the match results is responsible for ensuring the match results have been correctly entered in TennisLink. Match results must be confirmed in TennisLink within 48 hours after the conclusion of the final individual line match

3.04 (c) Disputing team match results:

- (1) Match results entered incorrectly may be disputed. When the results are entered, the objecting captain has 48 hours to dispute the results. TennisLink automatically confirms results 48 hours after the results are entered. Failure to dispute results within the time allowance will forfeit an individual's right to protest. Modifications or corrections to scores must be made by the Local League Coordinator.
- (2) Following initiation of a dispute in TennisLink, the team captain initiating the dispute shall:
  - (A) Confirm the scoring discrepancy with the opposing captain.
  - (B) Email the League Coordinator with the desired change and include the TennisLink match identification number and the correction needed.

## 3.5 FORFEITS, DEFAULTS, AND RETIREMENTS

3.05 (a) An individual default occurs when a player fails to appear on time, or is disqualified by eligibility or other reasons unless substitution as specified under Section 3.01(i) can be applied.

- (1) If a team defaults an individual line of play due to the 15-minute default rule, the team receiving the default must have players present and ready to play the individual line match being defaulted.
  - (2) If a team captain knows in advance that an individual line match must be defaulted due to lack of player availability, he or she must notify the opposing captain no later than three (3) hours before the scheduled start time of the team match. Habitual violators of this rule will be considered using gamesmanship and are subject to penalties or suspension from league play.
  - (3) Unless a team match is postponed under 3.03(a), once advance notification of a line default is given, the default stands; the team receiving the default is not required to have players present to play that individual line match.
- 3.05 (b) For the purpose of determining standings, individual defaults will be scored as a 6-0, 6-0 win for the player or doubles team receiving the default. Only the names of the player(s) receiving the forfeit need to be entered on the scorecard. In the event of a default by both players or doubles teams, both sides will be given a 0-6, 0-6 loss and neither receives credit for a win.
- 3.05 (c) A team must have a minimum number of eligible players available for play in each team match in accordance with the table below or the entire match must be defaulted. The maximum number of positions that may be defaulted without defaulting the entire match is also noted. When defaults are necessary, the order of the defaults, whenever possible, shall be determined by the team captain in accordance with the table below (also see 3.01(g) through 3.01(i) for information pertinent to defaults after lineups have been exchanged):

<b>Allowable Individual Line Match Defaults for All Leagues</b>					
<b>League</b>	<b>Division</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Min. Number of Players Available per Team Match</b>	<b>Max. Number of Positions that can be Defaulted</b>	<b>Positions(s) and Order of line match defaults</b>
<b>USTA</b>	Adult	18 & Over 2.5, 5.0+, Open	3	1	#1 Singles <b>or</b> #2 Doubles
		18 & Over 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5	4	2	<b>Singles:</b> #2 Singles before #1 Singles <b>Doubles:</b> #3 Doubles before #2 Doubles, & #2 Doubles before #1Doubles
		40 & Over	4	1	#1 Singles Doubles: #3 Doubles before #2 Doubles, & #2 Doubles before #1Doubles
	Adult	55 +, 65+, Tri Level, Combo	4 players who are eligible to combine and compete	1	#3 Doubles
	Mixed	18 & Over 40 & Over 55 & Over			

**Figure 4: Allowable individual line match defaults before team default**

- 3.05 (d) 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 or in that local league. 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 team in good faith, those matches shall stand as played when determining standings.

See *USTA League Regulations* item 2.03L, and *USTA Texas Section Operating Procedures* "Scoring of Full Team Defaults". The captain and/or players of a team forfeiting an entire match may be subject to penalties or sanctions prohibiting them from participating in any NoHo leagues for the remainder of the year and/or the following year.

3.05 (e) Retirement

A retirement occurs when an individual line match has started and a player or doubles team is unable to continue due to injury, loss of condition, emergency, or refusal to play. In case of a retirement, for the purpose of determining standings the non-retiring player/doubles team shall be credited with such number of additional games as would have been won if the match was completed and the non-retiring player/doubles team won every subsequent game. For NTRP computer data entry in TennisLink, mark as retired and submit actual scores of the match at the point of retirement.

## 4.0 CHAMPIONSHIPS

### 4.1 POST-SEASON PLAY

- 4.01 (a) Post-season and/or championship play may be offered to NTRP levels (flights) and age groups that contain more than one sub flight.
- 4.01 (b) Post-season and/or championship information will be sent to all captains at the beginning of each league season.
- 4.01 (c) Post-season and/or championship play will follow the procedures described in section 2.03 of the *USTA League Regulations*.

### 4.2 ELIGIBILITY

- 4.02 (a) To be eligible to participate in post-season or championship competition, all players **other than Self Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed players** must have two match results entered into TennisLink from the same Local League from the same team unless otherwise specified on the nohousta.com website. One result may be a win by default.

***Self-Rated and Valid Computer Rated Appealed players must play in 3 matches with no defaults counting to advance to Local League Playoffs or Sectionals. They must have 4 matches thru Sectionals with no defaults to advance to Nationals.***

- 4.02 (b) Post season and/or championship play may include wildcard teams.

### 4.3 MULTIPLE LEAGUES PROGRESSING TO THE SAME CHAMPIONSHIP

- 4.03 (a) The USTA Texas Section allows multiple league play within cities in the Section provided the team captains and players abide by the local rules for the leagues in which they participate. The purpose of allowing multiple league play is to encourage more USTA adult participation. Per the Texas Section Operating Procedures, the Texas Section allows a player to play on more than one team at a Sectionals event, provided they are at different NTRP levels. However, there will be no special scheduling for that player or team.

For purposes of these rules, "League" represents a distinct calendar of play with start and end dates (a season); which plays on a specific day and/or time; which has specific NTRP eligibility requirements; and which is of a specific Age Group. All

conditions must be met to constitute a separate league. For example, a ladies NTRP 4.0 USTA 18 & Over league playing on Monday mornings is distinct from the same level and Age Group playing on Wednesday mornings. A player may participate in each of these leagues, but may not be a member of two teams at the same NTRP level in the same Age Group that both play on Wednesday. The following rules apply to participation in multiple USTA leagues that advance to the same championship progression, whether Local, Area, Sectional, or National:

- 4.03 (b) When a player is involved with more than one Community Tennis Association, they must abide by the fees, rules, and boundaries of each organization.
- 4.03 (c) A player may be on as many teams as he or she is otherwise eligible, provided participation is not on two teams that: play during the same season on the same days/times, and at the same NTRP level and Age Group.
- 4.03 (d) If there is more than one league, or flight within a league, at a given NTRP level and Age Group, the team to advance to the Texas Sectional Championships shall be determined by the NoHo Local League Playoffs.
- 4.03 (e) When a player's NoHo team qualifies for the Texas Sectional Championships by way of the NoHo Local League Playoffs, she may not participate in any other Local League playoffs on a team at the same NTRP level. Likewise, if a player has qualified for the Texas Sectional Championships with a team in any other Local League, she may not participate in the NoHo Local League playoffs at the same NTRP Level.
- 4.04 (f) Players on a NoHo team that proceeds directly from local league play to the Texas Sectional Championships without requirement of a local league championship (e.g., insufficient number of teams to hold a playoff) may participate in another local league's playoffs on any other of their qualifying teams. However, if that team wins the local league playoffs, they must advance to the Texas Sectional Championships with that team and not the team that had already qualified unless the teams are at different NTRP levels. Players should verify what the other local league's rules allow for as they may have different rules. NoHo has no authority over other local league rules including but not limited to the Houston Tennis Association (HTA).
- 4.03 (g) If a player is on a team that wins a Local League Playoff and she does not participate in those playoffs, she may join that team at the Texas Sectional Championship providing she did not participate in any other Local League Playoffs at the same NTRP Level and qualify for the Texas Sectional Championships.
- 4.03 (h) When a team qualifies for the NoHo Playoffs and 50% or more of it's the players on its roster are on a team's roster that has already qualified for or subsequently qualifies for another local league championship the following shall apply: The NoHo team must make a declaration as to whether or not they will participate in the NoHo playoffs within 24 hours after the second playoff qualification occurs. If the team does not declare for the NoHo playoffs, their spot will be given to another NoHo team based on their standing in the league.
- 4.03 (i) Any other situation regarding play in multiple leagues progressing to the same championship will be resolved by the League Coordinator(s) for the appropriate Community Tennis Association(s). Standards for the filing of grievances apply (see Section 5.00 below).

## **5.0 VIOLATIONS, GRIEVANCES, AND PENALTIES**

### **5.01 SCOPE**

- 5.01 (a) Any situation not covered in these league rules will be settled at the discretion of



the team captains, League Coordinator, or the NoHo USTA or HTA Discipline and Grievance Committee, in that order.

- 5.01 (b) A team or player violating NoHo or USTA regulations, standards of conduct, fair play, or good sportsmanship is subject to disciplinary action as deemed necessary.
- 5.01 (c) The NoHo USTA or HTA Discipline and Grievance Committee will determine if any violations have occurred after reviewing a grievance. The Discipline and Grievance Committee has the power to dismiss or deny a grievance, or to direct the correction of any violations by reasonable means including but not limited to, the suspension of an individual or team. This is applicable to any party to the grievance so long as such party has been given the opportunity to review the grievance and present evidence.
- 5.01 (d) The rulings of the Discipline and Grievance Committee will stand unless any party materially affected by the decision files an appeal to the HTA Executive Director within seven (7) calendar days of the ruling's publication. Such an appeal will be heard by the Local Grievance Appeal Committee.
- 5.01 (e) The Local Grievance Appeal Committee has the power to affirm, modify, remand for cause, or reject the decision of the Discipline and Grievance Committee. The Local Grievance Appeal Committee shall not impose a harsher penalty than that imposed by the Discipline and Grievance Committee. For the purpose of clarification, should the Discipline and Grievance Committee elect not to impose a penalty, the Local Grievance Appeal Committee may not impose a penalty; however, the Local Grievance Appeal Committee may, for cause, remand the matter to the Discipline and Grievance Committee for reconsideration.
- 5.01 (f) Decisions of the Local Grievance Appeal Committee are final and binding except with regard to suspensions of individuals or teams from USTA play for a period of 12 months or more; suspensions of 12 or more months that affect USTA play may be appealed further to the USTA Texas Section.
- 5.01 (g) Grievances concerning NTRP ratings, including complaints regarding self rated players, must be filed with the USTA Texas Section.

## **5.02 FILING A GRIEVANCE**

- 5.02 (a) If a grievance against an individual or team arises out of participation in NoHo USTA league offering, the grievance may only be filed by (a) the team captain of the team that has competed in the match where the alleged violation occurred; (b) a league coordinator; or (c) a member of a Championship Committee. The exception is for Administrative Grievances, Eligibility Grievances and NTRP Grievances, which may be filed as stated in *USTA League Regulations* 3.03A(2), 3.03B(3), 3.03C(3) and 3.03E(2).
- 5.02 (b) Grievances arising out of league play must be filed in writing with the League Coordinator prior to commencement of the next team match involving said player or team, or within 24 hours after the end of local league play, whichever occurs first. The grievance form may be found on the NoHo USTA website (nohousta.com) under the 'File a Grievance' tab
- 5.02 (c) An individual or team may continue to play during a grievance investigation and hearing but must understand that, if the grievance is upheld, all matches played during that time may be reversed.

## APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY

**7 Point Set Tiebreak:** The 7 Point Set Tiebreak is played when the players reach 6 all in a set. The first player or team to win seven points by a margin of at least two wins the set 7-6. It will follow the Coman format. (Also see [Set Tiebreak](#).)

**10 Point Match Tiebreak:** The 10 Point Match Tiebreak is played in matches in lieu of the deciding final set. The first player or team to win 10 points by a margin of at least two wins the final set 1-0 and the match. The Match Tiebreak follows the Coman format, and will count as both one game and one set in TennisLink standings.

**Age Group:** Age groups within the Divisions of the USTA League Program.

**Appeal:** Request for reconsideration of a previous decision, determination, or finding.

**Area:** See [District](#).

**Benchmark Rated Player:** A player by whom other players' NTRP computer ratings are calculated. This includes any player who participates in an 18 & Over or 40 & Over Adult Division match at the local playoffs, participates in championship play, or who is dynamically disqualified. Additionally, on teams in the 18 & Over and 40 & Over Adult Division that qualify for a championship event and/or are on the schedule at a championship but the team does not participate and the team is not replaced by another team, all rostered players who played one or more matches become Benchmark players.

**Benchmark Rating:** A computer rating determined by the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System for a player using a combination of their dynamic rating and their rating derived at a local league playoff or at championships.

**Championship Level:** Any League competition held after local league competition or playoffs.

**Championship Year:** The time frame beginning with the first local league including Early Start League and ending with the conclusion of the National Championship.

**“The Code”:** A summary of the procedures that custom dictates players follow. [USTA guidelines](#) require players to follow “[The Code: The Players' Guide for Unofficial Matches](#)” in all matches without officials.

**Coman Tiebreak Procedure:** The Coman Tiebreak Procedure requires the tiebreak to be played with the players changing ends after the first point, every fourth point thereafter, and at the end of the tiebreak. Scoring is the same as a traditional tiebreak. For additional information, see the USTA's *Friend at Court*—Part 3: USTA Regulation I.E. (1) c.

**Community Tennis Association (CTA):** Any incorporated, geographically defined, not-for-profit, volunteer-based organization that supports or provides programs which promote and develop the growth of tennis.

**Computer Rating:** An NTRP rating assigned to Adult players to the 1/100<sup>th</sup> of a point at year-end that reflects level of ability. (Also see Current NTRP Rating.)

**Current NTRP Rating:** A rating generated by the USTA NTRP computer rating system based on two or more matches. (Also see *Computer Rating*.)

**Default:** When a player or team fails to appear or is removed by an administrator or tournament official for misconduct or violation of regulations.

**Disqualification:** Action taken to remove from a team a player deemed ineligible to participate.

**District:** Geographic boundaries fixed by a Sectional Association within their Section that represents a subdivision of the Sectional Association. This term may be interchanged with the terms Area, State, Region, and Territory.

**Division:** National League Programs (Adult and Mixed) offered and administered by the USTA and any other USTA League sanctioned program offered in a Section, District or Area, identified as part of TennisLink and entered as part of the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System.

**Domicile:** A legal concept-involving residency. It is that place where a person has a true, fixed permanent home or that person's home for the indefinite future. A person can only have one domicile at a time.

**Dynamic Rating:** A rating associated with a player that has the potential to change with every match played by the player. (Also see [Current NTRP Rating](#).)

**Early Start League (ESL):** A local league season that commences prior to January 1 of the league year. An ESL will use Early Start (midyear) Ratings to determine NTRP level.

**Eligibility:** Requirements to play.

**Fifteen Minute Default Rule:** Any player—or entire team—that arrives 15 minutes or more past the regularly scheduled or agreed upon start time will be defaulted. If players from both teams in a given individual line match are defaulted under this rule, the match will be recorded as a double default. Team captains do not have the authority to play any match for score after 15 minutes past the agreed upon start time. See [3.01\(h\)](#) and [3.01\(i\)](#).

**Flight:** A group of teams competing at a specified NTRP level within a local league or Championship competition where every team in that group plays every other team to declare a winner. (Also see [Subflight](#).)

**Forfeit:** See [Default](#).

**Grievance:** Written formal complaint regarding an alleged violation of a regulation, procedure, standards of conduct, fair play, or good sportsmanship.

**Houston Tennis Association (HTA):** The HTA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization and the umbrella Community Tennis Association (CTA) for Greater Houston, Texas, that administers HTA league tennis, USTA league tennis, WTT league tennis, junior and adult USTA sanctioned tournaments, Junior Team Tennis, and National Junior Tennis and Learning programs.

**Inaccurate self rating:** A self-rating that occurred as a result of no willful intent on behalf of the player whether by the player or one acting on behalf of the player (e.g., captain or coach).

**Inappropriate self-rating:** A self-rating that occurred as a result of willful intent to misrepresent a player's level of play, whether by the player or one who condones or acts on behalf of the player (e.g., captain or coach).

**Individual Line Match:** Any singles or doubles match played as part of a team match. (Also see [Team Match](#).)

**League:** League play is available throughout the year in varying formats. For purposes of these rules, when not used in a generic sense "League" represents a distinct calendar of play with start and end dates (a season); which plays on a specific day and/or time; which has specific Age & NTRP eligibility. For example, for USTA advancing play the HTA operates a ladies' Monday day league, a ladies' Friday day league, and NoHo operates a ladies' Wednesday day league. These are considered to be three distinct leagues.

**League Committee:** A committee assigned to oversee the functioning of, and make decisions regarding the direction of the organization's League tennis program. Both NoHo USTA and USTA Texas have league committees.

**League Coordinator:** Person appointed or hired to implement and administer the League.

**League Progression:** Local USTA league team winners have the opportunity to advance through area, sectional, and national championships competition.

**Level of Play:** NTRP skill levels offered in the league program.

**Lineup:** A lineup is a list of players from a roster taking part in a particular team match. Players for each individual line match will be listed in a lineup.

**Local League:** A team competition in a specified geographical area that applies specific local league regulations and consists of NTRP level(s) with a minimum of two or more teams per NTRP level. A local league may choose to divide any or all NTRP levels into flights and sub flights. Where flights or sub flights are used, a playoff structure may be established to determine a champion.

**Match Tiebreak:** Used in place of a third set, a match tiebreak is the first to 10 by a margin of two. The Coman format is used. (Also see [Set Tiebreak](#).)

**Mixed:** A team comprised of a man and woman who combine to play.

**New Player:** An individual who is playing in the Championship Year of his/her first year of competition in the HTA or USTA League Program.

**No-Ad Scoring:** A scoring system that is the same as the traditional system except that when the score reaches 40-40, only one additional point is played to determine the winner of that game. In Mixed Doubles, a male server serves this point to the male receiver, and the female player serves this point to the female receiver. In all other events, the receiver chooses the side from which the server must serve.

**NoHo: (North of Houston)** is the name for the USTA local league in the area north of Houston, including but not limited to Spring, Tomball, The Woodlands, Kingwood, Atascosita, Conroe, and Montgomery. HTA is the umbrella CTA for North of Houston USTA Leagues, and it is common for players to participate in both NoHo and HTA leagues. Find out more about Ladies NoHo USTA Leagues at [www.nohousta.com](http://www.nohousta.com).

**NTRP:** National Tennis Rating Program. The system rates players by ability levels ranging from 1.5 to 7.0. Refer to the [USTA NTRP information page](#) for details.

**NTRP Level:** Generic term advising the minimum NTRP level in increments of .5 at which a player may participate.

**NTRP Disqualification Criteria:** Having reached disqualification level three times, as designated in the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System Procedures, during the local league competition and/or any level of championship competition below the national championships in the adult division. (Also see *USTA League Regulations 2.04*.)

**NTRP Computer Methodology Procedures:** The document establishing procedures governing the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System. Refer to the [USTA NTRP information page](#) for details.

**Numeric Scoring:** Numeric scoring consists of substituting "zero," "one," "two," and "three" for "Love," "15," "30," and "40." Deuce may be announced by "Deuce" or by "3-all". When language is a barrier, hand signals are often used with a clenched fist indicating "Deuce."

**Player:** The individual USTA Member who registers on a team.

**Plus (+) NTRP Level:** An NTRP level that allows a team roster to include a specified number of players from the next higher NTRP level.

**Plus (+) Player:** A player who is allowed to register on a specific NTRP Plus (+) level roster with a rating that is at the next higher NTRP level.

**Postponed Match:** Either a team or individual line match that could not begin as originally scheduled. Due to weather conditions or other considerations, a match may be postponed by mutual agreement between the team captains provided no point has yet been counted in the match.

**Rating:** See [Computer Rating](#), [Benchmark Rating](#), [Self-Rating](#), [Dynamic Rating](#), and [NTRP Level](#).

**Remand:** To send a grievance back to either the original Grievance Committee or a new Grievance Committee, as the Grievance Appeal Committee deems appropriate, for reconsideration.

**Residency:** A place where a person is actually living, as distinguished from the person's domicile, or a place where one temporarily lives. Domicile and residence may coincide. A person can have more than one residency while he or she can have only one domicile.

**Rest Period:** A maximum of 10 minutes with coaching permitted between the second and third set when playing best of three tiebreak sets; does not apply if a tiebreak is played in lieu of a third set.

**Retirement:** Occurs when an individual line match has started and a player is unable to continue due to injury, loss of condition, emergency, or refusal to play. Retirements are entered in TennisLink with the final game count for NTRP calculation purposes (e.g., 2-6, 1-3) and the system will automatically credit the individual receiving the retirement with sufficient games as to make them the winner of the match (i.e., 2-6, 6-3, 1-0) for determining standings.

**Returning Player:** An individual who has played in a previous Championship Year and is now going to play in the current Championship Year.

**Roster:** A roster is a list of the entire team.

**Round Robin:** Each team plays every other team in its flight or sub flight. League play may consist of more than one round-robin cycle.

**Self-Rating:** A rating for a new player entering the program determined in accordance with the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) guidelines during the on-line player registration process. The player uses the NTRP guidelines to select the level of play that the player will participate in.

**Set Break:** The two (2) minute period between the completion of the last game of a set and the beginning of a succeeding set. Breaks taken at other times should be limited to true emergencies.

**Set Tiebreak:** The Set Tiebreak is the 7-Point Tiebreak Game that is played to decide a set when the set score reaches 6-all. The winner is the first to reach seven points or more by a margin of two. The Coman format is used. (Also see [Match Tiebreak](#).)

**Single Elimination Format:** In this tournament format, once you lose you are out and do not get to play any additional matches.

**Spectator:** Any person not playing a specific match. Spectators may not aid or influence players in making line calls or in determining the score. Spectators include team captains, teammates, and players on adjacent courts. Spectators are never allowed on the court unless rendering aid to a physically injured player. See *Friend at Court* comments 23.2, 26.6, and 'The Code' item 16.

**Start of a Match:** First service attempt on an individual court.

**Sub flight:** Flights with a large number of teams may be divided into sub flights as needed. (Also see [Flight](#).)

**Suspended Match:** A match, either individual or team, that is stopped after the first point has been played. The team captains will mutually agree to reschedule a suspended match. The match will resume with the same players, the same service order, and at the same score.

**Team Captain:** Appointed to represent the team and perform administrative duties.

**Team Match:** (Local team match) A number of individual singles and doubles or any combination as determined by the local league. (Also see [Individual Line Match](#).)

**TennisLink:** TennisLink ([tennislink.usta.com](http://tennislink.usta.com)) is a user-friendly Web-based system designed as a means to provide secure communication and flow of information between the USTA and its members via the Internet. TennisLink allows users to:

1. Register teams and players.
2. Enter and confirm match scores.
3. Access team rosters, schedules, and standings.
4. Apply for and renew USTA memberships.

**United States Tennis Association (USTA):** The [United States Tennis Association](#) is a not-for-profit organization that is the national governing body for the sport of tennis.

**USTA League:** A program for men and women in which teams comprised of players with the same NTRP rating are established. USTA membership is required. Players must reach the minimum age as specified by the Age Group during the calendar year of the competition. Teams may advance from local to area, sectional, and national competition.

**USTA Section:** One of 17 defined areas that comprise the USTA.

**Valid Computer Rating:** An NTRP computer rating that has not expired and is based on accurate player history. (Also see [Computer Rating](#).)

**Waiver of Claims:** As a condition of participation, each player gives up the right to any demand for injuries sustained in traveling to or from or participating in the HTA or USTA League Programs.

**Warm-up:** In order to ensure that matches begin and end in a timely manner, on-court warm-ups are limited to no more than 10 minutes other than as defined in item [3.01\(h\)\(1\)](#), and in no case shall the warm-up continue more than 15 minutes past the designated start time of the individual line match. For example, a player taking the court 10 minutes after the announced match time will have only a five-minute warm-up. Warm-up serves must also be taken at this time, not before each player's service game; taking serves "as you go" adds time to the length of a match. It is expected that players will physically prepare themselves to play (e.g., raising body temperature, dynamic stretching) off-court, prior to the scheduled start of a match. (Also see "The Code" items 3 and 4.)

**Willful Intent:** An act is done willfully and knowingly when the individual intends to do it and knows the nature of the act will achieve the intended result.

**World Team Tennis League (WTT):** World Team Tennis Recreational and Corporate Leagues feature co-ed teams competing in six sets: men's and women's doubles, men's and women's singles, and mixed doubles. The unique format, which is also played by the pros in Mylan World Team Tennis, includes no-ad scoring, substitution and coaching. Players have an opportunity to qualify for Mylan WTT National Qualifiers and the National Championship.

**Year-End Rating:** A published NTRP rating generated at the end of the league year.