



2016 USTA Junior Team Tennis Guidelines

USTA Texas Section

USTA Junior Team Tennis is a national program intended to provide youngsters with “fun, fitness, and friendship” through learning and playing the lifelong game of tennis.

TEXAS OBJECTIVES

- To provide leveled competition in a team atmosphere for boys & girls of beginner to advanced ability levels.
- To serve as a “bridge the gap” program to the USTA Schools Program, NJTL, and beginner programs and bringing youngsters from entry level tennis to competitive play in USTA sanctioned tournaments.
- To provide additional JTT program opportunities outside our current “advancing” & “traditional” Junior Team Tennis partners.
- To provide a “safe” team environment where beginner players can develop a full knowledge of the rules of tennis and develop habits of good sportsmanship.
- To provide a “competitive” team environment where experienced players can seek advancement through competition at the local level and section level.
- To encourage volunteer participation from parents as team captains, team managers and possibly have them assist in program administration.
- To provide a program that is fair across all local leagues and “to the best of our abilities” across all Junior Team Tennis programs under the umbrella of USTA

THE BIG 12

Statewide Rules & Regulations for Advancing Leagues

1. All leagues will have a captain's meeting and/or training before the season
 - a. Go over "Big 12" with captains
 - b. Go over important dates and deadlines
 - c. Go over possible "what if" scenario's
 - d. Answer questions and provide any supporting materials necessary for the league to be successful
2. Team sizes
 - a. Spring and fall seasons – JTT Track
 - i. 4 Player minimum
 1. All 10U divisions and 12U beginner & intermediate divisions are gender neutral
 2. 12U advanced, and all 14U & 18U divisions must have a minimum of 2 boys and 2 girls
 - b. National Championship Track
 - i. Divisions hosted: 14U intermediate, 14U advanced, 18U intermediate, & 18U advanced
 - ii. 6 Player minimum – leagues must have minimum of 3 boys and 3 girls
 - c. In an advancing division teams must meet this criterion in order to be considered an Eligible Team. Only an eligible team will be allowed to substitute a player onto a championship team.
3. There must be two teams per division in order to advance.
 - a. Spring and fall seasons – JTT Track
 - i. Local leagues may combine divisions if a division has only one team registered. They can only combine with a division high in level and/or age, never lower.
 - b. National Championship Track
 - i. Leagues may NOT combine divisions in order to meet this criteria
4. Each player must play 2 team matches, and match scores recorded on TennisLink in order to be eligible for sectionals.
 - a. These 2 matches must be matches from one of the recognized "Team Tennis lines" used by USTA Texas Junior Team Tennis.
 - b. One of these 2 matches may NOT be a default recorded on tennis link.
 - c. Each team must record a minimum of 3 team matches for team in a division for National Championship Track.

5. Match format – more matches can be played but these official lines must be recorded.
 - a. Spring and fall seasons – JTT Track
 - i. All 10U divisions and 12U beginner & intermediate divisions – 4 singles (in order of strength) and 2 doubles (in order of strength). In the event of a tie in bracket play each team will field one doubles team to play a 7 point tie breaker that will count as one game only.
 - ii. 12U advanced, and all 14U & 18U divisions – 4 singles (2 girls and 2 boys) and 2 doubles (boys and girls doubles) In the event of a tie in bracket play, 1 mixed doubles 7 point tie breaker will be played and the tie breaker will count as one game only.
 - b. National Championship Track
 - i. Must consist of 1 boy's single, 1 girl's single, 1 boys' doubles, 1 girls' doubles and 1 mixed doubles.
 - c. Please keep in mind...any "non official" lines will not count towards the 2 team matches a player must have to be eligible.
Coordinators/Coaches/Captains will need to keep track of where a player stands on meeting the requirement of having played in 2 local team matches.
 - d. If a player doubles up (plays in a singles and doubles match during 1 team match, it still only counts as 1 team match towards the players' need to play in 2 team matches in order to be eligible.
6. Coaching is allowed during 90 second change over between games after the third game has been played. (During the first change-over of 1-0 coaching will not be allowed.)
7. All players must be registered on TennisLink before the 1st match
 - a. Please do not allow captains to play players before they are registered on TL. By enforcing this big 12 rule we can avoid tough situations later.
8. Age Eligibility
 - a. Spring JTT Track – May 31
 - b. National Championship Track – August 31
 - c. Fall JTT Track – November 30
 - d. Players must remain age eligible through the section championship date. It is the responsibility of the coordinator to set the age cut-off date and captain to verify/validate that a player is indeed eligible before registration.
9. Score entry – scores must be in TennisLink within 48 hours of match completion.
 - a. This will help make sure players are registered before they play their first match
10. Membership
 - a. Spring and Fall JTT Track – USTA membership is not required. It is up to the local league to determine if they would like membership to be required or not.
 - b. National Championship Track – USTA Membership is required. Make sure player is a USTA member registered on TL before they play their first match

- i. USTA membership will cost \$20 for players 11 up
- ii. Membership will be at no cost to players 10 and Under registering for the 1st time as a USTA member.

11. If an intermediate player champs up during the season, or is registered for an intermediate team before champing up; the player can play the rest of the season through the Sectional and/or National championship

- a. Captains should be encouraged to correctly/fairly register kids in the appropriate level.

12. Every league must have a discipline and grievance committee

- a. 3 to 5 people should make up this committee. This group of volunteers should help settle disputes or rule on possible rule violations within the local league.
- b. Local leagues are encouraged to have a diverse group of people serve on this committee from within the local community. (parents, coaches, program coordinators, etc.)

- The Big 12 rules are the guidelines that will be applied to the divisions that are attempting to advance to the section championships and/or national championships in JTT.
- USTA Texas Jr. Team Tennis does have a grievance committee that will hear any formally written/emailed request for an exception to the rule.
- The Big 12 helps USTA Texas ensure equal & fair play among each of our local leagues.
- The Big 12 also help to guide local leagues in providing a well organized, well structured league that helps to foster trust among local league participants.

* Local leagues can organize divisions differently if they so choose. Those that do not follow the JTT or National Championship Track would not have the opportunity too advance to Sectional Championships.

10 & Under Jr. Team Tennis Top 10

1. Players in the 10U divisions will receive a participation credit for each season of Junior Team Tennis competition.
2. In order to receive participation credit, players must play at least 2 team matches on the same Junior Team Tennis Team in a season.
3. Players will receive 1 green ball credit for playing in a green ball Junior Team Tennis division.
4. Players will receive 1 orange ball credit for playing in an orange ball Junior Team Tennis division.
5. Players will not be allowed to apply an orange JTT credit towards a green ball qualification.
6. Players will not be allowed to apply a green JTT credit towards an orange ball qualification.
7. Scores/participation for players must be recorded on TL for player to receive participation credit.
8. Divisions must use the same colored ball (green/orange) for the duration of the league season.
9. Participation credits will be awarded to players in June for Spring JTT season and December for Fall JTT season.
10. In order for players to receive a participation credit they must be listed in a flight/division that is designated on TL as an orange or green ball 10U division/flight. – Those who are 10 and under but playing up into a 12U green ball division must have their information forwarded on to the Texas Section Coordinator for participation credit to be added. Any players who's information has not been forwarded on to the Section Coordinator by the end of the season will not be eligible for credit.

ADVANCING AGE GROUPS and LEVELS

The following are descriptions that should be used by the **league commissioner** or **captain**, to determine the ability level of their teams:

10 & Under Green Dot Level

- Designed for children 5- 10 years old
- Appropriate 10 under components should be used based on age of players.
- Focus should be playing first, fun, friendship, & teamwork.
- Parent team managers highly encouraged to help facilitate
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31 and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 11 before age cut off they must play in the 12 & Under division)

12 & Under Intermediate Level

- Designed for children ages 11 -12 years old
- Players can be playing in Challenger level events and as long as they have not leveled up into the championship level prior to registration are eligible to compete in this level
- Focus should be on playing, fun, friendship & teamwork.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31 and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 13 before age cut off they must play in the 14 & Under division)

12 & Under Advanced Level

- Designed for children from 11-12 years old.
- Players should be advanced in yellow ball and can be ranked in the Champ or Super Champ level. They may hold a National ranking.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31 and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 13 before age cut off they must play in the 14 & Under division)

14 & Under Beginner Level

- Designed for players ages 13 – 14 years old
- Players shall not have more than 8 Challenger points and cannot have played in more than 3 local Grand Prix type (USPTA) events.
- Focus should be on playing, fun, friendship & teamwork.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31 and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 15 before age cut off they must play in the 18 & Under division)

14 & Under Intermediate Level

- Designed for children from 13 -14 years old.

- Players can be playing in Challenger level events and as long as they have not leveled up into the championship level prior to registration are eligible to compete in this level
- Texas Championship and Super championship players are not allowed to play in this division; unless they qualify for the championship division after they have registered for the season.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31, National Championship season players must remain age eligible through August 31st, and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 15 before age cut off they must play in the 18 & Under division)

14 & Under Advanced Level

- Designed for children from 13-14 years old.
- Players should be at an advanced level of play and can be ranked in the Champ or Super Champ level. They may hold a National ranking.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31, National Championship Track season players must remain age eligible through August 31st, and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 15 before age cut off they must play in the 18 & Under division)

18 & Under Intermediate Level

- Designed for players from 15-18 years old.
- Players can be playing in Challenger level events and as long as they have not leveled up into the championship level prior to registration are eligible to compete in this level tournaments or perhaps playing for their high school team.
- Texas Championship and Super Championship players are not allowed to play in this division; unless they qualify for the championship division after they have registered for the season.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31, National Championship Track season players must remain age eligible through August 31st, and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (Turns 19 before age cut off they ineligible to participate.)

18 & Under Advanced Level

- Designed for children from 15-18 years old.
- Players should be at an advanced level and can be ranked in the Champ or Super Champ level. They may hold a National ranking.
- Spring season players must remain age eligible through May 31, National Championship Track season players must remain age eligible through August 31st, and Fall season player must remain eligible through November 30. (If the child turns 19 before age cut off they ineligible to participate.)

Notes:

- 1) Champ and Super-Champ players are not allowed to register on TennisLink in the intermediate division under any circumstances (For example: 14 advanced champ cannot play on a 18 intermediate team)
- 2) If a player champs up during the Junior Team Tennis season they may remain on the intermediate team so long as the player was a Challenger player when they were registered on TennisLink for the team.
- 3) In the National Championship Track season TennisLink will not allow a player to register if they are age ineligible. Be aware that in the spring and fall JTT Track seasons, local league coordinators will need to verify that players are and will be eligible at the end of the season for championship play. If a player is deemed to be ineligible it will cause the team to forfeit all the matches the ineligible player played, likely causing the teams overall standing to change.
- 4) Please remember that players are only eligible to compete in 1 Section Championship per season. Players are allowed to play on multiple teams (as always). If a player is on multiple teams that qualify for the playoffs he/she must choose which team they will represent at the playoffs.

LOCAL LEAGUE INFORMATION

LEAGUES

A local league is a team competition in a specified geographical area that applies specific local team regulations and consists of age and ability level(s) ideally with a minimum of two or more teams per level. A local league may choose to divide any or all age and ability levels into flights. A playoff structure may be established to determine a champion for each division created.

TEAMS

A team shall consist of the minimum listed in the Big 12 rules. Team members may not have a higher ability level than the level at which they are competing. Team members shall be eligible to compete in the divisions for which they are registered. A team is only eligible to advance if it has the minimum required players and all have completed their 2 local team matches each.

LEAGUE COMMISSIONER (Area League Coordinator or ALC)

An ALC should be named for each local league & approved by Junior Team Tennis Section Coordinator. He/she will be primarily responsible for organizing the league, doing the general administrative work, scheduling play, and recruiting local volunteers to help facilitate league growth by increasing the number of facilities, teams, and players participating. It is recommended that this person be a parent or other interested volunteer. *The ALC and their ability to be inclusive is the foundation to the success of the league.*

Team Captains

Captains will be responsible for his/her team(s), and can be a parent, tennis pro, coach, or any other volunteer. Free captain's training will be provided by USTA Texas if requested. Recreational Coaches Workshops and/or a Quick Start Tennis Training can be requested by going to www.coachyouthtennis.com. USTA National has a background checking process in place. The registered TennisLink captains participating in Jr. Team Tennis is required to pass a background check. Please visit www.usta.com/safeplay for more information.

FORMAT

The USTA National Championship Track require the use of a co-ed modified play format similar to the World Team Tennis format. This consists of boys' and girls' singles and doubles, and one mixed doubles for a total of five lines. This is the format that will be played at the Sectional Playoffs as well as The National Championships.

The JTT Track allows for gender neutral 10U & 12U age groups and co-ed 12U adv. and all 14U & 18U age groups. 10U & 12U divisions will play four lines of singles in order of strength and two lines of doubles in order of strength while the 12U adv. and all 14U & 18U divisions will play two girls' singles, two boys' singles, one girls' doubles and one boys' doubles. This is the format that will be played at the Sectional Playoffs.

The USTA TX Section also recommends playing pro sets (first one to six games, no-ad) for all age groups except 10U. The 10U age division is recommended to play 2 short sets to four

with a tie breaker as the third set. All rules and regulations of the USTA should apply during local play.

Good sportsmanship should always be highly encouraged!

LOCAL PROTESTS/GRIEVANCES

A grievance committee **must** be named by the local commissioner or managing CTA that will hear all protests/grievances within 48 hours of when they arise in local league play. This committee should consist of 3- 5 persons.

ROSTERS / TEAM & PLAYER REGISTRATION

The USTA has developed a TennisLink program specifically for Junior Team Tennis. Each league and/or ALC is responsible for making sure that programs and players are entered onto TennisLink before they play their first team match of the season.

ALCs are also responsible for making sure that team scores are entered onto TennisLink so that each registered player shows a local history of play. There is a fee to enter a player's name and information. It is collected on-line by credit card at the time of registration.

Players eligible to advance to Section Championships must be registered on TennisLink, and show local play history on TennisLink. ALCs hold the final responsibility for making sure all players are registered on tennis link and all scores are recorded on tennis link prior to section championships. Failing to do so will result in players not registered or incomplete match history being declared ineligible for section championship participation.

USTA MEMBERSHIP

In 2016 USTA will continue its program/initiative of 1st time 10 & Under players can receive a FREE USTA membership. A source code will again be provided to providers and consumers to use at time of registration. As more information becomes available it will be passed along to the commissioners and managing CTA's

A junior USTA membership is \$20.00. A membership can be purchased by going to www.usta.com or by calling 1-800-990-USTA (8782).

USTA MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

- All the JUNIOR TEAM TENNIS BENEFITS

PLUS

- USTA Membership Card
- Subscription to Smash or Bounce Magazine
- USTA TX Tournament Schedule
- USTA TX Publications
- Discount offers

SPONSORSHIPS

Leagues are encouraged to seek sponsor support from local businesses, or to hold fund-raisers. Please work with the JTT section coordinator when creating these partnerships.

SIGN-UP CARNIVAL

A “sign-up carnival” is a great way to generate excitement for your league. Be sure to take pictures and submit to the USTA Texas Section for state and national exposure. The Texas section has ability to help with sign-up carnivals through our Grow the Game Grant, so we encourage local leagues to take advantage.

SECTION CHAMPIONSHIPS

There will be 3 Junior Team Tennis Sectional Playoffs offered this year: Spring, Summer & Fall.

SECTION CHAMPIONSHIPS DATES

Season	Date	Location
Spring	May 27-29	Tyler, TX
Summer	July 22-24	Kerrville, TX
Fall	Nov. 11-13	Abilene, TX

PARTICIPANTS

The local league will determine which team will advance to the section championship. To participate in the section championships players/teams must meet the following requirements:

- Must have the minimum players as set in the Big 12 on the team that competed in 2 team matches locally.
- Scores of these and all matches must be recorded on TennisLink. Local Commissioner may set a higher minimum of matches.
- If a player from the winning team is unable to participate at the Sectional Playoffs and that causes the team to have less than the required minimum then the winning team can substitute a player from another team in their local league to meet the minimum for the Sectional playoffs. For example, during the Spring JTT Track season if the Tigers have 3 boys and 2 girls on their winning team and one of the girls got sick, injured, or can't make the playoffs, the Tigers can select another girl that participated in the local league and meets the requirements of Junior Team Tennis. If one of the boys from the Tigers cannot attend the playoffs the Tigers cannot add another player because they would still have 2 boys, which are enough to participate at the Sectional Playoffs. This rule is to protect the fairness of local leagues and playoffs. It is the responsibility of the commissioner to monitor this rule. The Texas Section will monitor this rule based on the team rosters/registration.
- In addition, teams must adhere to the 2/3 rule which limits the amount of players being subbed onto the playoff team. The team participating in the championship must contain 2/3 of the original roster. For example: During the National

Championship Track season, if the Eagles have 6 players, 3 boys and 3 girls, they may only sub for two player's total. If they are missing two girls and one boy; the tigers may only sub for two of these players.

DIVISIONS

Area leagues must create, but are not limited to Intermediate and Advanced divisions. Additional divisions include, Quick Start and Beginner level play. Divisions offered at JTT Track Section Championships are 10U Green Dot, 12 & Under Intermediate, 12U Advanced, 14 & Under Beginner, 14 & Under Intermediate, 18 & Under Intermediate, 14 & Under Advanced, and 18 & Under Advanced. Divisions offered at National Championship Track Section Championships are 14 & Under Intermediate, 18 & Under Intermediate, 14 & Under Advanced, and 18 & Under Advanced.

Advanced divisions can be made up of Championship or Super Championship players. Local leagues are required to implement Intermediate divisions during their local play, and they will be required to enter their teams into the appropriate division at the Sectional playoffs according to the guidelines provided.