



2025 USTA Early Start League (ESL) Memphis Local Regulations

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Memphis ESL Local League Coordinator Contact Information

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[USTA League Regulations \(National/Southern/Tennessee\)](#) have full force at all levels of play. There is no authorization to modify, amplify or change those regulations. USTA League are un-officiated matches so Friend at Court and The Code shall be observed.

Please note that this information is specific to the USTA Adult Leagues in the Memphis area and may not apply to other areas or types of leagues. They are designed for the Memphis area to help ensure fair and competitive matches while maintaining good communication between teams and the Local League Coordinator. These regulations are focused on local play specific to Memphis.



Local League Important Dates

<u>League</u>	<u>Local Registration Opens</u>	<u>Local Team Registration Close (Deadline for legal team roster)</u>	<u>Local Last Day to Add Individual</u>	<u>Local Schedule Released</u>	<u>Local Playoff Dates</u>	<u>State League Play Deadline</u>	<u>State Championship</u>
Adult 18 & Over ESL	August 1, 2024	September 6	November 16	September 23rd	Nov 13 - Dec.. 14	December 23, 2024	TBD

Days of Play

<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
	Overflow matches for facilities that allow play on Tuesday	2.5, 3.5, 4.5	3.0, 4.0		Men/Women 2.5, 3.5, 4.5	Men/Women 3.0, 4.0

ESL League Regulations

- Players should become familiar with the USTA League Regulations. Click [here](#) for easy access of USTA League Regulations where you will find the comprehensive regulations related to league play.
- It is necessary to note that these local rules specific to the Memphis area, may be modified or adjusted with the approval of the Local Rules Committee.
- Memphis is defined as encompassing the counties of Shelby, Lauderdale, Tipton and Fayette. Teams participating in Memphis local leagues must use facilities located within this defined geographical area.

Player Registration Requirements and Fees

- All participants must be current members of USTA
- Before a player registers for an ESL team, they must have reached 18 years of age.
- Players are allowed to play at their current NTRP level and/or one level above it.
- Participants must be registered in TennisLink to be eligible to play in their first match



- If only one team is registered at the deadline for any level, an extension of two weeks will be given to meet the National requirement of a minimum of 2 teams.
- ESL League registration fee is **\$33.15**. A \$30 dollar league fee and a \$3.15 non-refundable TennisLink fee.

Refund

Players that did not play a match for that team and are not advancing to a State Championship are eligible to request a refund.

- Process for Refunds:
 - Contact the LLC to request a refund by the deadline of December 27, 2024
 - Refund will consist of league fee (\$30) minus \$7.00 that goes to LLC. The processing fee to TennisLink \$3.15 is non-refundable.

Eligibility

- Players can participate in different NTRP levels as long as they meet the eligibility criteria for those levels.
- NTRP Ratings: Each player will use his/her most current NTRP Computer Rating on file in TennisLink. Players who do not have a computer rating on file in TennisLink shall self-rate in accordance with the National Tennis Rating Program. Self-ratings are valid for two years from the date issued or until replaced by a dynamic or computer rating. NTRP computer generated ratings are good for 3 years for those players 59 years old or under, and 2 years for those 60 years of age or older.
- Team captains have the responsibility to ensure that all team members meet the eligibility requirements.
- If a player is found to be ineligible any matches they have played may be forfeited.

Captain Responsibilities

- Each team must appoint a captain who will be responsible for managing team activities and representing the team in USTA League matters.
 - Captains must have a valid email address and phone number listed in TennisLink to facilitate communication with LLC's and other captains.
- Team Naming Format:
 - Captains must use the following format to name teams: *Captains Last Name/City*
- Home courts must be identified during registration; otherwise, the LLC will assign courts.



- Captains must communicate with their weekly opponents before the match to confirm details and discuss any unique court arrangements.
- The home captain is responsible for informing the opposing captain about how matches will be played if the site uses split court times.
- Home teams pay the court fees for regular season matches, and visiting teams provide new balls for each match.
- If matches need to be moved indoors due to weather conditions, the cost is split between both teams if agreed upon by the captains.
- Each team must have access to at least three courts for home matches, but if a facility has blackout dates, teams may play some home matches elsewhere.
- Matches may be played on any court surface chosen by the home team.

Roster Requirements

- 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.
- For leagues with three teams or more, there is no minimum number of players required at the designated team NTRP level. For example, a 3.0 registered team may be composed entirely of 2.5 NTRP-rated players.
- USTA Tennessee limits the number of players that appear on a team roster. Specific details can be found in the Levels Offered table for the maximum number of players allowed in this league.
- No residency requirements attached to divisions that play locally. In the divisions with direct advancement, there must be at least 3 players on the roster that reside within that particular local league.

Levels Offered

<u>Division</u>	<u>Age Group</u>	<u>NTRP Levels</u>	<u>League Format</u>	<u>Minimum Number of Players Required For Legal Team</u>	<u>Maximum number of players allowed on team roster</u>
Adult 18 & Over ESL	18 & Over	2.5 women, 5.0	1 Singles 2 Doubles	5	12
	18 & Over	3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5	2 Singles 3 Doubles	8	18

***Notation:** 2.5 Men and 5.0 Men/Women are not offered in the ESL League. These levels will play their local league at the TN State Championships.

Possible Scheduling Criteria

- Divisions may be divided into two or more flights with a playoff at the end of local play to determine the Memphis champion.
- Alternatively, each NTRP level may play a partial round robin competition wherein every team plays the same number of matches against randomly selected opponents, and then a minimum of the top two teams shall progress to a single elimination playoff to establish a local league champion for that NTRP level.
- A division that has at least 12 teams might be subdivided into flights/brackets per the LLC's discretion.
- If a bracket has 5 or less teams it will play each team more than once and have a double round robin or a partial second round robin if the calendar allows.
- Brackets with 6 or more teams are guaranteed a single round robin only. An option to add additional matches to a bracket of 6 will be considered if court availability allows. This option could include a random drawing to schedule some of the teams in a flight to play each other twice, but not a full double round robin.
- There will be a weekday schedule made for any level of play that has a minimum of 2 teams registered by the deadline.
- If there is only one team in a weekday bracket, that team will be moved to the weekend bracket of the same age group and NTRP level.
- If there is only one weekend team in a bracket, the weekday teams will play against that one team on a weekend day and that weekend team will be moved to the weekday bracket, but all of their matches will be on the weekend.
- If there are more matches than the weeks of play, teams may have to work in matches, or will have two matches scheduled in one week. These matches will be scheduled on an alternate day, most likely Tuesday for weekday teams and a weeknight evening for weekend teams.
- Some matches may have to be scheduled by the captains. These matches will be treated like a makeup match. If a work in match has not been played by Wednesday, November 13 at 6 :30 pm Central Time for 18+, the LLC will schedule the match and it will made up whenever the LLC can secure courts at the home, away or neutral facility. The original home team will be responsible for court costs.
- Self-scheduled matches and make up matches need to be rescheduled between the captains. Once the date/time are set and confirmed, captains will email the exact match details to the LLC at jackiemills@memphista.com.



- Brackets that do not have playoffs do not have to meet this November 13 deadline. The Adult 18 & Over teams must have matches completed by December 18 at 5pm. Once the match is set, it is expected to be played at this time unless canceled by weather. This match will then follow the inclement weather policy.

Individual Regulations

USTA ESL Local League Play in Memphis

- Official Ball - A standard Type 2 USTA approved ball shall be used in all matches.
- All local league matches will be the best of two sets with a Set Tiebreak (first to 7 by 2) used at 6 all in each set. After each set there is a two- minute rest period allowed. There is NO changing of ends unless it is a change over time. No coaching will be allowed during set breaks. After the first game of each set, players change ends without a rest period (continuous play). All other changeovers within a set will have a 90-second rest period. In lieu of a third set, a Match Tiebreak (first to 10 by 2) shall be played. The Coman Tiebreak Procedure will be used for all Set Tiebreaks and Match Tiebreaks in local league and State Championship matches.
- With the exception of 2.5, a team wins a team match if it wins three or more individual matches (courts). In the 2.5 division a team wins the team match if it wins two or more individual matches (courts). Winning teams receive one point for each team match; total points accumulated during the season will determine team standings. Team Standings can be viewed by the level/flight in Tennis Link.
- If a match is rescheduled due to anything but weather, school spring or fall breaks (as defined by the LLC) or State Championships, then 3 courts need to be played on the scheduled date (or 2 courts for any 3-court league) and the other court(s) may be rescheduled within the 14-day make-up window if both captains agree to reschedule some courts.

Line-ups and Substitutions

Line-ups are to be exchanged at the scheduled match time or earlier if captains agree. Each player can participate in only one individual match within each team match. In case of illness, injury, disqualification, or no-show of a player before the start of an individual match, the team may substitute a player in the affected position within the 15-minute default time, using a player not already listed on the line-up. The substitute player is entitled to a five-minute warm-up.

- When individual matches in a team match do not begin all at the same time, the order of matches shall be as follows, unless both captains agree to change: #1 singles, #2 singles, #1 doubles, #2 doubles, and #3 doubles.
- A player may be added to the team roster up until the last day to add a player but it must be before they step foot on court for warm-up of individual match they will play.
- For City Playoffs the USTA lateness rule will be enforced: 5 minutes....loss of one game and loss of toss, 10 minutes....loss of 2 games and loss of toss, 15 minutes....loss of 3 games and loss of toss, greater than 15 minutes... default.

Valid Match

For a team match to be considered valid, the majority of individual matches must be played. Refer to National regulation 2.01C(3)

- Non-compliance with Regulations: If a captain does not comply with these regulations, it may be considered a full team default in favor of the opponents.
- Inability to Reach Agreement: If the captains cannot come to an agreement on the individual matches, the following matches will be assigned in sequential order to be played: #1 Singles, #2 Singles, and #1 Doubles.
- Re-Exchange Scorecards: Once the captains agree on the individual matches, they will re-exchange scorecards reflecting the agreed-upon matches.

Defaults

- If a team shows up without the minimum number of players required for the team match based on the number of players present, or to be present, it will be a full team default in favor of the opponents. Please refer to National Regulation 2.01C(5) on team default procedures.
- If a team plays a local match without a full lineup, defaults must be taken according to the following:
 - For 1 Singles/2 Doubles format, defaults must occur at either #1 singles or #2 doubles
 - For leagues playing the 2 Singles/3 Doubles. Defaults are taken from either #2 Singles or #3 Doubles making sure that at least 3 courts are being played.
- Any team/captain who has more than 4 defaults in 18+ during one league season may be subject to a grievance, and suspension points assessed.



- If a match is begun and a player has to retire due to injury or illness, the match score to the point of default will be recorded on the scorecard (i.e.; 6-2, 2-1, 15-15, retired).
- If a match must be forfeited, the name(s) of the forfeiting player(s) are not written on the scorecard. Only the names of the player(s) receiving the default.
- The score is entered as 6-0, 6-0

Coaching and Cell Phones

Coaching in any form is not allowed during USTA Adult League matches. Cell phones must be turned off or silenced during play.

- Teammates, spectators, and coaches may not comment on the line calls or scoring while a match is being played. The home team will be responsible for controlling spectator's conduct during match play.

Weather Interruptions

- If play is interrupted by weather, darkness or other factors beyond the control of players, completed individual matches will stand as played. In the event that rain or inclement weather forces the cancellation and/or re-scheduling of a local league team match, the line-up would stand only for those positions that had already started (first service attempt) their match. All other positions, even those that were in warm-up may be changed including defaulted courts.
- Inclement Weather Rescheduling:
 - An inclement weather re-schedule becomes official if courts or conditions are unplayable for more than 40 minutes during the 2-hour block matches are scheduled to be played.
 - Inclement weather conditions include rain, snow, ice, darkness, or weather below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - The temperature below 40 degrees needs to be confirmed on weather.com app or website.
 - If the temperature is colder than 40 degrees, play may still take place if both team captains agree.
 - The supervisor of the courts will determine if the courts are playable. If there is no supervisor, the team captains will jointly make that determination.

- If captains cannot reach each other to determine if a match is eligible for inclement weather reschedule, the teams must go to the courts and be ready to play.
- Completing a match interrupted by weather:
 - If a match has already started and is rained out or meets the criteria for inclement weather rescheduling, all points, games, and sets played at the time the match is rained out will count.
 - Makeup matches will begin at the point they were terminated and may be played on an alternate surface if both captains agree.
 - If a written line-up has been exchanged between captains but play did not start, substitutions from the team roster may be made.
 - Forfeits offered verbally prior to the original lineup exchange are nullified when the match is rescheduled due to rain or inclement weather.
 - Lineups exchanged virtually through the LLC may not substitute any players unless an injury occurs and the player can not participate within the 14 day make-up period. See the Memphis Standard Regulations at memphista.com for the Virtual Lineup Exchange rule.
- Scheduling Makeup Matches:
 - The two team captains shall agree on a date for the makeup match. Individual courts do not have to be made up at the same time.
 - Once the captains agree on a match date and time, that date and time are official and cannot be changed without the consent of the LLC .
 - The makeup match must be completed by the 14th day after the match was originally scheduled.
 - If captains cannot agree on a date, the match will automatically be scheduled for 1 pm (for weekday teams) and 6:30 pm (for weekend teams) on the 14th day from the originally scheduled date.
 - If the home team facility cannot accommodate a match on this 14th day at 1 PM or 5:30 PM as stated above , an alternate site will be used, and the home team is responsible for court costs; no exceptions.
 - The LLC reserves the right to book the match at another facility if the home courts are not available on that 14th day.
 - If the makeup match scheduled for the 14th day is rained out, it will be played the next day at 1pm or 6:30 pm, and so on until the match is played.
 - Rainouts that occur during the last weekend of league play will be scheduled immediately by the LLC without exceptions.



- Captains are encouraged to be proactive and schedule makeup matches at a time and date agreeable to both teams, especially if inclement weather is expected for the last weekend of play.

- Rescheduling because of Championship Conflict
 - During USTA championship events, if a team has at least 6 players who are participating in a USTA championship (including Combo State Championships), they may reschedule their match.
 - At least 6 players must have registered and attended the championships for the team to be eligible for rescheduling.
 - The captain of the team that needs to reschedule must inform the opposing team captain at least 7 days prior to the scheduled match.
 - Once both captains agree to a reschedule date, they must notify the LLC by email at jackiemills@memphista.com, providing the exact date and time of the rescheduled match.
 - The same rules that apply to rainout reschedules will also apply to this type of rescheduling, and there will be no exceptions.
 - It is important to complete all matches by local deadlines. In case of rainouts occurring during the last weekend of league play, the LLC will schedule those matches immediately, and no exceptions will be made.
- Finishing Matches:
 - If a team's match is not finished by the time the next scheduled match starts, the players will have to vacate the courts.
 - The unfinished match will be continued according to the inclement weather policy if one or both of the next scheduled match captains want courts available at their scheduled time.

These guidelines aim to ensure fairness, proper completion of matches, and effective communication between team captains and the league coordinator in the event of inclement weather or rescheduling needs. It is essential to adhere to these guidelines to maintain the integrity of play and to avoid any unnecessary disputes.

Full Team Match Forfeits

- If a captain knows ahead of time that he/she will forfeit an entire team match, he/she must notify the Local League Coordinator and the opposing team captain.

If a team forfeits an entire team match and that forfeit affects the outcome of the local league, then all matches played by the forfeiting team will be removed from the standings. If the forfeiting team has no effect on the outcome of the local league, matches played by that team will stand and that team may be eligible to advance.

- Notifications of full team forfeits must be done in a timely manner. For example, if you know a week ahead of time you will be defaulting an entire match, don't wait until the day before to notify the LLC or opposing captain. Once a captain has forfeited his/her entire team match and has contacted the LLC and/or the opposing team captain, it becomes final. The opposing team captain must contact the LLC at jackiemills@memphista.com and verify the opposing team default or the team must be present and ready to play at the scheduled match time, or it becomes a double default/forfeit.

Score Entry

Captains are responsible for entering and/or confirming match scores on TennisLink. Captains need to verify and confirm the recorded match scores. All recorded scores will be final 48 hours from match time. If a mistake is made when entering scores and you have clicked out of scorecard on TennisLink, you will have to email the LLC with the match number and correction.

- **Only the LLC can make a change to the scorecard.** Any disputes must be made on TennisLink and the LLC must be notified by email before the 48 hours is up.
 - If scores are not entered into TennisLink within 48 hours, both captains may be subject to a local grievance and sanctions imposed by State Grievance Committee.

Tiebreak Procedures

In the event of a tie in a team match or in league standings, the tie will be broken by the first of the procedures listed below.

For a tie in league standings at the end of the season:

- **Individual Matches.** Winner of the most individual matches in the entire competition.
- **Head-to-head.** Winner of head-to-head match.
- **Sets.** Loser of the fewest number of sets.
- **Games.** Loser of the fewest number of games
- **Game Winning Percentage.** Total games won divided by total games played.



- If two teams are still tied for first place after game winning percentage tiebreak, then a playoff match will be held between the tied teams prior to the end of league deadline.

Local Playoffs

- All players must play in two (2) matches locally to qualify for advancement to City Playoffs. Local playoffs are considered championship play, so each player must have played 2 matches during the local season to be able to participate.
- If a level has more than one flight/bracket, a playoff will be played to determine which team/teams advance to the TN State Championships. If a bracket/flight has 7 or more teams, the top 2 teams will advance to the local playoffs. If a bracket/flight has 6 or less teams, the top team only in that bracket/flight will advance to local playoffs. See Memphis Standard Regulations at memphista.com to view the full playoff rules.
- In good sportsmanship and in fairness to other teams in a flight/bracket, if your team knows before playoffs start that your team cannot advance to the State Championships, then please let the LLC know ahead of time so that your team's spot in the playoffs can be offered to the next team in line. Playoff teams may be asked to commit to State Championships by email if the LLC requests. If a team enters the playoffs and knows they can't play a minimum of the courts for playoff matches, to have valid matches, or the team knows they will not advance to the State Championships if given the opportunity, a grievance will be filed on the captain and possibly team members, and will forfeit their security deposit.
- All teams playing in local playoffs will be required to submit a \$250 security deposit (payable to MTA), which will be destroyed upon completion of the City Playoffs if team has played all of its scheduled play off matches. Teams that win the City Playoffs will have their check destroyed once they have committed to the state championships. If you know your team will not be going to the state championships, please do not play in the local playoffs.

Championships

- Players who qualify for a team(s) may advance on more than one team within an age group only if they are different NTRP levels and have qualified separately for each team. No accommodations for scheduling will be made at any Championship for teams with players that may be competing on two or more teams during a championship.

- Players that are bumped as a result of Year End ratings, may still advance on their ESL teams, if they are eligible, as long as they have not reached the “clearly above level” mark.
- Captains must accept/decline their ESL bid to championships by April 1st and have the deposit check into USTA TN by April 5th.
- Once the season is completed including Memphis Local Play-Offs, the 1st place team will be offered a berth in the TN State Championships. If the 1st place team declines, the Local League Coordinator will offer to the 2nd place team.

Advancement

- ESL players who have valid computer ratings that indicate they are at a higher level than the one they are currently competing in are allowed to continue participating at the lower NTRP level until the conclusion of any ongoing Early Start League.
- These ESL players are still eligible to advance to Local Play-Offs, State Championships and Sectional Championships (2.5 only) despite having higher computer ratings.
- However, ESL players with computer ratings that are "clearly above level" must immediately adjust to their new NTRP level and are not allowed to continue playing with the lower-level team they qualified for.

Matches required to advance to championships for ESL Adult League

- State and Sectional Championships(2.5 only)
 - 2 matches played on advancing team
 - 1 Default received shall count
 - Retirements count for all players on the court
- National Championships
 - 3 matches played on the advancing team for a computer rated player
 - One default received counts as one of those 3
 - For Self-rated and computer rated appealed players- 4 matches required with no defaults counting as one of the four.
 - Retirements count for all players

Grievances

- **Self-Ratings and Grievances:** Any self-rated player who is playing at an NTRP level lower than his/her actual skill level is subject to an NTRP Grievance. Players



who allow someone else to complete the self-rating process for them will be ultimately responsible and held accountable for information submitted or omitted. Failure to self-rate in accordance with the *Guidelines*, or omission of information regarding a player's tennis history, will subject the player as well as the captain and/or others who completed, assisted, condoned and/or approved an inappropriate self-rating to penalties or disqualification. A Captain, Local League Coordinator, or member of a Championship Committee can file a NTRP grievance.

- Grievances are filed with the Local League Coordinator. Please submit via email, including a \$50.00 filing fee. Should the Grievance Committee uphold the grievance, the filing fee will be refunded. The LLC will give the grievance to the State Grievance Committee. Forms for grievances may be obtained from the Local League Coordinator
- USTA League Suspension Point System will be used to assess points to players, captains and associated USTA Members when grievances are upheld.

Local Committees

- [Memphis Rules & Regulations Committee: Jackie Mills, Laura Huss, Marla Goodwin](#)
- USTA Tennessee Grievance Committee: Terryann Nelson, Chair, Jackie Mills, Bryce Curry
- USTA Tennessee Grievance Appeals Committee: Roger Ross, Chair, Barbara Hooper and Jeanne Jones

Other Resources

- USTA, USTA Southern and USTA Tennessee Regulations - <https://www.ustatn.com/adult-local-league-regulations/>
- Friend at court - <https://www.ustatn.com/adult-local-league-regulations/>
- USTA Tennessee Website – <https://www.ustatn.com/>
- USTA Southern Website – <https://southernchampionships.com/>
- Memphis Tennis Association Website - <https://www.memphista.com/>
- Facebook - [@MemphisTennisAssociation, Memphis USTA 18 & over, 40 & over, 55 & over, 65 & over and Early Start League](#)