



# Savannah Area Tennis Association

## Rules and Regulations – 2016 League Season

### I. Savannah Area Tennis Association

#### **A. Organization**

The Savannah Area Tennis Association (SATA) was established to provide an operational framework for the organized promotion and growth of tennis play and activities in the Savannah Area. The power to act on behalf of the association is vested in the board of directors that is comprised of member volunteers associated with various tennis facilities throughout the Savannah Area.

#### **B. Affiliations**

The SATA is a member organization of the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

#### **C. Membership**

The SATA program is provided for all members of SATA. Requirements for membership and membership fees vary depending upon the program in which one participates. Leagues participating under the USTA programs may also require membership in the USTA.

The board of directors has the authority to deny, revoke, or reinstate any SATA membership if that member violates or has violated any of these rules or any generally accepted standard of behavior on or off the court.

### II. General Rules and Regulations

This document and all references contained within constitute the general rules and regulations as defined by the SATA for tennis play within the membership. Where not specifically covered within this document, play shall be in accordance with the current rules of play as defined by USTA Georgia, USTA Southern, and the United States Tennis Association (USTA). All players and teams have the responsibility of playing within the Rules of Tennis and the principles of The Code.

In situations not covered or provided for within these general rules and outside the responsibility of the leagues program, the SATA board of directors shall have the authority to take the necessary actions, make the necessary rulings or to impose the appropriate penalties.

### III. League

#### **A. Program**

The SATA program of league tennis play may include USTA oriented groupings of:

- Men and Women Adult Leagues, 18&Over, 40&Over, 55&Over, and 65&Over
- Adult Mixed Doubles Leagues, 18&Over and 40&Over
- Combo Leagues, Tri-Level Leagues, and Singles and Doubles Flex Leagues.

All of these leagues are comprised of any number of teams and further sub-divided into USTA NTRP defined skill or rating levels such as 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.5 and 5.0.

##### 1. NTRP Levels of Play:

- NTRP Rating levels in the Adult 18&Over League are: 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, 4.0 Low, 4.5, and 5.0 Plus(+).
- NTRP Rating levels in the Adult 40&Over League are: 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, and 4.5 Plus(+).
- Plus(+) level team rosters may include up to two players from the next higher NTRP level. (40 & Over 4.5+ can have up to 3 players)
- Plus(+) players must always play in the #1 slot position, either #1 Singles, or #1 Doubles.
- For Plus(+) levels, which play only three slots per team match, only one Plus(+) player may compete in a team match at a time.
- For Plus(+) levels, which play four or more slots per team match, two Plus(+) players may compete in the same team match.

## B. Players

All team members must be members of the USTA and have reached the age of 18, 40, 55, or 65 for the adult age categories, 18&Over, 40&Over, 55&Over, or 65&Over, respectively, by December 31 of the calendar year.

New/returning players who do not have a computer rating that is current as prescribed by USTA rules shall self-rate themselves in accordance with the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) when entering the program regardless of the NTRP level they are entering.

No player may play below their current computer rating or self-rating. A player may play only one NTRP level above the player's current NTRP level. A player may appeal their rating at anytime online thru TennisLink. A player on a team is bound by their rating at the time of registration as shown on the team roster. However, if a rating is changed by appeal after a player has registered, that player (or the captain) can notify the LLC of the change and have his/her rating changed on the team roster. The player must play at the level the team roster reflects at the time of the match.

Each player must register for a team and be assigned a TennisLink player ID number for the team prior to match play.

**All players** (except Combo and Adult 65&Over) **must play a minimum of two (2) matches** on the same team during the local league season to qualify for State Championship level or beyond. Only one default can be counted as a match played.

A player may participate in up to two NTRP levels in the same local league during the same season. Players who qualify for the State Championships may advance on two different level 18&Over Adult teams, two different level 40&Over Adult teams, or two different level combo teams. A player may advance on one 55&over team and one 65&Over team. Players who qualify for the Mixed Doubles State Championship may advance on a maximum of two teams - one 18&Over and one 40&Over mixed team, or two different levels in the same mixed league. If eligible players do not participate at the State Championship, they may participate in the Sectional and/or National Championships.

## C. Teams

Each team must have a designated captain to provide coordination between the team and the league coordinators for the league level. The League Coordinator has the authority to approve or disapprove the registration of a team.

Teams wishing to participate in SATA USTA League tennis programs must provide home courts within 40 miles of the intersection of Skidaway Road and Bona Bella. If a team is within the "playing area" as defined as Chatham, Effingham, Bryan and Bulloch counties, but has home courts beyond 40 miles, the team will be included but may be required to play most of their matches "away" as determined by the League Coordinator. If a team wishes to participate but is outside the previously defined "playing area", they may be included or excluded as the league coordinator determines but no team may be required to play a match outside the "playing area" without their consent.

If any flight within any adult league consists of only two teams in its level of play, each of the two teams must maintain its roster with at least 40 percent of its players at the designated NTRP level of play. For flights with more than two teams at their level of play, a team must maintain its roster with at least 50 percent of its players at the designated NTRP level of play. Individual league coordinators have the option of relaxing this rule in the lower levels of the adult leagues (allows for more 2.5 women to play at the 3.0 level, and allows for more 3.0 men to play at the 3.5 level).

Teams and the minimum number of players must be registered on TennisLink by the roster deadline, as set by the League Coordinator. Within a specific league, the league coordinator may adjust the registration dates for specific flights prior to publishing the flight schedule.

The home team must guarantee a minimum of three (3) lighted courts for night play and two (2) courts for day leagues. Courts may be of any USTA approved surface. Restroom facilities must be provided.

Any court and/or guest fees for visiting teams or players must be paid by the home team.

There is no maximum limit of eligible players on a team roster. Two or more are recommended above the required minimum (see section VI. Specific Leagues).

Eligible players may be added to the team roster up to the scheduled date as set by each League Coordinator. After this period, players may only be added to the team if the team roster falls below the required minimum and only to replace players who are unable to play because of injury, illness, or physical impairment or because they have moved out of the metro area. The only exception to this rule is that a player disqualified from a lower level of play during the season can be added to a team in the new level of play.

In order to replace a player, the replaced player must agree to be deleted from the roster and may not be allowed to play on any SATA team in that league during the remainder of that season.

#### **IV. Match Play**

##### **A. Start of Play**

Each team must have a captain or acting captain present at the beginning of each team match. A scorecard ([available on TennisLink](#)) must be prepared for each team match and the line-up must be exchanged simultaneously prior to match play. If a captain is missing a player, but in good faith believes that the player will arrive before the 15-minute default time, the scorecards/line-up **must still be exchanged at the scheduled time.** "Official" scorecards printed from Tennislink are highly advised, as they show the team rosters, however, they are not required.

At the time of the scorecard/line-up exchange, should either team know prior to the exchange of lineups that the team will not have enough players to fill all positions then all defaults must be made from the bottom up. **For example,** 3<sup>rd</sup> doubles must be defaulted before 2<sup>nd</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> doubles and 2<sup>nd</sup> singles before 1<sup>st</sup> singles. The defaulting captain has the choice of defaulting either the singles or doubles position.

After the scorecard/line-up has been exchanged and there is an illness, injury, disqualification or no-show of a player prior to the start of an individual match, a 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. If no such substitution can be made, only the affected position will be defaulted.

The 15-minute default rule will be in effect for all matches. **For example,** if your match is scheduled for 9:00 a.m., a default will occur at 9:15:01. While an opponent may choose to extend this time, he or she is not obligated to do so and his/her decision should be respected. If a team is missing players from two separate doubles positions, the captain may play the two available players together in the higher doubles position and only default the lower doubles position.

If the host facility has a combination of playing surfaces, the captain of the home team has the option of which playing surface to play the match on, but must notify the opposing captain in advance to advise him/her which slots will be played on which surface.

Warm-up time is limited to 10 minutes. A player arriving prior to default time but after match schedule time is entitled to full 10-minute warm up.

##### **B. Match Play**

Each home team must furnish one unopened can of USTA approved yellow balls for each individual match.

Matches will be played as scheduled (refer to E. Adverse Weather or Playing Conditions) except as determined by League Coordinator. Any departures or extensions from the published schedule based on events known before the beginning of a season (i.e., holidays, local tournaments, etc.) shall be made by the League Coordinator on a level or league-wide basis and shall be communicated to all captains at the pre-season captains' meeting. If a team, at any time during the season, under a circumstance that was unknowable at the time of the captains meeting, has four or more players that qualify for a USTA state, sectional or national tournament on other teams and is unable to field a complete team due to the loss of these players, the League Coordinator (upon request) can allow this match to be made up later within twelve (12) days.

The option of playing a full set after the first two sets are split, or of playing a match tiebreak in lieu of a third set, will be voted on by the captains at the captain's meeting, unless the SATA board has predetermined how it would be played.

**OPTION 1** All matches will be the best 2 out of 3 sets. The 12-point tiebreak as specified by USTA will be in effect if and when the score reaches 6-all in any set. A 10-minute break may be allowed after the second set if requested by any one player. Otherwise, play must be continuous throughout the match as specified in USTA rules. **Coaching will be permitted between the second and third set.**

**OPTION 2** In the event of split sets, a match tiebreak (first to 10 by margin of 2) shall be played in lieu of a third set. A two-minute break between the second set and the match tiebreaker will be allowed. The match tiebreak shall be scored as 1 set and 1 game per tiebreak. There will be continuous play after the first game of each set. Team will change ends and complete the second and third games of the set before a 90-second break occurs. **Coaching will not be allowed at any time.**

At the conclusion of the match, both scorecards must be checked for agreement. Scores must be entered by one team captain/designee and confirmed (marking the match as completed or disputed) by the other team captain/designee on the TennisLink web site. This should occur within 48 hours of the match. Assignment of the responsibility to an acting captain does not relieve the captain of the responsibility to assure this is done. If scores are not confirmed with 48 hours, TennisLink will automatically confirm scores as entered. There will be no local penalty, except that neither team will receive any points for the team match, if completed match scores are not entered within one week (unless there is a weather related or other coordinator approved delay).

The players and their supporters are expected to demonstrate good sportsmanship and conduct.

### **C. Scoring, Points and Playoffs**

One point shall be awarded to the team or player winning each individual match. If both teams default the same position, that position's point shall not be counted as a win for either team.

In all SATA leagues with odd numbered lines, the team with the most team points at the end of the season will be that league season winner. In the event of a tie of team points, that tie will be broken in the sequence as follows: the winner will be the team with the most individual matches won, then the fewest sets lost, then the fewest games lost, head-to-head competition, and toss of coin with witnesses. If even numbers of lines are used, the winner will be determined by the team with the most individual matches won. In the event of a tie of individual matches won, that tie will be broken in the sequence as follows: the winner will be the team with the most team points, then the fewest sets lost, then the fewest games lost, head-to-head competition, and toss of coin with witnesses.

In the case of a level with multiple divisions, the league season winner will be determined in accordance with the league coordinator's specific playoff rules. These rules will be approved by the board of directors and submitted to the captains prior to the start of the season.

If a team wins both seasons, they will have the choice of which team they wish to have participate at the State Championship, and the second place team from the last league season preceding the State Championship will participate regardless of which first place team goes. If that second place team also placed second the first season, they may choose which roster to send to state.

If a team declines to go to State from the first league season, the 2<sup>nd</sup> place & then 3<sup>rd</sup> place team of the same season will be asked. If there is no acceptance, then the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> place team of the second league season is asked. If there is still no acceptance, then the next place teams in the second season will be asked, i.e., 2<sup>nd</sup>-place, then 3<sup>rd</sup>-place, etc.

### **D. Wild Card**

A wild card slot may be offered by USTA Georgia to complete the field for the State Championship. After the local league winners have been decided in each league/level, the remaining team(s) with the best overall record from the league season preceding the State Championship would be the first to be considered for the wild card selection since they would have just completed their season and have their team intact.

## E. Adverse Weather or Playing Conditions

If the start of a match is delayed or the continuous play of a match is halted by lightning, rain or any condition in which the courts are not playable as determined by the facility, if no club pro or staff is present, then by the home captain, teams must wait no longer than one half hour (1/2 hour) past the scheduled start time or the time the play was interrupted, at which time teams are free to leave and reschedule unless both teams agree to wait longer.

In the event that rain or inclement weather forces the cancellation and re-scheduling of a team match, unrestricted substitutions from the team roster may be made in any individual match that has not begun. This includes moving a player from one position to another.

Points awarded for defaults during the original written line-up exchange will stand. All players involved in such defaults cannot participate in the rescheduled match.

Defaults offered verbally or by electronic means prior to the original written line-up exchange are nullified when the match is rescheduled due to rain or inclement weather.

After play has started, points awarded for individual match defaults during the original scorecard/line-up exchange will stand and completed individual matches will stand as played.

**At the resumption of play for any suspended matches, the events will resume from the point when the match was halted; continuance with same players, using the same balls, the score and position of players on-court in the match shall stand when the match resumes.**

Rescheduled matches must be completed within twelve (12) days of the scheduled match.

Monday matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday

Tuesday Matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday

Wednesday matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday

Thursday matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

Friday matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday

Saturday matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday

Sunday matches by 2<sup>nd</sup> Friday

Once teams agree on a rescheduled date, they are committed to play on that day unless both captains agree on another date. If rain occurs on the rescheduled date, the match must still be completed within the twelve (12) days. If captains cannot come to an agreement on when the make-up matches are to be played, they should call their Commissioner or League Coordinator (or if unavailable the Local League Coordinator) within 72 hours of the original match date. This person will flip a coin to determine the match time from two proposed dates submitted by the captains. Failure of the captains to make up a match within twelve (12) days or to contact the League Coordinators within 72 hours for help in rescheduling the match will result in no points for either team.

If, in the opinion of the League Coordinator, additional time is required (due to factors such as repeated unplayable weather) a "date certain" extension shall be made level or league-wide and all captains will be notified. Under no circumstances will extensions be granted for individual team matches or slots. Any matches not completed should be entered in TennisLink as a double default.

If the temperature at playtime is below 40 or above 95 degrees, according to The Weather Channel, whose information may be accessed from the SATA website, the match may be postponed unless both captains agree to play. There are no provisions for any other conditions.

## F. Penalties and Defaults

The League Coordinator may impose the following penalty if a team has *excessive defaults*. A team with excessive defaults will have all its matches to date entered as defaults and any match points will be removed from the league record; any future scheduled matches may be played but will be entered as defaults.

Excessive defaults will be defined as defaulting a total of individual match points in excess of **20%** of the total of all regularly scheduled individual matches. *For example*, with a season length of 8 weeks and with 5 individual matches per week for a total of 40 total individual matches per league season, then if a team defaults in excess of 20% of the 40 individual matches or in excess of 8 individual matches then the defaulting team will be penalized. When playoffs are incorporated into the league structure, the playoffs are considered an extension of the regular season and the excessive default calculation considers the total length of the season. The penalty for any team exceeding the 20% defaults within the playoffs will be applied only within the flight in which it is participating; i.e., there is no crossover effect to other flights.

In any match that an ineligible player participates, the League Coordinator will disqualify the ineligible player for that match and require that the individual match point be default.

A team default occurs if a team has insufficient players to have a possibility of winning a team point. If such an event occurs, the team must default all slots. There will be no further consequences unless the 20% rule is also violated. The first course of action would be for both captains to agree on what individual matches, based on the number of players present, or to be present, can be played to constitute a valid team match. Once that is determined, both captains will re-exchange scorecards.

If both captains cannot come to an agreement on what lines will be played to constitute a valid team match, based on the number of players present, or to be present, then the following individual matches will be assigned in sequential order to be played:

Format	Required Matches in Sequential Order	Minimum # of Players Required For Each Team in a Valid Team Match
<b>2 singles, 3 doubles</b>	#1 and #2 singles, and #1 doubles (priority); #2 doubles if enough players present	4
<b>1 singles, 3 doubles</b>	#1 singles and #1 doubles (priority); #2 doubles if enough players present	3
<b>1 singles, 2 doubles</b>	#1 singles and #1 doubles	3
<b>3 doubles</b>	#1 and #2 doubles	4

## G. Grievance Procedure

Any captain or coordinator believing that a violation or infraction of the Rules of Tennis, The Code or any other rule or regulation covered within these general rules has occurred may file a "letter of grievance" with the Local League Coordinator prior to the commencement of the next match involving such individual or team, or within twenty-four hours after the end of local league play, whichever occurs first. The Local League Coordinator will attempt to resolve the issue with the complainant. If this intervention fails, the written complaint will be forwarded to the Grievance Committee. The names of the Grievance Committee, grievance filing procedures, and grievance forms may be found at [www.savannahtennis.com](http://www.savannahtennis.com). An individual or team may continue to play during a grievance investigation & hearing, but must understand that if upheld, all matches played during that time may be defaulted. Should any party to the grievance not be in agreement with the decision of the committee, they may appeal this decision by filing a 'letter of grievance appeal' with the Local League Coordinator within the time specified by the Grievance Committee decision. It is to be understood, that decisions of the Grievance Appeal Committee shall be final and binding except with regard to suspensions of individuals or teams for a period of 12 months or more. Suspensions of this length will be forwarded to USTA Southern. Eligibility or self-rate grievances can be filed anytime.

The person filing the grievance must provide a copy of the grievance or grievance appeal letter and any supporting data to the party or parties alleged to have committed the violation.

The grievance procedure is not to determine the fairness, ethics or intention of any issue but to interpret the issues on the basis of the rule of tennis play.

## V. Glossary

### **League Season - League Year – Championship Year**

The *League Year (or Championship Year)* is composed of the two (2) *League Seasons* preceding the State tournament (unless only one season is offered). In the Adult 18&Over League, for example, its League Year is comprised of the preceding year's Fall League Season and the following Spring League Season. In the Mixed 18&Over League, for example its League Year is comprised of the preceding year's Winter League Season and the following Summer League Season. The League Year is the year in which the state championships occur. Thus the Fall Adult League season of 2012 is in the League Year of 2013.

### **TennisLink**

*TennisLink* is a United States Tennis Association (USTA) online support system for USA League Tennis. This is the official system for online registration of all teams and players, recording of all match scores, and automatic posting of league standings. This system may also be used for renewal of USTA memberships or for joining the USTA for the first time.

*TennisLink* may be accessed through [www.savannahtennis.com](http://www.savannahtennis.com)

### **Self-Rating - NTRP Rating - Dynamic NTRP**

The *Self-Rating* is a level rating that you assign to yourself based on USTA guidelines. Self-Rating should never be lower than your on-court skills. The *NTRP rating* is a computer rating that establishes your rating based on actual competitive play. Once the NTRP rating is established, it becomes the sole determinant for your skill level of play. If you have not played for a time (3 years if under age 60 or 2 years if 60 and above), you may self rate higher or at the rating you previously held. You may file a self rate appeal online if you feel that rating is too high. Players without a current computer rating may rate themselves in accordance with NTRP guidelines. Once play begins, the USTA *Dynamic NTRP* system will control ratings based on league play.

### **Eligible Player - Ineligible Player**

To be an *Eligible Player* in USTA leagues, a player must be a member in the USTA through the end of the season of play (including championships) and have a valid NTRP or self rating. They must be registered on a roster prior to play. If a player has a computer rating, they must play on a level equal to or higher than that rating. Any league age restrictions must be adhered to. A player shall be *Ineligible* if in violation of the above requirements.

### **Substitution Rule**

Prior to match play and where allowed by SATA (IV A. Paragraph 3) rules, the *Substitution Rule* is a method by which a player may be removed from the original scorecard/line-up and a player who is not listed on the original scorecard/line-up may participate as a substitute in a match that had not begun. Players listed on the original scorecard/line-up may not be moved upward or downward to fill a vacancy created by a player removed from the line-up (except as outlined in IVA). Once a player's name is removed from the original scorecard/line-up, that player shall not be allowed to play in that team match or in the event of rescheduling.

### **Team Match - Individual Match - Position**

A *Team Match* is a grouping of *Individual Matches* played in various combinations of singles and doubles matches depending on the particular league. An *Individual Match* is a match between opposing single players (singles match) or a match between opposing pairs of players (doubles match). Each singles player or pair of player's plays in a particular *Position*. *Positions* are usually identified as #1 singles and #2 singles, #1 doubles, #2 doubles, and #3 doubles.

### **Retire**

A player or team *retires* after an individual match has started and a player or team is unable to continue due to injury, loss of condition, ability, etc. The scorecard shall reflect the score as of the time of retirement. For example, if 1 – 1 at retirement, the score should read 1 – 1 Retired.

### **Default - Disqualification**

A *default* occurs when a player fails to appear on time for a match or when a team cannot fill all the required positions. A *disqualification* occurs when a player is ruled ineligible to play for reasons such as: improper age, improper NTRP rating, not a USTA member, etc. The scoring of a default will be a 6-0,6-0 win for the players receiving the default.

### **12-Point Tiebreak - Match Point Tiebreak**

The *12-Point Tiebreak* is a mechanism by which the winner of a set can be determined after the game score reaches 6 all. During the 12-point tiebreak, one point is given for each point won and the winner is determined when one team or player reaches at least 7 points or greater by at least two (2) points such as 7-5 or 11-9.

The *Match Tiebreak* is used in lieu of the third set when the score stands at one set apiece. The winner is determined when one player or team reaches 10 points by a 2-point margin. This is only used when Option II (Sect. IV B.) is selected by a League.

## **VI. Specific Leagues**

As of Championship Year 2014, mixed doubles flights have a minimum allowed NTRP rating. The NTRP difference between members of an individual doubles team may not exceed 1.0. The minimum NTRP Level for 6.0 is 2.5; 7.0 is 3.0; 8.0 is 3.5; 9.0 is 4.0.

The formats, player requirements, seasons of play and days of play of each of SATA's leagues may be accessed on the organizational website, [www.savannahtennis.com](http://www.savannahtennis.com). If you cannot find answers to your questions, please contact the Local League Coordinator (contact information also on the website).

## **VII. League Committees – League Year 2016**

### **SATA Grievance Committee:**

Ann Chapman - Chair  
Tom Sabino  
John Leone  
Doug Smith  
Val Calamari  
Rusty Toler

### **SATA Grievance Appeals Committee:**

Camile Searcy  
Matt Hall  
Danny Bohlen  
Jason Collins

### **SATA Adult League Committee:**

Laura Tuchscherer  
Leslie Shields  
Laurie Phillips