



## Rules and Regulations – 2023/2024 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, Singles and Doubles Flex Leagues, or Flexible Format 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.
- NTRP Rating levels in the Adult 40 & over League are: 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, and 4.5.

## 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. A player turning 18 in the calendar year cannot participate until they reach the age of 18.

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 any time online through TennisLink. If a player's rating changes after registering for a league (either by appeal or release of new ratings), the player is bound by the rating on the roster at registration. If by release of ratings the new rating will take effect when registering for the next league or tournament. If changed by appeal, the player must notify the LLC of the change and is bound by the level on the roster 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, Tri-level, 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. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

In the Adult 65 & over Division, a player is eligible to advance to the state championship competition if that player has played on the same team in at least one match at the same level in this Age Group during the local league season. One default received by the player during local competition shall count for advancing. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

In the Combo and Tri-Level 18 & over Age Group and the Combo 40 & over Age Group, no individual is eligible to progress to the State Championship unless he/she has played on that same team in at least one match and no team is eligible to progress unless they have played at least three team matches during the Local League season. A defaulted match shall count as a match played for the player(s) who received the default. A retired match shall count for all players involved.

Players who qualify for an Adult 18 & over, Adult 40 & over, Adult 55 & over, and/or Adult 65 & over team(s) may advance on more than one team within an age group only if they are different NTRP levels. Players who qualify for a Mixed Doubles 18 & over and/or Mixed Doubles 40 & over team(s) may advance on more than one team within an age group only if they are different NTRP levels. 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. 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.

The use of tennis-related blended lines is permitted on courts used for local league matches. The use of other lines for another sport, such as Pickleball, are not permitted on courts used for local league matches.

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.

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 written scorecard/lineup (available on TennisLink) must be prepared for each team match and the lineup 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/lineup **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/lineup 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/lineup 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 lineup. 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.

Early Play Matches: A team match and/or individual lines within a match may be played early if both captains agree. Playing matches early must take place prior to the originally scheduled date/time. Notification MUST be e-mailed to the SATA League Coordinator. This new date now becomes your official scheduled match date. If inclement weather occurs, the scheduled date reverts to the original date published on TennisLink. Note: It is the responsibility of the requesting player/team captain to secure a court for the newly scheduled match. Notification must also be provided to the original facility to release any unused court(s).

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. Matches not played on the scheduled day for reasons other than League Coordinator decision, weather, agreed upon early match play or unplayable courts (at the time of the match), will result in a double default. Any slots that are not played will result in a double default for that slot. Any departures or extensions from the published schedule based on events known before the beginning of a season (e.g., holidays, local tournaments) 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.

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. Teams 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 within 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.

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, 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, that tie will be broken in the sequence as follows: the winner will be the team with the most individual matches won, then head-to-head competition, then the fewest sets lost, then the fewest games lost.

Any league or level using a 4-line format will use the following tiebreak procedure for individual team matches: If the individual lines are tied at 2-2 the win will go to the team with fewest sets lost, then fewest games lost, then game winning percentage. If the match is still tied, the team winner will be the team that won the first doubles line. If there is a double default of that line, then the winner of the first singles will prevail. If there are no singles, then the team that won the second doubles line prevails.

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 playoff is used, state qualifications for individual players will apply.**

State Championships Eligibility:

State-advancing leagues with one season:

SATA will receive a state championship berth for each level with local play. The league winner will be offered the berth. If they decline, the second-place team will be offered the berth. If they decline, the third-place team will be offered the berth.

State-advancing leagues with two seasons:

Winners of each season may be entitled to a berth in the state tournament. If a season has only two teams, the other season needs to have three or more teams for both seasons to be entitled to a berth.

If there are two seasons with two teams, the winners of each season will playoff to determine who gets the berth.

If there are three or more teams in a season, SATA will receive two berths to the state championship. The first-place team of each season will be offered a berth. If a team wins both seasons, they can choose which roster they will use at the State Championship.

If a first-place team declines the berth or if the first-place team is the same for both seasons, other teams will be offered a berth in the following order:

- The second-place team from Season 2
- The third-place team from Season 2
- The second-place team from Season 1
- The third-place team from Season 1

#### 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 30 minutes 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 lineup 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 lineup 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/lineup 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 within the legal period. 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 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. By the end of the 12-day period for rescheduled matches, completed slots should be recorded in tennis link and any matches not played should be entered in TennisLink as a double default.

If the temperature at playtime is below 40 or above 95 degrees, the match may be postponed unless both captains agree to play. There are no provisions for any other conditions.

#### **F. Penalties and Defaults**

The USTA Georgia default definition and penalty applied to excessive defaults is described below:

2.01C(5)e: If a team has an invalid match (a majority of the individual matches must actually be played to constitute a valid team match) the team may (state Adult League Committee’s decision) be removed from competition and the standings.

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 (see USTA Georgia regulation above for consequences) for the purposes of team standings. The available slots may play, and scores entered into TennisLink will be counted only for ratings and advancement purposes.

If a lineup has been exchanged that has sufficient players for a valid match if they were rearranged, then both captains should 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 the 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 and #2 doubles (priority);	5
<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 agree 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 based on the rules of tennis play.

## V. Glossary

### 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. The scoring of a default will be a 6-0, 6-0 win for the players receiving the default

### 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

### 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 2023 is in the League Year of 2024.

### **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 or any other reason. 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.

### **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.

### **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/lineup and a player who is not listed on the original scorecard/lineup may participate as a substitute in a match that had not begun. Players listed on the original scorecard/lineup may not be moved upward or downward to fill a vacancy created by a player removed from the lineup (except as outlined in IVA). Once a player's name is removed from the original scorecard/lineup, 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.

### **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)

### **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

## **VI. Specific Leagues**

Mixed 18 & Over and Mixed 40 & Over flights have a minimum allowed NTRP rating. The NTRP difference between members of an individual doubles team may not exceed .5.



Level	Player Level Combinations	Individual Rating Cannot Exceed	Minimum Rating Allowed
2.5	2.5 with a 2.5	2.5	2.5
3.0	2.5 with a 3.0/3.0 with a 3.0	3.0	2.5
3.5	3.0 with a 3.5/3.5 with a 3.5	3.5	3.0
4.0	3.5 with a 4.0/4.0 with a 4.0	4.0	3.5
4.5	4.0 with a 4.5/4.5 with a 4.5	4.5	4.0
10.0	4.5 with a 5.0/4.5 with a 5.5/5.0 with a 5.0	5.5	4.5

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 2023/2024**

**SATA Grievance Committee:**

- Ann Van Winkle - Chair
- John Leone
- Levette Dixon
- Chris Lane

**SATA Grievance Appeals Committee:**

- Danny Boaen
- John Locke
- Jason Collins

**SATA Adult League Committee:**

- John Mauro
- Leslie Shields
- Michael Burwinkel

**SATA Rules Committee:**

- Chuck Keenan
- Tracy Burks
- Michelle Monahan

\* Committees may change due to lack of availability or conflicts of interest.