



## 2024 COTA Local Rules and Regulations

The purpose of COTA League play is to promote USTA team tennis for men and women at established ratings of the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) within the counties of Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, and Oconee. All team matches must be played out of facilities within these boundaries.

COTA's Rules and Regulations govern local USTA league play within the previously mentioned counties.

These rules are established for local league play, but local league play is also subject to USTA National and Section and State rules. Those rules can be reviewed in depth on the COTA website. One change of note for 2023 that the **40 & Over Adult League format at state championships (and beyond) will be 1 line of Singles and 3 lines of Doubles.**

### I. Regulations

The Clarke Oconee Tennis Association (COTA) agrees to the rules and regulations of the USTA, USTA Southern, and USTA Georgia as published. In addition, COTA also sets forth the following rules to apply to local league matches.

### II. Membership

A. All adult team members must be at least 18 years of age. All team members must be paid members of the USTA through the current league season and must pay local league fees, as applicable.

B. Players must play at or .5 above their NTRP level. (E.g. a 3.0 player can play at 3.0 or 3.5, but not 4.0). Any player without a computer rating must self-rate using the self-rating form on Tennis Link, and follow guidelines set forth by the USTA. Tennis Link will require a non-rated player to self-rate when registering for a team.

C. Players may play on more than one team in the COTA league, but a player may not register for more than three teams within an age group in the same season. Playing on three teams during one season must be within the parameters described below:

- A player may play on a weekday & a business team at the same NTRP level.
- A player may play on a weekday & a business team at a different NTRP level.
- A player may play at two different NTRP levels, within the same league.
- A player may play on both an 18 & Over team and a 40 & Over team at either the same NTRP level or at different NTRP levels.
- A player may play on both an 18 & Over team and a 55 & Over team at either the same NTRP level or at different NTRP levels.
- A player may play on both a 40 & Over team and a 55 & Over team at either the same NTRP level or at different NTRP levels.

*Please note: Playing at a higher NTRP level may increase the player's risk of being disqualified at the lower level.*

D. Once a player's name appears on a Tennis Link team roster they cannot change teams if league play has begun.

### III. Local Leagues & Formats for 2023 USTA Leagues that are eligible for advancement to State Championships:

- 18 & Over Adult League – 2 Lines of Singles, 3 Lines of Doubles
- 40 & Over Adult League – 1 Line of Singles 3 Lines of Doubles
- 55 & Over Adult League – 3 Lines of Doubles
- 65 & Over League – 3 Lines of Doubles
- 18 & Over Mixed – 3 Lines of Doubles
- 18 & Over Tri-Level – 3 Lines of Doubles
- 18 & Over Combo - - 3 Lines of Doubles

### IV. Captains: Pre-Season Responsibilities

A. The captain should read and be familiar with the rules of the USTA, USTA Southern, USTA Georgia and the COTA League rules. It is the captain's responsibility to make sure his/her players have read and understand all the COTA League rules.

B. Captains must list a COTA approved facility as their "home" facility. Those facilities can be found at [www.cotatennis.net](http://www.cotatennis.net). It is the captain's responsibility to contact the facility **prior** to registration to get approval to use the facility as their home court and find out the facility's requirement of teams using those facilities. "Home teams" will have the choice of court surface for which they wish to play their home matches. The use of tennis-related blended lines are 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. Court surface must be decided upon at time of registration and must remain consistent throughout the season. The LLC must have written notification that a team has been approved by the facilities they requested. Home facilities must be located in Barrow, Clarke, Jackson, Madison, Morgan, or Oconee counties. **Captains may choose to play from their home facility in another**

CTA if that league is not offered in COTA. Approval must be received from the LLC and from the other CTA in advance.

C. Team Registration: Captains MUST establish a team number through Tennis Link and have the minimum number of players registered to fill a match roster by the designated roster deadline date – in leagues with modified formats, team minimums must still field the minimum number of players to field a line at State Championships. Per USTA National Rules, teams not in accordance with roster requirements at the roster deadline date will not be scheduled. Coordinator will send a follow up email to the captain indicating the team being pulled from the schedule; captain and players may seek refunds, defer their registration to the next season within that Championship Year, or have their registration transferred to another team that season.

D. Team names should be entered in the following format: Facility Name/Captain's Last Name. Example: Athens Tennis Center/Smith. **No other formats will be accepted.**

E. Captains are responsible for ensuring a balance of players at the proper NTRP level is established on their team by the initial roster deadline and maintained throughout the course of the season. As such, 60% of players registered on a team must be at the level of play. Only 40% of the players on a team may be below that level of play. Teams not in accordance by the initial roster deadline will not be scheduled. Team rosters will be checked again at the midpoint for compliance. Teams not in compliance at the roster deadline may be removed from the remaining schedule. COTA has the option to waive the 60% requirement in order to facilitate play at transitional levels and advanced levels, - teams in these leagues and flights can be no less than 40 percent on level.

F. A team Co-captain is required as an additional point of contact.

G. Captains/Co-captains MUST have a current e-mail address at which they can receive league information throughout the season. Captains/Co-captains MUST enter a phone number in Tennis Link when establishing a team number. If this phone number differs from the phone number listed with the USTA membership data, contact USTA at 1-800-990-8782 or [memberservices@usta.com](mailto:memberservices@usta.com) to update. The number listed with the USTA membership data will appear on the captain's report. Change of phone number or e-mail address after team registration, must be forwarded to your Local League Coordinator (LLC). E-mail will be the primary form of communication between the coordinator and the captains.

H. Refunds. If a league does not make, COTA will refund to the captain all local league fees for registered players on his/her team if requested. Local league fees do not include Tennis Link and State fees, which are not refundable to COTA, hence not refundable to players. If a league does not make, registered players may be moved to another team or league within the championship year or the subsequent championship year. The LLC must be notified, in writing, in order to move a player from the holding folder to another team.

## **V. Captains: Match Responsibilities**

A. COTA encourages playing positions by order of strength, as established by fair play practice in “The Code.” Below level players are not allowed to play #1 positions when participating in plus (+) level matches. ( See 2.01A USTA State regulations )

B. Each team shall identify and reserve its home courts. The "home" team must guarantee a minimum of 2 courts with an available on-site bathroom for regularly scheduled matches. Lights are required for evening matches.

C. The “home” team pays any court and/or guest fees and provides new balls for each line. All players are encouraged to bring their own water and sports drinks. Other refreshments are optional.

D. Start times are listed on Tennis Link schedules. Check schedules as times vary depending on the league. If both captains agree:

- The team match or individual match may be changed to an earlier start time on the same scheduled day.
- The team match or individual match may be changed to an earlier day and time during the regular season schedule.
- Once an agreement has been made, the LLC and Program Director must be notified of the match date, time and location, and all participants must be present at match time, or default.
- If early play is requested and inclement weather occurs, the line/s affected will default to the regular day of play. In cases of early play, only lines affected will be exchanged between captains.

E. If inclement weather occurs matches must be rescheduled. See section VII. Rescheduling below. Any changes to a team or individual match start time/day need to be emailed to the program coordinator/LLC prior to the match, with both captains included in correspondence. The e-mail is to include: team names, league, level, new date, time, line # and location.

F. Any team involved in a USTA League State, Sectional, or National match, regardless of the league, must notify their coordinator if requesting from their opponent consideration in rescheduling their USTA Local League match prior to the original scheduled day of the match. A team with this concern must notify their coordinator and the affected opponents at least two weeks prior to the scheduled match to reschedule individual matches. Opposing teams are required to cooperate fully in these circumstances. Only positions involving players attending said championship need early play; should early play be affected by inclement weather, the match must be completed by the respective default date.

G. "Home team" captain should contact the visiting team captain no less than 3 DAYS prior to a scheduled match to make final arrangements for the match, including the number, and location of courts or alternate courts if requested and agreed upon by the captains.. Visiting captain must field as many courts as are presented. The location of the match cannot be changed unless both captains agree. If the captain/co-captain listed on the schedule will not be present at the match he/she must be accessible to the opposing captain via phone, or he/she must notify the opposing captain the name of the person acting in his/her stead.

H. The captains may agree on the order of play. However, if no prior agreement is made then the order of play will be #1 singles, #1 doubles, #2 singles, #2 doubles and #3 doubles. Players in the second time slot must be available one hour after the first time slot begins; players in the third time slot must be available 2 hours after the first time slot begins.

I. If a team must default one or more positions at the start of the match, it should follow the guidelines stated in the USTA Regulations handbook. Defaults must come from the bottom of the line-up, at either singles or doubles, except for Trilevel. Please see Trilevel Rules and Regulations for additional information.

J. Team Captains or representatives must have lineups in written or electronic form BEFORE arriving to the match site. Team captains or representatives must simultaneously exchange written or electronic lineups with their opponents BEFORE the scheduled match time. Match time is stated on your Tennis Link schedule. This match time is the beginning of the 15-minute default time (see section V.E). Failure to comply with this rule may subject teams to a grievance and/or team default.

K. Scores must be entered in Tennis Link within 48 hours of the match start time by the winning captain. Score confirmation or score disputes must be made within 48 hours of the score entry. If scores are not confirmed or disputed within 48 hours of the score entry, the opposing team will lose the right to dispute the match score. Tennis Link will confirm scores automatically after the 48-hour period has passed. NOTE: Playoff matches require score entry immediately upon completion of the match and the LLC must be notified. Failure to comply with this rule may subject teams to a grievance and/or a double default.

L. Tennis Link does not accept partial match results. The scores for all match lines must be entered at the same time. To dispute the scorecard that has been entered, you must dispute the match in Tennis Link and notify your coordinator within 48 hours of the match. You must provide the match number, explanation of discrepancy, along with the corrections and copy the opposing captain

## **VI. Match Play**

A. A warm-up must be accomplished within a maximum of 10 minutes of scheduled start time, including serves. Warm-ups are not practice.

B. League matches will be best 2 out of 3 complete sets. With the agreement of all players involved before starting an individual match, the players may play a 10-point tie-break in lieu of a full 3rd set. Due to time limitations at some facilities, all evening matches, matches starting at 6:00 PM or later (including make-up matches), must use a 10-point tie break in lieu of a third set.

C. The Coman Tiebreak Procedure - When and if the score in an individual set is 6-6, the winner will be decided by the 7-point Coman tiebreak procedure. The score for that set will be recorded 7-6. If players play a tie-breaker in lieu of a third set and they split sets, the 10 point Coman Tiebreak procedure will be used to determine the match winner. If a match tie-breaker is played in lieu of a 3rd set as an option, the score is entered as 1-0 in the 3rd set and the match type is changed from "completed" to "retired."

However, if the match tie break is required, the match type can be entered as completed.

D. After the first game of each set, play shall be continuous and players shall change ends without a rest period. The rest period during all other changeovers is 90 seconds. The rest period between first and second sets is 2 minutes. A 10-minute break may be taken between the second and third set or 10-point match tie-break, should this option be chosen.

E. Coaching is allowed ONLY during the rest period between the 2nd and 3rd set or 10-point tie-break.

F. Defaults: The 15-minute default clock begins at the scheduled match time, when a court is available and a player has not arrived.

1) When a player does not show up within the 15-minute default time, or a player becomes ill or injured during warm up and there is no substitute available, only the affected position is defaulted. Players already listed in the lineup cannot be moved to another position. However, two players already in the lineup will play together in the higher position when both of their partners do not show in order to avoid two defaults.

2) If a substitute player, not already in the lineup, is available within the 15-minute default time, then that player may substitute for an absent, sick or injured player, at the affected position ONLY. If a substitution is made during the warm-up, the substitute player is entitled to a 5 minute warm up.

G. Players should be ready to take the court when the previous match is finished. For example, if a match begins at 9:30 am and ends at 10:15 am, default time for the next match on that court is 10:45 am, since 10:30 am is the scheduled time of the next match. If the first match ends at 10:50 am, then players must take the court immediately since the next time slot players must have been available at 10:30 am. Captains should communicate and agree ahead of time which positions will take the court and in which order. If the captains cannot agree, refer to V. H. (Captains: Match Responsibilities).

H. A majority of the individual matches must actually be played to constitute a valid team match. 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 be removed from competition and the standings. This decision is made by the State Adult League Committee.

## **VII. Rescheduling**

A. Inclement Weather: The following weather conditions authorize the cancellation of a scheduled match: rain, lightning, or snow at the courts, or extreme temperatures (32 degrees F or below, not wind chill, 95 degrees F or above, not heat index as reported by the COTA website, [www.cotatennis.net](http://www.cotatennis.net)), at the time of the match. Captains may agree to delay the match up to one hour. Once the match has started, matches cannot be canceled due to changes in temperature.

1) If teams have reported for play and the match is delayed or interrupted by inclement weather (not

including rise or fall in temperature), teams must wait 30 minutes to determine if courts are playable. If courts are still not playable after 30 minutes, teams are free to leave and reschedule unless both teams agree to wait longer. Any player may deem a court unsafe to play.

2) If inclement weather (not including rise or fall in temperature) occurs after play has begun, completed matches will stand as played and incomplete matches must be resumed by the same players at the exact point, game, and set that existed when play was halted. Substitutions may be made in any individual matches that had not begun. Points awarded for defaults during the original line-up exchange will stand. All players involved in such defaults cannot participate in any rescheduled match. Defaults offered verbally prior to the original written lineup exchange are nullified when the match is rescheduled due to rain or inclement weather.

B. Arrangements for make-up matches: MUST be agreed upon within 36 hours of the original match start time. All individual matches do not have to be made up at the same place and time. Once teams agree on a rescheduled date, time and location, the make-up match may not be canceled for any reason other than inclement weather. Substitutions from the team roster may be made in any make-up match, at any time, prior to the match. If no agreement can be reached, the match must be played at the make-up default time (see below.) A default will result if one party cannot play. If both parties cannot play, the result is a double default. Both captains should contact the program or league coordinator via e-mail with the agreed upon rescheduled match information to prevent problems. (See VII. B.) Players added to a team's roster after the original scheduled match and prior to the make-up match, may play in the make-up match.

C. Default date is the day/evening before the next regularly scheduled match with the exception of the last match of the season. If inclement weather occurs on the default day/evening, matches must then be scheduled on a day-to-day basis, until weather permits the match to be played, but excluding the regularly scheduled match day.

#### Original Match Default Schedule

Monday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm Sunday 2:00 p.m.

Tuesday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm Monday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm

Wednesday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm Tuesday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm

Thursday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm Wednesday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm

Friday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm Thursday 9:30 am / 7:00 pm

Saturday 9:30 am Friday 7:00 pm

Sunday 2:00 pm Saturday 7:00 pm

Exception: If inclement weather occurs on the last match day of the regular season when a playoff match is necessary, the make-up default time is the next day/evening after the regularly scheduled match and continues day to day until weather permits. This exception is in effect only if a playoff match is necessary.

The following National Holidays are not to be included when calculating default dates: New Year's Day, Easter, Memorial Day, July 4th, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas (i.e., the default date falls on Memorial Day; the default day moves to the next day). Matches will not be scheduled on the previously

mentioned National Holidays.

### **VIII. Addition of Players During a Season**

A. COTA permits teams to add players after the commencement of play. A player's name must be added to the roster in Tennis Link prior to the player's participation in a team match. Players cannot be added after the roster addition deadline date published in Tennis Link.

B. If a self-rated player has been disqualified during the season, they can register on a higher-level team. They will need the assistance of the LLC.

### **IX. National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP)**

A. A player without a valid NTRP rating level in Tennis Link, a returning player with an expired NTRP rating level and a Tournament Exclusive (T) rated player or a Mixed Exclusive (M) rated player who does not have a valid computer (C) rating from a previous year and chooses to participate in the Adult Division, must self-rate to be assigned a new rating, reassigned to their last expired rating or a higher rating based on their playing history to enter the USTA League Program.

B. A player obtains a computer rating after playing at least three matches against players with dynamic ratings (calculated daily during league play, based on match scores and player ratings). Defaults do not generate computer ratings.

C. Dynamic Disqualification occurs when the dynamic rating of a player (e.g. self-rated or playing with a rating reduced by appeal) exceeds the maximum tolerance for their specified level three times during the year (consisting of all league matches except retirements received, in the Adult 18 & Over, 40 & Over and 55 & Over divisions through the Section Championships). More information on dynamic ratings can be found on the USTA website.

### **X. State Championships**

A. Each team that wins a specific level of local league competition shall be entitled to advance to the next level of competition.

B. Players who qualify on an Adult 18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over and/or 65 & Over team for the Georgia State Championships 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 that championship.)

C. Players who qualify for a Mixed Doubles 18 & Over and/or 40 & over teams for the Georgia State Championships 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 that championship.)



D. Players who qualify for a Combo 18 & Over and/or 40 & over teams for the Georgia State Championships 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 that championship.)

E. In the event of a tie in a local league flight, the USTA League Regulations, for tie-breaks, will be followed:

- 1) Individual matches: winner of the most individual matches in the entire season.
- 2) Head-to-Head: Winner of the head-to-head match. If teams played each other more than one time during the season, step 1 will be used for the head-to-head matches, to declare the winner
- 3) Sets: Loser of the fewest number of sets in the entire season..
- 4) Games: Loser of the fewest number of games in the entire season.
- 5) A coin toss by the league coordinator in the presence of witnesses.

F. When there are two seasons at a specific level, there must be a minimum of three teams participating in one of the two seasons at that level to receive two berths to the State Championships. If there are only two teams in both seasons, only one berth will be awarded. A playoff following the second season will determine the league winner if there was a different winner in each season.

G. Leagues with more than 10 teams (e.g. 3.5 day women) may be divided into sub-flights and, if divided, may have a Flight Playoff. The home court for playoffs will be decided by calculating the percentage of matches won. The winner of the Flight Playoff will progress to the League Playoff, if necessary, or to the State championship. Playoff teams must use the roster from their qualifying season. If one team declines a playoff, the other team is automatically chosen. If time does not permit for a playoff, the team advancing to state will be determined by the teams' season records.

H. In the event that the same team should win both league seasons, for the same level, that team must choose which season's roster they would like to take to the State Championship. (Should this occur and that team has enough players to field two separate teams without any crossover at the State Championship, they may accept both berths.) If the same team wins first place both seasons, the league may send a second place team as a State entrant. The awarding of bids to 3rd place teams and below will be at the discretion of the LLC and League Committee.

I. In the event that a first place team from a specific season receiving a berth to the State Championships, declines advancement, the second place team from that same season may represent the league for that season. Should the 1st and 2nd place teams both decline, extending a bid to another team will be at the discretion of the LLC and League Committee.

J. In programs in which business and day leagues are offered at a given level twice a year, one day and one business team will advance to state championships. At the end of the second season in a championship year (typically Spring), the winners of the day leagues will have a playoff (Fall day winner vs. Spring day winner) and the winners of the business leagues will have a playoff (Fall business winner vs. Spring business winner). Note, if the same team wins both seasons without crossover in such

leagues, that team must select which roster to take.

K. COTA will pay for the State Championships entry fee for the minimum number of players required to compete at the given state tournament for teams having both competed in league play and paid local league fees. Area teams are responsible for paying their own tournament fees minus the local league fees. **Players will register themselves online and will be required to pay all fees. COTA will issue a check to the captain once the tournament is complete for the minimum number of players. The captain will be responsible for dispersing that the funds to the players.** ~~For teams sending more than the minimum number of players, a separate check must be written to cover the cost of the extra players. This check, covering the additional players, is not refundable and will be cashed. All deposit checks will be held by COTA and shredded once the teams have satisfactorily met the State Championship requirements.~~

L. If COTA receives a wild card, it will be awarded to the team at the given level with the best winning percentage and available to field a team for state competition. Wildcard teams are responsible for all state tournament player fees.

M. COTA will also pay the minimum player registration fee for teams representing COTA at Sectional tournaments; USTA Georgia will pay the player registration fees for teams competing at National tournaments.

N. State Championship Berths are awarded based on number of teams participating in local league play. Please see USTA Georgia Rules & Regulations for the breakdown of each league type.

O. Player Eligibility Requirements:

1) In the Adult 18 & Over Division, a player is eligible to advance to state championship competition if that player has played on the same team in at least two matches at the same NTRP level in the same league type through the local league (local playoffs not included). One default received by the player during local competition shall count for advancing. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

2) In the Adult 40 & Over Division, a player is eligible to advance to state championship competition if that player has played on the same team in at least two matches at the same NTRP level in the same league type through the local league (local playoffs not included). One default received by the player during local competition shall count for advancing. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

3) In the Adult 55 & Over Division, a player is eligible to advance to state championship competition if that player has played on the same team in at least two matches at the same NTRP level in the same league type through the local league (local playoffs not included). One default received by the player during local competition shall count for advancing. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

4) In the Adult 65 & Over Division, a player is eligible to advance to state championship competition if that player has played on the same team in at least one match at the same NTRP level in the same league type through the local league (local playoffs not included). One default received by the player

during local competition shall count for advancing. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved. If there is no local competition offered during the entire championship year, an Area Team may advance directly to the USTA Georgia Adult 65 & over State Championships.

5) In Southern Combo, players must have played once during the season. (local playoffs not included) Refer to the Southern Combo Regulations for Georgia - Section 7.03A (3) for requirements of each level. ([www.ustageorgia.com](http://www.ustageorgia.com))

6) In the Mixed 18 & Over and Mixed 40 & Over Age Groups, a player is eligible to advance to state championship competition if that player has played on the same team in at least two matches at the same NTRP level in the same league type through the local league (local playoffs not included). One default received by the player during local competition shall count for advancing. Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

7) In the Tri-level League, players must have played once during the season to be eligible for advancement (local playoffs not included). Retired matches shall count toward advancing for all players involved.

## **XI. Grievances**

A. All complaints alleging a violation by an individual or team during local league competition shall be filed in writing by the captain with the Local League Coordinator. The complaint must be filed prior to the commencement of whichever occurs first: (a) the involved teams' next match in that flight, whether or not the involved player participates or (b) within twenty-four hours after the end of the local league season.

B. Any party to the complaint may appeal the decision of the Grievance Committee within the time stated in the ruling handed down by the Grievance Committee.

C. If unsure of procedure, contact the Local League Coordinator.

D. Any grievances that are filed and heard at the Southern level will require a \$100 filing fee. There is no charge for a local level grievance.

## **XII. NTRP (Self-Rate) Grievances**

A. Any league captain, coordinator or member of a championship committee has the right to file an NTRP Grievance against a player and/or captain who commits or condones entering at one NTRP level when his/her actual skill level is at the top of the next NTRP level or higher.

B. All grievances must be filed with your local league coordinator and must include specific and tangible information regarding the tennis history of the player-in-question. The LLC will forward the NTRP grievance to the USTA Southern NTRP Grievance Committee. Decisions may be appealed to the USTA Southern Grievance Appeals Committee.

C. A player with a valid NTRP Computer (C), Benchmark (B), or granted Automatic Appeal rating of a "C" is not subject to a self-rate grievance. Any other player is subject to a self-rate grievance.

**Adult League Committee:**

Kala McNair, Chair - LLC  
Sloan Gill, 18/40 & Over Men's Coordinator  
Cheryl Dean, 18/40 & Over Women's Coordinator  
David Barnhart, Mixed Coordinator

**Grievance Committee:**

Kellie Borders  
Susan Boleyn  
Ashlie Johnson

**Appeals Committee:**

Robert Newsome, Chair  
Trina Butts  
Kay Dillard

Committee members are subject to change due to conflicts of interest or availability. New committee members may be appointed on a case-by-case basis by the Local League Coordinator.

These rules have been approved by the COTA Adult League Committee, USTA Georgia, and the COTA Board of Directors.