



2019 Orange County LOCAL LEAGUE RULES

(Captains must also read the 2019 Sectional Regulations)

www.orangecountyusta.com

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Our Local League is just that: It's local, and it incorporates many of the same teams, captains and players, year after year. Let's keep that in mind as we work together to maintain a cooperative, fair, friendly, and fun environment for all of us. The most current version of these rules will always be posted on the website: www.orangecountyusta.com

Pre-Season Requirement

All captains must now complete a form before they put their teams online and start registering players, which helps ensure they know the rules. The form is linked on the Rules, Forms and Information Page of the website: www.orangecountyusta.com Here is the direct link:

After captains read and understand the rules, review the new year-end ratings, and complete that form, they may then email Heidi for their team number(s) and I'll email them back to you.

Objective

The objective of the local league is two-fold. First, we hope to provide a competitive, fair, and friendly tennis environment for local players. Additionally, first place teams in each flight progress to the next level of competition- Local League Playoffs, Area/District Playoffs, Section Championships, National Invitational and/or National Championships.

Below are the OC policies, guidelines, and rules, which govern our local league. Please remember that a key objective is to try to make sure all matches are played. Circumstances are not always going to be perfect or ideal. We want to avoid defaults whenever possible. Defaults skew the true results; they provide an artificial win for a team. In applying the information below, please use as much flexibility and common sense as possible. **Please always ask questions if you need any clarification regarding these local league rules and re-read them at the beginning of each season.** We cannot write rules that cover every possible scenario and there will be sometimes when we will need to make a judgment call. Captains should keep all communications in writing in case we need to refer back to such communications.

Participation Clarification for our Local League

Generally, players may not play on multiple teams in the same league, at the same level, in the same area. Players are limited to play on two teams per league, per area. Example, a 4.0 player may play on both an OC 4.0 and a 4.5 team in the winter 40 & Over League *and* play on an 8.0 and 9.0 18 & Over Mixed Doubles League, but could not play on a 7.0, 8.0 and 9.0 team, even though a 4.0 technically is able to play at all those levels. (2-team limit per league.)

Since 2015 – For certain leagues, when we have a WD flight: When there are a minimum of six teams at a level, that level *becomes* a new area, and is in many ways treated as such, meaning that a 4.0 player could play on both a 4.0 WE team and a WD team. (Registration will not be allowed until and unless the level exceeds the six-team minimum.)

In those designated leagues, when WD flight consists of fewer than six teams, they are considered in the same area as the WE flights, meaning that players may not play on at the same level in both a WE and WD flight. If a WD area consists of fewer than 6 teams, the winning team from that WD flight will need to playoff against the winning team from the WE flight(s) and the winner from that playoff will advance (either to Local League Playoffs, Area Playoffs or Sectionals).

For example: For each level, if we have at least 6 WD teams, then that group gets moved into a separate WD Area and it means WD and WE are completely separate AREAS. So, a player could play on the maximum two WD teams that have at least 6 teams in the WD flight (at different levels) AND a maximum of two WE teams (at different levels). However, if we don't get at least 6 teams in the WD league, the WE and WD are considered the same area. So a player could play on only 2 of those teams and they would have to play at different levels.

Deadlines

An overarching goal of the local league is provide playing opportunity. In some cases the deadlines will be extended to meet this goal. When a division has one or fewer interested teams, the deadline can be extended so another team can join (to form a two-team league) until the last possible moment which would allow enough time to play a local league. Regardless of whether the deadline is extended, the deadline to pull a team out of the league remains the initial deadline to add a team. The reason is, that if teams pull out after the deadline, especially in a two-team league, it destroys the other teams' options to move to another flight and compete. Once you enter your team online, you are guaranteeing you will follow through with the commitment to field a team each week and complete the season. Teams who fail to complete their season or are consistently unable to field lines during the season, causing full-team defaults may be subject to Sportsmanship Grievances filed against them, exposing the entire team to potential sanctions.

Roster Size Limits & Registration

There are no team size limits, but this may change. Players must be added before deadline dates and before they play their first match. Any technical difficulties must be reported via email to the area league coordinator by 5:00 p.m. the night before the registration deadline. With exception of these players, NO extensions for registration will be extended.

Captain's Responsibilities

Each team must have one captain who is responsible for reading and knowing the rules and making sure their players also know the rules and where to find them. They should attend, or send a representative to the preseason captain's meeting, but all captains must complete the form discussed at the beginning section of these rules. Captains should not expect to receive reminders throughout the season for things that are covered in the rules. When you have a question, please check the online rules first to see if the answer to your question is answered there.

Captains and Co-Captains need to visit the website: www.orangecountyusta.com and on the right-hand side, put your cursor over the section that says **OC USTA LEAGUE Tennis**. You will see a variety of pages appear in a drop-down menu. Familiarize yourself with what's contained in those pages. Click on each one so you know where what information is found, and then click on the **Rules, Forms and Information Page**. Read that information behind each link on this page. After the preseason meeting—once the rules have been revised—print them out and keep them in a notebook that you take to each of your matches. Keep all your scorecards in there after they are completed. If you ever are unable to be at a match, give the notebook to whomever you have designated as captain of the day. Direct all the players on your team to the same **Rules, Forms & Information Page** on that website and ask them to read through those materials. (This is a request from many captains who say the captains know the rules but the players do not.) You will be added to the captain's email list, and you will need to make sure you read through the emails I send. You will also receive a newsletter that covers current league information and will inform you of upcoming leagues and OC Tennis Opportunities. Please read through everything and let me know what questions you have.

The captain of a team may have their \$27 league fee waived **if and only if** they register on the captain's-only team, costing them only \$3. These numbers change every year and are posted on the

website: www.orangecountyusta.com Make sure you don't give the captain's team number out to your team players. Only the team captain, or the co-captain may register using the captain's team number and **no refunds will be processed for captains who fail to use it when they register.** ***Any player mistakenly registering on that team will be ineligible to play until they re-register on their correct team number, and will not be refunded the \$3 fee.

Tennis Balls & Refreshments

The HOME team provides the balls and refreshments. Most teams provide refreshments after the match. When you confirm your match with your opponent, please let your opponents know what will be provided after the match. They are not mandatory.

Team Format

Generally, we play our local league employing the best 2 out of 3 sets format. **We *only* play a match tie-break in lieu of a 3rd set when it is a playoff situation, not in our Local League.** (There are occasional exceptions to this but everyone will be clear on the format before the season begins.) New balls for the 3rd set will be used in a match if any players in that match request them, and they are available. Players who prefer playing with new balls in the 3rd set should be prepared to provide them. All tie-breaks, whether in Post-Season Play or OC Local League Play will use Coman-style rotation in all tie-breakers. (Coman Tie-Break Procedures are linked on the website.)

Players do not have the option to play a match tie-break in lieu of a 3rd set because the system will not allow scores to be entered that way when it's set up for a different format. When players choose to play the tie-break, their match needs to be recorded as 1-0 (retired) in the 3rd set, which robs the winning team of at least 5 games. (Make sure your players know the rules of the league.)

Scheduling Procedures

Captains must poll their players to determine their availability during the season and then list the dates for which the team would be unable to field a full team on the TIS (as team-bye requests). There is a limit as to how many dates may be requested, so need more, you should probably add players. (Summer leagues are played within a shorter time frame so fewer team byes are allowed.) Captains who fail to list a date as a Team Bye Request, or who request more dates than are allowed risk their opponents not agreeing to reschedule those matches. Captains who reach a playoff for another league that is played during the current season must notify the opposing captain and league coordinator immediately if a team bye in the current season is needed to accommodate the playoff match.

Schedules will typically be posted the Sunday night (late, at midnight) the week before the beginning of the season. If that Sunday is a holiday, then the schedules will be online following Monday night. Flight's who begin a week late, will have their schedules posted a week later. When the schedules first come out, they are extremely tentative, and will change continually, without notice, during the first week. Once the schedules are published online, each captain needs to check theirs for errors—there will be errors. These need to be reported on the Schedule-Change Spreadsheet linked on the Rules, Forms and Information page of the website: www.orangecountyusta.com **after** they notify their opponent a change is coming by sending me and email about the change and cc'ing the captain of the opposing team on the email. After the schedules are published, if you have any team bye requests that were not honored, or you need to change the date and/or time of any of your matches, **that must all be done within the reschedule window during that first week.**

When the schedules come out, they are extremely tentative. Captains need to use them only to confirm that-week's match with their opponent and to notify me of any errors using the procedures described above. ***All dates on the TIS for when a captain did not indicate a Team-Bye Request (TBR) must remain open and captains need to expect that they may have a match rescheduled to one of***

these dates during the rescheduling process. Two weeks after the season begins, captains are free to "release" for dates when either no match is scheduled for the team in TL, or is not listed on the SCS as a schedule change, or one agreed upon between captains as a reschedule date that has not yet been listed or changed in the system.

Special Procedures for Team-Bye Requests

Please make sure you understand the nature of requesting a day off as one for which a captain is responsible. Tennislink has no mechanism to recognize any dates you request off.

Team-Bye Requests are the responsibility of captains to reschedule with each other. Most Team-Bye Requests will NOT be reflected in the schedules that originally come out. When you list your dates on the TIS, that is to let your opponents know that you need the day off that day, and gives you the right to reschedule the match with them.

Captains who fail to list Team Bye Requests on the TIS before the deadline will likely be subject to the penalties described below if they request a reschedule later in the season. Also, a request by a captain for a reschedule for a match not officially listed as a team-by request, or one beyond the allowable maximum, can be rejected by the opposing captain, allowing them to take line defaults and/or full-team defaults.

Rescheduling Matches

Allowable reasons for postponements without penalties are outlined in the Section Regulations. If a captain requests a reschedule AFTER the initial time period at the beginning of the season, which is set aside for match rescheduling, then in addition to exercising the option to become the now-hosting site, *the opposing captain has the option* to impose the following penalties:

- Line 3 default in a league that plays 3 individual matches
- 2 lines defaults in a league that plays 5 individual matches (in this instance the captain receiving the defaults determines which lines will be defaulted.)

If a captain intends to levy penalties, it must be made known to the opposing captain at the time the reschedule is arranged and must be documented in an email.

If after the schedules are set, a team has their courts taken away due to scheduling conflicts, the first option is to play the match at what would have been the away site. If neither site is available, the match is rescheduled without penalty after I verify with the site that courts are not available.

Captains may not force reschedules because they do not have enough players. If a team is unable to produce at least 4 players for a match, they risk the possibility that they will need to default the match to their opponent. In accordance with the rules, all other teams who are in contention will receive the same full-team default for the corresponding round.

If after the reschedule window has passed, and a captain is trying to confirm their match with their opponent, and their opponent says they need to reschedule, the first thing they should ask is: "Are you sure you don't have four players available?" (It only takes four to have a legal match.) If they insist they don't have four, you should then tell them that in the reschedule, you will be taking penalties, and will send them an email specifying which lines you will be playing. (Confirm this via email, when you confirm the new date and time.) Alternatively, you may not have time in your schedule to accommodate a reschedule request. If this is the case, you need to tell them you will be taking a full-team default. (All teams in contention will receive the same full-team default from that team.)

Defaulting LINES and Lateness Policies

We follow the same rules as the section regarding late penalties and defaulted lines for lateness. These are posted below. It is always up to the acting captain (not the players) as to whether they will be enforced. The default penalties will be calculated from the MATCH TIME. The home team captain

should be near the entry of the facility, greeting the players as they enter—or at a spot pre-designated by the captain during the pre-match confirmation. The designated place at the facility will be where the player must be present at match time. However, if players are present, and courts are not available, the home team will not be penalized. Players will need to wait for courts to become available. If courts are not available within 30 minutes of the match time, the match becomes a reschedule and follows the rescheduling rules in the Full-Team Default Section, applying penalties if requested by the visiting team.

We have had some difficulties with this policy lately, where captains are unhappy when their opponent attempted to enforce penalties. We strive for a balance between being flexible and reasonable on one hand, while also respecting someone else's time on the other. Lateness typically results from poor planning and time management. So who should be the one to suffer the consequences—the person who took the extra steps to get there on time, or the person who didn't? I suggest that captains tell all their players, "please be there 15 minutes early, because if you are late, you will be penalized by losing games, which will in turn penalize our team." I suggest captains who plan to adhere to the 15 min. policy to mention it when they confirm with each other, although this will not be a pre-requisite for enforcing the penalty. Additionally, **if you are a captain who intends to take a default and then try to play the match "for fun," don't do it. The match will stand as played if you play it.**

Local League Default Policy:

Players never lose the time to warm up. The only purpose of the warm-up is to warm the muscles to prevent injury. The maximum warmup time is 10 minutes, which provides enough time to warm the muscles. Excepting the warmup, the penalties for lateness are:

0 - 5 min late - loss of toss and 1 game

5:01 - 10 min late - loss of toss and 2 games

10:01 - 15 min late - loss of toss and 3 games

15 min + defaulted line

Players and captains should arrive 15 minutes EARLY to avoid default penalties.

The above policies do not apply to teams in the 4.5+ or 5.0+ flights. Those flights have no grace time because the + players may only play line 1. Therefore, match time is also the default time. Please make sure your players arrive at least 15 early and for these + leagues you may want to shoot for even earlier to ensure no late defaults.

Line Defaults

If a captain needs to default a line, he or she must call the other captain by 5:00 p.m. the day before the match. Regardless of the time, once the call is made to default, the team is stuck with that default, and the match may only be played if the other captain agrees. (It is rare that once a captain receives a default that they will later agree to play the match.)*****Captains and/or players should not take a default and then play the match "for fun." If there is time to play the match, and people want to play, go ahead and play it. If you play the match, it will count towards the standings.

Defaults once Assigned Cannot be Changed

Captains must be careful when selecting names of players to assign defaults. Names of players assigned to receive defaults may not be changed so to help qualify players later.

Full-Team Defaults

Captains whose team(s) no-show and/or cancel an entire match during the season will be subject to sportsmanship grievances and possible sanctions. All teams in contention to advance to the next level of competition may not do so as the result of receiving an entire-team default. If it is found that a team does default an entire match, and it affects the outcome of the division, then all teams in contention will receive the same default for that round of the round-robin, in accordance with our

Sectional Rules. Teams who cause entire-team defaults risk possible sanctions, including being excluded from participating in future leagues.

Exchanging Line-Ups and Recording Scores

Lineups must be exchanged **before match time, SIMUTANEOUSLY**, and all players must be present at that time and ready to walk out on the court to play. For a match to be legal, teams must play a majority of the lines—3 for a 5-court match and 2 for a 3-court match. **Any players who are still expected to arrive, MUST be moved to one of the bottom of the lines that may be defaulted if the player does not arrive. You may not wait to see if they show up within the 15-minute default period.** You need to move the player(s) to the bottom line at match time. The exception to this is the Tri-Level League, where the one line defaulted may be any line. Captains must record scores within 48 hours of play. Both captains report scores, and it does not matter who goes first. However, the home team should report the score no later than 24 hours after the match is played.

Warmup

Warmup is limited to a maximum of 10 minutes and is not practice. Teams should start back, practice ground strokes, then volleys, overhands and serves. Any bathroom breaks need to be taken before the scorecards are exchanged and the match should begin immediately after the warmup ends.

If a team wants to practice before their match, they should make arrangements outside of the warmup time.

Unplayed Matches

Unplayed matches may either be left as unplayed, recorded as a double-default, or a full-team default after the standings have been resolved. **In the event of a TD or Dbl TD the standings will be adjusted to reflect only actual matches played by the other teams which prevents a team from advancing due to a whole team default. In a multiple round robin format each round robin is considered a separate segment. If the team default took place in the 2nd round robin segment, for example, only those matches will be affected.**

Unplayable Conditions & the Heat Rule

Under unplayable conditions or the Heat rule, it's up to captains to reschedule the match by mutual-agreement. If it has not started, then in the reschedule, entire new lineups and players may be used. However, if matches have started, then teams will need to use the same players and start the matches where they left off. It's okay for individual lines to make their own arrangements to play individually if the entire team cannot make it together. The SCTA Regulations include general guidelines but captains must make decisions using their own discretion and keeping the health of their players in mind. *If home courts are wet, but away courts are dry, teams should play the match at the away courts, unless circumstances prohibit. Keep this in mind during the season, and plan accordingly. Please only reschedule when absolutely necessary. Unless rain is predicted with certainty, wait until right before the match to call it. Players are not expected to wait more than 30 minutes for courts to become playable. At the 30-minute mark, either team may request a reschedule.*

Post Local League Play

Winning teams of each flight will proceed to either Local League Playoffs, or directly into Sectionals. The links to OC Local League Playoffs and the link to the dates for the Section's Area Playoffs and Sectionals are posted on the front page of the website: www.orangecountyusta.com. Please make sure you understand the difference between these three events. Links to Nationals are also posted on the above website as soon as they are available.

OC Local League Playoffs

Where we have more than one flight at a certain level, we will hold Local League Playoffs, (LLP's.) LLP dates are always set before the season starts and will be posted on the website:

www.orangecountyusta.com on the 2018 Master Schedule and Deadline Date Page. Teams must keep this day available and know they may have a match time that starts anywhere from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (which may require play through 7:00 p.m. or later) depending on the time assigned by the hosting team. Make sure players and captains reserve the dates in advance and reserve the entire day until the times are set. **Dates may change due to unplayable conditions or for reasons outlined in the Section League Regulations.**

The team with the best percentage record, (determined by dividing a team's total number of individual matches won, by the total number of individual matches for which they are scheduled,) will have the option to host the playoffs. An exception to this will be if only one team completes their season undefeated. That team would not be subjected to the above percentage rule, and would have the option to host their LLPs. If a team does not finish playing all their scheduled matches, they will end up with a lower percentage rate, which could possibly hurt their chances of securing home-court advantage. Hosting must be decided no later than the week before the playoffs, so all teams involved in playoffs must finish all their local league matches by the Sunday night before the playoffs. As the season nears its end, teams with potential to win their flights should contact their facility and find out if they can secure courts for hosting. An online form will be provided for captains to record their hosting availability. Hosting playoffs has historically been a much-desired option for teams. Hosting teams often need to provide courts for multiple rounds throughout the day and they are responsible for any court costs that may be incurred. If the hosting team's regular site is not available, an alternate site may be submitted for approval and will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

When three teams are involved in a Local League Playoff, the hosting site must be able to secure the need number of courts (three or five) for all three rounds of play, and be able to secure a beginning start time no later than 11:00 a.m. The order of play is determined by the seeds as described above.

Example:

10:00 a.m. #1 seed v. #3 seed

12:30 p.m. #2 seed v. #3 seed

3:00 p.m. #1 seed v. #2 seed

If the #1 seed cannot provide courts for the entire day, the hosting option will pass to the other teams. If none of the teams can host, the playoff will be broken into two days and will depend on the availability of the teams.

Single match LLPs for WE league will be played on Saturday and moved to Sunday if it rains on Saturday.

When we have 4 teams in an LLP, the matches will span over Saturday and Sunday and be based on hosting availabilities of the teams, with the top seeds having the option to host the majority of the matches. Hosting teams must be able to set times that facilitate the overall scheme, and if they can't provide times that work within the overall scheme, their hosting rights will pass to the next team in line.

Players should arrive at the hosting site no later than 30 minutes before their match. 15 minutes before match time, all bathroom breaks need to be taken and lineups should be exchanged to allow for an on-time start. After lineups are exchanged, players are assigned to courts and warmup should begin. Matches are scheduled for 2 hours with 30 minutes in between matches.

The format is best of three sets with a match tiebreak (first to 10 by 2) played if teams split the first two sets.

Each team contributes half the number of cans needed for each of their matches. (if a team is playing two rounds in a 5-court league, they contribute 5 cans to the playoff.)
Match numbers will be provided and teams need to enter their scores the same day played.

The Code

Please make a copy of The Code (the last three pages of the Section Regulations) and distribute it to all your players. (Please make sure they read it.)

Sportsmanship

I understand I am responsible to educate my players and spectators regarding proper behavior at our matches and that all interactions must be handled professionally, with courtesy and respect.

Cell Phones

Captains, when you address both teams before the match, please announce that all cell phones need to be turned off and that your announcement is their warning. If players have been made aware, and a cell phone rings during the match, it's a point penalty.

Refunds + Adding Players + Moving Players to Subsequent Seasons

New for 2018 – The SCTA is no longer issuing refunds, so be very careful when rostering players.

Captains may continue to add players onto their team up to 4 weeks BEFORE the end of the league's season. The add deadlines will be strict. No extensions will be granted to add players late, so make sure you start the process early so you can resolve any issues you may encounter that prohibit the registration, and you have weekdays available to contact USTA when they are open—they are often closed on weekends.

The extended add deadline is not meant to be a way for captains to amass large teams, add players late, and then move players they haven't played onto subsequent seasons. If you roster a player at the beginning of the season, the captain and the player must have the expectation that they will play during that season. Requests to move players to a subsequent season are limited to four weeks after the season starts, *and* when accompanied by a request and reason for transfer. Proper reasons include injury or illness during the season. Players need to make the request on the online spreadsheet:

Teams that pull out of the league after the schedules go out will not receive refunds for any of their players and will not be allowed to move those players into subsequent seasons.

Teams with Split Times

Some teams are required by their facility, (due to lack of available courts,) to play their matches with a split-time schedule. Before the season begins, the captain of any team who will be utilizing this format, needs to communicate the procedures that will be to all the teams in their fight. This must be done in a group email with the Area League Coordinator cc'd. The same procedure needs to be followed for every match during the season. Example: Doubles at 9:00 a.m. followed by singles at 11:00 a.m. Lineups must be filled out completely and exchanged before the first match's time.

Timed Matches

Timed-match procedures are outlined in the SCTA Regulations. (We can usually avoid timed matches by adhering to the 10-minute warmup and by beginning matches on time.)

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding any of this. I'm looking forward to a great 2019. Good luck to everyone!

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