

USTA SOUTHERN

2026 Southern and Alabama Tri-Level Regulations

Play is governed by the RULES OF TENNIS, "The Code" as contained in the 2026 Friend at Court, and the following USTA Southern Tri-Level Regulations. **USTA Southern will adhere to the USTA League National and/or Southern Regulations on items not mentioned in the USTA Southern Tri-level Regulations.** General regulations and procedures for the program are listed below and/or Championship Procedures. Each State of the USTA Southern Section may supplement these regulations as is required for play within their State. Local and/or State regulations shall not be in conflict with the Southern Tri-Level Regulations. No Southern Tri-Level Regulation or Procedure may be waived by a State Association or by any local, state or sectional league coordinator or Grievance or Grievance Appeal Committee. Any violation of these regulations shall be subject to such sanctions as may be imposed by League Grievance or Grievance Appeal Committee procedures outlined in the USTA League Regulations. USTA Southern is the final authority on such actions unless otherwise specified in Bylaws of the USTA or USTA Southern.

The USTA Alabama State League Coordinator, in conjunction with the USTA Alabama Adult League Committee Chairman, shall have the authority to interpret the USTA Alabama Tri-Level Regulations.

The following areas have been approved as Local Leagues: Anniston/Gadsden/Pell City, Auburn, Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Gulf Shores, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Shoals and Tuscaloosa. A new USTA Southern Alabama Tri-Level League may be considered at the discretion of the State League Coordinator and the USTA Alabama Adult League Committee

1. All participants must be current members of the USTA and register through Tennis Link. **Tennislink initial team registration deadline for the Tri-Level 18 & Over and 40 & Over and 55 & Over is July 5, 2026.**

2. **Team Composition:** A team shall consist of a minimum of six (6) players which are able to combine to form an eligible pairing for each of the three (3) lines for a team match. **Maximum number of players per team is 16. Players may play on more than one level in a local league; however, see Rule 12 regarding advancement.**

3. **Team Match & Scoring:** The team match format of play will be 3 lines of doubles per team match. It is recommended that all matches be the best of three tiebreak sets with a match tiebreak in lieu of a third set. Local leagues may decide to use other USTA approved scoring methods that are compatible with the USTA NTRP Computer Rating System. **Local and state championship matches will be the best of two sets with a Set Tiebreak (first to 7 by 2) used at 6 all in each set. In lieu of a third set, a Match Tiebreak (first to 10 by 2) will be played. The Coman Tiebreak Procedure will be used for all Set Tiebreaks and Match Tiebreaks. There will be a two-minute set break at the end of each set. There is no coaching at any time.**

4. **Levels Offered:** Levels offered are Men's and Women's Tri-Level 18 & Over 5.0-4.0, 4.5-3.5, 4.0-3.0 and 3.5-2.5; Tri-Level 40 & Over 4.5-3.5 and 4.0-3.0; and Tri-Level 55 & Over 4.0-3.0.

5. **NTRP Rating & Scorecard Overview:** Players may register for a Tri-Level team roster with a computer ("C"), self ("S"), mixed-exclusive ("M"), tournament-exclusive ("T"), computer appealed ("A"), and/or Dynamic ("D") rating. For players that do not have a rating on file, he/she shall self-rate in accordance with the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) Guidelines and complete the self-rating process on TennisLink when registering for a team. Failure to do so or omission of information regarding a player's tennis history will subject the player, the captain and/or others who condoned inaccurate self-rating to an NTRP Grievance and possible suspension points.

A player may not be dynamically promoted based on match results

in year-end NTRP computer ratings. A player may be dynamically promoted mid-year from play in the Adult and/or Mixed Doubles League program.

6. **Scorecard Placement & Defaults:** Players may play "up" one level (.5) within a Tri-Level match line-up. *For example, a Tri-Level 18 & Over 4.0-3.0 team may place a 3.0 player in the #2 (3.5) and/or #3 (3.0) positions only.*

A team may not default a higher line on a scorecard unless there is no in-level pairing to list. *For example, a Tri-Level 40 & Over 4.0-3.0 team only has two 3.5 players and two 3.0 players for the team match. The team is permitted to default the #1 line (4.0) and list the 3.5 players in the #2 line (3.5) and #3 players in the #3 line (3.0).*

If a team defaults an entire match (as described in USTA League Regulation 2.03K) in local play, states may decide whether to allow further play by that team and how matches played by that team should be used in determining standings. A state may not authorize a local league to make such determination. If the state does not have a specific rule in place regarding such team defaults, it must follow USTA League Regulation 2.03L. **Please refer to the Alabama State Regulations for Alabama's regulation on a full team default for local league play and Alabama Championship procedures for full team defaults at the State Championships.**

7. **Appealed Ratings:** Players who submit an appeal to their self-rating through the Tennis Link system before their local league deadline for registering players will be permitted to register up to seven days after the notification of final self-rating.

If a player's rating is appealed down during or after the Tri-Level local season, the player should notify applicable Local League Coordinator to make update on TennisLink roster. Previous matches by the player would stand.

If a player's rating is appealed up during or after the Tri-Level local season, the player should notify applicable Local League Coordinator to make update on TennisLink roster. Adjusted rating will be used for duration of Tri-Level championship year. Previous matches by the player would stand.

8. **Rating Used for Championship Play:** Players must play with the rating on the TennisLink roster through the Sectional Championships unless:

- The player appealed up or down during season (see above-mentioned regulation #6), and/or
- The player is dynamically promoted during any championship year.
- **The player has a Mixed, Tournament or Self-rating and receives a new self-rating that places them at a higher NTRP level at which they are competing. Said player must immediately adjust to their new NTRP level.**

9. **State Championship:** State associations may regulate how many matches, if any, qualify a player to advance to state championship. State associations may determine advancement on more than one team within an age group only if they are different NTRP levels. **In order to be eligible to play at the USTA Tri-Level Alabama State Championships, a player must have played at least one match for that team during the local league season. Defaults received do count toward advancement. A retired match counts for all players. 5.0-4.0 18 & Over Tri-Level will be a local league played at the state championships. No more than three out of state players are allowed on the rosters of levels played locally at the state championships or in a weekend tournament style local league.**

10. **Southern Championship Advancement Process:** If the winning team at any level of State Championship competition is unable to compete further towards the Sectional Championships, then the State

competition. The Section may issue wildcards as necessary to fill the draw. If less than four teams are entered in a NTRP level draw within 21 days of event, the draw for the NTRP level may be cancelled unless otherwise authorized by the Championship Committee.

11. State Championship Advancement Process & Deadlines:

States shall determine the progression from local league to the State Championship. States shall conclude their State League Championships to determine its State Champions and identify to the Section their winning teams at each level by September 21, 2026.

A local league must have at least two teams at a single level to advance one (1) team to the USTA Tri-Level Alabama State Championships. A local league that has more than ten (10) teams at a single level will advance two (2) teams to the USTA Tri-Level Alabama State Championship. A local league with more than twenty (20) teams at a single level will advance three (3) teams to the USTA Tri-Level Alabama State Championship. USTA Alabama Tri-Level Championships with Gulf Shores as the anticipated host with the following tentative dates: Tri-Level 40 & Over and 55 & Over as well as 18 & Over September 11-13 with the initial team registration deadline being July 5, 2026. The score entry deadline is August 16, 2026.

12. Southern Championship Advancement Requirement:

Players must play in at least one local or state championship match in order to advance to the Tri-Level League Championship. The one match requirement pertains to the team and age division for which player is advancing. A default received counts towards advancement in this program.

Players who qualify for a Tri-Level 18 & Over, Tri-Level 40 & Over and/or Tri-Level 55 & Over teams (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 Sectional Championships for teams with players that may be competing on two or more teams during a Sectional Championship.** If matches are scheduled concurrently in the above-mentioned scenarios, then teams are expected to provide full line-ups for all team matches. Please refer to Championship Procedures for full details on the Southern Tri-Level League Championship. **A player can advance to the USTA Alabama Tri-Level State Championships on only 1 team per age group. The exception would be made for any level playing their local at state.**