

2026 Southern Tri-Level Regulations & USTA Kentucky
Updated: December 8, 2025, January 14, 2026

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.

1. All participants must be current members of the USTA and register through Tennis Link.

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.

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.

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.

Kentucky Regulation: Local Leagues may offer differing levels and divisions of Tri-Level, including Mixed Doubles format. These additional levels/divisions will not advance beyond Local League play. Initial roster deadline for advancing Local Leagues is **July 26, 2026**. This includes any teams that combine and play in a Regional or Combined Area.

A team shall consist of a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 21 players. Local League Regulations may limit the number to less than 21.

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 from Southern Tri-Level program, but match results will be calculated 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.

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.

Kentucky Regulation: Local areas where there is no local play for a given Age Division and/or Level, a single team may advance direct to the Kentucky State Championship. All team registration deadlines must meet the deadline for their Local Area. Where local play exists, players must have played at minimum one match during the local league season. Defaults in this league count toward advancement.

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 League Coordinator may select the second-place team for such further 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.

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.