



## 10 Easy Steps to Getting a USTA Jr. Team Tennis League Started

### League Coordinator Duties

If you are interested in providing youngsters with a healthy lifetime activity, consider becoming a USTA Jr. Team Tennis League Coordinator. No prior tennis experience is needed to organize and conduct a successful youth league. An interest in tennis coupled with a love of working with youngsters is all that's necessary. The following is a simple step-by-step guide to starting a USTA Jr. Team Tennis league in your community.

#### Step 1: Contact Your State Coordinator

USTA Southern and USTA Georgia have their own staff, regulations and procedures for USTA Jr. Team Tennis. Contact Mary Dillon at USTA Georgia, [dillon@gatennis.com](mailto:dillon@gatennis.com), or (404)-256-9543, ext. 24, to find out how to get involved. Your local contact will provide materials and format information.

#### Step 2: Get Some Help

Starting a league can be easy, but it's not a one-person job. Find a few parents, tennis enthusiasts, or a local community tennis association to help get the program going. This may even be the beginning of a booster club, which will continue to support the program as it grows. Consider forming a committee and set up an organizational meeting.

#### Step 3: Facilities

To run your league, you'll need access to tennis courts for both team practices and matches. Often you'll be able to get free court time through your local schools and recreation department. You may even get discounts or off-peak rates at private or commercial facilities.

#### Step 4: Coaches

Perhaps your most important task will be to identify individuals to coach the teams in your league. Recruit certified teaching professionals, parent, volunteers, or recreation leaders. The USTA provides Recreational Coaches Workshop (RCW) trainings to educate coaches on coaching philosophies, tennis skill development, and team management. Encourage coaches to form entry-level teams by getting the graduates of USA Tennis 1-2-3 and students from schools to participate in USTA Jr. Team Tennis.

#### Step 5: Supplies

You'll need an ample supply of tennis balls for team practices and matches. These may be obtained through soliciting donations or through a fund-raising event. Also consider collecting a few used racquets in case there are players who don't have their own. T-shirts may be purchased at a discounted rate or other types of uniforms may be supplied to demonstrate affiliation with a team.

#### Step 6: Team Sponsors

Find a team sponsor to help defray expenses. Sponsors can help purchase balls, racquets and T-shirts or subsidize the registration fee for youngsters who couldn't otherwise afford to play. You can recognize a sponsor's contribution by putting its name and logo on the sleeve or back of the USTA Jr. Team Tennis T-shirt.

#### Step 7: Publicity

Whether you're starting from scratch or are the coordinator of an existing league, you will want to publicize your league. Publicity can range from a small blurb in a local newspaper to an appearance on a local cable TV station. Using the media is an efficient way to notify many people about league news, such as the registration date, starting date, mid-season team standings, and the ultimate league champion. Publicity can also help attract interest in your league and make it easier to find players, coaches, and financial support. Ask your local USTA representatives for help with your marketing plans.

#### Step 8: Registration

Hold a kick-off carnival or city-/town wide tennis jamboree to register children in your league and sign up parents as team managers/captains. Registration fees may vary. Please contact your USTA representative for details. Log onto Tennis Link to register your participants and to take full advantage of the many functions the program can offer <http://teamtennis.usta.com/Main/HomePage.aspx>. Schedules can be created and posted on the Tennislink Team Tennis. Financial assistance programs should be set up for children who cannot afford the fee.

#### Step 9: Team Match Play

To hold an actual league season, you'll need four or more teams. Teams must have a minimum of six players playing in appropriate skill and age divisions. It's advisable to find out the formats used at all play-offs your teams might advance to and to use the same formats locally. Contact your local USTA office for this information. Please see National Standards and USTA Jr. Team Tennis Recommended Formats for more detailed assistance. Stats and standings can be entered and viewed on the TennisLink Team Tennis Site.

#### Step 10: Special Events

We suggest you hold a season kick-off event and an end-of-season community jamboree or party to encourage participation and recognize the efforts of players, coaches, volunteers, sponsors, and anyone else who helps with the program. As your league begins to grow, you may want to implement a play-off structure to crown a league champion. These league champions may then advance to state, sectional, or national playoffs.