



## 2011 Houston Tennis Association USTA Junior Team Tennis Houston Guidelines

### USTA Texas

USTA Junior Team Tennis Texas is a national program intended to provide youngsters with “fun, fitness, and friendship” through learning and playing the lifelong game of tennis.

### Objectives:

- To provide leveled competition in a team atmosphere for boys & girls of beginner to advanced ability levels.
- To serve as an entry-level program using the QuickStart format & as a follow up program to the USTA Schools Program, NJTL, and beginner programs.
- To provide a “bridge the gap” program, bringing youngsters from entry level tennis to competitive play in USTA sanctioned tournaments.
- To help youngsters develop a full knowledge of the rules of tennis and develop habits of good sportsmanship.
- To encourage the total support of junior tennis within the state of Texas.
- To bring families of participants into the game as team coaches and have them assist in program administration.

### Statewide Rules & Regulations for Advancing Leagues:

- HTA will conduct coaches/parent meeting before the start of each season within each of the geographic areas.
- There must be a minimum of 3 boys & 3 girls per team to be eligible for competition at the sectional and national championships.
- There must be two teams per division in order to advance to playoffs.
- Each player must play a minimum of 3 matches and match scores must be recorded on TennisLink.
- Format must consist of 1 boy’s single, 1 girl’s single, 1 boys’ doubles, 1 girls’ doubles and 1 mixed doubles – the team captains can agree to play more matches, but scores are kept/submitted only on the official lines played.
- Coaching is only allowed during the 90-second change over between games.
- All players must be registered on TennisLink.
- Age Eligibility – August 31st in order to participate in the post-season play.
- Score entry – scores must be in TennisLink within 48 hours of match completion.
- Players must be USTA members.
- If a player qualifies into the Championship or Super- Championship divisions of USTA during the season or is registered for an intermediate team before qualifying; the player can play the rest of the season through the National championship.
- HTA will have a grievance committee

### The National Tennis Rating Program:

Players are placed on USTA Jr. Team Tennis teams based on their age and skill level as determined by the National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP). The coach, team manager and/or parent place players on teams, from the 8 & Under division on up. Use the following NTRP chart to help place your players (additional notes per level are added to aid you in placing players).

### General Characteristics of Various NTRP Playing Levels:

- 1.0 Player is just starting to play tennis and is learning the basic skills of serving, forehands, backhands and volleys.
- 1.5 Player has limited experience and is working primarily on getting the ball in play.  
Note to team manager: Player needs to coordinate moving when hitting the ball. In fact, player is still concentrating on getting the ball over the net from a stationary position. Player is learning to serve and keep score.
- 2.0 Player lacks court experience and strokes need developing. Player is familiar with the basic positions for singles and doubles play.  
Note to team manager: Player is now beginning to coordinate footwork but is not consistent in hitting the ball over the net. Player can serve to some degree, understands scoring as well as correct positions for serving and receiving, and has limited success with volleys.

- 2.5 Player is learning to judge where the ball is going, although court coverage is limited. Player can sustain a short rally of slow pace with other players of the same ability.  
Note to team manager: Player can keep score unassisted, can call own lines, can serve overhand from the baseline and has an understanding of the basic rules.
- 3.0 Player is fairly consistent when hitting medium-paced shorts but is not comfortable with all strokes and lacks execution when trying for directional control, depth or power. The most common doubles formation is one-up, one-back.  
Note to team manager: Player is improving court coverage and can sustain a rally and serve with consistency. On ground strokes, player needs to improve control of height, depth, direction, and speed.
- 3.5 Player has achieved improved stroke dependability with directional control on moderate shots but needs to develop depth and variety. Player exhibits more aggressive net play, has improved court coverage and is developing teamwork in doubles.  
Note to team manager: Player is starting to recognize opportunities to attack short balls by coming to net. Player is developing more spin and power on the serve and seldom double faults.
- 4.0 Player has dependable strokes, including directional control and depth on both forehand and backhand sides on moderate-paced shots, and occasionally forces errors when serving. Rallies may be lost due to impatience. Teamwork in doubles is evident.  
Note to team manager: Player has added variety in shot selection by using lobs, overheads, volleys and approach shots with some success. Player can develop a game plan.
- 4.5 Player has developed use of power and spin and can handle pace. Player has sound footwork, can control depth of shots and attempts to vary game plan according to his/her opponents. Player can hit first serves with power and accuracy and place the second serve. Player tends to over-hit on difficult shots. Aggressive net play is common in doubles.  
Note to team manager: Player is developing an offensive weapon.
- 5.0 Player has good shot anticipation and frequently has an outstanding shot or attribute around which a game may be structured. Player can regularly hit winners or force errors off short balls and can put away volleys. Player can successfully execute lobs, drop shots, half volleys and overhead smashes, and has good depth and spin on most second serves  
Note to team manager: Player is match-wise and uses shots that have a high percentage of success in both singles and doubles.

### **Houston Tennis Association Texas Junior Program Descriptions:**

The following are descriptions that should be used by the coach to determine the ability level of their teams.

#### **8U and 10U QUICKSTART LEVEL:**

- Designed for children 5-10 years old.
- Players should be beginners with limited tennis experience.
- Appropriate quick start components should be used based on age of players.
- Focus should be playing first, fun, friendship, and teamwork.

#### **12U LEVEL**

- Designed for children from 10-12 years old.
- Players should be rated between 1.0-3.0 JNTRP. They may have some tournament experience or this may be their first venture into match play.
- If a player turns 13 before August 31 then they must play in the 14 & Under age division during their local season.

#### **14 U INTERMEDIATE LEVEL:**

- Designed for children from 8-14 years old.
- Players should be rated between 1.0-3.0 JNTRP. They can be playing ZATs and local tournaments.
- If a player turns 15 before August 31 then they must play in the 18 & Under age division during their local season.

#### **18U INTERMEDIATE LEVEL**

- Designed for children from 14-18 years old.
- Players should be rated between 1.0-3.0 JNTRP. They can be playing ZATs and local tournaments.
- If a player turns 19 before August 31 then they will not be eligible to play in the advancing league.

#### **14U ADVANCED LEVEL**

- Designed for children from 8-14 years old.
- Players should be rated between 3.0-5.0 JNTRP.
- Players should be ranked in the Champ or Super Champ level. They may hold a National ranking.
- Same aging up rules (as in Intermediate level) apply.

### **18 & Under ADVANCED LEVEL**

- Designed for children from 14-18 years old.
- Players should be rated between 3.0-5.0 JNTRP.
- Players should be ranked in the Champ or Super Champ level. They may hold a National ranking. Same aging up rules (as in Intermediate level) apply.

### **Houston Tennis Association/Junior Team Tennis (HTAJTT) League Information:**

#### **Leagues:**

Junior Team Tennis is a team competition in a specified geographical area that applies specific local team regulations and consists of NTRP levels with a minimum of two or more teams per level. A local league may choose to divide any or all NTRP levels into flights. A playoff structure may be established to determine a champion for each NTRP level.

#### **Coaches:**

Coaches will be responsible for his/her team(s), and can be a parent, tennis pro, coach, or any other volunteer. Free coaches' training will be provided by the USTA, if requested, Recreational Coaches Workshops can be requested by going to [www.usta.com](http://www.usta.com).

#### **Format:**

The USTA Texas Section requires The World Team Tennis Format. This consists of a boy's singles and a girls' singles and a girl's doubles, and one mixed doubles for a total of five lines. This is the format that will be played at the Sectional Playoffs. The USTA TX Section also recommends playing pro sets (first one to six games with no-ad). All rules and regulations of the USTA should apply during local play. Good sportsmanship is highly encouraged!

#### **USTA Membership:**

A junior USTA membership is \$19.00 and can be purchased by going to [www.usta.com](http://www.usta.com) or by calling 1-800-990-USTA (8782).

#### **USTA Membership Benefits:**

All the Junior Team Tennis Benefits PLUS

USTA Membership Card

Subscription to Smash Magazine

USTA TX Tournament Schedule

USTA TX Publications USTA TX Publications

Discount offers

Nike Dri -Fit Uniforms from Nationals & Premium Item from

#### **Texas Section:**

Players registered on tennis link participating in the Houston Tennis Association Junior Team Tennis program will be required to purchase a Nike Dri Fit uniform for their 1st season of play. The cost of the uniform will be \$13.00. This cost includes the uniform, tax and shipping. The uniform will have both the JTT logo and the Nike swoosh symbol. Delivery of uniforms has been coordinated that coach/captains WILL/CAN receive team uniforms prior to first match. The Texas section will continue to provide a premium item as a gift to the players and/or help local area leagues with some cost associated with running leagues participating in the Junior Team Tennis program.

#### **Spring JTT Section Championships:**

There will be 3 Junior Team Tennis Sectional Playoffs offered this year: Spring, Summer & Fall.

#### **Spring Section Championship Dates:**

- May 14 – May 15, 2011: 14 & Under Advanced and 18 & Under Advanced (location TBD)
- May 21 – May 22, 2011 12 & Under, 14 & Under Beginner, 14 & Under Intermediate, 18 & Under Intermediate (John Newcombe Tennis Ranch, New Braunfels, Texas)

**Participants:**

To enter, teams must have a minimum of 3 boys and 3 girls. The players must have participated in at least 3 local matches. Scores of these and all matches must be recorded on TennisLink. Local Commissioner may set a higher minimum of matches. If a player from the winning team is unable to participate at the Sectional Playoffs and that causes the team to have less than 3 boys or 3 girls, then the winning team can add a player from another team in their local league to meet the minimum for the Sectional playoffs. For example, if the Tigers have 4 boys and 3 girls on their winning team and one of the girls got sick, injured, or can't make the playoffs, the Tigers can select another girl that participated in the local league and meets the requirements of Junior Team Tennis. If one of the boys from the Tigers cannot attend the playoffs the Tigers cannot add another player because they would still have 3 boys, which are enough to participate at the Sectional Playoffs. This rule is to protect the fairness of local leagues and playoffs. It is the responsibility of the administrator to monitor this rule. The Texas Section will monitor this rule based on the team rosters/registration. In addition, teams must adhere to the 2/3 rule, which limits the amount of players being subbed onto the playoff team. The team participating in the championship must contain 2/3 of the original roster. For example: If the Tigers have 6 players, 3 boys and 3 girls, they may only sub for two player's total. If they are missing two girls and one boy then the tigers may only sub for two of these players.

Advanced divisions can be made up of Championship or Super Championship players. Local leagues are required to implement Intermediate divisions during their local play, and they will be required to enter their teams into the appropriate division at the Sectional playoffs according to the guidelines provided.

**National Championships:****14U National Championship:**

This year the USTA Texas will send the top teams in the 14 & Under Intermediate and Advanced divisions from the Spring Section Championships to the USTA Annual 14 & Under National Championships. More information will be given to the winning teams from the Fall Section Championships as soon as it is available. Players with more than 200 points on an end of the year ranking or standing list are not allowed to play in the Intermediate division at the National Championship.

Date: October 21-23: 14 & Under

Location: Surprise, Arizona

**18U National Championship:**

This year the USTA Texas Section will send the top teams in the 18 & Under Intermediate and Advanced divisions from the Spring Section Championships to the USTA Annual 18 & Under National Championships. More information will be given to the winning teams from the Fall Section Championships soon as it is available. Players with more than 200 points on an end of the year ranking or standing list are not allowed to play in the Intermediate division at the National Championship.

Date: TBD

Location: TBD

**General Junior Team Tennis/QuickStart Information:**

Children love team games, and more importantly, they love to be with their friends. As opposed to individual sports, team sports emphasize cooperation, teamwork, camaraderie and friendship— valuable skills at all stages of growth and development.

Playing on a team makes tennis more fun for kids. It allows them to practice together and travel to matches together, fostering team spirit and, along with it, a love of tennis. Players who play on teams generally enjoy tennis more, which means they are more apt to stick with tennis into middle school, high school and beyond. Teams are also a great motivation for kids, who will want to become better so they can do well for their team. USTA Jr. Team Tennis also provides the social interaction often missing in singles tournaments—including youth team sports staples such as uniforms and pizza parties.

USTA Jr. Team Tennis is all about turning an individual sport into a team sport. Not only is it fun and social, it's also practical. Team practices ensure that kids continue to develop their skills, and team matches give them a place to apply the lessons they've learned— so that while they're learning, they're also having a great time with friends.

**What Is USTA Jr. Team Tennis?**

Designed for 5- to 18-year-olds, USTA Jr. Team Tennis gets kids playing right away on teams. It's easy to organize. Only two teams are needed to start a league and leagues can be played at local parks, schools or clubs. Teams are composed of players of similar ages so everyone gets to play with their friends and make new friends, too.

USTA Jr. Team Tennis offers five divisions of play: 8U QuickStart, 10U QuickStart, 12U, 14U, and 18U.

The 8U QuickStart and the 10U QuickStart divisions feature age-appropriate equipment, smaller court sizes and modified scoring.

The other divisions (12U, 14U, and 18U) play on full-size courts and uses standard equipment and various play formats.

In addition, for the 14U and 18U divisions, teams have the option of playing locally only or competing in the National Championships. (The required play format for the National Championships is later in this chapter.)

### **National Championships:**

USTA Jr. Team Tennis offers youths in the 14U and the 18U age divisions the opportunity to advance to a National Championship at both the Advanced and Intermediate levels. Each USTA section advances one team for each event (14U Intermediate and Advanced, 18U Intermediate and Advanced) for a total of four teams per section.

The National Championships introduce young players to competition in a way that minimizes competitive stress and maximizes learning opportunities. The fun aspect of tennis and team spirit is always emphasized, and the goal of the competition is to build a strong foundation for both athletic success and personal achievement.

### **The Championships also are designed to:**

- Provide a competitive opportunity for maximizing each player's physical and emotional development.
- Promote the spirit of competition and camaraderie in such a way that the self-esteem of each player is enhanced and strengthened.
- Provide a national competitive climate that focuses more on personal development and less on competitive outcomes. Teams are coed and made up of at least six players—three boys and three girls—based on similar ages and skills. Each team must meet all eligibility requirements.

### **Placement by Age and Skill Level:**

Within USTA Jr. Team Tennis for the 8 & Under QuickStart, 10 & Under QuickStart, 12 & Under, 14 & Under, and 18 & Under age divisions. Players are further divided into three play levels:

Beginner (NTRP 2.0 and below)

Intermediate (NTRP 3.0 and below)

Advanced (NTRP 3.5 and above).

Parents and coaches are asked to place players in the appropriate level of play using NTRP levels. Players can always choose to move up to a higher age or skill level should they need the challenge.

*For complete rules, please see the USTA Jr. Team Tennis Regulations at [jrteamentennis.usta.com](http://jrteamentennis.usta.com) or consult your USTA Section Coordinator.*

