

A Guide For USTA Junior League Captains

League Captains are the largest group of volunteers in the USTA! Your willingness to serve your team and the League in this leadership role is greatly appreciated.

THANK YOU FOR BEING A JUNIOR TEAM CAPTAIN OR CO-CAPTAIN!

The following suggestions were compiled to make your job easier and to provide tips for success.

USTA Junior League teams are formed in a wide variety of ways, from public parks to private country clubs. Throughout the country, matches are played indoors and out, scheduled or not, timed or played to completion, on a wide variety of court surfaces. Each Section of the USTA has its own unique aspects and opportunities.

Therefore, this is a general guideline for captains with topics that may or may not be pertinent to your own league. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to contact your local league coordinator.

Forming a team. Teams are formed in many ways. Some are groups of friends who start a team because they enjoy being together. Others are structured by club pros, schools, parents or directors from their membership ranks. If you are looking for more players, check with your facility, local pro shops, schools and your teammates. They may know of others who would love to join you. Don't limit your team to only those you know. Half the fun of League Tennis is meeting and making new friends.

Getting Registered. All team members must be registered on your roster in TennisLink prior to playing a match. To register, players must be a current member of the USTA, a one year fee of \$18.00. (www.usta.com)

League Regulations. The captains, as well as all junior league players, must read and follow the rules and regulations. National regulations are available on the web and in a convenient booklet that you may receive from your local coordinator. In addition, each section, district, and local league may also have regulations that govern play. It is your responsibility to know and convey these to your team players. It is also a good idea to acquire Friend of Court to use as a general reference for rules of tennis.

Home Matches. Verify all home matches with your facility. Check for court availability, court fees, guest fees, and any other requirements of your home facility. Does your facility provide the balls for home matches, or does the team?

Player Availability. Ask each team member to go through the schedule and let you know of any conflicts.

Team Meeting. Have a team meeting and agree on the team philosophy. Is the team playing to win or playing for fun? Will only the strongest players play matches or will everyone participate equally? Will the Captains and Co-Captains decide the match lineups? If everyone on the team and their parents are aware of these issues and agrees, you will have a much more successful season as captain and co-captain. Having a coach or pro assist you with team lineups may be helpful.

Contact the opposing captain. Confirm When (day/time); Where (get directions if necessary); Match Duration (will all courts be played at the same time or will this be a split match); Court fees?; Are spectators allowed?; Who is the captain or acting captain for the match?

Verify home matches with your facility again and reserve courts.

Appoint acting captain if you or co-captain are not able to take care of pre-match details.

Verify your starting lineup. Arrange alternates.

Check your roster on TennisLink. Make sure all players are registered.

Plan transportation and arrival time. Arrange carpools if necessary.

Print match scorecard from TennisLink. All eligible players, including any last minute additions to the roster, will be listed if you wait until just before leaving for the match to print your scorecard.

Collect money from your team and pay court fees and/or guest fees if necessary.

Provide balls for home matches. Every match should be played with new USTA approved tennis balls appropriate for the court surface.

Meet with the opposing captain and go over any ground rules. Discuss which match will be played on which court; which team will use what color score cards; format for tie-breaks (Common procedure or regular); and default procedure.

Exchange scorecard lineups BEFORE players walk onto the courts. All players should be present prior to exchanging lineups.

Get the score from each court and record on your scorecard. Note the winner and record the score from the winner's prospective.

Get opposing captain's signature after the match is over. Both captains should agree on the winners and scores.

Meet with your players and air any questions or disputes. If possible, go have a meal together to promote team bonding!

Record your match scores in TennisLink within 48 hours of the match. If the opposing captain has already entered the scores, carefully check the entered scores and confirm or dispute the entry.

File any necessary protest/grievance in writing to League Coordinator.

Have fun! Treasure the camaraderie and friendships with your team and enjoy the spirit of competition!

NOTE: While competition (39%) continues to edge out fun (36%) as the primary reason for playing league tennis, fitness (20%) is advancing as a popular driver.

(Statistics compiled from USA League Tennis National Championships player survey).