2025 GSTL RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR 18+, 40+, 55+, 65+, 70+, MIXED DOUBLES, SINGLES

USTA League Tennis National Regulations, Southern Regulations and South Carolina State Regulations shall apply and take precedence, if a conflict arises. The purpose of the Rules and Regulations is to assure that fair play and good conduct is maintained at all times and to assist the tennis league in rendering equity to all teams and players.

The GSTL Rules and Regulations are not intended to serve as a comprehensive list. Refer to the National, Southern and South Carolina Regulations for topics not covered or for those requiring additional details.

USTA rules and resources: https://www.usta.com/en/home/play/adult-tennis/programs/national/usta-league-resources.html

SC and Southern rules and resources: https://sctennis.com/league-regulations-and-forms/

Friend at Court and The Code: https://www.usta.com/content/dam/usta/2024-pdfs/friend-at-court.pdf

The Grand Strand includes Horry and Georgetown Counties and may include players from Marion that work in and around the Grand Strand.

Registration

Team registration: The captain must register the team on TennisLink using the following format: local area and age division/captain's last name/facility name (Example: GSTL18/Cover/Dunes).

Teams must have the minimum required number of players by the deadline provided by the Local League Coordinator to be eligible for league play.

Player registration: Players must be at least 18 years of age, have a valid USTA membership thru the local season and the SC State Championships, meet the age requirement for the age group in which they are playing, and may not have more than one USTA membership account/USTA Number. Player must reach the minimum age by December 31 of the year during which the division is scheduled to start.

Southern has no residency requirements for local league play.

A player may play up to one NTRP level higher than the player's current NTRP level in each age group. Check with your club if they have specific requirements for "playing up" on teams.

Players may not switch from one team to another after the start of the league season.

Players must be registered on a team before playing a match. If they are not registered and play a league match, their court will be forfeited.

Player Registration Fees: Registration fee for GSTL players is $20.15 ($17 GSTL fee plus $3.15 TennisLink fee). The GSTL fee is $10 for 70 & Over and 75 & Over. Once a player registers and pays fees on TennisLink, there are no refunds.

Credits may be provided to players who are unable to play one match on their registered team due to illness, injury, or other valid reason. Credit may also be provided to players on unqualified teams due to insufficient number of players, or no local competition and unable to advance directly to State Championships. Credits on TennisLink can only be used for USTA league play, and do not include the $3.15 TennisLink fee. Players must request their credits by informing the League Coordinator by email BEFORE registering for a new team. Credits can only be carried over for one year.

Players 80 & Over: GSTL will cover the league registration fee for players 80 & Over. Players should provide the League Coordinator with the team number, name, phone number, and email address before they register. There are no refunds if they are already registered.

Two-team age groups: If any Adult Division Age Group consists of only two teams in a level of play, each team must maintain its roster with a minimum of 40 percent of its players at the designated NTRP level of play. The Adult Division 65 & Over and 70 & Over age groups that use combined NTRP rating levels will not be required to comply with this regulation.

Ratings

Players may appeal their year-end ratings online at any time during the League year. TennisLink will allow only one granted appeal each year. You can click the appeal button as many times as you want, but it will always give you the same result after the first time.

Players must play in three matches in the same age group to receive an end of year rating. In 2025, ratings will be based on 18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over, and 65 & Over, as well as Tri-level and sanctioned National Tennis Rating Program (NTRP) tournaments. Mixed results will not be part of generating a player's year-end rating, except for those players who participate in the Mixed Division exclusively. Combo, Singles, 70 & Over and 75 & Over do not count toward your dynamic rating.

Players who do not have a valid computer rating or self-rating on file in TennisLink must self-rate in accordance with the NTRP Guidelines and complete the self-rating process on TennisLink before registering for a team.

For additional ratings appeal information, including medical appeals, check the Southern and SC USTA rules.

New for 40 & Over

Starting in 2025, Southern will follow the National format for 40 & Over teams to require a minimum of 9 players and a format of 1 singles and 4 doubles.

On Court

Courts: Captains should confirm court availability for home matches once the schedule is published. If there are multiple playing surfaces at a site, the visiting captain is entitled to know which specific match will be played on which surface before line-ups are exchanged.

Captains at match: All teams must have a captain or designated captain at every match.

Scorecards: Each captain should have a scorecard printed from TennisLink and exchange written line-ups simultaneously, prior to the beginning of the match – no later than the scheduled start time of the match.

Lateness: Players must report to scheduled matches on time, preferably at least 15 minutes early. There will be a 15-minute default rule in effect. More details available in "Friend at Court."

Start of Play: Home team is responsible for providing a can of new tennis balls. Regular duty felt balls for clay surfaces and heavy duty felt balls for hard surfaces. Warm up is 10 minutes and should be started no later than the designated match time. An individual match starts when the first ball is put into play. Please start matches on time!

Substitutions: No substitution may be made in an individual match after the lineup has been presented, except for injury, illness, disqualification, or no-show of a player before the start of an individual match. In this case, once the lineup has been exchanged, a team may substitute a player in the affected position within the 15-minute default time, with a player not already in the lineup. If a team alters their line up for this reason, the opposing team may not change its line-up. If no such substitution can be made, the affected position will be defaulted.

Incomplete line-up: Teams are expected to provide full line-ups for all team matches**.** A default occurs when a captain cannot field all positions for a match. Both captains agree on what individual matches, based on the number of players present or to be present, can be played to constitute a valid team match. Defaults start from the lowest positions of the line-up.

In the spirit of good sportsmanship and fair play, it is recommended that the opposing team(s) should be advised of a known default. For a line forfeit to count as a win, the player[s] receiving the forfeit must be present at the match site, unless the forfeiting captain has

informed the opponent captain in advance that they will not have enough players. Players receiving the forfeit should be listed on the line-up and entered in TennisLink. Players giving the forfeit should not be entered in TennisLink.

See below and USTA, Southern and SC Rules for more information on forfeits and defaults.

Officials and Coaching: There are no officials at league matches and coaching is not allowed. Spectators, team members, and facility staff may not make calls, act as an official, or provide coaching during the match.

Cell phones: Must be turned off. If a cell phone rings during a point, the opponent wins the point based on a hindrance. Sending or receiving texts or calls on cell phones or smart watches during match play is not permitted and can also be considered a hindrance.

Format: All matches will be best of three sets with a 10-point tiebreak in lieu of a third set (first team to 10 by a margin of 2). Set tiebreaks (first team to 7 by a margin of 2) are played in the 1st and 2nd set. All tiebreaks will use the Coman tiebreak system.

Making Calls: Every player is expected to call shots on their own side and loud enough for the opponent to hear. If a ball is 99.9% out it is 100% in. All points played in good faith stand. Players are urged to call the score after each point to avoid confusion. If there is disagreement over the score, players should go back to the last agreed upon point or, if they cannot agree, spin the racquet.

Players must be familiar with USTA's “The Code,” a handbook of ethics and fair play, and “Friend at Court”. Captains should have this information available during match play for settling disputes.

If a conflict occurs during a match that cannot be resolved on court, the players should request both captains/designated captains to get involved. It is the responsibility of the two captains to decide on a resolution to the incident. Spectators, facility staff, or other team players may not participate in any way. If the incident cannot be resolved, options include playing under protest or filing a grievance. See USTA, Southern, and SC rules and regulations for more details.

Spectators: Spectators must remain at least 6 feet from the court and should not sit or stand at the end of the court behind the servers or receivers. It is the responsibility of each team to control the noise and behavior of its spectators. Loud, boisterous, and unsportsmanlike behavior is unacceptable and may result in a grievance filed against the offending team captain.

Reporting Scores: Report scores through TennisLink immediately following the match. Winning captains enter scores within 48 hours and visiting captain confirms scores within 48 hours. Confirm player names and scores with opposing captain at time of the match to avoid errors.

At the end of the league season, all scores must be entered prior to the State league deadline and any scores entered after the deadline will be null and void and recorded as double defaults.

Reschedules for weather: Reschedules may occur due to inclement weather (rain, high winds, hurricane), however, there is no heat or cold rule. If courts are playable, matches must be played. Within 48 hours of a weather postponement, a makeup date should be scheduled, and the League Coordinator notified. The home captain must confirm court and player availability before offering makeup dates. The date of the makeup match must be scheduled within 2 weeks of the original match date. If the teams cannot agree on timing for the makeup match within 2 weeks, notify the Local League Coordinator who will assign a date/time for the match.

Other Reschedules: Aside from weather, captains may not reschedule an entire match without permission from the Local League Coordinator. No scheduling accommodations will be made for teams with players on multiple teams.

If a team cannot field a lineup due to players participating in a State or local tournament, a reschedule of the impacted lines are allowed. Only positions with at least one player that is participating in a tournament may play in any rescheduled match.

If captains know in advance of a shortage of players for an upcoming match and wish to reschedule one or more lines, they must contact the League Coordinator before reaching out to the other captain. The requesting team must play as many lines as possible on the regularly scheduled match date and may request to reschedule the other lines prior to the original match.

If the opposing captain agrees to reschedule one or more lines and a date/time is agreed, no further reschedules are allowed. Courts at the home facility to be arranged by the home captains for any reschedules.

If the opposing captain is unable to reschedule the additional line(s), and there are enough positions played for a valid match, the requesting captain must default the remaining line(s).

Excessive forfeits and reschedules by the same team will not be tolerated.

Captains are encouraged to be flexible and work together to ensure all matches are valid. See Full Team Default below. If you are having difficulty agreeing on a make-up date, contact the Local League Coordinator immediately.

Delays: Matches that have begun, but are not completed due to weather, should be rescheduled by the players before leaving the court, in consultation with their captains. These matches should be made up as soon as possible, but must be completed within two weeks of the rain out. Any match rescheduled under these circumstances become an officially rescheduled match and should be reported to the League Coordinator. Any changes after that are not allowed.

If a line has not finished play and it begins to rain and a player subsequently leaves town, the position must be played within 48 hours of the player's return.

If lightning occurs during a match any player may suspend play if they feel unsafe. The match is suspended for a minimum of 20 minutes after the last lightning strike, or facility personnel give the "all-clear". A five-minute warm-up is appropriate after such a delay. If there is additional lightning, the match may be rescheduled for another time.

If the match or position has to be rescheduled or continued due to the weather and the captains/players involved are unable to agree on a makeup date, the default match date will automatically be assigned by the Local League Coordinator. Any team unable to make the date and time will forfeit any un-played positions.

Full Team Default: Teams are expected to play all matches on their schedule. If a valid match cannot be completed resulting in a full team default, there are consequences for both teams. It is in the best interests of both teams to work together so that a valid match can be played. If there are questions about what qualifies as a "valid match", contact the Local League Coordinator.

South Carolina has updated its regulations on full team defaults:

- The defaulting team is ineligible to advance beyond local league play but must continue to play the remainder of the local matches.
- All matches played by the defaulting team will be recorded in TennisLink for the purpose of satisfying match play requirements for opponents only.
- At the end of the local season, all matches of the defaulting team will be removed from the stats and standing in TennisLink, UNLESS:
    - More than one full round was played in a flight. If more than one round was played, only the matches in the affected flight will be removed.
    - All teams with a mathematical chance to advance have already played the defaulting team in good faith; the matches shall stand as played when determining standings.
    - The final standings would not be impacted by the matches played against the defaulting team.
- A grievance may be filed against the defaulting team.

The team that receives the team forfeit will not receive credit for the win. We all face scheduling challenges and we all want to play matches, so please work together to complete a valid match.

Team standings: At the end of the regular season, standings will be determined by the number of team wins. Tiebreaks will be calculated in TennisLink by:

(1) Winner of the most individual matches

(2) Winner of head-to-head match

(3) Loser of the fewest number of sets

(4) Loser of the fewest number of games

(5) Highest winning game percentage of total games played

Note: Third set tiebreakers are considered as one (1) set and one (1) game)

Qualifying for State Championship: The winner in each age division/level in local competition shall be entitled to advance to the State Championship. If the winning team is unable to attend, the second-place team can be asked. Wildcards may also be offered; check with the Local League Coordinator. See USTA, Southern, and SC rules for more information.

A player must play two matches in 18 & Over, 40 & Over, and 55 & Over age divisions to be eligible to go to State. A player must play in at least one match in 65 & Over, and one match in 70 & Over to qualify for State Championship.

A player must play two matches in 18 & Over Mixed and 40 & Over Mixed, and one match in 55 & Over Mixed, 65 & Over Mixed, and Singles (18 & Over, 40 & Over and 50 & Over) to be eligible to go to State. The 50 & Over singles teams are invited to State Championships.

Players who qualify for an 18 & Over, 40 & Over and 55 & Over team(s) may advance on more than one team as long as the two teams are not in the same NTRP level or Age Division. For example, a 3.0 player could play on two 3.0 teams in two separate Age Divisions or play two different NTRP levels in the same Age Division. This also applies to players who qualify for Mixed Doubles 18 & Over and/or Mixed Doubles 40 & Over team(s).

No accommodation for scheduling will be made at any Championship for teams with players that may be competing on two or more teams during a Championship.

The Adults Program Committee will determine which NTRP levels qualify to go directly to State Championships without local play required based on the total of teams registered in each area for each level annually. In addition, in 2025, Adult 65 & Over, Adult 70 & Over, Mixed 55& Over, Mixed 65 & Over, and Singles teams where there is no local competition will advance directly to State Championships. These teams are required to have 51% of the players from the local area (Grand Strand) and 60% of players from SC.

Grievances: Grievance complaint forms, procedures and rules are posted on the SC Tennis website. There are specific time limits, procedures, and rules for filing a grievance.

Grievance complaints may be filed not only for infractions of the regulations but also for failing to abide by good conduct, fair play, and good sportsmanship. Such grievances must be filed by the captain in writing and emailed to the Local League Coordinator prior to commencement of the next team match or within 24 hours after the end of local league play, whichever occurs

first, except a complaint based on ineligibility may be filed at any time after learning the player is ineligible.

A $100 filing fee will be required for all General/Sportsmanship, Championship and/or Administrative Grievances. The filing fee will only be returned to the grieving party if the grievance is upheld.

USTA South Carolina Local League Grievance and Grievance Appeals Committee – 2025

James Teal – Co-Chair Grievance Committee

Scott Zobrist – Co-Chair Grievance Committee

Debby Bosselman – Chair – Grievance Appeals Committee

Local League Representatives

Jeannette Hammers (AATL)

Jonathan Watkins (BBTL)

Toni Odom (CTL)

Malinda Griffin (FTA)

Abby Martin (GATA)

Susie Honeycutt (GSTL)

Sue Cook (HHTL)

Thea Salmonson (LATA)

Art Welling (LCTA)

Becky Williamson (LCTA)

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Local League Coordinator: Wende Cover, wendecover@hotmail.com, 703-395-9180