

2026 – GSTL RULES COMBO DOUBLES

18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over, 65 & Over

GSTL Combo Coordinator-Amy Jordan

amyjordanwm1993@gmail.com

843-455-4338

NOTE: Items in **RED** are important, and frequently misinterpreted rules
Items **HIGHLIGHTED** are changes or modifications to previous rules

INTRODUCTION

USTA South Carolina Combo Doubles League Program is team competition in
18 & Over men & women at the combined levels of 5.5, 6.5, 7.5, 8.5, 9.5 & 10.5
40 & Over men and women with combined levels of 5.5, 6.5, 7.5 and 8.5
55 & Over men and women with combined levels of 6.5, 7.5 & 8.5.
The Local winning teams above may advance to State competition.

South Carolina ONLY Age Group will be offered at the combined 65 & Over (6.5, 7.5 and 8.5)
with **no advancement past the SC State Championship.** .

All State rules as outlined apply to all Age Groups unless otherwise noted. A player may compete in each Age Group in accordance with the appropriate rules

USTA South Carolina has appointed the SC Combo Doubles State League Coordinator to organize and coordinate all USTA Southern Combo Doubles league activities in the South Carolina State Combo League and in conjunction with STA SC Combo Doubles League Committee shall have the authority to interpret the South Carolina State Combo Doubles League Tennis Regulations.

Local Leagues may write regulations to govern local play but they may not be in conflict with USTA Southern Combo Doubles Regulations or USTA South Carolina Combo Doubles Regulations

CAPTAINS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING ALL THE USTA, SOUTHERN, SOUTH CAROLINA, AND GSTL RULES AND REGULATIONS, AND FOR ENCOURAGING TEAM MEMBERS TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THESE RULES AND REGULATIONS. CAPTAINS SHOULD ENSURE THAT EACH TEAM MEMBER HAS A HARD COPY OR INTERNET ACCESS TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS.

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A. Format of Play:

1. The format of play will be three individual men’s or women’s doubles matches per team match.
2. a. A team shall consist of a minimum of 6 players able to combine to form 3 eligible teams.
3. The combined ratings of a partnership cannot exceed the level of play and the highest rated player cannot exceed as listed on chart below:

NTRP Cap for Combined Levels:

NTRP Level	Max NTRP Rating		NTRP Level	Max NTRP Rating
5.5	3.0		8.5	5.0
6.5	3.5		9.5	5.5
7.5	4.0		10.5	6.0

Two team leagues: In a two-team flight in any age group, a team must have at least 3 players on roster at the level according to the chart below. This chart is different from the chart with the maximum levels approved for each combined level.

Level	3 players at Max
5.5	3.0
6.5	3.5
7.5	4.0
8.5	4.5 or 5.0
9.5	5.0 or 5.5
10.5	5.5 or 6.0

Singleton teams: If any Adult Division in the 18 & Over, 40 & Over, or 55 & Over consists of only one team in a level of play, (singleton team), and that level must play a local league in order to advance, the Local League Coordinator has the option to:

- (1) Contact the SC State League Coordinator who can transfer an individual team with no local league play to another area’s league tree only if it is agreed upon by both local league coordinators and accomplished before the registration deadline for that league.

- Complete teams that are moved to play in a local league area other than their home local league must secure home courts in that local league they choose to participate unless both local league coordinators agree on something different.
- If an individual team is transferred into an already existing league of at least 2 teams, then that team must secure home courts in that host local league where they have been moved and if that transferred team wins that league, they will represent that host league at the State Championship. The transferred team must follow all rules and regulations of the host league. The host league is responsible for all awards, state championship fees (if applicable) and state championship registration.
- If Local League coordinators agree to combine individual teams from more than one area to form a league for those teams to qualify, the winning team from that individual league will be allowed to represent the Local League where they initially registered.

Rules and regulation issues that occur during league play for these individual teams will be handled by the SC State League Coordinator in consultation with the Local League coordinators that are involved.

The area that is represented by the winning team will be responsible for all awards, state championship fees (if applicable) and state championship registration for that team.

(2) Offer to move that team to another age division offered in that area in that level, if applicable.

(3) Move individual players to another team in that area, if applicable, or move them to an “Extra Players” flight to hold for future play in other leagues, i.e., Mixed, Fall, etc.

(4) Refund or credit all or a portion of the registration fee in accordance with the Local League policy.

Singleton teams: If any area in the 65 & Over division consists of only one team in a level of play (singleton team), that team may advance straight to the state championship.

Local League at State Levels:

18 & Over: 9.5 Women & 9.5 Men

55 & Over: 8.5 Women & 8.5 Men

4. Individual matches – best two of three sets with a ten-point match Coman tiebreak in lieu of the third set. Coman procedure for Set Tiebreak (first to 7 by a margin of 2), and Match Tiebreak (first to 10 by a margin of 2) in lieu of the third set.

B. Eligibility:

1. Players must have a current USTA membership through November 2026.
Players renewing memberships must do so before being placed on the roster.
2. Adult League 18 & Over: Player must reach at least 18 years of age to register for a team.
Adult League 40 & Over: Player must reach at least 40 years of age during 2026.
Adult League 55 & Over: Player must reach at least 55 years of age during 2026.
3. Adult League 65 & Over: Player must reach at least 65 years of age during 2026. Note: This 65 & Over League is a South Carolina League only, with no advancement past the South Carolina State Championship
4. A player may play on more than one NTRP level in Adult 18+, 40+, 55+, and 65+ Age Group in the same Local League during the same season, BUT **NO SCHEDULING ACCOMMODATION WILL BE MADE FOR PLAYERS ON MULTIPLE TEAMS.**
5. A player may not be dynamically disqualified based on match results from Southern Combo Doubles and match results are not calculated in year-end NTRP computer ratings.
6. Pre-approval is granted to any GSTL player wishing to play out of state.

C. Computer rating:

1. A player with a valid computer rating as a result of playing in the Adult 18 & Over, Adult 40 & Over, Adult 55 & Over, Adult 65 & Over or Mixed USTA League Tennis Program must play at that rating level or higher.
2. Players may appeal their 2025 year-end ratings at any time during the league year. USTA allows one appeal per year. National benchmark players cannot appeal their 2025-year end ratings for 12 months except for medical reasons. See Reg. 2.07 . NTRP appeals to computer ratings must be done online.

3. A MEDICAL APPEAL of a disabling injury or illness for a player must be accompanied by THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN'S EVALUATION of the injury or illness stating the extent and permanency of the injury or illness and any other substantiating information. The Southern Medical Review Committee will evaluate all medical appeals, and if the injury/illness is deemed permanently disabling; the appeal will be forwarded to the National Medical Review Committee for further review. **Medical Appeals must be submitted in writing, by email and sent to PJ Fulmer, fulmer@sctennis.com.** Medical Appeal forms can be found on the USTA South Carolina Tennis webpage at sctennis.com. Appeals must be done on an individual basis; no group appeals will be accepted.
4. If a player's rating is appealed down during the Combo season, the player must adjust the rating on the roster for the duration of the season and should notify the LLC to make update on TennisLink roster. Previous matches by player would stand. If a player's rating is appealed down after the Combo season, the player may not adjust the rating on the roster and must continue to use rating on the roster for the remaining championship year. If a player's rating is appealed up during the Combo season, he/she must use that rating for the duration of the Combo season. If a player's rating changes for any reason, they must play at that level. If a player's self-rating expires mid-season and they have to self-rate but receive a higher rating, they must appeal back down before they can continue playing on their current team.
5. Combo season starts before the year-end computer ratings are published, but sectionals are after the ratings are published. A player may play the entire season at the level he/she played at the beginning of the season except as noted in Southern COMBO RULE #6 for players that are moved up 2 levels or on the "Clearly Above Level" report that Southern sends after ratings are published. Players that are on this list will be notified by email.
- 6.
7. If a player's rating is lowered during the Combo season, the player must use the adjusted rating for that season. If the rating is lowered after season, they must play as listed on roster.
8. **Sanctioned NTRP tournaments will count towards Year-End rating. All players who participate in these tournaments must have an NTRP rating (self or dynamic). The rating will again denote a tournament exclusive rating.**

D. Self-Rating:

1. Unrated players must 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 self-rate or omission of information regarding a player's tennis history will subject the player, the captain and/or others who condoned the inaccurate self-rating to penalties and disqualifications.**
2. 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.
3. A player who does not have a computer rating, but does have a self-rating on file in TennisLink, must play at that level and cannot self-rate lower for COMBO Doubles.
4. NTRP Grievances filed within 14 days of the start date of the player's and/or captain's State Championships will be administered after the event unless the section authorizes the administration of the grievance prior to that time. If the grievance is not administered until after the event, points won by players will stand. Disqualified players and/or captains that are suspended will not be eligible to advance to the next level of championship play. USTA South Carolina mandates that the party (ies) that file(s) the NTRP grievance complaint must provide the documentation to support their complaint at the time of their filing.
5. Players with expired ratings will not be allowed to self-rate at a lower level than their last published NTRP rating. However, they will have the opportunity to an immediate, on-line, self-rate appeal.
6. Self-ratings are valid for 2 years from the date issued or until replaced by a dynamic or computer rating.

E. Registration and Fees:

All Local Combo Leagues (18 & Over, 40 & Over, 55 & Over and 65 & Over) must end team registration before **June 21, 2026 Teams may continue to add players per local league regulations.**

1. TennisLink is the official system for team registration.

2. Rosters must be entered in TennisLink before League play begins. Players may not move to a different team once match play has begun for that level, unless approved by the State Combo Doubles League Coordinator. Players may not be added to the team roster during local league flight playoffs or at any championship.
3. Deadline to register a team for Combo Doubles is **June 21, 2026**. Teams may not be added after deadline. The last day to add additional players to a roster is **September 30, 2026**.
- 4.. Fees will be collected (via credit card) when the captain/player registers on TennisLink. Grand Strand Tennis League fees for all AGE GROUPs are \$27.00 \$23.85 + \$3.15 TennisLink, . (\$15.00 for teams playing LLAS) Fee is non-refundable. and must be paid for EACH LEAGUE TEAM a person is on.
5. Once a player is placed on a roster through TennisLink, the registration fee will not be refunded except for season ending injury or illness. **NO REFUNDS WILL ONLY BE GIVEN AT THE END OF THE YEAR.** Injury Credit will be issued to be used for the next GSTL league year.

F. Local Play: TEAMS ARE REQUIRED TO HAVE A CAPTAIN OR ACTING CAPTAIN ASSIGNED FOR EACH MATCH, AND TO INFORM THE OTHER TEAM OF WHO IS ACTING CAPTAIN FOR THE DAY. All decisions made by the acting captain are as if made by the registered captain.

1. Each team will play a round robin competition with at least one other team in the same level. Each team in a round robin must play every other team in the round robin at least once and an equal number of times. *Teams are expected to provide full lineups for all team matches. Forfeits have become a real problem, and excessive forfeits will not be tolerated.* See Section H for how forfeits will be scored and penalties that will be assessed.
2. It may be necessary to divide a level into two or more sub-levels if there are too many teams for a single round robin group. In that case, there will be a local league play-off to determine the GSTL champion and the team(s) to advance to the State Championships.
3. Each team must play at least three matches in local league to qualify for championship play.
4. Home team is responsible for providing courts, paying court fees (if applicable), and providing new balls.

5. **Captains may not reschedule, without permission, any match except in the event of inclement weather** (RAIN and LIGHTNING ONLY. NO Heat Rule is in effect for GSTL League Play).

In the event of inclement weather, the captains should call the host club and ask about playability of courts, **and only a captain may tell their players that a match has been cancelled**. If the Visiting Captain cannot reach the Home Captain, the visiting captain should ALSO CALL THE HOST CLUB. **If courts are playable, you CANNOT reschedule because of a weather forecast.**

- a. Matches and/or Courts rescheduled due to inclement weather must be **COMPLETED** within two (2) weeks of the regularly scheduled match. BEGIN THE RECHEDULING PROCESS IMMEDIATELY TO AVOID PROBLEMS.
- b. Matches that have begun, but are not completed due to weather, should be rescheduled **by the players on the court**, with the advice of their captains if needed. Ideally, this should be done before players leave the facility on the date of the match. 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 the above circumstances becomes an officially rescheduled match when a new date is agreed to by all four players who should then report the new date to Combo LLC. Any changes after that are not allowed. The match is now treated exactly the same as a regular scheduled match.
- c. If a position has not finished play and it begins to rain and a player goes out of town, that position must be played within 48 hours of the player's return. Both captains must alert the coordinator that this has happened and when the player will return from out of town or the court will be forfeited. Captains should consider not scheduling players headed out of town if bad weather is a possibility.
- d. Lightning: 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 then be rescheduled for completion at another time.
- e. If your match is rained out or incomplete due to weather, please contact the LLC IMMEDIATELY by email only amyjordanwm1993@gmail.com with the new match dates. Please copy the opposing captain on the email so we are all in agreement. **IF YOU ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY AGREEING ON A MAKEUP DATE, CONTACT THE LLC RIGHT AWAY. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST DAY TO INFORM ME OF THE PROBLEM.** Every grievance filed last year could have been

prevented if the captains had contacted LLC immediately.

- f. If the match or position has to be rescheduled or continued (if begun and rained out), due to the weather, and the captains/players involved are unable to agree on a makeup date or fail to contact the LLC with the information, the default match date will automatically be the **Friday evening** following the two week deadline for makeups, at 6:30pm, at the HOME team courts. Home captain is responsible for contacting their Club to reserve courts. If the home team courts are unavailable, the match will move to AWAY team courts. Any team unable to make that date and time will forfeit any un-played positions at that time. The only exception being if weather does not permit play at the new time, then the match is scheduled for the next soonest Friday after that.

6. **YOU MAY NOT RESCHEDULE JUST BECAUSE MOST OF YOUR PLAYERS ARE UNAVAILABLE** due to any event, holiday or reason other than a Local tournament or State Championship, **unless requested before the season begins**, the opposing captain agrees, **and** you are granted permission by Combo LLC!!!!

Any courts played without meeting above criteria will be deemed forfeit. If you know of a major conflict that will make your team unable to field a court, contact the LLC immediately upon publication of the official schedule in Tennislink, and accommodation may be made. **Accommodations WILL NOT be made once the season is in progress.** Any match rescheduled under the above circumstances becomes an officially rescheduled match when approved by both captains and reported to Combo LLC, and any changes after that are not allowed. The match is now treated exactly the same as a regular scheduled match. If the player you planned on playing becomes unavailable, you must substitute a new player, and MAY NOT ask for another reschedule, except for weather. ALL RULES OF MATCH PLAY now apply to the new match time/date.

7. For Local Tournaments, State or Sectional League Championships ONLY, both captains may request Combo League Coordinator approval to change a scheduled match or individual positions to an earlier date. This will be granted ONLY if the team requesting does not have enough players on scheduled match date to field all three positions. ****Not having your strong players available is not a LEGITIMATE reason to have a match rescheduled. Such requests must be submitted via email at least TWO WEEKS in advance and the rescheduled match must be made up prior to the regularly scheduled match. TENNIS WARS or other non-USTA tennis events is NOT A LEGITIMATE REASON TO RESCHEDULE A MATCH. If one or two POSITIONS (not entire match) need to be rescheduled, they must be played prior to the regularly

scheduled match and captains must agree to this arrangement one week prior to the regularly scheduled match. The #3 Position will be made up first, and the #2 second.

Only positions with at least one player that is going to the championships or playing in the local tournament may play in any rescheduled match. Positions with players that will be out of town on match day for other reasons MAY NOT play early without a State/Tournament bound player with them in the position. If this rule is not followed, the team playing an unauthorized player will have the position defaulted.

**** GSTL COMBO COORDINATOR MUST BE NOTIFIED OF ANY CHANGES**

STATE, SECTIONAL AND NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER LOCAL LEAGUE MATCHES.

*LLC may, at his/her discretion, extend the season end date in case of excessive inclement weather issues. Any extensions must be approved by State League Coordinator and must allow completion of matches in time for rosters and fees for teams advancing to state to arrive by the deadline date.

8. Captains should encourage all players to arrive up at least 15 minutes prior to the scheduled match time. Captains are encouraged to exchange lineups 10 minutes prior to the scheduled match time UNLESS NOT ALL PLAYERS ARE PRESENT. Line-ups must be exchanged no later than the match start time, and once exchanged, players should take their assigned courts and begin the 10 minute warmup with the opponents. The 15-minute default rule will apply – unless prior arrangements have been made between captains. Direct substitutions may be made for any player injured or becoming ill during warm-up. **A direct substitution may also be made for a no-show. However, the no-show substitution must be made prior to expiration of the 15-minute default period. Captains and players are encouraged to begin the 10-minute warm up at least 10 minutes prior to the scheduled match time.** If court(s) are not available at the scheduled time, each position will complete the 10-minute warm-up and commence the match as soon as a court(s) become available. Matches/Positions that do not start within 15 minutes of the scheduled start time or within 15 minutes of the time of court availability will be forfeited to the team whose player(s) is at the court ready to begin play. The home team captain and the visiting captain should confer to insure both agrees as to the “official” time for beginning the 15-minute default period. Any captain violating this policy will be reported to the Local League Coordinator and repeat offenders may have disciplinary sanction placed on the Captain and/or the team.

If a home team has access to more than one court surface, the home captain must call the opposing team to let them know at least 4 days before the

scheduled match that they will be using multiple surfaces for their match, and which positions will play on hard surfaces and clay surfaces.

Surfaces may need to be changed without prior notice if courts are wet or the facility managers/pros say that the courts you were going to use for your matches are not playable at time of the match.

G. Scorecards and Lineups:

1. Line-up/scorecards will be used to exchange line-ups only. Each captain will provide their own line-up scorecard, or portion thereof. Each Captain should keep a copy of final scores to assist in posting or confirming scores on TennisLink. Suggestion: have the other captain check the scores on your scorecard and sign it showing their agreement. This will avoid wrong scores and wrong names being put in Tennislink.

2. Captains must exchange line-ups simultaneously. NO CHANGES may be made after the line-up has been exchanged, except as allowed in the substitution rule below. NOTE that after lineups have been exchanged, if a team receives a forfeit, the receiving team DOES NOT HAVE THE OPTION TO CHANGE THEIR LINE-UP!

An individual match is started when the first ball is put in play.

H. Forfeits:

1. Forfeits are used for Defaults or for Disqualifications. These two different forms of forfeit are defined as follows:

A. Forfeit by DEFAULT- when a player fails to appear on time or after the start of an individual match, if injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player occurs, the opponents will be awarded a default for that individual match only. The default principles shall be applicable, with the Sectional modifications that:

1. In the event of illness, injury, disqualification, or no-show of a player prior to the start of an individual match (once the lineup has been exchanged), a team may substitute a player in the affected position within the 15-minute default time, using a player not already listed on the lineup. If no such substitution can be made, the affected position will be forfeited in local leagues.

2. In the event that a team match must be re-scheduled and starting times are staggered, where opponents are not available and ready to play at the time agreed to by captains and reported to LLC, forfeits will be awarded in the affected position only.

B. Forfeit by DISQUALIFICATION- Disqualification occurs when a player is ineligible to participate for any reason [i.e. under age, not a USTA member, NTRP disqualification, etc.]

2. SCORING OF FORFEITS: Scores for forfeit courts are not entered in TennisLink—the word Default is selected for “status” of match and the team receiving the default shall be awarded the win for the individual match that was forfeited. In the event of forfeit by both teams (double default), neither team will receive credit for the win.

3. TEAM FORFEITS/ DEFAULTS: If a team forfeits an entire team match (2+ positions). *THIS IS A CLARIFICATION OF THE PROCESS*

a) Ineligibility to Advance: The defaulting team is ineligible to advance beyond local league play but must continue to play the remainder of the local matches.

b) Recording Matches: All matches played by the defaulting team will be recorded in TennisLink for the purpose of satisfying match play requirements for opponents only. c) Removal of Matches: At the end of the local season, all matches of the defaulting team will be removed from the stats and standing in TennisLink,

UNLESS: 1) 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. 2)

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. 3) The final standings would not be impacted by the matches played against the defaulting team. d) Grievance Filing: A grievance may be filed against the defaulting team.

e) Retirements will be used to qualify all players involved in the retired match for Championship play.

f) An individual match starts when the first ball is put in play. In the event of illness, injury, disqualification, or no-show of a player prior to the start of an individual match (once the lineup has been exchanged), a team may substitute a player in the affected position within the 15-minute default time, using a player not already listed on the lineup. If no such substitution can be made, the affected position will be forfeited in local leagues.

g) If a team match must be re-scheduled and starting times are staggered, where opponents are not available and ready to play, forfeits will be awarded in the affected position only.

ANY TEAM THAT DEFAULTS AN ENTIRE MATCH MAY BE SUBJECT TO A GRIEVANCE FILED, BY THE LOCAL LEAGUE COORDINATOR, AGAINST THE ENTIRE TEAM AND CAN RESULT IN THEIR SUSPENSION FROM LEAGUE FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.

5. **For a forfeit to count as a win, the player[s] receiving the forfeit must be present at the match site at the time of the forfeit.** Players receiving the forfeit must be listed on the line-up and entered in TennisLink. Players giving the forfeit should not be entered in TennisLink.
6. In case of a forfeit, the # 3 doubles positions must be forfeited first. **Forfeits must always be from the bottom up.** Please check your USTA regulations for further examples of how to forfeit.
7. In the event line-ups have already been exchanged and a player listed fails to show, that position in which the player was to play, is the position that is forfeited (defaulted). Once exchanged, line-ups may not be rearranged.
8. **Do not put someone in the number one or two positions that you know is going to be late or you know will not show. Repeat offences will be grounds for a grievance to be filed against the captain by the local league coordinator.**
9. Two players will play together in the higher position when both of their partners do not show in order to avoid two defaults (as long as combined ratings do not exceed the designated level of play.)
10. Games awarded as forfeits during original line-up exchange will stand. No players involved in such forfeit can participate if the match is rescheduled due to weather after lineups are exchanged.

I. **Retirements**

A retirement occurs when an individual match has started and a player is unable to continue due to injury, loss of condition, or emergency.

SCORING OF RETIREMENTS: In case of retirement after commencement of match, the non-retiring player[s] shall be credited with such number of additional games as would have been won if the match were completed and the non-retiring player[s] won every subsequent game. Note: for NTRP computer data

entry, actual scores are required, (i.e. the winner of the retirement if the match ended at 6-4, 4-3, should be recorded as a retirement at that score.)

J. Reporting scores

1. All scores MUST be recorded in TennisLink by the **WINNING team captain**, within **24 hours** after the last position of each match is finished. The LOSING team captain MUST confirm the match score within 48 Hours after the final position scores are recorded. If the captain fails to confirm the scores, TennisLink will confirm them automatically. ONCE TENNISLINK HAS CONFIRMED THE SCORES, CHANGES MAY NOT BE MADE. The local league season ends on the date published in Tennislink as the league season end date. No matches may be played after the league season end date. Any matches/position not played by the league season end date will go in Tennislink as a double default.
2. If a captain disputes the scores in TennisLink, the captain must also notify the League Coordinator right away that there is a disputed score.
3. If scores are not entered into Tennislink in a timely manner, the computer assumes the match is unplayed and you WILL receive a call from the LLC to explain the unfinished match. DON'T MAKE ME CALL YOU!!!!

K. Court procedures:

1. Players are not allowed a rest period between the first and second game of each set. They must change sides and continue play. A **two-minute** break may be taken between the first and second set, as well as the second set and the 10-point match tiebreak. Repeated abuse of the break time limit is not appropriate.
2. Spectators may not aid players in making a line call or in determining the score. Spectators may not participate in the match in any fashion, and must refrain from doing so even if asked by the player [s]. Coaching of any player at any time is prohibited. CAPTAINS OR ACTING CAPTAIN SHOULD BE responsible for the behavior of ALL Spectators supporting their team including teammates, friends and family.
3. Spectators may QUIETLY watch a match in progress. They should not sit or stand at the end of the court immediately behind the servers or receivers or at the side fence because it is a distraction to the players. It is the responsibility of each team to control the noise and behavior of its spectators; if not

controlled, a protest may be filed against the offending team. **COACHING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!**

4. No line judge or umpire will be provided for matches. Players are urged to call the score after each point to avoid confusion. Total disagreement concerning the score in the game will result in a spin of the racquet if players are unable to go back to a score they both agree on. If a conflict occurs during match play over line calls, the players involved may request that the captain or acting captain of each team appoint a lines person for the remainder of match.

5. FOOT FAULTS are illegal. Constant and blatant foot-faulting gives the server a definite advantage, and should be politely brought to the attention of the server during the match. If it continues, the players involved may request that captains of both teams appoint a line person for the remainder of that match.

6. **Bathroom (and water, if no water is available on the courts) breaks may be taken at any time.** It is preferred that they be taken at set breaks or at a changeover. The person taking the break may not talk to anyone or a Grievance may be filed.

7. Disputes on court:

A) In GSTL matches where there is no umpire, players themselves act as umpires and must see that obvious violations of the rules do not occur. It is imperative that players know the USTA, Southern, South Carolina AND GSTL regulations which govern play. Friends of the Court rules should be honored. A link to the Friends of the Court can be found at the end of this document.

B) Coaches or club pros **AND SPECTATORS** must refrain from intrusion in discussions between players or captains. It is the responsibility of the two captains, not the pro/coach, to decide on the resolution of the Incident.

C) Disputes should be settled between players before the match is finished. Remember, all points played in good faith stand. It is hoped that the players involved can resolve the dispute themselves. If that is not possible, the procedure to follow is:

1) A player should inform the opponent of the problem and his/her intent to leave the court to obtain the assistance of his/her captain. The player should leave their racquet on the court when going for the captain. The captain should contact the opponent's captain and they should try to resolve the dispute. If the captains are involved in playing a match, the players may have to postpone their play until the captains are available

to assist them. (This is a good reason to have a non-playing teammate act as co-captain).

2) If the captains and players cannot agree on a resolution to the conflict, the offended player[s] may:

a Notify the opponent that due to his/her opinion that a violation of the rules occurred, he/she is going to continue to play but that he/she is playing under protest and intends to file a grievance with GSTL after the match is completed. His/her captain would then record the protest on the line-up exchange and have the opposing captain initial.

b Stop play—telling his/her opponent why, and have her captain indicate on the scorecard that the match was stopped in protest. The exact place and score of the match when play stopped must be recorded and signed by both captains.

c. The captain or designated captain at the match has 24 hours in which to register a complaint with the USTA SC online. See SECTION M of this document for procedures. Failure to comply with the 24-hour rule renders the grievance invalid. If the team captain chooses to file a formal grievance, the captain must also inform the Local League Coordinator **before** filing the USTA SC grievance form at

<https://www.jotform.com/230294197061051>

L. State Championships:

1. Local League winners will be determined based on team **Matches Won** or winning percentage of team matches. In the event of a tie, whether in round robin or single elimination, the state recommends that the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so

TIE BREAKERS

- (1) **Individual Positions.** Winner of the most individual matches in the entire season
- (2) **Head-to head.** Winner of head-to-head match.
- (3) **Sets.** Loser of fewest number of sets.
- (4) **Games.** Loser of the fewest number of games.

(5) A method to be determined by the Local League Coordinator.

For GSTL, a. Fewest Number of positions forfeited in season b. Coin Flip

2. Each Local League MUST complete their Local League Season prior to the South Carolina Combo Doubles State League Championships and submit the required information to the Combo Doubles State League Coordinator by October 4, 2026 for 18/55+. Or October 18, 2026 for 40/65+

3. The State League Coordinator will determine the number of teams at the Combo 18 & Over 9.5 levels and 55 & Over 8.5 level that qualify to advance to the Combo State Championship to play their local league once the team rosters for these levels have been submitted. Legal team rosters for these levels must be submitted by the initial league deadline date for the area in which the team is registering. The deadline for adding players to a roster for teams playing local league at State is October 9, 2026.

5. A player must play at least ONE (1) match locally or receive one default locally to advance to the state championships. A default RECEIVED will qualify for advancement to the championships; A default GIVEN will not qualify. For all players involved, a retirement counts as a qualifying match for Combo Doubles League State Championship.

6a. Championship Draw: The Championship Draw is a random draw done by the championship referee once local league competition is completed and rosters for State Championship entry are received. If possible, teams from the same local league will be put in separate flights. The number of flights at a given level will depend on the number of teams eligible. The championship referee will determine, before league competition is completed, if wildcards are needed to balance out the flights. The wildcards will be chosen by a weighted random draw, (i.e. one entry per local league team in that local league division). A flight typically will have four teams. Local Leagues receiving a wildcard for the championships will be eligible for a wildcard at the same level/flights the following year. Flights must have a minimum of four (4) teams to be eligible for a wildcard.

6b. Semifinal Wildcard for draws with 3 flights at the Championship: When a draw has three flights, a wildcard will be drawn from the top second place team by the referee on the final day of round-robin play to determine which flight's second place team will play in the semifinals. The wildcard team will play a team from another flight.

7. Players who qualify for South Carolina Combo Doubles State League Championships may advance on more than one team within an age group as long as they are at different NTRP levels. **NO Scheduling accommodations will be made, however, for players on multiple teams.**

8. **Deposit Fee:** A \$300.00 Deposit payable to **USTA SC** by credit card from each team advancing to the championships is required. Once championship play has completed, the USTA SC will refund the deposit. A grievance may be filed against the withdrawing team after the deadline in addition to the \$300 deposit check being cashed. Penalties against these team members may include that all members on the submitted roster be banned from participating in any USTA leagues for a period of up to 364 days.
9. **Championship Entry Fee:** \$40.00 for tournaments with hard court only or a mix of clay and hard (Adult 18 & Over, 40 & Over, Mixed, Combo, Tri-Level and Singles) and \$45.00 for tournaments that use only hard clay courts or are in resort areas (Adult 55 & Over, 65 & Over, 70 & Over, and 75 & Over) per player. The player entry fee covers partially the expenses that USTA SC incurs for each state championship, which may include but not limited to gifts for players, captain's gift, awards, players' lunch or party/amenities, court fees, tennis balls, Referee, team supplies and materials, volunteer travel expenses, and host stipend to local tennis community.

Teams that withdraw from the championship after the online registration deadline date **and before the draws are published may request a refund for registration fees.** Individual registration fees are NOT refundable for 18/55 after Oct 16, 2026, or for 40/65 after Oct 30, 2026. **Teams that withdraw from the championship after the draws have been published will lose their \$300 deposit and their registration fees.**

10. **ANY TEAM DEFAULTING A COURT FOR ANY REASON AT THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS WILL INCUR A \$100 FINE (per scheduled court) PAYABLE IMMEDIATELY (Charged to Credit Card used for Registraion) FOR EACH COURT DEFAULTED.** If the team does not pay the fine, a grievance may be filed against all players on the State roster, which could result in the suspension of play from any USTA League play until the fine is paid. Additionally, you will not be allowed to take the court for any following matches until the fine for the defaulted match is paid. It is your responsibility to have players on every court at each match at State Championships. Please make note of this when deciding how many players to have on your team, as many players may not be willing or able to go to State.
11. If an entire team defaults an entire match during a championship, a grievance may be filed against all members on the team roster that is submitted for the championship. Penalties against these team members may include that all members on the submitted roster be banned from participating in any playoff (state or higher) for a period of up to 364 days. The defaulting team is ineligible to continue to play the remainder of their matches. The defaulting

team will be responsible for the \$100 per line default penalty for all matches not played.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES FOR STATES

IMPORTANT DEADLINES: Combo 18/55 & Over

- Registration opens: September 11
- Deadline for Minimum Required Registered and Online Team Deposit: October 7
- Wildcard Application turned in: October 7
- Wildcard Teams Selected: October 8
- Deadline for Minimum Required Registered for LLAS (TennisLink and Match Tennis Team) and Wildcard teams: October 9
- Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: October 16
- Deadline for Permitted Team Withdrawal: Prior to draws being posted. Teams will be charged \$300 if they withdraw after the draws are posted.

Combo 40/65 & Over • Registration opens: September 25

- Deadline for Minimum Required Registered and Online Team Deposit: October 21
- Wildcard Application turned in: October 21
- Wildcard Teams Selected: October 22
- Deadline for Minimum Required Registered for LLAS (TennisLink and Match Tennis Team) and Wildcard teams: October 23
- Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: October 30
- Deadline for Permitted Team Withdrawal: Prior to draws being posted. Teams will be charged \$300 if they withdraw after the draws are posted.

**Combo 65 & Over Singleton Team's cannot add new players to their TennisLink roster after September 27, 2026

CHAMPIONSHIP DATES AND LOCATIONS:

2026 Combo 55 & Over State Championship – Oct. 23-25 – Aiken

2026 Combo 18 & Over State Championship – Oct. 24-26 – Aiken

2026 Combo 40/65 & Over State Championship – Nov. 7-9 – Florence

WEBSITE FOR COMBO STATE CHAMPIONSHIP INFORMATION AND ONLINE REGISTRATION: [League State Championships – Our mission is to improve lives and build healthier communities in South Carolina by growing and promoting tennis as a lifelong sport.](#)

M. GRIEVANCE COMPLAINTS

USTA South Carolina mandates that the parties that file the NTRP grievance complaint (or any grievance) must provide all documentation to support their complaint at the time of their filing. Questions, problems or concerns should be directed to the Local League Coordinator for assistance. Official grievance should be reported to The Local League Coordinator first, and then SUBMITTED ONLINE at <https://www.jotform.com/230294197061051> within 24 HOURS of the incident or match date. A \$100 filing fee will be required for all GSTL and USTA SC

General/Sportsmanship, Championship and/or Administrative Grievance and Grievance Appeals. The filing fee will only be returned to the grieving party if a penalty is imposed. And can be paid at the link:

<https://www.jotform.com/230294197061051>

General Grievance: General grievances are any complaints alleging a violation of the USTA Constitution and By-Laws; the USTA Regulations; the Rules of Tennis or other USTA Regulations (unless modified by these USTA League Regulations); USTA League regulations or standards of good conduct, fair play, and good sportsmanship other than those defined in Sections 3.02B-NTRP Grievance, 3.02C-Eligibility Grievance, 3.02D Administrative Grievance, 3.02E-National League Grievances below:

NTRP Grievance: A grievance contending that a player has stated NTRP level is lower than the actual skill level shall constitute a NTRP Grievance. Players who enter the USTA League by inappropriately self-rating at an NTRP level lower than their actual skill level, and captains and others who condone such inappropriate self-rating, are considered to have violated the standards of good conduct, fair play, and good sportsmanship. General Grievances may be filed against the players and/or captains and others that assisted or otherwise condoned the inappropriate self-rating. NTRP grievances shall be filed in writing with the Local League Coordinator who will then forward it to the State Combo League Coordinator who will then forward to the Section League Grievance Committee who will make the final decision. NTRP grievances filed within 21 days of the start date of the player's and/or Captains State Championships will be

administered after the event unless the section authorizes the administration of the grievance prior to that time. If the grievance is not administered until after the event, points won by players will stand. Disqualified players and/or captains that are suspended will not be eligible to advance to the next level of championship play. All Grievances must be filed on the appropriate Grievance Forms as mandated by the USTA Southern Tennis Association.

Eligibility Grievance: Any complaint other than a NTRP Grievance contending that the players have failed to meet eligibility requirements to participate in league tennis shall constitute an Eligibility Grievance.

Administrative Grievance: An administrative grievance is any complaint pertaining to administration of a league at any level below the national level.

1) The grievance committee will exercise the following options:

- a) Rule in the complaining player's favor
- b) Rule that the match be completed later—starting at the exact point when protested or when play ended.
- c) Rule in favor of the complainant's opponent.
- d) Other actions that may be determined by the Grievance Committee.

2. The Local League Coordinator has the right to file a grievance against any team or player regarding sense of fair play, sportsmanship, default and forfeits or rules violations!

3. USTA South Carolina Local League Grievance and Grievance Appeals Committee – 2026

James Teal – Co-Chair Grievance Committee Scott Zobrist – Co-Chair Grievance Committee Debby Bosselman – Grievance Appeals Committee Local League Representatives Jonathan Watkins – BBTL Toni Odom – CTL Lauren Demosthenes – FTA Abby Martin – GATA Jessica Holmes – GSTL Sue Cook – HHTL Thea Salmonson – LATA Art Welling – LCTA Becky Williamson – LCTA Chris Jones – LCTA Stephanie Stanton – MCTA Linda Freeman – PD Frank Thompson – SATL Terry Kent – UPTA 6

Please note that a chairman and 2 committee members will be assigned to handle each grievance or grievance appeal but will not be assigned to any grievance or grievance appeal from their local area. The decision of the Statewide Local League Grievance Committee may be appealed to the Statewide Local League Grievance Appeals Committee

[Friends of the Court Rules](#) can be found at [2022 Friend at Court.pdf](#)
South Carolina USTA regulations are at [League Regulations and Forms –
Our mission is to improve lives and build healthier communities in South
Carolina by growing and promoting tennis as a lifelong sport.](#)

USTA LEAGUE REGULATIONS (NATIONAL AND SOUTHERN) ARE
AVAILABLE ON THE USTA SOUTHERN SECTION WEBSITE:
WWW.SOUTHERNTENNIS.COM