

NOTE: All resolutions in these minutes were approved by the USTA NorCal Board as of August 20, 2025 with the exception of the resolution Expenses for Qualifying National Teams and Removal of Auto Appeal Down.

NOTE: These minutes were approved on September 29, 2025.

Andrea Barnes, Chair of the Adult Leagues Committee (the "Committee"), called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm and roll call was conducted. The meeting was held by Google Meet video conference.

Committee Members Present: Andrea Barnes (chair), Anoosh Davoudzadeh, Jennifer Holmes, Marilyn Morrell-Kristal, Damon Levy, Paul Startz

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Michelle Wilson (Sr. Manager, Adult Competition)

Guests Present: Sarah Robinson

1. **Approval of June 30, 2025 Minutes.** The Committee considered for approval the draft minutes of the meeting held on June 30, 2025.

The following motion was then **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions

RESOLVED: That the minutes of Adult Leagues Committee meeting held June 30, 2025 be approved as presented.

2. **Adult 18 Sectionals August 8-10 weather.** Staff informed the ALC that the Adult 18 Sectionals Championship Committee for August 8-10 met in the afternoon regarding the forecasted heat for the weekend and informed the ALC of the Championship Committee discussions and that the Championship Committee will wait until it gets closer to the weekend to make any decisions due to the weather as the forecast could change.
3. **2026 Flex League Calendar.** The Adult League Committee discussed the Adult League Calendar proposed by staff. The 2026 proposed schedule mirrors the 2025 schedule.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That effective immediately, the following 2026 Flex League Calendar be approved:

2026 Flex League Calendar

11 Week Season /6-8 matches depending on the number of players in the area

- Season Dates: January 19 – April 5
- Registration: December 15 - January 11

11 Week Season/6-8 matches depending on the number of players in the area

- Season Dates: April 13 - June 28
- Registration: March 2 - April 5

11 Week Season/6-8 matches depending on the number of players in the area

- Season Dates: July 6 – September 20
- Registration: May 25 – June 28

11 Week Season/6-8 matches depending on the number of players in the area

- Season Dates: September 28 – December 13
- Registration: August 17 – September 20

Rationale: The 2026 proposed schedule mirrors the schedule we had in 2025. Flex League has grown in 2025. In 2024 NorCal ended the year with 1,442 registrations. As of July 22, 2025, the year-to-date number for Flex Leagues is 1,544. Players for the Fall season haven't registered yet; conservatively, that could be another 450-600 registrations, putting Flex at about 2,100 registrations by year-end 2025.

- 4. Continuation of First League Free Promotion.** The ALC reviewed the current First League Free Program that allows players to play in their first NorCal league for free. Staff presented numbers to show its current success. Based on the players who signed up for this promotion in 2024, 176 players took advantage of the first league free promotions and played their first NorCal league. Of the 176 players, 137 have continued to play which is an 78% return rate. Some have even played multiple leagues.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED: To extend the First League Free Program through the end of the 2027 season to provide a free registration to any USTA member participating in a USTA NorCal League for the first time.

Rationale: This Program has been in effect since 2023. It allows players to try their first adult league for free. If NorCal gets new players to sign-up, hopefully, they will play more leagues. In terms of success, from the players who signed up for this Program in 2024, 176 players played their first league and 137 have continued to play which is an 78% return rate. 43 players have played on 5 or more teams. 5 players have played on 11 or more teams. One player has played on 22 teams. Having this program in place helps staff to identify the new players and their retention and also helps staff to be able to know and reach out to those that have only played the one league.

Fiscal Impact

This Program only affects the budget in terms of league revenue being collected (currently \$33 per player) and the \$3.15 Tennislink fee which NorCal pays to roster the player in Tennislink. However, the program is a good investment because it will hopefully improve retention.

- 5. Continuation of New Captains Promotion.** The New Captains Promotion was reviewed by the Committee. This promotion provides a new captain and his/her mentor a "USTA NorCal Captain" ¼ zip long sleeve pullover at the end of the season. Staff presented numbers to show its current success. Based on the players who signed up for this promotion in 2024, 121 players signed up for the New Captains Promotion. Of the 121 players that captained their first league, 84 have continued to captain or co-captain which is an 70% return rate.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED: To extend the New Captains Promotion through the end of the 2026 season to provide a new captain and his/her mentor a "USTA NorCal Captain" ¼ zip long sleeve pullover at the end of the season.

Rationale: New captains are needed to help grow adult leagues and this program is a promotional tool to recognize new captains and to enhance their experience. NorCal would recognize the new captains and their mentors with a ¼ zip long sleeve pullover at the end of the season. In terms of success, in 2024, 121 players signed up for the New Captains Promotion. Of the 121 players that captained their first league, 84 have continued to captain or co-captain which is an 70% return rate. 12 new captains have captained 5 or more teams during this period. The data is based on 2024 numbers because many of the new 2025 captains have just registered for the promotion and haven't had a chance to captain subsequent teams yet. Having this program in place helps staff to identify the new captains and their retention and also helps staff to be able to know and reach out to those that have only played the one league.

Fiscal Impact

\$4,000 to the budget. The budget impact would be approximately \$30 per new captain/mentor receiving a ¼ zip pullover. The \$30 covers the shirt and shipping cost. Staff is anticipating at between 50 to 75 new captains during 2026. Should more budget be needed, the Adult Leagues Committee will submit another action item.

- 6. 2025 Adult Leagues Awards Criteria.** The Committee reviewed the current Adult League Awards and criteria that was presented. They discussed each award and the criteria.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That the Adult Leagues Awards and Criteria be approved as EXHIBIT A.

Rationale: The Adult League Awards remain the same. No awards were added nor removed from existing criteria. Only minor adjustments have been made.

7. **Reimbursement for Qualifying Teams.** Staff reminded the Adult League Committee that the following item was approved by the Committee at the June 2, 2025 meeting but then sent back to the ALC by the Board to ensure that an adverse tax consequence is not happening for NorCal captains.

Passed by the ALC on June 2, 2025: That effective immediately, the language in the NorCal League Rules FAQ be amended as follows (stricken through language is proposed deletion and underline language is proposed addition):

Expenses for Qualifying National Teams

Q: Does USTA NorCal help with the expenses of taking a team to Nationals?

A: Yes. USTA Northern California ~~provides an allowance~~ contributes towards the expenses of ~~a team dinner for~~ qualifying teams that participate in USTA National Championships. For five-line leagues, NorCal will ~~provide a per diem allowance up to~~ contribute \$650; for four-line leagues, NorCal will ~~provide a per diem allowance up to~~ contribute \$550; for three-line leagues, NorCal will ~~provide a per diem allowance up to~~ contribute \$450. Per diem allowances Contributions are paid directly to the individual listed as captain of the team, ~~for use by the captain and teammates,~~ on the date of the national championships and will be mailed at the conclusion of the USTA National Championships for each league, upon the captain submitting a ~~request for a per diem, or by submitting receipts,~~ a W-9 to USTA NorCal.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED: To move forward with the Expenses for Qualifying National Teams action item that was submitted to the Board for the June 2025 Board meeting and make it clear to the captains that 1) they must submit a W-9 to USTA NorCal to receive the stipend, 2) they should be reporting the stipends when they do their taxes, and 3) it is their choice whether to accept the stipend.

Rationale: NorCal Accounting Department has checked with the auditors a number of times if stipends and meal reimbursements for captains/players are taxable income and the auditors have confirmed that it is, because the qualifying national teams are not attending League Nationals on business. The proposed NorCal League Rules FAQ resolution makes it clear that a captain must submit a W-9 to USTA NorCal before the funds are paid out. Collecting the W-9 before the funds are paid out is a good business practice so if the captains received over \$600 in a year, USTA NorCal will already have their W-9 on file as opposed to having to collect it from the players at the end of the year. NorCal tried collecting W-9s at the end of 2024 and was receiving push back from some captains.

8. **Retirement at Sectionals.** Staff explained to the ALC that the proposed addition to the FAQ regarding players being ineligible to participate in any additional matches scheduled for the same day if they retire at Sectionals that passed in June was being brought back to the Committee for them to review because National had informed all sections that preventing players from competing after a retirement on the same day is within the rules in the Friend at Court so sections are not able to add this rule.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That effective immediately, the following language be removed from the NorCal League Rules FAQ (stricken through language is proposed deletion):

~~**Q:** What happens if a player retires from a match at a Sectional Championship?~~

~~**A:** If a player retires during any portion of a Sectional Championship, they are ineligible to participate in any additional matches scheduled for the same day.~~

Rationale: Sections were notified by National that they are not able to have this rule because the Friend at Court allows players who retire to continue playing.

9. **Combo League Counting Towards NTRP Ratings.** The Committee continued discussing the topic of Combo League counting toward NTRP ratings. During discussion it was noted that a survey was sent out to players asking if they would like Combo League to count towards ratings and 581 responses were received. Of the 581 responses 301 respondents said "no" and 280 said "yes" which is pretty even. Comment of why players wanted Combo League to count or not count towards ratings were also shared with the ALC. It was also noted that at the time of the meeting the 2025 Combo League increased by 30 teams from 2024. Additionally, staff sent an email to the four other sections that count Combo league towards NTRP ratings and received a response back from one with information about how it is going in their section.

After discussion, the Committee tabled this topic to a future meeting after the completion of local league for the 2025 season where NorCal will send one more survey to the Combo players asking more specific questions regarding this topic.

10. 2026 NorCal Regulation Proposal.

- A. Limit Teams to Having Two (2) Appeal Down Players for Adult 65 League.** The ALC discussed the proposal to limit teams to having two (2) appealed down players for the Adult 65 League. During discussion it was noted that this rule change proposal is stricter than the National rule. Since there is no section option here, NorCal cannot make a rule stricter than the National rule.

After discussion, no motions were made.

11. National Regulation Proposals.

- A. Removal of Auto Appeal Down.** The Committee discussed the proposal to remove the ability for players with a computer-generated rating to appeal down that was tabled from the June meeting.

After discussion, the following motion was **APPROVED** by a vote of 6 in favor, 0 opposed, and 0 abstentions:

RESOLVED: That USTA NorCal will submit a 2027 USTA League Regulation Proposal proposing to remove the ability for a computer rated player to appeal their rating down but keep the ability for a player to appeal their rating up.

Rationale: Adult Leagues and NTRP divisions are supposed to be level-based play and USTA should be confident in the system they have to place players accordingly. Whatever rating a player gets at the end of the year should be what they get in terms of rating. Currently, players know that players with an "A" rating is not the actual rating that they got at the end of the year but that it is an appealed rating and this is bought up a number of times. If USTA just went by calculated ratings with no appeal down, we would solely be relying on what is calculated. Currently if players are close enough to the next level and it is being said that there is little difference in where they are between the two levels as a reason for them to move down, one could say that there is not much difference between the two levels that a player who earned their rating should stay at where they are at and try the level that they actually earned for a year and see what happens.

If the concern is that the confidence level of the rating is low due to the number of matches they played, potentially look at raising the number of matches needed to get a computer rating.

It is being proposed to still allow players to appeal up because they are trying to move up and improve their game.

- B. NTRP Rating Appeal Procedures – Computer (C) Rated Players.** The ALC continued their discussion regarding a proposal to allow players aged 60 and older with a current 5.0 rating to appeal to a NorCal Ratings Committee for a potential adjustment to 4.5 that was tabled from the last meeting. During their discussion, it was mentioned that it has been hard for some players that are 60 and older that generate a 5.0 to find opportunities to play. Suggestions were made to play tournaments and/or the 4.0/4.5/5.0 Tri-Level event.

Following discussion, no motions were made.

12. 2026 Operating Plan and Budget. Staff updated the ALC that NorCal is currently working on the 2026 Operating Plan and Budget

There being no further matters to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 pm.

EXHIBIT A

Adult League Awards – Facility and Volunteers

Award Description	Eligibility Criteria	Process
League Facilities of the Year: Awarded annually to a League Facility	• Hosts at least 10 USTA NorCal Adult Leagues teams during the year • Offers to host a League Sectional Event • Facility and teams playing out of the facility are<u>be</u> in good standing with USTA NorCal • Recipient cannot have been serving a probation or suspension within the last 12 months • Cannot win award 2 years in a row	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
Local League Area Coordinator of the Year: Awarded annually to a Local Area Coordinator	• Assist with League emails and show initiatives to resolve issues on behalf of the league staff. • Volunteers at League Events • Cannot win award 2 years in a row	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
Service to Leagues: Awarded annually to an individual who volunteers with Adult Leagues Staff Pick	• Goes above and beyond to make Adult Leagues better (i.e. length of service to leagues, years played, regular volunteer at league sectionals, etc.) • Cannot win award 2 years in a row	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
League Volunteer of the Year Staff Pick	• Volunteer time/efforts to make improving Adult Leagues • Volunteer time/efforts to <u>support leagues staff and help futher the mission of USTA NorCal</u>increase Adult League numbers • Cannot win award 2 years in a row	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>

*** The Adult League Committee reserves the right to not select a recipient in any given category in any given year.

Adult League Awards Criteria - Players

Award Description	Eligibility Criteria	Process
Impact Player of The Year Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	• Must have played 15 matches in the calendar year (includes all NorCal Adult League programs excluding Flex Leagues.) • Most times advancing to Sectionals • Submission count and content of Sportsmanship awards • Could not have been Deeddynamically disqualified in the Championship season • <u>Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal.</u> • Volunteer time within the community • <u>Helping to further USTA NorCal's mission, grow tennis and the league program</u> • Volunteered time within the community • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal.	<i>Based off nominations. After the nomination deadline, staff will review nominations along with criteria and submit eligible candidates to the Adult League Committee to vote on.</i>
Most Matches Played: Awarded annually to one male and one female league player in the following age brackets ● 18-39 ● 40-545 ● 55+	• Player who played the most league matches played in the Calendar year up until Dec. 31. • No Defaults Count • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • One male, One Female in 18 age division leagues, 40 age division leagues, and 55 age division leagues • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>
Most Improved Player: Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	• C rating only • Evaluated by start and end dynamics • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria and nominations submitted</i>
Sportsmanship Award Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	• Eligibility based off blue ribbon report • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i> <u>Staff voted on these two recipients from a pool of 62 submissions.</u>

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Adult League Awards Criteria - Captains

Award Description	Eligibility Criteria	Process
Adult League Captain of the Year: Awarded annually to an Adult League Captain in each league area.	• Eligibility based off blue ribbon report • Recipients must be current USTA member residing in Northern California. • Recipient must captain a minimum of two league <u>teams</u> during the season • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal • <u>Consideration given to number of Most</u> times advancing to Sectionals within a captain/co-captain role • Helping to <u>further the USTA NorCal mission</u> grow tennis and the league programs • Cannot win award 2 years in a row	Based off blue <i>ribbon</i> report. After the nomination deadline, staff will review nominations along with criteria and submit eligible candidates to the Adult League Committee to vote on.
Captains who Captained the most amount of teams Most Teams Captained Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	• Based on calendar year • <u>Based on number of teams captained</u> • Cannot win award 2 years in a row • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria and nominations submitted</i>
New Captain of the Year Awarded annually to one male and one female league player	• Recipients must be current USTA member residing in Northern California • Eligibility based off blue ribbon report • First time captains • Must have completed entire season they captained • Player must be considered in good standing as determined by USTA NorCal	<i>Objective determination made by staff following a review of the players and eligibility criteria.</i>

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