



## USTA Alabama Championship Procedures 2026 Championship Year

**The USTA Alabama Championship Procedures will apply to all USTA Alabama State Championships to include Local League at State divisions. If not stated in the Championship Procedures, the National, Sectional and Alabama regulations and Friend at Court will apply. USTA Alabama is comprised of twelve local leagues: Anniston, Auburn, Birmingham, Decatur, Dothan, Gulf Shores, Huntsville, Mobile, Montgomery, Selma, Shoals and Tuscaloosa.**

*Due to the possibility of a championship modifying dates and location outside of our control, we highly encourage players to secure lodging at places that allow refundable deposits.*

### USTA Alabama League Championships + Deadlines

USTA Alabama offers the following league championships and deadlines:

- **65 & Over Combo/55 & Over Mixed Doubles/18 & Over Team Singles – April 17-19**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Deposit: March 24, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST.
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: March 24, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: April 9, 2026 @ 11:59 PM ET
- **Adult 18 & Over – May 1-3, All levels**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: April 14, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: April 14, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: April 23, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
- **Adult 40 & Over – June 12-14 All Levels**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: May 26, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: May 26, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: June 4, 2026, 11:59 PM CST T
- **Adult 55 & Over – May 15-17**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: April 28, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: April 28, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: May 7, 2026 @ 11:59 CST
- **Mixed Doubles (18 & Over + 40 & Over) – August 21-23**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: August 4, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: August 4, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: August 13, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
- **Tri-Level – September 11-13**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: August 18, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: August 18, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund Withdrawal: September 3, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
- **Adult 65 & Over October 2-4**
  - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: September 8, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: September 8, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST

- Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: September 24, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - **Southern Combo Doubles 40s/55s – October 23-25**
    - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: September 28, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
    - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: September 28, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
    - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: October 15, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
  - **Southern Combo Doubles 18s – November 6-8**
    - Deadline for Minimum Required Registered + Online Team Deposit: October 13, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
    - Deadline for Individual Registration Refunds: October 13, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
    - Deadline for Full Team Withdrawal with no penalty and with no refund: October 29, 2026 @ 11:59 PM CST
- ✓ Please Note: Teams that withdraw after the “individual registration refund” deadline but before the “permitted team withdrawal” deadline will not be issued a refund of their player registration fees. To be refunded registration fees, teams and/or players must notify USTA Alabama prior to “individual registration refund” deadline. (Please see “Registration, Deposit + Withdrawal Requirements.”)
- ✓ The above-mentioned deadlines may be amended by USTA Alabama at its discretion.

## State Championships

USTA Alabama offers a state championship for each of the following programs:

- USTA League Adult 18 & Over
- USTA League Adult 40 & Over
- USTA League Adult 55 & Over
- USTA League Adult 65 & Over Invitational
- USTA League Mixed Doubles 18 & Over and 40 & Over
- Southern Combo Doubles
- Tri-Level
- Invitational Mixed 55 & Over
- Invitational Combo 65 & Over
- Invitational Singles 18 & Over

## Team Qualification

Local championship teams may be allowed to advance to the USTA Alabama State Championships. If a local championship team declines their opportunity, the local league coordinator will inquire and notify the state league coordinator if the next priority team is interested in advancing. **The next priority team will be the second-place team if the same team has won the two offered seasons in an age division. This will be referred to as a dropdown team. If there are multiple leagues with a dropdown team interested in advancing, the state league coordinator will place those teams in a drawing to determine which team gets the wildcard. If there are no dropdown teams, then the team with a second-place finish in the league will be the next priority. If there are multiple second place teams, then the state league coordinator will place those teams in a drawing for the opportunity to advance if needed.** Teams with a losing record will not be placed in the draw.

## Team Match Format

- Adult 18 & Over (3.0-4.5): 2 singles, 3 doubles • Adult 18 & Over (2.5, 5.0): 1 single, 2 doubles
- Adult 40 & Over: 1 single, 3 doubles
- Adult 55 & Over, Mixed Doubles, Tri-level & Combo Doubles: 3 doubles
- Singles League: 3 courts of singles

## Championship Format

**• USTA Alabama Championship format shall use round robin or Partial Round Robin matches against randomly selected opponents in all levels of competition.**

- For Flighted Round Robin format:

o Each team shall play every other team in its flight. (Exception: Please see Championship Cancellation Policy)

o Levels with two flight winners will offer a single elimination finals match to determine the champion.

o **If a league has more than one team at the same level, those teams will be placed in separate flights provided there are two or more flights in that level.** For those levels that have three groups the second place team or teams with the best record as determined from above will be designated the wildcard.\* If a draw results in the second place team playing against the first place team from its own group, the draw shall be altered as follows: second place team shall exchange places with team from the top line of the other semi-final.

o If an applicable division has 4 or less teams, each team may play every other team in its flight twice (known as "double round robin).

\*In the event that a team withdraws from the tournament and/or if all flights do not have an equal number of teams; the wild card team will be determined by a draw from the 2nd place teams from each flight.

- For Partial Round Robin Matches Against Randomly Selected Opponents:

o Each team shall play four team matches against randomly selected opponents. (Exception: Please see Championship Cancellation Policy)

o In divisions with 7 teams, the top 2 teams based on standings and national procedures on tiebreakers, will be entered into a playoff final.

o In divisions with 8 or more teams, the top 4 teams, based on standings and national procedures on tiebreakers, will be entered into a semifinal playoff to be followed by a final. For semifinals, the draw will be #1 vs #4 and #2 vs #3.

## Team Eligibility

- All players must possess current USTA memberships through the conclusion of the USTA Alabama Championship.
- Alabama Combo Doubles and Tri-Level: Team members are eligible to advance to championship level competition. **A player must have played at least one match for that team during the local league season or local league at state. Defaults received do count toward advancement. A retired match counts for all players. Players must be present to receive the default.**

A minimum of (6) six players (three eligible pairings) on the final roster of their local league team at the conclusion of local league play must be available and eligible to combine and compete. The Championship Tournament Committee, by majority vote, can reduce that number to not less than four.

- All players must be prepared to present photo identification immediately upon request.

- USTA League Adult 18 & Over, Adult 40 & Over, Adult 55 & Over, and Mixed Doubles: Players are eligible to advance to the state championship level competition if that player has played on that same team in at least 2 matches (1 of which may be a default received) during its local league season or state championships.

A minimum of eight for 18 & over (five for 2.5 & 5.0 levels) and **seven players** for 40 & over team members who were on the final roster of their Adult 18 & Over and/or Adult 40 & Over local league team at the conclusion of local league play must be available and eligible to compete. Please note that at the local level 40 & Over rosters must meet a minimum of 9 registered players on the local roster in order to meet the state, southern and national regulations. The Championship Tournament Committee, by majority vote, can reduce that number to not less than four for 18 & over (three for 2.5 & 5.0 levels) or five for 40 & over.

A minimum of six players for 55 & Over and a minimum of six eligible pairings for mixed doubles, combo and tri-level.

The Championship Tournament Committee, by majority vote, can reduce that number to not less than four.

**\*Please refer to 2026 Alabama Combo and Tri-Level Rules and Regulations for full details on eligibility.**

#### Registration, Entry Fee, and Deposit Requirements

- Championship Entry Fee: \$45.00 per player. A late fee of \$10.00 will apply after the online registration deadline. Player entry fees covers partially the expenses that USTA Alabama incurs for each championship, which may include but not limited to player t-shirt or gift, bag tags, captain gift, awards, player amenity/lunches, court fees, tennis balls, Referee, team supplies and materials, volunteer travel expenses, and generous host stipend to local tennis community.
- Captains are required to submit a team deposit hold of \$300.00 by the deadline set by the state league coordinator. Deposit will be made online via the Match Tennis Team app.
- The deposit will be held until the conclusion of the applicable 2026 USTA League Alabama Championship. If the team successfully completes the championship (e.g., no defaults), or if a team withdraws on or before the full team withdrawal deadline. If a team withdraws after the full team withdrawal deadline, or if a team does not successfully complete the Alabama championship, the deposit will be forfeited, or partially forfeited. The situations where the deposit hold will be forfeited, or partially forfeited, is as follows:

If a team withdraws after the full team withdrawal deadline, or if a team does not successfully complete the Alabama championship, the entire deposit will be forfeited.

If a team defaults an individual court/line during the championship, an administrative fee of \$100 per individual court will be charged up to the full amount of the deposit. (For example, a team defaults an individual line during its Saturday afternoon match. \$100 of the deposit will be charged by USTA Alabama within 15 days.)

Team captains with deposit forfeiture and/or administrative fees for individual defaulted courts may submit a waiver to be exempted from paying fees. Waiver requests will be submitted to and reviewed by the Alabama Adult League Committee and must be submitted within 3 days of the completion of the championship. Only cases of "extreme" circumstances will be accepted and/or considered. Appeals should be submitted to [meg.al.tennis@gmail.com](mailto:meg.al.tennis@gmail.com)

Note: Collected monies will be donated to the Alabama Tennis Foundation.

- Players should be registered on both TennisLink and Match Tennis Team. Players registered on an invitational team under AL-Invitational must be on the Tennislink roster AND Match Tennis Team by the stated deadline in order to be eligible to play at the State Championships. Any player not registered in Tennislink by the deadline will not be eligible to play at the State Championships.

### Scheduled Matches

- The captain is responsible for checking his/her team in at the site of the match. When all players are present and ready to play, the captain will submit their lineup through Match Tennis Team. It is asked that captains submit line-ups in Match Tennis Team up to 30 minutes prior to the start of their scheduled match.
- If a team has a known default (i.e. "forfeit" or "default" is submitted), the opposing team will have the opportunity to revise their scorecard once both scorecards are submitted, and the default has been communicated by the site director. This will be done through Match Tennis Team.
- **A player must be present on site at match time in order to receive a default to include local league at state divisions. (18 & Over 5.0, 55 & Over 9.0, 18 & Over 10.0 Mixed Doubles, Singles Invitational, 18 & Over 5.0-4.0 Tri-Level, 18 & Over 9.5 Combo Doubles).**
- No substitution may be made in an individual match after the line-up has been submitted, except for injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player prior to the start of such match, and except other circumstances as permitted by the Tournament Committee. If a substitution is made during warm-up, the substitute player is entitled to a five-minute warm-up. If no such substitution can be made, the affected position only will be defaulted.
- Penalties for Lateness, which includes the 15-minute default time rule, will be strictly enforced. The Tournament Referee, in conjunction with the Tournament Committee, has full authority on enforcing Penalties for Lateness. The Tournament Referee may use the Point Penalty System at their discretion. Court monitors may be used to time warm-ups and changeovers.
- A 10-minute warm-up will be observed which will include serves. The referee may allow a five-minute warmup in the event of a short inclement weather delay.
- Winners of individual matches will submit their scores through Match Tennis Team immediately following the completion of the match.
- Captains are expected to sign off on each scorecard in Match Tennis Team after each scheduled match is completed before leaving the tennis facility.
- If a team match is postponed following the exchange of line-ups, the original line-up will stand for the make-up match UNLESS teams are released from the tournament by the Tournament Director. If teams are released, the line-up would stand only for those positions that have already started (first service attempt) and all other positions (even those that were in warm-up) may be changed. Defaulted courts will stand for matches in progress. If teams are released and play has not begun, then the line-up may be changed including defaulted courts.
- Tournament Referees will not be used to make line calls or call foot faults but may correct an obvious out call and may call blatant foot faults if seen.
- In the event of significant weather challenges, the Tournament Committee may use an alternate scoring match format, change court surfaces, play under lights, in order to complete the tournament. See Alternate scoring document located on championship website.

## Scoring

- Each team will receive 1 point for each team's match won. Results will be posted in Match Tennis Team and Tennislink. In the event of a tie, for determining teams round robin and/or flight winners, and/or determining teams to advance to a semifinal and/or final, the tie shall be broken by the first of the following procedures that does so: winner of the most individual matches, then winner of head-to-head match (if all tied teams played one another), then least sets lost, then least games lost, then highest game winning percentage. If a tie still remains through game winning percentage, the tie will be broken by the following: Team with highest # of victories at #1 Doubles during state championship round robin and/or Partial Round Robin matches. Then the team with highest # of victories at #1 Singles during state championship round robin and/or Partial Round Robin matches. Please see national regulation 2.03H(1) for further information.
- Coman procedure will be used for all tiebreaks.
- Results will be entered into Tennis Link throughout each day and can be viewed on Tennislink.
- If any team is released from the Alabama championships due to inclement weather and/or court availability issues, matches in progress between teams that are no longer in contention will be scored as retirements. The players leading in the set and/or game count will receive the retirement. (For example, teams leading 6-4, 0-4 would be considered the leading team. If a 2nd set is not completed the team winning the first set is considered the leading team). Courts that have not begun will be scored as double defaults. Teams that are not in contention may not leave the championship without verbal permission from the Tournament Committee.

## Grievances

- Forms are available at each of the sites at the tournament desk. Completed grievance forms must be presented to the Site Director at the site of the match within 30 minutes of the completion of the team match.
- A \$100 filing fee will be required for all grievances and appeals filed at any USTA Alabama Championships. The filing fee will only be returned to the grieving party if a penalty is imposed.
- The committees involved will handle all Grievances as promptly as possible. Unless requested by the committee, only the captain and the player(s) involved will be permitted at any hearings.
- NTRP Grievances filed within 14 days of the start date of the player's and/or captain's state championship 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.
- A team that withdraws from a championship after the full team withdrawal deadline, or a team that forfeits an entire team match during championship may be subject to a grievance filed by the Championship Committee and may receive suspension penalties imposed by the Championship Grievance Committee.
- Players who exhibit inappropriate behavior and/or unsportsmanlike conduct towards tournament staff and/or volunteers may be subject to a Championship Grievance and may receive penalties imposed by the Championship Grievance Committee.

## **NTRP Dynamic Disqualification**

- USTA Southern follows national regulation 2.04E(2)c in that dynamic ratings will be generated following the State Championships. It is possible for any self-rated (S), appealed (A), dynamic disqualified (D) and early start league (C) players to be dynamically promoted at his or her NTRP level. (Please see National NTRP Dynamic Disqualification table for further details.) The promoted player will not be eligible to advance to the next level of competition. Points earned by disqualified players will stand.

## **Tournament Cancellation Policy**

### ▪ During Round Robin Play

Should inclement weather or other circumstances prevent the completion of a state championship or prevent round robin matches from starting by 5:00 PM on Sunday; the level/flight winners will be determined by the first of the following procedures that does so:

- In the event a level or flight within a level consists of multiple round robins, the first-place team will be determined by TennisLink standings at the conclusion of the most recent full round robin. If a full round robin is not completed, the below-mentioned procedures would apply:
- In the event that only one team in a round robin has a mathematical chance of finishing first, that team will be declared the winner of the round robin.
- If more than one team has a mathematical chance of winning their round robin, and the first-place team has already beaten the other teams with a mathematical chance of winning, the 1st place team would be considered the round robin winner.
- If a round robin winner cannot be determined, and each team in a round robin has been given the opportunity to complete a minimum of one team match, only teams with a mathematical chance of finishing first will receive an entry into a drawing. Undefeated teams will receive a second entry into the drawing.
- If a round robin winner cannot be determined, and each team in a round robin has not been given the opportunity to complete a minimum of one team match, each team will receive one entry into a drawing to determine the round robin winner.

### ▪ During Round Robin Playoffs

- Should inclement weather or other circumstances prevent the completion of either the semifinals or finals during the State Championship; the following procedures will be used:
- If cancellation occurs before or during the semi-finals, all flight winners will receive two entries in the drawing and any best 2nd place teams will receive one entry into the drawing to determine finalists. Any winning team that has completed their semi-final match will receive two entries into the drawing and the losing team will be excluded from the drawing.
- If cancellation occurs once the finalists have been determined, but play has not begun, each team will receive an entry in the drawing to determine one state champion.
- The Tournament committee may keep both finalist teams at the site past 5:00 PM to see if play can continue later that evening.

### **During Partial Round Robin Matches Format**

- Should inclement weather or other circumstances prevent the completion of our state championship or prevent Partial Round Robin matches from starting by 5:00 PM (local time) on Sunday, the winners will be determined by the first of the following procedures that does so:
- If a minimum of 3 full Partial Round Robin rounds has been completed by all teams, any undefeated teams will receive an entry into a drawing to determine a winner. In this instance, unfinished Partial Round Robin rounds in fourth segment will not count.
- In the event that only one team (after the most recent full Partial Round Robin round) has a mathematical chance of finishing first, that team will be declared the winner.
- If more than one team has a mathematical chance of winning, after the most recent full Partial Round Robin round, and the first-place team has already beaten the other teams with a mathematical chance of winning, the 1st place team would be considered the winner as the head-to-head winner.
- If a winner cannot be determined, and each team has been given the opportunity to complete a minimum of one team match, only teams with a mathematical chance of finishing first will receive an entry into a drawing. Undefeated teams will receive a second entry into the drawing.

### **During semifinal playoffs:**

- Teams that have clinched (won a majority of individual matches) in their semifinal playoff will be considered the winner of their semifinal match.
- Teams that have not clinched (not won a majority of individual matches) in their semifinal will be put into a drawing to determine the winning semifinalist. For each individual line won by a team, said team will receive an additional entry into the drawing. (For example, the #2 doubles match was finished. The winning team of said #2 doubles match would receive an additional entry into the drawing.)

### **Administration**

- **All communication will be done through Match Tennis Team.**
- **The Tournament Committee will use proper and fair judgment with regard to all State tournament-related issues.**
- **Tournament Committee: To be appointed by Alabama State League Coordinator.**
- **Championship Grievance Committee: To be appointed by Alabama State League Coordinator.**
- **Championship Procedures may be amended at the Tournament Committee's discretion.**