

# New Jersey Women's Tennis League

**"To provide the best possible tennis competition at all levels. To promote tennis as a means of healthful recreation and physical fitness and to maintain high standards of amateurism, fair play and good sportsmanship."**

## **RULES**

***Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated and league suspensions will be implemented at Exec Board's discretion.***

## **ORGANIZATION**

1. In order to participate in this organization, each club must be willing and able to field four courts (eight players) each week of regular play. All League match dates should be cleared with your club before the season starts.
2. Court maintenance is necessary for safe tennis play. If courts are unplayable due to poor upkeep, the Board reserves the right to take action.
3. All clubs shall send \$100.00 per team to the League Treasurer. All clubs will be billed directly.
  - a. One check for all teams should be made payable to the NJ Women's Tennis League.
  - b. Clubs will be billed for all teams confirmed by the tennis professional or club representative. Payment per team is non-refundable once the schedule is produced. Payments are due upon receipt. Clubs will receive a one-time warning at the completion of the first week's matches. Clubs that have not paid in full by the end of day on the third week's match will be assessed a 1 point penalty for each team entered in the League, each week thereafter, until such fees are received. Unpaid clubs will have no standing in the League (i.e., filing protests, etc.) and will not be invited back in the next season.
  - c. Monies received cover administrative fees incurred by the Board.
4. New clubs wishing to apply for League membership may apply in writing to the President. Four soft courts are required for membership.
5. Member clubs wishing to field an additional team should submit a written request to the President.
6. In the event that a club shall have two teams in the same Series, the captain should:
  - a. Review Rule #31 with all team members. This rule states that "each team must field its top available players in order of strength so that Court 1 will be stronger than Court 2; Court 2 stronger than Court 3, etc." In this case, eight courts from 1 to 8. Play-offs, professional guidance, pre-match challenges, etc. should be used to determine

the first week's line-up. At this point, there will be two distinct teams. The second team should be weaker than the first. These teams should remain intact except for normal substitutions.

b. If the first team requires a substitute, the top player from the second team should be used regardless of their competition within the Series.

### **PLAYER/CLUB REQUIREMENTS**

7. Any woman, age 21 and older who is a regular dues paying member of the club she represents is eligible. Special one-day "League Memberships" or "pay for play" type memberships are not allowed. The Club Tennis professional and staff are not eligible to play on the teams.
8. No college student, playing for her school team, may play in League matches in the same calendar year.
9. Players may play for only one club during the season.
10. A player may play only one League match each week except when a rain date carries over into the following week.
11. Written complaints against players/clubs are kept on file. The player or club against whom the complaints are lodged will be notified. (Board discretion as to player/club penalty.)

**RULES OF PLAY** USTA rules govern match play unless stated otherwise by League Rules.

12. All matches in Series 1-7 will be played Tuesday. All matches in Series 8-14 will be played on Wednesday. All matches begin at 9:30 a.m. unless noted otherwise. All matches will be played OUTDOORS on SOFT COURTS!

#### ***Pre-play rule for Monday:***

Individual courts may choose to pre-play on Monday only if all 4 players agree. Captains must inform Series leaders of any agreements to pre-play in advance. This does not grant teams the right to play out of order of strength in order to accommodate someone's schedule. If Monday is weathered out, Tuesday is the match day for teams in Series 1 - 7 and Wednesday is the match day for teams in Series 8 - 14.

NJWTL matches take precedence over indoor matches.

13. A match is best of 2 out of 3 sets with a tiebreaker at 6-All. Maximum warm-up time is 15 minutes. Practice serves must be taken before play begins. In the interest of saving time, during warm-up, all serves must be caught by the receiver and served back. If you choose to practice your return of service, you forfeit your right to practice your serve. A match begins when the first ball is served. There are no breaks between sets. Play is continuous unless mutually agreeable. A quick bathroom break may be taken between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> set as per USTA rules.

14. Lateness

There will be a 15 minute grace period for players who are later than the official 9:30am start time. If a player arrives at 9:35am, she has only a 10 minute warm-up left. If she arrives at 9:40am, she has a 5 minute warm-up. At 9:45am, there is no warm-up allowed and the following game deductions will apply:

. One (1) game will be forfeited for each 5 minutes of lateness beyond 9:45 am.

If play begins at 9:50am, the score begins 0-1

If play begins at 9:55am, the score begins 0-2

If play begins at 10:00am, the score begins 0-3

If play begins at 10:05am, the score begins 0-4

If play begins at 10:10am, the score begins 0-5

If play does not begin until 10:15am, the score is 0-6. The team has now lost the first set and forfeited the match.

15. The USTA rule regarding a carry or double hit applies in this league: "A player loses the point if, in playing the ball, she deliberately carries or catches it on her racquet or deliberately touches it with her racquet more than once. Only when there is a definite 'second push' by the player does the shot become illegal."

16. If there is a dispute regarding line calls or foot faults during a match, one person designated from each team may observe the lines, but will make a call only when asked.

**If partners disagree on a call the point goes to the opponent.**

17. Coaching during matches is prohibited. Spectators, including parents, friends and coaches, should not interfere with, or participate in, on-court matches. Coaches and spectators must maintain a respectable distance from the courts.

18. The use of cell phones/watch phones is **not** permitted during NJWTL match play. Check club policy regarding usage on the premises. Captains should remind ALL players to silence phones/watches BEFORE play begins. Air-plane mode is recommended for watches because glancing repeatedly at your watch during the match is considered the same as consulting your phone. \*\* If either watch or phone rings during play of a point on your court, that point will automatically be awarded to the opposing team. (Rule Infraction.) Players on any one court may not agree amongst themselves to disregard the phone/watch rule to use them due to disturbance on neighboring courts. Something ringing on another court does not constitute a loss of point for either team on your court. ***Use of a cell phone/watch may subject you to a penalty point.***

19. It is the captain's responsibility to inform each player of the scheduled match time. Unless the home captain has postponed the match, teams must be prepared to play.

If the home courts are UNOPENED, matches **must** be played away if original start time is available. If opponent's courts are unavailable on match day/original start time, matches must be played Thursday of that week. Matches may be staggered with as many as possible being played on opening day. Courts that are open will be played as scheduled with the rain date being Thursday. If neither club's courts are open, matches may be rescheduled up until May 10th.

If the home courts are open but UNPLAYABLE, and the visitors' courts are available, the match MAY be played at the visiting team's club if both teams are mutually agreeable. It is the duty of the home team captain/pro to check court conditions on the morning of the match. If the court conditions are suspect, please call your opposing captain as soon as possible. Thursday Rule applies or, if available, a mutually agreed upon alternate site. (outdoor soft courts) If a team has not been contacted by 8:00 am (for the 9:30am match), the home team forfeits any unplayable courts. When weather is an issue the morning of the match you can mutually agree to wait a specific amount of time to play, if there isn't a 2nd match following. For 2nd matches you have until 9:30 to call the match.

20. The host club will supply new balls, water, and a meal at home matches. With pre-play matches or staggered rain date matches, the host club will ensure water on the courts and working bathrooms. For double matches, when

all four courts are not available due to existing matches, the Away team chooses the order of which courts play. This may also be determined in advance by both Captains.

### **RAINED-OUT MATCHES**

21. Thursday is the weather make-up day for all matches. Regular Tuesday starting time in effect. Individual courts may choose to play on Wednesday if all 4 players agree. Regular Wednesday scheduled matches Series 8-14 have priority over any re-scheduled matches from Tuesday. Start time on Thursday remains at 9:30am. (Refer to Rule 13.) Matches are not to be staggered, unless there is a conflict of court time (i.e., three matches to be rescheduled) or mutually agreeable for the individual court. If both Tuesday and Wednesday matches are rained out, priority for court time on Thursday morning will be given to the home team with the lowest Series number (**Series 1 matches have the highest priority and Series 14 matches have the lowest priority**).

22. If the Thursday matches are rained out, matches may be staggered but must be completed by the following Friday (8 days). If the match is not completed, no points and no games will be awarded to either team.

23. If Thursday of the final week is rained-out, the next day (Friday) becomes the mandatory rain date. If Friday is rained-out, matches must be played on Monday (with weekend play being an option). The Monday after the final match is the last day of League play.

### **SUSPENSION OF PLAY**

24. **Any player** may suspend play when rain makes court conditions dangerous.

25. Please attempt to complete the game in progress.

26. Captains will record the score, players' names, court position and team to serve when play resumes.

27. When play resumes, no substitutes are allowed. A short warm-up is permissible.

28. If the match has not begun (Rule 14), line-ups may be changed for the make-up match.

29. If play must be rescheduled for a different day, follow the rain date rules (Rules 22-24).

### **PLAYERS/LINE-UPS**

30. Each team must field its top available players in order of strength so that Court 1 will be stronger than Court 2; Court 2 stronger than Court 3 etc. In the case of a club with two or more teams, the League considers them to be "one long team." Team A must be stronger than team B (see Rule 6). Lineups should reflect strengths of players available that day. A default must come from the bottom of that club's lowest team.

**A lower team that refuses to send up players risks being penalized.**

However, when a situation arises in which a higher team loses one or more players AFTER 5:00 p.m. Friday preceding a match day, then that team may take the default at its court 4 position, fielding the rest of the team in order of

strength. The lower team does not have to give up a player. (In case of a default, please notify opposing team captain asap.)

31. Any team suspected of sacrificing a match risks forfeiting all four matches.

32. A captain may move a **team** up or down only **ONE** (1) position from where they last played together, regardless of the number of intervening matches.

33. A captain may move an **individual** player up or down **TWO** (2) positions from where she last played, remembering that the team must be strongest at Court 1.

34. Permission for an illegal move **up** will be granted only if you and your Series Leader cannot find a legal alternative. Rule 31 is still in effect. Personalities, preferred side of court, and an illegal move down, are not valid considerations for granting an illegal move. Any illegal move from Rules 33 and 34 must be approved by the Series Leader or a Board member BEFORE the match is played.

35. If a team or player has been granted special permission for an illegal move up, or has played out of order due to error or neglect, refer back to the sheets to where the individual or team last played legally and base placement of the player/team on that. For the next match, the individual or team may move up or down in accordance with Rules 33 and 34.

36. If a club is judged to have fielded a team in an illegal position for a match without Board approval, it will result in the loss of a point. If the offending team has won the match in question, it loses the point and this point is awarded to the opponent. If the team has lost the match, it loses a "Penalty Point" which is deducted from its cumulative score. Said penalty point is not awarded to the opponents.

37. Line-ups for each match must be written out on the Official Score Sheet PRIOR to arrival at the courts and presented to the opposing team captain before the start of the match. **\*Captains arriving without a written lineup are subject to a penalty point.** In an emergency situation, a "legal" player of equal ability may be substituted for another player even after the line-ups have been exchanged. However, there may be no change to the other court positions on any other courts. The "new" player takes the place of only the player who cannot play. Rule #14, regarding late arrival still applies.

38. If a team feels that the opposing team has "juggled" its line-up, the match may be protested. Teams may question an opponent's line-up prior to play and have it altered.

39. All players must have played twice in matches 1-7 to play matches 8 and 9. This rule does not apply to the lowest series in the league.

a. For a series carrying less than 10 teams, players will be required to play at least once prior to their team's final two matches in order to play in either of those matches.

b. The lowest team in a club and single club teams can use a player that has only played once prior to that team's last two matches.

40. Each single match is worth one (1) point. A team may win a total of four (4) points in a given match.

41. Each match must end with a completed match and score or a defaulted, retired or forfeited score.

42. A defaulted match is defined as a match where one team is unable to field a team prior to the beginning of the match. In case of rain, see Rules 22-24. If a club is unable to field all the teams it is committed to fielding, a default must come from the club's lowest position. If a club has A, B and C teams, the default will be at C-4. However, after line-ups are exchanged, an emergency default will take place on the specific court defaulting.

a. A captain may not default all four matches without permission from the League President or Vice President. If this rule is abused, the team in question may be disqualified.

- b. On a week where a club finds players shortages, the defaults must be spread over more than one team.
- c. The Executive Board reserves the right to penalize teams taking defaults in the last 2 weeks of the season, and will review any team with more than 2 defaults for eligibility the following year.

43. *No match may be defaulted without approval of a Board member, except in the case of a last minute injury or illness. Any default for failure to field players may be cause for the suspension of a team from the League.*

- a. In the event of a default, the defaulting team shall provide the names of both players who would have played in the match (they must be ready and available) to the series leader and reason for the default PRIOR to the match.
- b. List only AVAILABLE players' names on the score sheet. Defaulting player/players will be designated on score sheets as "no player available." When only one player of a partnership is available, listing shall read "Jane Doe/ No Player Available." When both players of a partnership are unavailable, the score sheet should read "No Players Available." The team being defaulted to will have a score of 6-0, 6-0. The player or players must be of legal status and will be tracked as if they actually played the match.
- c. If your opponent gives you an early default call the night before on one of their courts, and it rains on match day and none of the courts play, the default will be rescinded. Match gets played on scheduled match rain day.

44. A retired match is defined as one in which play is ended due to a player suffering an injury or illness. The score at the time of retirement stands. Advance any unfinished games (for example, 15-30) to the team that did not retire. Mark the match as "retired", list the score and mark the winning team on the scoresheet. The winning team is the team that did not retire regardless of who was winning when the match stopped.

45. A forfeited match is one defined as ended due to the inability of one team to complete the match in progress for reasons other than weather or injury/personal loss (ie. Dr's appt, etc). The final score is the same score at the time play stopped. Advance any unfinished games (for example, 15-30) to the team that did not forfeit. Mark the match as "forfeited", list the score and mark the winning team. The winning team is the team that did not forfeit regardless of who was winning when the match stopped.

46. All matches must be completed by the last scheduled day of match play or both teams will forfeit the points.

### **SERIES RESULTS There will be no challenges.**

47. The top two teams in each series will automatically move to the next higher series. The two lowest teams in each series will automatically move to the next lower series. Byes will be filled at the Executive Committee's discretion.

48. In the event that two or more teams are tied within a series after the last match, their matches against each other will be compared as a group. The team with the most courts won will be deemed the winner. If they remain tied, the team with the most sets won will be the winner. If still tied, games will be counted. If they remain tied, total sets against all teams for the season will be compared.

49. Funeral Rule: If there are services for the death of a Club member or Team member on match day, we ask that those not attending the services play the scheduled match. The board reserves the right to grant an extended period (up to a week) to reschedule for an individual court or the entire team or club, but captains must contact their Series Leader in a timely manner when teams are affected.

## RULE INFRACTIONS/PROTESTS

50. If a team thinks that their opponents have juggled their line-up, that team may play the match under protest. Only the teams involved and the Exec Board may lodge an official protest. Protests may occur for reasons other than a juggled line-up. All protested matches must be completed. If a dispute arises either prior to or during a match, the match must be completed in order to file a protest.

51. Teams in Series 1-7 lodging the protest must inform the Series Leader by Wednesday at 6 pm. Teams in Series 8-14 lodging the protest must inform the Series Leader by Thursday at 6 pm. In the event of rain and the match is played on Thursday, teams lodging the protest must inform the Series Leader by Friday at 6 pm. Within 24 hours, the Series Leader must notify the team against which the protest is being launched of the rule violations allegedly committed.

52. The protesting captain shall email the completed **PROTEST FORM** to the League President, Vice President and Series Leader within forty-eight (48) hours from the time the Series Leader was originally informed of the team's intent to protest.

53. The Series Leader shall then email the Protest Form to the captain of the team against which the protest is lodged. Within 48 hours of receipt of the Protest Form, the captain shall email their response to the allegations provided on the Protest Form to the President, Vice President and Series Leader.

54. Immediately upon receipt of the Response, the President shall email the Protest Form and Response to the nine members of the Executive Board who will vote to determine the validity of the protest.

55. If the protest is valid, the team protested may have to forfeit one or more points and/or one or more points may be awarded to the protesting team.

56. Any Board Member whose club is involved in a protest will abstain from the vote.

57. The Executive Committee may initiate action against any club where no protest has been lodged if it feels that an infraction of the rules has occurred.

**The final power for making decisions on circumstances not covered in the NJWTL Rules rests with the Executive Committee.**