# SNMWTL Regulations and Rules

(August 2026)

## ELIGIBLE CLUBS

Any organized tennis club within Sonoma, Napa, or Marin counties is eligible to participate, provided at least three tennis courts are available for continuous play (public or private). Courts must be in one location, not individual, private home courts. Any exceptions must meet with Board approval.

## DIVISIONS

The league will be open to all divisions, provided there are at least six teams per division, except for an entry level team or lowest division. (The entry level division has no minimum requirements.) The divisions are 1 - 4. The Board will try to maintain no more than 10 teams per division for scheduling purposes. The Executive Board reserves the right to reclassify any team or player.

## TEAMS

1. A team consists of one singles position and five doubles positions. A team roster must include at least 15 members. All teams can have a maximum of 35 members.
2. Clubs in a particular division may field a team consisting of members of two clubs ONLY; this is a combo team.
    a. A combo team will have its own separate designation as a separate club and as such will not have the ability to use subs from other teams at either of their facilities.
    b. The other option is to choose one of the clubs to be the designated club which would then allow subs from within that designated club, but not the other club from which the additional team members came from.
    c. A Combo team will have one assigned Club Representative, not one from each club.
3. A team must have one captain and one co-captain, with email addresses, who serve as contacts for the team.
4. A team will not be allowed to have rotating captains.
5. A captain and/or co-captain(s) must serve for at least one half of the League year. It is strongly recommended that the same captain serve for the entire year.

## PLAYERS

1. No player may compete for more than one club or team.

2. Players must be members of the club they represent and must be 18 years or older. It is up to the individual club to determine who is considered a member, or who is permitted to play for that club.
3. Level of play will be determined by the player's USTA rating as of January prior to roster creations. This rating will be in effect for both the Fall and Spring. Rating changes will occur only when new rosters are created for a new playing year.

    Division 4: USTA rating of 4.0 or below
    Division 3: USTA Rating of 4.0 or below
    Division 2: USTA Rating of 4.5 or below
    Division 1: Open

    The highest level team at each club may have players with any USTA rating, however, any other discrepancies from the above guidelines must be approved by the board BEFORE rosters are submitted. If the board finds out after rosters are submitted that a player is playing at the wrong level, intentionally or not, they will be automatically suspended from play for the remainder of that half of play and all matches played by this player will be reversed.
4. Players playing "out of level" (i.e. a 4.5 player playing on a Division 3 team, a 4.0 player playing on a Division 5 team) because of the above exception can only play at Line 1 singles or doubles. They cannot double back. A default shall be called if a player is found playing at another position.
5. For players who no longer play USTA and whose USTA rating is 5 years or older, these players will be able to self rate if the player feels the USTA rating no longer reflects their playing level.
6. The Board reserves the right to move a player to another division within her club because of her USTA rating. (If a player has a USTA rating of 5.5 or above, she will be limited to one #1 position per match.)

## MASTER CALENDAR

A Master Calendar will be posted on the League Website that will outline specific calendar dates for the following:

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| New Team Applications | Late June |
| Team Rosters to Club Rep for Input | Late June/Early July |
| Team Rosters and Applications Submitted to League | Early July |
| Start of First Half Play | Early September |
| End of First Half Play | Late October |
| End of Rain out Make ups | Early November |

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| Submission of Additions and Deletions to Rosters for 2nd Half Play | Mid December |
| Start of Second Half Play | Mid January |
| End of Second Half Play | Mid March |
| Completion of Rain Out Make ups | Late March/Early April |

## APPLICATION AND ENTRY FEES

1. All Clubs must submit an Application each season to play in the league. This application will include a listing of the club's teams by division and the name and address of the club, the name, address, phone number and email address for the Club Representative and the Captains and Co-Captains for each team. This application must be submitted by the date outlined by the Master Calendar.
2. Any Club wishing to enter a new team into the league must submit an application for the team by the date outlined on the Master Calendar of the season prior to adding this new team.
3. The League charges an entry fee of $75.00 per team. This fee helps pay for the web site, awards, and other league expenses.
4. The entry fee must accompany the Club Application and must be received by the deadline specified on the Master Calendar.

## TEAM ROSTER

1. A list of participating team players will be submitted by each club to the league chairperson by the date specified on the Master Calendar. It is the captain's responsibility to make sure that all information on the roster is complete and accurate before the beginning of each half of play.
2. At any time during the playing season, teams my ADD players who are currently NOT on a SNM team. The team must allow the League 72 hours to make the addition before the player can be played in a match.
3. After the end of the First Half, deletions of players on the roster may be made and must be sent to the Chairperson by the date specified on the Master Calendar. At this time players may also change teams for which they are playing.

## SCHEDULING

A "skeletal" match schedule will be created by the board and sent to the webmaster for posting on the website. Club reps and Captains will be notified by the Chairperson when "skeletal" matches are on line.

The schedule will indicate HOME and AWAY teams for each week of the playing year (Fall and Spring). HOME teams will set the exact date for each match and then post it on the website. Captains do not need approval from the opposing captain for home match dates.

Matches must be scheduled during the designated week for each match.

When setting match dates, captains should work with other captains at your club to ensure there are no date conflicts on your home courts.

Matches should NOT be scheduled on Federal Holidays. This includes Labor Day, Indigenous People's Day, Veteran's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, MLK Day and President's Day. This holds for rescheduled matches due to rain outs as well unless BOTH captains agree otherwise.

## PLAYING SEASON

The playing season begins in September and ends in April. Awards will be given for 1st and 2nd place in each division.

## RULES AND CODE BOOK

This league is governed by the rules outlined here and all USTA rules including "The Code," "Friend at Court" and "Local League Area Regulations". League rules will supersede USTA rules where they are different. All Captains and Co-Captains should take copies of the league rules, "The Code," and "Friend at Court" to all matches. Rules regarding play, scoring and court officials shall be strictly enforced.

## COACHING

Coaching is defined as any advice and/or instruction. There will be NO on court coaching at any time; coaching is permitted only between the second and third sets. If a Match Tie Breaker is played in lieu of a full third set, no coaching is allowed.

## COURT MONITORS

When court monitors are requested during a match, two people may be called to officiate, one representing each team. If there are two court monitors, each will stand at the net on opposite sides of the court and monitor their side of the court. Court monitors may be asked to verify line calls, keep score, time breaks, call foot faults. If a court monitor is asked to verify line calls, the monitors stand at the net and verify the line call ONLY in response to a player request. Also, if a court monitor is on the court for any reason other than calling foot faults, the monitor has the obligation to call any obvious foot faults.

## SPORTSMANSHIP

1. This league is a competitive tennis league. However, this should not supersede courtesy and sportsmanlike play among participants. According to "The Code," players shall not:
2. Conduct loud postmortems after points
3. Complain about shots like lobs or drop shots
4. Embarrass a weak opponent by being overly gracious or condescending
5. Lose her temper, use vile language, throw rackets, slam balls in anger, threaten or inflict bodily injury to anyone

6. Sulk when losing

## PROTESTS

1. When filing a grievance (protest) letter with the Board, the letter must be signed by the Club Rep and a copy of the letter sent to the captain of the opposing team within one week of the incident.
2. All protests MUST be emailed to the SNM Board and Rules person.
3. After receipt of a grievance, the opposing party has three days to file a response with the board, if she so chooses.
4. The Board Rules Person will inform the concerned parties of the Board decision within one week of the deadline of response to the grievance.

## RULES OF PLAY

### TIME OF PLAY

Line ups should be exchanged at 9 AM. The match has begun once the lineups are exchanged AND the first point has been played. One singles match and two doubles matches must begin at 9 AM. A default will be called at 9:15 AM. There is no warm-up after 9:15 AM, unless otherwise agreed upon by both parties. All players for the remaining matches must arrive by 10:30 AM. Default is 10:45 AM, whether or not a court is available. If a court is available by 10:30 AM, players who arrive at 10:45 will have no warm-up. If a 9:00 AM match splits sets and the time is 10:45 AM or later, in the interest of time and respect for players waiting for second round courts, a Match Tie Breaker (first to 10 by 2) MUST be played in lieu of a full third set. If a second round match starts later than 11:15AM and either team has a time constraint, a Match Tie Breaker MUST be played in lieu of a full third set. If neither team has a time constraint, the home team will make the decision regarding a third set.

### REFRESHMENTS/BALLS

The hosting team will provide refreshments following the "Food and Beverage Recommendations" on the league website under the Forms and Docs tab. They will also provide three NEW, optic yellow, USTA approved balls per individual match.

## LINEUPS

1. The lineup will be Singles and 4th and 5th doubles at 9 AM and 1st, 2nd and 3rd doubles at 10:30, unless the hosting captain calls at least one week and one day (8 days) prior to the match to exercise her prerogative to change the order of the DOUBLES matches. For example, switching doubles 1 to play at 9AM and doubles 4 to play at 10:30 AM.
2. Lineups must be written on the League Score Sheets PRIOR to arrival for the match. Should a captain fail to comply with this rule, two points will be deducted from her team's total score for the match.
3. After lineups have been exchanged, no changes can be made (except for a captain not informing the opposing captain of a player who is doubling up (See Doubling Up Section).

## DEFINITION OF MATCH

1. All matches will be the best of three sets, with a 12 point tie-breaker (first to 7 by 2) used at 6- all sets.
2. The decision to play either a full third set or a Match Tie Break (first to 10 by 2) is made by the home team on each court. (See Time of Play Section for exceptions to this.) The decision should be made, on each court, prior to the start of the match. If the players forget to make this decision prior to the start of the match, it should be made as soon as this oversight is discovered. The decision, once made, can be changed only by the unanimous agreement by all players on the court. If a Match Tie Breaker is used in lieu of a full third set, there is only a 2 minute break and coaching is NOT allowed.
3. The Coman Tie Break method is optional for league play. This procedure is the same as the traditional tiebreak except that players change ends after the first point, and after every 4 points thereafter (i.e. change ends after the 5th, 9th, 13th, 17th, etc), and at the conclusion of the tiebreak. If teams cannot agree on using the Coman tiebreak, the home team makes the decision. The decision should be made, on each court, prior to the start of the match. If the players forget to make this decision prior to the start of the match, it should be made as soon as this oversight is discovered. The decision, once made, can be changed only by unanimous agreement by all players on the court.

## SUBSTITUTES

1. If a team is lacking one or more players for any match, the captain may use a substitute player from a division below instead of defaulting. However, under no circumstances is a player allowed to play down a division. In other words, a Division 3 player may not substitute on a Division 4 team, but a Division 4 player may substitute on a Division 3 or higher team. A captain using a player from a lower division must mark on the score sheet next to the player's name what division the player is from.
2. A captain using a player from a lower division must present a copy of that player's team roster to the other captain to verify the substitute's eligibility.
3. A substitute may play in singles or doubles position and may double up.
4. A player may substitute twice on any or all higher teams at her club. The limit is twice per team, per half. Definition of twice per half: two separate days. (A substitute may play a singles match and then a doubles match the same day; this counts as only one substitution of the two allowed.)

## DOUBLING UP:

1. Only singles players may double up. When doubling up, the singles player may play only in the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd doubles positions.
2. The Captain MUST inform the opposing Captain if the singles player is doubling up and into which doubles position. This information must be disclosed PRIOR to the exchange of lineups, earlier if possible. If a Captain discloses this information only upon the exchange of line-ups, the opposing Captain has the option of changing her line-up accordingly.

3. If the singles player is doubling up, and play goes to a third set, a Match Tie-Breaker MUST be played. A Match Tie-Breaker is played like a regular tie-breaker, except that the winner is the first to get to get to 10 points, winning by 2.
4. If a player is doubling up, she cannot retire from a singles match and then play a doubles match on the same day.
5. If the singles player is doubling up and a court is immediately available upon completion of her singles match, she has the option of using the 15 minute warm-up time either to "re-group" or to warm-up with her partner and opponents. Whichever option she chooses, she is strongly encouraged to participate in the warm-up of serves. However, fifteen minutes is the limit of her "break".

## POSITION DEFAULT

1. The captain who is defaulting must inform the opposing team of the particular default position, prior to the match if possible.
2. A default must be in the lowest position, i.g., 5th doubles.
3. Once line-ups have been exchanged and a player does not show up for the match, the position with the missing player is defaulted.

## TEAM DEFAULT

If a team defaults an entire match, that team is suspended from the League for the rest of the playing season. The suspended team's scores will be deleted from all prior matches. To avoid a Team Default at least one position must be played.

## CHILDREN, PETS and CELL PHONES

1. Neither children nor pets are permitted at matches.
2. Cell phones are to be turned off during matches. The ringing of a cell phone during a point is considered a deliberate hindrance. The opponent may stop the point and claim the point based deliberate hindrance rule.

## SCORING/SCORE SHEETS

1. A point will be given for each set won. The winner is the team with the most sets won.
2. Each captain will provide an official league score sheet with her line-up, completed prior to arrival. Should a captain fail to comply with this rule, two points will be deducted from her team's total score for the match. Score sheets are found on the league website under the Forms and Docs tab.
3. Both captains will complete their score sheets by filling in the names of the opposing team's players and positions.
4. Both captains must sign the hosting team's copy of the score sheet upon match completion.
5. Both captains retain a copy of the score sheet. Both captains share responsibility to post match results on the league web site within 72 hours of completion of the match (weekends included). The first captain will post the names and scores; the second

captain will confirm or dispute the names and scores. (See league website for information on how to report match results under the Forms and Docs tab.)

***NOTE: The Executive Board will impose a one point penalty on both teams for scores not reported within 72 hours.***

## RAIN OUTS

1. In case of rain, the hosting captain will contact the visiting captain to cancel no earlier than 6:30 AM on the morning of the match and no later than 7:00 AM. If the hosting captain does not notify the opponents during this time frame, the visiting team has the option to become the host team.
2. By 6:00 PM the day following the scheduled match date (weekends excluded), the hosting captain must provide the visiting captain with two possible dates from which to choose. If this deadline is not met, the away team can choose to become the host team and provide the necessary two dates. When offering two possible make-up dates to the opposing captain, check the SNMWTL Master Calendar first. The dates offered cannot be dates that the opposing team has a scheduled or rescheduled SNMWTL match. Also, one of the dates offered MUST be within one month of the original match date. Also, if possible, try not to offer two dates in the same week. If the home team does not offer at least one date within the one month time frame, then the visiting team MAY offer a date within this time frame at their courts. The visiting team can then pick between these two dates.
3. The visiting captain has until 6 pm the day following notification of dates by the home team (weekends excluded) to select one of the dates and notify the hosting captain of the date. If the visiting captain does not respond on time or cannot play on any of the two dates given, a team default will be called against the visiting team. (See Team Defaults)
4. The hosting captain must post the rescheduled match date on the web site as soon as she and the opposing captain agree upon the date.
5. The Chairperson is to be notified immediately if there is a problem rescheduling the match.
6. If the visiting team arrives and the courts are unplayable, the match may be rescheduled on the visiting team's courts if they so choose. If they choose this option, they then assume the host's role and responsibilities. Note: If a visiting team considers one court unplayable due to dampness behind the baseline, that individual match may be rescheduled. That match will be rescheduled at the original hosting team's courts and with 2 dates provided to the visitor for the reschedule.
7. The match has begun when the line-ups have been exchanged and the first point of the match has been played. If it begins to rain, and the match must be rescheduled, only the line-ups for those individual matches that have begun play must be used. Any individual matches not begun may be rescheduled with a different line-up. The host Captain will offer two dates to the visiting Captain as outlined above in the Rainout reschedule section above.

a. For the partially played matches, the players from the home team will provide the visiting team players two dates as outlined above in the Rainout Rescheduling section. In this instance, the visiting players should provide the necessary information so the home team can provide workable dates (i.e. one of the visiting players works on Mondays) and the home team should try to accommodate these restrictions.
b. Once a date is agreed upon by the players, that becomes the match date for that position and defaults will be taken should players not show up. Also, once a date is agreed upon, each team captain should be notified of this date by email.
c. In these matches, play will continue from the point it was suspended.
d. Note: Captains are responsible for providing contact information to their players so that individual matches will be rescheduled as soon as possible.

8. Teams are required to reschedule rained out matches at least 2 times. Once the match has been attempted to be played 3 times (original match date plus 2 rainout reschedules), it will be up to the individual captains to agree to reschedule any further. Both captains MUST agree to reschedule at this point. Any matches not completed at the end of each half will receive Averaged Points (total points for the half divided by # of matches actually played) for that team.
9. On days when the courts are not dry in time for the 9:00AM matches, but the sun is out, and the weather is warm enough that the courts will be playable for the 10:30 AM matches, the home team captains will:
    a. Play 10:30 AM matches (1, 2, and 3 Doubles) as scheduled (sooner if possible).
    b. Play any additional matches that the host club can accommodate, i.e., singles or 4th and 5th doubles.
    c. Follow procedures as outlined in Rainouts #7 for partially played matches.

## Air Quality

If the Air Quality Index (at the recording station nearest the home court) is over 150, all matches must be rescheduled using Rain Out Rules. If the AQI is between 100-150, if a team wants to reschedule then reschedule using Rain Out Rules. If the decision is to play the match, please use modified playing rules which are extended breaks between sets (10 Minutes) and a mandatory Match Tie Breaker in lieu of a full third set.

## Power Outages/Evacuations/Fire Danger

Should EITHER team involved in any match be adversely affected by power outages and/or evacuations due to fire danger, the match MUST be rescheduled if the request is made by the affected team. Notification should be handled like a weather issue by notifying the opposing team by 7am the day of the match – or earlier if possible – should your team be adversely

affected. Rescheduling should follow reschedule rules for Rain Outs as stated in the Rain Out section above.

## FINAL MATCH DATES:

1. The final dates for 1st half and 2nd half matches will be set prior to the start of the season, and posted on the Mater Calendar.
2. If a match is not completed by the final date, NO SCORE will be given for the un-played matches. Any portion of a match that has been completed will be scored in the usual way.

## PLAY-OFFS AND PLAY-OFF SCORING

1. The playing season consists of two halves, allowing teams to play each other twice. First and Second place winners for the year will be determined by total accumulated points for the year. The team with the highest number of accumulated points will be first place and the team with the second highest accumulated points will be second place.
2. If two teams have the exact same number of accumulated points, a playoff will occur between these two teams. This includes two teams tied for first place or two teams tied for second place or two teams tied in last place. Host team will be determined by the winner of the last match between the two tied teams. If that match was a tie, the Chairperson will flip a coin to determine the home team.
3. The Chairperson will notify the teams should a playoff be necessary after all critical division matches have been played and within 48 hours of the website posting of those results.
    a. The play-off will be scheduled within the week specified on the Master Calendar.
    b. By 6 p.m. the day following notification by the Chairperson of the need for a play-off, the host captain will present the visiting captain with two dates from which to choose. (Note: Should the host captain fail to supply the dates by the deadline, the visiting team may choose to host the play-off match and if they do so, must supply two dates by 6 p.m. the day following the original host team's missed deadline.) When the host captain has provided the dates within the deadline, the visiting captain has until 6 pm of the following day (weekends excluded) to select one of the dates and notify the hosting captain of the chosen date. If the visiting captain does not respond by this time or cannot play on either of the given dates, the visitors default the match.
4. Should a tie occur for matches won, then tie breakers will be: sets won followed by games won.

## PLAYER ELIGIBILITY FOR PLAYOFFS

1. To be eligible for any playoff, a player must have played a minimum of two matches for that team, and be a current member of that team. (Playing singles and doubles in one match is counted as playing only once.)
2. Substitutes are not allowed to play in year-end play-offs.

## TEAM MOVEMENT:

1. The Board reserves the right to reclassify any team.
2. The Board may move a team due to the number of team applications per division.
3. The Board will maintain no more than 10 teams per division.
4. A team that has the highest accumulated points per division must move to the next higher division the following year. A team that has the least accumulated points in its division must move down the following year.

## EXCEPTIONS FOR LOWEST DIVISIONS

In order to encourage entry-level players, the Board reserves the right to make any exceptions to the rules for the lowest division in the League. These exceptions will be made known to and will apply to all teams in that division.

## SPECIAL AGREEMENTS BY CAPTAINS

1. SNMWTL encourages captains to be accommodating whenever possible. However, if captains make agreements that are contrary to League Rules, those agreements will supercede the League Rule in question (except for final match and play-off dates).
2. Agreements made between captains should be documented in writing (email), confirming the agreement. Both captains should keep copies for reference, should a dispute arise.
3. Captains cannot agree to enter false scores. To do so will result in both captains being suspended from league play for one year.