



# USTA LEAGUE TENNIS HANDBOOK

*For 2015 Season*

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## **The Purpose of this Handbook**

**The purpose of this Edgebrook Club USTA League Tennis Handbook is to provide suggestions for participation in USTA League Teams. The handbook is designed to help Players, Captains and Club Representatives participate in a way that expresses the spirit of the Edgebrook Club. These guidelines are offered with the best interest of the entire club and its membership in mind.**

## **Introduction**

When it comes to USTA League tennis the thrill of victory, the chance to go to playoffs or national level competition can become very intoxicating. The Edgebrook Club wants to be known as a place where people come first then the trophies. In many years the trophies will be put away in the dusty corners of our attic. What will remain is the memory of friends and teammates unified after a common goal, sharing the joys of victory and the bitter taste of defeat. We want our reputation in the community and among our members to be that of a caring place to enjoy this great game, while having opportunities to compete and vie for championships. Captains and their teams represent Edgebrook and how they handle themselves will form the reputation of Edgebrook which has more long term value than the results of a match or league. Our goal is to have the reputation for great sportsmanship, fair play and a high level of tennis.

**Remember tennis reveals your character – play accordingly!**

## **Responsibilities of Players**

### **Communication with the Captain**

It is important when playing on a team to communicate with the captain (returning emails and phone calls). If you can't participate in a match you need to contact the captain as soon as possible and depending upon the guidelines of the team contact a substitute. It is not fair to the captain or the team to leave them in a difficult situation by not finding a replacement in a timely manner. Captaining is a volunteer job that many people do not want to take on. Those that do take on this great and honorable service to Edgebrook Club and its members deserve thanks and support. This goes a long way towards a positive team spirit and a successful team. Some helpful phrases to learn to say are:

*I have not played well with that person in the past but for the sake of the team **I will play with anyone.***

*Sure I would love to sub at the last minute.*

*Do you have an alternate for the match?*

*I will leave my schedule open so I will be your alternate for the upcoming match in case someone cannot play at the last minute.*

### **Being a good teammate**

A good teammate is always supportive and encouraging. They are interested in building the team up and only say positive things about their teammates whether in their presence or not. A good team member keeps the goals of the team paramount. They allow teammates to have their individuality but realize everyone is contributing for the sake of the team.

## **Responsibilities of Captains**

### **Communicating with players**

When asking players to sign up for your team one of the most important aspects is to communicate the goals and policies of the team. The captain decides the policies but they need to explain those to the team before they commit through sign-ups. Giving the schedule out and notifying players of their participation in matches well in advance are things that players appreciate. The Captain is also responsible for the non members on their team, including any unpaid fees.

As a captain it is expected of you to have a representative from your team at the Edgebrook pre-season captain's meeting.

## **Organization of the team**

### Numbers of Players on team

It is best to have more players than you think you will need for a team. In adult leagues 8 players play in a league match so the minimum size team would be 12 players. For mixed doubles, seniors, 2.5 and 5.0 only six players are needed per match so ten team members would be a minimum size team. Depending upon the commitment of the players you could be alright with fewer or more. There is no limit of Club members who may be on a team. However, if a team is too large it may consider splitting into two teams.

### By strength or equality

Some teams play all their players equally and some play by strength. Generally teams that play by equality have a more contented team overall. The equality team works really well when they recognize that they are playing for development not vying for a playoff spot. This does not mean the team is not competitive, committed or competing hard. It means that the average individual ratings of the players on the team are in the lower half of the rating range of the league (your teams average rating is 3.23 and you are playing in the 3.5 league). Some teams that play "equally" do very well but to do this they all must be rated near the top of the rating range.

If playing by strength a team simply tries to put team wins ahead of individual playing time. This might mean some players get very little playing time. It is recommended that this is expressed by the captain clearly before players commit to signing up. There are infinite ways of deciding playing time. A captain might decide the rank order of players by either objective (ladder) criteria or subjective (captains choice). This should also be done before the season sign-ups happen so players will know where they stand before committing.

### Democratic or Benevolent Dictator

Captains can run teams democratically or dictatorially. Each method has its benefits and drawbacks. If the captain is a benevolent dictator they are in total control of the team and their decisions are final. This type of captain needs to be really good with managing a group of people and have the ability to know what their players want. They still might get feedback from the team but their decision is final and will be made in the interest of the team. The democratic form has many variations but the idea is that major policies are decided by the group. On a day to day basis the captain will still have to make decisions but they might enlist the help of assistants or co-captains.

### Having practices with a coach

Some teams prefer to have an EC Pro help the team by running organized practices. These practices are set up with the pro so as to fit within the overall EC programs.

## **Following Club Rules**

### Rescheduling of Matches

It is best not to reschedule a home USTA league match unless it is absolutely necessary. If a match at Edgebrook needs to be rescheduled it must be done with the permission of the Executive Director.

### Non-members on the team

A Maximum of three Non-members are allowed to play on Edgebrook's teams. To exceed this limit captains must petition the Tennis Committee for an exception. If you are at any time out of compliance with this rule your non-member players that exceed three are not allowed to play and sanctions will be brought on the captain/team by the tennis committee. Nonmembers will pay the same USTA guest fee as the visiting team. The team captain will be responsible for any unpaid fees by nonmembers on their team.

### Reserving practice times

During the season captains may book one 6 day court for their USTA team. This reservation will not count toward their personal 6-day reservation. It may be used for team practice, warm-up, or overflow. Team season is from the time the team confirmation form is turned in to the Executive Director to the day of the last match including any playoffs the team is participating in.

### Warm-up courts & Overflow courts

Warm up and overflow courts are the responsibility of the captain/player to book for their respective teams. The teams are responsible for the full court fee even if they use only part of the court time.

### Curtain Rule

If the captain of the EB team asks the non-USTA court permission to keep the curtain open and permission is not given then the non-USTA court has the right to close the curtain.

## **Following USTA Rules**

It is understood that all Edgebrook captains will fully comply with USTA rules and regulations. As a captain it is expected of you to have a representative from your team at the USTA pre-season captain's meeting.

## **Responsibilities of Edgebrook Club**

### **Responsibilities of Tennis Committee**

The tennis committee will monitor USTA League tennis teams and provide direction for captains and players. It will act as arbiter in situations that are policy driven. It will not step into personal conflicts.

### **Responsibilities of Tennis Staff**

Edgebrook Club Executive Director will provide courts to the USTA to schedule your teams league matches. These courts are in non prime time parts of the EC hours of operation. In addition in conjunction with Director of Tennis and the other tennis staff will help players find teams to play on and captains to fill out their rosters.

## **Understanding the USTA Ratings system**

The USTA ratings system can be difficult to understand at times, if you need help or have questions about ratings please contact Ross our Tennis Director.

### **The differences between a 3.5 and a 3.50**

The differences between what is called a 3.5 and an actual 3.50 might not seem apparent. A 3.50 is a player that is at the top of their respective rating range. They are simply stated, one of the best 3.5's in the league. A 3.5 player could also be a 3.01 that has just moved up or a 3.28 that has been playing on a 3.5 team for several years. All of these players are considered and called 3.5 players but all are not the same caliber 3.5's

Ratings change based upon the scores of your matches combined with the history and rating of your opponent. For each match you generate a rating based upon that match result. If you are playing a 3.45 and you are a 3.25 and you beat them in a third set tiebreak you might generate a 3.40 to 3.45 rating for that match. All those individual ratings are totaled up in an average rating. Unfortunately the USTA does not publish the ratings to the hundredth percentile.

## **Should I play up to the next level?**

When your record is above 66% wins it is time to start to look at the next level of play. So if you are a 3.5 men's player and last year your record was 4 wins and 2 losses playing #1 Doubles it would be appropriate for you to begin to play both 3.5 and find a 4.0 team that is willing to put you in the lineup sometimes. Player's with records that are not that strong such as 2 wins and 4 losses would be wise to only play at their particular level that year until their level and success increases. It is not helpful for your long term development as a player to carry a significant losing record.

## **How does my rating change?**

When you first start playing USTA league you are asked to self-rate. The computer will ask you a series of question and based upon your answer it will assign a rating. Most players begin at a self-rating of 3.0 unless they've played for years or have extensive High School / College experience. After your initial year the computer will average your score against the player you competed with. Based upon yours and their win/loss record it will assign you a current rating.

## **What do all these types of ratings mean?**

A **self-rating** is an entry rating level determined by the new player based on questions asked in the TennisLink registration process. All players must enter league tennis with a valid computer rating or self-rate.

An **early start rating** is a tentative rating for exclusive use by players who register for an early start league prior to publication of year-end ratings. The number is based on the most current dynamic rating at the time of publication. Early start ratings are replaced by year-end ratings. If you play in an early start league with an early start rating, please check with your section to see if you may continue to compete on your team if your year-end rating goes up.

A **dynamic rating** is a calculation based on a single match result. A dynamic rating may change with each match played. A dynamic rating is the result of your current match averaged with up to three of your most recent dynamic results generated.

A **year-end rating** is a NTRP level assigned at conclusion of the league championship year that reflects level of ability. A player's year-end rating shall be used to enter leagues

during the following year and will be valid for up to three years or until another rating is generated.

## **FAQ's**

### **What is the difference between a dynamic rating and a year-end rating?**

- Dynamic ratings are not disclosed to players, where year-end ratings are published annually at NTRP levels.
- Dynamic ratings are expressed to the one-hundredth of a point, where year-end ratings are expressed only to the one-half point.
- Dynamic ratings are calculated regularly and based on an average of the previous four dynamic ratings, where year-end ratings are based 50% on one's cumulative dynamic rating during the season and 50% on the comparison to the benchmark player.

### **Does the dynamic calculation treat doubles partners differently?**

No. Dynamic calculation maintains the rating differential between doubles partners that existed before a match. For example if a 3.3 and a 3.5 player are paired together, specific match results are applied to each player equally and the two partners will maintain the .2 differential.

### **Does the dynamic calculation apply to Mixed Doubles League play?**

Yes, for players who participate exclusively in the Mixed Doubles Division. Mixed Doubles results will not be part of generating a player's year-end rating except for those players who play exclusively mixed doubles.

## **Grievance Procedure**

The Captain has authority to make decisions concerning the team. If a team member knows the captain has made a decision that is not within their authority. They may submit a request to the Tennis Committee to investigate the matter. The Tennis Committee may find in favor of the Captain, the team member, or decide it is not an issue for the committee to make a decision about. All decisions of the Tennis Committee are final.

Letter to Opposing Captain:

Hi Opposing Captain's Name,

We are pleased that our USTA league teams will be playing a match at Edgebrook at (time) on (day/date). A few items of info:

- You can find directions/map on our website [EDGEBROOKCLUB.ORG](http://EDGEBROOKCLUB.ORG)
- Our address is: 13454 SE Newport Way, Bellevue, WA, 98006 (not always clear on web maps)
- Our club accepts one payment of \$72 (\$12 per player) at the front desk
- Court time is 1 ½ hours, and we don't have an overflow court. If we have a match that is unfinished we may continue it at 10:30pm or if the team following us agrees and there is only a few minutes to finish then we may play over our time.
- We switch sides on odd games per USTA, unless all players agree differently
- Our curtains are open for safety purposes per USTA, unless all players on both adjacent courts agree to close them prior to the match
- There is filtered water on the courts (it's behind the curtain on the middle court)
- There are two vending machines with snacks and beverages
- There are two unisex restrooms/changing rooms in our main tennis building
- We will of course provide the tennis balls on all courts
- I don't currently have a warm-up or overflow court—I'll let you know if that changes
- Spectators are welcome in our viewing area as long as they abide by USTA rules and tennis etiquette (no cheering unforced errors or while match is in play, no coaching, etc.)
- We would like to host your players in our viewing area after the match with some food and beverages

Our team is looking forward to our match with you! If you have any questions, please call or email me. Thank you.

Best Regards,

# USTA Suggestions:

## BEFORE THE SEASON STARTS

**Forming a team.** Teams are formed in many ways. Some are groups of friends who start a team because they enjoy being together. Others are structured by tennis club pros or directors from their membership ranks. If you are looking for more players, check with your facility, local pro shops, and your teammates. They may know of others who would love to join you. Don't limit your team to only those you know. Half the fun of USTA League Tennis is meeting and making new friends.

**Getting Registered.** All team members must be registered on your roster in TennisLink (<http://national.usta.com>) prior to playing a match. To register, players must be a current member of the USTA and have either a valid computer rating or will need to self-rate.

**League Regulations.** The captain, as well as all league players, must read and follow the rules and regulations. National regulations are available on the web ([www.pnw.usta.com](http://www.pnw.usta.com)) and in a convenient booklet that you may receive from your local coordinator.

In addition, each section and local league may also have regulations that govern play. It is your responsibility to know and convey these to your players. It is also a good idea to acquire the *Friend at Court* rulebook to use as a general reference for rules of tennis.

**Home Matches.** Verify all home matches with your facility. Check for court availability, court fees, guest fees, and any other requirements of your home facility. Does your facility provide the balls for home matches or does the team?

**Player Availability.** Ask each team member to go through the schedule and let you know of any conflicts.

**Team Meeting.** Have a team meeting and agree on the team philosophy. Is the team playing to win or playing for fun? Will only the strongest players play matches or will everyone participate equally? Who will decide the match lineups? If everyone on the team is aware of these issues and agrees, you will have a much more successful season as captain. Having a coach, pro, or team manager assist you with team lineups may be helpful.

## ONE WEEK PRIOR TO MATCH

**Contact the opposing captain.** Confirm When (day/time); Where (get directions if necessary); Match Duration (will all courts be played at the same time or will this be a split match); Court fees?; Are spectators allowed?; Who is the captain or acting captain for the match?

**Verify home matches with your facility again and reserve courts.**

**Appoint acting captain** if you are playing to take care of pre-match details.

## DAY BEFORE MATCH

**Verify your starting lineup.** Arrange alternates.

**Check your roster on TennisLink.** Make sure all players are registered.

**Plan transportation and arrival time.** Arrange carpools if necessary.

## MATCH DAY – BEFORE MATCH

**Print match scorecard** from TennisLink. All eligible players, including any last minute additions to the roster, will be listed if you wait until just before leaving for the match to print your scorecard.

**Collect money** from your team and pay court fees and/or guest fees if necessary.

**Provide balls for home matches.** Every match should be played with new USTA approved tennis balls appropriate for the court surface.

**Meet with the opposing captain** and go over any ground rules. Discuss which match will be played on which court; which team will use what color scorecards; format for tie-breaks (Coman procedure or regular); and default procedure.

**Exchange scorecard lineups BEFORE** players walk onto the courts. All players should be present prior to exchanging lineups.

## IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE MATCH

**Get the score from each court** and record on your scorecard. Note the winner and record the score from the winner's perspective.

**Get opposing captain's signature** after the match is over. Both captains should agree on the winners and scores.

**Meet with your players** and air any questions or disputes. If possible, go have a meal together to promote team bonding!

## AFTER THE MATCH

**Record your match scores in TennisLink** within 48 hours of the match. If the opposing captain has already entered the scores, carefully check the entered scores and confirm or dispute the entry.

**File any necessary protest/grievance** in writing to your USTA League Coordinator.

## THROUGHOUT THE SEASON

**Have fun!** Treasure the camaraderie and friendships with your teammates and enjoy the spirit of competition!