

FAIRFIELD COUNTY TENNIS LEAGUE
Frequently Asked Questions regarding rules

On occasion there have been issues that have not been clearly addressed in the rules or have led to multiple interpretations resulting in questions or requests for further clarification. With that in mind, we have provided this FAQ to help clarify some issues. The rules are still to be considered the “go to” source.

Q. If a player(s) on a higher court i.e. court 1, 2 or 3, has not arrived for the match but is on the way, can we start the other matches without waiting for the higher court player(s) to arrive.

A. Matches on a lower court i.e. courts 2, 3 or 4 generally should not start until the players from the higher courts have arrived. This is because if, for example, a player that is intended to play on court 2 does not arrive, players from the lower courts should be moved up and court 4 would be defaulted, not court 2. However, if the player is on the way and that is conveyed to the other team, the other matches can be started, PROVIDED that it is understood that if the “on the way” player(s) does not arrive all courts will be forfeited from the court the on the way player was to play on AND the courts below.

For example, Team A is hosting Team B. It’s 6 PM and all players are there except for one of the players on Team A court 2. That player is contacted and indicates he’s on his way, almost there, etc. The other matches begin, but the court 2 player doesn’t arrive. The points for courts 2, 3 & 4 are awarded to Team B regardless of the scores. Of course, if the player from Team A does arrive, but is not ready to play by 6:30 PM or 6:45 PM the rules regarding a late start for that court **can** be enforced and the appropriate sets **can** be defaulted.

Q. Can matches be started when the 4 players scheduled on the same court have arrived? For example, if the court 4 players are ready can they start?

A. The answer to this is similar to the answer to the question above. The Board suggests that even if all 8 players from a team are not present the court(s) for which there are players available can be started, as long as the absent player(s) is confirmed to be on the way. However, the following penalties will apply if the player(s) doesn't show up:

If player(s) not showing up is on court #4, then that match will be defaulted (lose 1 point)

If player(s) not showing up is on court #3, then court #3 will be defaulted and court #4 will be forfeited (lose 2 points)

If player(s) not showing up is on court #2, then court #2 will be defaulted and courts #3 & #4 will be forfeited (lose 3 points)

If player(s) not showing up is on court #1, then court #1 will be defaulted and courts #2, #3 & #4 will be forfeited (lose all 4 points)

Q. It’s 95 degrees and very humid. Both teams want to postpone the match and play it the following Monday. Can we do that?

A. No! Rescheduling a match does not only involve the two teams discussing the delay. Matches can only be postponed due to rain or other related issues.

Q. It rained and our match was postponed. Neither team wants to play on the following Monday or Tuesday. Can we make the match up at the end of the season or some other time?

A. No! The match is to be played the following Monday or Tuesday, at the election of the home team. If the home team’s courts are not available the following Monday or Tuesday the matches can be moved to the visiting club or any other mutually agreeable venue. Postponing matches to a later date is not fair to the other teams in the division and may also become problematical because of weather or other influences.

Q. Our matches started and then it rained and they could not be completed. Do we have to restart all the matches at the same time?

A. No! Matches that have started, but not completed, have to be completed in 11 days, but can be played at different times or venues by agreement and at the convenience of the 4 players on that court. Rule C-5 provides that the points can also be split by mutual agreement, unless it's the last match of the season. **If not completed in 11 days the Executive Committee will decide how to score the points and can assess penalties of up to 2 points as stated in rule C-7.**

Q. Same Q as above, but only 3 of the 4 courts began play. Can different players than those at the match play in the makeup.

A. No! If any of the matches start, then the lineup for all courts should be maintained for the completion of that engagement. If none of the matches have started, then the lineups can be changed for the makeup engagement.

Q. We have more than 1 team in the open league. One of the teams is in div 1 and another team is in div 2. If I play a player from my div 2 team plays on the div 1 team on a court above the court(s) that my div 1 designated players are playing on, is that stacking?

A. Yes! The designated players on a team with more than one team in the league should be the best players on that team in rank order. In keeping with the "best against best" principle, all designated players available for a given engagement should play on courts above non designated players. To do otherwise could be considered stacking. However, if the div 2 player teamed with the player designated 1 and played on a higher court than the other designated players on the div 1 team, but were a better doubles team than the teams that played on courts below, it would not be stacking. It could also be stacking to play, for example, the player designated 6th on court 1, when the player designated 2 is playing on court 4. However, if that 6th designated player playing on court 1 and his partner were a better team than the player designated 2 playing on court 4 would be if he played with the same partner, it might not be stacking.

Q. We have 4 teams in the open league. One team is in each of the 4 divisions. If I play a designated player from my div 3 team on the div 1 team while designated players on the div 2 team play on the div 2 team, is that stacking?

A. Yes, it could be! As above, in adhering to the "best against best" principle the designated players on the div 2 team are supposed to be better than the designated players on the div 3 team. Therefore, one of them, in rank order, i.e. the highest designated player available, should move up to the div 1 team for that engagement. However, if by moving a designated player from the div 3 team to the div 1 team resulted in a better doubles team than would have otherwise been the case by playing a designated player from the div 2 team on the div 1 team, it would not necessarily be stacking.

Q. John Doe is head pro at XYZ Div 1 club. It's in his contract that his family has a full membership. Can his son play on the XYZ team as a junior?

A. Yes, the pro is not eligible to play for the club, but his son can.

Q. John Smith is 21 years old and a member of XYZ club. So is his dad. As a 21 yr old John pays dues but at a lower rate (about 25%) than his Dad and other regular full dues paying member of that club. John's membership status at XYZ is that he is considered an associate member The FCTL rules state "A junior player is defined as a non-dues paying member, etc." Since John pays dues can he play as a regular player, not as a junior thereby allowing XYZ club to play a junior and John in the same engagement?

A. No, John's membership is tied to that of his father's and, while he can play, he would be considered a junior. The intent of the rule regarding junior members is that only one player younger than 25 yrs old would play per engagement, the exception being that if that individual were a full member on his own status, then he would not be considered a junior.

Q. When does a forfeit become effective? If you tell the captain of the other team you are going to forfeit a match or matches and then the match is rained out, without any of the matches starting, are you stuck with the forfeit?

A. A forfeit becomes effective when any of the other matches for that specific engagement begins. So, there is no defaulted court if you tell the other captain you are going to default a court but none of the matches for that engagement actually start. Calling ahead to tell a captain about a default is more a courtesy so as to not inconvenience the opponent rather than to concede the point.

Q. The rules state that if a match does not begin by 6:30 and one team is ready to play but the other team is not, one set of the match will be defaulted to the team that is ready to play. Additionally, the match will be defaulted if one of the teams is not ready to play by 6:45 p.m. We have lights and want to play tennis. Can we elect to play the full match with no set defaults even though one of our opponents is late?

A. Yes! The team that is ready to play has the option to waive this rule. While it might be inconsiderate to be late for a match and keep opponents waiting, traffic and other delays are sometimes unavoidable. On the other hand, sometimes we have to be somewhere after a match and a late start can interfere. However, we are a tennis league and most players want to play tennis. Some clubs have lights and more summer light would not prevent the match from being completed if it were to start late. Consequently, the rule can be waived but it is totally at the option of the team that is on the court and ready to play.

Q. Assume I play our best player available for an engagement, who happens to be our #1 ranked player, on court #1 with our 5th best player that is available for that engagement. For that same engagement there are other better (higher ranked) players than our 5th best player that played. Is it considered stacking?

A. No! If the combination of your 1st & 5th best players available for any given engagement would beat any remaining combination of players that played in that engagement it would not be considered stacking. **The overall guiding concept should be to create competition that is as fairly matched on each court as possible. Stacking is frowned upon by the league and penalties can be assessed if the grievance committee determines that stacking did occur.**

Q. In a match on court 1 the receiving team player who was not receiving the serve was jumping around in and out of the service box and waving his hands. This caused the server to become distracted resulting in double faults. Is this allowed?

A. No! We abide by the USTA rules which clearly state that any distraction by an opposing player is considered poor sportsmanship and the point would be awarded to the server even though the serve was not in. The USTA states that if the receiver's partner suddenly and abruptly moves away before the ball is struck by the server, then it could be deemed that the only reason they initially took such a position was to hinder the server, and that is not allowed. The receiver may change positions to receive serve at any time prior to the serve and may even stand in the service box. Waving the racquet, making noises or stomping the feet is not permitted by any player.

NOTE: These Q&A apply to the open, 50+ & 60+ divisions. However, when reference is made to 4 courts, for the 50+ & 60+ leagues, court 4 would be changed to court 3.