

NOTE: *The resolutions in these minutes were approved by the USTA NorCal Board on April 16, 2025. These minutes were approved by Junior Council on June 4, 2025.*

Andrea Norman, chair of the Junior Council, called the meeting to order at 7:03 pm and roll call was conducted. The meeting was held by Google Meet video conference.

Committee Members Present: Andrea Norman (chair), Matt Brunner, Jason Ho, Luis Reis and Caroline Sheu.

Committee Members Absent: Suzy Cossette, Cesar de Oliveira

USTA NorCal Staff Present: Beth Workeneh, Senior Manager Junior Competition; Tommy Tu, Junior Competition & Tournaments Manager; Lani-Rae Green, Player Development Specialist; Vinod Herur, Officials & Sportsmanship Specialist.

1. Welcome & Introduction of Members & Staff. As this is the beginning of a new term and new members have joined the council, Andrea asked each person present to give a brief introduction of themselves, including their role in tennis and one thing each does outside of tennis

2. Chair Report.

- **October 2024 Junior Council Recommendations:** Andrea reported that all of the proposals approved by Junior Council in October have been approved by the Board.
- **Amendments to USTA Junior Tournament, Ranking & Sanctioning Regulations:** Andrea announced that the amendments reviewed and recommended for approval in the last quarter of 2024 were approved by the national Junior Competition Committee. These include adding international team events to the list of ranking tournaments, updating the USTA National Championship wild card criteria, adding the option to use the 8-game pro set format at Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5 doubles events regardless of whether they are stand-alone or doubles-only, and codifying the number of Open and Closed Level 4 tournaments that will be held by each Section annually.

Luis Reis joined the call during prior to the Chair’s Participation Report.

- **Participation Report:** Andrea directed the members’ attention to the participation report included in the meeting packet. She noted that unique player participation in 2024 remained flat as compared to 2023, and is slightly down for year-to-date 2024. Additionally, she noted that total tournament registrations were up by approximately 900 in 2024 as compared to 2023. Finally, she noted NorCal had slightly higher representation in the players in the top 150 in 2024 (94 players) as compared to 2023 (88 players). Both total registrations and number of players in the top 150 factor into how quota for USTA National Championships is calculated. Quota increased for NorCal players in the BG 18, 16 and 14 divisions of the National Hard Courts and Clay Courts by one:

YEAR	Hard Courts & Clay Courts		Indoors	Winters
	BG18/16/14	BG12	All Div	All Div
2025 Quota	5	3	1	3
2024 Quota	4	3	1	2

Matt Brunner joined the call during the Chair’s Participation Report.

- **Bill Talbert Sportsmanship Award:** Andrea announced that once again Junior Council will be responsible for selecting NorCal’s nominee for the prestigious Bill Talbert Sportsmanship Award. NorCal has had many past winners including Natasha Rajaram and Karan Raghavendra (2024), Dylan Tsoi (2023), Nicholas Chen (2022), Patrick Toman (2021), Stevie Gould (2019), Sarah Choy (2018), Andrew Ton (2017), Lane Leschly (2016), David Ball (2013), Hadley Berg (2012), Andrew Ball (2011), Jamie Pawid (2010), Shaun Chaudhuri (2009), Taylor Matsumoto (2004), Tyler Browne (2002). Andrea reviewed the process for selecting the nominees and asked if members had any suggestions for improvement. The Council agreed that the following process would be followed:
 - ≈ Survey of NorCal players, parents, coaches, administrators, and officials (publicized via social media and emails to administrators and officials.

- ≈ Staff and chair narrowed the list of candidates down to fewer players based on survey and sportsmanship recognition of candidates.
- ≈ Candidates contacted to provide additional information.
- ≈ Candidate information distributed to Junior Council to select two nominees

3. Approval of Minutes. Council considered approval of the minutes of the meeting held October 7, 2024. The following motion was duly made by Luis Reis, seconded by Andrea Norman, and **approved** by a vote of 5 in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Junior Council meeting held October 7, 2024, be approved as presented.

4. Staff Report.

- **Junior Awards Party:** Lani reported that the 2024 NorCal Junior Awards (held in January 2025) was the most successful yet, with over 250 juniors and guests in attendance on January 25, 2025, at Big AI's in Milpitas. We honored several categories of players and providers from 10U Net Generation, Junior Team Tennis, Junior Tournaments, and Player Development. In addition to our usual award categories, we brought back individual awards for our Tournament Sportsmanship (for all age divisions, including the Elena Cadet and Daniel Scafidi) and introduced a new Tournament Organizer of the Year award.
- **Sportsmanship Awards: Participation Rate of Tournaments in Reporting Winners:** Tommy reported that the participation rate on the part of our tournament directors is not good, something that is disappointing given that sportsmanship awards are required in the NorCal Junior Tournament Regulations to be presented at every tournament. NorCal also has a form that permits families to submit the names of players that should receive recognition. Parents are currently reporting sportsmanship recognition at a greater rate than tournament directors.
- **Maze Cup:** Tommy announced that the 50th Annual Maze Cup will be held on May 2-4 at the Berkeley Tennis Club. Nick Fustar and Alexandra Porta will be the coaches. Applications have just opened and outreach has begun to attract NorCal's top players.
- **Electronic Line Calling.** National has been piloting at National Tournaments and the USTA has a proposal to include regulations for Electronic Line Calling ("ELC") in the USTA Regulations starting immediately upon adoption. During pilots at last year's Level 1 National Indoors, ELC was well received by players and officials. It was reported that ELC helped reduced conflict, created a calmer and trusting atmosphere, and reduced match delays. The USTA will be conducting additional pilots at National tournaments this year. NorCal staff members have participated in sales pitch calls with four ELC vendors as the Sections have been given funding to invest in ELC and it is up to each Section as to how and when they will invest.
- **Other Events.** Tommy announced other upcoming events to be run by NorCal:
 - May 17-19: Level 2 at Sleep Hollow Swim & Tennis Club - B18
 - June 28-19: Level 5 West Quest at St Mary's College - BG16 & 14
 - August 8-10: Level 4 Intersectional at Diamond Hills BG16 (NorCal, Hawaii Pacific, Intermountain, Southwest, Pacific Northwest)
 - September 12-14: Level 2 Intersectional at Diamond Hills - BG16 (SocCal, NorCal, Pacific Northwest and Intermountain)
 - October 26: Herb Cup Invitational at Moraga Country Club - Top eight BG12-18 doubles players
- **Sportsmanship Report.** Vinod reported that Southern, SoCal, and MoValley are currently using Match Tennis App to nominate players for sportsmanship awards. The App keeps a running tally of nominations players have received. The App is free to use. Sections are giving awards throughout the year and there is a year-end grand prize that includes tickets to professional tournaments. NorCal is looking to adopt the same program in NorCal at junior ranking tournaments.
 - Vinod also announced work has been done to amend and restate the procedures for filing grievances and appeals of suspensions and how they are adjudicated by the Sportsmanship Committee.

5. Report from National Junior Competition Committee – Caroline Sheu.

- At the national Committee's first meeting, the primary topic of discussion was the selection criteria for the national Scholar Athlete Award and possibly increasing the monetary award (which was \$2K in 2024).
- Tommy added that soon the number of times a player has withdrawn from a tournament will be viewable of a player's USTA profile.
- Lani reported that a warning will soon be implemented in Serve Tennis to alert players to when they have entered in concurrent tournaments and inform them of the permission requirement from both Tournament Committees.

6. Doubles-Only Draw Size When Fewer Than 32 Entries Received. Andrea directed the member's attention to the proposal in the meeting packet related to draw sizes when fewer than 32 entries are received at several of NorCal's Doubles-Only Tournaments: Level 4 and Level 5 Dominant Duo and Level 3, Level 4 and Level 5 Doubles-Only Tournaments. The draw size and format are set in the Regulations in a manner that guarantees teams three matches. In January of 2024 Junior Council created a table that gave Tournament Committees instruction on the number of teams to select to guarantee each team gets these three matches because accepting certain numbers of teams could result in teams getting one or two matches.

At the recently held Mixed Doubles Level 3 Sectionals, it was discovered that the tournament could not guarantee a team three matches when there were 21 teams. This led to a complete review of the table created in January 2024 to determine what corrections were needed. It was discovered that:

- In a Draw of 21, three teams would play two matches
- In a Draw of 22, two teams could play two matches
- In a Draw of 23, one team could play two matches

Another factor to consider is that there are often withdrawals in the back draw that could further limit actual matches player, although ranking points are assigned.

Council reviewed two different proposals to address this issue:

- #1: The first proposal removes match guarantees, which would result in teams getting at least two matches (the entry fees are \$44 per person for an L5, \$49 per person for an L4 and \$55 per person for an L3). The proposal also includes for the Compass Draw to be played to completion and not stop once a team has lost three rounds.
- #2: The second proposal limits the draw to 16 teams and have alternates (currently when 16-23 teams enter, the draw limit is 16)

Discussion followed that resulted in additional options to address the issue including:

- Eliminating draw limits to allow for more teams to play, something that likely can't fully be done until 2026 given that tournaments for 2025 have already been sanctioned;
- Changing the draw format to limit the effect a withdrawal has on a Compass Draw
- Changing the match guarantee to two matches
- Possibly taking into consideration the levels of these tournaments and create different draw sizes and formats based on the level
- Creating a round robin with a playoff format using a single set format and No-Ad Scoring

The Council also noted it would need to be mindful of the various needs of the players competing at each level, from both a player development and ranking point expectation.

Jason Ho left the call during the discussion.

Following discussion, Andrea announced she would work with staff to prepare several additional options for consideration to address the issue of numbers of entries at NorCal's doubles-only tournaments.

6. Extending Tournament Assistance Grants (TAG) to the Junior Circuit. Andrea presented a proposal to amend the Tournament Assistance Grants (TAG) program to include Junior Circuit Events in the list of tournaments that qualify for entry fee reimbursement. Both the Chair of the JTT/Local Play Committee and its NorCal staff liaison are in support of this expansion.

Andrea noted that upon the recommendation of Junior Council, the NorCal Board approved the re-introduction of the Tournament Assistance Grant (TAG) Program in June 2024. The Program provides assistance to players in financial need with reimbursements of entry fees up to \$400 per year. The 2024 funding for the program, \$30,000, was a one-time budget addition for 2024 only, and the existence of the Program in the future is dependent upon future budgets. Out of that \$30K, approximately \$9,000 was paid out to approximately 20 players between June and the end of 2024.

For 2025, increases in the sanction fees were approved and revenue from this increase is projected to be approximately \$8,000. An additional \$7,000 was budgeted from other NorCal revenue, for a total of \$15K that supports approximately 37 players. To date, 8 players have enrolled, and ongoing efforts to publicize the program are occurring. The marketing includes announcing the opportunity:

- On every tournament home page;
- On every Monday tournament email;
- In Junior player newsletters;
- In NJTL communications; and
- In emails to coaches.

There are also plans to cross-promote TAG with JTT participants.

Although the participation numbers to date are low, given the maximum of 37 participants in 2025 that can be accepted based on the budget, if NorCal gets approaches the 37 participants, other options can be explored including:

- Requesting additional funds in the budget;
- Considering increasing the Level 7 sanction fee;
- Consider adding a small sanction fee for the Junior Circuit Events (although this option would have to be approved by the JTT/Local Play Committee.

Tommy added that entry fees for Junior Circuit events are approximately \$45 and will help players and their families who are starting to play tennis to defray the cost of entry level competition.

Following discussion of the options, the following motion was duly made by Luis Reis, seconded by Caroline Sheu, and **approved** by a vote of 5 in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions:

RESOLVED: That, effective immediately, the USTA NorCal Tournament Assistance Grant (TAG) Program attached as Exhibit A be amended to include Junior Circuit Events in the list of authorized events.
(Underlined language is proposed to be added; stricken-through language is proposed to be deleted.)

- 7. Preliminary Review of 2026 Calendar.** Andrea directed the Council's attention to the preliminary draft of 2026 Calendar. As the Council had already gone over the time allotted for the meeting she asked the members to study the preliminary draft and come prepared at the next meeting to discuss possible changes for next year.

Following conclusion of business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:51 pm.

Tournament Assistance Grant (TAG) Program Overview

The TAG program provides economically disadvantaged players with a discount on junior tournament entry fees. Funding for this program is determined on an annual basis by the USTA NorCal Board of Directors.

Junior Player Eligibility. Only players that meet the following requirements may apply for a TAG:

- USTA NorCal junior members who meet the Residency Requirements set forth in Regulation IV. of the USTA Junior Tournament, Ranking, and Sanctioning Regulations; and
- The Adjusted Gross Income on the most recently filed tax return(s) of applicant’s primary custodial parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must be equal to or less than 500% of the Modified Adjusted Gross Household Income as determined in the Federal Poverty Guidelines (see below). These thresholds are based on the number of persons living in the family household and are adjusted from time to time by the government. Tax returns will be destroyed once the Adjusted Gross Income is verified.

2025 Federal Poverty Guidelines	
Persons in Family Household	Modified Adjusted Gross Household Income (500%)
1	\$78,250
2	\$105,750
3	\$133,250
4	\$160,750
5	\$188,250
6	\$215,750
7	\$243,250
8	\$270,750
<i>For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$27,500</i>	

Maximum TAGs Per Year

Approximately 37 players will be awarded TAGs in 2025. This number will be adjusted annually based on the funding allocated to the program. Approved applicants (also known as TAG Participants) are eligible to receive reimbursements equivalent to 50% of an entry fee for up to 10 Authorized USTA NorCal Tournaments each calendar year (January 1-December 31), which total amount may not exceed \$400 per player per year.

Authorized USTA NorCal Tournaments

The following are considered Authorized USTA NorCal Tournaments:

- Any USTA NorCal Junior Circuit Event;
- Any USTA NorCal junior tournament sanctioned by USTA NorCal that counts for junior ranking; and
- Any junior tournament for which a NorCal player is selected to represent USTA NorCal on a team, *except* any such team tournament that otherwise provides for a player stipend paid by USTA NorCal or the USTA.

TAG Application & Approval of TAG Participants

- USTA NorCal shall publish all information regarding the TAG Program, including the TAG Application, to its website.
- An eligible player may apply to participate in the TAG Program at any time during a calendar year by completing and submitting the TAG Application. A new TAG Application must be submitted for each calendar year.
- The TAG Application shall include a request for Adjusted Gross Income on the most recently filed federal tax return and shall require that a copy of the most-recently filed tax return accompany the TAG Application.
- USTA NorCal staff will determine the eligibility of the applicants based on the eligibility criteria.
- All Applicants will be notified by USTA NorCal as to whether the Application has been approved. Approved applicants are known as TAG Participants.

Eligibility for Reimbursement for an Authorized USTA NorCal Tournament

- **Sportsmanship:** TAG Participants shall maintain a high level of good sportsmanship. TAG Participants shall not receive a TAG reimbursement for a tournament if they are assessed two (2) or more suspension points during the tournament. Additionally, any player that has six (6) or more suspension points on their record at any time is not eligible to receive a TAG reimbursement for a tournament.

- **Play to Completion:** TAG Participants are required to play a tournament for which they are requesting a TAG reimbursement to completion. For the purposes of the TAG Program, this means a player must not have withdrawn from the tournament without playing a match or withdrawn after the start of the tournament for reason other than injury, illness, or personal circumstance. Matches won by withdrawal, walkover, default and retirement count as playing a match.

Procedure for Reimbursement:

- USTA NorCal shall publish all information regarding requesting a reimbursement, including the Reimbursement Request Form, to its website.
- No later than seven (7) days after the last day of an Authorized USTA NorCal Tournament, a TAG Participant must formally request to receive the TAG reimbursement using the Reimbursement Request Form. Failure to request a TAG within the 7-day time limit will be denied. Information on how to submit a TAG reimbursement requested will be posted to the USTA NorCal website and sent to all TAG Participants.
- USTA NorCal staff will determine whether the TAG Participant has met the Sportsmanship and Play to Completion eligibility requirements required for reimbursement.
- TAG Participants that meet the Sportsmanship and Play to Completion grant eligibility requirements shall be sent a reimbursement to the address provided on the Application.

Reimbursements may take up to 45 days to process.