

2026 JTT LEVEL OF PLAY CRITERIA

USTA North Carolina strives for fair competition. Our primary goal is to preserve the integrity of the Beginner division by ensuring players who have progressed beyond entry-level skills are placed in appropriate divisions, maintaining fair and competitive play.

- Player placement depends on multiple factors and follows the rules and placement criteria outlined in this document.
- All requirements must be followed unless an exception is approved by the LLC.
- It is the responsibility of the coach/manager to check ranking criteria and eligibility before registering each player. Failure to do so may result in disqualification of the player(s) and/or team, as determined by the local league coordinator and USTA North Carolina staff.

Category	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited tennis experience. • Learning the basic rules. • Developing coordination while hitting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates regularly in clinics to develop technical skills, speed, accuracy, and pace. • May play in a low position on a varsity high school team • Participates and wins matches in entry-level tournaments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trains technically & tactically. • Regularly competes in L6 or higher tournaments. • May play in a high position on a varsity high school team. • Has a National Standing
Technique	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistent strokes. • Slower, inconsistent serve. • Basic grips & swing shapes. • Volleys & overheads are unformed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More consistent strokes with spin and pace development. • Reliable serve. • Strengthening and using volleys/overheads in play. • Improving directional control to run basic patterns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent strokes with spin, pace, and placement. • Serve variety (flat, kick, slice). • Can hit specialty shots: half volleys, lobs, approach shots and drop shots.
Match Play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short rallies, often blocking or pushing the ball. • Needs help with scoring & match formats. • Focus is on contact and having fun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses full strokes when running for a ball. • Long rallies; compete with more strategy and control. • Moves well to track down difficult shots. • Reliable player at the net during doubles play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructs points intentionally, forces errors. • Maintains consistency under pressure. • Adapts strategy mid-match. • Minimizes errors and capitalizes on opportunities. • Confident at net and in all court areas. Recovers quickly.

Placement Criteria

1. Once a player plays Intermediate or Advanced, they **must not** return to Beginner, unless approved by the LLC.
2. A player with a fully verified or high-confidence rating under any rating system **must not** play Beginner, without approval from the LLC.
3. For teams with both Beginner and Intermediate players, it is mandatory to reach out to your LLC for guidance.
4. A player who has had strong results in the Beginner division in past seasons and/or advanced to a State Championship **may be** required to play at the Intermediate level.
5. A player who has made the roster of a school tennis team **may be** required to play at the Intermediate level.
 - Note: Some high schools have a no-cut policy or allow all players to participate; this alone may not indicate Intermediate-level ability.
6. When deciding between Beginner vs. Intermediate or Intermediate vs. Advanced, consider each player's standing on your team:
 - If a player on your Beginner team meets Intermediate criteria and is not your top player, the team should be placed in Intermediate.
 - If a player meets Advanced criteria and is not your top player, the team should be placed in Advanced.

Intermediate Ranking Criteria

- Players with 30 or more ranking points in any age group by Combined National Standings List as of 1/8/26 for spring, 7/29/26 for fall, **must** play Intermediate in any age group.

Advanced Ranking Criteria

- Players with a National standing in the ranges below as of January 8, 2026 (Spring) and July 29, 2026 (Fall), **must** play Advanced.
 - 12U: 1-650 – must play ADV in either 12U, 14U or 18U INT or 18U ADV
 - 14U: 1-1500 – must play ADV in 14U or 18U age group
 - 18U: 1-1500 – must ADV in 18U age group
 - Use the standings list provided, or you may look up any players using USTA's player search feature. TennisLink will NOT stop an ineligible player from registering on a team if it is due to their standing.