

ADDENDUM - LEVEL OF PLAY GUIDELINES

USTA North Carolina strives for fairness in competition. Our primary goal is to preserve the integrity of the Beginner division by ensuring that players who have clearly progressed beyond entry-level skills are placed appropriately.

If any coach/manager is unsure where to place a player/team they should contact their local league coordinator prior to the team registration deadline.

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 entry-level tournaments and wins 	<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

Intermediate Ranking Criteria

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

Advanced Ranking Criteria

- Players with a National standing in the ranges below as of January 7, 2026, shall play Advanced.
 - 12U: 1-650 – shall play ADV in either 12U, 14U or 18U INT or 18U ADV
 - 14U: 1-1500 – shall play ADV in 14U or 18U age group
 - 18U: 1-1500 – shall 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. *It is the responsibility of the coach/manager to check eligibility before registering each player. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.*

Additional Placement Considerations for Players/Teams

- Once a player plays Intermediate or Advanced, they shall not return to Beginner unless approved by the LLC.
- A player with a fully verified or high-confidence rating under any rating system shall not play Beginner without approval from the LLC.
- For teams with both Beginner and Intermediate players, it's mandatory to reach out to your LLC for guidance.
- If a player had strong results in the Beginner division in past seasons and/or went to a State Championship.
- Made the roster of a school tennis team
 - Note: Some high schools have a no-cut policy or allow all players to participate, so this may not always indicate Intermediate-level ability.
- 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.

Unsure where to place a player or a team? Contact your LLC **before** the team registration deadline.