

# Memorandum

To: NM State High School Coaches  
Fr: Scott Owen, Tournament Director for the 2025 NMAA State High School Tennis Championships & Brian Bingham, Tournament Referee  
Da: March 13, 2025  
Re: Specific Rules/Procedures during the Championships

While the NMAA State High School Championships is not a USTA-sanctioned event, in 2003, the NMAA took the formal policy decision that USTA Rules & Regulations would govern the officiating of the event. Yet, where certain NMAA rules & regulations have had to be formulated for use, those supersede USTA Rules & Regulations in conducting the tournament.

The following most important USTA Rules & Regulations will govern the 2025 event.

## Rest Between Matches

The USTA 2025 Friend at Court, III. "Conducting The Tournament" C. "Rest" 1. "Rest Between Matches" page #95 states – "The Referee shall offer the players at least the minimum rest between matches specified in Table 11" appearing on page 96 "Minimum Rest Between Matches" which is 60 minutes for all "Junior" players 18 and under. During the Championships, we intend to enforce that minimum rest on all players and between all matches.

## "Recovery Rule"

The USTA 2025 Friend at Court - Table 11, page #96, also, informs us on this issue.

*It states: "The Recovery Rule requires the Referee to offer a player two hours of rest after a singles match that uses a format consisting of the best of 3 tiebreak sets or more if the player's next match is singles. The regulation does not apply to short set matches, matches that play a tiebreak in lieu of a final third set, nor to any indoor match that lasts less than two hours."*

During the Championships, we intend to administer the Recovery Rule in the following way:

When players come off court having just played a singles match in the best of three tiebreak sets format, and visit the tournament desk to report their score, if either of those players' subsequent match is another singles match, the NMAA tournament (director, referee, desk staff) **will offer** both players 2-hours rest prior to commencing play for their next singles match. That does not mean either individual player must accept the offer. **INDIVIDUAL PLAYERS CAN DECIDE TO PLAY THEIR NEXT MATCH WITH ONLY THE MINIMUM AMOUNT OF REST (60 minutes), OR, NO REST, WHICH BECOMES, AT THAT POINT, THAT PLAYER'S PERSONAL ACCEPTANCE OF FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES HE OR SHE MAY SUFFER THEREAFTER.**

As for rest periods between **the end of a best of a three set singles match and the beginning of a best of three set doubles match**, the referee (tournament desk) "should offer more than the minimum rest in Table 11" - the minimum being 60 minutes. But here again, the responsibility of the tournament (director, referee, desk staff) is to "offer" the player the allowable rest time under

the published rules. **It is the player's responsibility to observe the allowable rest time.** When any player elects not to observe the allowable rest time in any given situation of which he or she is a part, the tournament has no further liability or responsibility towards that player relative to their making that particular choice.

**Rest Between 2nd & 3rd sets (in a split sets situation)**

In accord with the USTA **2025 Friend at Court – Table 12, “Time Allowed Between Sets” page #97**, NMAA will observe the “*mandatory 10-minute rest period*” in a split sets situation in all best of 3 set matches (singles & doubles) during both the individual and team competition portions of this event. During this authorized 10 minute break:

- no player shall practice - A player practicing during an authorized rest break subjects themselves to the PPS for unsportsmanlike conduct if an official observes a player in the act;
- players may receive coaching;
- players may leave the court, however, they must return within the 10-minute period to resume play and avoid penalties for “lateness” per the resumption of play **2025 FAC Table 16, page #111 – “Penalties for Lateness,” wherein, Section C – “Lateness after 10-Minute Rest Period” Page #112** states as follows:

Lateness of one player up to 5 minutes	Game Penalty
Lateness of one player for more than 5 minutes	Default
Both players equally late up to 5 minutes	No Penalty
Both players late but arrive at different times	The last player to arrive loses one game unless the difference in arrival time is more than 5 minutes, in which case the last player to arrive is defaulted.
Both players are more than 5 minutes late	The Referee may:
	• Default both players;
	• Allow the match to continue without penalty; or
	• Allow the match to continue and penalize the last player to arrive one game unless the difference in arrival times is more than 5 minutes, in which case the last player to arrive is defaulted.

**Inclement Weather**

In the event of rain, **players should continue playing until the tournament referee or site referee, by loudspeaker announcement, calls for a suspension of play.** At the moment of such an announcement, players should collect the match balls quickly and protect them from becoming wet pending the resumption of play, and, be certain to maintain knowledge of the score fixed at the time of suspension of play, as agreed to by both players.

In the event that lightning is registered at a distance of 5 miles away or less, the site umpire will suspend play on all courts for 30 minutes; at which point, if no more lightning is registered, play will continue.

In the case of either suspension of play due to rain or lightening, players will not resume play until a loudspeaker announcement is made to do so. This is a matter of insurance liability on the part of both the tournament organizers (NMAA) and the City of Albuquerque, and therefore must be followed.

### **Dress Code**

In addition to the NMAA policy regarding uniform attire during the high school championships, it is USTA-SWS policy that:

**All players are required to wear appropriate tennis attire. Cut off shorts, bare midriffs, compression shorts & tights (alone), or any other attire that is simply recreational and/or not tennis-oriented is NOT acceptable!**

If an official working the NMAA high school championships, becomes aware of a "fashion" infraction of the above-stated policy, that official will bring it to the attention of the player and ask if they have anything else to wear suitable for playing their match. If the player does not, the official shall inform the player of the dress code and strongly suggest they wear something more suitable for the remainder of the tournament or risk being prohibited from continuing. Tournament directors and desk staff will make the same observation and instruction to any player. The bottom line is discretion and to avoid any embarrassment to a player. However, players must be aware that this is a policy that must be followed.

### **Coaching**

Coaching will be permitted through the fence on **changeovers and set breaks**, not on-court. And coaching will be permitted during authorized rest breaks - i.e. **off-court** during the 10 minutes between the end of the 2nd set and beginning of the 3rd set in a split set situation.

### **Medical Time Out (MTO)\***

In accord with the USTA **2025** FAC III. E. **“Medical Timeout and Bleeding Timeout”** page **100**, “1. A medical time out consists of evaluation time as determined by the Referee plus a maximum of three minutes treatment time for a treatable medical condition.” The duration of an MTO is **three** (3) minutes for treatment; with a maximum time of **15 minutes for any** total stoppage of play as timed by an on-court official. If a player believes he or she requires a medical timeout, that player must stop play and get the nearest official to come to that court. The official will then call the trainer to that court. The official will then time the MTO from the moment the trainer, after reaching the court, makes an evaluation, and informs the official that treatment has begun. At that moment, the timed 3-minutes commences as it appears on the umpire’s stopwatch. “The maximum time allowed for evaluation and treatment is 15 minutes.” “If the maximum total time is exceeded,” the player will be penalized under the point penalty system for “delay” – “not resuming play within 30 seconds after a medical timeout or bleeding timeout.”

### **MTO Cramping\***

One heat-related occurrence of cramping is permitted during a match. If a second heat-related MTO must be taken during a match, the player must retire. A player is entitled to only one medical timeout for all cramping and heat-related conditions during a match.

### **MTO Bleeding\***

The USTA 2025 FAC III.E.2 page 100 states: “*Bleeding Timeout. A bleeding timeout consists of up to 15 minutes to stop visible bleeding, clean up the court, and dispose of contaminated items.*” A mandatory bleeding timeout begins when a player notifies an official or acknowledges visible bleeding. A maximum time of 15 minutes is allowed for a bleeding timeout, within which the bleeding must be stopped, playing area cleaned up, with someone having disposed of any contaminated items – i.e. towels, clothing, shoes, socks, accessories, balls, etc. as applicable. If bleeding has not stopped within the 15 minutes of time allowed, the player must retire from the match. If bleeding has stopped within the 15 minutes of time allowed, but the playing area has not been cleaned up, the Referee may move the match to another court, if another court is available, or continue cleaning up the court. However, such action is not to exceed 15 minutes of total stoppage of play to stop visible bleeding, clean up the court, and dispose of contaminated items successfully. **\*Coaching is NOT permitted during any medical or bleeding time out.**

### **“Penalties for Lateness” for Start of Match**

As per USTA 2025 FAC Table 16.A, page #111 – See Table

### **Point Penalty System**

The USTA point penalty system will be in effect at all times, and, officials will inform both NMAA and coaches of all unsportsmanlike behavior carried out by players and code violations issued.

### **\*\*Most Common Hindrance Issue\*\* (from years of observation of this event)**

One of the most common moments of exuberant behavior that happens at this particular tournament during the pressure of highly contested matches seems to be a player hindering an opponent’s returns. When Player A hits an apparent ‘winner’ and shouts “come on” (or any other such encouraging outburst) to urge themselves onward to glory, if Player B has “a play on the ball” but is distracted by Player A’s verbal outburst and ends up losing a step to get to that ball and return it, Player B experiences what is called a “deliberate hindrance” committed by Player A, and therefore Player B wins the point. When this moment happens with an official present on court, the official will call the “deliberate hindrance” and award the point to Player B (in this case) immediately. Keeping with this example, when this moment happens with no official on court or in direct observance of what happened, the players must award the point to Player A (who hit the supposed *winner*), stop play, allow the heat of the moment to pass, and get the nearest official to come to that court. The official will then explain that nothing can be done about the fact of what happened to award the point otherwise as the moment has passed, OR, replay the point, since that is not within the USTA rule system to do, and, because it is not a sufficiently rare occurrence to justify replaying the point. For the rest of that match and all future matches, the players must resolve to hit their shots in their effort to win points, and save their self-congratulatory outbursts until after the points are completed.

### **Restroom Breaks**

No limit in number; prefer set breaks only; must be genuine need; 15 minutes maximum time allowed due to the distance from the courts. Beyond 15 minutes break for a toilet visit will result in a player's retirement from the match.

### **Change of Attire (Women)**

A change of attire break consists of a reasonable amount of time when an official determines that there is a genuine need. No coaching is allowed during a change of attire break. When possible, these breaks should be taken during a set break. If this is not possible, then the break should be taken at an odd game changeover. Breaks taken at other times are to be limited to true emergencies.

### **Foot Faults**

When in direct observation of the match in progress, the umpire must make the call immediately.

### **Overrules**

Officials can and will make such calls from off court if in direct view of play. When on court or through the fence in direct observation of the court, an umpire will overrule immediately any good ball mistakenly called out by a player. For the officials, the goal is accuracy and fairness to all players at all times. For impartial officials, there is no difference between the first point of a match and a match point in facilitating accuracy in questions of tennis fact or questions of tennis law. Officials will use their discretion in overruling a call, that a player has made, that is egregiously incorrect – whether in or out on a serve, return of serve, or any ground stroke including volleys.

### **Scoring disputes**

The officials will handle these situations in accord with **USTA 2025 FAC Code #32, “Disputes,” page #41**. When scoring disputes occur, and cannot be solved quickly, players are to stop play and one of them is to leave the court to get an official to visit that court and help them solve the problem - with the players' involved in the solution.

### **Sportsmanship and Player Conduct**

The NMAA holds players and coaches to a high standard of conduct and sportsmanship on and off the court, as outlined in The Code – **2025** Friend at Court (FAC) pages 37 - 43. **USTA 2025 FAC Section IV.C.18 page #107** states that a “player shall not engage in unsportsmanlike conduct.” During the course of a match a player shall not engage in verbal abuse or visible or audible profanity or obscenity, racket abuse, ball abuse, physical abuse, or other unsportsmanlike conduct. **USTA 2025 FAC Table 14 “POINT PENALTY SYSTEM” pg. 110** defines violations of The Code of Tennis and unsportsmanlike actions and stipulates penalties for conduct in the areas of racket abuse, ball abuse, audible or visible obscenity/profanity, verbal or physical abuse, illegal coaching, and unsportsmanlike conduct. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes loud, emotional outbursts in any language, if profane in nature and/or directed toward an opponent. Such outbursts may be verbal, or a gesture such as a fist pump, directed toward an opponent. In the event that a player engages in an emotional outburst in a language that is not understood by the official, the official shall stop play on that particular match and approach and inform that player's coach at the fence line that such outbursts are not acceptable under The Code. Then, any subsequent similar outbursts will be assessed code violations under the Point Penalty System, in the standard penalty progression, based on “unsportsmanlike conduct” at the discretion and judgment of the on-court official or the referee.