



LOCAL LEAGUE PROCEDURES



The Montgomery County Tennis Association administers various League Tennis Programs, both USTA-branded and locally-branded, so that tennis players have multiple, year-round opportunities to compete against other players of the same playing ability. Although competition is spirited, it is expected that each participant in league play exhibit good sportsmanship at all times. To this end, MCTA Leagues have a zero-tolerance policy regarding any physical altercations that occur at or in connection with any match. Similarly, MCTA is committed to taking all steps necessary to maintain the integrity of its league programs, up to and including the initiation of grievance complaints, or where authorized direct decisions to discipline those who by their own actions (whether directly or indirectly) undermine league integrity. Each league participant is expected to know, and is bound by these Procedures; the Rules of Tennis; *The Code: The Players' Guide for Unofficial Matches* (printed in *Friend at Court*, published annually by USTA); and (for USTA-branded leagues) the current-year versions of USTA Mid-Atlantic Section League Rules and the USTA League Tennis Regulations. To the extent that the plain meaning of any Local League Rule or procedure may be unclear, it will be construed in a manner to foster good sportsmanship and fair play.

The following policies and procedures apply in all MCTA League Tennis programs:

(A) Team Captains. Every team must have a team captain, who is the person whose name appears as (or in conjunction with) the Team Name as displayed in TennisLink and who is the person that league administration shall communicate with regarding all matters affecting that team. A person seeking to captain an MCTA league team must first file a signed copy of the current MCTA Captain's Commitment Form with the league administration. Receipt of a Team Code from the League Coordinator is evidence that the recipient is approved as an MCTA League Captain and bound by the terms of the Captain's Commitment Form. In addition, teams are encouraged to appoint one or more "co-captains" to assist with internal team functions (collection/payment of fees, coordinating practices or player availability, etc.) any ONE of whom also may be listed in the TennisLink Team Captain Report.

(B) Roster Additions/Deletions. With respect to players added to the roster during the local season:

(1) Players may be added throughout the season up to the maximum number of players allowed by Section rule (20, except for Tri-Level teams which may roster 22), up to the start time of a team's next to last local league match, not counting any local league playoff matches. To avoid eligibility disputes, those who participate in their first match on the same day that they register on that team are strongly encouraged to print an on-line TennisLink receipt and bring it with them to that day's match.

(2) Players who have not participated in a match may be deleted from a roster on TennisLink at any time by filing a completed Player Deletion Form. Players who have participated in one or more matches **cannot** be deleted, and always count toward the maximum number of players (i.e., players no longer can be declared "inactive" and replaced if that causes the roster to exceed the 20/22 player maximum, regardless of the circumstances).

(3) A deleted player is entitled to a **reimbursement only if the player's name has not appeared on any match scorecards for the team filing the Form, and the completed Player Deletion Form has been filed no later than the end of the applicable local league season.** In this case Mid-Atlantic Section will reimburse all fees to which the player is entitled. Note that the TennisLink user fee is never refundable. Note also that reimbursement of unused pre-paid court fees related to local league play is the responsibility of the team captain and not the Section or MCTA.



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(C) Fees. Fees include the following:

- (1) **Initial Deposit.** Team captains are required to place a refundable deposit with MCTA in an amount equal to the court cost of one team match in order to receive a Team Code for registering players. Currently, the maximum deposit amount is \$114 for any league playing a 3-court format, and \$152 for any league playing a 5-court format.
- (2) **Administrative Fees:** When an individual registers on TennisLink to play in a Leagues program (s)he is charged a series of administrative fees, including pre-payment of court fees as established by the MCTA Board of Directors. Line-itemization of fees is provided to captains when they receive a Team Code, and to any player upon request.
- (3) **Individual Costs: Each captain agrees** to be responsible for timely payment of his/her team's court costs associated with participation in the USTA League Tennis program, net of the amount collected from his/her players via the TennisLink registration process. (*See, MCTA Policy Re: Timely Payment of League Fees* for applicable timelines and procedures). By registering on a team, **each player agrees** to reimburse his/her captain for all costs associated with membership on that team as determined by that team captain. Upon notice to the League Administration by a team captain, an individual's failure to pay such costs will result in suspension of eligibility to compete in any MCTA-sponsored League program until all outstanding debts are satisfied. At least one week prior to contacting the League Administration regarding a player's indebtedness, a team captain shall provide formal notice to the delinquent player(s) of the exact amounts (s)he owes and of the captain's intention to refer the matter to MCTA for resolution if the debt is not satisfied within seven (7) days.

(D) Scheduling. Input from captains is welcome regarding the length (# of matches) and structure (e.g., flights, playoffs) of each local level league season. However, MCTA reserves the right to organize each level league as it deems appropriate, consistent with MAS limitations, including the kind and structure of any local playoffs. Where a level league is divided into flights, the assignment of teams to said flights shall be conducted in public by random draw, with affected captains notified of the opportunity to observe/participate. Where a local league playoff structure is utilized, written notice of the specific terms and conditions for such playoffs shall be finalized and communicated to all affected captains prior to the start of match play for the season.

A copy of the official and binding schedule of play for the local league season, as may necessarily be amended from time to time, shall be maintained on the USTA's TennisLink site. While individual team notice of schedule changes is attempted, Captains are responsible for staying abreast of any changes by regularly reviewing the TennisLink schedule. Per Section "Rules for Local Leagues" #4, each team match shall be played at the time and site designated in the current TennisLink schedule, except only for one of the two conditions below:

- (i) a facility-related closure or condition prevents it; or
- (ii) a Captain completes and submits, and the Coordinator confirms and approves, the relevant form found on the MCTA website identifying a conflict between a scheduled local league match and a USTA National, Mid-Atlantic Sectional or Maryland Regional league championship event affecting 50% or more of the players on his/her team, any such conflicts being identified to the League Coordinator no later than 3 days after the team becomes eligible to participate in said championship *or* publication of the relevant championship schedules, whichever comes later. For the purposes of this procedure D (ii) relative to a Tri Level match, if two-thirds or more of a **particular level** within a team is affected (for example, of 6 4.0 players, 4 or more players are affected), then the same right to a reschedule shall be observed.

For all rescheduling requests made under this provision, the Captain shall identify the specific players affected, and the specific qualified championships in which each is involved. Upon filing of the



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completed form, the Local Coordinator shall review the relevant team roster and confirm that the 50% impact threshold appears to be satisfied, and if so then reschedule the local match(es). **However**, upon challenge from any opponent(s) affected by the reschedule(s), or upon his/her own initiative, the League Coordinator shall confirm that the players named in the original petition in fact participated in the associated championship (check TennisLink match scorecards) **or** have produced satisfactory evidence (e.g. airline ticket stub or hotel bill) that they traveled to the championship in anticipation of playing, even if never inserted into a championship match line-up. Where a challenge results in a finding that the team requesting the original reschedule did not play each of the players listed in their original petition at the championship event, and no credible evidence is provided that said players traveled to the championship ready, able, and prepared to play, then the local league matches that were rescheduled shall instead be forfeited to the opposing team(s) affected thereby.

Within 3 days of being made aware of the need to reschedule a match because of (i) or (ii) above, the League Coordinator shall advise the affected teams of a new date, time, and location for the match to be played. Where at least 10 days' notice of the proposed new date is both possible and given, it shall be final and binding, unless the two captains mutually agree to any earlier date and time that the League Coordinator can make available. Where limited court availability or mandated deadlines for completion of local match play do not allow this much notice, all parties must accept the rescheduled match time proffered by the Coordinator.

In the event that a scheduled match is not completed within the time authorized by the rules, a double default shall be entered in TennisLink, unless the MCTA Leagues Coordinator, after consultation with MCTA's First Vice President for League Programs, or in his/her absence then MCTA's President, determines that extraordinary circumstances justify extending the deadline by no more than one additional week.

(E) Inclement Weather/Hazardous Playing Conditions or Other Interruptions of Play.

Delay or Interruptions Caused by the Facility. Where a match is delayed by the facility due to court unavailability or some other cause attributable to the facility *per se* (e.g., power failure), the following procedures shall apply at all tennis facilities. If the match is delayed/interrupted for 30 minutes or less, play will resume and continue for the full allotted time. The starting time of any match scheduled to use the courts following a delayed/interrupted match shall be delayed by the amount of time of the preceding delay/interruption, not to exceed 20 minutes. If the delay/interruption is longer than 30 minutes (i) a match that was in progress may resume; but (ii) a match that had not yet begun shall be rescheduled if there is another league match scheduled to follow it at the same site; otherwise it may commence if both captains agree and the facility allows. Where both captains agree to resume play, a 5-minute warm-up is permitted. If the match is rescheduled, it must be completed within the timeframe specified in the Rules.

1. **Delay/Postponement of Matches Scheduled on Outdoor Courts.** If within 2 hours of the scheduled start time of an **outdoor** match the facility confirms its courts are likely to be unplayable at the scheduled start time, the captains may mutually agree to reschedule due to weather conditions. Where such an agreement is reached, no players need go to, or remain on, the match site. ***In the absence of the captains' agreement, players must report to the match site, ready to play.*** If thereafter an outdoor match is cancelled, or interrupted during play, due to rain or other hazardous condition (e.g., lightning), players shall remain on site for at least 30 minutes (longer if both captains agree) to see if the hazard abates and the courts become playable. If so, the match may resume and be extended, if possible, the length of time of the delay, subject only to court availability. In the event the hazardous condition prevents resumption of play, the following procedures shall apply:
 - a) The Team Captains shall promptly notify the MCTA Leagues Coordinator that the match was interrupted or cancelled and the reason therefore, and request a rescheduled match date.



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- b) MCTA will reschedule the match indoors or outdoors as it deems feasible and will revise the TennisLink published match schedule accordingly. No additional fees for this rescheduled match will be charged.
2. **Match Postponement Due to Widespread Weather or Other Hazardous Condition.** MCTA relies upon Montgomery County's Community Use of Public Facilities (CUPF) determinations with respect to access to public buildings during adverse weather conditions (e.g., snow, sleet, extreme heat, etc.) as the key determinant whether scheduled league matches must play as scheduled on any given day/night.
- a) If CUPF announces *public facilities are closed for evening activities due to inclement weather or other hazardous condition in either of the two Montgomery County "weather zones" officially recognized by the National Weather Service*, then all MCTA matches are cancelled, regardless of location or an individual facility's decision to remain open. Captains and players can register on-line with CUPF to receive such notifications directly, or may telephone 240-777-2710 for CUPF recorded announcements.
- b) If CUPF is open for business, has considered all relevant facts, and makes no activity closing decision, captains are responsible for contacting the facility to determine whether it is open for play. If open, captains are responsible for ensuring that their teams play, MCTA having already paid for the courts.
- c) If CUPF has not been open for business and thus unavailable to consider an activity closing decision, then the MCTA League Coordinator may request approval of the First Vice President to issue such a decision, and if approved the Coordinator's decision shall have the same force and effect as if rendered by CUPF.
- d) For Ladies Day League matches, if public schools announce a "delayed opening," then matches scheduled to start before 12:00 noon will *not* play, but matches scheduled at 12:00 noon or later will play. Conversely, if public schools announce an "early release day," then matches scheduled to start before 12:00 noon *will* play, but matches scheduled at 12:00 noon or later will not play. If public schools are closed for the day, no LDL matches will play.

(F) Match structure.

1. **Team Match.** A team match in each level league shall consist of the approved number of individual singles and doubles matches as stated in the *Fact Sheet or listed on the relevant page of the MCTA website*.
2. **Individual Match.** Each individual match shall be a two-hour timed match, and shall be best of 2 sets with regular scoring and a *set tiebreak* (first to 7 by a margin of 2) at 6-all in each set. In the event of split sets, a *match tiebreak* (first to 10, by a margin of 2) shall be played to decide the match. *(See 1 below for scoring matches that do not finish within the 2-hour time limit.)* **A point in play at the end of the time limit will be completed even if it will affect the outcome of the match.** All tiebreaks shall use the Coman Tiebreak procedure. If desired, any level league may elect by a unanimous vote of the affected captains prior to the start of match play to use no-ad scoring for its entire league season.

(G) Warm-up Courts. Warm-up courts may be purchased as spot time at a facility where allowed, the same as any other patron. Otherwise, players are not authorized or entitled to early access to courts except with the explicit permission of the facility; and if a facility does permit early access without payment of an additional fee, then such courts must be shared equally between the competing teams.

(H) Match Administration.

- (1) Balls and Court Assignments.** MCTA provides the balls for all league matches. The Home Team Captain shall retrieve at the front desk of the facility/club enough cans of new, yellow, Type 2 (medium-heavy duty felt) USTA-approved tennis balls to provide one can per individual match actually to be played, and makes court assignments for individual matches from among the courts pre-determined and provided by the facility/club. Only if no specific courts have been assigned for a match, may the home team then make a choice from among those deemed available by the facility/club.



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- (2) **Exchanging Lineups.** At the line-up exchange, Captains or their designated representatives are required to specify in writing their respective player names for each individual match, court assignments for each individual match, and to finalize agreement on the calling of “Time” (See, H.6.a below). For purposes of the line-up exchange, paper copies of line-ups are required; screenshots, voicemails, or other electronic communications are not sufficient. Each captain is responsible for keeping a complete match scorecard for future reference when entering (or validating) the results on TennisLink, and to facilitate resolution of any data entry disputes. If the opposing captain is not ready to exchange line-ups by the official start time for the match, the penalty is loss of toss plus one game assessed against every court of the un-ready team. Lateness penalties continue to accrue on all courts per the schedule in Section Rules for Local Leagues #7b until all players are present or any default courts are recorded (and court assignments adjusted if necessary to conform to the “bottom up” default rule).
- (3) **Procedures for Split Matches.** The standard procedure is: the two singles matches play in the first timeslot, for example 7:00-9:00pm. The singles matches are followed by the three doubles matches in the second timeslot (e.g., 9:00-11:00pm). **To play any other configuration requires advance agreement from both captains, provided in writing (e-mail) to MCTA Executive Director Hayley Hughes (hhughes@mctatennis.org).**

Additional Procedures for Split Matches:

- a. Full line-ups for **all** individual matches to be played must be exchanged before the first match within the first time block begins play.
- b. Unless agreed by the Captains in advance using the procedure above, Singles play in the first timeslot, followed by doubles. Where captains agree to start matches out of order (see above), they inherently concede that the “bottom-up” default rule may be violated. For this reason, if captains agree to allow individual matches to change to earlier/layer timeslots, it is advisable that the proper order of play be maintained (#1 starts before #2, etc.).
- c. Matches scheduled for the later timeslot may begin earlier than the scheduled time if a preceding match finishes early and those players agree to yield the court, **but no team can be penalized for lateness before the official start time for its segment of the match.** That is, even if the courts become available early, the later-playing players cannot be assessed lateness penalties until the official start time for that segment has arrived.

(4) Individual Match Forfeits and Defaults.

1. Unless both team captains have agreed in writing on defaults in advance of the match, the team seeking to claim a forfeit must have its players present in order to claim the individual match in question. Once a default is proffered, it cannot be withdrawn without the consent of the opposing captain, **except for** matches that must be rescheduled, in which case any default proffered for the original date/time is null and void.
2. Where both teams have a full complement of players at a team match, court costs are divided equally between the 2 teams. Whenever one or more individual matches is defaulted, the defaulting team pays 100% of the costs of those courts (calculated as that team’s pre-paid, per-player cost for each specific kind of defaulted court, plus their opponents’ per-player cost for those same courts, the latter of which is debited against the defaulting team’s deposit account and credited to the receiving team’s deposit account). Where a team incurs 100% of the cost of a defaulted court, the defaulting team captain then controls who may use the court on which the defaulted match was to have played.



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3. Only Captains (or acting captains) may enter into agreements to share costs of defaulted courts between the two teams. Any such agreement must be reported to MCTA by both captains within 24 hours of the completion of the match.

(5) Team Match Defaults.

Except where a double default occurs as a result of MAS Rule 8.c, where an entire team match is defaulted, the defaulting team bears 100% of the costs of all courts reserved for the match, regardless of the presence of one or more team members ready to play. Where a team incurs 100% of the cost of one or more defaulted courts, the defaulting team captain then controls who may use those courts, consistent with the constraints of Local Procedure H.7 below.

(6) Time Management.

- a. **Official Match Time Piece and Who Calls “Time:”** Where a facility uses a horn, bell or similar device to announce time, it shall be relied upon as the official timepiece for all matches. Where no such device is present and operable, then the Home Team Captain shall determine the official timepiece to be used for the match and the Visiting Team Captain shall determine the person responsible for calling “Time” using said timepiece. No other means of time notification to players on court is permitted. Whatever conditions captains agree to regarding management of time for a match (i.e., timepiece to be used and name of designee to call “Time”) should be recorded on each copy of the scorecard before match play begins and should be initialed by each captain. Note that where captains disregard these procedures, the local Grievance Committee is unlikely to be able to fairly determine what relief (if any) is appropriate.
- b. **Match Warm-up:** Match warm-ups are strictly limited to no more than 15 minutes, except that late-arriving players are always entitled to 5 minutes’ warm-up, and in this instance the start of any affected individual match may be delayed to accommodate such a request. The Visiting Team Captain or designee is responsible for announcing when the warm-up period has expired and it is time to “Begin Play.” At that time, any adjustments in position due to lateness (i.e., defaults) must be made and match play begins immediately thereafter.
- c. **Lateness.** Whenever at least one player (or one member of a doubles team) is late (i.e., not on the assigned court and ready to play), the players shall be penalized in accordance with the Section rules, except that a team member who is both acting as captain and also in the line-up for a particular match shall incur no penalty for lateness until an additional five minutes has elapsed.
- d. **Bathroom Breaks:** Bathroom breaks are limited to a reasonable amount of time generally not to exceed 5 minutes and are authorized only if truly necessary. An established pattern of requesting bathroom breaks during the last 15 minutes of the time allotted for a match constitutes unsportsmanlike behavior and may subject a team to Grievance Complaint and penalty. To minimize the potential for gamesmanship, it is advisable for opponents to accompany the team that takes a bathroom break.

- (7) **Court decorum.** All players must abide by the rules, customs and procedures contained in *The Code* at all times. No coaching is allowed at any time during the match, including warm-up. Spectators are permitted to sit courtside only if all players in the affected match agree. In any event, spectators are permitted on adjacent courts if the matches are finished, provided that such spectators come no closer than the centerline of the court they occupy in relation to the court they are observing (in other words, maintain one-half court width distance from any match still in play). ***No spectator, teammate, or team captain may intervene, offer an opinion, or become involved in any way, in any match that has not yet been completed,*** except for the calling of “Time” by the Visiting Team Captain or designee, either to begin or end match play on all courts. Having paid for a court(s), that captain controls who may use the vacant court(s) ***provided that*** players



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occupy the court continuously; that proper tennis etiquette is followed at all times; and that no disruption or interference to any ongoing match is tolerated.

(I) Scoring.

- (1) After the entire match is completed, **both captains** (or their designees) **shall sign both match scorecards, indicating their agreement that the player names and scores have been properly recorded thereon.** It is recommended that as they finish, the participants of each individual match initial the scorecard to indicate their agreement to their specific match scores. Each captain shall **retain one of the signed scorecards for the remainder of the season.** **Failure to retain a signed scorecard may result in waiver of the right to dispute the results of the match.**
- (2) No individual or team match may end in a tie – where time expires, the winner will be determined based on *the principle that the outcome of each individual match is to be decided by what happens on that court alone.* As a result, scores are to be reported on TennisLink using the Timed Match designator and consistent with the instructions immediately below:

If in the first set when time expires, the winner of the most completed games in that set shall be awarded the set and match point. **If games are tied,** then the players shall without delay play one, “sudden death” point to determine the match winner.

If in the second set when time expires, and neither team is ahead by two or more games, the winner of the first set shall be declared the winner of the match and awarded the match point. If a team is ahead by two or more games, that team shall be awarded the second set; and if that team also won the first set, then that team is declared the winner and awarded the match point. If instead, this results in split sets, then the team that won the most total games in both sets on that court is the match winner. Only if the total games won by each team are also tied, then shall a single, “sudden death” point be played to determine the match winner.

If in a tiebreak in any set or in the deciding match tiebreak when time expires, a team is awarded the set if and only if six or more points have been played and one team is ahead by two or more points. Otherwise, the tiebreak does not count and the team that has won the most games played on that court is declared the winner. Only if the total games won by each team are tied, then shall a single, “sudden death” point be played to determine the match winner.

- (3) **Sudden Death Point Procedure.** For purposes of the sudden death point, players shall meet at the net, where Home team spins a racket and Visiting team “calls” to determine which team wins choice of server or receiver, or selection of end, or requires opponent to make one of the preceding choices. **Whichever team is the Receiver in the sudden death point shall determine the side of court to which the serve shall be delivered (deuce or ad) and for doubles, the specific player who shall be the Receiver. The player who shall be Receiver need not be designated until after the player who shall be Server is declared. See, MCTA Chart and Accompanying Description for playing sudden death points.**

(J) Calculation of League Standings. The winner of each NTRP level league shall be the team that accumulates the greatest number of team match points over the course of the league season (unless a local playoff system for that level is in place), subject to any adjustment required by the Rules to account for Team Match defaults. One “team match point” is awarded to the team winning a majority of the individual matches played in any scheduled team match. In the event of a season-end team match point tie, a level winner will be determined using the rules, steps and procedures described in USTA League Regulation 2.03H unless otherwise specified in the league program description. Where more than one team is eligible to advance to Regional championship competition, the advancing teams, in descending order of finish, may select the flight in which they will play from among those assigned to MCTA teams. A captain forfeits the right to choose his/her preferred flight if that choice



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is not communicated in writing to the MCTA League Coordinator within 48 hours of public release of the championship's draw. Once made, the choice of flights is irrevocable. Note: the option to choose flights applies only to participation at Regional championships, and *not* to Sectional championships.

(K) Grievances/Appeals.

(1) Filing a Grievance

For purposes of filing a Grievance arising out of USTA League play, the team captain is either one of the two persons listed in the TennisLink Team Captains' Report for that team, but no one else; and the MCTA League Coordinator is either the Executive Director of MCTA or where the Executive Director's unavailability would prevent timely filing of a grievance complaint, then the First Vice President of the Board of Directors.

(2) Local League Grievance and Grievance Appeals Committees

Pursuant to USTA League regulation 3.01A(1) and 3.01B(1), a Local League Grievance Committee (LLGC) and Local League Grievance Appeals Committee (LLGAC) are hereby established to receive and adjudicate Grievances and Grievance Appeals arising out of all MCTA-sponsored USTA League Tennis programs.

The MCTA First Vice President for League Programs shall nominate no fewer than 9 nor more than 15 individuals to serve as a qualified pool of candidates to adjudicate any Grievances or Grievance Appeals that may arise, with the express limitation that no person shall sit on both the LLGC panel and LLGAC panel hearing the same or derivative Complaint. In nominating individuals to serve, the First Vice President shall take care that each nominee affirms an interest in serving, demonstrates an appreciation and clear understanding of applicable rules and procedures, and commits to serve on any Grievance/Grievance Appeal to which he/she is assigned and for which he/she has no apparent conflict or other credible basis for recusal. Further, the First Vice President shall take care that a majority of all nominees for LLGC/LLGAC service are themselves active participants in one or more MCTA-sponsored league tennis programs. The names of all persons approved to serve as LLGC and/or LLGAC panel members shall be posted on the MCTA website. LLGC/LLGAC members shall serve for a 1-year period and may succeed themselves without limitation.

The Committees shall retain all Grievances filed. Even where the facts are disputed, the filing of 2 or more Grievances by separate Captains against the same team or individual player within any 12-month period, whether within the same or different league type, suggests a pattern of unacceptable behavior that will trigger an LLGC investigation and can result in disciplinary action.

For purposes of MCTA local league play, any Grievance or appeal of a Local League Grievance Committee decision must be filed by electronic means, using the standard forms available on the MCTA website. Original Grievances shall be filed at: leaguegrievances@mctatennis.org and Grievance Appeals shall be filed at: leaguegrievanceappeals@mctatennis.org

(L) Annual Review/Approval and Continuity. These local league procedures and related policies will be reviewed and amended as necessary (but at least annually following receipt of the following year's National and Sectional League Regulations) by the MCTA League Rules Committee, which will forward its recommendations to the MCTA Board of Directors for approval at its next scheduled meeting. Once approved by the Board and accepted by the Mid-Atlantic Section, the MCTA local league procedures continue in full force and effect until successor Procedures are similarly approved and accepted. Captains or players with suggested amendments (whether additions or deletions) are invited to submit them in writing at any time during the year, by e-mailing: leaguerules@mctatennis.org.