# Understanding League Default, Substitution, and Line-up Adjustment Rules

Captains and players sometimes become confused about how and when the various default, substitution, and line-up adjustment rules and principles are applied in MCTA league matches. This brief explanation addresses those issues.

**One or more of these 3 National league regulations may apply:**

1. National League regulation **2.03E**, that requires that "[f]or each team match, a majority of the individual matches must actually be played by the two teams to constitute a valid team match."

2. National League regulation **2.03F**, prohibiting substitutions in any individual match once line-ups have been exchanged, "except for injury to, illness of, or disqualification of a player prior to the start of such match…"

3. National League regulation **2.03K**, table that mandates the order in which courts must be defaulted, when an individual match default is necessary.

**Further, these Section rules, derivative of the national regulations cited above, may apply:**

1. Section Rule 8.d, enacted in furtherance of national regulation 2.03E. The Section rule provides that if "two teams arrive to play a match, and *they each have 1 or more defaults at different positions which prevents them from playing a valid team match*, then they should adjust their line-ups [to yield a "valid team match"], remembering to default from the bottom up. If the teams cannot agree on which courts to play, then the [entire] match is scored as a double default." (Emphasis added)

2. Section Rules for Local Leagues, #6b-c, which specifically apply national regulation 2.03K "order of default" principles to local league play, and further, re-state national league interpretations authorizing complete line-up revisions for those individual matches that have not begun play within a team match that is postponed after line-up exchange has occurred.

## Taken together, these various rules stand for these likely outcomes:

- If both teams have a full complement of players, once line-ups are exchanged no substitutions are allowed except for injury/illness of a player occurring before or during warm-up and prior to first serve that begins the actual match.

- A "substitution" requires removal from the match altogether of a player physically present at the site. One cannot "substitute" players by moving them to a different line or pairing them with a different partner. Further, teams cannot avoid lateness or default penalties by "substituting" for a player listed in the line-up but who fails to appear for the match.

- Where substitutions are allowed, they are accomplished by "straight-line" replacement – meaning a new player is inserted in the same place occupied by the removed player, with no further adjustment as to line or player partner.

- When defaults occur, they must be taken from "the bottom up," except that once an individual match has begun, no adjustment in players to accommodate the "bottom up" rule is allowed. (In this instance, the default is taken on the court where the absent player is scheduled.) This means that for **3-court doubles leagues**, line #3 must be defaulted and *player pairs* moved up a line accordingly. For **5-court singles+doubles leagues**, this means #2 singles must be defaulted before #1; that #3 doubles must be defaulted before #1 or #2; and that captains may choose whether to default both singles courts and no doubles courts; doubles #2 and #3 and no singles courts; or a combination of #2 singles and #3 doubles.

- "Reconstituting" a line-up to produce a valid team match (as defined in national regulation 2.03E) is authorized only under the circumstances described in Section rule 8.d, specifically that **both** teams are short of players and the line-ups exchanged reflect proposed defaults at **different positions** that if unaltered would prevent a "valid match" from being played. Numerous defaults by only one team in a match are not grounds for "reconstituting" line-ups. In this situation, the one team that is short of players must bear the consequences of their defaults, both as to match scoring and match expense.