

2025-26 TSSAA Handbook

TENNIS REGULATIONS

I. Divisions

- A. In Division I, there shall be two classifications (Class A and Class AA). Tennessee shall be divided into eight regions and each region shall have two districts.
- B. In Division II, there shall be two classifications.
- In Class A, TSSAA schools shall be divided into three regions: East, Middle, West and each region shall have two districts.
 - In Class AA, TSSAA schools shall be divided into two regions: East, Middle, and West.

II. Scoring

- A. During the regular season, by mutual agreement, pro sets may be used along with “No Ad” scoring. In post season tournament play in team competition, “No Ad” scoring will be used with two out of three sets in singles. However, a **10-point tiebreaker will be used in lieu of a 3rd set to determine a match**. Doubles shall be an eight game pro set during the team competition. In the tournament format, singles and doubles play shall be two out of three sets with a **10-point tiebreaker used in lieu of the 3rd set determine a match**.
- B. A seven point tie breaker will be used in all sets at 6-6.
- C. In Division I (A) and Division II (A) a team shall be composed of **five singles** and **two doubles** and players may participate in both singles and doubles. Play will begin with singles and continue until one team has won four matches. If no team has won four matches, teams will play two doubles to determine the winner. To speed up play, it is recommended to have a minimum of five courts to allow all singles matches to play at the same time, but this is not mandatory.
- D. In Division I (AA) and Division II (AA) a team shall be composed of **six singles** and **three doubles** and players may participate in both singles and doubles. The doubles will be played first and the winner of the doubles will receive one point. Play will continue until one team has won four matches. To speed up play, it is recommended to have a minimum of six courts to allow all singles matches to play at the same time, but this is not mandatory.

III. Order of Play in Team Competition

- A. In Division I A and Division II A, tournament play in **team competition** shall begin with the five singles matches. If neither team has won four matches after the five singles matches, the teams will play doubles. The first team to win four matches will advance to the next round. It is recommended to have a minimum of five courts to speed up play, but it is not mandated.
- B. In Division I AA and Division II AA, each team shall be composed of six singles and three doubles teams and players may participate in both singles and doubles. In the tournament for **team competition**, play will begin with the top three doubles teams. After all three doubles matches, the winning team will receive one point. Following the doubles matches, the Division AA teams will play six singles matches. The first team to win four matches will advance to the next round. It is recommended to have a minimum of six courts to speed up play, but it is not mandated.

IV. Match Procedures

- A. Warm-up time shall be limited to five minutes as specified under U.S.T.A rules. Failure to limit warm-up periods to five minutes shall be an automatic default.
- B. Default times shall be based on U.S.T.A rules. Failure to show up for a scheduled match within five minutes or less shall result in loss of toss plus one game. More than five minutes, but less than 10 minutes shall result in loss of toss plus two games. More than 10 minutes, but less than 15 minutes shall result in loss of toss plus three games. Failure to show up within 15 minutes or more shall result in default of the match.

V. Sportsmanship

- A. It is a violation for visible or audible profanity or obscenity, abuse of racquet, balls or equipment, verbal or physical abuse of a player or official. The penalty is a point on the first offense, game on the second offense, and default on the third offense. Flagrant violations can result in immediate disqualification.

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- B. All tennis players are required to wear school-issued shirts which are not objectionable. No advertising will be allowed on the shirts. Only drawings related to tennis may be used. School names, nicknames, mascots or player's names may also be used on the shirt. Uniforms may carry the manufacturer's logo provided it is no larger than 4" X 4". Caps may have a single manufacturer's logo (maximum 4" X 4") in addition to the school name, nickname, or mascot.
- C. If shirts or tops must be changed during a match, they need not be the same design or color as previously worn, but must meet regulations as outlined above.
- D. Headbands no wider than 2 inches and made of a single color may be worn.

VI. Coaching

- A. Coaching of the players is permitted to be continuous throughout the match, as long as it does not interfere with play. It is understood that the purpose of such coaching is solely to offer advice to the player and not in any way to distract or annoy an opposing player. In addition, no coach should change the score on the court. It is the responsibility of players to keep up with the score.
- B. Coaching is allowed by any person meeting Article I, Section 10 of the TSSAA Bylaws. Only one person meeting this requirement may coach on a court at any given time.
- C. During match play a coach is permitted only to sit – not to stand – only at the center side of the court and can only move from one court to another during changeovers. No coaching is permitted within the playing area by coaches standing at the side or corners of the court.
- D. Coaching is permitted by coaches standing anywhere outside the fence surrounding the court, as long as this does not distract the other player during a point.
- E. **At no time is a coach permitted to initiate a conversation with the opposing player** or in any way get involved with an on-court problem, except at the request of the solo chair umpire, referee, or the player or the coach of the player involved. A player should not initiate a conversation with an opposing coach.
- F. Should it become necessary for a coach to be consulted due to a problem on the court, it is preferable that the opposing coach also be present.

VII. Entry Forms

- A. Schools entering the district tournament in Division I (Class A and Class AA) and region tournament in Div II must complete the online tennis entrance forms at least five days before the post-season match is scheduled to begin. Schools that do not file the entry form with the meet director by the deadline shall be charged \$25.00 for each day they are late in order to enter the meet. There are two forms, an Individual Entrance Form and a Team Form. In April, Instructions for submitting the forms will be emailed to Head Coaches.
- B. **Team Entrance Form-** The team entrance form lists your line-up based on players' rankings. Your best player will be ranked one, next best will be two, etc. Doubles teams should be listed in order of playing ability as well. Substitutions may be made and team members shall always play in their order of ability. A player in singles or doubles can be removed from the line-up and later be placed back in the line-up for the next match as long as each line-up for each match is in order of ability as set forth on the initial entry form. **The entry form levels shall apply to all levels of the tournament and cannot be adjusted once post season begins.**
- C. **Individual Entrance Form-** The individual entry form shall indicate which players will participate in singles and which players will participate in doubles. Each team may enter two individuals and two doubles teams. A player can enter as a singles player or as a member of a doubles team but cannot enter both. Players must be accompanied by a person meeting Article I, Section 10 of the Bylaws. The name of the person in charge of the team must be listed on the entry form.

VIII. Awards

- A. In Division I (A and AA), TSSAA will award medals to winners and runners-up in singles and doubles in the district, region, and state tournaments. The district team winners shall receive a plaque. The region team winners and runners-up shall receive a plaque. In the state tournament, the team champions and runners-up shall each receive a trophy and medals.
- B. In Division II Class A, TSSAA will award medals to winners and runners-up in singles and doubles in the district, region, and state tournament. The district and region team winners and runners-up shall receive a plaque. In the state tournament, the team champions and runners-up shall each receive a trophy and medals.

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- C. In Division II Class AA, TSSAA will award medals to winners and runners-up in singles and doubles in the region and state tournaments. The regional team winners and runners-up shall receive a plaque. In the state tournament, the team champions and runners-up shall each receive a trophy and medals.

IX. Division I Post Season Tournaments

A. Team Competition

1. Schools complete the online tennis entrance forms at least **five days** before the start of the post-season. In April, instructions for submitting the forms will be emailed to Head Coaches. Schools that do not file the entry form by the deadline shall be charged \$25.00 for each day they are late.
2. To play in team competition in tournament play, a player must have played in at least **one match** during regular season play for your team in any position.
3. A substitution in team competition may be made and team members shall always play in their order of ability. *It is strongly encouraged to include everyone potentially able to play in the order of ability on the team entrance form.* A player in singles or doubles can be removed from the line-up and later be placed back in the line-up for the next match as long as each line-up for each match is in order of ability as set forth on the entry form. **The entry form shall apply to all levels of the tournament and cannot be adjusted once the first tournament begins (District, Regional, Sectional, and State).**
4. In all team competition (regular season & tournament) coaches shall exchange their line-ups prior to the team competition beginning. Once exchanged, the line-up may not be altered unless the opposing coach agrees with the change. Sample line-up cards can be found on the TSSAA.org website under tennis.
5. **Districts** - Each district shall determine a team champion by any method the district membership selects. TSSAA encourages districts to create by-laws prior to the season and communicate with the schools in your district these procedures for advancement. In addition, please communicate the tournament director to the TSSAA administrator at tennis@tssaa.org prior to the regular season beginning. *The district team champion shall qualify for the regional team tournament play.*
6. **District & Regionals (Division I, Class A)** - Each team shall be composed of five singles and two doubles and players may participate in both singles and doubles. Players shall be ranked one through five in singles with one being the best player, two being the next best player, etc. Doubles teams should be listed in order of playing ability with one being the best team and two being the next best team. For example, the best doubles team may be #2 and #4 singles players and the next best doubles team may be #1 and #3 singles players. Play will continue until one team has won four matches with the five singles playing first followed by the two doubles (if needed). The region team champion shall be determined by District 1 champion playing District 2 champion, etc..

The odd-numbered districts shall determine the region site in odd-numbered years and the even-numbered districts shall determine the region sites in even-numbered years.

7. **District & Regionals (Division I, Class AA)** - Each team shall be composed of six singles and three doubles teams and players may participate in both singles and doubles. In the tournament for team competition, play will begin with the top three doubles teams. After all three doubles matches, the winning team will receive one point. Following the doubles matches, teams will play six singles matches. The first team to win four matches will advance to the next round. The region team champion shall be determined by District 1 champion playing District 2 champion, etc..

The odd-numbered districts shall determine the region site in odd-numbered years and the even-numbered districts shall determine the region sites in even-numbered years.

8. **Sectionals** - In sectional play the champion of Region 1 shall play the champion of Region 2, Region 3 vs. Region 4. Region 5 vs. Region 6, Region 7 vs. Region 8.

In odd-numbered years, the odd-numbered regions shall be the host team, and in even-numbered years, the even-numbered region shall be the host team.

9. **State** – The draw for the team state championship shall be made by the Board of Control.

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B. Individual Singles and Doubles Competition

1. In district and regional tournaments each contestant in singles and each team in doubles will provide a can of new tennis balls. One can of balls shall be open for play during that match. The loser of the match keeps the can of used balls; the unopened can goes to the winner for use in the next match. Wilson US Open balls will be furnished by TSSAA in the state tournament.
2. A substitution may be made in the district tournament for a singles or a doubles player if made prior to the beginning of the first match in the district tournament. Once a doubles team has played its first district match, no substitution may be made on that doubles team for the district, regional or state.
3. **Districts** - In the district tennis tournament each team may enter two individuals and two doubles teams. A player can enter as a singles player or as a member of a doubles team but cannot enter both.

Players (boys and girls) who place **first and second** in the singles and **first and second** in the doubles division in the district tournament shall qualify for the regional tournament. If an individual does not advance due to illness or injury the **next seeded team will be able to advance** to avoid a "bye" in the bracket; however, the tournament director must have a minimum of 24-hour notice.

4. **Regionals** - In the regional tournament, all singles and doubles teams must have qualified by placing first or second in the district competition.

Players (boys and girls) who place **first in the singles** and **first in the doubles** in the regional tournament shall qualify for the state tournament. If an individual does not advance due to illness or injury the **next seeded team will be able to advance**; however, the state must have notification by **12:00pm (CT) on Monday, May 11.**

5. **State**- In the state, all singles and doubles teams must have qualified by placing **first in regionals**.
6. Any individual who qualifies for the next higher tournament and does not participate in the next higher tournament because they are participating in a non-TSSAA tennis tournament shall be ruled ineligible for the next school year.

X. Division II Post Season Tournaments

A. Team Competition (Class A)

1. Schools must complete the online tennis entrance forms at least **five days** before the post-season match is scheduled to begin. In April, instructions for submitting the entry forms will be emailed to Head Coaches. Schools that do not file the entry form with the meet director by the deadline shall be charged \$25.00 for each day they are late in order to enter the meet.
2. To play in team competition in tournament play, a player must have played in at least one match during regular season play for your team in any position.
3. A substitution in team competition may be made and team members shall always play in their order of ability. *It is strongly encouraged to include everyone potentially able to play in the order of ability on the team entrance form.* A player in singles or doubles can be removed from the line-up and later be placed back in the line-up for the next match as long as each line-up for each match is in order of ability as set forth on the entry form. **The entry form shall apply to all levels of the tournament and cannot be adjusted once the first tournament begins (District, Regional, Sectional, and State).**
4. In all team competition (regular season & tournament) coaches shall exchange their line-ups prior to the team competition beginning. Once exchanged, the line-up may not be altered unless the opposing coach agrees with the change. Sample line-up cards can be found on the TSSAA.org website under tennis.
5. **Districts** - The East, Middle and West Region shall determine a team champion, runner-up, third-place and fourth-place team by any method the region selects. TSSAA encourages districts to create by-laws prior to the season and communicate with the schools in your district these procedures for advancement. In addition, please communicate the tournament director to the TSSAA administrator at tennis@tssaa.org prior to the regular season beginning.

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6. First Round - Sites shall be as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	#3 East @ #2 Middle	#4 Middle @ #2 East	#4 Middle @ #3 West	#3 East @ #2 Middle
Site 2:	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)	#3 East vs. #2 West (H)	#4 Middle @ #2 West
Site 3:	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)	#4 West @ #2 Middle	#4 West vs. #2 East (H)	#4 East vs. #3 West (H)
Site 4:	#3 Middle @ #4 West	#3 Middle @ #3 East	#3 Middle @ #4 East	#3 Middle @ #4 West

In 2025-26, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

In 2026-27, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

In 2027-28, #1 Middle will host the #4 West vs. #2 East First Round game and #2 Middle will host the #3 East vs. #2 West game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

In 2028-29, #1 Middle will host the #4 East vs. #3 West First Round Game. The participating teams have the option of finding and playing at a mutually agreed upon neutral site.

7. Quarterfinal Round – Sites shall be as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	FR Site 1 W @ #1 W	FR Site 1 W @ #2 W	FR Site 1 W @ #1 E	FR Site 1 W @ #1 W
Site 2:	FR Site 2 W @ #2 E	FR Site 2 W @ #1 M	FR Site 2 W @ #2 M	FR Site 2 W @ #2 E
Site 3:	FR Site 3 W @ #1 M	FR Site 3 W @ #1 E	FR Site 3 W @ #1 M	FR Site 3 W @ #1 M
Site 4:	FR Site 4 W @ #1 E	FR Site 4 W @ #1 W	FR Site 4 W @ #1 W	FR Site 4 W @ #1 E

8. State -The team tennis quarterfinals shall be completed by Friday prior to the state tournament and the winners shall advance to the central tournament site.

If all three #1 Seeds advance to the central tournament site, the first matches of the state tournament shall be as follows:

Match 1: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner

Match 2: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

If all three #1 Seeds do not advance to the central tournament site, the bracket shall be set by the Executive Director upon completion of the quarterfinal round matches.

B. Team Competition (Class AA)

- Schools must complete the online tennis entrance forms at least **five days** before the post-season match is scheduled to begin. In April, instructions for submitting the entry forms will be emailed to Head Coaches. Schools that do not file the entry form with the meet director by the deadline shall be charged \$25.00 for each day they are late in order to enter the meet.
- To play in team competition in tournament play, a player must have played in at least one match during regular season play for your team in any position.
- A substitution in team competition may be made and team members shall always play in their order of ability. *It is strongly encouraged to include everyone potentially able to play in the order of ability on the team entrance form.* A player in singles or doubles can be removed from the line-up and later be placed back in the line-up for the next match as long as each line-up for each match is in order of ability as set forth on the entry form. **The entry form shall apply to all levels of the tournament and cannot be adjusted once the first tournament begins (District, Regional, Sectional, and State).**
- In all team competition (regular season & tournament) coaches shall exchange their line-ups prior to the team competition beginning. Once exchanged, the line-up may not be altered unless the opposing coach agrees with the change. Sample line-up cards can be found on the TSSAA.org website under tennis.
- The twelve teams that qualify for the post season tournament shall be as follows: the top four teams from the East Region, the top five teams from the Middle Region, and the top three teams from the West Region.

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Seeding will be based on regular season records. TSSAA encourages regions to create by-laws prior to the season and communicate with the schools in your district these procedures for advancement. In addition, please communicate standings to the TSSAA administrator at tennis@tssaa.org.

6. First Round (Boys) - Sites shall be as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	#4 Middle @ #3 East	#4 East @ #2 Middle	#5 Middle @ #2 East	#4 Middle @ #3 East
Site 2:	#5 Middle @ #2 West	#3 East @ #3 Middle	#3 West @ #3 East	#5 Middle @ #2 West
Site 3:	#4 East @ #3 Middle	#5 Middle @ #3 West	#4 East @ #3 Middle	#4 East @ #3 Middle
Site 4:	#3 West @ #2 East	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#3 West @ #2 East

7. Quarterfinal Round (Boys) - Sites shall be as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	FR Site 1 W @ #1 M	FR Site 1 W @ #1 E	FR Site 1 W @ #1 W	FR Site 1 W @ #1 M
Site 2:	FR Site 2 W @ #1 E	FR Site 2 W @ #2 W	FR Site 2 W @ #1 M	FR Site 2 W @ #1 E
Site 3:	FR Site 3 W @ #1 W	FR Site 3 W @ #1M	FR Site 3 W @ #1 E	FR Site 3 W @ #1 W
Site 4:	FR Site 4 W @ #2 M	FR Site 4 W @ #2 E	FR Site 4 W @ #2 M	FR Site 4 W @ #2 M

8. First Round (Girls) - Sites shall be as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	#5 Middle @ #2 West	#5 Middle @ #2 East	#4 East @ #3 East	#5 Middle @ #2 West
Site 2:	#4 Middle @ #3 West	#4 Middle @ #3 East	#4 Middle @ #2 West	#4 Middle @ #3 West
Site 3:	#4 East @ #2 Middle	#4 East @ #3 Middle	#3 West @ #3 Middle	#4 East @ #2 Middle
Site 4:	#3 East @ #3 Middle	#3 West @ #2 Middle	#5 Middle @ #2 East	#3 East @ #3 Middle

9. Quarterfinal Round (Girls) - Sites are as follows:

	2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29
Site 1:	FR Site 1 @ #1 E	FR Site 1 @ #1W	FR Site 1 @ #1 M	FR Site 1 @ #1 W
Site 2:	FR Site 2 @ #1 M	FR Site 2 @ #1 M	FR Site 2 @ #1 E	FR Site 2 @ #1 M
Site 3:	FR Site 3 @ #2 E	FR Site 3 @ #1 E	FR Site 3 @ #1 W	FR Site 3 @ #2 E
Site 4:	FR Site 4 @ #1 W	FR Site 4 @ #2 W	FR Site 4 @ #2 M	FR Site 4 @ #1 W

The team tennis quarterfinals shall be completed by Friday prior to the state tournament and the winners shall advance to the central state tournament site

10. State - The winners of the quarterfinal round shall advance to the central tournament site for a four team single elimination tournament. The first matches of the state tournament for the boys and girls shall be as follows:

- Match 1: Quarterfinal Site 1 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 2 Winner
- Match 2: Quarterfinal Site 3 Winner vs. Quarterfinal Site 4 Winner

C. Individual Singles and Doubles Competition (Class A)

- In district and regional tournaments each team may enter two contestants in singles and two doubles teams. A player can enter as a singles player or as a member of a doubles team but cannot enter both. Each team will provide a new can of balls. One can of balls shall be open for play during that match. The loser of the match keeps the can of used balls; the unopened can goes to the winner for use in the next match. Wilson balls will be furnished by TSSAA in the state tournament.
- A substitution may be made in the regional tournament for a singles or a doubles player if made prior to the beginning of the first match in the region tournament. If a singles player or a doubles team qualifies for the next higher tournament, those players must continue play in the next rounds of individual singles or doubles play. Once a doubles team has played its first region match, no substitution may be made on that doubles team for the district, regional or state. If an individual does not advance due to illness or injury the next seeded team will be able to advance to avoid a "bye" in the bracket; however, the tournament director must have a minimum of 24 hour notice.

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3. **Districts** - Players (boys and girls) who place first, second, third and fourth in the singles and first, second, third and fourth in the doubles in the district tournament shall qualify for the regional tournament.
4. **Regionals** - The bracket for the region tournament shall be as follows:

Upper Bracket	Lower Bracket
#1 District 1 vs. #4 District 2	#2 District 1 vs. #3 District 2
#2 District 2 vs. #3 District 1	#1 District 2 vs. #4 District 1

5. **State** -Players who place first and second in the singles and first and second in the doubles in the region tournament shall qualify for the state tournament. Additional qualifiers shall be as follows:

In 2026, players who place third in the singles and third in the doubles in the East and West Region tournaments shall qualify for the state tournament. In 2027, the rotation starts over again. In singles and doubles, the bracket for the state tournament shall be as follows:

2026 Bracket
Upper Bracket
#1 East vs. #2 Middle
#3 East vs. #1 West
Bottom Bracket
#1 Middle vs. #3 West
#2 East vs. #2 West

6. If an individual does not advance due to illness or injury the next seeded team will be able to advance; however, the state must have notification by **noon on Monday, May 11.**
7. Any individual who qualifies for the next higher tournament and does not participate in the next higher tournament because they are participating in a non-TSSAA tennis tournament shall be ruled ineligible for the next school year.

D. Individual Singles and Doubles Competition (Class AA)

1. **Regionals**- Players who finish first, second, third, and fourth in the singles and doubles division in the Middle Region shall qualify for the state tournament. Players who finish first and second in the singles and doubles division in the East Region and West Region shall qualify for the state tournament.
2. **State**- In the state, all singles and doubles teams must have qualified. In singles and doubles, the bracket in the state tournament shall be as follows:

Even Year
Upper Bracket
#1 Middle vs. #4 Middle
#1 West vs. #2 East
Lower Bracket
#2 Middle vs. #2 West
#1 East vs. #3 Middle

3. If an individual does not advance due to illness or injury the next seeded team will be able to advance; however, the state must have notification by **12:00pm (CT) on Monday, May 11.**
4. Any individual who qualifies for the next higher tournament and does not participate in the next higher tournament because they are participating in a non-TSSAA tennis tournament shall be ruled ineligible for the next school year.