**USATT TEAM LEAGUE - PROTOTYPE**

*Updated 01-20-16*

**INTRODUCTION**

Interested in running a Regional Team League? Then join USATT in its goal of creating such regional leagues all over the country! Below are guidelines for a prototype Regional Team League, based on current leagues. Feel free to make changes for your own league – these are guidelines, not absolute rules. If you do plan on setting up such a league or have questions, let me know! Here's the [online Word version of this](http://larrytt.com/USATT-Team-League-Prototype.docx) so you can download and make any needed changes.

-[Larry Hodges](mailto:larry@larrytt.com), USATT League Committee Chair, November 2015

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. [Regional League Committee](#REGIONALLEAGUECOMMITTEE)
2. [Teams](#TEAMS)
3. [Divisions](#DIVISIONS)
4. [Rules](#RULES)
5. [Setting Up and Promoting a League](#SETTINGUPANDPROMOTINGALEAGUE)
6. **REGIONAL LEAGUE COMMITTEE (RLC)**.

The RLC shall generally be made up of at least three people. One of them shall be designated the League Director, who shall be in overall charge of making sure the league is run properly, calling meetings when needed, and representing the league when working with USATT. The RLC may assign certain decisions and responsibilities to the League Commissioner and others on the League Committee. They will designate among themselves the various tasks of treasurer, webmaster, and publicist. Leagues may choose to have a different set of titles or responsibilities. Some leagues, especially smaller ones, may choose to have just a League Director who runs the league.

1. **TEAMS**

The [Regional Name] League is for league play among clubs and organizations in the [define region].

**2.1 Club Affiliation.**Each team participating in the league is required to represent a club or organization. The club playing conditions must be approved by the Regional League Committee or their representative. This should include enough tables for the team contests, and appropriate tables, floors, lighting, and court space. It is strongly recommended that these clubs be [USATT affiliated](http://www.teamusa.org/USA-Table-Tennis/Clubs/Find-a-Club) – here's the [affiliation page](http://www.teamusa.org/usa-table-tennis/clubs/application).

**2.2 Rosters.**A team roster's size requirements depends on the format to be used. A team should normally have extra players in case one or more of their players cannot make a specific league night. A league may choose to have *no limit* on the number of players on a team, or to have high limits, with as many as seven on a team.

* For Best of Five format, teams should have *at least* 2-4 players
* For Best of Seven format, teams should have *at least* 3-5 players
* For Best of Nine format, teams should have *at least* 3-5 players

Team rosters must be submitted prior to the season registration deadline. Changes to the roster can be made until the start of the league season, provided that they do not change the team’s division placement, as determined by the league committee. After the start of the league season, roster replacements are only permitted for special circumstances, and at the full discretion of the league committee.

**2.3 Individual Ratings.**Each player on a team roster shall have an individual rating, which could be either a league rating or USATT tournament rating. If a player has both, the higher of the two ratings are used. Current ratings as of the league entry deadline for the season are used for team ratings. In special circumstances a rating may be assigned to an unrated player whose level is known.

**2.4 Team Ratings.**A team’s rating is the average of the top three individual ratings of players on the team roster. There are no rating restrictions.

=>NOTE 1: A common problem is that a team may bring on a high-rated player just to increase the team's average rating. So some leagues may average more than the top three, and may have penalties for top players who sign up but do not play.

=>NOTE 2: A league may choose to weigh the team's top players (who may play more than others) more heavily than others. For example, one formula used is as follows, for a team roster of five players (A through E): (1.5 \* A + 1.5 \* B + C + D + E) / 6.

**2.5 Team Captains.**Each team is responsible for designating one **team captain**. The team captain will serve as the primary contact and spokesperson for the team. League related communication, including scheduling and rule related-issues, will go through the team captain.

**2.6 Team Name and Color**. Each team should indicate a team name and perhaps a team color. Team name and color are at the discretion of the team.

=>NOTE: See 4.9, where it says, "Each team must have uniforms consisting of team shirts of the same color."

**2.7 Team Fees.**Each team is required to pay a [$200?] team fee, which needs to be paid to the Regional League Committee prior to the first team contest. Please note that all money collected will be used to pay for prizes and operational expenses. The league committee is made up of volunteers, who will receive no compensation. (Exceptions may be made to this for professionally run leagues.)

=>NOTE: Each league may choose how much to charge per team.

**2.8 National League Finals** (also called the National Club Finals). The winning team in the top division of a Regional League will be eligible to take part in the National Finals, generally held at the U.S. Nationals.

1. **DIVISIONS**

**3.1 Division Assignments.**Each team will be assigned to a **division** based on team rating. In forming divisions, some accommodation may be made for geography or to separate multiple teams from the same club. There may also be divisions by age, such as a youth or senior division. Division champions with at least three returning players may choose to participate in a higher division for the following season, regardless of team rating. Teams who end last in their division may be relegated to a lower division.

**3.2 Division Format.**Divisions will generally be composed of 4-8 teams. Each team will generally play every other team in the division twice over the course of the season. Matches will occur during monthly meet-ups. Teams will generally meet once or twice each month. It is recommended that meetings take place on Friday night or weekends.

**3.3 Scheduling.**Schedule will be available on the league web site. Captains will be notified of any schedule changes. Scheduling will be done by the Regional League Committee, with input from the Team Captains.

**3.4. Rescheduling.** This will only be done when absolutely necessary, and at the discretion of the Regional League Committee, with input from the Team Captains involved.

* 1. **Prizes.** Prizes will generally be awarded to the winning team and runner-up.

1. **RULES**

Competition will follow USATT rules with additional guidelines for league play outlined in this section.

**4.1 Team Contest Format.**There are three standard formats to choose from. In each case team captains will flip a coin to decide who gets to be the home team. Doubles teams need not be named until it is time to play the doubles match.

**4.1.1 Best of Five**. Each team plays two players in singles, with each playing two singles matches, and any two players in doubles, so anywhere from 2-4 players may play in the team contest. Each team contest will have a total of five individual matches, with four singles matches and one doubles match, as follows:

Home Team Away Team  
Player A Player X

Player B Player Y

Doubles (any 2 players) Doubles (any 2 players)

Player A Player Y

Player B Player X

**4.1.2 Best of Seven**. Each team plays three players in singles, with each of them playing two singles matches, and any two players in doubles, so anywhere from 3-5 players may play in the team contest. Each team contest will have a total of seven individual matches, with six singles matches and one doubles match, as follows:

Home Team Away Team  
Player A Player X  
Player B Player Y  
Player C Player Z  
Doubles (any 2 players) Doubles (any 2 players)  
Player C Player X  
Player A Player Y  
Player B Player Z

**4.1.3 Best of Nine.** Each team plays three players in singles, with each of them playing three singles matches, so three players play in each team contest. Each team contest will have a total of nine individual matches, as follows:

Home Team Away Team  
Player A Player X

Player B Player Y

Player C Player Z

Player B Player X

Player A Player Z

Player C Player Y

Player B Player Z

Player C Player X

Player A Player Y

**4.2 All Matches Played**. All individual matches are generally played out regardless of the score in the team contest. Individual matches are best of five games to 11 points. However, at the sole discretion of the team captains, in case a team contest protracts longer than expected, the team captains can decide to have individual best-of-three matches. Both team captains need to agree, in order for this instance to occur. League organizers also reserve the option to adjust the format for division finals, to adapt to spectators’ preference.

=>NOTE: Some leagues may decide to end a team contest when a team has clinched a win. If the league is scoring by team wins, then that works. If they are scoring by total points earned, then they should play out all of the matches.

**4.3 Two Player Rule**. If only two players show up for a league match, then they will default not only the singles matches of the missing player, but the doubles matches as well. This is to prevent a team from trying to win a league match by sending only two strong players. Exceptions can be made by the league committee in extreme cases, especially if notified in advance, but not (for example) so players can play in 4-star or lower tournaments. If a third player cannot play because of sickness or injury but shows up to cheer his teammates, or has a doctor's note, then that team will not default the doubles.

=>NOTE: This rule only applies to formats that include doubles. Some leagues may choose not to use this rule.

**4.4 Division Standing**. There are three main ways of doing this. Leagues may do variations of these. Note that in these cases, "Individual matches" includes doubles, if they are included in your format.

**4.4.1 Option One: Team Won-Loss Record**. This is the simplest. However, it means players may have little incentive to play hard once their team has won a team contest. Teams will earn two (2) points for a team win, one (1) point for a loss, and zero (0) points for a default. The winning team in each division will be determined by the number of team contest points earned.

**4.4.2 Option Two: Team Points.** Teams will earn as many points as their wins in individual matches. Additionally, if a team wins the majority of the individual matches in a given team contest, it will earn an additional bonus point. Therefore, the total number of points a team can earn is the number of individual matches in the team contest plus one. A team defaulting a game will be given 0 points, and the other team will gain the full number of points possible. If two or more members of the group have gained the same number of points, their relative positions shall be determined only by the results of the contests between them, by considering successively the numbers of team points (including bonus points), the ratios of wins to losses in individual matches, games and points, as far as is necessary to resolve the order.  
  
**4.4.3 Option Three: Alternate Team Points Method.** With this method, teams get three points for every individual match won, one point for every match lost, and zero points for every match defaulted.

**4.5 Warm-up.** 30 minutes prior to the scheduled team contest start, time will be allotted for warm-up/practice (at least 15 minutes per team). Warm-up will be on the designated competition tables for the contest only (unless use of other tables is allowed by the club/venue operator). Club/venue policies must be followed.

**4.6 Defaults.** The scheduled contest start time is default time. Individual matches will be defaulted in the order that they come up.

**4.7 Balls.**The league committee will supply balls.

=>NOTE: Most of the major table tennis distributors will supply balls for free if you put their logo up on your web page or flyers. Or you can rely on the players supplying their own balls – but then there might be arguments on what type of ball to use (celluloid or plastic, seamed or non-seamed, which brand, etc.)

**4.8 Club/Home Venue.** League participants and spectators are subject to the rules and policies of the home venue/club hosting a team contest.

**4.9 Uniforms.**Each team must have uniforms consisting of team shirts of the same color. Including the club or organization name and/or the team name on a team’s uniform is preferred, but not required.

**4.10 Results Submission**

* Match results from a team contest must be submitted by the home team electronically within 24 hours of the scheduled contest, or immediately following the end of the team contest, if a league committee member is present. League organizers will provide a form to report the results.
* Any results submitted more than 48 hours after the scheduled time for a team contest will be subject to a penalty of 0.5 team contest points deducted from the home team for each additional day the results have not been submitted. The maximum penalty is the number of points the home team would have earned without any penalties.
* Submission of photos, write-ups, videos or other content from a team contest is encouraged.
* Ratings are optional. Each league may decide on their own if they would like to have their league rated, either with USATT Ratings (where all players must be USATT members – contact USATT for more info), [USATT League Ratings](http://www.usatt.net/league/singles/existing_leagues.asp), or some other version.

**4.11 Rule Violations.**Rule violations should be reported by a team captain to the League Committee and are subject to the following guidelines:

1. Any rule violation must be reported within 48 hours of the violation or the point/game/match/contest will stand as is.
2. Teams with more than three infractions of the same rule during the season may be subject to additional penalties including disqualification from the remainder of the season.
3. For other rule violations or misconduct, the league organizers will determine an appropriate resolution and/or penalty. Penalties for rule violations, unsporting behavior, or other misconduct may include: loss of match, loss of team contest, suspension of player or team from future team contests, expulsion of player or team from league.

**4.12 Liability Waiver.** The league committee does not assume any liability. Each team captain and player may be required to submit a signed waiver of liability form prior to the first team contest.

**5.** **SETTING UP AND PROMOTING A LEAGUE**

* **Flyer**. Create one and leave it at every club in the region. Here is an [example of a league flyer](http://capitaltt.com/capital-area-league-flyer.pdf), used by the Capital Area League.
* **Web page**. This is a must. Here are examples:
  + [Capital Area League](http://capitaltt.com)
  + [Los Angeles League](http://www.lapingpong.com/)
  + [New York League](http://newyorktabletennisleague.blogspot.com/)
* **Mass Emailing**. Do one to players in your region, both current and past members. You can get email addresses from [USATT](mailto:admin@usatt.org). You might also consider a regular mailing to get those whose email addresses are not known – USATT can provide mailing labels at a low cost.
* **News Release**. Write one and submit it to [USATT](mailto:admin@usatt.org) for their news page, and to local news media. (Google for contact info for local media.)
* **Word of Mouth**. Talk to players at your club and encourage them to give it a try. Perhaps have a club info meeting. Many will be hesitant at first, and so you may use your first season to show players what they're missing, and then get them the second season. This means writing up articles on the league as it goes on so that potential players want to become a part of it.
* **Club Newsletter**. If your club doesn't have one, create one. Feature the league in it so that players will want to become a part of it.