



New Player Guide

Welcome to the world of tennis! We hope you will enjoy the sport, meet new people, stay active, and overall benefit from playing this “sport of a lifetime.” We’ve compiled this guide to help you understand how tennis teams work, what leagues we offer, and other various tidbits of information that might help you get your feet on the courts.

Most of our information is on our website, <http://csratennis.com>. There are news items on the home page, and you can find more detailed information on our website through the Adult – USTA link (<http://csratennis.com/adults-usta>). The rules of tennis, local league rules, and detailed league schedules and information are located on the website. Please check it out routinely! If you don’t get our CSRATA emails, please sign up for them on our website. The link is at the bottom of our web page.

Also, if you’re on Social Media, we are on Facebook at [CSRA Tennis Association](#) and Instagram [@csratennis](#).

Our local tennis leagues are run by the CSRA Tennis Association (CSRATA). We “govern” the USTA leagues in the CSRA – Burke, Columbia, Lincoln, McDuffie and Richmond counties in Georgia, and Aiken, Barnwell and Edgefield counties in South Carolina. We are part of USTA Georgia.

We have a Board of Directors as well as a Local League Coordinator (LLC), Julie Lichty, llc.csratennis@gmail.com, and a Junior Team Tennis (JTT) coordinator, Carolyn Drake, c.drake1240@comcast.com. These are the people who are there specifically to help you with finding teams and any league issues and questions.

A great link to understand the basics of playing matches, including tennis etiquette, is [Introduction to Tennis for Adults](#).

To play on a team, you’ll need to join the USTA (\$44/year) and then register for each league you play (\$28). If you take Tennis Apprentice, your fees are covered for your first year of USTA membership and your first league fee!

To register for a team, you’ll need a team number which you will get from your captain. The website for registering for teams and also for finding team schedules and various stats is TennisLink (<https://m.tennislink.usta>). This can be accessed through the <https://www.usta.com> website or through the USTA mobile app (it’s a great little app that you should download).



Tennis Apprentice & Continued Learning

The CSRA Tennis Apprentice program is THE program for beginner adults (18+) who have never played USTA league tennis. In fall, 2019, we had 68 tennis apprentice players, over 40 of whom continued into league play. There is always a wide age range and athletic ability in the program, from people who played in high school twenty years ago, to those who have never played, to those who are young and new to the area wanting to get started. It's a six-week program offered in spring and fall, includes a racquet, and helps you get right into league tennis at the conclusion of the program. The fee is \$50, and you can find more information using the Tennis Apprentice link on our website, <http://csratennis.com>.

At the completion of Tennis Apprentice, you may want to take part in additional lessons or clinics. Please contact the facilities or our Local League Coordinator to help you get started. Lessons and clinics are great for faster improvement and to make sure you learn correct strokes (which also helps with injury prevention).

Teams, Leagues, and Ratings

One of the best things about tennis leagues is that they are based on skill level. Beginner leagues are 2.5 level for women and 2.5 or 3.0 levels for men. At the end of each calendar year, "ratings" are issued. This is based on who you've played with and against and your match scores. Players may move up a level or down when ratings are released. Most all players are 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, or 4.0. A few will reach 4.5 in our area. There are higher levels, but we don't have local leagues for them.

When you first start playing, you will self-rate through a questionnaire on TennisLink. Use caution – you can always appeal to play higher, but it's harder (and lengthier) to appeal down, so don't overestimate your ability! If you participate in Tennis Apprentice, DO NOT create a USTA account. This will be done for you since your first year's USTA membership is included in the initial fee.

Ratings that are issued at year end take into account regular men's and women's matches. They don't take into account combo, mixed, Tri-Level, or singles flex league results.

Teams consist of about 14 players, one of whom is captain. Captains form their own teams. This is why there isn't a list of teams to join anywhere. However, we can help you find a team! Eventually it gets easy since most people gravitate to a group, and it's our job to help you along the way, including getting on your first few teams until you are plugged in.

Teams have a "home" facility. In a perfect world, each team would play half of their matches at their home facility and half at other facilities. However, due to shortage in the number of courts, this doesn't usually work out. You'll play against teams from other facilities, or maybe



even from your own facility. Some facilities require you to be a member of the facility to play on their teams and others are public facilities that don't. Our area facilities and their contact information are also listed on our website. Most courts in our area are hard courts (concrete). There are some that are clay courts. Don't worry – you'll get used to the difference soon!

Tennis matches are played with three or five "lines" which are individual matches. For 2.5 level teams, one court would play singles and two would play doubles, so five players on each team would play a match. Therefore, you won't play every match that your team is scheduled. It's up to the captain to find out who is available and put together the "lineup" – who is going to play and what they are going to play (singles, doubles, which "line", etc). The captain also enters scores into TennisLink (it's the USTA software that is used for league rosters, schedules, standings, etc).

For 3.0 and higher regular leagues, most leagues play 2 singles lines and 3 doubles and would require eight players on each team each match. Combo, Mixed, and Tri-level matches consist of only 3 doubles lines.

LEAGUES

We have several types of leagues that are played throughout the year. Men's, Women's, Combo, Mixed, and Tri-level Leagues are all offered.

Combo Leagues and Mixed Leagues are typically played for one "short" or "condensed" season in Spring or Fall and then have a longer season each summer. Condensed season is an entire season played in a week, so teams could have matches every day of that week.

Men's and Women's leagues

These leagues are the heart of league tennis in our area. Teams in these leagues consist of all men or all women. All adults can play 18 & over, but there are also age level leagues that have a minimum age. Teams in these leagues are based on rating. You can play at your rating or one level (a half point) above your rating. Our fall and spring leagues are:

- 18 & over men's
- 18 & over women's
- 40 & over men's
- 40 & over women's
- 55 & over men's
- 55 & over women's
- 65 & over men's
- 65 & over women's



Each league is played at a level, so there can be 2.5, 3.0, 3.5, 4.0, and 4.5 men's and women's leagues at each age group if there is enough interest for two teams. It's up to players to form teams, so if captains don't register to start a team, we won't have a league! We don't have leagues in all the divisions since there are some in which we just don't have anyone forming teams.

Combo Leagues

Combo is named because players have a combination of levels. Teams are made up of the same gender and consist of players of two different rating levels. For instance, a 5.5 team consists of 2.5 and 3.0 players who play together in an individual match. The total rating of players in a line cannot exceed the league rating. However, the total rating can be lower than the league rating. For instance, two 2.5 players can play together in a 5.5 combo match, or there can be 3.0 and a 2.5 player. Combo leagues play three individual doubles lines in each match, so six players of each team play in each scheduled match.

CSRATA typically plays a "short season" combo league for a week each spring and a longer season in the summer.

Mixed Leagues

Mixed teams consist of men and women who play doubles together, with three doubles lines per match. We normally offer 6.0, 7.0, 8.0, and 9.0 mixed levels in 18 & over and 40 & over leagues. Players cannot have a combined rating greater than the level. For instance, two 3.0 players or a 2.5 and 3.5 player can play together in a 6.0 mixed match.

CSRATA typically plays a "short season" mixed league for a week each fall and a longer season in the summer.

Tri-level Leagues

Tri-level is a new league that will be introduced in 2019 in the CSRA. Tri-level consists of three different levels, with each level playing together and against the same level. For instance, a 3.0 - 4.0 Tri-level league will play three individual matches at each scheduled match, one 3.0 line, one 3.5 line, and one 4.0 line. Like regular adult leagues, players can play up a level – a 3.5 player can play a 3.5 or 4.0 line. Men's Tri-level will be played in the summer of 2019.



Singles Flex Leagues

Singles Flex Leagues are offered each spring/summer. This is not a regular team; instead, you sign up for this on your own. You will be given a schedule of who to play each week and the contact information of your opponent. It's up to the two of you to agree to a time to play and reserve a court. This is a great way to get more singles experience! You'll play people at your own rating, and you don't have to worry if you're unavailable for a week. You can make matches up earlier or later.

PLAYER DATABASE - HOW TO FIND TEAMS

We have JUST rolled out a new way to find teams! Our Player Database is located on our website (<http://csratennis.com>). Go to the Adults tab, then Player Database. Just complete the form and submit. You can look at the submissions also and form teams from who is interested in playing. Again, teams are formed by players, and hopefully this will help people connect with each other.

Again, if you have any questions, please just email our local league coordinator at llc.csratennis@gmail.com, or contact our CSRATA Board President at csratennis@gmail.com. We are here to help you get started and answer whatever questions you have along your way.

Hope to see you on the courts!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda M. Dollar".

Linda Dollar
CSRA Tennis Association, President