

**Girls' Tennis Post Season Meeting**  
**November 20, 2024 @ 9:30am**

- I. Welcome and introductions: Sandy Mamary, NJSIAA (chair); Vicky Browne, Kent Place (AD); Tara Geisser, Hanover Park (coach); Jeff Holman, Haddonfield (coach); Frank Malta, East Brunswick (AD); Colleen Senor, Clearview (coach); Joseph Ricciardelli, New Milford (AD); Courter Smith, Tournaments Director; Meaghan Williams, Holy Angels (coach)
- II. No previous meeting correspondence
- III. Correspondence/Feedback regarding the 2024 season (regular- and post-season):

*Proposal/correspondence*

- 3<sup>rd</sup> set match tiebreak was seen as a positive as it moved things along, fewer matches had to be moved to earlier starting times, consistent with rules for state tournament.
- *The early start date caught many by surprise, there was increased difficulty in gathering all players on short notice, completing challenge matches was a struggle.* Since tennis ends much earlier than other fall sports, the early start provides some opportunity for a relatively equal season, in terms of overall weeks of play. **A blast will be sent out to all ADs in January with important dates, reminders about entering rosters and accurate challenge forms, and the expected code of conduct; a follow-up will be sent in early August.**
- *New coaches – we encourage every conference to have a coaches meeting to review rules, expectations, etc*
- Several sports have formed coaches' associations – the NJSIAA does not sanction any of these associations and they are not affiliated in any way with the NJSIAA, but recommendations/discussions brought forward by the association certainly can be presented to the sport specific committee. **The tournament director will send correspondence to all tennis coaches for whom he has email to gauge interest.**
- There are some coaches who have mentioned concern about the use of UTR to determine post-season honors and the negative impact of out-of-season results determining high school results. The NJSIAA has no influence on post-season honors. **The UTRs update weekly once the season gets**

**started – when match results are entered into njschoolsports.com, there is no need for coaches to enter anything in UTR during the season. This year, there was a slight delay at the start of the season, but by mid-September, all results were seen within a few days on UTR. The recommendation of this committee is that UTR continue to be used as a tool to assist with seeding and selection of players for the individual tournament.**

- *Proposal to adjust or revisit the group/section classifications, even if it means unbalanced numbers in some sections.* The committee felt that the two-year cycles were reasonable while acknowledging that some of the classifications require some increased rigor in certain sections/groups and may cause travel adjustments. The classifications are standardized and are done in all sports. Equity in terms of competitiveness is too difficult to change on a yearly basis, particularly in this sport when many top players make participation decisions well after classifications have been decided.
- *Officials are great at matches, and perhaps schools should have chair officials regularly for big matches; can we have serve clocks like the professionals have; and is there professional development required for officials?* Schools are encouraged to hire officials as often as feasible, to acclimate players with having officials on court, to provide officials with practice and work opportunities, and to assist coaches in monitoring the pace and quality of play. The serving clock was not something noted as necessary by any of the committee members and would be quite a burden on districts and teams (buying and maintaining devices when many facilities have limited/no power, and then operating five courts each match). Professional development would be great, but officials' associations should probably bear that responsibility. **Recommendation of the committee is to make no recommendation/request for change to the Executive Committee regarding chair officials or serving clocks. The NJSIAA will work with the assignors for officials to review points of emphasis and to go over any new rules.**

#### IV. Girls' Calendar for Fall 2025 -

**Start Date: practices/tryouts may start on August 11, 2025**

**Competition Starts: August 18, 2025**

**Cut-off: September 20 (with download on September 21 at noon)**

**Entry Forms Open: September 1, 2025**

**Challenge Match Form Start: September 3, 2025**

**Team Entry Form Closes: September 15, 2025**

**Conflict of Interest Form Due: September 15, 2025**

**Cutoff (Team & Individuals): September 22, 2025**

**Power Points Close at Noon: September 23, 2025**

**Individual Entry Form Closes: September 23, 2025**

**Tournament Seeding Meeting: September 25, 2025**

**Team Tournament Dates: September 29, 30 October 7, 9, 14, 16 (Groups)**

**Individual Tournament Info:**

**Tournament Dates: October 4 and 5, 11 and 12, 2025**

V. Review of current regulations and any proposed changes: -

**Proposals for rule modifications:**

- *Proposal to publish challenge match form online, and have results entered into njschoolsports.com. These results then automatically would be transferred to UTR for inclusion into player profiles. The feature should be available, as baseball already includes pitch counts on a game-by-game basis. In addition to greater transparency regarding lineups, this would lead to more lineups being complete on both UTR and njschoolsports.com, and would help non-tournament players increase the number of matches played to provide a more accurate UTR for every participant. Connected to previous discussion point about UTR opportunities, this potentially should provide ALL players with more results to include to help develop a most accurate UTR rating. **Recommendation of the committee was to review this proposal after the spring/boys tennis season of 2025***
- *Proposal for a carryover rule; bad sportsmanship at the end of a match seems to have no consequence. A proposal to suspend a player for the next match if there is a code-able behavior at the conclusion of, or after, a match. The committee supports initiatives to promote sportsmanship. Asking coaches, ADs, and/or site managers who may not be on a court at the conclusion of a match to make this determination will be difficult to*

mandate. Other sports have similar policies, and there are consequences for behavior that can occur after a contest has been completed. Concern about word-of-mouth reports of infractions leading to penalties, and consistent enforcement if it is left to individual coaches. Discussion about how to enforce with seniors. **Recommendation, the officials and tournament directors (county, conference, and/or state) will be able to issue consequences for observed behavior at the respective tournaments. During the state tournament, the assigned official will issue the code and inform the tournament director and player's coach if a suspension will be issued. Further discussion at the boys' end of season meeting and again next year to determine efficacy.**

- *Proposal to revise the 24-match maximum.* Changing the maximum number of allowable matches will require Executive Committee action. There were 54 programs throughout the state that reached 20 matches during this most recent season, and that was with nearly perfect weather. Given that the weather was gorgeous, and there were not many teams coming close to the maximum, there seems to be no reason to request that the Executive Committee increase/eliminate the match limit, as its inclusion in the regulations and modifications keeps tennis consistent with other NJSIAA sponsored sports. **Recommendation of the committee is to make no recommendation/request for change to the Executive Committee.**

### **Proposals for match amendments:**

- *Proposals to allow in-match substitution – “During team matches, a coach can substitute one (1) player into a set at any point of 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles **ONLY**. This substitution can be due to the inability to play due to injury or lack of performance at the position. Once a player is **replaced**, they cannot return. The replacement player must be on the singles ladder of the challenge match form and must not have been announced into the varsity lineup (i.e. no singles players or moving a 1<sup>st</sup> singles player to 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles). Replacement player must assume the serving position and return position of the replaced player. If a warning and/or point penalty has been assessed for violations of CONDUCT to any of the four doubles players, a replacement player may not be used in that match. The player that started the match is the player of record. The CAL, Olympic, and Tri-County conferences have introduced this measure into regular-season matches with success. Committee concerns related to permanent removal of a player for the match*

– in other sports, you can reinsert a player removed for poor play, etc., but this proposal does not allow for that. If the committee revised the proposal to allow for re-insertion, would it be fair to have a serving specialist (for example) just on court when serving, and would that be like a form of stacking? The committee felt that proposal, while potentially providing an avenue to avoid injury defaults/retirements and perhaps allow an additional player to participate in certain matches, provided a very easy path to stacking in the doubles, and potentially denies a struggling student-athlete (play-wise, not injured) the opportunity to persist through a difficult stretch of play. More consideration possible if limited to being used in cases where an injury occurs during the match, but concerns about stacking persist as well as faking injuries. **The recommendation of the committee was not to adopt this proposal but bring it up for discussion at the end of the boys' season to solicit feedback.**

- *Proposal to adopt no-ad scoring in all games/all matches.* This scoring system is frequently used in large county/conference tournaments during the earlier rounds to speed up play and move the tournament along; it is used in other states for high school tennis; college tennis uses this scoring system. While those points are valid, no members of the committee had heard of problems during the season with the length of matches, particularly with the implementation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> set match tiebreak. If county/conference tournaments choose to utilize this format in their early rounds, the committee has no problem with it. **Recommendation of the committee was to not adopt this proposal.**
- *Multiple requests for clarification on doubles lineups, particularly about rotation of doubles pairings from one match to the next. Among the other requests was a proposal to prohibit a 1<sup>st</sup> doubles player, when partner is not playing, from dropping to 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles, since that strong player in a lower position can be considered stacking.* If there is a listed challenge match result, which a coach/AD has signed off on, movement in doubles is acceptable. Doubles pairs are not always formed in the order of the singles ladder, and there are a lot of programs that have very balanced doubles teams, so the absence of a player from 1<sup>st</sup> doubles might make the 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles team better than the makeshift team, regardless of how good one of those players may be. Some programs rotate from match to match because they have a number of comparable players; ongoing challenge matches, and/or multiple combinations, and/or rotating among various pairs can provide additional playing opportunities, and also help programs prepare for

possible lineup adjustments should they be necessary at some point in the season (sickness, vacations, school trips, for the boys – AP testing and senior class trips). The committee felt that rotating doubles pairs was acceptable, as long as the challenge match form supports the placement of the pairs on a given day. The absence of a member of 1<sup>st</sup> doubles should not require the 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles team to split, and while the strong player might be the strongest on the 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles court, her partner is presumably the weakest doubles player among the four participants – since doubles is a pair, moving that non-lineup player into 1<sup>st</sup> doubles may make the 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles pair stronger and therefore the lineup may be stacked at that point. **Recommendation of the committee was to maintain current wording and explanation, and to remind coaches that ALL doubles challenges and combinations need to be included on the challenge match form.**

- *Proposal to allow programs to play multiple matches on school days, if both teams agree. A related proposal for teams to be able to play two matches at the same time, if no players are in both matches, thereby allowing more players to compete and not putting any players' health at risk.* Conferences that have teams play twice might be able to reduce make-ups and/or save on transportation costs. The committee discussed how this would impact team lineups, UTR, and qualification for states. Since all matches would count, the 24-match limit is not impacted, and more players potentially can participate, there was a general feeling that lineup integrity would be maintained, scheduling might be easier, and transportation costs could potentially be lowered. Playing the same team twice on one day would require a program to give up the home court match, but if both teams agree, then two matches could be played one after the other. In this case, regulation scoring must be used, and players may participate in both matches. If a program is going to play a split-squad match (two matches simultaneously), then no player may participate in both matches (which would be possible, if there are differing numbers of courts at each site, and/or if staggered start times were used to allow for a player to be in both matches). This scenario is less likely than the previous part of the proposal as an interested program would need a lot of depth and would have had to play a lot of challenge matches to support lineups in this case since all positions would have to be in proper verified order. **Recommendation of the committee is to revisit/review this topic after the boy's tennis (spring 2025) season and determine if this proposal should be adopted. Program's ability to play multiple matches on school days if both**

**teams/administrations agree. Players may participate in consecutive matches, but not in simultaneous matches.**

**Proposals for tournament amendments:**

- *A proposal for raising the singles automatic qualifying standard to 70%, same as doubles.* There is a chance that some weaker players will be relegated to wildcard status, and their low UTRs (along with failing to meet the 70% standard) will reduce the size of the singles draw. There does not seem to be a need to create space in the draw by increasing the qualifying standard, as 60% ensures that players performing at a high level at 1<sup>st</sup> singles have an avenue to entry in the singles tournament, regardless of UTR, strength of schedule, etc. **Recommendation of the committee was to keep singles automatic qualifying standard at 60%.**
- *A proposal for a minimum UTR for wildcard consideration.* Players in other individual/team sports (golf, swimming, track) must meet much stricter time/score standards than in tennis. Players with low 4 UTRs are not outstanding players, and coaches should not be encouraged to submit paperwork that will be denied. Perhaps, consider using the standard required for players who attend schools that do not sponsor a tennis team (**5.38 for girls' 2025 tournament**). Each year, the committee examines dozens of unsuccessful entries for players who are not automatic qualifiers, play behind non-qualifiers and/or barely qualified 1<sup>st</sup> singles players, and/or who have multiple losses, often to players who did not qualify. The individual tournament should be for the best players in the state, not anyone who wants to participate. Doubles pairs below a combined 6 UTR should not be considered for wildcards. This seems mainly geared towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> doubles teams, but there have been some 1<sup>st</sup> doubles wildcard entries for teams with low UTRs, winning percentages under 50%, and/or multiple losses to non-qualifiers. **Recommendation of the committee was to review this proposal after the Boys Tennis 2025 spring season.**
- *A proposal to fill the 128 person singles draw and 64 team doubles draw, with any available entrants. Related proposal for a waitlist for the singles and doubles tournaments.* All entrants receive consideration upon initial submission of entry, and with very quick turnaround time from entry to draw publication, there likely is no new information that would sway the committee. **Recommendation of the committee was to continue with past practices by the seeding committee.**

- *Proposal that the seeding for the team tournament should either be all power point or done entirely by the selection committee.* The regulations are pretty clear that the power points are used for entry and determining the 16 teams in any bracket. The seeding committee then has the ability to consider UTR, strength of schedule, record, head-to-head results, etc. to seed the bracket. While there are difficult decisions being made in many brackets, the selection committee valued head-to-head results more than any other factor, then looked at UTR and strength of schedule concurrently, with record and common opponents after that. While there was a 16 seed that advanced to the sectional final, that team had a 2-5 record (both wins against winless teams) entering the tournament, was actually below #16 in its section and only got into the tournament when teams in the top 16 opted not to participate, and there was no basis for moving that team above #16 based on any evidence in the first few weeks of the season. Additional discussion revolved around whether teams without complete UTR rosters should be considered incomplete entries – why is the seeding committee tasked with researching lineups and results? Additionally, there were multiple cries of “foul” when teams with fewer wins/matches were elevated in brackets, as opposed to years when winning percentage was paramount; when there are slight differences in team UTR, why would the committee feel it has the right to take away a home match from an established program? It gets difficult to give a standard response to how different brackets are seeded, when some of the sections have teams with no head-to-head results and almost no common opponents. The committee understood that some brackets would be very challenging and did its best to examine in-season results, as well as projecting what would happen when teams with no common data would meet. Hopefully, since teams now know their sections for next year, some of the out-of-area teams can schedule each other. Head-to-head results are always the most important criteria within each section. Perhaps, a minimum number of matches should be instituted – the power point system uses 8 matches, maybe not reaching that number should be considered in the seeding/selection process. **The recommendation of the committee is to continue with power points being used for initial entry. A reminder about playing at least 8 matches by the cutoff to ADs. If the challenge matches can be reflected in UTR, then that should solve the problem of having to search for individual player UTRs and/or having incomplete rosters that, in turn, impact team UTR. This will be revisited after the boys’ season and should be examined at the end of each season.**



- Proposal to mandate court surface and number of courts.* The NJSIAA's position is that player safety is most important and should be every day. That said, the conference of the home team is in the best position to decide about the safety of a program's facility. If the home team's conference has deemed that the court surface is safe and acceptable for regular season matches, then the NJSIAA will not overrule. Mandating playing surfaces negates home court/field advantage enjoyed in other sports (turf vs. grass; stadium seating vs. the auditorium styles of some gyms); if the size of the playing surface is the same, and the courts are used regularly, visiting teams need to adjust to conditions. If safety is the issue, then it should have been addressed during the season by opponents and the conference. **The NJSIAA will allow teams with uncommon playing surfaces to use those surfaces/facilities in post-season play, provided the surface/facility was used throughout regular season play.**
- Proposal to mandate that sites have a minimum of 4 courts to host a state match.* Two matches had to be completed on a second day because daylight ran out; both of those matches took place at 3 court facilities. Perhaps, 3 courts are ok but only with a 2pm start time. Moving start times that early requires missed class time, different transportation options, at times coordination between different schools (students in specialized academies), and/or issues securing a site outside of normal high school playing times. 3 courts also adds to transportation and officials costs; in states, there can also be much more travel involved, and a 3 court facility team match will be much longer, resulting in later returns home. **Recommendation of the committee to require all state matches be played at facilities with at least three courts – home teams without four courts are not required to travel to the visiting school and may play at a neutral site. Refer to the start times for state matches in the rules and regulations of the state tournament.**
- Proposal to adjust the regulations to state that matches should start no earlier than 2pm and no later than 3pm.* The state matches are not longer than other regular season matches, which routinely start between 3:30 and 4:00pm. If a facility has fewer than five courts, or if indoor space is required during either season, exceptions can be granted as teams are at the mercy of the indoor clubs' court availability. **Recommendation of the committee to require all state matches to start no earlier than 2pm. If there are lights at the facility, the match may start at 4:00pm. High seed/Home school**

**determines the time of the match. Schools are at the mercy of indoor Clubs/Courts and may start earlier than 2:00pm.**

VI. Good of the Order

**Meeting adjourned at 12:42pm**