**USTA Mentor Program for New Umpires**

In order to work under auspices of the USTA, a new official must:

1) submit the USTA background check
2) complete the safe play initiative
3) pass the on-line USTA test using the passing grade for a provisional
4) participate in the USTA Mentoring Program

**Rationale:**

On-court experience under the direction of a seasoned official is part of the mentoring program. This official will serve as a resource and will facilitate a base of experience using hands-on training. This, in turn, will increase knowledge of rules, regulations and professionalism which will lead to the new umpire developing confidence and pride in his technique, skills and performance.

The results of this program hopefully will be increased retention of the highest quality of trained officials prepared to achieve the Sectional level by the end of their provisional year.

**Program Components:**

**USTA Training Coordinator/Mentor/Trainers:**

The USTA Mentor Coordinator will oversee the Mentoring Program and be the liaison between the Florida Section Officials Committee and the Program Participants (Mentors & Participants). The Coordinator will work closely with all aspects of the Program.

**Mentors:**

The Mentor Coordinator will designate Mentors from a pool of officials approved by the USTA Florida Section Officials Committee, certified in the categories in which the participants may work, who have agreed to participate in the program. Mentors will be paired with new officials (Participants) from their geographical area who will make themselves available to discuss rules and offer support and guidance regarding situations that arise on court as well as coach the participant in the Officials Code of Conduct. The Mentor will report progress to the USTA Mentor Coordinator and the Regional Director of Officials in their area regarding readiness of Participants to work once the minimum requirement for shadowing is met.

**Site Trainer:**

A Site Trainer is the tournament official that the Participant will shadow at a given event. He/she shall be designated by mutual agreement of the Mentor and the tournament referee in the category the Participant wishes to work and may be either the referee or an umpire designated to supervise the Participant at the approved event.

**Mentor Program Participants:**

All provisional umpires will be required to volunteer/shadow an assigned Site Trainer(s) for a minimum of five days at two or more approved events. The shadowing must be done at a minimum of two different events under at least two different referees/umpires who have been approved by the assigned USTA Mentor. ITA dual meets do not serve as part of the minimum training days.

Additional shadowing may be required as recommended by the USTA Mentor to ensure readiness to work “on his/her own.” This will be reported to the USTA Regional Director of Officials. **Shadowing time shall not be documented on Nucula.**

New officials will be given special forms with Competencies to be covered during the training period, but will not be limited to the items listed on the Competency form.

Mentors and Site Trainers will also be provided with a (simple, user-friendly) evaluation report form designed to report the Participant’s progress. Site Trainers will email a copy of the report to the Participant’s assigned Mentor following the event that was shadowed. The Mentor will send a report to the USTA Regional Director of Officials in their area after each shadowing event has been completed until the Participant has been approved to work alone on the court.

**The Next Step:**

Once the shadowing process is complete and the Mentor Program Participant has been deemed qualified as having sufficient skills by his/her Mentor, the Mentor will then notify the USTA Regional Director of Officials in their area and the USTA Mentor Coordinator of the Participant’s readiness. Participant may then proceed forward to taking the steps to become a sectional official. The Sectional Chairperson of Officials will change their certification on NUCULA to sectional if those steps are completed. Their names will be added to the list of officials certified to work and this information passed on to the local association or scheduler.

Completion of the shadowing experience under the USTA Mentor Program for Umpires hopes to ensure retention of newly qualified and certified officials within USTA FL, raise the standards of officiating as well as the expectations of tournament personnel, thereby promoting the growth and development of tennis officiating in our Section. Our hope is that the assigned Mentor, having established a relationship with the new umpire, will stay in touch periodically and offer guidance on an ongoing basis.
Competencies for New Umpire Mentor Program Participants
(A Self-evaluation form assessing progress throughout shadowing process; please note comments and initial & date to left when each is mastered)

_____ **Crew meeting:** Prior to the start of play, referee will conduct a meeting for all umpires to go over court assignments, time of warm-up, and any other items of special interest (coaching, parents, handling tie-break, MTO, when to call referee to court).
   *Comments:*

_____ **Prepare the Courts for Play:** Clear debris/trash, measure nets, properly measure and install single sticks.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Starting of the Match:** Pre-match talk at net with both players + coin toss.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Time the Warm-up:** Using hand-held stop-watch, time the warm-up (for 5 min WU, after three minutes, call “two minutes” which will notify players to begin taking serves).
   *Comments:*

_____ **Time change-of-sides and set-breaks:** Start clock at the moment the ball goes out-of-play on the game/set-ending point. Call time when 30 seconds remains; call 15 seconds if player doesn’t leave bench.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Roving at net-post:** Posture, watching two or more courts from the net-post if instructed by referee.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Point Penalty System (PPS):** Observe how umpire handles behavioral issues using the “caution” for borderline behavior, Code-Violation for flagrant violations (flagrant actions in anger, etc), when coaching is and is not allowed.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Medical Time-Out:** Observe how referee/roving official handles a medical time-out (how to call trainer, what steps to take when trainer is unavailable, transitioning from evaluation to treatment; retirements).
   *Comments:*

_____ **Observe Chaired Match in Progress:** If matches are to be chaired, sit in direct view of chair umpire with scorecard, pencil, and hand-held stop-watch for a minimum of one set.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Introduction to Scorecard:** If matches are to be chaired, obtain a scorecard and become familiar with standard scorecard markings using FAC.
   *Comments:*

_____ **Assignment process:** Discuss with Mentor how to network with other officials, check TennisLink for area tournaments, and become familiar with the USTA and USTA-FL officials’ websites, Officials Code of Conduct, Nucula, as well as criteria commonly used by referees when hiring.
   *Comments:*

*Comments:*
New Umpire Evaluation Report

To be filled out by the Site Trainer and sent to the assigned Mentor upon completion of day/tournament. [Include a suggested minimum recommended days for additional shadowing]

Using FAC Procedures for the Roving Official, please note the following categories

A. The purpose of the crew meeting (learning of assigned courts, scoring system, ball change, warm-up time, calling overrules, foot faults from in or outside of court)
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

B. Preparing assigned courts for play (installing single-sticks, measuring the net, clearing debris, etc).
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

C. Timing the warm-up and change-of-ends (call “two minutes” or “time” when appropriate; understand use of time violations and delay-of-game code violations).
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

D. Resolving scoring disputes (using judgment on when to approach players, listening carefully, having players reconstruct score, then in order: 1) replaying disputed points, 2) last mutually agreeable score, 3) coin toss).
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

E. Knowing when and how to issue a Code Violation (what is acceptable, what warrants a “caution,” use of timing, calm tone, awareness of audible obscenities of other languages commonly used by players)
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

F. Other items requiring judgment (Handling MTOs, controlling spectators, overrules, avoid officiousness, being “visible and invisible,” calling lets, and other things as they arise)
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

G. Verbiage (uses proper verbiage in all cases as approved by USTA or ITF best practices) and provide resources or refer to available sources.
Comments_________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Assessment and additional general comments on performance of new umpire, including Officials Code of Conduct, professionalism, initiative, attitude, and endurance.
Comments:____________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

In your opinion, is this individual ready to perform duties of an official using judgment in all situations not specifically covered by the Rules of Tennis or USTA Regulations? List limitations, if any.
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________________
Mentor Responsibilities:

- Contact Participant within two weeks to arrange meeting
- Discuss training opportunities; offer assistance in contacting tournament referee/site trainer
- Discuss uniform requirements (plain navy polo shirt, khaki pants, etc.); USTA shirt to be worn only after completion of provisional training
- Advise Participant to provide Site Trainer with form for evaluation at event (if other than Mentor)
- Counsel on Professionalism and items of the Officials Code of Conduct
- Report progress to USTA Regional Director of Officials on a regular basis until Participant is certified to work.
- Make yourself available to Participant at a mutually agreeable time to answer questions, offer support, etc., during the shadowing period and thereafter
- Assist new umpire in networking to find additional work both inside and outside the local area when possible.

Site Trainer Checklist to Cover at Event:

- Become familiar with New Umpire Evaluation Report
- Appropriate uniform (including outerwear) of provisional umpire
- Required equipment/gear
- Appropriate arrival time, punctuality
- Limitations during training (participants should not make any rulings on court until certified to work and are wearing proper USTA attire)
- Pre-match tasks & procedures (prepare court, balls, single sticks, etc)
- Particulars as requested by Referee in Pre-match Meeting (warm-up, match format, etc.)
- Troubleshooting (staying calm during intense moments, how to handle parents/coaches, etc)
- Rotation/Coverage area (how many courts, break schedule)
- Appropriate verbiage to be used on court (roving)
- Implementation of PPS (incl. when to use caution)
- Post-match debriefing
- Report to Participant’s assigned Mentor at conclusion of event.