

2021 ATTA Doubles Ladder Rules

Schedule of Play

The doubles ladder runs from June 2 through October 31, 2021, followed by playoffs. There are five segments of play; each segment is about four weeks long (see schedule below). The Ladder Chair will provide a score update the week before the end of each segment. All players are responsible for checking and reporting scores.

Segment	Play Dates	Resolved Scores	Finalized Segment
A	4/15 – 5/7	5/8	5/9
B	5/9 – 6/5	6/6	6/7
C	6/7 – 7/5	7/6	7/7
D	7/7 – 8/7	8/8	8/9
E	8/9 – 9/6	9/7	9/8
F	9/8 – 10/3	10/4	10/5
Semi-finals	10/5 – 10/15		
Finals	10/17 – 11/1		

Matches

Ladder matches use the standard rules of the United States Tennis Association (USTA). Matches are best of three sets, with a standard 12-point tiebreak (first to 7 points, win by 2) at 6 games all.

If all 4 players agree, it is permissible to play a match tiebreaker (first to 10 points with a win by 2) in lieu of a full third set; in which case, the third set would be scored as 1-0, e.g. a completed match with a match tiebreaker may be 6-4, 4-6, 1-0.

Required Matches:

1. Each team must play two required matches each segment.

2. For the required matches, each team must play the team two above and the team two below their position on the ladder. For the top two teams on the ladder, required matches are as follows: team #1 on the ladder plays team #2 and team #3; team #2 plays team #1 and team #4. For the bottom two teams on the ladder, required matches

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are as follows: the bottom team plays the team one above and the team two above them; the team second from the bottom plays the team one below and the team two above them.

3. For Segment A, play is within tiers only (i.e., Tier 1 teams play only against other Tier 1 teams; Tier 2 teams play only against other Tier 2 teams, etc.). Thus, for the first segment, each tier follows the rules for required matches for the highest and lowest teams within the tier (see #2). After Segment A, all teams are arranged in order of total points, collapsing across tiers, and play continues for the rest of the ladder season accordingly.
4. Required matches utilize a “home court” concept. The team that is higher on the ladder is considered the home court team (e.g., the team on row 10 is the home team when scheduling with the team on row 12, but the away team when scheduling with the team on row 8). The home court team decides on the location of the match and reserves the court, when possible. All efforts should be made to agree on the location, but the home court team has the final say. **Both** teams should bring a new can of tennis balls to the match. The home team opens a can for the match. After completion of the match, the winning team receives a new can of tennis balls and the defeated team receives the played balls (similar to ALTA and USTA leagues).
5. The date, time, and location of the match must be agreed by all players for it to be considered a scheduled match. Only then can the match be considered a default match when applicable (see Defaults). The court fees should be mutually agreeable to both teams. **Court fees should be shared.**
6. Should a team know in advance that they will be absent for 14 or more days during one full segment they are permitted to arrange 2 make-up matches for their team to replace their required matches for that segment, provided it is sanctioned by the Ladder Chair in advance. For segment A the opponents must be from the same tier (as per rule 3 above), and for the remaining segments the opponents must be of the appropriate playing level.

Challenge Matches:

1. Challenge matches are “partial-value” matches; fewer points are at stake than in required matches (see Scoring System below).
2. A team may play several challenge matches per segment but only one of these will receive points in each segment. The Ladder Chair will award the team points based on their best challenge match result. Therefore, no more than six challenge matches will be awarded points over the entire season (one in each segment).

3. Challenge matches may only be between teams in the same tier. [*Exception:* Teams from different tiers can play a challenge match if the team in the lower tier is above the

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team in the higher tier on the ladder.]

4. Challenge matches only count toward a team's point total when a team has also completed their two required matches for the segment. Alternatively, if only one required match was played in a given segment, a challenge match played during the same segment may be used as the second required match (subject to the Ladder Chair's approval), in which case it will count as a make-up match. Challenge matches can be played and reported before required matches.
5. Teams are not required to accept a challenge match.
6. The date, time, location, and court fees (if any) should be mutually agreeable to both teams. **Court fees should be shared.**
7. Two teams can receive points for a challenge match against each other only once during the ladder season.

Make-Up Matches:

1. A make-up match may be played in lieu of a required match in either of the following circumstances:
 - a. A team has attempted at least two emails and a phone call/text **and** four days have passed without hearing from their required opponents.
 - b. Despite both team's best efforts to schedule their required match, a mutually agreeable date, time, and/or location cannot be reached.
*** *Players must email the ladder chair that both players cannot agree on a schedule and hence, make-up matches will be reported by the players.***
2. For the team seeking a make-up match to replace a required match, the make-up match counts as "full-value"; it is scored as if it were a required match (see Scoring System below). For the team's opponents, the match may be a challenge match, a make-up match (if they need one), or no recorded match (if they have already completed both required matches and have another higher scored challenge match).
3. There is no limit on the number of times a team can serve as make-up opponents. However, only one of these matches will count. Specifically, if a team plays one or more matches as make-up opponents and/or a challenge match during a given segment, the match that earns them the most points will count.
4. Make-up matches must be against a team in the same tier as the original required opponents. For example, a Tier 2 team whose required match was to be against a Tier 1 team should schedule a make-up match against another Tier 1 team.

5. If a team must schedule a make-up match against a team outside their tier, the match must be approved by the Ladder Chair **before** it is played. The Ladder Chair will ensure that fair and suitable make-up matches are played.

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6. In rare cases, it may be necessary for a team in need of a make-up match against a team in a higher tier (e.g., a Tier 2 team whose required match was to be against a Tier 1 team) to play an opposing team that is also higher on the ladder (e.g., if no Tier 1 teams below the Tier 2 team on the ladder are available to play a make-up match). In such cases, the match will be scored as partial-value for the higher-tier team; it cannot replace a required match. Note that such matches are typically not permitted and must be approved by the Ladder Chair **before** they are played, on a case-by-case basis.

Unfinished Matches: All matches must be completed before the end of the relevant segment for that match and cannot be completed in the following segment (for scoring of unfinished matches see Scoring System below).

Default Matches: When two teams have mutually agreed on a date, time, **and** location for their match, one team may elect to take a default if their opponents either (a) cancel with less than 24 hours' notice, or (b) are more than 20 minutes late to the match. In either scenario, the team may also opt not to take a default, choosing instead to reschedule with the same opponents for later in the segment. If that rescheduled match fails to take place before the end of the segment for any reason whatsoever then the original default stands.

If a team cancels more than 24 hours prior to a scheduled match time, the match should be rescheduled and no default is awarded. A match is not considered "set" (and hence no default applies) until a date, time, and location have been agreed upon by both teams. **Note:** *If two teams cannot agree on a date, time, and/or location, neither is eligible for a default. Instead, each must play a make-up match (see Make-Up Matches above).*

Retired matches: If a player must retire during a match for any reason, the score should be reported as it stands at the time of the retirement. When match points are calculated, the winning team is awarded all remaining games. For example, if Team A retires while leading 6-2, 2-3, Team B is recorded as the winner. The score should be reported as Team B winning, 2-6, 3-2 (ret.). For purposes of point allocation, the match is recorded as a win for Team B, 2-6, 6-2, 6-0 (i.e., Team B is awarded all remaining games).

Reporting Scores

All teams are responsible for reporting the results of a match within 24 hours via the ATTA website or by emailing the Ladder Chair at doublesladder@atta.org. The following information should be provided: date of match, type of match (required, challenge, or make-up), winners' names, losers' names, and match score. When reporting the results of a make-up match, the names of the original required opponents should also be provided. Check your scores online after a week of the reported match

and notify the Ladder Chair immediately of any discrepancy.

Scores must be reported by the end of the segment (see Schedule of Play above) to be counted for that segment.

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Score Updates: Scores are updated weekly and finalized by the Finalized segment date. Players can verify their scores online after a week of reporting their match. All scores must be reported and resolved by the Resolved Score date for that segment.

The ladder operates on an honor system. There is a **zero-tolerance policy** for reporting a score for a match that has not been played. If a score is discovered to be fabricated, it will not count and the player(s) who reported it will be removed from the ladder immediately. Whether the player(s) will be permitted to return in a subsequent segment is up to the discretion of the Ladder Chair, in consultation with ATTA's Ladder Committee.

Scoring System

Each team begins the season with a designated number of points based on their tier:

Ladder Tier Initial Point Total

1	2000
2	1750
3	1500
4	1250
5	1000

Required Matches: A total of 100 **match points** are allocated among the two teams for each required match, according to the final game score. [For example, in a 6-0, 6-0 match, the winning team receives all 100 points. In a 6-1, 4-6, 6-1 match, the winning team receives 67 points (since they won 66.67% of the games played) and the losing team receives 33 points.] Decimals are rounded to the nearest integer.

In addition, the winning team receives 75 **bonus points** and the losing team receives 25 bonus points. In the case of a default (see Defaults below), the "winning team" receives a standard total of 125 points (match + bonus). The team that defaulted receives 0 points.

Challenge Matches: A total of 50 match points are allocated among the two teams for each challenge match, according to the final game score. [For example, in a 6-0, 6-0 match, the winning team receives all 50 points. In a 7-6, 6-7, 7-6 match, the winning team receives 26 points (since they won 51% of the games played) and the losing team receives 24 points.] Decimals are rounded to the nearest integer.

In addition, the winning team receives 15 bonus points and the losing team receives 5 bonus points. In the case of a default (see Defaults below), the “winning team” receives a standard total of 40 points (match + bonus). The team that defaulted receives 0 points. In challenge matches, the same number of bonus points is at stake for men’s, women’s, and mixed teams.

Unfinished Matches: If a match is unfinished by the end of a segment (e.g. due to rain, loss of light, etc.) then the match points are divided according to the number of games played. For example, a match score of 6-4, 2-4, would result in the match points being split 50/50 between the two teams. A match score of 6-3, 4-2, would result in a 67/33 match points split. Bonus points are split 50/50 between both teams in all cases.

Additional Information

Tier Assignment: At the beginning of the season, teams are assigned to tiers by the Ladder Chair (in consultation with ATTA’s Ladder Committee), who takes into consideration results from previous ladders, GLTA tournaments, ALTA, and USTA. If a team is made up of two players who have not played together previously, each player’s individual results with other partners are considered.

The Ladder Chair (in consultation with ATTA’s Ladder Committee) reserves the right to change a team’s tier after two segments, if the team’s results suggest that a higher tier is more appropriate. In this case, the team will be placed in the new tier for the next segment, under the Joining the Ladder Mid-Season policy (see below).

The winners of each tier from the previous year’s doubles ladder are automatically moved up to the next higher tier.

Joining the Ladder Mid-Season: Any team that signs up mid-season will be added to the ladder at the start of the next segment. Their starting point total will be the initial point total for the team’s tier (see Scoring System above), plus 100 “borrowed” points for each required match missed to date. Borrowed points serve the function of placing such teams at a position on the ladder closer to their skill level than the initial tier point total. For example, say John and Bill (a Tier 2 team) join the ladder for Segment C. Their starting point total will be 2150 (i.e., 1750 initial points for Tier 2, plus 400 borrowed points for missing four required matches during Segments A and B).

Borrowed Points: Borrowed points are designed to place a team within their skill level on the ladder, when

- 1) a team joins the ladder mid-season,
- 2) a team does not play a required match in a segment,
- and 3) a team receives a “default loss” for a required match.

In determining playoff berths at the conclusion of the regular season borrowed points are partially “paid back.” At the end of the ladder season, a team’s Final Points is equivalent to $\text{Total Points} - \text{Borrowed Points} / [(1000 - \text{Borrowed Points}) / 200]$.

In other words, the number of borrowed points is divided by the number of segments in which the team was active on the ladder, and the result is deducted from the team's final point total. See the chart below:

Matches played	Matches not played	Borrowed points awarded	Borrowed points Deducted from Total
9	1	100	22
8	2	200	50
7	3	300	86
6	4	400	133
5	5	500	200
4	6	600	300
3	7	700	467
2	8	800	800

Under this policy, teams are playing within their skill level during the season and penalized for any missed required matches; conversely, a team playing all required matches on the ladder are always playing opponents of an appropriate skill level.

Ladder Inactivity: A team will be removed from the ladder if either (a) they play fewer than two full-value (required or make-up) matches for two consecutive segments, or (b) they play no matches during any given segment, without prior approval from the Ladder Chair. In either case, the team will be removed from the ladder for the next segment but may return for subsequent segments. If the team returns, their new point total is the number of points they previously accumulated, plus borrowed points based on the number of required matches missed (see Joining the Ladder Mid-Season above). These borrowed points are partially paid back at the end of the season in the manner described above.

Teams that play just one required match during a given segment are placed on "probation" for the next segment. To remain active on the ladder, they must play two full-value (required or make-up) matches during the next segment. In addition, 100 borrowed points are added to the team's point total for missing one required match, correcting for the team's inactivity. As in the above cases, the borrowed points are partially paid back at the end of the season.

During the season, if a team decides not to continue playing the ladder for whatever reason, they should inform the Ladder Chair and their required opponents for the current segment immediately so that make-up matches can be arranged.

Changing Doubles Partner Mid-Season: Players may need to find a different doubles partner during the Doubles Ladder season due to his/her partner being injured, moved, etc. We provide herein a mechanism for people to rejoin the Doubles Ladder, 1) with a person who is on the Doubles Ladder and is also in need of a new partner or 2) with a person new to the Doubles Ladder.

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1) A player who exits the Doubles Ladder has “earned points.” Earned points are half of all accumulated points to date (i.e. match points, bonus points and borrowed points). Therefore, a player does not lose his/her points if he/she wishes to continue on the Doubles Ladder with a different partner.

2) A player new to the Doubles Ladder has “earned points” equivalent to half of the borrowed points, as defined in Joining the Ladder Mid-Season policy.

Any pair joining or re-entering the Doubles Ladder will be placed in the next segment with a total point equivalent to the summation of their individual earned points, borrowed points and Doubles Tier Initial Points.

This rule applies to any type of combination, i.e. new player/new player, re-entered player/new player, re-entered player/re-entered player. Further, it should not matter which tier the re-entered player played previously, since his/her earned points do not include tier points. When they rejoin, they are given the tier points in addition to their earned points.

Breaking Ties: If, at any point during the ladder season, two teams have the same number of points (i.e., are tied), the team listed higher on the ladder will be the one that:

1. Has the better head-to-head match record against the other team during the current ladder season.
2. Has won the greater percentage of individual games against the other team during the current ladder season.
3. Has been active in more segments.
4. Has played more required matches.
5. Has played fewer challenge matches.
6. Was higher on the ladder in the previous segment.

The above tiebreaker criteria will be applied in the order listed.

Playoffs: At the end of the last Segment, the top **four** teams in each tier qualify for the playoffs, which take place after the Peach tournament. Within each tier, the ladder semifinals will be as follows: #1 team vs. #4 team, #2 team vs. #3 team. The two semifinal winners will meet in the finals for the division championship. Note that in order to qualify for the playoffs, teams must be active (i.e., play at least one full-value match) during the final segment of play. If one of the top four teams in a tier is unable to play in the semifinals (due to injury, lack of availability, etc.), the #5 team in the tier will take

their place in the playoff draw.