

USTA Level 6 Tournament Manual

1-3 Day Tournament Best Practices

Focus on Round-Robins

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I. What is a Level 6 Tournament?

A. 1, 2, OR 3-DAY EVENT

B. REQUIRES USTA SANCTIONING

C. FORMATS

Tournament Directors have many options:

1. Single Elimination
2. Single Elimination with Consolation
3. Double Elimination
4. Compass Draw
5. Round-Robins

D. DIVISIONS

For ranking purposes, divisions should be according to:

1. **Ability:** NTRP ratings work best. You may also use A, B, and C.
2. **Gender:** Men's, Women's, Singles, Doubles, Mixed Doubles, or Family.

Optional: Divisions may be further broken down by age groupings.



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II. A Fresh Approach: Round-Robins

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II. A Fresh Approach: Round-Robins

A. BREAKING FREE FROM TRADITION

There are many drawbacks of tournaments where the players or teams are stacked vertically with the winners moving right, and the losers moving left. **This format is partly responsible for the decline in tournament participation over the years.** This format is efficient in determining a winner, and works great for televised and spectator events, but in other situations does not offer the best player experience.

1. Many have lost in the first round and left thinking “I wish I hadn’t entered.”
2. Consolations attempt to solve the above, but tend to be uninspiring and many players do not participate.
3. Players often play either too much or too little.
4. There is little closure, for by the time a champion is crowned the other players have gone home.

B. HOW TODAY’S PLAYERS ENJOY THE GAME

League and regular weekly games are the most popular ways today’s players enjoy the game of tennis. In both cases, **players show up, play a reasonable amount of tennis, and are done for the day.** This can be accomplished with round-robins.

C. ADVANTAGES OF ROUND-ROBINS

1. **Everyone gets 2.5-3 hours** of good competitive tennis every day.
2. **Even if you lose a match**, you are not out of the tournament.
3. **Playing multiple, shorter matches** in a day has proven to be popular.

4. **Closure:** The tournament ends about the same time for everyone which provides an opportunity to recognize the winners, celebrate sportsmanship, and thank the players.
5. The social aspect of Round-Robins adds greatly to the event. However, this does not in the slightest preclude them from being competitive.
6. **Round-Robins are every bit as competitive, even for high level players, as single elimination tournaments.**
7. Because there are more results, there is more complete ranking information.

D. CHALLENGES OF ROUND-ROBINS

1. A learning curve for some tournament directors and players.
2. There will be more courts used.
3. Scoreboards with rotations need to be posted for each group.

Pro DOUBLES Round Robin app has rotational schedules for all numbers of players and courts including mixed doubles, rotating partners, or fixed.



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III. Tips for Successful Round-Robins

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III. Tips for Successful Round-Robins

A. SCHEDULING

1. Have enough courts and groups small enough so that **every player/team can play at the same time**. This will allow players/teams to go from one match to the next with little to no waiting. If a division is too large to do this, divide into groups.
2. **Every player/team in a group plays every other player/team** in their group.
3. **The size of the groups is an important decision for the TD.** The smaller the groups the fewer matches per day for the teams.
4. **Spread the seeded players/teams between groups.**

B. SCORING OPTIONS

1. Players/teams get 1 point for each game won during each round.
2. Win/Loss record.
3. Games won divided by games played.



C. MATCH FORMATS

1. Shorter formatted matches

- a. Multiple matches in a day require a short match format
- b. Playing 3-7 matches/day is a great goal.
- c. More important than the number of matches, is to have 2.5-3 hours of good competitive tennis each day. If a division is small and there are only a few matches per day, then longer match formats work fine.

2. Match formats that are consistent in time

Allows the players/teams to go from one match to the next with little to no waiting.

a. Always use No-ad scoring.

b. Timed Rounds: Timed Rounds work the best. Some traditionalists may protest, but players love it. Timed rounds speed up play, and it's a plus that everyone ends at exactly the same time. You may be amazed how short the rounds can be and still be super fun.

c. Short sets to 4 are exciting and take only 20 minutes or so.

d. A set number of games.

e. 10-point Match Tie-Break

f. One Set works if only 2 or 3 rounds/day.

g. Matches with time limits are a great way to stay on schedule and keep play going. Players are inspired to play fast.

1) One set or 45 minutes, whichever comes first.

2) A short set to 4, or 30 minutes, whichever comes first.

D. SCOREBOARD/ROTATIONAL SCHEDULE

Prominently display a Scoreboard/Rotational Schedule.

Update after each round. It allows players/teams to see where they stand and provides an accurate final ranking of the players/teams. (See Appendices A and B.)

E. AWARDS CEREMONY

1. Presenting awards is a simple and effective way to recognize the winners, good sportsmanship, thank volunteers, and have closure.
2. Print some Universal Awards before-hand. Fill in the names and what the award is for on tournament day.
3. Having refreshments is a wonderful addition.



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IV. 3-Day Round-Robins

A. DAYS 1 & 2

Round-Robin play with every player/team in a group playing every other player/team in that group. (See Appendix A)

B. DAY 3: PLAY-OFFS

1. Take the top players/teams from each group for a single elimination final day play-off.
2. **OR,** Take the top players and have them play another Round-Robin.
3. Day 3 should also include a Round-Robin for all the other players/teams to determine finals standings. (To clarify, if there are 4 players/teams in the finals play-off, then all the other teams would be competing for the remaining places.

C. MULTIPLE DIVISIONS

If players are entered in multiple divisions like singles and doubles:

1. Consider playing Round-Robin singles for 2 days and Round-Robin doubles the 3rd day.
2. Have a Round-Robin singles the first two days with a play-off on the third day for the top players, and Round-Robin doubles on the third day for everyone else.

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V. Appendix

A. SCOREBOARD FOR A 2-DAY ROUND-ROBIN

Scoreboard and rotational schedule for 12 player/teams.

DAY 1

Court: 1 Court: 2 Court: 3 Court 4: Court 5: Court 6: Rd 1: 3 vs 5
 2 vs 4 1 vs 12 6 vs 11 8 vs 9 7 vs 10 Rd 2: 3 vs 12 5 vs 7 1 vs 9 6 vs 10
 2 vs 8 4 vs 11 Rd 3 2 vs 6 3 vs 8 5 vs 9 1 vs 11 7 vs 12 4 vs 10 Rd 4 1vs
 3 5 vs 6 3 vs 7 8 vs 11 10 vs 12 2 vs 9 Rd 5 2 vs 5 9 vs 11 7 vs 8 6 vs
 12 1 vs 10 3 vs 4 Rd 6: 2 vs 10 6 vs 8 5 vs 12 7 vs 1 3 vs 9 1 vs 4

Name	Rd 1	Rd 2	Rd 3	Rd 4	Rd 5	Rd 6	Day 1 Total
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							

DAY 2

Rd 7 5 vs 11 3 vs 10 2 vs 7 1 vs 8 4 vs 6 9 vs 12 Rd 8 4 vs 5 2 vs 3 1 vs
 7 6 vs 9 11 vs 12 8 vs 10 Rd 9 7 vs 9 2 vs 12 3 vs 6 4 vs 8 10 vs 11 1 vs
 5 Rd 10 1 vs 2 8 vs 12 5 vs 10 4 vs 9 3 vs 11 6 vs 7 Rd 11 3 vs 12 1 vs 6
 2 vs 7 9 vs 10 3 vs 8 5 vs 11

Name	Rd 7	Rd 8	Rd 9	Rd 10	Rd 11	Grand Total
1.						
2.						
3.						
4.						
5.						
6.						
7.						
8.						
9.						
10.						
11.						
12.						

B. A FUN DOUBLES VARIATION: ROTATING PARTNERS

It can be extra fun if players sign up without a doubles partner, and players rotate partners each round. The advantages of this format is that it is more social, it is easier to enter because you don't have to find a partner, and it determines the best doubles player, not the best team. In the example below there are 8 players, but rotational schedules for all number of players/teams/mixed are available on the [ProDoubles Round-Robin app \(https://apps.apple.com/us/app/tennis-round-robin-pro/id381941060\)](https://apps.apple.com/us/app/tennis-round-robin-pro/id381941060).

Ct. 1 Ct

Round 1	1/2 vs. 3/4	5/6 vs. 7/8
Round 2	1/7 vs. 2/8	3/5 vs. 4/6
Round 3	2/6 vs. 3/7	1/5 vs. 4/8
Round 4	2/4 vs. 6/8	1/3 vs. 5/7
Round 5	1/6 vs. 2/5	3/8 vs. 4/7
Round 6	2/3 vs. 5/8	1/4 vs. 6/7
Round 7	1/8 vs. 3/6	2/7 vs. 4/5

Name Rd1 Rd2 Rd3 Rd4 Sub-total Rd5 Rd6 Rd7 TOTAL

1. Tim Claar de Lune	4	1	1	4	10	2	3	4	19
2. Daniel Dropshot	4	4	3	3	14	4	4	2	24
3. Mike Vandedrifter	2	2	4	4	12	3	4	2	21
4. Todd Sprig	2	3	3	3	11	4	3	3	21
5. Jimmy O'Connors	2	2	1	2	7	4	1	3	15
6. Miss Hit	2	3	3	4	12	2	2	2	18
7. Rafael Nagel	3	1	4	2	10	4	2	2	18
8. Dennis McMenace	3	4	3	4	14	3	1	4	22

C. SUGGESTED FORMATS

	Timed round	Rounds/ Courts	Games
4 teams/ players	30 min	3 Rounds, 2 Courts	One set to 6 games, no-ad One Fast4 set/round
5 teams/ players	20 min	4 Rounds, 2-3 Courts	One Fast4 set each 10 point Tie-Break 6 games total
6 teams/ players	15 min	5 Rounds, 3 Courts	One Fast4 set each 5-6 games total
7 teams/ players	12-15 min	6 rounds, 4-5 Courts	One Fast4 set 5 games total
8 teams/ players	12-15 min	7 rounds, 4-5 Courts	4 games total

