

USTA Florida Junior Competitive Position Paper

The Junior Competitive Committee has put together a “Position Paper” with the help of the USTA/Florida Coaches Commission. The Coaches’ Commission is comprised of some of the leading player development coaches in the state of Florida. Coaches on the Commission: Robert Gomez, Bill Clark, Cary Cohenour, Gustavo Granitto, Kevin Quay, Maria Cercone, Martin Blackman, Angie Zguna, Bobby Bernstein, Bryon Gill, Danny Will, Harry Gilbert, Henner Lenhardt, Joe Daleo, John Hudson, Kathy Rosenburg, Kevin Chow, Michael Edge, Pat Jenkins, and Paul D’Amico have helped to formulate this guide. Together, we have come up with some topics that will hopefully serve as food for thought for aspiring junior players and assist parents through their child’s journey.

Florida is very rich in talent and deep in level. We are fortunate to have a competitive system that allows our players to test their skills and prepare themselves for very high levels of competition. Our year round weather and numerous facilities allow you to play and compete at every level, even the professional ranks if you chose that pathway. Everything from Level 8 (entry level) to Grade A ITF (world ranking) events are part of our yearly calendar. Not many sections can boast this.

Florida has over 600 junior tournaments held each year around the state. There is literally a junior tournament held every weekend in each region. The Florida section is broken up into 8 geographic regions which can be found at this link: [USTA Florida Regions](#)

Levels of tournaments have been numbered to simplify your understanding at each stage. We have provided a brief description to help you understand each level.

- **Level 8** (Rookie) Entry level players. Perfect for the player just getting started or has some experience but competes sporadically. Not intended for experienced players and players cannot play up in age. Ages from 10-18.
- **Level 7** (Local) Intermediate to advanced level players. Typically players ranked between 70 and lower (below 70) would play L7’s. There are no restrictions so a player may meet an out of section player playing at a high level or a high level player playing up in age for developmental purposes or to accrue points in the next age group. There is virtually a L7 event in every region each weekend.
- **Level 6** (Super Series) High intermediate to advanced player. Players ranked in the top 50 in the USTA Florida or better in their age group will play L6 events. Top 20 players often play up in age at the L6 tournaments to accumulate points in the next age group up or to prepare themselves for the level 5’s in their natural age group. Ten and under divisions are played on a 78 ft. court and use the “green dot ball”.
- **Level 5** (Designated) Advanced level player. These tournaments are high in point value and are played six times per year. Usually players compete in their natural age group unless they are ranked in the top 10 in Florida of their natural age group or about to age out. Beginning in 2014 these tournament will not carry national ranking

USTA Florida Junior Competitive Position Paper

points, but will still have high ranking value within the section. The top 32 ranked players will be selected for these events with two events being 64 draws in February and October. These two events are good opportunities for younger players to get into the next age group and test their skills or accumulate points for the next age group. With play being driven back to the section to access the national Championships these tournaments should be very competitive in 2014.

- **Level 4** (Sectional) Advanced level player. These tournaments have very high ranking points in Florida and carry national points as well. Players do not usually play up in age in these events unless they are ranked in the top 5 in Florida or again about to age out and trying to get points for the next age group. These tournaments have always been very competitive and 2014 will prove to be the same if not even more. Twice per year there will be a qualifier for these events (February & August) with Feb. counting for the L4 in March the latter being a qualifier for the Labor Day L4. 64 players in the B&G's 18-16's and 32 players in the B&G's 14's will have a chance to qualify for the L4 in those two months. 8 players will qualify through the 18's and 16's divisions and 4 players will qualify in the 14's divisions. The L4's in March, May and December will host 10 and under green dot events.
- **Level 3** (Sectional Championship) Advanced level player. These two events held in January and June (Bobby Curtis State Championships) are Florida's highest level state events. They carry the highest ranking points in Florida and also have significant national points. It is not recommended players play up in these events unless they have a proven winning record and have won at least one of these events in their natural age group. The top 64 players in the state (B&G's 18's-14) that register will be selected for these events. The B&G's 12's divisions will select the top 32 players that register.

Here is a link to the [2014 USTA Florida Junior Tournament Schedule](#)

There are many pathways to player development as history has proven. This paper is not meant to be written in stone and the only way to approach your child's development. It's merely a compilation of views and perspectives from a group of coaches with proven track records on how they would approach your child's development. So many factors go into considering what approach you should take including, goals, time, budget, and how it can affect your family's lifestyle. The coaches have put together a list of "[Frequently Asked Questions](#)" on the USTA Florida website to address many of your inquiries and comments.

For all of us tennis has enriched our lives in ways that are difficult to put into words and do it justice. Whether you want to win a "gold ball", play Division 1 college tennis, or play for your high school team, tennis can be an exciting journey filled with many valuable life's lessons that can enrich your child's life. Find a good program with a caring coach and let the games begin!