

Youth Protection Policy for MTA – Junior Team Tennis

The mission of the Mississippi Tennis Association is “To Promote and Develop the Growth of Tennis”. In pursuing its mission, ensuring the safety of all participants is of paramount importance. USTA Junior Team Tennis brings kids together in teams to play singles, doubles and mixed doubles against other teams. It promotes social skills and important values by fostering a spirit of cooperation and unity, as well as individual self-growth. It is also a fun environment for kids where they learn that succeeding is about how they play the game – win or lose. An important goal of Junior Team Tennis is to provide a safe and positive experience for participants so that they may enjoy the benefits of a sport they can play for a lifetime.

A risk facing every organization that serves children is the potential of harm resulting from inappropriate conduct by peers or adult leaders. The policies presented below are intended to reduce the risk of such conduct while promoting a safe environment and protecting the mission of Junior Team Tennis.

Abuse of any kind is strictly prohibited within our organization. This means that Junior Team Tennis does not tolerate physical, sexual, emotional or verbal abuse or misconduct from our players, coaches, captains, volunteers, parents, spectators or any person associated with a team or competition.

The Mississippi Tennis Association will require criminal background screening for coaches/captains and co-captains registered on TennisLink and local and area Junior Team Tennis coordinators effective for the 2012 program year (August 2011). Background screening will be performed before a person subject to screening is allowed to serve as a volunteer, and thereafter, at least every two years.

These background checks will be conducted by Acxiom, a consumer reporting agency with experience working with youth-serving organizations. The individual, who is the primary contact for the team, and assuming team management and/or coaching responsibilities, should be listed as the Coach/Captain on TennisLink. If another individual will have regular and continuous contact with the team, he or she should be entered in TennisLink as the co-captain. Coaches/captains and co-captains registered on TennisLink should be responsible for enforcing the Policy set out herein during team activities and at least one registered coach/captain or co-captain should be present during any and all team activities. The cost of the screening will be borne by the Mississippi Tennis Association.

Any prospective volunteer who refuses to consent to background screening is no longer eligible to volunteer for a position. The background check will include verification of information provided on the completed application. Information which may be verified includes but is not limited to, social security number, previous addresses and a criminal record check. An

applicant's opportunity to volunteer may be denied based upon the results of background screening.

Applicants will be deemed ineligible for appointments as Junior Team Tennis coaches/captains, co-captains and local and area league coordinators if they have been convicted of:

- Any felony, regardless of the amount of time since conviction.
- Any crime involving force or threat of force against a person, regardless of the amount of time since conviction.
- Any crime characterized as a "sex offense" including, but not limited to, child molestation, rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, prostitution, solicitation, indecent exposure, pornography, etc., regardless of the amount of time since conviction.
- Any crime involving cruelty to animals, regardless of the amount of time since conviction.
- Any crime involving contributing to the delinquency of a minor, regardless of the amount of time since conviction.
- Any crime, other than a felony, involving driving under the influence, driving while intoxicated or involving controlled substances within the past 5 years.

If an applicant is deemed ineligible based upon the results of the background screening report, the applicant will be given the opportunity to: 1) withdraw his or her application to serve; 2) dispute the accuracy of the search report to the screening provider; or 3) request a waiver (appeal) to a committee established to consider waivers.

Passed: February 25, 2011

Revised: June 25, 2011