



Medical Appeal | Adult Leagues

A medical appeal may be made by a computer-rated player only. While computer rated, the player must have suffered an intervening medical illness or injury that is permanent and disabling. The player may then appeal when he/she is released back to play tennis.

Medical appeals are very difficult to obtain. They must first be granted by the Section (Hawaii Pacific), and then by National. In 2014, only ten (10) appeals were granted nation-wide.

If you wish to make a successful medical appeal, you will need to take the time to do the following:

1. Read the NTRP Medical Appeal Procedures – Questions and Answers carefully. You will have a better understanding of what may qualify and what may not. It is important to know what typically is considered and will not be considered for a Medical Appeal.
2. Player must fill out the Medical Appeal Form and a medical professional must fill out the Attending Physician's Statement. Fill out all forms completely. Appeals will not be reviewed or processed until all appropriate documentation is received.
3. Medical Appeals can be submitted via email, fax or mail:
 - a. Email: yoshinaga@hawaii.usta.com
 - b. Fax: (808) 585-9512 (Attn: Medical Appeal)
 - c. Mail: USTA Hawaii Pacific Section, Attn: Medical Appeal, 1888 Kalakaua Avenue, Suite C-309, Honolulu, HI 96815
4. Upon receipt of all forms, your appeal will be sent to Section Medical Appeal Committee to start the process. If your appeal is granted at the Section level, it will then be sent to the National Medical Appeal Committee for final review.

Medical appeals will be sent to our Section Medical Appeal Committee at the end of every month. Keep in mind that the appeal process could take up 6 – 8 weeks.

All computer-rated players who are granted a medical appeal down will become a self-rated player and is subject to the Three Strike Dynamic Disqualification Procedure and to NTRP grievances.



NTRP MEDICAL APPEAL PROCEDURES - QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What is a Medical Appeal?

A medical appeal is a formal, written request from a player for reconsideration of his/her NTRP Rating based on a permanent, disabling illness or injury that has occurred since the player generated the year-end or early-start NTRP Rating. USTA League Regulation 2.05D states, "If an intervening, permanently disabling injury or illness indicates that a player's current computer rating may be too high, the player may request a medical appeal of such rating in accordance with NTRP Medical Appeal Procedures."

2. Who can file a medical appeal of a player's NTRP Rating?

Only the player whose rating is being appealed can file an appeal. A team captain, another player, a spouse or a physician may not file an appeal on the player's behalf.

3. Where should a medical appeal be filed?

Generally, medical appeals are submitted to the player's USTA Section League Coordinator who will forward to the Chair of the Section's designated Medical Review Committee. Contact the Section or District/State League Coordinator or go to the Section or District/State League website to obtain instructions for filing, medical appeal protocol and forms.

4. When can a medical appeal be filed?

The time to file a medical appeal varies depending on where it is filed. Contact the Section or District/State League Coordinator or go to the Section or District/State website for this information.

5. What are the written requirements for communication in filing a League NTRP Medical Appeal?

The requirement that a letter or document be filed in writing is satisfied if it is sent by email, mail, telegram, fax or equivalent communication. Verbal appeals are not accepted.

6. What would prevent a medical appeal from being considered?

A medical appeal would not be reviewed and/or considered if:

- a. player's NTRP Rating is no longer current or valid; player may self-rate.
- b. onset of player's illness or injury occurred prior to playing the last match used to generate their most current Year End or Early Start NTRP rating level.
- c. player does not complete and submit all required information.
- d. information submitted by player is not current.
- e. Attending Physician's Statement is not current and/or does not include required information.
- f. player has not been medically released to play tennis.
- g. registration for the league season, in which player desires to play, does not begin close to the time of filing, but at some point in the future.

7. What information must be included to submit a medical appeal?

- a. A written request from the player.
- b. A current, completed and signed USTA League NTRP Medical Appeal Form.
- c. A current Attending Physician's Statement (from the physician who is actually treating the player for the described illness or injury) that is dated, written on the physician's letterhead stationery or on the APS form provided, and includes an evaluation of the player's current condition.
Specific information from the physician must include:
 - (1) date of onset of the player's illness or injury.
 - (2) diagnosis of player's illness or injury.
 - (3) extent of the illness or injury that specifically defines what the player cannot physically do.
(i.e., cannot lift arm above head, cannot see out of left eye, etc.)
 - (4) player's prognosis: how long will the injury or illness last, will player eventually have full recovery, what specific permanent limitations does-the player currently have?
 - (5) medical release to play tennis which includes date when player may resume playing.

***Additional medical information including written results of lab tests, x-rays, Cat Scans, MRIs, etc., may be submitted, but will not be accepted in lieu of an Attending Physician's Statement.**

8. What is not considered in the review of a medical appeal?

- a. A statement from the attending physician stating what specific NTRP level the player should play. It is the responsibility of the committee to determine the skill level where the player should play.
- b. Statements from the physician like:
 - (1) "Mr. Smith has asked me to request that he be allowed to move down from 4.0 as he feels he can no longer compete at that level."
 - (2) "Mrs. Jones has shown considerable improvement since starting on her medication but, her illness or limitations will progress over time and is therefore permanent." (This may be true but does not refer to current status.)
 - (3) "Mr. Ross would like to play with his friends, spouse, etc."
 - (4) "Ms. Harris may need surgery in the future." (Not current status)

9. What determines if a medical appeal is granted?

Each medical appeal is thoroughly reviewed and considered on an individual basis. A decision is based on the current, specific information that is submitted about the diagnosis, onset and extent of the player's illness or injury, the specific limitations present, whether the current limitations are permanently disabling and whether the specific limitations will impact the player's NTRP skill level.

Very few medical appeals should be granted, as it is usually better to let the computer determine the NTRP Skill Level based on actual match play. Rationale:

- . If the illness or injury is not permanently disabling, an appeal cannot be granted even if treatment, recovery and/or rehabilitation may take a year or longer.
- . Individuals respond to illnesses and/or injuries in different ways so it is hard to predict the impact on their skill level.
- . Many illnesses, such as osteoarthritis, are chronic, progressive, permanent conditions. However, the rate of progression of the illness, resulting symptoms and degree of impairment, as well as reaction to medication and treatment, varies in different people.
- . Most individuals actually play better after knee, hip and shoulder surgery due to decrease in pain and possible increase in mobility from their pre-operative status.
- . Many individuals who have heart disease, cancer, etc., if medically released to play tennis, will probably be able to play at their previous skill level.
- . If medically released to play tennis, potential pain, shortness of breath and risk of injury should not be factors in determining NTRP skill level, as these could occur no matter what NTRP level playing.
- . Endurance issues may occur at any skill level and vary from individual to individual. More energy may be exerted at the lower skill levels than the higher skill levels depending on the player's style of play, court position and placement of the ball. Therefore, the amount of energy exerted while playing tennis varies in individuals and cannot be accurately predicted.

10. Can a player be disqualified if a medical appeal is granted?

Yes. He/She is assigned a 0.0 start level and is subject to dynamic disqualification and NTRP grievances.

11. What is the procedure for reviewing medical appeals and making a decision on the appeal? (Refer to USTA League Regulations 2.05D)

- a. A player's NTRP Medical Appeal will be reviewed and considered by the appropriate Medical Review Committee as designated by the player's section.
- b. The section's designated Medical Review Committee will either deny the appeal or, refer the appeal to the National Medical Appeal Committee for further consideration.
- c. If the section's designated Medical Review Committee denies the appeal, their decision is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.
- d. If the section's designated Medical Review Committee refers the appeal to the National Medical Appeal Committee for further consideration, the National Medical Appeal Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision to grant or deny the appeal.
- e. If the National Medical Appeal Committee denies the appeal, their decision is final and binding and there is no further right of appeal.

12. Who should serve on a League Medical Review/Appeal Committee?

- a. A minimum of three persons, one of whom shall serve as chair.
- b. Individuals who are very league knowledgeable including knowledge of NTRP skill levels.
- c. Individuals who have current medical knowledge are recommended.
- d. A medical consultant is required to be accessible to the committee for consultation and input as needed.

13. What are the responsibilities of the League Medical Review/Appeal Committees?

The committee's responsibilities are to:

- a. make sure all required information has been completed, submitted and is current.
- b. determine if the player has sustained a permanent, disabling injury or illness since playing the last match prior to the publication of the most current Year End or Early Start NTRP rating level.
- c. determine if the intervening, permanent illness or injury has impacted the player's skill level and resulted in an NTRP Rating that is currently too high.
- d. make sure the player appealing has been medically released to play when the medical appeal is filed, not at some point in the future.
- e. make sure the player appealing is planning to register for a league season close to the time of filing, not at some point in the future.
- f. send, in writing, the committee's decision to the player and the appropriate coordinator(s).
- g. maintain confidentiality of the player's medical information.

14. If an appeal is denied, does a player have the right to appeal the decision of a League Medical Review/Appeal Committee?

No. If either the Section Designated League Medical Review Committee or the National League Medical Appeal Committee denies a medical appeal, their decision is final and binding.

Philosophy Statement:

While USTA League acknowledges that a medical appeal process is necessary and should be available, it must be understood that:

Very few medical appeals should be granted, as it is usually better to let the computer determine the NTRP Skill Level based on actual match play.

Rationale:

- If injury or illness is not permanently disabling, an appeal *cannot* be granted even if treatment, recovery and/or rehabilitation may take a year or longer.
- Individuals respond to injuries and/or illnesses in different ways so it is hard to predict the impact on their skill level.
- Many illnesses, such as osteoarthritis, are chronic, progressive, permanent conditions. However, the rate of progression of the illness, resulting symptoms and degree of impairment, as well as reaction to medication and treatment, varies in different people.
- Most individuals actually play better after knee, hip and shoulder surgery due to a decrease in pain and a possible increase in mobility from their pre-operative status.
- Most individuals who have heart disease, cancer, etc., if medically released to play tennis, will probably be able to play at their previous skill level.
- If medically released to play tennis, potential pain, shortness of breath and risk of injury should not be factors in determining NTRP skill level, as these could occur no matter what NTRP level playing.
- Endurance issues may occur at any skill level and vary from individual to individual. More energy may be exerted at the lower skill levels than the higher skill levels depending on the player's style of play, court position and placement of the ball. Therefore, the amount of energy exerted while playing tennis varies in individuals and cannot be accurately predicted.

A medical appeal may be requested by a player for reconsideration of his/her NTRP rating based on a permanently disabling injury or illness that occurred after the last match played prior to the publication of the most current Year End or Early Start NTRP rating level.

Only the player may appeal his/her computer-generated rating DUE TO MEDICAL REASONS. To file a medical appeal, the player must submit a written request for reconsideration of his/her rating, the *USTA League NTRP Medical Appeal Form* and the *Attending Physician's Statement* via email, fax or mail to his/her USTA Section League Coordinator or designee who will in turn forward to the Chair of the designated Medical Review Committee. When possible, forms should be submitted via email.

The following are criteria for completing the USTA League NTRP Medical Appeal:

1. The permanently disabling injury or illness must have occurred after the last match played prior to the publication of the most current Year End or Early Start NTRP rating level.
2. The Medical Appeal request and completed *USTA League NTRP Medical Appeal Form* must be submitted in writing to the player's USTA Section League Coordinator or designee who will in turn forward to the Chair of the designated Medical Review Committee.
3. The Medical Appeal must be accompanied by an Attending Physician's Statement (APS) that is written by the physician who is treating the player for the specific injury/illness being appealed. The APS must include a current evaluation of the injury or illness, all substantiating information, a prognosis for recovery with a timeline and any permanent limitations the player currently has.

Medical Review Committee Procedure:

A player's League NTRP Medical Appeal will be reviewed and considered by the appropriate Medical Review Committee as designated by the player's Section. The Committee will either deny the appeal, or refer it to the USTA League National Medical Appeal Committee for further consideration. If the Section's designated Medical Review Committee denies the appeal, their decision is final and binding. If the appeal is referred to the USTA League National Medical Appeal Committee, that committee will make the final decision to either approve or deny the appeal. All decisions of the USTA League National Medical Appeal Committee will be final and binding.

THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MUST BE COMPLETED FULLY.

THIS MEDICAL APPEAL CANNOT BE CONSIDERED IF ANY PART OF THE APPEAL FORM IS INCOMPLETE.

This form must be accompanied by a current Attending Physician's Statement (physician who is actually treating the patient for the described illness or injury) that is dated, written on the physician's letterhead stationery or on the provided APS form and includes an evaluation of the player's current condition. Specific information from the physician must include:

- (1) date of onset of the player's illness or injury***
- (2) diagnosis***
- (3) extent of the injury or illness that specifically defines what the player cannot physically do (i.e., cannot lift arm above head, cannot see out of left eye, etc.)***
- (4) player's prognosis: how long will injury or illness last, will player eventually have full recovery, what permanent limitations does the player currently have?***
- (5) medical release to play tennis which includes date when player may resume play***

****Additional medical information may be submitted but will not be accepted in lieu of an Attending Physician's Statement.***

| | | | |
|--|------------------------|---|-----------|
| Date: | | USTA Number: | |
| Name: | | | |
| Address: | | | |
| City: | State: | Zip: | |
| Phone: | Email: | Fax: | |
| Date Of Birth: | Age: | Gender: | Forehand: |
| Current NTRP Rating Level Being Appealed: | Date Rating Published: | NTRP Rating Level Prior to Current NTRP Rating Level: | |
| What are the dates of the next League season for which you plan to register? | | | |
| Information on Last USTA League Played: | | | |
| Date: | Location: | NTRP Rating Level: | Division: |
| Have you played tennis since you received your current NTRP Rating Level? | | | |
| If yes, describe: | | | |
| Briefly describe other USTA Leagues in which you have participated in the past including years played: | | | |
| Have you previously filed a Medical Appeal? | | | |
| If yes, what year was it filed? | | If yes, was it granted or denied? | |
| If yes, with whom was it filed? | | If yes, for what injury or illness? | |

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|---|--|
| Current Medical Condition(s) | |
| Describe the current permanently disabling injury or illness: | |
| | |
| Date of injury: | Date of onset of symptoms of illness: |
| Have you had any surgery related to this condition? | |
| If yes, date of surgery: | If yes, type of surgery: |
| In detail, describe in your own words how this permanent injury or illness impacts your ability to play tennis: | |
| | |
| What treatments have you received for this condition? | |
| Are the treatments ongoing? | How long do you anticipate receiving treatments? |
| Has your physician ordered any kind of physical restrictions related to this medical condition? | |
| If yes, please describe: | |
| How long do you anticipate the restrictions will be in place? | |
| Has your physician released you to play tennis? | Date of release: |
| Are you currently playing tennis? | How often? |
| Additional Comments: | |

This form, along with any and all supporting documentation and the Attending Physician's Statement, must be submitted to your Section League Coordinator who will forward to the Chair of the designated Medical Review Committee.

For additional Medical Appeal information, please refer to the USTA League NTRP Medical Appeal Procedures- Question and Answers, available at www.usta.com/league

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| Signature of Player Submitting this Form: <i>By signing this form, I authorize a USTA League Section Designated Medical Review Committee and the National Medical Appeal Committee to review, for the purpose of evaluating my medical appeal, any protected health information, including my medical records, that I have provided as part of this appeal.</i> | Date Signed: |
|--|--------------|



ATTENDING PHYSICIAN'S STATEMENT

| | | | |
|----------------------------|--------|----------------|------|
| Patient Information | | | |
| Patient's Name: | | Date of Birth: | |
| Address: | City: | State: | Zip: |
| Date: | Phone: | Email: | |

Your patient has submitted a medical appeal to the United States Tennis Association League. The USTA's National Medical Appeal process may grant an appeal only if a player has a **permanent**, disabling injury or illness that would impact the player's ability to play tennis at that player's current level of play.

The Medical Appeals Committee makes a concerted effort to gather accurate information in an effort to render a decision that will be fair to the player and to the player's opponents. To assist the Medical Appeals Committee in making a decision on your patient's appeal, the Committee requires an Attending Physician's Statement from you, the doctor treating this player's specific injury or illness.

Please answer the following questions on this form or provide your patient with the following information on your letterhead:

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| What is the patient's specific injury or illness? | | | |
| When did this injury occur or symptoms of this illness begin? | | | |
| Describe any surgery performed: | | Date of surgery: | |
| Describe other treatments received and/or receiving: | | | |
| | | | |
| Short Term Prognosis? | | Long Term Prognosis? | |
| What permanent limitations does the patient currently have? (Please be specific as to what the patient is unable to do) | | | |
| | | | |
| Do you expect the patient to have full recovery eventually? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | Anticipated date of full recovery: |
| Have you released the patient to play tennis? | | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | What date may the patient resume playing tennis? |

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|------------------------------|-------------|
| Physician Information | |
| Name of Practice: | |
| Physician's Name (PRINT): | Specialty: |
| Address: | |
| City: | State: Zip: |
| Phone: | Fax: |
| Physician's Signature: | Date: |