

2026 COMPETITION STRUCTURE GUIDE. Updated Jan 16, 2026

Following record growth in 2025, the USPA Circuit continues to expand, with more than 200 tournaments scheduled nationwide in 2026. This unprecedented growth reflects the rapid development of padel across the United States and has prompted several important updates to the USPA Circuit structure. The 2026 changes are designed to improve competitive balance, clarify player pathways, support Tournament Directors, and ensure the circuit scales in a consistent and sustainable way as participation continues to rise. The information below is intended as a quick reference guide for players, officials, and tournament directors. It should be used in conjunction with the [USPA Rules and Regulations](#) and the [FIP Rules of Padel](#).

Star Point (New FIP regulations 2026)

Star Point will be used in all USPA-sanctioned tournaments and matches, replacing the Golden Point scoring system. The Star Point System starts at the first deuce. Players play one point to determine which team has the first advantage. At the first advantage, if the team with the advantage wins the point, the game is won; if the point is lost, the score returns to deuce. Players play one point to determine which team has the advantage. At the second advantage, if the team with the advantage wins the point, the game is won; if the point is lost, the score returns to deuce. The Star Point is a single decisive point that determines the game, with the receiving team choosing the service side.

The Serve (New FIP regulations 2026)

When serving, the player must keep one foot behind the service line within the service-box area and remain there until striking the ball. The server must bounce the ball inside the correct service box, and the ball cannot cross the service line or its imaginary extension before being struck.

USPA 1000 and 2000, Division 1 Draw Changes

Division 1 at USPA 1000 & 2000 will be a maximum draw size of 24 teams to improve competitive balance and planning for players and TDs. Division 1 will now use only a first-round loser consolation draw, replacing the first-match loser consolation format.

USPA Rankings Updates

Beginning in 2026, the USPA has updated its ranking framework to better reflect participation and competitive results. Player rankings will now be calculated using a best-of-ten tournament results formula, replacing the previous best-of-seven approach. The USPA has also introduced the USPA Race, which runs on a calendar-year basis (January 1–December 31) and serves as the qualification standard for the USPA Circuit Championships. The traditional USPA Rankings continue to operate on a 52-week rolling cycle and will be used for draw selection and seeding in USPA-sanctioned tournaments. [The complete points table is available here.](#)

USPA Seniors Circuit Update

Beginning in 2026, the USPA Age Group Circuit has been renamed the USPA Seniors Circuit, aligning with FIP terminology. The Seniors National Championships have been moved earlier in the summer to avoid conflicts with the FIP Seniors World Cup in September. Additionally, local age group tournaments have been removed from the calendar, as player participation has increasingly shifted toward the USPA 100 format for local competition.

Tournament Withdrawal Rules

Beginning in 2026, the USPA has updated its tournament withdrawal rules to promote fairness and improve tournament operations. All withdrawals must be submitted directly by a team member via email to the Tournament Director, and for Division 1 events at USPA 2000, 1000, and 500 levels, the USPA must also be notified. Withdrawals require supporting documentation within seven days; failure to provide documentation will result in a \$200 fine and ineligibility to compete until the fine is paid, with escalating suspensions for repeated undocumented withdrawals within the same calendar year. Players may withdraw from consolation draw matches without penalty if they provide timely notice; however, failure to notify the Tournament Director will result in the same fine and progressive suspension structure as outlined in the Tournament Rules. Complete withdrawal procedures, timelines, and penalties are outlined in the USPA Rules & Regulations.

Tournament Officials Requirements

Effective April 1, 2026, all USPA Circuit tournaments will be required to have at least one USPA Certified Level 1 Official or FIP International Padel Referee Level 1 present, who may also serve as the Tournament Director. This requirement has been introduced to improve match consistency, rules application, and tournament decision-making, ensuring a more professional and predictable tournament experience for players.

FIP Tournaments.

One of the USPA's strategic priorities is to expand the number of international FIP-sanctioned tournaments held in the United States, including the CUPRA FIP Tour, FIP Promises, and Beyond FIP tournaments. Increasing the number of these tournaments creates meaningful competitive pathways for U.S.-based players, expands the development opportunities for U.S.-based Players, Officials, and Promoters. It also raises the national profile of padel and provides clubs and venues with greater visibility and commercial opportunity. Together, these outcomes support the long-term growth of both player participation and spectator interest nationwide.

The USPA actively seeks qualified “promoters”, clubs, individuals, or companies to produce FIP-sanctioned tournaments. Promoters must be USPA Premier Members and are responsible for financially underwriting and delivering the event, including operations, sponsorship, and logistics. Tournaments must be hosted at a USPA Premier Club or an approved purpose-built venue. FIP Tournaments are conducted exclusively under FIP rules and regulations, not the USPA Circuit regulations.

The USPA approves promoters, coordinates directly with FIP, and collaborates on scheduling to align international tournaments within the broader U.S. competition calendar. Each event may include main draws, qualifying draws, and wild cards, creating strong opportunities for U.S. players, particularly those with USPA rankings, to access qualifying draws and earn FIP points. Tournament-level requirements and sample promoter budgets are available to support event planning. [View more information here](#) or contact the USPA directly. info@padelusa.org

USPA Circuit Tournaments

USPA 2000, 1000 - These tournaments are the highest levels of domestic competition on the USPA Circuit and require a professional tournament standard. Host clubs must be USPA Premier Clubs with demonstrated experience running large, successful USPA tournaments and strong familiarity with USPA regulations and the TMS. Clubs are fully responsible for all tournament operations, including prize money, revenues, and expenses. The USPA may set minimum prize money requirements at these levels. These tournaments are typically three-day tournaments. USPA Membership is required to play in USPA 2000 and 1000 tournaments.

USPA 500, 250 - These tournaments provide competitive play for a broad range of players and are an essential part of the USPA Circuit. Host clubs must be USPA Premier Club members and be familiar with USPA regulations and the TMS. Host clubs are responsible for all tournament finances. Prize money is encouraged but not required. These tournaments typically last two days, with a third day required if the division draw exceeds 16 teams. USPA Membership is required to play in USPA 500 and 250.

USPA 100 - These tournaments are designed to promote local participation and player development. They typically run 1–2 days, with a goal of completing play in 1.5 days or less. No USPA membership is required for players to participate. USPA 100s are a key growth tool for clubs new to tournaments, clubs building a local competitive base, or larger clubs adding additional tournaments to their calendar. Clubs are encouraged to start at this level before applying for higher-tier tournaments. A USPA Official Club membership is required to host USPA 100 tournaments. Clubs may offer mixed and co-ed categories during a USPA 100. Results will count for WPR, but since there are no Co-Ed or Mixed USPA rankings, the results do not impact the rankings.

Players may not compete in more than one division within the same category at a single USPA tournament. For clarity, a player may not enter both Men's Division 1 and Men's Division 2 (or any two divisions within the same category) in the same event.

Players may, however, compete in multiple categories if they are offered, such as Men's Doubles and Mixed Doubles or Women's Doubles and Co-Ed, provided they compete in only one division within each category.

Please see the quick reference guides below

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

USPA LEVEL	2000 / 1000	500	250	100
Maximum D1 draw size	24	32	32	32
Maximum D2 - D6 draw size	32 (A 32 draw must take place over 3 days, due to the maximum matches per day rules)			
Minimum draw size	3	3	3	3
Draw Format	3-5 pairs = Round Robin, 6-7 pair = 2 Group Round Robin with 1v1 Final. 8+ Pairs = Main Draw & Consolation. D1 Consolation will be a FRL Consolation.	3-5 pairs = Round Robin, 6-7 pair = 2 Group Round Robin with 1v1 Final. 8+ Pairs = Main Draw & FML Consolation	3-5 pairs = Round Robin, 6-7 pair = 2 Group Round Robin with 1v1 Final. 8+ Pairs = Main Draw & FML Consolation	3-5 pairs = Round Robin, 6-7 pair = 2 Group Round Robin with 1v1 Final. 8+ Pairs = Main Draw & FML Consolation
Preferred Tournament Length	3 days	2 days	2 days	1 - 2 days
Number of seeded pairs	6-11 pairs = 2, 12-23 pairs = 4, 24-32 pairs = 8			
Seeding Criteria	USPA Rankings, verified WPR	USPA Rankings, verified WPR	USPA Rankings, verified WPR	USPA Rankings, verified WPR
Draw Selection Criteria	USPA Rankings, verified WPR	USPA Rankings, verified WPR	USPA Rankings, WPR	USPA Rankings, WPR
Wild Cards	2 per division	2 per division	2 per division	2 per division
D1. Scoring Format	Best of 3 Sets. Star Point	Best of 3 Sets. Star Point	Best of 3 Sets. 10 Point Tiebreak for 3rd set. Star Point	Best of 3 Sets. 10 Point Tiebreak for 3rd set. Star Point
D2-D5. Scoring Format	Best of 3 Sets. 10 Point Tiebreak for 3rd set. Star Point			
Consolation Scoring Format	Best of 3 Sets. 10 Point Tiebreak for 3rd set. Star Point			
Maximum matches per day*	2 if the main draw. 3 if includes any back draw matches	2 if the main draw. 3 if includes any back draw matches	3	3, unless approved prior
Fee Structure	USPA retains \$10 pp	USPA retains \$10 pp	USPA retains \$10 pp	Club retains 100%
Player Entry Criteria	Paid Membership Required	Paid Membership Required	Paid Membership Required	Free Membership Required
Official Requirements* For tournaments after 4/1/2026	Minimum of USPA Certified Level 1 Official or FIP International Padel Referee Level 1. This person can also be the tournament director			
Adhere to the USPA Flier, Video, & Photo Banner Branding Guides	See the Tournament Planning, Requirements, and Guidance Sheet here			

TOURNAMENT ORGANIZATION TABLE

Draws Open	90 days prior to the tournament. Tournament directors must have set up the tournament in their account on the USPA Tournament Management System (TMS).
Draws Close	The entry deadline for all USPA 2000, 1000, 500, 250, and Senior tournaments is 11:00 PM local time on the Thursday of the week preceding the tournament. For example, the Tournament is on Sat & Sun, Jan 17/18. Entries close Thursday, January 8th, at 11:00 PM local time. The entry deadline for all USPA 100 tournaments is 11:00 PM local time on Monday, the week of the tournament, for example. Tournament is on Sat & Sun, Jan 17/18. Entries close Monday, January 12th at 11:00 PM local time.
Draws Published	For USPA 2000, 1000, 500, 250. Draws should be published no later than 3:00 PM on the Monday before the tournament (Preferably earlier). For USPA 100, Draws should be published no later than 3:00 PM on the Tuesday before the tournament.
Registration and collection of entry fees from players	One player from each pair must enter and pay for the team online in the USPA TMS. Accessed from the USPA Calendar . Players pay a \$1.50 platform fee, in addition to their entry fee. For example, if the entry fee is \$80 pp, then one player pays \$163 to enter the team.
Allocation of Entry Fees, Distribution to the Club, and Refunds.	USPA 100 clubs receive 100% of the set entry fee, less Stripes transaction fees. USPA 250, 500, 1000, 2000, the USPA retains \$10 per player from the entry fees. The club receives the remainder, less the Stripe transaction fees. Each club enters its banking information into the USPA TMS via Stripe and is paid the entry fees as players register for the tournament. Clubs are responsible for managing all player refunds through the Clubs Stripe account.
Players joining the USPA	Managed by the players on the USPA website
Seeding	For USPA 2000, 1000, and 500, conducted by the USPA. For USPA 250, 100, conducted by the tournament director.
Draws, Schedule, results, updates	Managed by the tournament director using the USPA TMS.
Management of players and draw changes.	Managed by tournament directors using the USPA TMS. Draw changes involving 2000, 1000, 500, and seeded players must be approved by the USPA.
Supervises all aspects of play	The Tournament Director and the Tournament Referee are responsible for running all sanctioned tournaments in accordance with the USPA Rules and Regulations and this Competition Guide. The USPA is always available in a supporting role.
Prizes, gifts, entertainment, supplies, first aid, etc.	Tournament director and club.

PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK