



## **MISSISSIPPI**

### **USTA Mississippi Committee Report**

**2025**

**DUE: January 15, 2026**

**Committee Name: Officials Committee**

**Committee Chair: Billy Gip Clark**

**Committee Members: Billy Gip Clark, Dale Williamson, Felicia Ford, Sonia Kusek, Grant Eubanks**

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#### **PROJECTS UNDER WAY and/or DISCUSSED:**

The officials committee's main responsibility is to help recruit new officials as well as help to retain the ones we have.

We have some new people interested in going through the officiating process, which is good. Always need more.

USTA Southern created and implemented a grant that gave new officials a \$250 stipend as a thank you for becoming certified. This also helps give an incentive to finish your certification as many start and do not finish.

USTA Southern also has a referral grant of \$50 to officials who help recruit a new official who gets certified.

At the end of 2025, Mississippi had a total of 36 certified officials and another 4 that are in the final stage(s). This is an increase of 10 during the 2025 year.

We continue to encourage people to go through the certification process and we certainly think the stipend will certainly help increase our numbers.



## **USTA Mississippi Committee Report**

**2025**

**DUE: January 15, 2026**

**Committee Name: Ranking Committee**

**Committee Chair: Justyn Schelver**

**Committee Members: Justyn Schelver, Dave Randall, Steve Pennington, Neil Witherow, Michael Johnson**

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### **PROJECTS UNDER WAY and/or DISCUSSED:**

Starting in 2021, all rankings are handled by the USTA National Office for Adult and Junior players. MS no longer does our own ranking list each week.

As such, this committee handles all needs related to high level team competition that arise around the National Standing List. For example, creating and approving the team selections for Ozaki Cup. In 2025, the Ranking Committee met virtually to discuss and approve the Ozaki Selections for Team Mississippi.

This committee will also be involved in helping create/approve any other team selection or issues that arise related to the National Standing List and Rankings.

TO: Russell Dendy, Executive Director USTA MS  
FR: Cleon McKnight, Chairperson of MS USTA Sanctioning & Scheduling Committee  
RE: 2026 Annual Report

## Status of Adults and Junior Tournaments in 2025

- According to the Tournament Directors, there were no significant adverse issues with the administration or running of the various Tournaments during the 2025 fiscal year.
- The number looks like this:

### Adults

# of Tournaments NTRP 2024 (27)	# of NTRP Tournaments 2025 (27) (even)
# of NTRP Participants 2024 (2537)	# of NTRP Participants 2025 (2068)(-456)
# of NTRP Registered 2026 (12 as of now)	

### Juniors

# of Tournaments USTA 2024 (87)	# of USTA Tournaments 2025 (73)(-14)
# of USTA Participants 2024 (5635)	# of USTA Participants 2025 (4806)(-829)
# of USTA Registered 2026 (49 as of now)	

# of WTN Tournaments 2024 (5)	# of WTN Tournaments 2025 (12)(+7)
# of WTN Registered 2024 (246)	# of WTN Registered 2025 (553)(+307)
# of Registered WTN Tournaments 2026 (0 as of now)	



## **USTA Mississippi Year End Committee Report**

**January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025**

**DUE: January 20, 2026**

**Committee Name: Diversity Committee**

**Committee Chair: Toni Jackson**

**Committee Members: Birlette Jelks, Bonita Mosley, Oscar Deleon, Chris Adams, Nyesha Nealon, Myesha Nealon, Laperiall Jones, Peggie Henderson, Jimmy Coins. Jay Pacelli- staff liaison**

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### **PROJECTS DISCUSSED:**

Committee met in January, April, and July to discuss how to increase diversity involvement in tennis in our state. Different committee members and NJTL's were to use National Tennis Month events and the Tennis Apprentice program to reach out to diverse populations and introduce many to the game of tennis. Diversity goals that are on going include calling on HBCU schools to have Tennis Apprentice and promoting tennis at a National Heritage Month event. Encouraged committee members to share information to their communities on Grow the Game and USTA Level 1 workshops happening throughout year. Both workshops are low to no cost opportunities to get everyone teaching the game of tennis and delivering it to all populations. Committee discussed speaking to HBCU colleges about having a Kids Day during one of their college matches or tournament. Committee is committed to generating interest in tennis at their local schools. For example, charter schools in the Jackson area have been contacted in an effort to provide workshops for its PE teachers and to register for free equipment. Finally, committee members were involved in the second annual NJTL State Leadership Camp and NJTL Cup in the summer of 2025. Event brought many of our NJTL youth for a day of fun, education, and competitive play at a NJTL headquarters or HBCU school.

### **PROJECTS COMPLETED:**

- Diversity Committee met throughout 2025 led by chairperson Toni Jackson..
- The committee oversaw the grant process for the MTA Diversity Grant. The grant was awarded to Greenville CTA/NJTL for maximum amount of \$1200.00. The grants are

offered for the purpose of supporting the development of NJTL's and to specifically impact increasing diversity.

-State organizations delivered events aimed at diverse populations, including Red Ball Tennis, during May's National Tennis Month. Meridian CTA, for example, focused again on offering tennis to the developmentally disabled at the Northeast Tennis Center.

- USTA Mississippi partnered with the organization "Tennis for Fun" to fund an adaptive tennis clinic in Hattiesburg throughout 2025. Three participants from the clinic went on to compete in the Special Olympics here in Mississippi and won medals.

-Adaptive tennis continued to grow in the state with programming in Meridian, Hattiesburg, and Ocean Springs. Meridian hosted a Holiday Adaptive Clinic in December, 2025. Friends at Battlefield NJTL have received funding from USTA Southern to start an adaptive program at Battlefield Park in 2026.

-NJTL's continued to offer low to no cost summer tennis options for youth in its communities. Camps were offered by Ace2Deuce, Friends at Battlefield, and Greenville. Family Biz Builders provided a Summer Sports and Fitness program while Greenville continues to offer free tennis Saturdays.

-The Meridian CTA hosted a successful US Open Family Day at Northeast Park Tennis Center, one of only six cities selected nationwide, featuring tennis mixers, face painting, food, and a USTA-sponsored watch party for the US Open in August 2025, bringing families from all backgrounds together to celebrate tennis and community spirit with free activities for all ages.

-Coastal Tennis Alliance CTA promoted local tennis programming and Red Ball tennis setting up a court at the Hispanic Heritage festival at Pascagoula Beach Park in September 2025. Individuals of all ages got to experience Red Ball tennis first hand.

-USTA Mississippi hosted an Adaptive Tennis Workshop at River Hills Country Club in October 2025. Led by Jim Hamm of Special Pops tennis, 15 individuals learned all aspects of running an adaptive program. Athletes and coaches from Tennis for Fun participated on court for all the spectators.

-Diversity committee members assisted both on and off the court during the NJTL Leadership Camp and Cup at the Dorothy Vest Tennis Center on Saturday August 9, 2025. Food and coaching were provided by committee members.

-USTA Mississippi had three adaptive athletes participate in the Second Annual USTA Southern Adaptive Championships in Chattanooga, TN. Diversity committee chairperson Toni Jackson and Tennis for Fun Director Lori Duke coached and supported the Mississippi athletes competing against 44 players from across the USTA Southern region.

#### **FUTURE PROJECTS:**

- Diversity Committee meeting to start 2026 is scheduled for Friday, January 30 at the USTA Mississippi annual tennis weekend at River Hills. Emphasis will be placed upon what the committee can do to increase diversity involvement in tennis and what diversity goals would be attainable for all committee members. Topics will include, not be limited, to Tennis Apprentice in your community, bringing tennis to a Heritage Month event, the CTA/NJTL state workshop, HBCU kids days, school tennis workshops, and coaching and training opportunities for our next tennis coaches.



## **USTA Mississippi Year End Committee Report**

**January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025**

**Committee Name: NJTL Committee**

**Committee Chair: Birlette Jelks**

**Committee Members: Neal Robinson, Vanita Phinisey, Chris Adams, Nyesha Nealon, Myesha Nealon, Laperiall Jones, Peggie Henderson, Venecca Green, Rick Shields. Jay Pacelli- staff liaison**

### **PROJECTS DISCUSSED:**

Committee met in February, April, and July to discuss NJTL matters and to help organize the annual state Leadership Camp and Cup in August. Different NJTL's were to use National Tennis Month events and other grass roots programming to reach out to diverse populations and introduce many to the game of tennis. In particular, NJTL's have been proactive in increasing community involvement in junior tennis, having adult training programs and promoting Adult Red Ball. Members of the NJTL committee share and discuss updates on USTA Southern initiatives such as the apprenticeship grant, diversity grant, the NJTL essay contest, and funding assistance for tournament players. The NJTL committee was dedicated in bringing a strong academic program this year to the second annual NJTL State Leadership Camp and NJTL Cup in the summer of 2025. Committee decided on an agenda that included a tour of the Mississippi Civil Right Museum and Museum of Mississippi History to go along with a quiz bowl, tennis clinic, Red Ball Challenge and tennis play amongst its NJTL members.

### **PROJECTS COMPLETED:**

- Diversity Committee met 4 times throughout year led by chairman Birlette Jelks.
- Greenville CTA/NJTL received funding through the MTA Diversity Grant. The grant was awarded to Greenville CTA/NJTL for maximum amount of \$1200.00. The grants are offered for the purpose of supporting the development of NJTL's and to specifically impact increasing diversity.- Five Mississippi NJTL's (Family Biz, Golden Triangle, Greenville, Ace2Deuce and Friends of Battlefield) had members 12-16 of age attend the 2025 NJTL Sectional Summer Leadership Camp in Louisville, KY. 11 of the 27 participants at the camp were from Mississippi NJTL's.
- A group of our NJTL's delivered events, including Red Ball Tennis, during May's National Tennis Month.
- NJTL's continued to offer low to no cost summer tennis options for youth in its communities. Camps were offered by Ace2Deuce, Friends at Battlefield, and Greenville.

Family Biz Builders provided a Summer Sports and Fitness program while Greenville continues to offer free tennis Saturdays.

-Greenville CTA/NJTL continued to partner with local Delta schools to bring tennis to underprivileged children.

-Mississippi NJTLs had strong representation in Washington DC at the Haber Career Excellence program in July 2025. The program provides young people in tennis with diverse career opportunities. Zara Washington (Greenville), Michael Colombus (Greenville), Chloe Amerson (Friends of Battlefield), and Kahari McNeal (Friends of Battlefield) all received full grants to attend.

-Ace2Deuce CTA/NJTL and Friends of Battlefield CTA/NJTL engaged nearly 100 kids to their summer programs. Ace2Deuce offered a low cost Junior Holiday Winter Camp to the Jackson community in December 2025. Friends of Battlefield ran junior clinics and junior circuits in support of city parks and National Parks and Recreation Month.

-Golden Triangle CTA/NJTL raised funds for 24 kids to attend the US open and receive the honor of participating in the US Open Net Generation On Court Experience. The group played and drilled on the US Open courts before the pro matches began and received tickets for the first round matches. Sylar Powers of Columbus, MS participated in the coin toss for the Victoria Jimenez Kasintseva/Maya Joint main draw singles match.

-Family Biz CTA/NJTL continues to offer summer tennis camps and academic programming in conjunction with the local parks in the Tunica area. Family Biz partnered with Dynamic Tennis and Fitness to teach tennis skills to children at Kirkpatrick Elementary School in Clarksdale, MS

-Kaleb Phillips of Family Biz won the Arthur Ashe Essay Contest for the state of Mississippi. Kaleb earned an all expenses paid trip to the Atlanta Cup for his efforts.

-Family Biz and Greenville received USTA Southern Foundation facility assistance grants to improve and repair courts and facilities in Greenville and Tunica. The Southern Tennis Foundation provided a total funding pot of \$100,000 to support 10 NJTL's through the southern section.

-Family Biz, Ace2Deuce and Greenville all received \$1000 program grants from the USTA Southern Foundation. Friends at Battlefield received a \$750.00 adaptive grant from the foundation.

-Greenville CTA/NJTL gave 24 youth in the Greenville area the opportunity to participate in an ACT workshop.

-Family Biz Builder was awarded a \$4,000 grant in January 2025 from the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi to support their College & Career Readiness Program.

-USTA Mississippi NJTL Camp and Cup was held on August 9, 2025. 22 members of 4 different state NJTLs participated in activities at both the Mississippi Civil Rights Museum and at the Dorothy Vest Tennis Center. Friends of Battlefield and Ace2Deuce took honors during the Cup competition as the top teams in "A" and "B" Divisions respectively. Greenville were Quiz Bowl Champions for 2025.

#### **FUTURE PROJECTS:**

- NJTL Committee will have a meeting February 2026 with the purpose of defining its goals and initiatives and to pass along pertinent information from USTA Southern.
- Expansion of number of registered NJTL Chapters will look to take place in 2026. Colombia, MS and Natchez, MS have expressed interest in becoming NJTL Chapters.

**USTA Mississippi  
Wheelchair Committee Report 2025  
Robbie Sullivan, Chair**

- There are currently 10 active Wheelchair players in Mississippi that have competed in events or USTA sanctioned tournaments in 2025, which is a slight growth over years past
- Robbie coordinates a group of players that travel extensively to tournaments across the country. This year, Mississippi players attended sanctioned tournaments in Baton Rouge, Houston, Montgomery, Dallas, Nashville, Birmingham, and Atlanta.
- The Rock n Roll Wheelchair Association, in conjunction with Metro Area Community Empowerment (MACE), hosted a USTA Level 3 Wheelchair Tournament in Brandon in 2025, with 28 players entered. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest turnout in tournament history.
- The 2026 Rock n Roll Wheelchair Level 3 is scheduled for October 9-11
- The Wheelchair Committee is very active in procuring grants, and brought in nearly \$10,000 combined from all parties in 2025. These funds go to support the sanctioned tournament, assist with travel expenses for players participating in tournaments across the country, and to assist with local wheelchair clinics to get more players involved in the sport.
- The committee is aiming to promote the sport more across the state, and there are grants available to start new wheelchair programs in new cities.





**SOUTHERN  
MISSISSIPPI**

## **USTA Mississippi Quarterly Committee Report**

**Q1: January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025**

**Committee Name: Adult League**

**Committee Chair: Donald Jones**

**Committee Members: Jason Ohler, Katie Boykin, Kevin Martin, , Dennis Butler, Lisa Shaw, Melanie Fink, Leanne Summers, Judy Bumgardner**

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**PROJECTS UNDER WAY and/or DISCUSSED:**

**Met at annual meeting. Had special guest Dave Bain answer questions about Early Start Leagues**

**Get championship bid paper work ready**

**Q2: April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025**

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**PROJECTS UNDER WAY and/or DISCUSSED:**

**Championship Bid are open**

**Close loophole in One team regulations**

**FUTURE PROJECTS:**

**Selection of 2026-2027 Championship hosts**

## **Q4: October 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025**

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### **PROJECTS UNDER WAY and/or DISCUSSED:**

**Selection of hosts for 2026-2027 league events**

**Create language to define “one teams”**

**Update local league regulations**

### **PROJECTS COMPLETED:**

**Selected hosts for 2026-2027 league events**

**Updated language to define “one teams”**

**Updated local league regulations to define that matches must be played in the local league area**

### **FUTURE PROJECTS:**

**Develop ideas to improve league participation numbers**



## **MISSISSIPPI**

# **USTA Mississippi Committee Report**

**2025**

**DUE: January 15, 2026**

**Committee Name: Adult Competition Committee**

**Committee Chair: Amanda Mincey**

**Committee Members: Amanda Mincey, Dennis Butler, John Cox, Lisa Shaw, Ivan Michelli**

### **PROJECTS UNDER WAY and/or DISCUSSED:**

The committee will help solicit and put together the Callen Cup Team for Mississippi. Players will complete an online player application to assist in reviewing and selecting the top players around the state. Amanda Mincey and Emilia Viljoen served as the Female Team and Male Team Captains for the Callen Cup teams.

### **PROJECTS COMPLETED:**

Our Callen Cup team was filled and we sent a team in all age groups for men and women, except for Men's 55s. All of our players enjoyed the fellowship and competition, with the Men's 35s team beating South Carolina and North Carolina to win the consolation draw.



## MISSISSIPPI

### USTA Mississippi Annual Committee Report

**2025**

**DUE: January 15, 2026**

**Committee Name: Junior Tennis Council**

**Committee Chair: Toni Lucas**

**Committee Members: Toni Lucas, Bo Gard, Courtney Ulrich, Jason Woods, Anthony Hiatt, Chad Rhoden, Walker Sahag, Sylvia Viljoen, Gina Bingham, Ivan Michelli, Robbie Wrigley, Dave Randall, Xiaohua Wu, Claire Kiamie, Dita Collier, Julia Gaines, Jennifer McCants, Jestine Corso**

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The committee continued to approve last year's change to sending 1 coach to each location for Southern Closed tournaments, instead of two to three of the sites in years past. This saved \$4000 that was used to award travel grants to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place players in the State Closed L5 in each age group.

#### **PROJECTS COMPLETED:**

A sub-committee was formed to determine coach selection for both Southern Closed and Ozaki Cup. The sub-committee consisted of Toni Lucas, committee chair; Casey Rogers, North Mississippi; Dita Collier, Central Mississippi and Lindsey Byrd, South Mississippi. The sub-committee met virtually and approved coaches to go to the Southern Closed L3 Tournaments. Coaches this year were: Lucie Devier, Cary 12s; Chicho Chaves, Macon 14s; Michael Edge, Little Rock 16s; and Zoe Douglas, Mobile 18s.

The sub-committee met virtually again in June to determine coaches for the Ozaki Cup. Coaches this year were: Justyn Schelver, Sylvia Viljoen, Zoe Douglas, and Trey Woods. Before the tournament, Sylvia had a work conflict that came up. The Ozaki Cup Committee selected Lucie Devier to go in Sylvia's place.

MTA college scholarship recipients were also selected.

#### **FUTURE PROJECTS:**

## **USTA MS CTA Committee Report 2025**

Committee Chair: Lance Hickman

Committee Members: Karen Newman-Morgan, Pamela Johnson, Janice Crawford, Jay Pacelli (staff liaison)

### **PROJECTS DISCUSSED:**

CTA Committee meet between July and September 2025 with the purpose of organizing the USTA Mississippi CTA/NJTL workshop on October 4, 2025 at River Hills Country Club in Jackson. The committee was committed in organizing an agenda that will best equip our community tennis associations to fulfill the USTA mission of "promoting and developing the growth of tennis". The committee discussed new ideas for the workshop with the purpose of making tennis an instrument for mentoring and community building throughout Mississippi. Other items discussed by the committee included how to find our future tennis leaders, facility assistance grants for CTAs, free workshops for each CTA to grow the game of tennis, other grants available at the state, regional and national level, and how CTAs can share information and experiences to the other organizations throughout the state.

### **PROJECTS COMPLETED:**

CTA committee led the way to a successful CTA/NJTL workshop in October, 2025. Representation totaling 35 individuals from Mississippi CTAs and NJTLs were present. Topics for the workshop included, but was not limited to, the use of Serve Tennis by CTA leaders, promotion of Adult Red Ball Tennis, advocacy, recruiting your next community leaders, finding our future coaches and how to build relationships and partnerships. Guest speakers included Tracy McEvoy (USTA Southern) and Jim Hamm (Special Pops) who spoke about sponsorship basics and adaptive programming respectively. Included in the workshop was a CTA Roundtable discussion led by committee chairman Lance Hickman. Topics introduced by Lance included CTA family day events, adaptive tennis, tennis apprentices, tennis in schools, ways to grow public tennis and the Community Leadership and Development Program (CLDP) for CTA leaders. The day concluded with an adaptive clinic with 15 participants and adaptive athletes led by Jim Hamm. Other completed projects include Committee chairman Lance Hickman starting a GroupMe in Fall 2025 with the purpose of coordinating and staying connected with our CTAs, NJTLs and any tennis organizations in Mississippi. Group Me will enable everyone to share messages, photos, and organizing events within their regions.

### **FUTURE PROJECTS:**

CTA Committee will look to build on the success of the CTA and NJTL Summit and workshop for 2026. The committee will continue to discuss ways our CTAs can be stronger in their respective communities and work withy each other to better the sport of tennis. Representation from 4 CTA's and the CTA committee will attend the USTA Community Tennis Development Workshop (CTDW) on February 19-21, 2026 at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Grapeview, TX. The purpose of CDTW is to unite CTA leaders from all over the country who use tennis to create and transform communities.

# 2025 USTA MS Marketing Committee Report

## Purpose

The Marketing Committee supports USTA Mississippi's mission by assisting with promotion, engagement, and event support, and sponsorship initiatives that highlight the impact of tennis across the state.

## Leadership & Support

- **Staff Liaison:** Scotta Brady, Marketing Director (joined April)

Of the 4 committee members, just one, Catherine Poweres, volunteered her time and expertise to support marketing efforts tied to key organizational events and initiatives.

## Key Activities & Timeline

- **April:** Introduction of the new Marketing Director and successful hosting of the USTA Southern Section Summer Leadership Meeting, a once-every-nine-years event.
- **Fall:** Marketing Committee engagement aligned with Awards season and preparations for the **USTA Mississippi Annual Meeting and Hall of Fame Banquet (January 30–31).**
- **Awards Promotion:** Committee members were encouraged to submit nominations through the Awards Portal prior to its **October 1** close.

## Committee Support Areas

Marketing Committee members were invited to assist with:

- **Silent Auction:** Procuring items to support fundraising success.
- **Banquet Support (January 31, 2026):** Volunteer assistance with the 50/50 raffle and drink ticket distribution.
- **Sponsorship:** creation of a sponsorship packet and procuring sponsorships (ongoing).

## Outcomes & Impact

- Increased committee awareness and engagement during Awards season.
- Early volunteer coordination for Annual Meeting and Hall of Fame Banquet support.
- Strengthened collaboration between staff and volunteers to support major events.

## Appreciation & Future Focus

USTA Mississippi thanks the Marketing Committee for its service and commitment. Future priorities include continued volunteer engagement, expanded promotional support for key initiatives including a new and improved sponsorship packet and procurement of sponsorships, plus ongoing alignment with USTA values of inclusion, growth, and community impact.

# 2025 USTA Mississippi Awards Committee Report

## Purpose

The Awards Committee supports USTA Mississippi's mission to grow tennis by recognizing individuals and organizations who demonstrate excellence, leadership, and service across the state.

## Leadership & Support

- **Committee Chair:** Ashley Cox
- **Staff Liaison:** Scotta Brady, Marketing Director

The committee is composed of dedicated volunteers committed to a fair, inclusive, and transparent awards process. Of the 4 members, 2 were active in the Awards Process, Ashley Cox and Jeffie Blake Smith

## Key Activities

- Successfully transitioned Awards coordination following the onboarding of the new Marketing Director in April.
- Supported statewide engagement during Awards season leading into the **USTA Mississippi Annual Meeting and Hall of Fame Banquet (January 30–31)**.
- Promoted participation in the **Awards Portal**, including nominations advancing to USTA Southern Section consideration.

## Selection Process

- Awards Portal opened September 1 and closed **October 1**.
- Committee members reviewed submitted nominations and ranked their **top five candidates** in each category.
- Rankings were returned by **October 8** and used to determine this year's award recipients.

## Outcomes & Impact

- Strong committee participation from those who participated and timely completion of evaluations.
- Consistent, mission-aligned award selections.
- Clear alignment with USTA Southern Section award standards.

## Appreciation & Future Focus

USTA Mississippi thanks the Awards Committee for its leadership and service. Future priorities include increasing nomination volume, earlier outreach, and continued alignment with USTA values of inclusion, growth, and community impact.