



## HOW TO GET STARTED ON THE USTA MEN'S PRO CIRCUIT

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**Welcome to the USTA Men's Pro Circuit!** If you are 14 years of age or older and wish to become a professional tennis player, then there is no better place than the Pro Circuit to test your skill or to determine whether or not you have what it takes to achieve that goal. The USTA Pro Circuit is the place to start getting the points you need to create and build your ranking. With enough points acquired, your ranking will be high enough to gain you entry into the next level of tournaments.

We at the **USTA Pro Circuit**, are responsible for finding the host facilities in the United States for each tournament week on the US Futures and Challenger calendar. We send internationally certified USTA Supervisors to run the competitive side of the tournament and we rely on the host site to organize all other aspects of the event. We also send Certified Athletic Trainers to each of our over 90 men's and women's Pro Circuit events.

### What is the Pro Circuit?

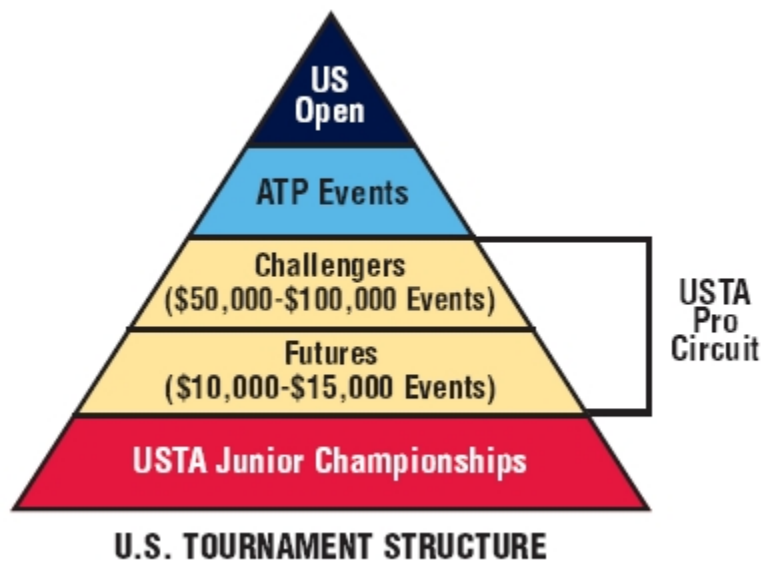
Each country has its own tennis federation that looks to grow the country's next star. One way, a federation can achieve this goal is by having a circuit of tournaments that become the training ground for their country's aspiring players. The USTA Pro Circuit was created for this purpose by the United States Tennis Association. There are over 90 men's and women's events available on the USTA Pro Circuit for upcoming players to gain points.

There are two types of events on the USTA Men's Pro Circuit: **Futures and Challengers**. All Futures fall under the umbrella of the International Tennis Federation (**ITF**) and all Challengers fall under the umbrella of the Association of Tennis Professionals (**ATP**).



The ATP created a ranking system for professional men tennis players. Each round of a draw in a Futures and Challenger event provide points which make up an ATP ranking. A player's ranking will be used for determining qualification for entry and seeding in all tournaments in both singles and doubles. As the prize money level of a tournament increases, so do the number of points awarded per round.

## Hierarchy of Professional Tennis in the US:



### **FUTURES**

Futures are professional tournaments ranging from \$10,000 to \$15,000 in Prize Money. They are the first step on the ladder for those trying to earn their first computer point in pursuit of an ATP ranking. Futures are also grounds for players trying to develop and improve their skills and techniques. A player will start earning points when he reaches the round of 16 of the Main Draw at a Futures event. These points will be posted on the ATP rankings list two weeks after completion of each event.

The draw sizes for **\$10,000** Futures are **32 Main Draw, 128 Qualifying Draw.**  
(except for two June-July clay court Futures)

The draw sizes for **\$15,000** Futures are **32 Main Draw and 64 Qualifying Draw.**

### **CHALLENGERS**

The next level of competition is the Challenger level with prize money ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000. Challengers build a bridge between the Professional Tennis tours (ATP & ITF) allowing players to earn more points per round and further improve their world rankings. Challengers are just one step down from ATP Tour events and you will often find players who play in Challengers also playing in ATP Tour events, and trying to qualify for Grand Slams. ATP rankings at the Challenger level range from 71 – 400.

The draw sizes for Challenger events are **32 Main Draw and 32 Qualifying.**

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## How To Enter Into a Pro Circuit Event

### Entering Futures

The ITF office in London, England is the entry bureau for all Futures around the world. Players must familiarize themselves with the following ITF entry rules in order to successfully enter Pro Circuit Futures events.

### IPIN Membership

Prior to entering, all players must register for an **I**nternational **P**layer **I**dentification **N**umber (IPIN) membership. This alpha numeric identification number is a prerequisite to entering a Futures event anywhere in the world. This number will be the same throughout a player's career. **A player will not be allowed to compete in ITF Futures unless he is registered for an IPIN.**

To register for an IPIN membership, please visit [www.itftennis.com/ipin](http://www.itftennis.com/ipin). A valid email address will be necessary in order to receive the e-mail from the ITF with the IPIN information.

In most cases, a player will receive his IPIN in up to 72 hours. In cases in which the player has never participated in ITF international competition, the information supplied by the player will be verified by a member of the ITF staff in London and the request may take up to 10 days depending on weekend/holiday closures.

Registering for an IPIN membership requires paying the IPIN Membership fee of **\$55**. When a player registers for the given year's IPIN, he has two options to select from – either to pay by Credit Card (which he must do immediately) or select "Will pay at the ITF Tournament." Once a player selects "Will pay at the ITF Tournament," this option will be final and the player must pay by cash at any ITF Tournament.

IPIN Membership provides a player with access to the ITF online registration system allowing him to manage their playing schedule online using the entry/withdrawal feature as well as view and pay their code of conduct fines online. Please note that subscription to this system is annual and must be renewed every year.

### Entry Rules and Procedures for Futures events:

All entries are completed on ITF's website, [www.itftennis.com/ipin](http://www.itftennis.com/ipin).

- **Qualifying Entry Deadline.** The entry deadline for main draw and qualifying is 1400 hrs Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) on ***Thursday, 18 days prior to the Monday of the Tournament week.*** 14:00 hrs GMT is 2:00 PM London, England Time which is 9:00 AM Eastern Time in the United States. **Players should be aware of this time difference!**
- **All** players must enter by this time, (*not just for main draw and not only players with rankings*).
- There is also a **Withdrawal Deadline:** 1400 hrs GMT (**9:00 AM Eastern Time in the United States**) on Tuesday, 13 days prior to the Monday of the tournament week.
- Entered Qualifying players must still appear at qualifying sign-in
- Players who miss the entry deadline may sign in for Qualifying as an On-Site Alternate.

Players are selected into the Qualifying draw based on the official order of acceptance as written in the current ITF Men's Circuit rulebook. Currently the system of merit is:

- 1) ATP
- 2) National Rank –as on record with the ITF
- 3) No rank

### Futures Entry Lists:

Once accepted into the Main Draw or Qualifying of an event, a player is committed to play only that event for that week. A player can verify whether he made it into Main Draw or Qualifying by checking the tournament's entry list. Entry lists are available the day after the entry deadline both on the ITF website, [www.itftennis.com/procircuit](http://www.itftennis.com/procircuit) and on the USTA Pro Circuit website, [www.procircuit.usta.com](http://www.procircuit.usta.com).

Entry lists change frequently with incoming withdrawals. **It is the player's responsibility to verify if he has moved into Main Draw from Qualifying or into Qualifying from the Alternates list.**

### **Futures Qualifying Sign-In:**

**If a player has been directly accepted into Qualifying, he MUST be physically present to sign-in for Qualifying in order to compete. NO ONE OTHER THAN THE PLAYER MAY SIGN-IN FOR THE PLAYER AND THERE IS NO TELEPHONE SIGN-IN.** Qualifying sign-in for Futures takes place from 4 – 6 p.m. the day before Qualifying play.

### **Signing-in as an Alternate:**

Any player who misses the entry deadline may appear at qualifying sign-in and will be eligible to sign-in as an On-Site Alternate, according to the System of Merit. There is a \$40 Qualifying sign-in fee that will be collected. If a player is not entered, their ATP or National Ranking **will not** put them ahead of any player whose entry was received by the entry deadline.

#### **System of Merit for On-Site Alternates:**

1. Players with an ATP ranking
2. Players with a National Top 500 ranking (on file with the ITF<sup>\*</sup>)
3. Players without a ranking

*\* If a player has an international ranking, it is the player's responsibility to make sure that their country's tennis federation has submitted that country's rankings. The USTA Supervisor who is conducting qualifying sign-in will **not accept** letters from a federation as proof of ranking. The ITF will provide the USTA Supervisor at qualifying sign-in with a National Rankings binder. If a player's country has not submitted the country's rankings, the player will not be allowed to use his national ranking and will be considered unranked.*

Once you have signed in for Qualifying you must wait until after the USTA Supervisor has completed the draw and the schedule of play to find out whether you will be playing. Tournament Fact Sheets for the events will indicate the specific location of the Qualifying sign-in.

### **Tournament Fact Sheet:**

CHAMPION PORSCHE \$10,000 FUTURES OF BOCA RATON	
USTA PROFESSIONAL CIRCUIT EVENT	
TOTAL PRIZE MONEY: \$10,000 ITF CODE: USA F3	SINGLES: MAIN DRAW - 32 DOUBLES: MAIN DRAW - 16 SINGLES QUAL - 128
TOURNAMENT INFORMATION	
SITE: PATCH REEF TENNIS CENTER 2000 YAMATO ROAD BOCA RATON, FL 33431	PHONE: 561-367-7090 FAX: 561-997-0818
TOURN. DIRECTOR: JIM TIERNEY DIRECTOR'S EMAIL: <a href="mailto:jtierney@myboca.us">jtierney@myboca.us</a>	TOURN. DIRECTOR: 561-239-1395 FAX: 561-997-0818
USTA ON SITE STAFF	
USTA SUPERVISOR: PETER KASAVAGE   CELL: 914-658-4758   CHIEF UMPIRE: AGATHA TAGLENTI	
SURFACE AND BALL TYPE	
SURFACE: HARD / OUTDOOR	BALLS: WILSON EXTRA DUTY
SIGN IN TIMES	
ENTRY FEE: \$30 CASH ONLY	
SINGLES QUALIFYING: THURSDAY, JANUARY 17 FROM 4-6 PM AT THE TOURNAMENT SITE	
DOUBLES MD: MONDAY, JANUARY 21, CLOSING AT 12:00 NOON ON SITE.	
SCHEDULE OF PLAY	
SINGLES QUALIFYING: FRIDAY, JANUARY 19, AT 9 AM.	
SINGLES MAIN DRAW: TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, AT 10 AM.	
DOUBLES MAIN DRAW: TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, AT A TIME TO BE DETERMINED.	
WILD CARD EVENT: WILL NOT BE HELD	
ENTRY FEE: N/A	
HOW TO ENTER N/A	
HOTEL INFORMATION	
MAIN DRAW DOUBLE TREE GUEST SUITES BOCA RATON & QUALIFIERS: 701 NW 53RD ST BOCA RATON, FL 33487 PHONE: 561-997-9500 FAX: 561-994-0646 RATES: \$149 SING AND DOUB, \$159 TRIPLE, \$169 QUAD	HOTEL NOTES: HOTEL CONTACT IS: Yvette Parker HER EMAIL IS <a href="mailto:yvettp@parkersuitehotels.com">YVETTE.PARKER@SUITEHOTELS.COM</a>
AIRPORT: WEST PALM BEACH (PBI) or FORT LAUDERDALE (FLL) If online, click this box to go to reservation page.	
TRANSPORTATION	
FROM AIRPORT TO HOTEL: NOT PROVIDED.	
FROM HOTEL TO SITE: PROVIDED ON AS NEEDED. PLAYERS MUST MAKE APPOINTMENTS AT FRONT DESK.	
DIRECTIONS	
TO SITE FROM FORT LAUDERDALE AIRPORT: TAKE I-95 NORTH EXIT AT YAMATO ROAD HEADING WEST. CROSS OVER RAILROAD TRACKS AND SITE IS LOCATED AT 2000 YAMATO ROAD TWO BLOCKS WEST OF MILITARY TRAIL.	
TO SITE FROM WEST PALM AIRPORT: TAKE I-95 SOUTH EXIT AT YAMATO ROAD HEADING WEST. CROSS OVER RAILROAD TRACKS AND SITE IS LOCATED AT 2000 YAMATO ROAD TWO BLOCKS WEST OF MILITARY TRAIL.	
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES: CONTACT TOURNAMENT DESK	

The Pro Circuit office at the USTA prepares a Tournament Fact Sheet for each tournament on the USTA Pro Circuit calendar. These fact sheets are detail sheets that give important information about a tournament such as:

- Qualifying sign-in dates and location
- Tournament location
- Directions
- Tournament hotel
- Important phone numbers
- Player activities

Fact sheets are available for all players on the USTA Pro Circuit website, [www.procircuit.usta.com](http://www.procircuit.usta.com)

A list of "Frequently Asked Questions" regarding the ITF Futures entry rules is available at the end of this information piece.

## **Entering Challengers**

The ATP office in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL is the entry bureau for all Challenger events around the world. Players must familiarize themselves with the following ATP entry rules in order to successfully enter Pro Circuit Challenger events.

### **Entry Rules:**

Players who wish to officially enter Challenger events may enter via the ATP Player Zone entry system. To register for this system a player must have an ATP ranking. ATP ranked players may register for this system by paying a fee by logging on to <https://atp-playerzone.com/login.asp>.

All Entries into Challengers must be sent to the ATP office in Florida **21 days** prior to the Monday of the Tournament Week. Those who are not directly accepted into Main Draw and wish to play qualifying must appear at qualifying sign-in.

### **Challenger Entry Lists:**

Entry Lists for USTA Challengers are available on the USTA Pro Circuit website, [www.procircuit.usta.com](http://www.procircuit.usta.com).

### **Qualifying Sign-in**

**Unlike USTA Futures, USTA Challengers will not accept unranked players to sign in for qualifying. Unranked players may compete in the qualifying of a Challenger event by receiving a wild card.**

Qualifying sign-in for Challengers is held between 7-9 pm local time the day before qualifying play. If more people have signed-in than spots available, there is never a guarantee that a player will be accepted into the qualifying draw. Players will be selected into the draw based on the current ATP rankings.

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## **ADDITIONAL PLAYER INFORMATION**

### **WILD CARDS**

- Players may request to be selected as a Wild Card entry into a tournament either from the USTA or from the Tournament Director of a particular event. All USTA Wild Cards are decided at the USTA Player Development training center in Boca Raton, FL. These requests must be made on the **WILD CARD REQUEST FORM** available on the player development section of the USTA Website [www.playerdevelopment.usta.com](http://www.playerdevelopment.usta.com).

The direct link is:

<https://usta.fairplayams.com/AMS/public/sites/tennis/usta/ustaRequestWildcard.aspx>.

The link can also be found on the Pro Circuit section of the USTA Website at <http://procircuit.usta.com>, click on Player Tools and then click Wild Card Request Form.

A number of Wild Cards are also given to the Tournaments to distribute at their discretion. You may contact the Tournament Director to see if he/she has an available Wild Card. A contact list for Pro Circuit tournaments is posted on the USTA Pro Circuit website.

## **ONE TOURNAMENT PER WEEK**

Players may not enter or compete in more than one Tournament or Circuit per week. Once a player has signed-in for the qualifying event at a tournament, or is a direct acceptance into Main Draw, Wild Card or Special Exempt into Main Draw, he is committed to that tournament. Players are prohibited from participating in a qualifying or other event for a tournament at the same time they are participating in another tournament in either singles or doubles.

## **PRIZE MONEY, TAX FORMS and AMATEUR STATUS**

In addition to earning ranking points, a player is also eligible to win prize money. At the Challenger level, the ATP office in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL distributes the prize money via wire transfer or check. At the Futures level, a player must retrieve his prize money check on-site from the Tournament Director. If a Futures player leaves the tournament before retrieving his prize money check, the check will be forwarded by the USTA Supervisor or by the USTA Pro Circuit office.

A player is also responsible for retrieving his tax forms before he leaves a tournament. Tax forms are completed by the Tournament Director.

If a player plans on attending college or is currently attending college, please note that accepting prize money is in violation of the policy set by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). Student-athletes may not accept prize money based on place finish, however if a player claims Amateur status, he may apply for partial reimbursement of expenses incurred during the tournament. The NCAA has approved the system of reimbursement the USTA has set in place for Amateurs. An **OFFICIAL USTA AMATEUR REIMBURSEMENT FORM** must be completed by the Amateur and returned to the USTA Supervisor on site. The Supervisor then determines the amount of reimbursement based on the system in-place and a check is made to the player. (The USTA Supervisor on-site may provide a detailed explanation of how Amateur Reimbursement is calculated.)

## **GETTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE USTA PRO CIRCUIT:**

**Website:** [www.procircuit.usta.com](http://www.procircuit.usta.com)

<b><u>Website includes:</u></b>	Tournament Fact Sheets	Calendars
	Tournament Address lists	Player of the week
	Important Player Notices	
	Tournament results	

### **USTA Pro Circuit Office:**

Danielle Gooding, Senior Manager - 914-696-7277  
Idelle Pierre-Louis, Coordinator - 914-697-2305  
Fax #: 914-696-7178

**Address:** USTA  
70 West Red Oak Lane  
White Plains, NY 10604

We hope this information is helpful in understanding the steps to begin competing as a professional tennis player. The USTA Pro Circuit Department may walk you through the entry process over the phone. The USTA Supervisor on-site at each Pro Circuit tournament is also available to answer any questions.

**We wish you great success!**





## **ITF Entry Procedures Frequently Asked Questions**

### **1. What are the major items to know about the ITF Futures Entry System?**

- All ranked AND UNRANKED players must enter Qualifying and Main Draw of a tournament online by the entry deadline using their IPIN.
- The entry deadline for main draw and qualifying is 1400 hrs Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) on **Thursday, 18 days prior to the Monday of the Tournament week.** 14:00 hrs GMT is 2:00 PM London, England Time which is 9:00 AM Eastern Time in the United States. **Often players just starting on the circuit overlook this time difference and miss the deadline because they think they have until 2 PM Eastern US Time.**
- The withdrawal deadline is 1400 hrs GMT on Tuesday, 13 days prior to the Monday of the tournament week.
- The Qualifying entry fee is \$40 cash.

### **2. Do I need an IPIN to enter?**

Yes, an IPIN is required of all players at ANY ITF Futures event. IPIN subscription and renewals should be completed online with the ITF at [www.itftennis.com/ipin](http://www.itftennis.com/ipin).

### **3. When is the Entry Deadline?**

The entry deadline for main draw and qualifying is 1400 hrs Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) on **Thursday, 18 days prior to the Monday of the Tournament week.** 14:00 hrs GMT is 2:00 PM London, England Time which is 9:00 AM Eastern Time in the United States.

### **4. Is there a Withdrawal Deadline?**

Yes, the withdrawal deadline is: 1400 hrs GMT (**9:00 AM Eastern Time in the United States**) on Tuesday, 13 days prior to the Monday of the tournament week. Entered Qualifying and Main Draw players may withdraw by the withdrawal deadline *without penalty*.

### **5. If I failed to enter by the Entry Deadline, can I still sign in for Qualifying on site?**

Yes, but you will be on the alternate list, behind all players who entered by the deadline. All un-entered alternates will be listed according to the System of Merit.

**6. If I have entered Qualifying and I am a Direct Acceptance into Qualifying, do I still need to appear at Qualifying sign-in?**

Yes. You must sign in by the Qualifying sign-in deadline. If you do not sign in by the Qualifying sign-in deadline, you will not be included in the draw and you will be fined.

**7. When am I expected to pay the \$40 cash entry fee?**

The \$40 entry fee will be collected at Qualifying sign-in.

**8. In what order do players get into Qualifying? What is the System of Merit?**

The System of Merit is:

- 1) Entered, with an ATP ranking
- 2) Entered, with a National Top 500 ranking (on file with the ITF)
- 3) Entered, without an ATP or National Top 500 ranking

Players who have not entered may sign in; they will be listed in the following order:

- 1) Players with an ATP ranking
- 2) Players with a National Top 500 ranking (on file with the ITF)
- 3) Players without a ranking

**9. I am #3 on the Alternate-to-Qualifying list. When will I be told if I am moved into the Qualifying draw?**

After the Freeze Deadline, which is Thursday, 1400 hrs GMT (9:00 AM Eastern Time in the United States) if you are still on an Alternates list you will no longer move into Qualifying but will remain on the Alternates List. Players remaining on the Alternate list who do not withdraw WILL NOT be fined. If you are on an Alternate list and want to play you must personally sign-in with the USTA Supervisor and you will be accepted into the draw as space is available according to the System of Merit. Remember that if you are moved into Qualifying before the Freeze Deadline you MUST withdraw in order to avoid being fined as a "No Show".

**10. There is an unranked player on the Alternate-to-Qualifying list and a top 200 ATP ranked player on the on-site alternates list. Who gets in first when a spot opens up?**

The players who appear on the original entry list get in first. See FAQ # 8 above.

**11. I don't want to go if I don't make Main Draw. Is there a Main Draw Only list?**

No. If you are not accepted into Main Draw and appear on the Qualifying list, you must withdraw by the Withdrawal Deadline.



**12. If I lose in the first round of a Futures Qualifying, can I still sign in at a Challenger or ATP singles Qualifying event that weekend?**

No. However, you may sign-in for Doubles at any event.

**13. If I am on the Qualifying list of the next event but still in Doubles of the current event, do I still need to sign in? What happens to my status in the next event?**

Contact to supervisor at your current event to discuss. The answer will vary, depending on the situation.

**14. Why do Futures have Qualifying entry lists and Challengers do not?**

The ATP sanctions and administers the Challengers. The ATP has decided that this method works for their events. The ITF sanctions and administers the Futures events and has decided that their method will work at this level. The obvious benefit to the Futures players is that they know their status ahead of time and can plan their schedules accordingly.