

DIAA Quick Guide for Tennis Coaches

Delaware high school tennis, governed by the DIAA, utilizes a 5-court format (3 singles, 2 doubles) for team matches. Lineups are based on ability and follow standard rules. Players must wear school-approved uniforms and strict sportsmanship protocols are enforced.

Match and Lineup Guidelines

- **Team Composition & Lineup:** Matches consist of 5 courts: 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Singles, and 1st and 2nd Doubles.
- **Lineup Ordering:** Players must play in order of ability. The best player plays #1 singles, the next best #2, and so on. Doubles teams must be arranged by ability.
- **Lineup Changes:** Once a lineup is submitted, players cannot change positions unless a coach adjusts the entire ladder, maintaining the ability-based order.
- **Uniforms:** Teams must wear school-approved, matching uniforms (shirts, shorts, or skirts). Modest, clean attire is required, with school logos permitted.
- **Match Format:** Matches adhere to USTA rules. The first team to win 3 courts wins the match. 10-point tie-breaks will be used in lieu of a third set once a match is decided unless both coaches agree otherwise.
- **Incomplete Matches:** If a match is suspended (e.g., for weather), it must be resumed with the same players and score, or it may result in a forfeit.
- **Coaching:** A 2-minute break is allowed between the 1st and 2nd sets for coaching. Coaches may speak to their players for 90 seconds once per set after the third game.
- **Player and Spectator Conduct:** Coaches will enforce ball abuse, racket abuse and verbal obscenities with point penalties, game penalties and defaults. Drones are strictly prohibited at all tournament events. Spectators must remain in designated areas, avoid using artificial noise-makers, and maintain positive, respectful behavior.
- **Transfers:** New DIAA rules limit eligibility for 10th-12th grade transfers who change schools outside their feeder pattern.

For detailed, season-specific rules, consult the latest [DIAA Tennis Tournament Manual](#) on the [DIAA tennis homepage](#).

Quick tips

1. Pre-Season and Eligibility

- **Coach Education:** Head coaches must attend the mandatory DIAA rules clinic or pass the open-book rules exam.
- **Practice Requirements:** Athletes must participate in at least 7 calendar days of practice before competing in their first match (8th day).
- **Player Eligibility:** Ensure all players are academically eligible and that a list of approved coaches/staff is on file with the DIAA office.

2. Match Format and Rules

- **Team Composition:** 3 Singles, 2 Doubles (7 total players).
- **Match Format:** Best of 3 sets, regular scoring.
- **Tie-Breaker:** 7-point tie-break at 6-6 in any set.
- **Substitutions:** Players may compete at singles or doubles in a match.
- **Balls:** Home team provides new tennis balls for each match.
- **Incomplete Matches:** Suspended matches must be finished by the same players at a later date.

3. Coaching and Sportsmanship

- **Coaching Limits:** Coaching is allowed only during 90-second changeovers (once per set after third game) and between sets (max 2 minutes).
- **On-Court Protocol:** Coaches remain outside the playing area when coaching.
- **No-Coaching Zones:** No coaching is permitted during tie-breakers.
- **Cell Phones:** A point penalty is issued if a player phone rings during a match.
- **Spectator Conduct:** Only approved coaches may interact with players. Taunting, profanity, or obscenity is prohibited.

4. Checklist for Match Day

- **Uniform Check:** Ensure all players are in school-approved, matching gear.
- **Lineup Exchange:** Exchange lineups (1S, 2S, 3S, 1D, 2D) with opposing coach.
- **Check Surface:** Ensure courts are dry and safe (NFHS standards).
- **Confirm Balls & Scorecards:** Have new cans of balls for each court and use scorecards when possible.
- **Report Scores:** Winning coach must record scores on [websites4sports](https://websites4sports.com) immediately after the match.