

BERKSHIRE DUNLOP WINTER LEAGUE – RULES (AUGUST 2023)

RULE 1 [Club Eligibility] - The Competition is open to clubs affiliated to the Berkshire LTA and clubs affiliated to neighbouring counties who had been accepted into the Berkshire Leagues. The Berkshire Winter League is an LTA Approved League and is administered via the LTA League Planner and Tournament Software. Clubs must be LTA registered venue to participate. Each club may enter up to six teams in each of the Ladies, Men's and Mixed competitions, provided that they have or can hire sufficient courts to play all home matches on the same day. Clubs shall confirm their entry to the league by 31 August.

RULE 2 [League Management] - The Competition shall be managed by a Sub-Committee, approved by the Berkshire LTA, consisting of a League Organiser, plus two members of the Committee of the above Association. All questions of eligibility, qualification of players and clubs and interpretation of the rules shall be referred to the Sub-Committee, whose decision shall be final. The sub-committee will interpret rules whilst also considering a concept of '[Fair Play](#)' regarding player behaviour and team selection based on ability. In particular a club is responsible for its player's behaviour and on match days the team captain responsible for the team; problems on match day should be referred to the team captain.

RULE 3 [Player Eligibility] - No player may represent more than one club in the same competition i.e. Men's, Ladies, Mixed in the same season. The minimum age of a player to represent their club is fourteen at the commencement of the first round of the league. All players should be a bona fide member of the club they are representing. All players are required to have an LTA Advantage membership number which links them to the venue they are competing for. They must also have an ITF World Tennis Number.

RULE 4 [Divisions, Promotion, Relegation] - Men's and Ladies doubles teams will be initially divided into divisions of eight. Two teams will be promoted and two relegated from each of the top 4 divisions. In divisions 5 and below three teams will be relegated and the lowest team in these divisions will be relegated by two divisions save for the penultimate lowest division in which two teams will be relegated by one division. In division 5 and 6 two teams will be promoted by one division except in Men's transit divisions 5 East and 5 West, in which only one team will be promoted. In the divisions below 6, three teams will be promoted, the highest team promoted by two divisions. Should the total number of teams not be divisible by eight, adjustments will be made to the lower divisions such that teams will play a minimum of six matches and a maximum of eight.

Mixed doubles divisions consist of six teams, so only one team is promoted to and one relegated from each division, save for division 4 where two teams are demoted.

RULE 5 [Team Structure] - All teams will consist of four players in two doubles pairs. A club shall not be bound to play the same team throughout any competition, but no change shall be made in the composition of any of the teams engaged in any matches after the start of play. If a match be unfinished, or postponed before any play shall have taken place, the composition may be changed. Clubs entering more than one team in any competition need to ensure that if a player has already played four times in succession for any higher team in that winter season, they are no longer eligible for a lower team. For the mixed doubles competition if a player has already played three times for any higher team in that season, they are no longer eligible for a lower team. The total number of matches in which any player may represent a Club in any Competition shall be seven. Also, if a player has already played for a team in a re-arranged match before the scheduled date, they are no longer eligible for any other matches played on the scheduled match date. If the eligibility rules are clearly breached, the penalty shall be the loss of all rubbers, sets and games in which the offending player is involved. Where any penalty is imposed then the opposing team shall always gain accordingly in the match totally.

RULE 6 [Match Structure] - Each match will consist of four rubbers. Each rubber shall consist initially of two full sets with standard tie-breaks if needed. If sets are one all, the rubber will be decided by a separate championship tie break game of first to 10 points with a two-point difference. This tie break set is counted as one set and one game. The away pairs will play both their rubbers on the same court. The order of play will be:

Round 1 Home pair 1 v Away pair 1 and Home pair 2 v Away pair 2

Round 2 Home pair 2 v Away pair 1 and Home pair 1 v Away pair 2

RULE 7 [Match Structure] - The match result will be decided firstly on rubbers won. If these are equal, then the most sets won, and if sets are also equal, then the most games won will determine the result. Three points will be gained for a clear win of either 4/0 or 3/1 in rubbers, two points for a narrow win where rubbers are equal, and one point for narrow loss. In the rare event of a tie where all scores are equal, a tie-break shoot out should be played to determine the winner. The tie-break shall be won by the first pair to reach 10 points with a two-point difference. Any two of the four team members can contest this shoot out. This tie-break, as any others, will count as one set and one game only and should be clearly shown on the match card.

RULE 8 [Placings] - Final league positions will be decided by the most points, then matches, then rubbers, then sets percentage won and then games percentage won. Any team that wins all its matches will receive maximum points, so enabling that team to finish as league winners. If all points, matches, rubbers, sets and games won are equal then the fewest sets or games lost will be the deciding factor.

RULE 9 [Playing Matches] - Matches should be played on or exceptionally, before designated weekends. All fixtures in the top 4 divisions are expected to be fulfilled on or before the match date save for adverse weather conditions.

To ensure matches are played, clubs are entitled to field two player teams for a league match in cases where raising a full team is not possible. They would, therefore, begin the match by conceding the two rubbers for which they have no players and begin 0-2 down. Teams fielding only one pair must make every effort to inform their opponents of this before the match.

Each club may enter up to six teams in each of the Ladies, Men's and Mixed competitions, provided that they have or *can hire sufficient courts *(risk assessments/insurance)* to play all home matches on the same day. (See Rule 1) If this is not possible due to adverse weather or for other legitimate reasons, home captains must offer a choice of *at least 3* new dates. If there is doubt or where matches are delayed by more than three weeks, the League Organiser should be informed.

If clubs with multiple teams cannot field all their teams on the scheduled day, they must fulfil all their higher fixtures including all fixtures in the top 4 divisions and postpone or, if necessary, concede the matches of the lowest team or teams. If clubs with multiple teams are clearly in breach of this rule, they risk penalty of a 2-point deduction from each of their lower team's league scores.

RULE 10 [Match Abandonment] - Should any match be started and abandoned before the first round has been completed, it must be replayed from the start on another day. If adverse conditions force curtailment at a later stage, the result will be taken from all completed rubbers, sets and games. *If a player retires during a rubber due to injury, the opponent shall be deemed to have won all the remaining games and sets necessary to win the rubber. (I will add this to the summer)*

RULE 11 [Recording Results] - Both home and away captains should sign the match cards which are used to help captains put results online. Results are to be recorded on the LTA League Planner and Tournament Software and results will count towards a player's ITF World Tennis Number. The winner's captain should put results online within 48 hours and losing team confirm results within 72 hours. If an 'unknown player' as recorded on League Planner is subsequently found to be a player without a valid LTA Advantage Number the results of that rubber will be recorded by the League Organiser as 6-0,6-0 against that player.

RULE 12 [Balls] - Eight new balls of a make authorised by the LTA or ITF approved shall be used for each match. The balls will be provided by the club whose home fixture it is.

RULE 13 [Player Later Arrival] - Should any player be absent 20 minutes after the scheduled or otherwise agreed starting time, the first set must be conceded. A further 10 minutes absence will result in the second set and therefore the first round being conceded. This rule will also apply to the second round.

RULE 14 [Matches Not Played] - If a club concedes, the score will be 4/0 in rubbers, 8/0 in sets and 48/0 in games to the opponents. Any club needing to postpone a match for a legitimate reason other than for adverse weather, and with careful regard to RULE 9 should give **seven days' notice** for the convenience of opponents. Availability of a club's best players is not a legitimate reason for postponement. In such a case opponents should make every effort to find a new agreed date. If no more than 24-72 hours' notice is given, then opponents are entitled to claim a walkover. Should any team concede two or more matches during the period of the scheduled rounds, they will be relegated at the end of the season, regardless of the number of points gained.

A club must claim a walkover at the time and cannot do so at the end of the season. All results against that team will be declared null and void for the purposes of determining the final placing in its group.

In the event of bad weather, matches may only be postponed with the agreement of both Captains. If no agreement between Captains is reached or if no contact made, then the match is deemed to be still on, and players are expected to be ready to play at the agreed start time. Matches not played at the end of the season will be recorded as "un-played" and no points awarded to either team.

RULE 15 [Match Start Time] - Unless mutually agreed otherwise by the clubs concerned, the time of commencement of play for Men's and Mixed matches shall be 10 am on Sundays and Ladies matches shall be 12.30 pm on Saturdays. If a club has more than one team playing a home fixture on the same day and there are not enough courts to play both matches concurrently the lower division match shall commence at an earlier or later start time as appropriate.

RULE 16 [Confirmation of Results] - As soon as possible after all matches are completed and all results sent in, the League Organiser will compile final league tables. The winners of each division will receive a Berkshire LTA Certificate.

RULE 17 [Indoor Play] - If it is desired to play any league match indoors, the prior agreement of the visitors should be obtained. Clubs are under no obligation to play all or part of matches on indoor courts.

RULE 18 [League Completion] - All matches must be completed by the end of March. If any re-arranged match clashes with the National Clubs League, the latter will take precedence.

RULE 19 [Appeals] - Any dispute arising between clubs in a competition shall be referred to the sole arbitration of the Committee, and its decision shall be final and bounding on all clubs involved in the dispute. Should any of the Clubs concerned in any dispute have a member or Members on the Committee, the said Member or Members shall not be eligible to sit on the Committee while such dispute is being considered.

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