

BERKSHIRE DUNLOP SENIORS LEAGUE RULES - 2024

Management

1. 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 before the 1974 boundary changes took place, or which are located within 5 miles of the Berkshire County Border.
2. The Competition is managed by a Sub-Committee approved by the Berkshire LTA. Routine issues are dealt with by a volunteer League Organiser, but for more complicated issues the Organiser is assisted by two members of the Leagues Committee of the 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. Should any of the clubs concerned in any dispute have a member(s) on the Leagues Committee, the said member(s) shall not be eligible to sit on the Committee while such a dispute is being considered.

Qualification and Eligibility of Players

3. A player shall be qualified to represent the LTA affiliated Club for which they are playing. He/she must also be a bona fide member of said club, and MUST be a signed-up LTA Advantage member (i.e. they MUST have a British Tennis Number). No player may represent more than one club in the same competition in any season. This however doesn't stop a player playing for two different clubs in two different events in the leagues. For example, "You can play in the Men's Over 50s for one club and the Mixed over 60s for another. Where the eligibility rules are clearly breached, the penalty shall be the loss of all rubbers, sets and games in which the offending ineligible player is involved.
4. Where clubs enter more than one team in any competition, players nominated for each team at the start of the season may only play in that team TWICE before becoming ineligible to play for any lower team. This means that when any player plays for a team higher than the one they were originally nominated for these counts towards the maximum number of matches they are allowed to play for that higher team. If promoted a second time, they become ineligible for their original team. Nominations may be changed at any time later in the season, but only by informing the League Co-ordinator. Where the nomination rules are clearly breached, the penalty shall be the loss of all rubbers, sets and games in which the offending player is involved. The total number of matches in which any player shall represent a club in any competition shall be equal to the maximum number of matches played by any team for which he/she is eligible, plus one.

4a Age group limits will be in accordance with the LTA of Great Britain Seniors Rules, thus:

- Over 40, born on or before 31 December 1984
- Over 50, born on or before 31 December 1974
- Over 60, born on or before 31 December 1964

These are revised age-groups designed to encourage more clubs to enter and for larger clubs to possibly enter more teams.

Adverse (Hot) weather

5. In recent years extreme heat has become an issue. From 2024 the Leagues Committee is proposing that matches should be postponed if temperatures are expected to reach 30 degrees celsius, prompting a Met Office "Amber Warning", by 12 noon on any day. Ideally the postponement should be arranged at least 48 hours before the match is due to start. Teams are also encouraged to try to play earlier in the morning of the original date of the fixture. At all times during periods of extreme high temperatures, players are encouraged to drink water regularly between games as well as at changes of end.

Composition of Teams & Divisions

6. Each competing team in the Men s, Ladies or Mixed competitions shall be represented by a team of two pairs and each pair shall play one rubber against each pair of the opposing team. Play shall take place in the following order.

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

The "Away" pairs will play both their rubbers on the same court.

7. 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 match after the start of play. If a match is unfinished, or postponed before any play has taken place, the team's composition may be changed.

8. Teams will usually be divided into divisions of approximately six or seven teams. Promotions and relegations shall normally be on the basis of two up & two down. Where divisions are of 4 teams or less, all teams will play each other home and away, and only one team will be promoted or relegated.

Balls

9. Eight new balls of a make authorised by the ITF/LTA shall be used for each match.

Note: The balls will be provided by the club whose home fixture it is, even if the venue is changed by mutual agreement.

Method of ascertaining results

10. In all competitions each match will consist of four rubbers. Any game where deuce is reached shall be decided by a deciding point i.e. A sort deuce/deciding point, unless both team captains in the 40 and over and 50 and over age groups agree to play long deuces before the start of the match. Where short deuces are played, the server will serve to the receiving player nominated by the receiving pair. The exception shall be when playing mixed doubles, where ladies will always serve to the opposing lady, and the man to the opposing man. Each rubber shall consist initially of two full sets with tie-breaks at six games all. If after two sets in a rubber the score is level at 1 set all, then a champions/match tie break game (first to 10 or more, with 2 clear points) shall be played to determine the winner of the rubber. All tiebreaks count as 1 game when added to the winning team's games total, including the match tie break.

11. Should any player be late/absent for 20 minutes or more after the scheduled or otherwise agreed starting time, the first set must be conceded unless mutually agreed e.g. when a player's late arrival is caused by serious traffic congestion. A further 10 minutes absence will result in the second set and therefore, the first rubber being conceded. This rule will also apply to the second rubber.

12. The match result will be decided firstly on rubbers won. If these are equal, then based on the most sets won. If sets are also equal, then the most games won will determine the result. Three league 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. Where two rubbers each is scored the sets and games should be reported and the league co-ordinator will adjust the league points to reflect a winning or losing draw.

13. In the rare event of a tie where ALL SCORES (rubbers, sets and games) are equal, a tie-break shootout of a 10 point match tie break out MUST be played to determine the winner. Failure to play the shootout will result in both teams being awarded 2 points. The championship tie-break shall be won by the first pair to reach 10 points with a 2 point difference. Any two of the four team members can contest this shoot out. This tie-break will count as one game only and should be clearly shown on the match card and recorded in the comments box of the league's match report page.

14. If a team concedes a walkover to another team, 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 other than for adverse weather, or sudden illness (e.g. Covid, Flu etc) should normally give seven days' notice for the convenience of opponents. In such a case opponents should make every effort to find a new agreed date. If 48 hours' notice or less 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.

15. Final league positions will be decided by the most points, then matches, then rubbers, then sets and then games won. Any team that wins all its matches but finishes lower than a team that wins fewer matches but has more league points it will receive a bonus of 1 point per match won by a narrow margin. If all points, matches, rubbers, sets and games won are equal then the fewest sets or games lost will be the deciding factor.

16. Matches are advertised to be played on a Monday, however the actual match can be played at any time in the week following the relevant advertised Monday, and should be played during or before that designated week. If this is not possible due to adverse weather or for other reasons (but not due to the non-unavailability of the team's strongest players), HOME captains must offer a choice of new dates. Where matches are delayed by more than three weeks, the League Co-ordinator should be informed BY E-MAIL to authorise the delay. If clubs with multiple teams cannot field all their teams on a scheduled day, they MUST fulfil their higher fixtures and postpone or, if necessary, concede the matches of the lowest team or teams.

17. Should any match be started and abandoned before the first two rubbers round have been completed, it MUST be replayed from the start on another day. If adverse conditions force curtailment at a later stage in the match, i.e. after two rubbers have been completed, the result will be taken from all completed rubbers, sets and games.

18. The winning team is responsible for entering the result on-line in a timely fashion, and also for retaining a match card for future verification, should it become necessary. Entering results is not the role of the volunteer league co-ordinator.

19. As soon as possible after all matches are completed and all results sent in, the League co-ordinator will compile final league tables. The winners of each division will receive a Berkshire LTA "Winners" Certificate.

20. If it is desired to play any league match indoors, the prior agreement of the visitors should be obtained. Visiting clubs are under no obligation to play all or part of their matches on indoor courts.

21. All matches must be completed by the 15th of September 2024.

Days and Time of Play

22. Other than for the exceptions a) - c) below, clubs are free to fix whichever day of the week they like for their home matches, but effort should be made to choose a weekday when possible, to prevent weekend court/match congestion. Unless mutually agreed otherwise by the clubs concerned, the time of commencement of evening play shall be 6.15pm.

a) the new ladies over 60s league will be a weekday daytime competition normally played after 10am.

b) the men s over 60 (formerly Over 65s) league will be a weekday daytime competition normally played after 10am.

c) the mixed over 60 will be a weekday daytime competition normally played after 10am.

To summarise therefore the leagues will be as follows:

- Ladies 40 and over (Normally played on weekday evenings)
- Men's 40 and over (Normally played on weekday evenings) - this replaces the Men's 45 and over league.
- Ladies 50 and over weekday evenings (NEW designed to accommodate working older ladies)
- Ladies 50 and over daytime league.
- Men's 50 and over (Normally played on weekday evenings) - this replaces the Men's 55 and over league.
- Men's 60 and over daytime league - this replaces the Men's 65 and over league.
- Mixed 60 and over daytime league.

Appeals

23. Any dispute arising between clubs in a competition shall be referred to the sole arbitration of the League Co-ordinator and the Leagues Sub-Committee, and their decision shall be final and binding on all teams/clubs involved in the dispute.

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