

**BERKSHIRE LTA WINTER LEAGUE 2020/21 - RULES**

**RULE 1.** The Competition is open to clubs affiliated to the Berkshire L.T.A. and clubs affiliated to neighbouring counties who had been accepted into the Berkshire Leagues. 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.

**RULE 2.** The Competition shall be managed by a Sub-Committee, approved by the Berkshire L.T.A., 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.

Should any of the clubs concerned in any dispute have a member or members on the Leagues Committee, the said member(s) shall not be involved while the matter is being considered.

**RULE 3.** No player may represent more than one club in the same competition in the same season and each player should be no younger than their fourteenth year at the commencement of the first round. *All players should be a bone fide member of the club they are representing.*

**RULE 4.** 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. (September 2020)*

**Rule 5.** Rule 5. All teams will consist of four players in two doubles pairs. Clubs entering more than one team in men’s and ladies’ doubles competition need to ensure that if a player has already played four times for any higher team in that 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.

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.** 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 then one all, the rubber will normally be decided by a separate championship tie-break game, of first to 10 points with a two-point difference.** If both captains and pairs agree, a full deciding set with a tie-break from six games all can be played but the score should still be counted as one set and one game only and should be shown as such on the match card. 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.** 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.** 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.** 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.

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. (See Rule 1)

If this is not possible due to adverse weather or for other legitimate reasons, home captains must offer a choice of 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 teams league scores

**RULE 10.** 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.

**RULE 11.** Both home and away captains should sign the Match cards which are used to help captains put results online. The winner's captain should put results online within 48 hours and losing team confirm results within 72 hours. Match cards should no longer be sent to the organiser

**RULE 12.** Eight new balls of a make authorised by the L.T.A. shall be used for each match. The balls will be provided by the club whose home fixture it is.

**RULE 13.** 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.** 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 necessarily 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.

**RULE 15.** Unless mutually agreed otherwise by the clubs concerned, the start of Men's and mixed matches will be 10am on Sundays and Ladies matches will be 12.30pm on Saturdays.

**RULE 16.** As soon as possible after all matches are completed and all results sent in, the League Organiser will compile final league tables, and send one copy of relevant results to each club, plus a full set of results to the BLTA Press Secretary and the County Handbook Editor. The winners of each division will receive a Berkshire LTA Certificate.

**RULE 17.** 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.** 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.