



# **VMH Solicitors**

**East of Scotland** 

Inter-Club Gentlemen's & Ladies' Leagues

**Competition Rules** 

2022

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Report Form



#### 1. Management

The East of Scotland LTA Ltd Board of Directors shall have full powers for the management of the Competition and shall annually determine all matters pertinent to the running of the leagues, including, but not necessarily limited to:

- · Regulations for play;
- · All questions surrounding application of the rules and resolution of disputes;
- The number and types of events to be included in the competition;
- The type of draw;
- The match format;
- The scoring methods;
- The number of divisions;
- · The number of teams in each division;
- · Eligibility of players and teams;
- All questions of promotion / relegation.

#### 2. Regulations for Play.

All matches in the Competition shall be conducted in accordance with:

- The ITF Rules of Tennis https://www.itftennis.com/media/4421/2021-rules-of-tennis-english.pdf
- The Rules and Regulations of the LTA including their:
  - o Disciplinary and Dispute Resolution Procedures;
  - o Tennis Anti-Doping Programme;
  - $\circ \quad \text{Regulations concerning Match Fixing, Financial Speculation and Betting}; \\$
  - $\circ\quad$  Competition Regulations including the LTA Code of Conduct.
- The East of Scotland Competition Regulations.

In the event of any inconsistency, the East of Scotland Competition Regulations shall prevail.

# 3. Decision of Board of Directors

All questions of eligibility or qualification of players, or interpretation of the Regulations or the spirit thereof, shall be decided by the Board of Directors - whose decision shall be final. The Board shall have the power to reconsider any matter on which a decision has already been taken should substantive new evidence come to light after the original decision has been made.

The Board of Directors reserves the right to take such action as they consider necessary where, in their sole opinion, the Regulations have been infringed in fact or in spirit by any Club. Such action may include, but not necessarily be limited to, the deduction of points and suspension for breaches of these Regulations.

The Board of Directors reserves the right to suspend or modify any of these Regulations in appropriate circumstances.



#### 4. Delegation/Complaints

The Board of Directors may delegate any or all of the powers given to them under the above regulations to a Sub Committee appointed by them for the purpose.

Where such powers are assigned the day-to-day organisation of the competition shall be carried out by the League Organiser under the auspices of the appointed Sub Committee.

Any complaint / dispute shall be made, in writing, to the League Organiser within 48 hours of the cause of the complaint / dispute arising. A Report Form (found at the end of these rules) should be completed and emailed to the League Organiser.

#### 5. Qualification

#### Single Club Teams

The qualification to play for a Club shall be bona fide playing membership of such Club.

All players shall have a British Tennis Membership (BTM) number linked to the Club for which they are competing.

No member shall play for more than one competing Club during the same season.

Participating clubs must be affiliated to the District.

#### Composite Teams

Composite teams may be entered under the following circumstances:

- Where there are age specific criteria associated with the league being entered and a single Club cannot raise a team from within their own Club alone.
- Where a single Club cannot raise a team from within their own Club alone and a number of Clubs agree to work together to enter a composite team from those Clubs.

### Notes:

- (i) This will only be permitted if there are strong grounds for believing that, where any of the composite teams' clubs have entered other teams in the league, the depth of the pool of players representing those individual Clubs elsewhere in the leagues will ensure that those Clubs will be able to fulfill their fixture obligations without reliance on players committed to play for a composite team.
- (ii) Players may only play for one team in a season. Club teams cannot use players from their Club who have played for a composite team. Whilst we seek to encourage as many players as possible to play, either in a Club or composite team, the depth of the playing squad of Club teams also associated with composite teams is an important factor in determining the feasibility and appropriateness of acceptance of composite teams.



Where community-based tennis programmes, or other similar such entities, cannot raise a team
from their own programme alone and a number of such programmes agree to work
collaboratively to enter a composite team comprising players from those programmes.

#### Note:

(i) In such circumstances the composite team shall enter the leagues as a single entity with a single team name and shall be treated, and have the same rules applied to them, as though they were a Club.

The qualification to play for a composite club team shall be:

- Bona fide playing membership for the season of one of the respective clubs entering the composite team, said clubs being affiliated to the District; OR
- Membership of, or registration on, a community-based programme for the season linked to the team or other such entity.

All players shall have a British Tennis Membership (BTM) number. This BTM number should ideally link to one of the Clubs, programmes or other such entities in the composite team.

Where a BTM number cannot be linked to a community-based programme or other such entity, and players are to be linked to another club within the league for administrative purposes, this may be done provided the League Organiser receives prior written authorisation from the relevant team captain and a senior elected representative of the Club to which they are to be linked. An e-mail or text message shall constitute written authorisation.

No member shall play for more than one competing Club during the same season.

Team entry fees are paid in full at the time of entering the team/s in the league and are non-refundable.

VMH solicitors to supply and deliver one advertising banner to all participating clubs. Clubs should make best endeavours to display said banner externally on the court perimeter during league season, unless there is a competing sponsor. The League Organiser should be advised of any difficulty.

Composite teams should display the banner at any of the participating clubs.

## 6. Player Eligibility

The purpose of league tennis is to give competitive tennis to Club players at different levels of the game. In selecting teams all Clubs shall adhere to the following:

 (i) Prior to the first match of the season each club must submit a ranked list of eligible players (see Rule 5) who will be available for team selection as follows:

Players	1	6	1 <sup>st</sup> team only
Players	7	12	May not play below the 2 <sup>nd</sup> team
Players	13	18	May not play below the 3 <sup>nd</sup> team
Players	19	24	May not play below the 4 <sup>nd</sup> team
Players	25	30	May not play below the 5th team



#### Notes:

- (i) In exceptional circumstances, and subject to authorization from the League Organiser prior to the commencement of the season, a player may be ranked in a lower team than would normally be the case because they are unavailable to play on the alternative day of the week that they would otherwise play. Where such circumstances arise that player MAY NOT 'Play up' in any matches during the season and will, in the spirit of the game, seek to participate in as many matches as possible throughout the season. If availability is likely to be sporadic then they should, in the interest of fair play to the other teams in the league, decline to play that season.
- (ii) If a list is not submitted before the first match of the season then a player may not at any time during the season play for a team lower than that for which he / she is first selected. If an unlisted player is selected in weeks 1-7 then he/she may not play for a team lower than that for which he / she is first selected.
- (iii) New players may only be added to the list of players during the league season with the prior written approval of the League Organiser. Where prior written approval is granted a revised list of ranked eligible players shall be submitted to the League Organiser. That revised list shall be eligible for application from a date communicated in writing by the League Organiser. An email or text message shall constitute written communication.
  - Lists may not be revised or resubmitted after week 5.
- (iv) Other than in exceptional circumstances in order to be eligible for selection in weeks 9 and/or 10 a player must have represented their club in a league match on 2 or more occasions during weeks 1 8 or be ranked below all players who have represented the club during the season. Examples of exceptional circumstances include, but are not necessarily limited to:
  - The return of an existing club member, who is a nominated player, from an injury which has meant two representative appearances have not been possible in weeks 1-8;
  - The return of an existing club member, who is a nominated player, from study or work overseas which has meant two representative appearances have not been possible in weeks 1-8.
- (v) Subject to (vi) and (ix) below a club shall field players in ranking order across their teams during any 7-day period (defined as Sunday to Saturday inclusive).

#### Notes:

- a) It is the responsibility of the team captain of the higher team to ensure, wherever possible, that an appropriate player(s) from the team immediately lower 'plays up'. The selection shall give priority to the playing strength of the higher team.
- b) Whilst it might be expected that a player normally playing in the first couple of a lower team will 'play up' to a higher team when the higher team is short of players this is not a compulsory requirement. It is for the higher team's captain to determine the playing strength of the higher team given potential partnership options. The final decision should be made in the knowledge that any decision may require to be justified and that sanctions may arise if that decision is deemed to be unreasonable.
- c) Where a higher team is short of players in any week, a player from the next ranked group of players shall play up before any player in a lower ranked group of players.
- d) Where a higher team is short of players but, as the team plays on a different night to the lower

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teams, with prior written consent of the League Organiser, the strongest, available player may be selected.

- e) In exceptional circumstances, where lowest teams in a club can prove that their players have played up and their team is consequently in danger of being incomplete, then the team captain should contact the League Organiser in advance of match night to discuss possibilities.
- (vi) Subject to (vii) below where a Club has more than one team entered in the League, a player from that Club, having played for one team in any 7-day period (defined as Sunday to Saturday inclusive) may not play for another team from that Club in the same period.
- (vii) For re-arranged matches the original team selection should be adhered to, wherever possible, even if a player has played/will play for a higher or lower team that week. Contact the League Organiser if there is any problem. In exceptional circumstances, if a player becomes unavailable (eg injury) for the re-arranged fixture then it may be possible to replace them with a player of a similar standard. This should be done with the agreement of the opposition and the League Organiser.

#### Notes:

- a) Example 1 Player will play for a higher team that week. Where a 2<sup>nd</sup> team player is to 'play up' for the 1<sup>st</sup> team during the same week as a re-arranged 2<sup>nd</sup> team fixture, in which the player was originally scheduled to play, is to be played – then the player may be selected for both matches.
- b) Example 2 Player will play for a lower team that week.
  Where a 2<sup>nd</sup> team player was originally selected to 'play up' for the 1<sup>st</sup> team but the 1<sup>st</sup> team match was re-arranged and they are then scheduled to play for the 2<sup>nd</sup> team during the same week as the rearranged 1<sup>st</sup> team fixture is scheduled to take place then the player should be selected, wherever possible, for both matches.
- (viii) Any match not played on the scheduled date ("the relevant date") will, if rearranged, be deemed to have been played on the relevant date for the purposes of the application of these rules.
- (ix) Where a club is unable to field a full team to fulfil a match commitment then they shall field as complete a team as possible to allow the fulfilment of the fixture. Failure to do so shall be treated as though the team has given the opposition a walkover and shall be subject to the sanctions specified at Rule 11.3.

#### Notes:

- a) Where a player becomes ill or otherwise unable to play at the last moment, where best honest endeavours have been made to:
  - $\circ\quad$  Ensure a full team is fielded by the team captain; AND
  - Notify, and where possible discuss, the circumstances with the League Organiser prior to commencement of the fixture
    - ... then the team will be deemed to have fulfilled their fixture commitment and shall be punishable only in line with Rule 11.1 with no additional sanction for that or lower teams in the Club.
- b) Determination of whether best honest endeavours have been made shall be determined, in the first instance, by the League Organiser – and thereafter, as appropriate, by the Sub Committee. In the event of ongoing dispute the matter may be referred to the Board, whose decision shall be final.
- (x) Players must be bona fide playing members, for the season, of the club.



#### 7. Method of Play

Every team in each Division of 6 teams shall play matches in doubles with each of the other teams in their Division on a home AND away basis.

Where a division comprises more than six teams each team will play against all other teams on a home OR away basis.

Each team shall consist of three couples, which shall be arranged one, two and three in order of merit. Once players' names are entered on the score sheet they are deemed to be committed to that team for that week.

#### The Draw

Play shall commence after the names of all players in both teams have been entered on the score sheet.

To be completed (subject to Regulation 15. below)

	Court 1		Court 2		Court 3		Format
	Н	Α	Н	Α	Н	Α	
Round 1	1	1	2	2	3	3	Best of 3 sets.  3rd set is a match tie break -entered in the system as 1-0
Round 2	2	1	3	2	1	3	Best of 3 sets. 3rd set is a match tie break -entered in the system as 1-0

# Scoring

Unless otherwise agreed by both team captains before the commencement of play the normal scoring method shall be applied to all games.

Where both team captains agree, before the commencement of play, the "No-Ad" scoring method may be used. Where the "No-Ad" scoring method is used it must be applied during all sets in the tie by all couples.

### Notes:

ITF Rules of Tennis - "No-Ad" scoring method

If both players /teams have won three points each, the score is deuce and a deciding point shall be played. The receiver(s) shall choose whether to receive the service from the right or the left of the court. In doubles, the players of the receiving team cannot change positions to receive this deciding point. The player/team who wins the deciding point wins the "Game".



#### 8. Composition of Teams

No change shall be made in the composition of the teams after the start of play.

When a match is postponed or not completed the composition of the competing teams may, subject to regulation 6 hereof, be changed.

#### 9. Balls

All matches must be played using Dunlop Fort tennis balls.

Points may be deducted if approved balls are not used.

The home Club in each match shall provide 1 dozen new tennis balls for use during that match.

#### 10. Commencement of Play

Competitive play shall commence, weather or exceptional circumstances permitting, in all matches at 6:30pm or such time as may be agreed upon by both Team Captains. Flexibility of up to half an hour (30 minutes) is recommended if distance is problematic to competitive play commencing at 6:30pm. This must be agreed between captains prior to the match night.

#### Notes:

- (i) Competitive play does not encompass the "warm-up" which shall be completed BEFORE the designated start time, unless by agreement of both Team Captains.
- (ii) Home teams should ensure that their courts and changing / toilet facilities are available to visiting teams at least 15 minutes before the scheduled start time of the match.

If any PLAYER is not on court WITHIN 15 MINUTES of the starting time fixed for the match the rubber in which the player is concerned may proceed on the player's arrival - but if it is not finished before the opponents of either couple in the second round become available, the couple containing the player who was late shall concede any unfinished sets to their opponents.

In the event of a TEAM having no couple on court WITHIN 15 MINUTES of the starting time that team shall concede all the sets / rubbers in the first round.

In the event of a TEAM having no couple on court WITHIN 30 MINUTES of the starting time that team shall be deemed to have CONCEDED THE MATCH.

If a player retires during a rubber, the opponent shall be deemed to have won all the remaining games and sets necessary to win the rubber. The player retiring from the rubber shall NOT BE ELIGIBLE to compete in any remaining rubbers.

Team Captains are advised to ensure that all their players have access to any necessary contact details should they need to communicate en route to the match. In the event of unforeseen traffic/travel delays, and when safe to do so, every effort should be made by players to maintain communication on match night.



#### 11. Penalties

#### 11.1 Absence of Players

If any player or players are absent, their opponents shall be entitled to: Rounds 1 &  $2 = 2 \times \text{Love}$  sets awarded.

Subject to 6 (ix) above, the team shall have an ADDITIONAL 4 sets deducted from their match score per missing player AND other lower teams in the Club competing in that same week will each have the same penalties applied.

#### 11.2 Playing out of order / Ineligible player(s)

#### Playing out of order

If a couple plays out of order then the rubbers involving that couple shall be forfeited to a score of 'Love'.

#### Motos

Whilst a Team Captain is at liberty to select their team in any pairings they feel is appropriate – those pairings should be ordered honestly to reflect playing standards across the selected pairings..Teams and players are expected to abide by the spirit of the game as well as the rules.

Team Captains should be able to justify their playing order and should always be prepared to do so as random checks can be made by any member of the sub committee and order of play can be questioned by any other team.

### Ineligible player(s)

Any player listed as "Unknown player" 14 days after the match date shall be deemed to be an 'Ineligible player', unless otherwise advised by the League Organiser.

If an 'Ineligible player' competes then the rubber involving the player concerned, and all rubbers lower in the team order, shall be forfeited to a score of 'Love'.

IN ADDITION, that team shall have 3 sets deducted from their match score for each ineligible player AND other lower teams in the Club competing in that same week will have the same penalties applied.

# 11.3 Team Walkover / Unplayed Matches

All Clubs entered in the League must be committed to playing all matches during the season and must make every effort to fulfil fixtures. The rules encourage participation and assist best endeavours to field teams. A full explanation for a walkover should be sent to the League Organiser.

Any team conceding a match will have 2 league points deducted, this IN ADDITION TO the 2 league points conceded to the opposing team.

Lower teams in the Club competing in that same week will also have 2 league points deducted.

Captains receiving the walkover must enter their players' names on the online scoresheet and select Not played, No player for Team X, when entering the rubber scores.



Additionally, the Board of Directors shall have the power to relegate a team and delete the results of matches already played, if, in the opinion of the Board, the circumstances merit such an action.

#### Notes:

(i) Notwithstanding the final point above - where more than two walkovers are granted by any team during a season then all of that teams' matches shall be disregarded for the purposes of the league standings - and that team shall be relegated as the bottom team in that league.

#### 11.4 Unsportsmanlike Conduct of individual/team/club

As per Rule 2, the LTA Code of Conduct should be followed by all participating players, teams and clubs. In the event, that <a href="repeated">repeated</a>, <a href="written">written</a></a> complaints are received by the League Organiser relating to any player, team or club then the League Organiser will refer to the East Board for advice on potential sanctions including, but not restricted to, possible suspension from East of Scotland events.

#### 12. Procedure of Later Rounds:

- 12.1 No player shall be compelled to commence a rubber in the second round until a period of five minutes has elapsed from the completion of his/her previous rubber. There will be no tea-break until the end of the match.
- 12.2 Subject to 12.1 in the second round the rubber shall commence as soon as the two couples become available whether or not the appropriate court is available. If a rubber has started on an inappropriate court it shall transfer to the appropriate court at the conclusion of the game in progress when that court becomes available.

#### 13. Use of Courts

Three courts shall normally be required for matches. The away team should not change courts.

Where a Club has only 2 courts play shall commence as follows:

- 2 x Round 1 rubbers featuring 1v1 and 2v2;
- 1 x Round 1 rubber featuring 3v3 and any available Round 2 rubber;

The two remaining rubbers from the second round.

#### Notes:

- (i) There is an expectation that matches should be concluded after a maximum of two visits to a club. Where there is a reasonable likelihood that matches will not be concluded within two visits then the League Organiser should be consulted at the earliest opportunity.
- (ii) Unless exceptional circumstances have caused a match to extend beyond two visits sanctions against the home club, including the concession of unconcluded sets, will be considered.

#### 14. Time Limits, Floodlights, Court Surface

Subject to Regulation 15 below, 2 rounds should be completed. Where there are local rules eg floodlights to go out at 10pm, time limits will be in place. Home captains must explain all such issues to away captains before play commences.

If a time limit is required then captains should agree the timepiece to be used for the determination of the time before play commences.

Unless the captains agree that play should not commence, or should cease earlier owing to the state of courts, weather, darkness or unavoidable hindrance - play shall continue where possible in each rubber until the conclusion of an even number of games and resume from that point unless, by agreement, a result has been reached.



If both captains agree, play may continue beyond the time limit to permit the completion of all rounds.

Every effort should be made to complete a match on the scheduled evening. If the home club has floodlights then they must be used should the light becomes an issue. Switching on floodlights should be done at a time sympathetic to all matches in progress and so the earlier in the evening the better to avoid interrupting play at a more crucial point of the evening.

No team shall be required to wait more than one hour before commencing or continuing play in the event of the state of the courts or weather preventing the start of, or interrupting play.

All clubs should ensure that their courts are fit and safe for play. If a club has multiple surfaces then the same surface should be used for all home matches. Away teams should be informed in advance if their couples are playing on different surfaces or indoors so that they can bring safe footwear.

#### 15. Unfinished matches

If all rounds have not been completed when play ceases, the match will be carried on where it left off on the:

same courts;

soonest available date ...until all rounds have been completed.

UNLESS, WHEN PLAY CEASES:

the tie has been decided; AND

both team captains agree to conclude the tie.

If such agreement is reached any unplayed or unfinished rubbers will not be counted for either team.

#### 16. Arrangement of Matches

All matches must be played on the due date fixed by the League Organiser unless the courts of the home club are unplayable. In such circumstances the home team captain must, <u>WITHIN 5 DAYS</u> of the scheduled date of the fixture, <u>OFFER 3 ALTERNATIVE DATES</u> to the visiting team captain.

An alternative date must be agreed WITHIN 10 DAYS of the date of the original fixture.

If, under any of these circumstances, a suitable date cannot be mutually arranged, it shall be fixed by the League Organiser.

#### Notes:

- (i) Unavailability of players is not a valid reason for cancellation or postponement.
- (ii) Rearranged matches shall be played over the same length of time as if the match had been played on the due date.
- (iii) If a match is postponed the League Organiser should be informed ASAP of the postponement by the home team captain, in writing, giving the reason for the postponement. An email or text message shall constitute written communication for this purpose.
- (iv) Additionally, the home team captain must notify the League Organiser, in writing, after it has been agreed, the alternative date for the match. An email or text message shall constitute written communication for this purpose. The agreed alternative date should be noted in the comment section on the online scoresheet.



#### 17. Results

Both team captains shall complete a score sheet and retain their own copy.

The recorded results must be agreed by both captains who must sign both score sheets.

The winning captain must submit the results online within 48 hours of the match and the losing captain must check and, if necessary, formally challenge the result between 48 hours and 7 days following the match

Walkovers shall be recorded as 12 sets - 0 sets.

#### 18. Method of Assessing Results

1 point per set. Winning team is determined by number of sets won. A draw is possible.

A team will receive 2 league points on a league table for an overall match win and 1 point for a draw. 0 points for a loss.

#### 19. Promotion and Relegation

There will be a single Division 1 and a single Division 2.

Parallel leagues, formulated on finishing positions, will continue from Division 3 downwards.

No Club may have more than one team in either Division 1 or Division 2.

A Club may have a team in each section of a parallel league.

The team finishing  $6^{th}$  in Division 1 will be relegated and the team finishing  $1^{st}$  in Division 2 will be promoted.

There will be a play off between the team finishing  $5^{th}$  in Division 1 and the team finishing  $2^{nd}$  in Division 2 with the winner of that play off competing in Division 1 in the following season.

Two teams from Division 2 will be relegated to Division 3.

The winners of both Division 3A and Division 3B will be promoted to Division 2.

The bottom 2 teams of both Division 3A and Division 3B will be relegated to Division 4.

In all the remaining parallel leagues the 2 top and 2 bottom teams from both the A and B sections will be promoted and relegated.

If any two or more teams are equal in points, their league positions will be decided on a set percentage basis for the season and then game percentage.



#### 20. Play-off rule

A play off may be required in the following circumstances:

- To determine promotion / relegation between the team finishing 5<sup>th</sup> in Division 1 and the team finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> in Division 2;
- (ii) To determine league standings;
- (iii) Where the Board of Directors agree to admit a new team in any division other than the lowest division. In that circumstance relegation from that division and all lower divisions shall be determined as follows:
  - 2 teams from the A division; 2 teams from the B division; plus the loser of a play off between the 4th placed teams in those divisions.

Play off matches must be completed by 31 July and shall be played on the "normal" match day for the division - the date to be agreed between the team captains, or failing such agreement, to be determined by the League Organiser. The venue for the playoff match shall be decided, by lot, by the League Organiser. Play off matches shall follow the standard league format.

Players playing in a playoff match must have represented their club in a VMH Solicitors league match in that team or a lower team at least 4 times during that season.

The result will be decided on the overall number of points won in the match. In the event of teams being equal on points then the result will be decided on the overall number of games won. If teams are still level the positions will be decided by a Champions tiebreak (10 points – with two clear points winning margin) between two players from each team who have not played as a couple during that match.

#### 21. Non Umpired Matches

All league matches are non-umpired matches and as such the following rules should be observed:

- (i) Each player (or doubles team) is responsible for all calls on their own side of the net. This includes line calls, foot faults and double bounces.
- (ii) All "out", "fault" and "let" calls should be made promptly after the ball has bounced and loudly enough for the opponent(s) to hear.
- (iii) Either player (or doubles team) may call a service "let".
- (iv) If in doubt about a line call, the player (or doubles team) shall give the benefit of the doubt to their opponent(s). There is no "play two" rule in tennis – if a definitively call of "out" cannot be made then the ball is deemed to be "good" ie 'I think' means IN.
- (v) If one doubles partner calls the ball 'out' and their partner calls the ball 'in' then the 'in' call stands
- (vi) If a player/team correct an incorrect call made during play the outcome should be based on the 'hindrance' rule as follows:
  - If the original shot was a winning shot then no hindrance has been caused to the player / team winning the point and the point winning shot shall stand.



- If it is the first incorrect/corrected call by a player/team and the original shot has been returned then a let shall be called and the point replayed. Dependent upon the stage of the point a 1st or 2nd serve may be appropriate. (i.e. If the mistake is during a rally then the entire point shall be replayed from the 1st serve. If the mistake is during a serve that service shall be replayed.)
- If it is a 2<sup>nd</sup> or subsequent incorrect/corrected call by the player/team, regardless of whether the ball has been returned or not, the player/team making the incorrect/corrected call shall lose the point.
- The full Hindrance Rule is Rule 26 in the ITF Rules of Tennis.
- (vii) The server should call the score before each first serve, loudly enough for the opponent(s) to hear



# VMH SOLICITORS EAST OF SCOTLAND LEAGUES REPORT FORM

YOUR NAME

YOUR TEAM

DATE

DATE OF MATCH

OUTLINE YOUR QUERY OR COMPLAINT HERE:

Return completed form as an attachment to Adele Fletcher  $\underline{east of scotland lta@hotmail.com}$