

LEAGUE RULES and REGULATIONS

1. TITLE

- [a] The League shall be called the Bedfordshire Lawn Tennis League, and shall be run strictly in accordance with the Rules of Tennis as laid down in the current hand book of the International LTA
- [b] The League shall be governed by the League Secretary and members of a sub-committee elected by the Bedfordshire Lawn Tennis Association at its first meeting after each Annual General Meeting of the Association.
- [c] Any dispute or difference or any query concerning the application of these Rules and Regulations shall be referred to the League Secretary and the matter considered and adjudicated upon by the League Sub-Committee. All decisions by the League Sub-Committee shall be final.
- [d] These Rules and Regulations shall not be altered except by a decision of the Bedfordshire Lawn Tennis Association (Beds LTA) or at a meeting of its League Sub-Committee called for the purpose. Proposals for alterations however, will be considered if received by the League Secretary in writing, signed by two officers of a member club not later than 90 days prior to the AGM of the Beds LTA

2. ELIGIBILITY

- [a] The League shall be open to all Clubs which are affiliated to the Bedfordshire Lawn Tennis Association, and any other Club as exceptionally agreed by the League Sub-Committee.
- [b] A Club shall be permitted to enter more than one team in any of the League Competitions.
- [c] A Club shall pay an entry fee for each team entering a competition in an amount determined by the League Sub-Committee.

3. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- [a] Where a Club has more than one team in a Competition a player can play once for any team linked to their club (provided they have not been nominated as an A team player in accordance with Rule 3 e) below) but having played twice 'up' is not thereafter eligible to play for any 'lower' team, either in that, or any lower division. For the purposes of this rule, if two teams are in the same division, a club's 'A' team is considered the highest team, then 'B', 'C' etc. If the teams are in different divisions, it is the Division that determines the highest and lowest (e.g. a C team in Division 2 is considered 'higher' than the B team in Division 3).
- [b] Players who have previously played no match for a club in that season will be ineligible to play in the last match of the season. This rule applies in the top divisions of the Mens, Ladies, and Mixed events only.
- [c] A member of a team in a mixed doubles Competition may also be a member of a team in the men's or ladies' Competition.
- [d] A player may only play with a team for one Club (the first Club) save only that if they are also a member of another Club (the second Club), they may play for each Club but only in different Competitions. An intention to play for a second Club shall be declared in writing to the League Secretary before the first match as a player with the team representing the second Club.
- [e] As required by the League committee, and where a club's 'A' team is playing in the top division of an event (Mens Ladies, Mixed) clubs will be required to name their top 4 players in each event, such named players being ineligible to play in any team but the club's 'A' team
- [f] If an ineligible player takes part in a match the sets for all rubbers involving that player shall be forfeited by a score of 6 – 0. In addition the offending team may be liable to a penalty including but not limited to the deduction of points.

4. LEAGUE STRUCTURE

- (a) The League shall comprise such Competitions as shall be determined by the League Sub-Committee and shall include the following as deemed appropriate.
 - (i) Open Doubles: Each team consisting of four players (men or women) comprising two doubles pairs.
 - (ii) Ladies Doubles Each team consisting of four ladies comprising two doubles pairs.
 - (iii) Mixed Doubles Each team consisting of two men and two ladies comprising two mixed pairs each pair consisting of one man and one lady.
 - (iv) Juniors This shall be aimed at encouraging singles play. Teams and age groups to be determined by the League Sub-Committee.
- (b) Each Competition shall where possible be divided into divisions as determined by League Sub-Committee.

5. MATCH FORMAT

- (a) In senior Competitions each doubles pair shall play both the opposing doubles pairs making four rubbers in all.
- (b) The home team captain shall provide the away team captain with his/her named pairs, following which the away team captain will decide theirs, together with the order of play.
- (c) The rubbers in all senior matches shall consist of two sets with the LTA approved tie-break (up to 7) in the first two sets if the score reaches six games all. If the score in sets is 1 - 1 at the end of these two sets, the rubber shall be decided by the playing of just one LTA 'Championship' tie-break (up to 10 points). The deciding tie-break will count as 1 game and one set, and will be shown on the score card as "TB" 1-0 or 0-1.
- [d] Each rubber shall be played to a conclusion unless conceded, or curtailed by reason of the weather. A rubber shall not be conceded except in unavoidable circumstances or by agreement between the two captains. Any team not completing a rubber or rubbers without reasonable cause may be liable to a penalty including but not limited to the deduction of points.

6. SCHEDULE OF MATCHES

- [a] The League Sub-Committee shall determine certain fixed periods within which Competitions shall be played which shall include a Summer League which will end on 15th September and a Winter League which will end on 31st March.
- [b] The League Secretary shall call a meeting (the fixture meeting) at which the representatives of all participating Clubs shall mutually arrange specific dates for the playing of matches. The League Secretary shall be informed of these agreed dates at the fixture meeting.
- [c] If a Club is not represented at the fixture meeting, the absent Club must contact and agree dates for all fixtures with their opponents. These arrangements to be completed within a fortnight of the fixture meeting, and the League Secretary immediately informed in writing of the agreed dates.

7. MATCHES

- [a] Matches shall be played at the dates and times arranged at the fixture meeting, or as agreed thereafter.
- [b] One match shall be played between competing teams unless there are five teams or less in a division when two matches, one home and one away, shall be played between competing teams.
- [c] A Club fielding more than one team in the same Division of a Competition must play scheduled matches between those teams by a date early in the season to be determined by the League Secretary and notified to the Club at the appropriate fixture meeting. If for reasons allowed under Rule 8 [a] any match cannot be played, the Club must immediately notify the League Secretary to agree a revised date. Such a match will be declared void if not played by the specified date.
- d) Refreshments to be provided by the home team (Winter and Summer), unless previously agreed with the away team captain

8. POSTPONEMENT/SUSPENSION

- [a] Matches may only be postponed or suspended by reason of weather or the unfitness of the courts for play. The decision as to the fitness of the courts shall be made by the captain of the home team.
- b) Whenever possible at least an hour's notice of postponement will be given to the away team. In the event that a match is not started due to the weather, and the away team has travelled (arriving at the venue), the away team can choose to host the re-arranged match. If they choose to do so, the responsibility for advising their opponents of three alternative dates, providing match balls and refreshments, passes to them.
- [c] If less than two rubbers have been completed at the time of suspension and the match not resumed on the same day the fixture shall be declared void.
- [d] If two or more rubbers have been completed at the time of suspension the match shall be considered as concluded and the current score-line will be accepted as the final result. Unfinished games shall be considered void.
- [e] The procedure following postponement of an unplayed or unfinished match whether or not play has already commenced shall be:
 - [i] If a new date is arranged at the time of postponement the home team Club shall notify the League Secretary of the revised date within two days.
 - [ii] If an agreed date is not arranged at the time of postponement then within two days the home Club shall offer three alternative dates to the opposing Club. The opposing Club shall then notify the home team Club and the League Secretary within seven days of the date they accept.
- [f] If it is not possible to complete or re-schedule a match within the Competition period then the fixture shall be declared void, unless a team declines, or fails to make reasonable efforts, to compete or to rearrange a match within the fixed Competition period, in which case that team shall forfeit the points to their opponents and be liable to a penalty including but not limited to the deduction of points.
- g) Points can only be shared in exceptional circumstances, and at the discretion of the League sub committee. In most circumstances matches will be either void or claimed by one team or the other.

9. BALLS AND COURTS

- [a] It shall be the responsibility of the home team to provide not less than three new LTA approved balls for each court.
- [b] The captain of the home team shall decide upon the type of courts to be used where more than one surface is available.
- [c] So far as is possible the same court surface shall be used for all rubbers.
- [d] Where more than one court surface is to be used then the captain of the visiting team shall have the right to decide upon the initial allocation of courts. The home team shall move courts in subsequent rubbers.

10. COMPLETE TEAMS AND LATE ARRIVALS

- [a] If a Club does not field a full team of players then the opposing team shall be deemed to have won all forfeited sets of unplayed rubbers by a score of 6 – 0.
- [b] If a player is not on court and ready to play within twenty minutes of the arranged start time the offending team shall forfeit the first set in which that player was to take part. If the late player has not arrived at the time when the first rubber has been completed then the offending team shall forfeit the first rubber in which that player was to take part. The late player may take part in any sets not started and which are not forfeited and such sets shall be part of the match. All forfeited sets shall be deemed won by the opposing team by a score of 6 – 0.

11. WINNERS AND SCORING

- [a] The team winning the greater number of rubbers shall win the match.
- [b] If the teams are equal on rubbers then the team winning the greater number of sets shall win the match.
- [c] If the number of rubbers and the number of sets are equal then the team winning the greater number of games shall win the match.
- [d] If the number of rubbers, sets and games are all equal then the match shall be declared a draw.
- [e] The winning team shall be awarded two points.
- [f] Where a match is declared a draw then each team shall be awarded one point.
- [g] If a team withdraws or is removed from a Competition then all results involving that team shall be null and void.
- [h] The winning team of each match has the responsibility for inputting the result onto the appropriate website within 48 hours of the match taking place. The losing team should either confirm or change the scores as input within one week of the match taking place. If the result has not been confirmed or changed within two weeks, the result as input by the winning team will be 'confirmed' by the League Secretary. Any match for which no score has been input one month after it has been played, will be declared void.

12. PROMOTION/RELEGATION AND CHAMPIONS

- [a] Where a competition consists of more than one division the winning and runner-up teams (apart from the top division) shall be promoted to the next higher division.
- [b] The two bottom teams of each division (apart from the bottom division) shall be relegated to the next lower division.
- [c] All new team entrants to a Competition shall be placed in the lowest division, unless exceptionally decided by the League sub-committee.
- [d] The League Sub-Committee shall have discretion to promote or relegate teams otherwise than as determined by these rules if the League Sub-Committee consider it appropriate.
- [e] If at the end of a Competition two or more teams have the same number of points, then the position of the teams will be determined by the percentage of rubbers won first, followed by percentage of sets, and percentage of games. If still equal, order to be decided by the head to head record between the teams, and if still equal, by the drawing of lots.
- [f] The Champion of any Competition shall be the team being top of the highest division of that Competition.

13. GENERAL

Any Club or Team failing to observe the foregoing Rules and Regulations shall be liable to a penalty including but not limited to the deduction of points.

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