

# Harrow Baptist Tennis Club

## Etiquette Policy



**Prepared by: Etiquette Committee**  
**(a sub-committee of the Harrow Baptist Tennis Club Committee)**

## **STANDARDS, ETIQUETTE AND COMPLAINTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This policy is in accordance with Lawn Tennis Association good practice, standards and values for tennis clubs around the country. In particular it covers player behaviour and tennis etiquette. The policy sets out a code of conduct for all Club members to follow so that every member is clear about what is expected to create the right playing environment.

This policy is seen as good practice and captures the behaviour expected at Harrow Baptist Tennis Club and demonstrated by the vast majority of members. It also sets out a complaints procedure for members to follow to address any concerns there may be. Finally, this policy sets out procedures once a complaint has been made and the rôle of the Etiquette Committee.

### **Aim of Policy**

The aim of this policy is to:

1. Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
2. Inform members about the standards of behaviour and etiquette expected so that we create the right playing environment for individuals and the club to flourish.
3. Create a complaints procedure so that, where there is a problem with behaviour, this can be addressed.
4. Set standards and values regarding the integrity of Harrow Baptist Tennis Club and the image and professionalism Harrow Baptist Tennis Club wants to uphold.

## **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR, ETIQUETTE, CLUB RULES**

### **Behaviour**

Harrow Baptist Tennis Club is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the club at every level. Tennis should be enjoyed by everyone who wants to play.

All members must treat other members with dignity and respect. Dignity is about respectful, responsible, fair behaviour. There must be no inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact, which may cause offence i.e. mental or physical anxiety or hurt to an individual.

Inappropriate actions include:

- Racquet throwing;
- Swearing;
- Being abusive or aggressive;
- Intimidation;
- Questioning another person's integrity over line calls or other actions;
- Causing danger to other players through reckless or negligent play.

## **Etiquette**

Tennis etiquette is different from the rules of the game. The rules of tennis are set by the International Tennis Foundation and can be found here:

<http://www.itftennis.com/abouttheitf/rulesregs/rules.asp>

Tennis etiquette covers a broad range of actions and behaviours which are traditionally considered acceptable on and around the tennis court. Here are some that Harrow Baptist Tennis Club recommends to members.

When playing wear recognised tennis clothing and most importantly "tennis shoes ". Firstly, other shoes mark and damage the courts and secondly, non tennis shoes do not have sufficient grip and can contribute to accidents and avoidable injury.

### **Show respect and courtesy**

- To your opponent(s), your partner, and others on or near the courts.
- Please do not walk behind players whilst a game or a rally is in progress, this is to avoid distracting other members and most importantly to avoid any potential accidents on court.

### **Do not walk onto another court during a game**

- Wait for the players to finish the point, before walking onto their court.
- It is very distracting to have someone disrupt a game in progress, so if you must cross another court, do so after the point is finished, and go around the court, not through the middle.
- If you are trying to cross a court please wait until you are invited to and it is safe to do so.
- When you are crossing courts it is normal to do so at the rear of the court and not at the net.
- When you decide to cross behind other courts do so as quickly as possible and don't stop for a chat on the way.
- If a stray ball comes onto your court do not knock it back immediately, wait until the "owners" are ready and then return it.

### **Line calls**

- Lines calls can be a problem and the majority of experienced players use what is called the 'honour system'.
- Only call the lines on your side of the net.
- Call clearly and firmly what you see and what you honestly believe to be correct.
- If you are not absolutely certain or did not see the ball clearly, the ball was IN and must be given in the opponents' favour.
- If occasionally you have serious doubts as to your opponent's eyesight, ask politely if they are certain as to the accuracy of their call. If they say that they are, get on with the next point.
- If in social friendly matches or club tournament matches there is some doubt over a line call, offer to play the point again rather than cause undue aggravation and time wasting.

### **Ball management**

- Balls should be kept either in hand, in a pocket or ball clip or against the fence.
- Any time your opponent has to walk a significant distance to get a ball, look around your side to see whether you can use that time to collect balls at your end.
- If the server needs a ball, the player closest to a ball should get it and send it to the server.
- If your opponent is ready to serve do not go to collect another ball.
- In doubles, where possible, the server's partner should keep a ball to feed the server.

- As with the above, it is common courtesy not to disrupt players on court during a match. If your ball rolls onto an adjacent court, wait for the players to finish the point and kindly ask for “a little help” to get their attention. Under no circumstances should you run over onto their court in the middle of a game to retrieve the ball yourself.
- At the end of a set in social tennis leave the balls at the net for the next group of players unless it is the final set of the day.

### **Keeping score**

- The server should announce the score at the start of each game and at the start of the second point and each subsequent point in each game. This ensures all players know the score.
- If the receiver cannot hear the server's announcement of the score, he/she must ask the server to speak louder.

### **Close the gate behind you**

- Whether you're coming onto or leaving the courts, it is common courtesy to close the gate behind you. This will keep the balls inside the confines of the court.

### **Mobile phones**

- Mobile phones should not be taken on court. Other communication devices, such as smartwatches should be set to silent.

### **Clear up after yourself**

- Do not leave empty cans or old tennis balls on the court when you leave. In fact, do not leave anything on the court.
- If you have old tennis balls that you don't want anymore, don't leave them on the court – put them in the yellow bin in the club house. These are recycled for charity.
- Take all your rubbish home with you.

### **Visiting players**

- Players from visiting clubs should be made aware that the club has a policy on bad language.

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

The Complaints Policy outlines the steps that will be taken to investigate any complaint brought to the attention of the Etiquette Committee.

### **How do I make a complaint?**

In the event that any member **feels that he/she has suffered inappropriate standards of behaviour by another member or breach of tennis etiquette** in any way, he/she should follow the procedure below.

1. The Complainant should report the matter in writing using the Proforma (*see appendix A*) to the Chair of the Etiquette Committee or another member of that committee.

2. The report should include:

- (a) name of complainant;
- (b) details of when and where the occurrence took place;
- (c) details of what occurred;
- (d) any witness details and copies of any witness statements;
- (e) names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);
- (f) details of any former complaints made about other incidents, including the date and to whom such complaint was made;

3. On receipt of a complaint the Etiquette Committee:

- 3.1 will request that both parties to the complaint submit written evidence regarding the incident(s);
- 3.2 may decide (at its sole discretion) to uphold or dismiss the complaint without holding a hearing;
- 3.3 may (at its sole discretion) hold a hearing (whether or not such a hearing is requested by either party) at which both parties will be entitled to attend and present their case;
- 3.4 will have the power to impose any one or more of the following sanctions on any person found to be in breach of etiquette policy:

- (a) warn as to future conduct;
- (b) suspend from membership while the complaint is being investigated;
- (c) recommend removal from club membership to the full Committee;
- (d) exclude a non-member from the Club, either temporarily or permanently; and
- (e) turn down a non-member's current and/or future membership applications.

3.5 will provide both parties with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one calendar month of such decision being made.

3.6 Either party may appeal a decision of the Committee to the Middlesex LTA (including a decision not to hold a hearing) by writing to the County Secretary within three months of the Club's decision being notified to that party.

4. When the Etiquette Committee meets it will take into account any background information deemed relevant including the personal circumstances of the person complained about. It will consider any development, advice or guidance that may be appropriate to a resolution of the complaint.

5. If a complaint is made about a member of the Etiquette Committee the person complained about will absent themselves from that Committee's meeting called to determine the outcome unless called to give their account. Another member of the full Committee will be co-opted to maintain sufficient numbers.

6. Any criminal behaviour, such as theft or physical violence perpetrated on Club premises would amount to gross misconduct and is highly likely to lead to immediate removal from membership.

### Removal from membership

The Club may expel a member or refuse membership to anyone only with good and sufficient reason such as unacceptable behaviour likely to bring the Club or sport into disrepute. The full Committee shall, by not less than a two thirds majority vote, be empowered to terminate that person's membership. Appeal against such a decision may be made to the Middlesex LTA.

Any person whose membership is terminated in these circumstances shall immediately be excluded from the Club premises and have no claim against the Club, the Committee, or any member thereof, except that any unexpired portion of his/her subscription shall be refunded.

### Points to consider

- Is there good and sufficient cause such as conduct or character?
- Is the conduct or character likely to bring the Club or sport into disrepute?

### From the Oxford English dictionary

- **Conduct** is the manner in which a person behaves;
- **Character** is the distinguishing qualities of a person;
- **Disrepute** is the state of being held in low public esteem.

Harrow Baptist Tennis Club is situated in a highly residential area and has many residents that overlook the club directly. There are also visitors and prospective members at the club during tennis playing times. It is not unreasonable to suggest that any bad behaviour on or off the court that takes place could bring the club into disrepute.

## **PUBLICATION**

A policy is considered to have been 'implemented' when it has been approved at a General Meeting and its content has been drawn to the attention of club members. All members and visitors must be made aware of the policy. This policy will:

- be sent to all current and new members
- be displayed on the notice board in the club house
- be on the Harrow Baptist Tennis Club web-site

## **Review**

The Etiquette Committee is responsible for reviewing the policy.

## **THE RÔLE OF THE ETIQUETTE COMMITTEE**

The rôle of the Etiquette Committee is to:

1. Oversee tennis related matters regarding behaviour and etiquette.
2. Deal with any complaints relating to such issues and to ensure that the tennis complaints procedure is correctly followed.

The Etiquette Committee will meet when needed. All members of the Etiquette committee will also be members of the full Committee.

Position	Name
Chair	Richard Fischer
Club Captain	Jane Mayes
Member	Andrew Jackson

(As at February 2018.)

**Appendix A - Harrow Baptist Tennis Club – Complaints Proforma**

Complaint about

Date and time of Incident

Details of what happened

Any witness details and copies of witness statements

Names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed)

Details of any former complaints made about other incidents, including the date and to whom such complaint was made

Name

Signature

Date