

Guidelines for team selection to play for Pewsey Tennis Club teams July 2022

Introduction:

The purpose of this document is to outline a recommended process to select individuals to represent Pewsey Tennis Club (PTC) in one of its teams, usually within the Swindon & District Tennis League (S&DTL), and with particular reference to the Summer League season.

Typically the following timelines need to be observed:

- Initial canvassing of all members to see who might want to play team tennis: January
- Initial Captains' meetings: early February
- Submission of teams to S&DTL (by match secretary): end February
- Squad practices (team trials): at least 2 sessions for each of mens, ladies and mixed teams: Feb - early April
- Further Captains' meetings and requests for player availability: March - April.

Note that Club and LTA membership is required in order to represent Pewsey Tennis Club in the S&DTL.

This document will be shared with any member of the Club who is given the responsibility of leading either an individual team, or a group of Men's, Ladies or Mixed Tennis teams. These guidelines are aimed at ensuring that these 'Team Captains', and 'Club Captains' select individuals to play for teams in a fair, transparent, and inclusive way.

A copy of these guidelines will be posted on the PTC Website for all to see.
(<https://clubspark.lta.org.uk/pewseytc>)

Guidelines:

1. The PTC Committee elects 3 individuals to captain a group of Men's Teams, Ladies Teams and Mixed Teams respectively. Currently (in the 2022 summer season), they are responsible for coordinating 7 Men's Teams, 4 Ladies Teams, and 4 Mixed Teams, who represent PTC in the Swindon & District Summer League. These guidelines are suitable for all 3 types of team.
2. Before the start of the season, those elected Men's, Ladies and Mixed Club Captains are charged with finding a 'volunteer' club member to captain each individual team. Clearly it is sensible to try and find a selection of Captains who are each of the right 'level' to be able to play in that team that they are responsible for.
3. The first task is then for the overall Captains of the 3 groups of teams to consult widely (at the very least to include all of the individual team captains, and the 2 full time coaches) well in advance of the start of the season, in order to assess how many players are likely to want to play 'competitive' team tennis. That helps ensure that PTC then enter the appropriate number of teams into the League (i.e. 7 teams of 4 in the case of Men's teams representation in summer 2022). In that discussion, it is also sensible to draw up a very first **draft** list of individual names of players, aiming at a minimum of 6 'regular' players per squad, and that list should be pulled together on a meritocratic basis.
4. Typically at least 2 formal 'squad practice' evenings will then be held, well in advance of the start of the season, at which any member will have the opportunity to demonstrate

their playing level, and be given the opportunity to play with numerous different players of a similar standard, so that they can have every chance of making sure that they end up in the squad which is appropriate for their playing ability. Anyone hoping to play for a team should aim to attend at least one of these practice sessions.

5. Selection of individuals should be done first and foremost on a **meritocratic** basis – i.e. the better the player, the higher the team that they should play for. Captains should make use of metrics where possible to establish the fairest ranking (eg, using sources like scores analysed from team trials, Swindon League, World Tennis Numbers, etc), and at the very least consult as widely as possible with peer group players within the club.
6. Every individual should be given the chance not only to demonstrate their playing ability, but also to discuss openly with anyone in the club (whether team captain, one of the coaches, or even other club members) if they feel that they are not being placed within the right squad.
7. Equally, every Team Captain should ensure that they consult widely with individuals and their peer group players, in order to ensure that they are making team selections on a totally meritocratic basis.
8. Team Captains must also ensure that they have given full consideration to any new, or recently joined club members, and that they consider to what extent individual skill levels of continuing club members may have changed since the prior season (e.g. youngsters improving). They should also weigh up tactical considerations such as:
 - a. Match experience versus 'youthful exuberance'
 - b. Which are the best 'pairings' for success?
 - c. Trying to get 'regular' pairings over the season, etc.
9. The overall Men's/Ladies/Mixed Captain will then agree a 'final' list of 'squads' in advance of the start of the League season. Each Captain at that stage should be confident that they have an allocated squad of the right meritocratic ability, from which they are able to secure 4 players for every match throughout the season. Even at this stage though, all individuals are openly informed that they may be requested to play in a higher or lower squad at times during the season (subject to League Rules) – for a wide variety of reasons such as:
 - a. If a player gets injured
 - b. If a player moves out of the area mid-season
 - c. If a new member joins the club mid-season
 - d. A player may even be asked to play down for a lower team early in the season, simply because they are not required for their given squad, and it gives a lower squad the opportunity to field a stronger team
10. Once the season is underway, it is the responsibility of the individual Team Captain to select the **best** team that one can from a given squad, and ensure that a team of 4 players turns up on time for every match. There is always tension between 'fielding the best squad to win', and 'giving widest opportunity to play match tennis across the squad'. Guidance here is:

- a. Get a team off to a good start, and make use of a player from a higher squad especially early on if there is a 'shortage' of a given squad's player availability, before they get "tied up" to their squads after 3 matches.
 - b. Once a Captain has done that, and calibrated the chance of achieving 1st or 2nd place in their division after a few matches, they will then have a feel for the strength of the other Clubs in their Division. The Captain can then assess whether to a) go for promotion! or b) do enough to hold the team's position in the division, or c) aim to field the strongest team one can every week in order to avoid relegation.
 - c. Weigh up tactical considerations such as:
 1. Match experience versus 'youthful exuberance'
 2. Which are the best 'pairings' for success?
 3. Trying to get 'regular' pairings over the season, etc.
11. Team Captains have the following match responsibilities:
 - Liaising with the opposing captain on behalf of the team (eg, rain interference, etc)
 - Ensuring new balls are available for home matches, and light refreshments
 - Ensuring that they understand the S&DTL rules
 - Ensuring that the Match Result Sheet is signed by both team captains, and that after a home match, it is submitted within 24 hours to the League Match Secretary (The Team Captain should appoint a stand-in to do this, if they are not playing in a match themselves).
 12. Squad members, and team players should support their team captain, understanding that: The team captain will make his best choice of team, taking into account availability, expectations and demands of team tennis versus social tennis, and awareness that team selection is based on meritocracy. Squad members therefore have no right to expect to be selected for every match.
 13. Team Captains take responsibility for selecting a replacement player if one is required at short notice. ALL Team Captains have a shared responsibility to support other Team Captains, if a call goes out for 'help' in the event that a squad is short of a player on a given occasion.
 14. In the event that any Team Captain is not happy with the level of support they are getting to secure a full team of the right standard, they should seek help and support from the appropriate overall Men's/Ladies/Mixed Club Captain.
 15. If at ANY point one of the Team Captains becomes aware of ANY potential anti-social behaviour (e.g. inclusivity, racism, sexism, child safeguarding, bullying, etc.), it must be escalated to the Club Chairman, and/or the Club Welfare Officer immediately, so that it can be appropriately investigated.