SUFFOLK LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION

COUNTY SENIORS REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Suffolk Lawn Tennis Association (SLTA) decided in August 2023 to review the County Seniors competition framework as part of its work in setting out a new strategy for the County Association; in view of the new financial framework introduced by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) in 2023 with consequences for County budgeting; and because of concerns about effectiveness and inclusion in its governance and communication systems. A member of the management committee was appointed to lead the review with the aim that it be completed by December 2023.

This report is the outcome of that review. It sets out the process and findings. It made recommendations to the Management Committee for consideration at its 29th November 2023 meeting to contribute to strategy setting and because decisions need to be made about which teams will be entered the 2024 by the LTA deadline for team and player nominations for the Seniors County Cup of 22nd January 2024¹. This report may be shared now that decisions have been made on the way forward.

CURRENT COUNTY SENIORS FRAMEWORK

The LTA runs the LTA National League, within which are the County Cup events (Summer County Cup, Winter County Cup, Over 35s County Cup and the Seniors County Cup²)³. The Seniors County Cup includes all Ladies and Mens Teams from the Over 40s upwards.

At the start of the review it was identified that SLTA has its County Seniors structured as set out at Appendix A. It should be noted that the County Ladies team and the County Mens team often include juniors as well as adult players. These teams play in the Summer County Cup and the Winter County Cup. All the other County teams only play in the summer. There are more Suffolk Senior Ladies County teams than Mens teams currently in the county is not represented in all the LTA categories⁴.

PROCESS OF THE REVIEW

Meetings with a number of key individuals took place including Emily Stebbings, Ben Smith, Debs Lawton-Abbott, Pam Chrispin, Julia Waters, Phil Eaves and Janie Taylor. Correspondence was received from others. All current captains were contacted with an offer of meetings. The majority of them engaged with the review, supplying the contact details for their players. This was important because SLTA did not hold this information already and a database has been built with this information. Observation of one Ladies training session at Ipswich Sports Club took place on 6th November 2023.

A survey of those currently playing for the County was designed and issued from late September 2023, as captains supplied email addresses. 28 responses were received. The opinions of these players are gold dust and the responses are summarised at Appendix B.

¹ The Summer County Cup team nominations close on 1st July 2024; the Over 35s team nominations close on 22nd July 2024; and the Winter County Cup team nominations will close on 11th November 2024

² https://competitions.lta.org.uk/sport/tournament.aspx?id=dc3575cc-a336-4722-aea8-809a8812d9ab

³ https://www.lta.org.uk/compete/adult/county-cup/

⁴ Mens 30s, Mens 35, Mens 45, Mens 50, Mens 55, Mens 60, Mens 65, Mens 70, Mens 75, Womens 35, Womens 40, Womens 50, Women 60, Women 65, Women 70, Senior Mixed, Super Senior Mixed

A minority of captains did not engage⁵, which meant that none of their players had the opportunity to contribute to the survey.

The review also considered the performance of teams from results available on the LTA website (see Appendix C). As the Ladies Over 35s County Cup team failed to play in group 5A, they do not feature in the results table and will be relegated to group 6B in accordance with Rule 3 of the County Cup General Rules and Regulations if SLTA enters a team in 2024.

By submitting an entry into the competition, the County Organiser (and therefore the captains and SLTA) commit to abide by the regulation that:

'-I have considered my roles and responsibilities as team captain and we are fully committed to organising the team pre, during and post-matches this season. -I have assessed the commitment of my venue and players in regard to fixtures, court time, travel, work/exams and financial cost throughout the season. We are committed to compete.

-The League Organiser reserves the right to refuse an entry application from any team(s) who have a record of un played fixtures, walkovers and/or poor communication in recent seasons

-I have read the 2023 Rules and agree to ensure the team will abide by them. National League rules are available on the LTA website '⁷.

FINDINGS

A great many findings came out of the review and are presented here, not in order of priority.

- In general, players are proud to play for Suffolk and some have been doing so for decades, working their way into different teams as they get older. Playing competitive tennis and the social aspect of team play are also motivating factors.
- Captains and their teams receive very little input from SLTA and thrive or fail on the strength of their own commitment, knowledge and experience, although the Treasurer engages directly in respect of reimbursement of revenue costs for funded activities.
- Some players are critical of the non-involvement of SLTA and its failure to fully fund and recognise and celebrate teams' performance.
- SLTA has no communication strategy for Seniors County Tennis.
- There appears to be no logic as to which, of all the teams it could have, Suffolk actually fields in the Seniors County Cup. There is only modest support among existing players in increasing the number of teams SLTA enters into the Seniors County Cup and no current players have suggested reducing the number of categories into which a team is entered.

⁵ Mens, Over 35s Ladies and Mens, Over 40s Ladies. Over 65s Ladies. The response from the captain of the, Over 60s Mens came too late to be included

 $^{^{6}\} https://competitions.lta.org.uk/sport/regulations.aspx?id=F067F213-536A-4123-91F9-2572C896DE94$

⁷ https://competitions.lta.org.uk/sport/regulations.aspx?id=F067F213-536A-4123-91F9-2572C896DE94

- SLTA currently has no control over the reputational risk if teams were to fail to be entered, or team decisions are made to withdraw from events or concede individual matches.
- There is no evidence that risk assessments are in place to manage any of the risks associated with Seniors County Tennis although the County Safeguarding Officer is regularly asked for advice when juniors are travelling to play away matches. These risk assessments are the responsibility of SLTA to undertake, share as appropriate, and hold securely.
- With the exception of the County Ladies team and County Mens team, there is little or no promotion of the teams involved in the other County Cup competitions.
- Most management committee members/offices in most Suffolk LTA registered venues (clubs) and a small minority of players in Suffolk have any knowledge of or information about County Seniors Tennis, with the result that few players have any opportunity to put themselves forward to compete at County level.
- With occasional recent exceptions, the Senior County Cup teams arrange and wholly or partially self-fund their accommodation and travel for away matches which can be hundreds of miles from Suffolk.
- They also self-fund home match catering at Ipswich Sports Club (the home venue) and consider this to be expensive and unfair.
- Some players in some Senior County Cup teams play together for training purposes at Ipswich Sports Club at intervals in the year, but there is no expectation that they will attend regularly or that the main focus of the session is practising in their pairs. This is at no cost to the players other than for travel. A few have accessed limited coaching this year but most players only meet up to play matches. This is not the case for the County Ladies team and County Mens team, whose captains and some team members arrange their own practice sessions at venues convenient to them.
- A significant number of players do not play competitively except in the Seniors County Cup.
- Very few play in the Framlingham Tournament, the County Closed, or other SLTA sponsored and/or local tournaments. Knowledge of the County Closed among players is very low, and commitment to playing in it even lower.
- The Ladies County Organiser provides considerable support to the captains of Ladies teams, and also assists the Mens County Organiser.
- There is no proper process for appointing captains although this is the responsibility of SLTA.
- There are at least 4 current players who would be willing to become captains if the opportunity arose.

- There is no induction for captains beyond the significant informal support the Ladies' County Organiser provides to new Ladies captains.
- There is no written guidance on the role of the County Organiser or captains.
- There is no succession planning for replacing captains.
- There are no captains meetings.
- Some captains find it difficult to enter results to the LTA online.
- There is a consensus that the 'best players' are the ones who should be selected based on the current level of their play combined with their commitment to teamship and to prioritise attendance at matches and training for which they have been selected.
- With the probable exception of the County Ladies team and possible exception of the County Mens team, there is currently no assurance that the 'best players' in the County are playing for the County.
- Captains inherit team players and there is no process for ensuring that the 'best players' each year have an opportunity to try out for the team, and get into the team. Word of mouth is currently important but that jeopardises diversity and inclusion.
- There is a consensus that SLTA should find a way of opening up the possibility of being selected to play for County to all potential players in Suffolk.
- Some of the local leagues are outside the LTA and/or do not use match formats that are compatible with World Tennis Number rankings, which contributes to many of the best club players in Suffolk being invisible to Senior County Tennis captains.
- There is currently no official route from the juniors' County programme into playing in the Ladies or Mens senior teams; and there is a need to route Ladies and Mens County Cup team players into the Over 35s County Cup team.
- No-one formally reviews the performance of teams to identify how the results could be improved year on year, nor is there a process for addressing underperformance in teams.
- SLTA, in not publishing results (in real time and afterwards), lacks awareness of performance and misses opportunities to celebrate progress/success and thank players.
- There is no system in place for checking that players are eligible to play for Suffolk within LTA Rules. All respondents to the survey self-reported that they are eligible, mostly on the basis that they have lived in Suffolk for at least 12 consecutive months before they played for County (54%), with another 32% having been born in Suffolk. A small minority have played for other counties in the past, and at least 2 current players live in adjacent counties but retain loyalty to playing for Suffolk.

- No database of players is kept by SLTA. Not all captains have basic data on their players including date of birth⁸, address, home club, mobile number, email address and next-of-kin details in the event of emergency.
- As a result of the expectation that Senior County Cup players wholly or partly selffund, there is little chance of equality of opportunity in representing one's county even if SLTA made selection to the teams more transparent and evidence-based. Unless players can afford to pay their way and/or take time off paid employment and/or pay for childcare/elders' care, they cannot play for County.
- It feels unfair to players that some counties invest more heavily in their Mens and Ladies County teams to ensure the very 'best players', paying them a higher day rate to attend County Cup and allegedly flying players back from The Tour/USA University to represent them.
- Several current players are coaches who lose several days' work at a time to play for County. The day rate paid to players does not cover their costs. This year, despite taking 10 men to Eastbourne, not all were able to stay for the week due to work/home commitments and with injuries plus young players' inexperience, this may have affected the outcome (demotion from Division 1). Other players in employment use their annual leave.
- The cost of County Seniors competition continues to rise with accommodation and travel costing more so booking early (ideally Air B&B rather than hotels), adhering to the budget, and ensuring there are sufficient drivers and vehicles is important.
- SLTA has no control over how the LTA runs Seniors County Tennis and some people believe that event should be regionalised so that teams do not have to travel hundreds of miles to compete. Others have suggested that neutral venues halfway inbetween competing counties could be designated for matches and that this could avoid some of the trave/accommodation costs and player anxiety about distance.
- Teams may be competing hundreds of miles from Suffolk and many older players do not feel confident to drive such distances yet train travel is prohibitively expensive and as time-consuming.
- It has been suggested that not all venues hosting away matches ensure access to suitable indoor court facilities in the event of inclement weather but this has not been verified.
- There is a consensus that team practice sessions are important, and differing views as to whether these should all take place at Ipswich Sports Centre where home matches are played, or whether the venues should vary to make it easier for some players to train closer to home and/or to increase the visibility of the county teams at other Suffolk venues.
- A majority of the current players value team coaching and at least half would be willing to pay for it.

⁸ Vital check of eligibility to play in one or more teams, and LTA Find a Player only records year of birth not date of birth

• Nearly all current players are willing to wear County kit (at a minimum involving a playing top and/or jacket/hoodie), with 7% only being willing to wear it if it is provided free. 39% would wear it even if they had to pay for it themselves and a further 54% would pay for it if subsidised. Currently, an assortment of clothing is worn.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of the findings from the review the following recommendations were agreed by SLTA's Management Committee on 29th November 2023:

- 1. SLTA should take a much more active part in the management and promotion of Seniors County Tennis in Suffolk for which it is responsible. It is proposed that a Competitions Sub Committee, chaired by a Management Committee member, and on which there is representation from current County Cup captains/players, should oversee the County's engagement in the County Cups in addition to other competitions for which SLTA is responsible.
- 2. If SLTA cannot afford to run and fund teams in all the age group categories, a set of criteria should be developed and agreed by which decisions are made about which teams will run and/or be supported financially.
- 3. When setting the competitions budget each year, the Management Committee should ensure that funding is equitable in line with its overall strategy and stated priorities, and that the funding commitment should be transparent.
- 4. The necessary risk assessments should be in place and be reviewed regularly by the Competitions Sub Committee.
- 5. SLTA should establish as a principle that it, and not individual captains acting independently, will enter and withdraw teams, and be involved in advance of decisions made to concede matches.
- 6. SLTA should fund and organise (or contract for) an open event at least once a year to which all the best players from Suffolk LTA registered venues are invited as well as current team players, from which captains will work as a team to identify prospective team members for the coming season, subject to further evaluation of their eligibility and suitability.
- 7. SLTA should, as a high priority, identify a captain and players to form a new Over 35s Ladies team for 2024.
- 8. SLTA will require assurance before new team members are introduced to teams that players are eligible to play for Suffolk within the LTA Rules, and formally accept the responsibilities that go with being selected to play for Suffolk.
- 9. Further work should be done to assess the potential for investing more heavily in the County Ladies team and County Mens team to ensure that the very best players can afford to commit to play in the Summer County Cup and Winter County Cup

matches, especially if they are studying/working abroad and/or are self-employed coaches.

- 10. County Organiser and captains' roles should be clearly defined, and there should be a standardised process for SLTA to appoint to these roles, induct and support leaders, and monitor performance in these roles through engagement with captains and team players. This work should include succession planning and consideration as to whether and when it is appropriate to have nonplaying captains.
- 11. A handbook for captains should be produced to support this process.
- 12. SLTA should identify one or more Management Committee volunteers to be the named lead for supporting one or more County Organisers and captains with the organisational tasks of booking accommodation and travel for away matches, ensuring that best use is made of the available budget whilst accommodating the reasonable needs of players.
- 13. SLTA should make available regular training opportunities for all County players at no cost to them, with input from a coaching team which players may need to fund or contribute towards.
- 14. SLTA should not expect team members to self-fund the catering costs for home matches, over which charges they have no control.
- 15. SLTA should consider running a veterans tournament and/or league in Suffolk to ensure year round play in readiness for the County Cup events.
- 16. Further consideration should be given to a suggestion that county players be expected to enter one or both the Framlingham Tournament and the County Closed.
- 17. A dialogue with the LTA and other County Associations should be opened regarding the findings of this review, with a view to influencing policy and practice changes in Seniors County Tennis nationally.

NEXT STEPS

The management committee asked Sally Gooch to undertake enabling work (drafting terms of reference and proposed membership) for a Competitions Subcommittee (recommendation 1) to lead and oversee its work on County Tennis and the other competitions and tournaments in which it is involved and for which it is responsible.

Once convened, it will be for the Competitions Subcommittee to take forward the implementation of recommendations 2-5, 7-16 above, bearing in mind the current financial pressures on SLTA's budget, and remitting to the management committee decisions it needs to take.

The management committee asked Sally Gooch to progress the implementation of recommendation 6, involving the appropriate people, and in view of the deadlines for team nominations.

The management committee asked Sally Gooch to share the report with those who contributed to the review; current captains and players; Suffolk clubs; the relevant LTA national and regional officers; and with the other County Associations in the region (recommendation 17).

CONCLUSIONS

The review was timely, coming at a time when SLTA is required by the LTA and as a condition of future LTA funding to have a strategic plan.

Sally Gooch 30th November 2023

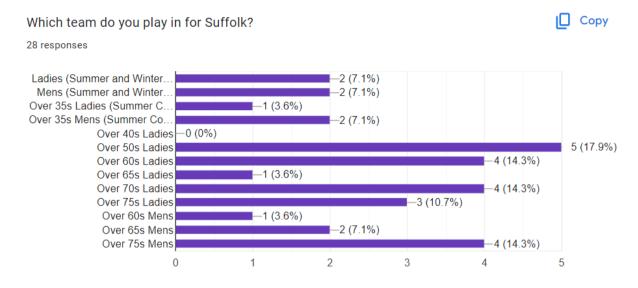
APPENDIX A

	LADIES													
Ladies Count	Ladies County Organiser: Janie Taylor													
	Teams													
Ladies	LadiesOver 35sOver 40sOver 50sOver 60sOver 65sOver 70sOver 75s													
			Cap	otains										
Emily	Alice Flatman	Alice Flatman	Debs Lawton-	Jo Harpur	Sue Bennett	Dorothy	Pat Bashford							
Stebbings			Abbott	_		Donaldson								

MENS											
Mens County Organiser: Charlie Fulcher											
Teams											
Mens	Over 35s	Over 60s	Over 65s	Over 75s							
		Captains									
Jez Cowley	Jez Cowley	Charlie Fulcher	Andy Clamp	Keith Palmer							

APPENDIX B

RESPONSES TO DATE FROM SURVEY



If Suffolk LTA was to increase the number of teams, there is a demand for:

Over 55 Ladies (4) Over 65 Ladies (2) Over 80s Ladies (1) Over 80s Mens (2).

How long have you played for Suffolk at County level?

28 responses

The respondents have played for Suffolk for 1-40 years, broken down as follows:

1 year – 4 2-5 years – 9 6-9 years – 6 10-14 years – 4 15-20 years – 4 30+ years – 3

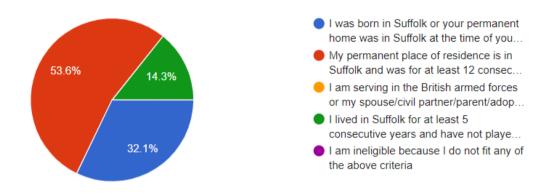
Note: 2 players play in more than one team.

Have you played for another Suffolk County team in the last year as well as your own? If so, which?

Five players had played in another Suffolk County Seniors team in the last year.

Under the LTA Rules (No 66), are you eligible to play for Suffolk because you are a British citizen or Great Britain (including the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man) has been your primary place of residence for at least 24 consecutive months (12 months for a junior) & you have not played for another county in the previous 12 months (6 months for a junior) plus:

28 responses



Have you ever played for another county? if so which and when?

22 responses

Most players have never played for another county but those who answered in the affirmative said:

- Norfolk as a junior (1)
- Essex as a junior (1)
- Leicestershire as a junior (1)
- Essex (2022)
- Lincolnshire (2)
- No but now lives in Norfolk.

Copy

Players give their time to play for their County. What keeps you wanting to play for County? 28 responses

it's an honour to represent the place I live. I'm proud of Suffolk

I enjoy the company of like minded people and I aim to keep fit and be competitive for a few more years

I enjoy playing with and against different people.

Very proud to represent my county

Competition and social

Pride, achieving new goals, facing better competition, continuous improvement, feel privileged to be good enough to represent Suffolk

Opportunity to play similar standard players in other parts of the UK

To play with and against good players

Enjoy the matches and fun group of players good comradery

Love of the game and wanting to do the best for my adopted county.

Great and challenging standard of tennis and people to be with

Competitive tennis of a good standard

Somerset

Pride, team tennis, appropriate level competition, the team I travel with.

The level of tennis and the team atmosphere

I love the sport and whilst I am able to play I will do so. I am so pleased to be selected as a member of the over $\overline{75}$'s as I was for the over $\overline{70}$'s.

I enjoy being part of the team and playing competitively against other counties.

Team spirit, enjoy playing other teams

Lovely people to play with!

Enjoy playing with my partner .

I find it an honour and no one else is available for over 75's

The level of play

I feel it is a privilege to play for my county and enjoy playing in a team

Love for the sport and socialising

I feel it's a privilege and am very happy to still be able to play competitively at age 73.

Enjoyment and competitive games

I enjoy representing Suffolk in County Matches because I lived in Suffolk for 30+ years

It is always a privilege to represent your county and I feel proud to do so

Players give their time to play for their County. What puts you off you wanting to play for County? ²⁵ responses

Nothing

The travel distances can be very time consuming

N/A

That currently all practices are in working hours.

Expense of travelling to away fixtures e.g Cornwall

Costs

The travel and the cost of travel/accommodation.

Not much

Huge travelling distances

Distance travelled to away matches on occasions and the expense this incurs.

Matches a long distance away

The cost

I would be put off if the team started taking the events less seriously

Nothing. I want to play for the County.

Expenses incurred.

Some of the travelling, can be a long way, like Scotland, or Cornwall

Not fully reimbursed on occasions.

Distance to travel to away matches.

As long as costs are covered for shorter events then I'm happy, appreciate different when week long

I haven't been put off so far

Just the cost. I don't need to be 'paid' to play for my county at this stage in life but I do think that for some costs are an issue. Certainly for the actual County teams an element of financial reward over and above cost reimbursement would put Suffolk in line with most other counties.

Sometimes long journeys

I do Play for the County I am not put off representing the county where I live

Being self employed, the loss of income in taking time off work is a key factor that has to be weighed up and the added expense playing has, as not all expenses are covered. I also have a young family and playing means time away from them. It is also a logistical headache some times with my family and ensuring my son is looked after as my husband also has a full time job. How much do you estimate it cost you to play for Suffolk in the last 12 months - and can you break it down to help us understand? For example: fuel/other travel costs, accommodation, food/drink, County kit, loss of earnings, using annual leave, child care, paid care for adult you otherwise care for, paid care for pet you otherwise care for. In responding please identify in which team you currently play

28 responses

travel to training as well as matches) plus accommodation and fees say £400

I was in the O 75s squad but didn't play any matches in 2023.

Fuel for practice about £50, two match day costs approx £25

£100 in accommodation and approx 700 miles travelled

Didn't play this year but usually £150 approx

Ladies over 50 - Fuel - Ipswich x 2 = £30, Berkshire £15 (car share) Cornwall = £230 Total fuel £275 Accommodation - Cornwall £150 (total although would've been more had we played Cornwall and Somerset fixtures) Food and drink - Buffet at Ipswich £32, Cornwall £50, Total food = £82 County kit £17 Total cost = £ 424 (but more had we played the fixtures at Cornwall and Somerset)

Suffolk 75's. I estimate I have spent £275. Made up of travel from home to Henley Road £90. Home fees for entertaining £105, shared travel to away matches £80.

Approximately £120 - £60 for fuel and £60 for food - a relatively cheap year. Other years have been much more expensive; last year there were 2 trips to the West country before that Northumberland and Glasgow which required accommodation. Currently over 65's

£75

Suffolk O60 Fuel 400 miles Accommodation £60 but that was my choice rather than travelling 3 hrs on the morning of the game then playing

Practice £7 per session x 25 approx = £175 approx Travel costs to practices and matches = £350 approx Contribution to team refreshments = £40 Pet care covered free by friends

Over 60s

Cost of fuel to away matches and food for 2 people at home matches.

Travel and accommodation: £100 Food/drink: £400 Loss of earnings: £1300

£100

£200. Over 75's men.

No loss of earnings incurred as I only played once I was able to change my work commitment.

Travel £300. No accommodation required this year but was £250 last year.

£25

Travel to Ipswich for home matches ie fuel, I live in Essex. Away matches cost of travel and accommodation.travel to west of Scotland for example. Devon, this year, conceded the match.

ladies 75's ..it was too costly for us to go to play in Devon and roads too busy in the height of the season. Otherwise 1 bed and breakfast (room sharing) car share and fuel share.

Transport - £70, Hotels £290, Food £70, LOE £200

Ladies Over 70 - Fuel approx £90. Accommodation and food and drink approx £100

Currently play in Ladies summer and winter. Independent fuel costs - £30. Kit - £50. Food/drink £30. 6 annual leave days minimum losing me roughly £100.

Can't really estimate. In recent years part costs have been reimbursed at the end of the season. Over 70s.

Fuel twenty five pounds. Food fifteen pounds (providing refreshments for opponents)

For Ladies County Week: Loss of earnings- minimum £500, Fuel- n/a as used mini bus, Food additional £40, For O35's if we had played, approx: Accommodation £250, Food £100, Fuel £120, Loss of income £300 minimum.

If Suffolk LTA was able to better fund Senior County teams, how much would feel fair to you to receive a year, and what costs would it subsidise?

27 responses

Only if having to pay for accommodation for long distance away matches then maybe a small subsidy would be good. Maybe match day travel costs could help some people.

Just covering accommodation cost away would help. Hotel rooms can be £100 per night

Depending on travel and accommodation £100 - £200

I think Suffolk LTA should subsidise the home buffets, and any fuel, food and accommodation costs for any away fixtures, regardless of distance. The driver should get a pence per mile expenses allowance for fuel and any necessary accommodation costs should be subsidised. It was particularly expensive this year as our away fixtures were in Cornwall, Somerset and Berkshire, and clearly Cornwall and Somerset are not day trips!

Half of my personal outlay would be £140. That would be fair

This varies so much it would be better to reimburse actual cost that have a set sum. I would consider fuel costs for trips over say 50 miles and accommodation, with a set maximum.

Cost of travel

Fuel and accommodation for games like Somerset Cornwall Wiltshire etc 2 away games probably £100 petrol 2 nights £100 total

Travel and accommodation on long distance away matches- this can vary greatly depending on where your away matches are and whether they require stays. A percentage of the overall cost would be great.

Not sure how much funding they already give

Costs of travel to away matches, covering 2 cars if needed and over night stays where necessary. Perhaps paying for refreshments at home matches.

Teams should be fully funded when representing county.

I think £100 a day at summer/winter county cup would be good

Travel and accommodation only.

Covering travel, refreshments and accommodation would help.

Travel/fuel cost. Accommodation if required.

Travel and overnight accommodation if needed.

At least half of what it costs. Ladies in the over 75s do prefer a room of their own.

Full cost of fuel and board for away matches

£500 - As there is a satisfaction gained from playing so a balance must be struck e.g. it costs to enter a tournament to play

I would only expect reasonable expenses to be refunded.

As stated I don't need to be paid to play, just to be fully reinbursed for costs.

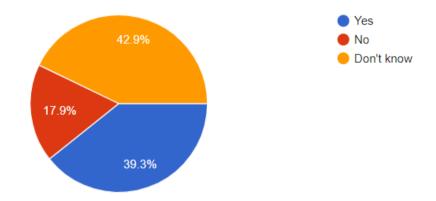
This depends on fixtures, travel overnight accommodation and food. Thirty pounds for away games if overnight accommodation is required. Home games ten pounds towards refreshments.

I don't know

Personally I feel that all accommodation, fuel and food costs should be covered.

Do you think the best players in the county are playing in your team currently?

28 responses



There is support for all of the following:

- Hold an event to which all LTA venues are invited to send their best players in the relevant age groups to be considered for selection (7)
- Publicise the county seniors program so all players know the teams exists and how to get involved (19)
- Facilitate regular captains meetings to share at the players who could play in more than one team (7)

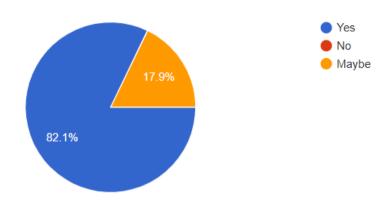
Additional comments were:

- Regular team practice sessions where non-team members could be invited along (1)
- Subsidised travel from abroad, fully fund team so players on losing out financially (1)
- Pay for flights/time off so that the best senior players are incentivised to play (1)
- Offer full reimbursement for away matches (1)

One respondent said that 'some players don't know how to go about being selected). Another said: 'to be honest SLTA feel completely irrelevant to county matches and training. There is no profile/publicity, very little financial support & for any player (not capt). I have no idea who you are nor what you do'.

Would you like regular team practice arranged for your team (if not already happening)?

28 responses



If you would like regular team practice arranged for your team, where, when and how often?

26 responses

We already practice regularly but only over the winter, so in the months just before the county matches start, there are no practices which is madness

Once a month, especially through the winter. At Ipswich Sports Club indoors which is where we play our home matches!

It would good to have some at weekends or evenings. Maybe once a month.

Already practise fortnightly

At least once a month during the winter months

Already have fortnightly session and monthly coaching session, but happy to go more often

Henley Road. Once per month

Once a fortnight would be reasonable. Inviting more that one age group would keep the numbers up. Anytime and at different clubs (to encourage non team players to participate) indoors in Winter.

We already do at Henley Road Ipswich every Wednesday alternating Over 50's with Over 60's

I think we have regular sessions each Wednesday morning in the winter at ISC

Already happening

Evenings or weekends, Ipswich or Stowmarket

We already have practices. Just need some weekend/evening practices for those who work full-time.

1 per month, more regularly in month leading to event

As we play our matches indoor at Ipswich which is central.

Ar different venues 3 weekly weekday or Sunday.

Before season starts. central location, probably a couple of times.

Once a month, as at present.

Already go to practice monthly

Ipswich/Henley Rd/

Central - e.g. Ipswich/ DL Ipswich and once a month

Already happening

Monthly at ISC

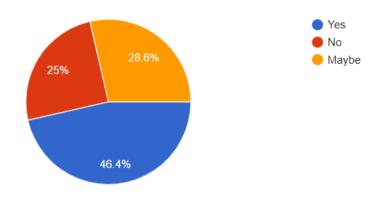
Ladies 70s and 75s already practice once a month.

As my team already has one practice per month I think having two per month would be better at Ipswich Sports Club indoor or outdoor

Realistically with players work, family, uni commitments etc about once every 3 months. (would love it to be more but I've tried in the past and doesn't work for the open Ladies age group)

Would you be willing to pay for 1-5 team coaching sessions a year if arranged for your team?

28 responses



Please tick all the criteria you would use if you were picking the best players for your team:

28 responses

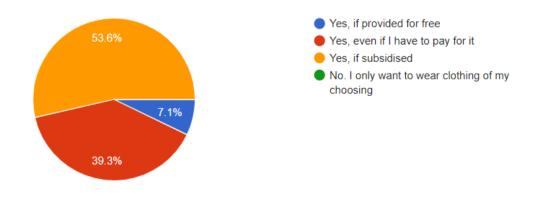
There was a lot of support for the following suggestions:

- Level of play in the last 12 months (25)
- Ability to get along with the rest of the team (25)
- Willingness to commit to playing the matches for which they are selected (28)
- Behaviour on court (20)
- Willingness to commit to regular practice with the rest of the team (23)
- Willingness to drive to away matches, however far away (19).

Only 4 respondents thought ranking by World Tennis Number relevant. In addition, one respondent made the comment that they would use the criterion: 'best fit for partnerships (sometimes the partnership is stronger than the individual players – Synergy)'. Another echoed this by saying 'chemistry of players on court, eg. doubles when practising.

Are you willing to wear County kit (at minimum playing top and/or jacket/hoodie)?

28 responses



Cc

What stopped you entering the County Closed this year?

28 responses

Didn't know it was on! the level of publicity of events is dire.

Family commitments

Wasn't aware of it taking place.

Returning from Injury

Illness

Never heard of it

Age group

I was away from home.

Timing

What is this?

Not able to commit for several days at short notice

Time off work

Not sure which event is 'the county closed' If it's the October event, I'm away.

Same week as LTA county event. Fram courts are not suitable.

I was abroad competing

Other committments

I was away.

already playing another tournament/not-convenient

Only interested in playing for a team.

No others in my age group entered. Have played in the past

Lack of publicity

Time commitments

Didn't know about it.

Injury

Not really applicable.

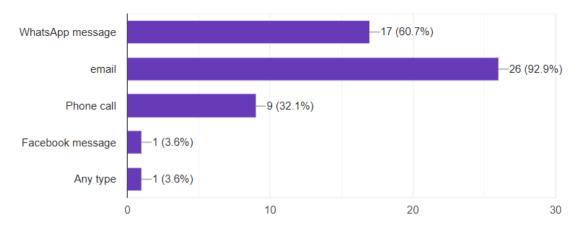
Family commitments.

I have not been invited to enter a team for County Closed County Closed

Family and the time off work already competing for Suffolk

What method(s) of communication do you prefer when contacted by your captain and Suffolk LTA?

28 responses



If you were Suffolk LTA, what else would you do to improve Suffolk's performance in Senior County tennis?

20 responses

Generate a bit of enthusiasm/publicity/energy. Promote results. Organise competitions. Let teams use the indoor courts more.

Enhance awareness of county teams with a view to increasing squad size and thereby fielding teams in as many age groups as possible.

Investigate whether you have the best available players in the squads.

More input from coaches for players

Arrange facilities for practise and coaching

Practice/friendly matches against local teams

Contact all Suffolk tennis clubs and let them.know about County teams and how they could be selected.

make facilities available for practice sessions and coaching

ID

Coaching

Celebrate the successes. The men's and women's teams have done really well over recent years. Use them as success stories for the rest of the county. Arrange a pro am day where the team players get paid to partner club players in a social event.

Unfortunately I think the only answer is increased funding

A coaching session twice a year.

Captains need to be able to find/contact other players! Information/contact details

Give more money and pay for team to practice

Publicity and encouragement

Firstly establish all eligible players, then establish playing level, then open practice

Coaching the teams

Make it more appealing to the high level players who are not currently involved

More coaching..

Better promotion of Senior events and their results. I couldn't tell you how the other senior teams got on. This will give greater visibility and make it aspirational to play for County. If you were running the LTA, what could it change or do better regarding Senior County tennis in the future?

18 responses

How long have you got?

Groups should be planned based on a geographical area which limits travelling to approx 2.5 hours. eg Suffolk should be restricted to Norfolk, Cambs, Essex, Herts, Notts, Lincs, Beds, Bucks, Northants, Surrey ? Middlesex? Kent? Sussex? Hants? Of course, permanent groupings of a limited number of counties may restrict the true competitive nature of the competition. However, this is not quite so important in my age group.

Group teams geographically in leagues with winners professing to further rounds.

Have central location for matches

Make it more attractive to play in the county senior teams

Make sure the best, most committed partnerships are playing for each team

Offer a subsidy to encourage players to represent their county thus reducing the overall cost that we currently have.

Better communications and information to non-team members. The creation of a bigger 'pool of players' would help the teams. Veteran's tournaments and league within Suffolk would bring more players to the attention of team captain's and the LTA.

Regular practises

Organise the event locations much further in advance to allow counties more time to book for value. Promote the events - the summer and winter events should have big crowds watching. County cricket gets on Sky Sports! County tennis should be in national news.

More visible presence in marketing and media. I couldn't get involved until I was semi-retired as was unable to attend training sessions. Nor coukdcl have afforded time off work and expenses.

like this question players who might like to play for county. possible trial event.

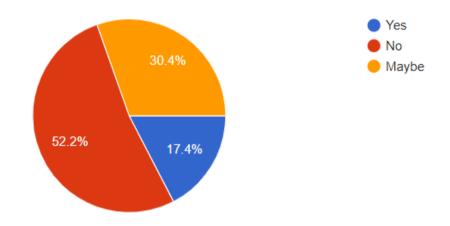
Make it cheaper for ALL to play

Ensure that ALL county events not just those up to 35+ are held over a single week/end rather than other

age categorys spread across multiple weekends across a long time frame Information about Senior County tennis could be promoted more. Get clubs to inform senior team captains of players who are county standard , and get them involved . I am not running the LTA so I am not able to comment Dates of some events are not ideal with players who are away at American uni's

If you are not currently a captain, would you like to be?

23 responses



If you are a captain, for how long have you captained your current team? The captains who responded have been captains for 1-5 years.

If you are a captain, for how long have you been a captain for any County team?

Respondents included three former captains. The longest someone had been a captain was for 30 years, their experience spanning several teams.

If you are a captain, how did you come to be captain?

- The previous captain asked me to do it (1)
- The previous captain asked for a volunteer (1)
- Volunteered (3)
- I was willing to do it! (1)
- No-one else wanted to do it (2)
- I was asked by SLTA (1).

What could Suffolk LTA do better in choosing, inducting and supporting captains?

15 responses

I don't know how you do choose induct or support them

Offer evening training

Take the views of senior players

Coaching

It seems to work quite well.

Transparent application and choice. Build a captains pack of information must knows

Explain what it entails.

list of potential players, if enough people a trial session

Helping with online results sheet. Janie does this for me.

Make sure their are more players to select a team

I found managing info on computer difficult

Establish interest from who would like the role primarily due to the probable number of people who'd put their name forward

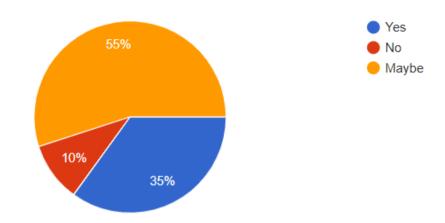
Be proactive in supporting the captains

I don't know the answer to that question as I never have any communication with the Suffolk LTA

Provide details of players who have represented before, guidance on roles and responsibilities.

Would written guidance on the role of captain be helpful?

20 responses



If you are a captain, has your team had to concede any matches this year? Please give reasons for each match conceded

- One captain said they had not had to concede a match but had fewer players as a result of the pandemic, and could not find replacements
- One captain had to concede a match because, two teammates having travelled to Cornwall, the other two teammates refused to travel at the last minute
- Another captain had to concede a match to Devon because the whole team considered it too far to travel without full reimbursement for travel and accommodation. This was based on their experience in 2022 of not being fully reimbursed for travelling to play a match in Newcastle upon Tyne. Other costs this year were lower because a husband drove the team to play at Bucks. It was reported that two good players would not play for County because it would cost too much. It was noted that Bucks also conceded the match to Devon
- The failure of the Ladies Over 35s to play this year because they could not get the full team was reported.

Thank you for your time and commitment. If there is anything else you want to say on this subject, please write here:

14 responses

The LTA are useless. The website is rubbish. They've taken over Local leagues and destroyed them. Where does all the money go that Wimbledon generates? why have we so few players in the top 100? Suffolk LTA seem focussed entirely on Ipswich - where's the support for other clubs? where are the events? re kit - I'd wear it and pay for it but only if it isn't awful, which it has been!!

Thanks for trying to improve Suffolk tennis.

We need to prevent this years issues in Cornwall from happening again at all costs (Ladies Over 50s). 2 team members had made the journey, costing considerable time, cost and effort, to find that their fellow team mates refused to travel the night before departure, with no good reason. Being let down by team members at the last minute is not acceptable, and those player(s) should face sanctions. There is also the issue of the difficulty of getting players in some age groups due to their work and family commitments. In this case, the team will consist of those who can make the commitment rather than the "best" players, but that is ok, they are the best the County can field, and they should be given the opportunity.

Thank you for asking.

Thank you for being interested in how county tennis operates

I really enjoy playing both in matches and the regular Wednesday morning sessions. Travelling to away and sometimes overnight matches is not an issue when doing it with folks you get along with. Finding the right combination of players is more important in my mind than trying to put together random high standard players of higher rankings. It's about team work! Sudden incapacitation injury is the only reason I have ever pulled out if a match, unfortunately this cannot always be foreseen!

If I am to play to my best I need to feel comfortable when playing so prefer to play in my own kit however I would be happy to have a top(not hoody!) or warm up top.

It is a considerable commitment and when I was working it was not one that I could have taken. I do whatever I can to support the captains as it's a difficult job to ensure they can put our teams so if I am approached late in the day to play for younger age group because they are short I have done so.

Thanks go to Stella who organises our monthly practices throughout the year.

The food at the Ipswich club is not exactly healthy and quite expensive., especially having to pay for two.

Our team would appreciate and enjoy matches against counties within a days journey.

It would be interesting to hear the results of this survey. Many thanks

This does not apply to Suffolk but opponents only providing three balls to warm up with.

Why is this survey been done now we are years too late.

I feel that players playing for the county should be better recognised by SLTA. You can see from my responses that it is a commitment to play for the County, both financially and emotionally. The players should receive at least an email from SLTA thanking them for playing, congratulating them on a successful event etc. (a social media post is not enough)

In addition, one respondent email to say 'thanks for the opportunity to comment.... The thing that rankles most is having to pay for food (not drinks) for home matches; it strikes me as almost petty'.

APPENDIX C

Summer County Cup

Men's Group 1 – Eastbour	ne			Ladies Group 1 – Eastbo	urne	
	W	R	1 1		W	R
Surrey	4	29	1	Hertfordshire	5	32
Hertfordshire	4	26		Hampshire & IOW	4	28
East of Scotland	2	23		Surrey	3	25
Kent	2	21		Northumberland	2	22
Yorkshire	2	20		Leicestershire	0	10
Suffolk	1	16		Nottinghamshire	0	2
Men's Group 2 – Havan	t			Ladies Group 2 – Notting	ham	
	W	R	1		w	R
North of Scotland	5	25	1	Middlesex	5	36
Northamptonshire	3	22		Yorkshire	4	22
Essex	3	21		Avon	2	20
South Wales	2	22		Cheshire	2	19
Middlesex	2	21		Norfolk	1	20
Cambridgeshire	0	14		Kent	1	18
Men's Group 3 – Frintor	n			Ladies Group 3 – Chelter	nham	
	W	R			W	R
Buckinghamshire	4	30		Somerset	4	30
Warwickshire	3	28		Derbyshire	4	27
West of Scotland	3	24		Gloucestershire	3	26
Derbyshire	2	21		Warwickshire	2	21
Berkshire	2	20		Lincolnshire	1	17
Norfolk	1	9		Cambridgeshire	1	14
Men's Group 4 – likley			Т	Ladies Group 4 – Cron	ner	
	W	R			W	R
Cheshire	5	32		Buckinghamshire	5	26
Hampshire & IOW	4	31		Lancashire	4	27
Lancashire	3	33		North Wales	3	26
Durham & Cleveland	2	18		Sussex	2	21
Lincolnshire	1	18		Essex	1	19
Dorset	0	3		East of Scotland	0	13
Mania Crown 5 - Faliwata				Ladies Group 5 – West Wo	athing	
Men's Group 5 – Felixsto	We	R	-	Ladies Group 5 – West Wo	W	R
Nottinghamshire	5	32	-	West of Scotland	4	25
Leicestershire	4	28	-	Berkshire	3	29
Devon	3	24	-	Herefordshire & Worcestershire	3	26
North Wales	2	19		South Wales	3	25
Staffordshire	1	12		Dorset	2	17
Somerset	0	7		North of Scotland	0	13
Men's Group 6 – Souths	03		T	Ladies Group 6 – North C	vford	
men a croup o - courta	W	R		Ladies Group 0 - Hortin C	W	R
Herefordshire & Worcestershire	5	29		Durham & Cleveland	5	31
Wiltshire	4	29		Suffolk	4	33
Shropshire	3	25		Northamptonshire	3	31
Avon	2	24		Cornwall	2	19
Oxfordshire	1	14		Bedfordshire	1	14
Cumbria	0	12		Shropshire	0	7
Men's Group 7 – Hunstan	ton		T	Ladies Group 7 – Manch	ester	
	W	R			W	R
Gloucestershire	2+3	13 + 17		Staffordshire	3+2	19 + 17
Northumberland	1+2	11 + 15		Cumbria	1+1	12 + 9
Bedfordshire	0+1	3+7		Isle of Man	0+1	9+9
Channel Islands - w/d 12.10.2022	0	0		South of Scotland	2+1	14 + 12
	W	R			W	R
Sussex	2+0	17 + 8		Devon	1+0	11 + 11
Cornwall	3+1	23 + 13	_	Oxfordshire	1+1	7+9
South of Scotland	1+2	12 + 13		Channel Islands - w/d 12.10.2022	0	0
Isle of Man	0+0	2+4		Wiltshire	1+2	11 + 14

W = WINS

R = RUBBERS

Winter County Cup

LTA Winter County Cup 2023 Women's Group 4a 🖈

General Draw Matches Statistics Player statistics

LTA Winter County Cup 2023 Women's Group 4a

		1	2	3	4
1	Leicestershire		2-5 Lost	7-2 Won	<mark>6-3</mark> Won
2	Derbyshire	5-2 Won		7-2 Won	8-1 Won
3	Herefordshire & Worcestershire	2-7 Lost	2-7 Lost		4-5 Lost
4	Suffolk	3-6 Lost	1-8 Lost	5-4 Won	

Standings of LTA Winter County Cup 2023 Women's Group 4a

	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	ers		Set	s	Sets %	Gan	nes	Games %
1 Derbyshire	6	3	20	-	5	41	-	11	78.8%	284 -	175	61.9%
2 Leicestershire	4	3	15	-	10	31	-	24	56.4%	235 -	216	52.1%
3 Suffolk	2	3	9	-	18	20	-	36	35.7%	224 -	268	45.5%
4 Herefordshire & Worcestershire	0	3	8	-	19	19	-	40	32.2%	194 -	278	41.1%

LTA Winter County Cup 2023 Men's Group 3b 🖈

General

Draw Matches

Statistics Player statistics

LTA Winter County Cup 2023 Men's Group 3b

		1	2	3	4
1	Lincolnshire		4-5 Lost	<mark>3-6</mark> Lost	1-8 Lost
2	Suffolk	5-4 Won		4-5 Lost	<mark>3-6</mark> Lost
3	South Wales	6-3 Won	5-4 Won		5-3 Won
4	Hampshire & IOW	8-1 Won	6-3 Won	3-5 Lost	

Standings of LTA Winter County Cup 2023 Men's Group 3b

	Points	Played	Rub	be	rs		Set	S	Sets %	Games	Games %
1 South Wales	6	3	16	-	10	36	-	24	60.0%	283 - 230	55.2%
2 Hampshire & IOW	4	3	17	-	9	38	-	20	65.5%	278 - 216	56.3%
3 Suffolk	2	3	12	-	15	26	-	36	41.9%	252 - 287	46.8%
4 Lincolnshire	0	3	8	-	19	20	-	40	33.3%	210 - 290	42.0%

Seniors County Cup

Ladies Over 40s – Ladies Over 40s – Ladies Over 40s - Grp 3b

	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	ers	S	et:	5	Sets %	Games	Games %
1 Cambridgeshire 40s	10	5	21	-	4	42	-	13	76.4%	266 - 143	65.0%
2 Bedfordshire 40s	6	5	16	-	9	34	-	18	65.4%	253 - 163	60.8%
3 Oxfordshire 40s	4	5	10	-	15	23	-	30	43.4%	185 - 194	48.8%
4 Dorset 40s	3*	5	13	-	12	27	-	28	49.1%	178 - 213	45.5%
5 Wiltshire 40s	2	5	8	-	17	19	-	37	33.9%	195 - 270	41.9%
6 Suffolk 40s	-1*	5	7	-	18	18	-	37	32.7%	167 - 261	39.0%

Ladies Over 50s – Ladies Over 50s Division 3 – Ladies Over 50s - Grp 3b

	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	ers	5	Set	s	Sets %	Games	Games %
1 Essex 50s	10	5	14	-	6	32	-	14	69.6%	214 - 141	60.3%
2 Somerset 50s	6	5	12	-	8	25	-	17	59.5%	194 - 148	56.7%
3 Berkshire 50s	6	5	10	-	10	24	-	24	50.0%	184 - 194	48.7%
4 Cornwall 50s	4	5	10	-	10	21	-	21	50.0%	181 - 155	53.9%
5 Norfolk 50s	4	5	8	-	12	19	-	27	41.3%	176 - 197	47.2%
6 Suffolk 50s	-6*	5	6	-	14	13	-	31	29.5%	103 - 217	32.2%

Ladies Over 60s – Ladies Over 60s Divisions 2 & 3 – Ladies Over 60s - Grp 3b

	Points	Played	F	۲u	bbe	rs		5	Set	s	Sets %	Gan	nes	Games %
1 Sussex 60s	8	4	1	3	-	3	2	8	-	6	82.4%	184 -	77	70.5%
2 Wiltshire 60s	6	4	1	0	-	6	2	3	-	16	59.0%	154 -	102	60.2%
3 Suffolk 60s	4	4	1	1	-	5	2	4	-	13	64.9%	160 -	122	56.7%
4 Berkshire 60s	2	4	4	4	-	12	1	1	-	26	29.7%	103 -	161	39.0%
5 Cornwall 60s	-3*	4	2	2	-	14		4	-	29	12.1%	46 -	185	19.9%

Ladies Over 65s – Ladies Over 65s Divisions 2 & 3 – Ladies Over 65s - Grp 2a

	Points	Played	Ru	ibbe	ers	:	Set	s	Sets %	Gan	nes	Games %
1 Kent 65s	6	4	13	-	3	26	-	8	76.5%	169 -	85	66.5%
2 Sussex 65s	6	4	10	-	6	22	-	14	61.1%	153 -	126	54.8%
3 Buckinghamshire 65s	6	4	10	-	6	22	-	14	61.1%	153 -	125	55.0%
4 Suffolk 65s	2	4	7	-	9	16	-	19	45.7%	126 -	149	45.8%
5 Leicestershire 65s	0	4	0	-	16	1	-	32	3.0%	77 -	193	28.5%

	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	rs		Set	s	Sets %	Games	Games %
1 South Wales 70s	6	4	13	-	3	27	-	9	75.0%	168 - 103	62.0%
2 Sussex 70s	6	4	10	-	6	22	-	13	62.9%	165 - 117	58.5%
3 Hampshire & IOW 70s	6	4	9	-	7	18	-	16	52.9%	133 - 123	52.0%
4 Hertfordshire 70s	2	4	5	-	11	13	-	22	37.1%	114 - 152	42.9%
5 Suffolk 70s	0	4	3	-	13	7	-	27	20.6%	93 - 178	34.3%

Ladies Over 70s – Ladies Over 70s – Ladies Over 70s - Grp 2b

Ladies Over 75s – Ladies Over 75s – Ladies Over 75s - Grp 2

	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	ers		Set	s	Sets %	Gan	nes	Games %
1 Devon 75s	6	3	12	-	0	24	-	0	100.0%	144 -	9	94.1%
2 Cambridgeshire 75s	2	3	6	-	6	12	-	13	48.0%	85 -	106	44.5%
3 Suffolk 75s	1*	3	5	-	7	11	-	15	42.3%	70 -	103	40.5%
4 Buckinghamshire 75s	-3*	3	1	-	11	3	-	22	12.0%	52 -	133	28.1%

	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	ers	5	Set	s	Sets %	Gam	ies	Games %
1 Suffolk 60s	8	4	12	-	8	25	-	19	56.8%	184 -	176	51.1%
2 Yorkshire 60s	6	4	13	-	7	30	-	15	66.7%	205 -	118	63.5%
3 Cambridgeshire 60s	4	4	10	-	10	22	-	22	50.0%	166 -	175	48.7%
4 Bedfordshire 60s	2	4	7	-	13	15	-	28	34.9%	138 -	190	42.1%
5 Staffordshire 60s	0	4	8	-	12	17	-	25	40.5%	150 -	184	44.9%

Mens Over 60s - Mens Over 60s - Mens Over 60s - Grp 2b

Mens Over 65s – Mens Over 65s – Mens Over 65s - Grp 2b

	Points	Points Played			Rubbers			s	Sets %	Gam	es	Games %
1 Hampshire & IOW 65s	6	4	14	-	6	29	-	15	65.9%	203 -	162	55.6%
2 Suffolk 65s	6	4	10	-	10	25	-	23	52.1%	182 -	170	51.7%
3 Sussex 65s	4	4	12	-	8	26	-	20	56.5%	185 -	167	52.6%
4 Bedfordshire 65s	4	4	9	-	11	20	-	26	43.5%	171 -	184	48.2%
5 Cambridgeshire 65s	0	4	5	-	15	15	-	31	32.6%	159 -	217	42.3%

Mens Over 75s - Mens Over 75s - Mens Over 75s - Grp 1b

									-			
	Points	Played	Ru	bbe	ers	5	Set	s	Sets %	Gar	nes	Games %
1 Kent 75s	8	4	14	-	2	28	-	4	87.5%	179 -	79	69.4%
2 Suffolk 75s	6	4	12	-	4	24	-	10	70.6%	165 ·	126	56.7%
3 Lancashire 75s	4	4	7	-	9	17	-	20	45.9%	137 -	153	47.2%
4 Sussex 75s	2	4	7	-	9	15	-	20	42.9%	148	139	51.6%
5 Nottinghamshire 75s	-3*	4	0	-	16	2	-	32	5.9%	53 ·	185	22.3%

Over 35s County Cup

Men's Group 3 - LTA Men's Over 35s County Cup Men's Group 3b														
	Points	Points Played			Rubbers			s	Sets %	Games			Games %	
1 South Wales	6	3	12	-	1	24	-	5	82.8%	101	-	46	68.7%	
2 Suffolk	4	3	6	-	9	13	-	21	38.2%	73	-	97	42.9%	
3 North Of Scotland	2	3	6	-	9	15	-	18	45.5%	77	-	87	47.0%	
4 Essex	0	3	4	-	9	12	-	20	37.5%	71	-	92	43.6%	

Men's Group 3 - LTA Men's Over 35s County Cup Men's Group 3b