

The HEAD H&W County Tennis League Competition Rules Summer 2025

General Purpose

1. These Rules shall apply to all divisions in the Summer and Winter Leagues. Additional Special Rules applicable to EAST and WEST Divisions are set out after these General Rules.
2. Should any point arise from these Rules, or otherwise, then this will be dealt with by the relevant League Organiser. Should any appeal be considered necessary then this will be directed to another League Organiser for review and a final decision made.
3. The Management Committee of the Association have delegated all other decisions relating to the Leagues to the Clubs. Any changes in the Rules must be approved by a meeting of Club Representatives. This meeting shall be convened by the League Organiser as necessary or at the request of not less than two clubs. All decisions taken at such a meeting shall be ratified at the next possible Management Committee Meeting of the Association. For the purpose of a meeting of Club Representatives, all clubs who play in the HEAD Herefordshire & Worcestershire County Tennis League are entitled to vote on any issues and changes to the League Rules, one vote per club.

Entry of Teams

4. The Competitions shall consist of three separate leagues, one for Ladies' Doubles, one for Men's Doubles and one for Mixed Doubles, run independently of each other. This arrangement will apply to a summer season and a winter season, each run separately from each other.
5. An entry fee, fixed annually by the League Committee will be charged to clubs for EACH Ladies', Men's and Mixed team playing in each summer and winter season. Teams that are entered must be from LTA registered venues.

Note: Club X enters two men's summer teams and three ladies winter teams. Five entry fees would need to be paid.

6. All entries must be submitted online to the League Organiser by the date specified for that season.
7. If a club withdraws a team, it is deemed to be their lowest team unless special circumstances prevail. Additional teams entered by a club will be placed in the lowest division as will teams entered by new clubs. The League Organiser may, however, use their discretion by placing a team in a higher division, provided that it does not involve the relegation of another team to a lower division.

Players

8. During each summer or winter season:
 - a. players must be bona-fide members of each club for which they play and registered as a player for each club via their British Tennis Membership profile. Players must be 12 years of age or older or turn 12 within that season to compete.
 - b. players must hold a British Tennis Membership Number and must be associated via the LTA website with the club for which they play. All results involving players who do not have a valid BTM by the end of the season will be voided and where applicable those points will be awarded to the opposition.

c. Players must not represent more than one club in the Ladies' or Men's or Mixed league. A player may represent a different club for the Mixed league than their Ladies or Men's club.

Note: A player may play for Club W in the Ladies' or Men's Summer League and Club X in the Ladies' or Men's Winter League, whilst playing for Club Y in the Mixed Summer League and Club Z in the Mixed Winter League.

d. Clubs must ensure that all players are uploaded to each of the teams that they may represent so that results can be entered correctly over the course of the season.

9. Clubs must nominate their 'A' team before their first **club** match. If a nomination list is not received by the appropriate League Organiser, the team playing in the first match for the 'A' team will be deemed to be the nominated team. Regular County players shall not play in any other team than club 'A' teams, and 'A' team players cannot play for lower ranking teams. Where a club has more than one team competing in the league, any vacancies must be filled by promoting players from lower ranking teams, and after playing two matches for any higher team, no player may play for a lower-ranking team regardless of division. If any team infringes any part of this rule they will forfeit the appropriate matches.

Arrangement of Fixtures

10. Clubs will be notified in advance of when League Organisers intend to publish the list of fixtures for the season. League Organisers will notify clubs when the fixture lists are published and how they can be accessed. It is then the responsibility of Club Match Secretaries or Team Captains to contact all opposing clubs, preferably by email, within two weeks of the fixtures being published to arrange a date. If Clubs do not comply then they may forfeit their fixtures at the discretion of the League Organiser. Home teams should offer a same list of dates to all away teams within the division, with three more dates being provided than the total number of dates required. The offered dates shall not include two successive dates. All such dates should then be held until all matches have been organised within the division, after which the dates can be released for use for home fixtures across other teams. All fixture dates must be entered online within four weeks of the fixtures being published. Actual arrangements as to whether fixtures are played in the evening or at weekends are left to the clubs concerned.

As per the past few seasons, there will not be a fixtures meeting.

11. "Intra Club" matches in the same division **MUST** be played before any other match is played. Otherwise, the **FIRST MATCH** on the fixture list of each club should be an 'A' team match.

12. Once the date for any fixture has been agreed, if either team fails to fulfil the fixture, it shall forfeit the match, the only reason for postponement being courts unfit or unavailable for play. In the event of a fixture being postponed, the home team must offer three alternative dates. The away team must accept one of the dates offered or forfeit the match. The offered dates shall not include two successive dates.

13. The above rule shall apply to unfinished matches, except that the team responsible for the failure to complete the match will only forfeit the unfinished rubbers. In the case of unfinished matches, whether or not a result has already been reached, it is only necessary to play off the outstanding rubbers, and these must be resumed at the point at which they were left off. If for any reason 'Team X' does agree to arrange a fixture at the request of 'Team Y', then in the event of the match not being played by the end of the season for any reason, Team X may claim the match. In all cases the League Organiser must be notified when a fixture is not played.

Note: Unfit for play is deemed to be when a fixture is postponed due to weather, e.g. rain, ice or snow. Unavailable for play is deemed to be due to works being undertaken, e.g. resurfacing.

14. If the courts of the home club are unavailable for play on the date arranged for a match, the match may be played on some other courts nominated by that club.

Note: The courts nominated by the home club can be at a different venue.

Fixture Day

15. All matches shall be played in accordance with the rules of tennis as set out by the ITF.

16. All matches must be played to the best of two tie-break sets and 1 match tie-break set (the first to 10 points provided there is a margin of 2 points).

17. The home club must provide a minimum of four HEAD Tour or HEAD Tour XT balls per court for each fixture.

18. In accordance with the current LTA Competition Regulations, immediately prior to a match, the players are entitled to a warm-up period not exceeding five minutes. Should a match be interrupted for reasons beyond the control of the players, a further warm-up period will be permitted immediately before the restart as follows:

0 to 15 minutes interruption: no further warm-up;

15 to 30 minutes interruption: three minutes further warm-up; and

0 or more minutes interruption: five minutes further warm-up.

19. Evening fixtures shall start by 6.30pm or later by mutual consent. In all matches, both evening and daytime, if a pair is not ready to commence play within 30 minutes of the start, it shall forfeit the first match.

Note: In extraordinary circumstances an application can be made to the relevant League Organiser for the rearrangement of an entire or incomplete fixture.

20. Unless Captains have mutually agreed otherwise before the start of a fixture, matches should be completed without a break.

21. The visitors have the right to stay on the same court for both matches of a fixture. In the event of a match not being completed due to bad light, the match must continue under floodlights, where available, unless this involves a change of court surface when the choice, as to whether to continue or not, is left to the away team.

Submission of Results

22. The home captain or match secretary is responsible for submitting the score online or a comment if the match is unfinished, within 48 hours of the match at <http://lta.tournamentsoftware.com/member/login.aspx> (link available at www.handwtennis.co.uk) otherwise all points may be awarded to the away team.

Note: It is recommended that both teams should keep a written record of the match result, signed by both captains at the fixture.

23. For both summer and winter leagues, all fixtures must be completed by midnight on the date notified by the League Organisers. If any fixture remains unfinished at the times given above, the score existing at that date shall determine the result, unless the League Committee decides otherwise.

24. 2 points shall be awarded for winning the fixture and 2 points for each rubber won. No points will be awarded for incomplete rubbers. If completed rubbers are equal the winner of the fixture shall be determined by reference to the number of sets won. If the number of sets won is equal, then the winner of the fixture shall be determined by reference to the number of games won. If the number of games won is also equal, each team will receive 1 point.

Forfeiture or conceding of or failure to fulfil a fixture

25. In the event of a team forfeiting a fixture the team receiving the walk-over shall be deemed to have won all matches relating to the fixture.

26. In the Summer League:

a. Failure to fulfil a fixture or conceding a fixture will result in 6 points (Divisions 1, 2, 3 and all East Divisions) and 4 points (all West Divisions) being deducted from the total number of points won at the end of the season.

b. A second conceded fixture will result in automatic relegation but all other points, for and against, relating to that team will stand.

c. The team to whom the fixture is conceded will be awarded 14 points (Divisions 1, 2, 3 and all East divisions) and ten points (all West Divisions). If a third fixture is conceded (as well as automatic relegation) all points relating to that team, for and against will be null and void.

d. For clubs who do not field a complete team on more than one occasion, the team will lose 2 points in addition to the 4 points lost by conceding 2 matches. If this happens on a third occasion, the team will lose 4 points in addition to the 4 points lost by conceding 2 matches.

27. In the Winter League (and Mixed Summer):

a. Failure to fulfil a fixture, by conceding the match, will result in 4 points being deducted from the total number of points at the end of the season.

b. A second conceded match will result in automatic relegation but all points, for and against, relating to that team will stand.

c. The team to whom the match is conceded will be awarded 10 points. If a third match is conceded (as well as automatic relegation) all points relating to that team, for and against will be null and void.

d. For clubs who do not field a complete team on more than one occasion, the team will lose 2 points in addition to the 4 points lost by conceding 2 matches. If this happens on a third occasion, the team will lose 4 points in addition to the 4 points lost by conceding 2 matches.

Determination of Standings, Promotion and Relegation

28. The winning team in a division is that which has scored the most points. At the end of a season, if two or more teams in any division have scored an equal number of points, the order of precedence shall be determined by the team which has the most wins, if still equal, by the number of rubbers won. Should the number of rubbers be equal, the percentage of sets won out of sets played shall decide and should the teams still be equal, the percentage of games won out of games played shall decide.

29. In the Summer League, the winning team in Division 1 (Ladies' and Men's) will be the champion team and will hold the championship shield for one year. The top two teams in Divisions 2 and 3 (Ladies' and Men's) will be promoted to Divisions 1 and 2 respectively, and the bottom two teams in Divisions 1 and 2 will be relegated to Divisions 2 and 3 respectively. The top team in Divisions 4 East and 4 West (Ladies' and Men's) will be promoted to Division 3 and the bottom two teams in Division 3 will be relegated to Divisions 4 East and 4 West respectively and two teams will usually be promoted and relegated from Division 5 onwards. If there are fewer than six teams in any division, only one team may be promoted and relegated from that division.

NOTE: There may be instances when League Organisers need to rearrange divisions due to additional teams entering or withdrawing.

30. In the Winter League (and Summer Mixed), the winning team of Division 1 (Ladies' and Men's) will be the champion team and will hold the championship shield for one year. The top two teams in Division 2 will be promoted to Division 1 and the bottom two teams in Division 1 will be relegated to Division 2. The top team in Divisions 3 East and West will be promoted to Division 2 and the bottom two teams in Division 2 will be relegated. Two teams will be relegated from Division 3 East and Division 3 West respectively and two teams will usually be promoted and relegated from Division 4 onwards (Ladies and Men). If there are fewer than six teams in any division, only one team will be promoted or relegated from that division. Each division, except the bottom one, will normally consist of seven teams playing each other once.

Special Rules

31. SPECIAL RULES applying to Summer Divisions 1, 2 and 3 and all Summer EAST Divisions:

a) Each Team will consist of three pairs, with each playing only two matches as follows: Each 1st Pair plays the opposing 1st and 2nd Pairs, each 2nd Pair plays the opposing 1st and 3rd Pairs and each 3rd Pair plays the opposing 2nd and 3rd Pairs.

32. SPECIAL RULES applying to all Winter Divisions and Summer Mixed Divisions:

a) Each team will consist of two pairs, each playing two matches as follows: 1st pair plays opposing 1st pair and 2nd against 2nd, followed by 1st against 2nd and 2nd against 1st.