

Belfast and District Lawn Tennis League

Rules – 2023

1. League Executive

- 1.1. The Belfast and District Lawn Tennis League and any Competitions under its auspices shall be administered by an Executive which shall consist of:
 - An Honorary Secretary/Joint Honorary Secretaries
 - An Honorary Treasurer and
 - A maximum of nine others on the committee.
- 1.2. Each member referred to above shall represent a Club which shall have competed in a League competition in the calendar year of election.
- 1.3. A Club may not have more than two representatives on the Executive.
- 1.4. At all meetings of the Executive, the quorum shall be four.

2. League Administration & Governance

- 2.1. An Annual General Meeting shall be called before the end of March each year. The members of the Executive referred to above in paragraph 1.1 retire and new members shall be elected. Retiring members shall be eligible for re-election.
- 2.2. Members of the Clubs which took part in the Competitions in that year shall be entitled to attend. Each Club is entitled to one vote.
- 2.3. The Honorary Secretary of the Executive shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting at the request of the Executive or immediately on receiving a request in writing from five constituent Clubs stating the purpose for which such a meeting is to be called. No other business shall be transacted at such meeting other than that for which the meeting has been expressly called.
- 2.4. At least seven days' notice in writing of a General Meeting mentioning the business to be considered shall be sent to the Honorary Secretary of each Club and to each member of the Executive.
- 2.5. No new rule shall be made, nor any rule altered, except at the Annual General Meeting or at an Extraordinary General Meeting.
- 2.6. Any dispute arising between Clubs in the Competitions shall be referred to the sole arbitration of the Executive, whose decisions shall be final and binding. Should any of the Clubs in connection with the dispute or protest have a member or members on the Executive, such members shall not be eligible to sit on the Executive while such a dispute or protest is being considered.

3. Club and Player Eligibility

- 3.1. The Competition shall be open to all Clubs affiliated to the Ulster Branch Tennis Ireland and shall not be in arrears as regards payment of the Affiliation Fee and the Capitation Levy of the Ulster Branch.
- 3.2. At least two courts shall be available for Inter-Club matches (three in the case of the Mixed League).

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4. Competition Entry and Entry Fees

- 4.1. The Competitions shall be held annually. Entries shall be on forms provided and must be received together with the entry fees by the Honorary Secretary of the Executive on a date determined by the Executive.
- 4.2. An appropriate fee will be determined for all Competitions by the Executive. No entries shall be accepted unless accompanied by the appropriate fee.
- 4.3. The Executive has the power to refuse entry/entries of any Club at its discretion.

5. League & Cup Competitions

- 5.1. Various Competitions shall be scheduled throughout the year and divided into divisions as numbers of entries permit. Divisions will be arranged in order of merit. Division 1 consisting of the strongest teams and the placing of the teams in the divisions shall be at the discretion of the Executive. Two teams will generally be promoted and two relegated each year. This practice may be overridden by the Executive should a new team enter, if a Club gains or loses players or if the size of divisions needs to be altered.
- 5.2. The teams competing in each division shall play matches against each other in accordance with a fixture list arranged by the Executive. The teams who receive the highest number of points, in their division, shall be the winners of that division. In the event of a tie in any division, the teams concerned shall play off, under the knock-out system, at reverse venues, as decided by the Executive.
- 5.3. The Executive shall determine the days of the week on which matches must be played and the period within which each Competition must be completed, including any play-offs.
- 5.4. In all Competitions, singles players and/or doubles pairings must be played in order of merit.

6. Matches brought forward, postponed or abandoned

- 6.1. All matches should be played on the date indicated on the fixture list or prior to the date on the fixture list by prior arrangement. A match may only be postponed or abandoned by agreement between the opposing Clubs by reason of adverse weather conditions or unplayable courts.
- 6.2. Matches thus postponed or abandoned shall be finished before the date fixed for completion in the relevant competition. The score in all events at the time of abandonment shall stand on the resumption of the match.
- 6.3. Notification of the postponement or abandonment of a match must be sent to the Division Secretary of the Executive by the team secretary of the home Club concerned not later than 24 hours following the date on which the match was to have been played or the match abandoned. Such notification shall state the date on which the match will be played or resumed.
- 6.4. The format of each League is set out in the table at the end of this document.

7. Nomination of Players

- 7.1. Each Club shall nominate the members of each team entered by the Club for the competitions. The Singles players shall be nominated in order of merit, which order shall be adhered to throughout the season. The notification containing the names of the nominated members of each team shall be sent to the Honorary Secretary of the Executive by a date set by the Executive.

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Points shall not be awarded in respect of any match played after that date if this rule has not been complied with.

- 7.2. A nominated member of a team may not play for a lower team. A player may play twice for a higher team without affecting his/her eligibility for a lower team. A player may play for a higher team in a play-off without affecting his eligibility for the lower team.
- 7.3. Prior to the commencement of each match, the Captains of the opposing teams shall exchange a list of the names of the members of their respective team in the order of merit in which the players will play in both Singles and Doubles events. Where a match is abandoned, the order of merit as declared must be adhered to on the resumption of the match.
- 7.4. No person may play in a competition or any resultant competition for more than the one Club during any one season.
- 7.5. The penalty for the breach of Rules 6.2 to 6.4 shall be the loss of the game including the illegal player(s) and those below in order of merit.

8. Custody of Cups

- 8.1. Where a cup or trophy shall be awarded to the winning Club, such Club shall be responsible for its safe custody. The cup or trophy shall remain the property of the Belfast and District Lawn Tennis Leagues and shall be returned not later than 1 September in the year following that in which it was awarded. The winners of each division of the League shall be awarded a plaque that shall remain the property of the Club.

9. Reporting the Results

- 9.1. Results must be received by the Divisional Secretary within 24 hours of the conclusion of the match. A copy of the Result card should either be scanned or photographed and then e-mailed by the winning team (or by the home team in the case of a draw). Clubs may be penalised if the result arrives late.

10. Balls

- 10.1. The home team has the choice of any tennis ball approved by Tennis Ireland.

11. Starting Time of Matches

- 11.1. All players from both teams must be ready to play at the stated starting times as set by the Executive.
- 11.2. The Executive will take action as it sees fit on receipt and investigation of reports of the failure of a player or players to be in attendance at the stated times.
- 11.3. Without prejudice to such action, the Executive hereby provides that should the absence of player(s) of either team prevent the commencement of play later than 30 minutes from the stated start time, in ties for which court(s) are available but on which no other tie within the fixture can be played at that time, the offending team shall forfeit the tie so delayed to a maximum of two ties as set out on the official match card.
- 11.4. Where ties have been forfeited under the provision of this rule, each of the Clubs concerned should report the matter to the Executive within three days for its information.

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12. Home Teams

- 12.1. The first named Club in a fixture is known as the Home Team. Matches shall be played on the courts available at the Home Club unless otherwise agreed by the Captain of the opposing team.

13. Rules of Lawn Tennis

- 13.1. Matches in the Competitions shall be played in accordance with the Rules of Lawn Tennis as sanctioned by Tennis Ireland. The tie-break system will operate at 6 games all in each set in every three set match. The Executive has the right to refuse the entry from a Club which has either withdrawn from or failed to fulfill fixtures in a previous season unless a Club has paid a financial penalty determined by the Executive.
- 13.2. In exceptional circumstances the Executive has powers of discretion.

League formats and scoring

Competition	Format	Timing	Team format	Matches	Scoring	Divisional or match play-off: if tied in matches, then COUNTBACK:
Singles League (Ladies & Gents)	Best of 3 tie break sets	March to April Weekday evenings at 6:30 pm	Three ladies (Ladies Singles) Four men (Gents Singles)	Each player plays one singles match against their corresponding opponent.	1 point per match. All matches must be played	1. Count back of sets, games 2. Nominated players play a Championship tie-break
Mixed League	Best of 3 tie break sets The third set being a Championship tie-break of first to 10 points with a 2 point margin.	April to June Weekday evenings at 6:30 pm	Four ladies and four men	Each player plays one doubles match and a mixed doubles match.	2 points for a win, and 1 point for a draw	1. Count back of sets, games, points in Championship tie-break 2. Nominated mixed pairs play a Championship tie- break
Evergreen League (Ladies & Gents)	Best of 3 tie break sets The third set being a Championship tie-break of first to 10 points with a 2 point margin.	April to June Friday evenings at 6:30 pm	Four ladies (Ladies Evergreen) Four men (Gents Evergreen) All players of 40* years and over *eligible if age limit attained during the year of their respective event.	Each player plays doubles against both the pairs of the opposing team.	3 points for a win, and 1 point for a draw	1. Count back of sets, games, points in Championship tie-break 2. Nominated pairs play a Championship tie-break
Mixed League Challenge Cup	A seeded knockout competition for Mixed League Winners from Divisions 4 and below. Best of 3 tie-break sets The third set being a Championship tie-break of first to 10 points with a 2 point margin.	A scheduled week late June or early July to be determined by the Executive.	As per mixed league	As per mixed league	N/A	1. As per mixed league

League formats and scoring

Competition	Format	Timing	Team format	Matches	Scoring	Divisional or match play-off: if tied in matches, then COUNTBACK:
<p>Knockout Cup (Ladies & Gents)</p>	<p>A knockout competition</p> <p>Junior section is restricted to Division 7 and lower, Intermediate section is restricted to Divisions 4 and lower, and the Senior section is open to all players.</p> <p>Best of 3 tie-break sets</p> <p>Eligible clubs or players who have not taken part in the Mixed League Competition may enter and such teams or players shall be graded at the discretion of the Executive.</p> <p>The Executive also reserves the right to place teams in a higher/lower section than by right of their division in the Mixed League.</p>	<p>A scheduled one or two week period in September to be determined by the Executive.</p> <p>Weekday evenings at 6:30 pm</p> <p>Finals at a central venue on a nominated day during the last weekend of the one or two week period.</p> <p>If a match is unavoidably postponed, for reasons such as weather, the match shall be played on the following day.</p> <p>Any team not being in a position to start a match by 6.45 pm shall forfeit the tie/ties which they cannot put onto court. If a match has not started by 7.00 pm the match goes by default to the opposing team. In this event, the Knock-Out Cup Secretary must be contacted by telephone not later than 7.15 pm on the evening of the match by the winning team.</p>	<p>Four ladies (Ladies) or four men (Gents)</p>	<p>Each player plays doubles against both the pairs of the opposing team</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Count back of sets, games 2. Nominated pairs play a Championship tie-break

League formats and scoring

Competition	Format	Timing	Team format	Matches	Scoring	Divisional or match play-off: if tied in matches, then COUNTBACK:
Summer League	Best of 3 tie break sets The third set being a Championship tie-break of first to 10 points with a 2 point margin.	August to September Weekday evenings at 6:30 pm	Two Ladies and two men	Each player plays a doubles and a mixed doubles.	1 point awarded per match – all matches must be played	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Count back of sets, games, points in Championship tie-break Nominated mixed pairs play a Championship tie-break
Autumn League (Ladies & Gents)	Best of 3 tie break sets The third set being a Championship tie-break of first to 10 points with a 2 point margin.	Late September to early November Saturday mornings at 9:30 am	Four ladies (Ladies) or four men (Gents)	Each player plays doubles against both the pairs of the opposing team	3 points for a win, and 1 point for a draw	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Count back of sets, games, points in Championship tie-break Nominated pairs play a Championship tie-break
Floodlit League	One professional set of first to 10 games. At 9-9 the deciding game will be a 7 point tie-break.	November to February Weekday evenings at 6:30 pm	Two Ladies and two men	Each player plays a doubles and a mixed doubles.	1 point awarded per match – all matches must be played	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Count back of sets, games, points in Championship tie-break Nominated mixed pairs play a Championship tie-break
Winter League (Ladies & Gents)	Best of 3 tie break sets, the third set being a Championship tie-break of first to 10 points with a 2 point margin.	January to March Saturday mornings at 10 am	Four ladies (Ladies) or four men (Gents)	Two doubles with pairings drawn on the match day by team captains Each player plays doubles against both the pairs of the opposing team.	3 points for a win, and 1 point for a draw	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Count back of sets, games Nominated pairs play a Championship tie-break