



ESSEX TENNIS

REGULATIONS FOR ESSEX COUNTY TENNIS LEAGUES

TITLE

1. The Competitions shall be called THE ESSEX OPEN LEAGUE and THE ESSEX SENIORS LEAGUE.

OBJECTS

2. To provide competitive tennis for Member Organisations registered with Essex Tennis.

CONSTITUTION

3. The ESSEX COUNTY TENNIS LEAGUES are constituted as a non-profit making organisations and shall be run under the auspices of Essex Tennis as defined in the Constitution and Rules of Essex Tennis, (hereinafter called Essex Tennis Rules) 2, 3, 4 (b) and (c). (These rules can be found on the Essex Tennis website).

MEMBERSHIP

4. Applications for Membership must be made to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary before 1st November in each year. Only those clubs who are Essex Advantage members or Proprietary clubs (that have directly affiliated to the LTA) may enter teams. Proprietary clubs (that have directly affiliated to the LTA) will pay a fee determined by the Competitions Committee. The acceptance or rejection of any application shall rest entirely with the Competitions Committee.

NON-PAYMENT OF ANNUAL FEES

5. In the event of any fees due remaining unpaid after the due date the Competitions Committee may withdraw Membership of the club or they may take such other action as they think fit.

RESIGNATIONS

6. Any Member Organisation wishing to withdraw from the Leagues must do so by 1st October in each year.

MANAGEMENT

7. The Essex Tennis Competitions Committee shall manage the Essex Open and Seniors League. The Competitions Committee is as defined in the Essex Tennis rules (see Rule 14 (f.ii)). Two of the persons, being nominated to serve on that Committee will be proposed and approved at the Annual General Meeting of the Essex Open League.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS AND FIXTURES MEETING

8. An Annual General Meeting and a Fixtures Meeting shall be held in London or Essex within 8 months of the financial year end and it shall be held not earlier than 6pm on a weekday. The League Secretary shall give League Member Organisations ten weeks advance notice of the date. The accidental omission to give notice of a Meeting to any person entitled to attend shall not invalidate the proceedings of that Meeting.

a. The business of the Annual General Meeting shall include the following:

- i. To receive a report from the Competitions Committee. This shall include those of the Chairman of Competitions, the Open League Secretary and the Seniors League Secretary.
- ii. To elect two representatives to serve on the Competitions Committee (as per regulation 7).
- iii. To decide all Essex Open and Seniors League regulations and other matters, including the qualification to play for a club, the composition of the leagues, the composition of matches, the postponement of matches, the nomination of players, the distribution and allocation of points and the concession of games and points.
- iv. Any other appropriate matters.

b. **Nominations, resolutions and proposals.** These must be received by the Open League Secretary seven weeks prior to the AGM for inclusion on the Agenda. The Essex Tennis Council and the Competitions Committee may make resolutions and proposals, but they may not make nominations in respect of persons to serve on the Competitions Committee.

c. **Notice of Meeting.** This shall be sent to all Members of the Essex Tennis Council and Competitions Committee and to the Secretaries of Member Organisations (or as otherwise directed) at least ten days prior to the previously advised date for the Meeting. Such notice shall specify the date, the time and place of the Meeting and shall include the Agenda, together with the names of persons standing for election in accordance with Regulation 8. A copy of the League Tables shall also accompany it. The accidental omission to give notice of the Meeting to any person entitled to attend shall not invalidate the proceedings of that Meeting.

d. **Attendance.** All League Member Organisations and members of the Essex Tennis Council and Competitions Committee are entitled to attend together with the President, Life Vice President and Vice Presidents of Essex Tennis. For the fixture meeting, attendance of League Member Organisations is mandatory and any Member Organisation which does not send a representative to arrange the fixtures for the forthcoming season shall be fined the sum of £50 (fifty pounds).

e. **The Chair.** The Chairman of the Competitions Committee shall take the chair and in his/her absence the Meeting shall elect its own Chairman. The Chairman's decision on all matters regarding the conduct of the meeting is final.

f. **Quorum.** No business other than the formal adjournment of the Meeting shall be transacted unless a quorum is present and such quorum shall consist of not less than twenty persons present who are entitled to vote.

g. **Voting Rights.** All Advantage Essex Member Organisations are entitled to two votes. For the avoidance of doubt, proprietary clubs that are directly affiliated to the LTA may have one representative in attendance who will have the right to speak and make proposals but not to vote. All Members of the Essex Tennis Council and Competitions Committee are entitled to one vote and shall not be deemed to be voting on behalf of the respective Organisations to which they belong. The President and Vice Presidents of Essex Tennis are entitled to one vote each.

h. **Voting.** Every person entitled to vote shall have one vote upon every nomination, resolution or proposal and it shall be decided by a show of hands unless prior to any vote being taken, the Chairman shall decide otherwise. Only those present are entitled to vote, and each person is only entitled to one vote. If there is an election because the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, each person shall only vote for as many candidates as there are vacancies, and if any person votes for more or less candidates than there are vacancies, their votes shall not be counted. Where there is an equality of votes, there shall be a second count and if upon such second count, there again be an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

i. **Amendments.** The Chairman may, at his or her discretion, permit amendments to be put forward at the AGM. Any person present (and entitled to vote) may put forward an amendment. Every amendment to a proposal shall be proposed and seconded. In the event of there being more than one amendment to any proposal, the last amendment shall be the first voted upon, and if carried shall become a substantive resolution. If an amendment is not carried, the amendment (if any) immediately preceding it shall be next voted upon, and if carried shall become a substantive resolution. In the event of no amendment being carried the original proposal shall be voted upon.

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETINGS

9. a. **i.** An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Essex County Leagues may be held by the Competitions Committee whenever it considers it appropriate.

ii. An Extraordinary General Meeting of either the Essex County Leagues shall be held within seven weeks after the receipt by the League Secretary of a requisition in writing to that effect by five or more Members Clubs. Every such requisition shall specify the business for which the meeting is to be convened and shall be accompanied by an appropriate resolution or proposal. No other business shall be conducted at such meeting. In the event that any of the resolutions or proposals are not agreed, no requisition for an Extraordinary General Meeting to consider the same resolution or proposal, or a resolution or proposal in like terms convening the same subject, shall be submitted within a period of two years of the rejection. NB: This does not preclude the resolution being proposed again at an AGM.

b. **Notice of Meeting.** This shall be sent to the Officers and other members of the Essex Tennis Council and to the Secretaries of the Member Organisations at least ten days prior to the date fixed for the meeting. Such notice shall specify the date, time and place of the meeting and shall include the agenda. The accidental omission to give notice of a Meeting to any person entitled to attend shall not invalidate the proceedings of that meeting.

c. **Attendance.** All League Member Organisations and Members of the Essex Tennis Council and Competitions Committee are entitled to attend together with the President, Life Vice President and Vice Presidents of Essex Tennis in accordance with Rule 8 (d).

d. **The Chair.** The Chairman of the Competitions Committee shall take the chair, and in his/her absence, the Meeting shall elect its own Chairman. The Chairman's decision on all matters regarding the conduct of the meeting is final.

e. **Amendments.** The Chairman may, at his or her discretion, permit amendments to be put forward at the EGM. Any person present (and entitled to vote) may put forward an amendment. Every amendment to a proposal shall be proposed and seconded. In the event of there being more than one amendment to any proposal, the last amendment shall be the first voted upon, and if carried shall become a substantive resolution. If an amendment is not carried, the amendment (if any) immediately preceding it shall be next voted upon, and if carried shall become a substantive resolution. In the event of no amendment being carried the original proposal shall be voted upon.

f. **Quorum.** No business other than the formal adjournment of the meeting shall be transacted unless a quorum is present, and such quorum shall consist of not less than twenty persons present and entitled to vote.

g. **Voting Rights.** All Members Organisations representatives are entitled to vote in accordance with Rule 8(h), and all members of the Essex Tennis Council and Competitions Committee are entitled to one vote and shall not be deemed to be representatives of the respective organisations to which they belong. The President and Vice Presidents of Essex Tennis are entitled to one vote each.

h. **Voting.** Every person entitled to vote shall have one vote upon every resolution or proposal and it shall be decided by a show of hands unless, prior to any vote being taken, the Chairman shall decide otherwise. Only those present are entitled to vote and each person is only entitled to one vote. All business at the Meeting shall require a two-thirds majority of the votes properly recorded at such a meeting for the resolution or proposal to be carried out.

QUALIFICATION TO PLAY FOR A CLUB

10. The qualification to play for a Club in the Essex Tennis competition shall be bona fide playing membership of such club which is restricted to members of Clubs as defined in Essex Tennis Rules 4 (b) and (c). Bona fide playing membership shall mean a player who has been a member for at least fourteen days and has paid the appropriate subscription to entitle that person full playing membership or junior membership as appropriate for at least the summer and/or winter season or other agreed period (the summer, winter or other agreed period must be for a minimum of six months), or a life member elected after payment of a recognised commutation or in recognition of some years of service to the Club, but not a temporary member or one brought in only for specific events, or a County member (or similar) unless otherwise agreed by the Competition Secretary in writing. Such agreement will not be given unless that member lives at least 25 miles from the club and has a paid subscription of 50% or more of the full annual subscription which would apply to a person of that category. An employee of the Club shall not be so eligible unless she or he has also paid the appropriate subscription as a playing member, or who has been accorded full membership under the terms of his or her employment. Players are not entitled to play for more than one club in either the Essex Open or Essex Seniors League during the same season. However, playing in these competitions does not debar a player from representing a different club in other club competitions organised by Essex Tennis namely the Essex Summer Cup Competitions and the Essex Winter Cup Competitions. Seniors age groups: the relevant ages and dates of birth are defined in the rules and regulations of the LTA. Members of Essex proprietary clubs (e.g. David Lloyd) may only play for one club within the relevant group. That is to say they may elect, on an annual basis, to play either for the relevant club at which they pay their membership fee or for a different, nominated, club within the same group. If no club is nominated the player will be considered to be a member at which they pay their subscription fee. For the avoidance of doubt, both the club at which they pay their subscription fee and the nominated club must be within the County of Essex to enable the member to play in Essex Tennis competitions. This rule will apply to Essex Tennis competitions.

COMPOSITION OF LEAGUES

11. a.i. The Open League will be run in Divisions in both a pyramid style and conventional format. The pyramid system will consist of a number of divisions and each division except the 1st Division may have more than one group of teams, which will be referred to as sub-divisions. The Summer League shall consist of a Men's Doubles Section and Ladies Doubles Section. Each section shall comprise divisions having a maximum of nine teams. There shall also be a Winter League with Men's & Ladies Doubles, six teams per division as far as possible. The Member Clubs at an Annual General Meeting convened under these Rules shall have the power to vary these numbers.

a. ii. The Seniors League will be run in divisions and maybe in Pyramid or Conventional format. The league will consist of a Men's Doubles, Ladies Doubles and a Men's over 55 Doubles section. Each section will comprise divisions having a maximum of 7 teams. Each match will be played on a home and away basis.

Players become eligible to compete in the Seniors League when ladies are in their 40th year and men in their 45th or 55th year.

b. A pyramid system may operate in the leagues where there is a minimum of 5 separate divisions (see note regulation 11 (c)). Clubs shall be entitled to enter one or more teams in each section, but no more than two teams of the same club shall be allowed to play in the same division. If promotion shall cause this circumstance, then the lower team shall not be promoted but the team below them shall be promoted in their place provided they have not finished lower than third. If relegation of a team would cause them to play in the same division as a lower team of the same club, the lower team shall be regarded as one of the two teams to be relegated from their division unless they were eligible for promotion; in this case, both teams would stay in their present divisions. If the lower team is already in the bottom division both teams would then play in the bottom division, but players would not be allowed to play for both teams.

c. Under the pyramid system, a maximum of two teams of the same club shall be allowed to play in any division or sub-division. Two teams will be relegated from Division One at the end of each season and shall be replaced by the respective winners of 2a and 2b. When two teams from the same club are in the same division or sub-division then the match between these two teams must be the first match played in the season. However, more than two teams of the same club shall not be allowed to play in any division or sub-division. If promotion shall cause this circumstance, then the lower team shall not be promoted but the team below them shall be promoted in their place. If relegation of a team would cause them to play in the same division as a lower team of the same club, the lower team shall be regarded as one of the two teams to be relegated from their division unless they were eligible for promotion; in this case both teams would stay in their present division. If a club has teams in a division and promotions dictate that two teams from that club should be promoted, then only the higher ranked team will be promoted i.e. a 2nd team would be promoted instead of a 3rd team. This could apply if there were teams from that club already in one division higher. If the number of teams under the pyramid system is an even number this dictates there being three sub-divisions in the lowest division. In this case two teams from each of these sub-divisions will be promoted to be replaced by the lowest three teams in the sub-division of the next division above.

d. Under the pyramid system, the Open League Secretary, the Seniors League Secretary and Competition Committee shall have the power to move teams between similar sub-divisions for the benefit of the League and shall decide which sub-division a relegated or promoted team may be placed into.

e. The Competitions Committee shall have the right to amend the number of teams in division or sub-division.

COMPOSITION OF MATCHES

12.a. **Open Summer Men's & Ladies Doubles Sections.** Each competing team shall consist of four players who shall be arranged in pairs by their respective captains and each pair shall play against each pair of the opposing team the best of three sets. The LTA tie break shall apply at 6 games all, in all sets in Men's divisions 1 and 2. In all other Men's divisions and all Ladies divisions the third set shall be replaced by a 10 point championship tie break. If the 10 point tie break reaches 10 all the winner must have a 2 point margin. The order of play for the first round shall be decided by lot and in the second round the pairs of the home team shall change courts to play the other visiting pair.

b. **Seniors Doubles Section.** Each competing team shall consist of four players who shall be arranged in pairs by their respective captains and each pair shall play against each pair of the opposing team the best of three sets. The LTA tie break will apply at 6 games all in the first 2 sets. If these sets are tied a 10 point championship tie break shall be played. If the 10 point tie break reaches 10 all the winner must have a 2 point margin. The order of play for the first round shall be decided by lot and in the second round the pairs of the home team shall change courts to play the other visiting pair.

c. **Open Winter Men's & Ladies' Doubles Sections.** Each competing team shall consist of four players who shall be arranged in pairs by their respective captains and each pair shall play against each pair of the opposing team the best of three sets. The LTA tie break will apply at 6 games all in the first 2 sets. If these sets are tied a 10 point championship tie break shall be played. If the 10 point tie break reaches 10 all the winner must have a 2 point margin. The order of play for the first round shall be decided by lot and in the second round the pairs of the home team shall change courts to play the other visiting pair.

13. If the courts to be used for a match are not of a uniform type of surface, the visiting Club shall have the right to insist which of their pairs shall play on which courts. This decision shall be taken before play commences.

14. If the first round shall not have been completed or there has been no play due to bad weather, the match shall be deemed to be a draw unless the respective Clubs can agree a re-arranged date. Either team may concede events to complete a round. If the match be played upon a later date it shall be wholly replayed and any completed events in the abandoned match disregarded.

FIXTURES AND POSTPONEMENTS OF MATCHES

15. a. A League Match may be postponed giving precedence to an Essex Cup Match, or Seniors LTA Inter-Club Championship Match, or Seniors Inter-County Match or National Team Competitions or the Essex Winter or Summer Finals if two or more of a Clubs nominated players (or regular players if nominations are not required) are playing in the finals, but not otherwise, because of the non-availability of regular players. However, if the home team itself is not playing the cup match, the opposing League team shall have the right to stage the match on their own courts on the original date.

b. Fixture lists for each club should be sent to the Open League Secretary and to all opposing clubs by the 31st March for the Summer Leagues and 31st October for the Winter Leagues. It is also the responsibility of the away club to confirm a fixture with the home club in the week leading up to the arranged match. Should either the above points not be carried out then the home club will have priority in any dispute.

c. Fixture lists for each club should be sent to the Essex Seniors League Secretary and the opposing clubs by 28th February

d. Matches may be rearranged up to 28 days following the Essex Fixtures Meeting. Thereafter they may only be rearranged with the consent of both Match Secretaries.

NOMINATION OF PLAYERS

16. A Club with more than one team in any Section shall nominate teams as follows:

a. A Club with two teams shall nominate its first team, the players of which shall be the best who are regularly available to play for that team.

b. A Club with three or more teams shall nominate all but the bottom team in order of merit from those regularly available to play for each team. However, if a club has more than one team in the bottom division of the league, all players shall be nominated. Any player nominated shall be ineligible to play for a lower division.

c. A Club with two teams in the same division or sub-division must nominate players for both teams.

d. Such nominations must be received by the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary in writing before the first match. In the event of failure to nominate players, those playing in the first match shall be deemed to be nominated for that team. Thereafter, members of such teams shall be ineligible to play for a lower team except as provided in sub-paragraph (e) below.

e. Any nominated player may act as a substitute for a higher team twice only without being debarred from playing or continuing to play in a lower team. Subject to sub-paragraph (f) below, any player not nominated may play for any team twice only without being debarred from playing in a lower team. Where a club has two teams in the same division or sub-division players nominated for one team cannot play for the other team in that division, and any player who has been a substitute in one team cannot subsequently be a substitute for the other team in that division or sub-division.

f. The nominated players may be changed on giving 12 days' notice to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary and the Competitions Committee who shall have the right to refuse to accept such alterations if they consider them unreasonable.

g. The Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary shall, in consultation with the Competitions Committee, also have the right to withhold points if he is dissatisfied with any nominations as set out above, or if a non-nominated player appears to have been included in a lower team than seems justified by known club ranking.

h. In the event of faulty nominations as defined above, the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary, in consultation with the Competitions Committee shall: -

i. Regard all events won by player included under a faulty nomination as forfeit to the opposing side and, in addition

ii. Deduct one league point for each occasion that a player with a faulty nomination is fielded.

POINTS

17. a. **Open Summer Men's & Ladies Doubles.** One point will be awarded for each set won by both teams. (This includes the 10 point Championship Tie Break). Two bonus points will be awarded to the team winning the most rubbers. One bonus point will be awarded if the number of rubbers won is equal. The team winning the most points in a match are declared the winners. Any rubber not completed will result in one point for each team. If no rubbers are completed and the match cannot be re-arranged, then each team will receive four points. One complete round must be completed for the match result to stand. One point will be deducted for teams which turn up with only one pair.

b. **Open Winter Men's and Ladies Doubles.** One point will be awarded for each set won by both teams. (This includes the 10 point Championship Tie Break). Two bonus points will be awarded to the team winning the most rubbers. One bonus point will be awarded if the number of rubbers won is equal. The team winning the most points in a match are declared the winners. Any rubber not completed will result in one point for each team. If no rubbers are completed and the match cannot be rearranged, then each team will receive four points. One complete round must be completed for the match result to stand. One point will be deducted for teams which turn up with only one pair.

c. **Seniors Doubles.** One point will be awarded for each set won by both teams. (This includes the 10 point Championship Tie Break). Two bonus points will be awarded to the team winning the most rubbers. One bonus point will be awarded if the number of rubbers won is equal. The team winning the most rubbers in a match is declared the winner. (There could be a maximum of 14 points for the whole match) i.e. 10 points for the winning team and 4 points for the losing team. Any rubber not completed will result in one point for each team. If no rubbers are completed and the match cannot be re-arranged, then each team will receive four points. One complete round must be completed for the match result to stand. One point will be deducted for teams which turn up with only one pair.

d. Walkovers and Defaults.

i. If a team concedes one walkover it will be debited 7 points.

ii. If a team concedes 2 or more walkovers in a season, its record will be expunged, and it will be deemed to be bottom of its division and relegated one or more divisions where applicable

iii. The team that wins a match by default shall receive a score equal to the best score achieved by another team against the defaulting team with the proviso that the score must be at least the minimum for winning the match (7 points).

18. In the event of an equal number of points being gained by two or more teams at the end of the season, the position in the League Table will be decided on the number of matches won. If these are equal, the result will be decided on the number of matches won and drawn. If these are equal the result will be decided by the result of the match between the teams. If these are still equal the result will be decided by the percentage of games won to those lost.

19. Subject to the provisions of Regulation 11 above, promotion and relegation between divisions shall be on the basis of "two up, two down" (i.e. the leading two teams in a division shall be promoted to the next higher division, while the two clubs finishing in the bottom two positions shall be relegated to the next division below). The winners of Division One shall be declared the League Champions for the ensuing year.

CONCESSION OF GAMES AND POINTS

20a. If any player be absent from the court and not ready to play after the time fixed for the commencement of play, the opposition shall be entitled to claim sets/rubbers as follows: -

30 minutes absent first set

45 minutes absent second set and thus first rubber

60 minutes absent second rubber.

b. Matches may not be claimed or conceded without the consent of a member of the Competitions Committee. Any dispute should be referred immediately to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary within 14 days.

c. If a match is postponed by a club, other than to give precedence to a match under Regulation 15, and the match is subsequently not played for any reason, the match shall be awarded against the club which caused the original postponement, subject to the discretion of the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary or Competitions Committee.

RESULTS

21a. Detailed results of matches, must be forwarded by both clubs by post or email to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match. If no match result is received by the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary within 7 days of the match being played the result may be declared null and void. If an extension of the end of season has been agreed by the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary, then for any match played during the period of the extension of the following applies: The captain of the winning team must telephone or e-mail the result to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary on the evening of the match. Both clubs must email or post off a result card, within 24 hours of the match being played to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary.

b. Within 7 days of the end of the season, as defined in regulation 22, all clubs are required to post or e-mail a Summary Card for each team showing all match results to the Open League Secretary/Seniors League Secretary.

COMPLETION OF MATCHES

22a Open League matches shall be completed by 30th September in each year. An extension of two weeks may only be granted by the Open League Secretary for extenuating circumstances. All matches in the Winter Section shall be completed by 31st March unless an extension has been granted (maximum two weeks).

b. The Seniors League season will start on the 1st February and will finish on the 16th November each year. An extension of two weeks may only be granted by the Seniors League Secretary for extenuating circumstances.

BALLS

23. The new balls shall be supplied and paid for by the home Club. The balls used shall be top grade balls manufactured by the current Essex Tennis Sponsors (if applicable).

ATTIRE

24. Tennis attire shall be worn on court. Shoes shall be without heels; rigid soles are prohibited.

TROPHIES

25. The winning Club in each of the Divisions or Sub-divisions of the Open and Seniors League shall be entitled to hold the trophy provided by Essex Tennis until required for presentation to the winners the following season. Clubs responsible for unreturned trophies at the AGM shall receive a fine of £50 for each unreturned trophy. In addition, clubs returning trophies which have not been engraved with the previous year's winners shall receive a fine of £50 for each trophy returned in this condition. Fines shall be collected with the annual fees.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE

26. As defined in Essex Tennis Rule 15 (a) and (b).

REFRESHMENTS

27. Light refreshments should be provided by the home club. If the away team does not require refreshments they should, at least 48 hours prior to the match, advise the home club to this effect. For the winter season the home club should supply, at least, liquid refreshments.

LP/12/05/18