



# ESSEX TENNIS

**THE LEAGUE RULES OF THE ESSEX TENNIS COMPETITIONS [ETC]  
[formerly the Essex Tennis Competitions Organisation]  
These rules, when appropriate, may be changed by the  
ESSEX TENNIS COMPETITIONS TEAM [ETCT] who will formally  
communicate changes to Member Organisations.**

## **1 MEMBERSHIP**

Applications for Membership must be made to the ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary before 1<sup>st</sup> November in each year. Only those clubs who are LTA registered and Advantage Essex 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 ETCT. The acceptance or rejection of any application shall rest entirely with the ETCT.

## **2 NON-PAYMENT OF FEES**

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

## **3 RESIGNATIONS**

Any Member Organisation wishing to withdraw from Leagues and/or Competitions must do so by 1st October in each year.

## **4 ANNUAL MEETINGS AND FIXTURES MEETING OF THE ETC**

a **An Annual Meeting** and a Fixtures Meeting shall be held in Essex on a date agreed by the ETCT. The ETC Secretary shall give 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.

b **The business of the Annual Meeting shall include the following:**

i To receive a report from the ETCT. This shall include those of the ETCT Chair, the ETCT Secretary/ETCT Seniors Secretary..

ii To elect a minimum of two persons, and if appropriate an ETCT Seniors Secretary to serve on the ETCT.

iii To decide all Essex Leagues and other Competition regulations together with other matters, including the qualification to play for a club, the composition of the leagues and competitions, 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.

c **Nominations, Resolutions and Proposals**

Only the Operations Executive [OPEX], ETCT and Advantage Essex Member Clubs may make resolutions and proposals. Proposals made by Advantage Essex Member Clubs must be seconded by another Advantage Essex Member Club for discussion at the next Annual Meeting. These must be received by the ETC Secretary seven weeks prior to the AM for inclusion on the Agenda.

d **Attendance**

All ETC Member Organisations are entitled to have up to three attendees, also members of the OPEX and the ETCT are entitled to attend together with the Life Vice Presidents

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 Notice of Meeting**

This shall be sent to everyone entitled to attend seven days prior to the meeting date. Such notice shall specify the date, the time and place of the Meeting and shall include the Agenda, other appropriate papers together with, if applicable, and the names of persons standing for election. 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.

**f The Chair.**

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

**g Amendments**

The Chair may, at his or her sole discretion, permit amendments to be put forward at the Annual Meeting. 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/proposal. 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/proposal and so on. In the event of no amendment being carried the original proposal shall be voted upon.

**h 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 fifteen persons present who are entitled to vote.

**i 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 will have the right to speak but not to vote. All Members of the OPEX and the ETCT are entitled to one vote and shall not be deemed to be voting on behalf of the respective Organisations to which they belong, unless they declare otherwise.

**j Voting and Counting of votes**

All business at the Meeting shall require a bare majority of the votes properly recorded for the resolution or proposal to be carried out.

Each attendee may only vote once\* upon every nomination, resolution, or proposal etc and it shall be decided by a show of hands unless prior to any vote being taken, the Chair shall decide otherwise. 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 Chair shall have a casting vote. [\* therefore, if a club wishes to cast two votes, they must have two attendees present].

**5 EXTRAORDINARY MEETINGS OF THE ETC**

An Extraordinary Meeting of the ETC may be held by the ETCT whenever it considers it appropriate.

**a** An Extraordinary Meeting of the ETCT shall be held within seven weeks after the receipt by the ECT Secretary of a requisition in writing to that effect by seven or more Advantage Essex 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.

**b The business of the Extraordinary Meeting**

The only business that shall be conducted at an Extraordinary Meeting shall be as itemised on the Agenda. 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 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 preclude the resolution being proposed again at an Annual Meeting.

**c Attendance**

As in 4d above.

**d Notice of Meeting**

This shall be sent to everyone entitled to attend at least ten days prior to the meeting date. Such notice shall specify the date, the time and place of the Meeting and shall include the Agenda and other appropriate papers. The accidental omission to give notice of the Meeting to any person entitled to attend shall not invalidate the proceedings of that Meeting.

**e The Chair**

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

**f Amendments**

The Chair may, at his or her sole discretion, permit amendments to be put forward at the Extraordinary Meeting. 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/proposal. 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/proposal and so on. In the event of no amendment being carried the original proposal shall be voted upon.

**g Quorum**

As in 4h above.

**h Voting Rights**

As in 4i above.

**i Voting and Counting of votes**

As in 4j above.

**6 QUALIFICATION TO PLAY FOR A CLUB**

The ETCT shall determine all matters about the qualification to play for a club.

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 2.

**a Bona fide playing membership**

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 Country member (or similar) unless otherwise agreed by the The ETCT Secretary/ETCT Seniors 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.

**b Club Employees**

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.

**c Playing for more than one club**

Players are not entitled to play for more than one club in either the Essex Open or Essex Seniors Leagues 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 ETCT. e.g. The ETC Summer Cup and The ETC Winter Cup etc.

**d Proprietary Club Members**

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.

**7 COMPOSITION OF LEAGUES**

**a The Open League**

The Open League will be run in divisions in both a pyramid style and conventional format. The pyramid system will consist of several 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.

**b The Seniors League**

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 as far as possible. 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 40<sup>th</sup> year and men in their 45<sup>th</sup> or 55<sup>th</sup> year.

**c League Pyramid System**

A pyramid system may operate in the leagues where there is a minimum of 5 separate divisions.

- i 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.

- ii 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. In respect of the Open Summer and Winter Leagues, where a club has two teams in the same division or sub-division, the first match of the season for both teams must be between each other. If due to inclement weather this does not happen then the match must be played before the respective teams 3<sup>rd</sup> scheduled match of the season. Failure to comply will result in the deduction of two points from each team. In respect of the Seniors Leagues, where a club has two teams in the same division or sub-division, the first match of the season must be between each other. If due to inclement weather this does not happen then the match must be played before the respective teams 3<sup>rd</sup> scheduled match of the season. The return match between the teams must be before 1<sup>st</sup> July. Failure to comply with either will result in the deduction of two points from each team on each occasion. 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 2<sup>nd</sup> team would be promoted instead of a 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Pyramid System League Changes**

Under the pyramid system, The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary, and/or the ETCT 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, similarly, they shall have the power to amend the number of teams in each division or sub-division.

### **8 COMPOSITION OF MATCHES**

#### **Open Summer Men's & Ladies Doubles. Open Winter Men's & Ladies Doubles. Seniors Doubles.**

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 10point tie break reaches 10 all then 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.

### **9 COURT SURFACES**

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.

## **10 ABANDONED MATCHES BEFORE FIRST ROUND COMPLETED**

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 cannot be played at a later date it shall be wholly replayed and any completed events in the abandoned match disregarded.

## **11 FIXTURES AND POSTPONEMENTS OF MATCHES**

### **a League Match**

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 Club's 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 match being given precedence to is at the home ground of the fixture and the home team is not playing in the match, the opposing team shall have the right to stage the match on their own courts on the original date.

### **b Fixture Lists-Open Leagues**

Fixture lists for each club should be sent to The ETC 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 of the above points not be carried out then the home club will have priority in any dispute.

### **c Fixtures Lists-Seniors Leagues**

Fixture lists for each club should be sent to ETC Seniors Secretary and the opposing clubs by 28<sup>th</sup> February. 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 of the above points not be carried out then the home club will have priority in any dispute.

### **d Early rearrangements**

Matches may be rearranged up to 14 days following the ETC Fixtures Meeting. Thereafter they may only be rearranged with the consent of both Match Secretaries.

## **12 NOMINATION OF PLAYERS**

**a** Clubs with more than one team in any Section shall nominate teams as follows:

- i** 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.
- ii** 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.
- iii** A Club with two teams in the same division or sub-division must nominate players for both teams.

**b** Such nominations must be received by The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary in writing before the first match. In the event of failure to send nominations to The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary, those individuals 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 (c) below.

**c** 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 (d) 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.

- d The nominated players may be changed on giving 12 days' notice to The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary and the ETCT who shall have the right to refuse to accept such alterations if they consider them unreasonable.
- e The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary shall, in consultation with the ETCT, also have the right to withhold points if he/she 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.
- f In the event of faulty nominations as defined above, The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary, in consultation with the ETCT 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.

### 13 POINTS

#### a **Open Summer Men's & Ladies Doubles. Open Winter Men's & Ladies Doubles. 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 points in a match are declared the winners. Any rubber on the day not completed will result in one point for each team. One round on the day must be completed for the match result to stand. If no rounds are completed on the day and the match cannot be re-arranged, then each team will receive two points. One point will be deducted for teams which turn up with only one pair. If both teams turn up with one pair no points will be awarded in respect of the rubber between the missing pairs.

#### b **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).

### 14 EQUAL POINTS AND LEAGUE TABLE POSITION

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.

## **15 PROMOTION**

Subject to the provisions of Regulation 7 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. The ETCT have the right to promote teams more than one division in certain circumstances.

## **16 CONCESSION OF GAMES AND POINTS**

- a** 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 ETCT. Any dispute should be referred immediately to The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary to within 14 days.
- c** If a match is postponed by a club, other than to give precedence to a match under Regulation 6 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 ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary.

## **17 RESULTS**

- a** Detailed results of matches, must be forwarded by both clubs by e-mail or post to The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary within 48 hours of the conclusion of the match. If no match result is received by the ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors 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 ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary, then for any match played during the period of the extension of the following applies: The captain of the winning team must contact The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary on the evening of the match with the result. Both clubs must e-mail or post off a result card within 24 hours of the match being played to The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary
- b** Within 7 days of the end of the season all clubs are required to post or e-mail a Summary Card for each team showing all match results to The ETC Secretary/ETC Seniors Secretary.

## **18 COMPLETION OF MATCHES**

- a** Open League matches shall be completed by 14<sup>th</sup> October in each year. An extension of two weeks may only be granted by The ETC Secretary for extenuating circumstances. All matches in the Winter Section shall be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> March unless an extension has been granted (maximum two weeks).
- b** The Seniors League season will start on the 1<sup>st</sup> February and will finish on the 16<sup>th</sup> November each year. An extension of two weeks may only be granted by The ETC Seniors Secretary for extenuating circumstances.

## **19 BALLS**

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).

## **20 ATTIRE**

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



## **21 TROPHIES**

The winning club in each of the Divisions or Sub-divisions of the Open and Seniors Leagues shall receive either a trophy provided by Essex Tennis to hold until required for presentation to the winners the following season, or a trophy to keep. 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.

## **22 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE**

As defined in the Rules of Essex Tennis [this rule can be found on the Essex Tennis website].

## **23 REFRESHMENTS**

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.