

HUNTINGDON & PETERBOROUGH TENNIS LEAGUE

2024 LEAGUE RULES

1. League membership is open to all Tennis Clubs in the Huntingdon and Peterborough area, subject to the approval of the Huntingdon & Peterborough Tennis Committee.

2. All memberships are subject to clubs being fully paid affiliated members of the Huntingdon & Peterborough Tennis League at the 1st May per annum.

All clubs entering the Huntingdon & Peterborough League must have current Public Liability Insurance.

3. League Fees for the 2023 season are as follows:

Annual Club Membership Fee	-	£10.00
Team Entry Fee	-	£10.00 per team
Don Brace Cup Entry Fee	-	Free this season

4. Unless otherwise notified all fees should be paid direct to the 'Huntingdon & Peterborough Tennis Association' by BACS - Sort Code : 20-05-73 : Account Number : 33864243,

5. The administration of the League is the responsibility of the appointed League Secretary.

6. There is no limit on the number of teams a club may enter into the league. New entries will be placed in the lowest division of the appropriate league in all cases. A club with multiple teams in any league wishing to remove a team/s may only remove its lowest place team/s.

The closing date for all entries is normally **late January** of the current year.

Penalty : A club withdrawing a team once the fixtures have been sent out **or defaulting twomatches during the season** will be demoted to the lowest division.

7. The league shall consist of one or more divisions of Mixed, Mens and Ladies Doubles. Each Division shall normally consist of six, seven or eight teams. Normally, the top two teams in each division (other than Division 1) shall be promoted by right, replacing the two teams finishing lowest in the division above who shall be relegated. The League Secretary reserves the right to modify the structure of divisions when in the best interest of the league clubs, **for example balancing out the numbers of teams in each division.**

8. The Mixed season will normally be **scheduled in April**, May and June. The Mens and Ladies seasons will follow in July and August.

9. In all divisions a team shall comprise of two pairs eligible to play in that division. Each pair shall play the opposing team's two pairs, matches of two sets duration in the following order:

Home Team Pair A play Away Team Pair A
Home Team Pair B play Away Team Pair B
Home Team Pair A play Away Team Pair B
Home Team Pair B play Away Team Pair A

10. The scoring system for all divisions - Set winners will be the pair to first reach six games with a two game advantage. Should the score reach six games to five a further game shall be played, seven games to five wins the set. Should the score reach six games all; a tie-breaker shall be played to decide the set.

For the tie-breaker, winners shall be the pair to first reach seven points with a minimum two-point advantage. If the score reaches seven points to six, play shall continue until a two point advantage has been **achieved** by one of the pairs.

For the tie-breaker, the service order shall continue in the order played during the set. The first server has only one serve (normal two ball service) from the right service court. After this single point, the service passes to the other side, the server having two normal services, the first from the left hand service court. Thereafter, players will follow service order serving twice as applicable. Service order shall change sides after all odd points i.e. after the 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, 9th etc. During the tie-breaker, ends shall be changed after each six points have been played.

11. The scoring system for all divisions is two points for a win, one point for a draw, nil points for a loss. All matches are scored on total sets won. At the end of the season, if any teams are equal on points, the team

with the higher number of sets won shall be placed above the other. Should teams be level on points and sets won, then a ratio of games won and lost shall decide which team is placed higher.

A team who concedes a match shall be automatically placed below a team who finish level on points but who have played all of their matches even if this team has won more sets.

Penalty : Any team failing to play their matches for reasons other than due to bad weather, as provided for in the rules, shall be deducted two points upon conceding. Should a club concede two or more matches in a season then all results are voided and the team concerned automatically relegated **to the bottom division**. **When a club has defaulted two matches during the season then the next lower team of that club in the same category, ie mixed, ladies or mens, cannot be promoted that season.**

If a club considers there were any extenuating circumstances that prevented them from attending a match, they must write to the League Secretary explaining the reason for the concession **ASAP**. The League Committee may reduce or waive the **points deduction** if the explanation is accepted.

12. Cancellations and Abandonments.

When a match has to be cancelled due to bad weather, teams should make a mutual re-arrangement of the fixture and play on the date arranged in the normal manner.

When a match has to be abandoned for any reason, if a total of 5 sets have been played then the match shall deem to have been completed, the sets completed deciding the result. When 5 sets have not been completed, the match shall be replayed in full at a date mutually agreed between the teams. (In this instance only, teams have the right to agree to share the points if they so wish when they consider their remaining club fixtures would not lend themselves to a re-match).

13. The League can only accept bad weather conditions for the cancellation of fixtures. **Any other changes, requested by a team, should be resolved between the clubs at their discretion and goodwill. If a rearrangement is not acceptable to their opponents** the team defaulting shall forfeit the match. Within 14 days of the postponed fixture, the Home team must agree a date with their opponents and confirm this in writing with the League Secretary. Home teams failing to conform to this within 14 days will automatically forfeit the fixture. The League Season ends on the 14th October, matches outstanding after this date will be awarded to the away team.

It is the responsibility of the home club to check the results on the website to ensure that any result has been recorded by this date. If a score has not been recorded clubs must assume the result has not been received.

Note: In rules 12 & 13, the home team shall have the right to set the new date for the match after consultation with a representative of their opponents. When re-arrangements are necessary, clubs should attempt to play off any matches within 21 days of the date set for the original fixture. The home team must offer 3 weekday alternative dates to their opponents for the re-arranged fixture, excluding any dates that the away team has fixtures already scheduled in that division. Rearrangement of the game during a weekend will only be allowed if agreeable to the visiting team. If none of these dates is acceptable, the away team will forfeit the fixture. If the away team considers it has extenuating circumstances they may appeal to the League Secretary in writing for a ruling by the Committee.

14. Tuesday is the normal evening for fixtures to be played and clubs are asked to keep to this if at all possible. However, to accommodate clubs who are unable to arrange home matches on this evening or who have more than one team in the league, the home team may select another evening for their home match. In the rare instances of this being an embarrassment to their visitors, clubs may mutually agree to re-arrange the match. However, it must be stressed that the final decision rests with the home club.

Clubs selecting to play home games on a Saturday or Sunday must accept that some clubs find these days unacceptable. If this is the case, the onus is on the away team to contact the League Fixture Secretary to request a change to another day. **This request must be made when the draft fixtures are released for checking.** Home clubs must accept this request and offer three midweek fixture dates as a replacement, excluding any dates the away club's team is already scheduled **to play**. Away clubs seeking this change must accept that it will probably be necessary for the concerned team to play the game during a week they may already have a fixture.

Exception

When matches have been cancelled late in the season and cannot be re-scheduled on an evening due to failing light, teams must accept that this fixture will have to be played during a weekend to ensure sufficient light is available to complete the fixture. In this instance, the home club secretary must contact the away team's **captain** and mutually agree a suitable weekend date.

15. Matches should commence at 6.30 p.m. as programmed, unless otherwise agreed with the League Secretary. No match must start later than 7.00 p.m. and any request for a later start will be refused. Teams must arrive in good time prior to the start time to knock up. **A court should be made available for a minimum of 15 minutes prior to the match start time for the teams to warm up on to ensure matches can start on time.** A maximum 5 minute knock up may take place before the second match commences.
- Matches should start on time but** if a team is delayed, they are allowed 30 minutes from the specified time, if still not on court at that time, they must forfeit the first half of the fixture to love. Upon arrival, if within 30 minutes of the specified start time, the defaulting team may endeavor to complete the match whilst sufficient light remains. Any uncompleted sets at the end of the match are forfeited.
- If floodlights are available, the captain of the non offending team may agree for the offending team to complete the match, but has no obligation to do so. The availability of floodlighting must not have any bearing on this decision; it is purely at the discretion of the non offending captain. Non offending players may not wish to be delayed from returning home.
- If clubs mutually agree to a match being played at another specified time, then the fixture shall be accepted to conform to the above rule from that time.
- Should a team be delayed through a transport breakdown or through unforeseen traffic congestion, then their opponents may, if they so wish, agree to waive their right to claim the match (it must be emphasized that the onus is on teams to arrive in time for a programmed match). **Communication is key here, please ensure the home team are kept updated if there are delays.**
- Penalty: A team failing to arrive forfeit the match and will normally be considered to have conceded the match unless a reasonable explanation can be given to the League Secretary.
16. The home team has the right to select any of their courts for matches. They must provide 4 new tennis balls per court for the matches (new balls must be purchased in the year of the match). Undated pressurized cans of balls may be used providing the cans have remained unopened prior to the match. The home team must also provide the scoresheet for the match, get the visiting team's captain to sign the scoresheet upon completion of the fixture **and enter the result online on the website.**
- Point of Etiquette: It is recommended that players knock up against the opposing team at the start of each match, not knock up against their own team members. Teams arriving early may knock up against their own players until such time as their opponents enter the courts.
17. The home club must decide when their courts are unfit for play and, if at all possible, they should inform their expected visitors in good time of any postponement to avoid unnecessary journeys. It is accepted that there are occasions when prior warning cannot be given as to likely conditions, as we all know, all-weather courts can be played on after an extremely wet day, followed by a dry evening.
18. The decision as to when a match may be abandoned occasionally causes friction. It should be remembered that the slightest amount of rain can become adverse conditions to people wearing spectacles, therefore the decision of the league is that no player is expected to play on when it is raining (players are expected to use common sense in this respect).
19. At the completion of a match, a scoresheet should be completed, signed by both team captains and the result sent to the League Secretary using the electronic score recording system on the website WITHIN A PERIOD OF 48 HOURS. A signed scoresheet signifies that the match result is acceptable to both teams. The home team captain should retain the scoresheet until the end of season in case the recorded score on the website is disputed. When a recorded scoresheet is disputed, if agreement is reached, both captains should initial any alterations and forward **a copy of** the scoresheet to the League Secretary. However, should a score be disputed and no agreement reached, the captain disputing the result should NOT sign the scoresheet and write "Disputed" in the space provided for the captains signature. Within 48 hours BOTH team captains should forward their report of the incident to the League Secretary.
20. A player may not represent more than one club in either the Mixed, Men's or Ladies Leagues. The player must be a member of the club he/she plays for.
A player may represent one club in the Mixed League and another club in the Men's or Ladies Leagues, however, this player must be a paid up member of both clubs.
- Should a player change clubs mid-season, they will not be allowed to play matches for the new club if their previous club has any reason to object to the transfer i.e. the player owing the club money. Should this be the case, the original club must notify the League Secretary immediately of the objection.

For the purpose of this rule each site of a national organization shall be deemed to be a separate club. A player may only represent the club they joined and normally play at, and that club must be the one that is a participating member as defined under Rule 1.

In the event of a player's eligibility being questioned a club not fully cooperating with the League Committee in its investigation of the complaint may at the discretion of the said Committee be expelled from the League, and all its competitions and associated events.

21. Mixed League

A player having played TWO matches in any higher division may not play for a team in a lower division during the rest of that season.

Men's and Ladies Leagues

A player having played THREE matches in any higher division may not play for a team in a lower division during the rest of that season.

Men's and Ladies Leagues - Clubs having more than one team in the same division

Players from clubs with more than one team in the same division, having played TWO matches for a higher team may not play for a lower team in that division.

Note

The above rule is intended to assist clubs when players are unavailable due to holidays. Clubs should not exploit this concession, playing recognized higher ranked players in lower divisions to secure a win for this team. Clubs found guilty of not playing within the spirit of this rule will be penalized and the match will be awarded to their opponents.

22. Any team found to have played a match with an ineligible player due to a breach of either rule 20 or 21 shall forfeit all sets played by the pair containing that player.

23. Should a player suffer injury and be unable to continue play, the affected team shall forfeit all future games involving that player during that rubber, or if unable to continue permanently, for the duration of the match. If a player is unable to continue through a temporary injury or condition they should resume the match within 10 minutes of the outset of the problem.

24. Player delay - A team with only one pair may play for shared points. If a match is started by a team with only one pair, team mates arriving late may pick up their part of the match - they have the opportunity to win as many games within the time taken to complete the rubber already in play. If a set is unable to be completed within this time, their opponents shall be awarded the set.

This rule only applies to player delay. A team must not set off for a match with only one pair, hoping to share the match points unless agreed with their opponents beforehand. This is not acceptable to the league as it shows disrespect to their opponents.

25. The home team shall provide refreshments for the visiting team members subject to the visiting team captain confirming 48 hours (minimum) before a match that their players will be staying after its conclusion when light refreshments should then provided in the form of sandwiches, biscuits and/or cake and preferably a hot beverage or cold drinks. If no contact is made beforehand by the visiting team captain then there should be no presumption that refreshments will be available. Cold drinks should be available during all matches.

26. Tennis Shoes - ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR ACCEPTABLE TENNIS SHOES OF A NON-HEELED FLAT BASE WITHOUT ANY VISIBLE OUTER SERRATED EDGES. Clubs having grass or shale courts are liable to have these damaged by incorrect footwear. In view of this, the above rule must be observed on ALL types of court, without exception.

HOME TEAM CAPTAINS MAY REFUSE TO LET ANY PLAYER PLAY ON THEIR COURTS IF THEIR TENNIS SHOES DO NOT CONFORM TO THE ABOVE RULE. CLUBS ARE REMINDED THAT IT IS THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT THEIR PLAYERS ARE INFORMED OF THIS RULE AND THAT ACCEPTABLE TENNIS SHOES ARE WORN, PARTICULARLY AT AWAY MATCHES.

SEE ADDITIONAL NOTES

A. FOOT FAULTING - Will all players please remember the foot fault rule? Captains should ensure that they and members of their team do not abuse this rule. It is suggested that if any player is seen to be consistently breaking this rule, his/her opposing team captain should bring it to the attention of the offending player's captain for action. The captain should advise the player and ensure compliance of the rule.

B. PRE-MATCH CONTACT REQUIREMENT - Home team captains should contact their opponents prior to the match to confirm the fixture and obtain a contact number of one of the opposing team members to contact in case of bad weather or other situation which may lead to the postponement of the match. Visiting team captains shall comply with Rule 25.

