

**PORTSMOUTH AND DISTRICT LTA
MASTERS LEAGUE COMPETITION RULES**

1. MANAGEMENT

The management of the league shall be in the hands of the committee of the Association (The Committee)

2. L.T.A. RULES

All matches shall be played according to the current rules of the Lawn Tennis Association. The LTA Code of Conduct is adopted by The P&D and shall be adhered to by everyone on and off the court at all times when dealing with tennis related matters or playing within the leagues.

3. ELIGIBILITY

The League shall be open to any club situated within a 20-mile radius of Portsmouth. Club applications to join The Leagues from outside this radius will be at the discretion of The Committee.

Clubs must be affiliated to the Portsmouth and District L.T.A.

All participating clubs must be LTA Registered venues.

Clubs desiring to take part should forward their application to the league secretary. Acceptance is subject to Committee approval.

4. ENTRIES

A club may enter one or more teams at a fee decided by The Committee. Annual Affiliation fees will also be determined by The Committee.

5. TEAMS

A full team shall consist of four players (2 pairs) in all leagues – men's, ladies, and mixed - summer and winter. For the avoidance of doubt, a ladies team must consist of four ladies, a men's team must consist of four men and a mixed doubles team must consist of two ladies and two men. If unable to field a full team, clubs are encouraged to field at least one legitimate pair to enable a fixture to be completed with two rubbers played (except in the case of Mixed Masters as one pair will not work).

6. MATCHES

(a) All matches will be the best of three sets. The first TWO sets will be normal sets with a standard 7-point tie-break played at 6 games all. The third set (if required) will be a standard 10-point tie-break (with a two-point gap after 9-9). A third set tie break will count as a normal set won or lost and scored by 1 game to 0 when adding up the results.

(b) A match will consist of four rubbers, two pairs to play each opposing pair. The team winning the majority of rubbers shall be declared the winner of the match. If the rubbers are equal the team winning the majority of sets shall be declared the winner. If the rubbers and sets are equal, the team winning the majority of games shall be declared the winner. If the rubbers, sets and games are also equal the result shall be declared a tie

(c) The order of play shall be as follows:

Ladies and Men's Masters

Round 1 – 1st pairs play 2nd pairs. Round 2 – 1st pair play 1st pair. 2nd pair play 2nd pair.

Mixed Masters

Round 1 – 1st mixed pair play 1st mixed pair, 2nd Mixed pair play 2nd mixed pair

Round 2 – Men's pair play men's pair, ladies pair play ladies pair

(d) Eight new L.T.A. approved balls must be provided for each match by the home side.

(e) If a player is absent at the start of play, at the expiration of 15 minutes from the agreed time of commencement, the opposing team shall be awarded one set, and a set thereafter for each consecutive 15 minutes delay.

(f) Three points will be awarded to a team winning a match on rubbers (e.g. 4-0 or 3-1); two points will be awarded to a team winning a match on sets or games after a 2-2 score in rubbers: one point will be awarded to a team losing a match on sets or games after a 2-2 score in rubbers: One and a half points will be awarded to both teams in the event of a tied match. (e.g. rubbers, sets and games equal).

6.1 INJURIES DURING A MATCH

If a player suffers an injury during a match and is unable to continue, then he/she must concede that rubber and any subsequent rubbers still to be played involving him/her. The result shall be recorded to include the score up to the time of the injury and then shall be considered a loss of 6-0 for each un-commenced set. So, for instance at the time of the injury if the score was 3-1 in the first set to the injured player, the score would be recorded as 3-6 0-6. If the score was 6-2 3-1 to the injured player, the score would be recorded as 6-2 3-6 0-6, in the case of a three full sets match or 6-2 3-6 0-1 in the case of a two set match with a 10 point tie-break. Rubbers, sets and games are then calculated in the normal way to determine the match result.

7. LEAGUE DIVISIONS

(a) A Division shall consist of not more than 9 teams, each team to play one match against each team in the division. If there are 6 teams or less, it is at the discretion of the Committee to arrange for teams to play on a home and away basis against each other. In deciding the number of teams in a division, the Committee will be mindful of attempting to keep numbers as even as possible across all divisions in each category. No more than two teams from the same club will be allowed to play in any one division.

(b) At the end of each season, in the case of divisions with six teams or more, the top two teams will usually be promoted and the bottom two teams will usually be relegated. In the case of divisions with five teams or less one team will usually be promoted and one team will usually be relegated. However, promotion and relegation decisions will be at the discretion of the Committee.

(c) Trophies or Cups will be awarded to Divisional Winners. These will be retained by the relevant club for one year and then returned to the Committee on request. Trophies and Cups remain the possession of the P&D LTA at all times.

8. FIXTURES

(a) All fixtures and playing dates will initially be allocated by the Committee. There will be no more than 10 fixtures per team in any one season. All fixtures and results will be displayed on the Association's web site – portsmouthlta.info

(b) Summer fixtures will be allocated dates between 1 April and 30 September, Winter Fixtures will be allocated dates between 1 October and 31 March. Matches must not be played outside these dates except with the permission of the relevant league secretary.

(c) Start times for each match will be determined by the home team but must be between 9.30 and 2.30 unless agreed by the relevant league secretary.

(d) Clubs with two teams in the same division must play the fixture between those two teams by 31 May in the summer and 30 November in the winter.

(e) Clubs unable to provide two playable courts will play their allocated home matches away and will bear any costs involved.

(f) The home captain will confirm a forthcoming fixture with the opposing captain a minimum of three and preferably at least 7 days beforehand. The match venue, start time and any special arrangement for post-match refreshments should also be clarified.

(g) Responsibility for calling a match off in the event of adverse weather conditions rests with the home captain. Consideration must be given to the time and cost involved for the travelling team. Conditions can vary widely across the area, and it is recommended that the captains agree a “weather check” deadline for the morning of the match to avoid unnecessary travel if at all possible.

(h) If either captain will not be supervising a fixture they must notify the opposing captain of their nominated deputy, providing appropriate contact details.

9. REARRANGEMENTS – GENERAL

(a) The general premise is that every effort should be made to ensure that matches are played wherever possible, with conceded matches being reduced to a minimum. In the event of a team being unable to field a full complement of players, the league encourages teams to fulfil an arranged fixture by playing with one pair, thus avoiding the possibility of the application of penalty points through conceding a match.

(b) At the publication of the fixture list prior to a new season, any match date for the season may be rearranged. Any requests made before 30th April in the

summer and 31st October in the winter will be accepted without question providing at least 7 days notice is given. The rescheduled date should be agreed by both teams.

(c) Subsequent requests for changes made after 30 April/ 31 October will generally be looked upon favourably, as long as BOTH teams agree to the reschedule. However, the team being asked to postpone is not obligated to accept and has the option of declining such a change. However, if a change is agreed, such change will be subject to provision detailed in rule 9 (d) below.

(d) If a match which was changed under rule 9(c) and is subsequently not played for weather related reasons, then the team that was originally asked to postpone has the option of agreeing to a further rearrangement or to simply claim the match. If the match is claimed, then points will be awarded under rule 11(b). However, if a further match is agreed and either team default from the rearranged match, other than for weather, then points are awarded in accordance to rule 11.

(e) If a match is postponed for any reason, within 14 days of the postponement, the home team should offer three alternative dates on which the away team does not already have a fixture. It is incumbent on the away team to respond quickly. It is imperative a new date is agreed on in timely fashion, and the League Secretary is notified of the agreed new fixture date.

Note:

It is the responsibility of both clubs/captains to action rearrangements. Whilst the home team will need to offer potential new dates and are encouraged to do so within 14 days of a postponement, the away club/captain should prompt if no new dates were forthcoming.

10. WEATHER AFFECTED MATCHES

10.1 Match called off before either team travel

(a) The match should be rearranged as soon as possible. Both captains are equally responsible for making contact. The home captain should provide three alternative dates on which the opposition are not already committed to play, see 9(e).

10.2 Play interrupted after both teams arrive at the venue, and the captains agree to abandon

(a) If both teams have arrived at the venue every effort should be made to complete at least one round of rubbers, at which point a match will be declared as “played”, the result being decided on the rubbers/ sets/ games completed in the first round. Any rubbers, sets and games played in the second round will be ignore.

(b) If both captains agree that conditions make it impossible to play to the completion of the first round of rubbers then, bearing in mind the travel time and costs involved, the default position is that the match will be declared “abandoned”. The points will be shared equally, with the rubbers, sets and games recorded as 2-2, 4-4, 24-24 respectively.

(c) If both captains agree, then they have the option of arranging to play the match on a new date. More than one attempt can be made to rearrange the match, but with the proviso that if the match is subsequently not played for any reason, then the result reverts to the default position of “abandoned”

10.3 Play interrupted after both teams arrive at the venue but the captains cannot agree on whether to abandon or not

(a) Hopefully such situations will be rare, but if the captains cannot agree about the playability of conditions once a match has started then play should be suspended and a “sitting out” time period commenced. If play is curtailed for a period of more than 30 minutes – in one or more spells – and the captains can still not agree, then the match will be declared abandoned and the match decided on the position at the time of abandonment.

(b) If the first round of rubbers has not be completed, then the rules as detailed in 10.2 (b) and 10.2 (c) will apply.

(c) If the first round of rubbers has been completed, but not the second, then any rubbers, sets, and games played in the second round shall be ignored and the match decided on the completed round in accordance with rule 10.2 (a) above.

11. CONCEDED MATCHES

(a) If a match is NOT played on the arranged date and not rearranged in accordance with sections 9 and 10 above then the team responsible for the failure to play must concede the match to their opponents.

(b) The match score for such a concession will be recorded in favour of the non-conceding team as 4-0, 8-0, 48-0 in rubbers, sets and games respectively. In addition, the team making the concession will be deducted 1 point and, at the discretion of the Committee, they may be relegated at the end of the season.

12. WITHDRAWAL

If a team withdraws from the league during the season, all matches involving that team will be declared null and void irrespective of whether they have been played or not.

13. PLAYERS

(a) All players must be enrolled members of the competing club, or otherwise affiliated to the club where no formal or direct membership scheme exists. The club must be affiliated to the Portsmouth & District L.T.A.

(b) In any one season, a player who has played more than twice for the same team or played more than twice for any "higher" teams may not play for any "lower" team from the same club. A "higher" team being defined as follows:- a team from the same club that is competing in a higher division OR if two teams from the same club are in the same division, the team with the higher title status and a "lower" team being defined as follows:- a team from the same club that is competing in a lower division OR if two teams from the same club are in the same division, the team with the lower title status.

(c) No player may play for more than one club in the same season except that a player who has played in the men's or ladies for one club may represent another in the mixed league. Furthermore, players who play for one club in The Masters Leagues may play for another club in the Weekend Leagues and visa versa.

(d) All players must be aged 50 or over on 31 December in the year in which a match is played, with the exception that any female player who had played a P&D Masters league match before 31 March 2023 will be exempt from this rule and will remain eligible to play

14. CONDITION OF COURTS

(a) It is the home club's responsibility to ensure that the courts to be used do not pose a threat to the health and safety of the players. All courts used for matches must be in a reasonable state of repair and be free of any loose materials. All lines must be clearly marked. The courts must be safe to play on.

(b) Although not mandatory, all clubs are encouraged to use centre net bands secured or weighted at the bottom of the net.

(c) It is the home captain's responsibility to ensure that the nets are of the correct height before start of play and that a winder and measuring stick or tape are available throughout

15. LEAGUE POSITIONS

In the event of two or more teams being equal on points they shall be placed in the table in order according to the highest percentage of rubbers won to rubbers played. If that is equal then in order according to the highest percentage of sets won to sets played. If that is equal then according to the highest percentage games won to games played. If two teams are still equal then the order shall be decided on the result between the two teams during the season in question.

16. MATCH RESULTS

(a) The FULL DETAILS of each match, signed by BOTH captains, shall be forwarded to the relevant league secretary on the appropriate match cards (available from the website) within 48 hours of completion.

(b) The match details must be recorded in FULL, including player's full names

(c) If a match is conceded, the relevant league secretary must be informed by BOTH clubs.

17. DISPUTES

(a) Any complaints in connection with a match shall be raised by the complaining team's captain with the opposing team's captain as soon as possible. If this is not possible, or inappropriate or the matter is not settled between the teams, the complaint should be made in writing within 7 days of completion of the match and sent to the relevant league secretary and copied to the opposing club.

(b) The P&D adopts and adheres to The LTA Code of Conduct as the guide to the way in which all League related matters are shall be handled and all matches played. It is expected that everyone observes the code of conduct which amongst its provisions requires the need for courtesy, consideration, respect and co-operation to be shown at all times, on and off the court.

(c) The Committee reserves the right to adjudicate on any serious breach of The Rules and /or The Code of Conduct and take any action, including disciplinary action, to ensure the integrity and best principals of the competition are maintained

(d) The Committee's decision is final.

18. SPIRIT OF THE COMPETITION

The overriding guideline is that all teams should play and conduct themselves in a fair and sporting manner, complying with this set of rules and playing within the "spirit of the competition." This particularly applies to team selection. It is hoped that in deciding team selection clubs will note the general standard of the division being competed in and will select players in accordance with that standard. If The Committee feels a team has selected a player (or players) of such a higher standard to gain "unfair" advantage it reserves the right to intervene and either void or reverse the result of affected rubbers and/or matches even if the team selection does not contravene rule 13.

19. VARIATION OF THE RULES

These rules will apply to both summer and winter leagues and are available on the Association's website or from any committee member.

Any variation of these Rules must be put before the Annual General Meeting of

the Association and be agreed by a majority of clubs attending. Each affiliated club will have one vote regardless of the number of representatives at the meeting.

May 2026