

# PLAYING RULES

Note: Rules underlined denotes changes made at 2009 AGM.

## 1. TEAMS

1.1 Teams shall comprise:

- (i) in the *Open League* two pairs of players who may be members of either sex;
- (ii) in the *Ladies League* two pairs of ladies;
- (iii) in the *Mixed League* two pairs of mixed couples;
- (iv) in the *Junior Leagues* four players (of either gender).

1.2 For the *Junior Leagues*, leagues shall be formed based on two age groups: under 18 and under; 14. A player's eligibility will be based on their age on December 31<sup>st</sup> (for 2009, this means players in the Under 14s must be born on or after 01/01/1995 and players in the Under 18s must be born on or after 01/01/1991).

1.3 A team must consist of four players.

1.4 Any Club with more than one team in a League that subsequently withdraws a team from that League must withdraw the lowest ranked team.

## 2. FIXTURES

2.1 Open League fixtures will be scheduled for Saturdays.

2.2 In the *Ladies*, *Mixed* and *Junior Leagues*, clubs can stipulate a day and a time to commence their home fixtures (except that *Ladies League* matches should commence as described under 'Commencement of Matches').

2.3 In drawing up the fixture list, the Fixtures Secretary shall ensure:

- (i) that, if any clubs have two or more teams in the same division, they shall be scheduled to play each other within the first three matches of a season and within the first three matches of the reversed fixtures, where applicable.
- (ii) that the fixtures be scheduled so that where more than one Division operates in the Open League, the final League matches in the Divisions each take place on the same day.

2.4 In all Leagues, all matches shall be played as specified in fixture list, with the following exceptions:

- (i) *Open* matches may be played one evening in the week prior to the Saturday stipulated by agreement of **both** team captains. No player playing in such a midweek fixture may also play in an *Open* match on the following Saturday. Midweek matches will commence by 6.30 p.m. Such matches may **not** be continued or re-arranged for a later date if the match is abandoned due to either bad light or inclement weather once the agreement is made.
- (ii) The League Committee be authorised to make such alterations to the League fixtures as are necessary to permit the playing of the Tennis Lancashire Inter-Club Knockout competitions on the dates fixed by the association (usually semi-finals and finals).

Note that there is no facility for rearrangement of Open or Mixed League matches, except as provided for in (i) and (ii) above. Should inclement weather preclude the completion of a match in either league, the points shall be shared as described in Section 4.

2.5 All teams shall turn up at the venue specified. In the event of any team failing to do so their opponents shall be awarded the match (and all the rubbers and points available in League matches). Moreover, if a club cannot raise its full complement of teams for a particular week's fixtures, it must concede the match(es) of the lowest ranked team(s).

2.6 Any Club wishing to concede a fixture must consult either the Chair or Secretary at least 48 hours before a match is conceded. A fine of £5 will be imposed on teams who concede less than 48 hours before the scheduled start time of a match or who fail to inform the relevant officials.

### 3. MATCHES

3.1 At least two courts shall be made available for play by the Home Team at the time stipulated.

3.2 New Slazenger L.T.A. official tennis balls **must** be used for all matches. Not less than **three** balls shall be provided for use in each first round rubber in each match. Used Slazenger balls may, however, be used in Junior League matches.

3.3 In *Open League* and Knockout fixtures, play shall commence at 2 p.m. prompt (or by 6.30 p.m. in the case of evening matches) and this will be strictly adhered to unless a Club approaches the League Committee which can use discretion to allow for an earlier start. An exception to this is if a club has 3 or less courts and more than one team is at home on that day, in which case the Club's lower team shall commence its match at 10.30 a.m.

3.4 In *Ladies* (and evening *Mixed*) matches play will commence by 6.30 p.m. (or 6 p.m. in early and late-season fixtures with the agreement of both captains).

3.5 In the *Open League*, each pair shall play the opposing two pairs the best of three tie-break sets.

3.6 In the *Ladies* and *Mixed Leagues* each pair shall play two tie-break sets against each of the opposing two pairs.

3.7 In the *Junior Leagues*, each player shall play one singles and one doubles rubber. The four singles rubbers will each be the best of three sets. Within each team, players should be ranked 1-4 and the 4 singles rubbers be 1 v 1, 2 v 2, 3 v 3 and 4 v 4. The first two sets will be each be "short" sets: in a "short" set, the first player/team who wins four games wins that set, provided there is a margin of two games over the opponent(s); if the score reaches four games all, a tie-break game shall be played. If the first two sets are shared, the players shall play a "Championship" tie-break for the third set; in a "Championship" tie-break, the player who first wins ten points shall win the "Championship" tie-break (and the rubber) provided there is a margin of two points over the opponent. Other than playing to 10 points (2 clear), the rules of a "Championship" tie-break are the same as those of a tie-break. For players holding a British Tennis Rating, results will be sent to Tennis Lancashire and hence contribute to players' British Tennis Rating ratings. The doubles rubbers will each comprise a single, tie-break set. The players who participated in the singles rubbers can be paired as their respective captains choose.

3.8 If 20 minutes after the scheduled start of play, any pair is not ready to play then the opposition may claim the first set of the rubber/s 6-0. If after 45 minutes any pair is not ready, the opponents may claim the first rubber/s 6-0, 6-0. After 1 hour the

match is considered forfeited due to non-arrival and any previously played rubbers will be conceded.

3.9 In the *Junior League*, if a match is abandoned prior to the completion of *any* rubbers due to inclement weather, the match may be rearranged if agreed between the clubs. (The Junior Organiser must be informed by the home club of such an abandonment within 24 hours in order to avoid a late result fine – see 4.8).

3.10 If play has not started due to bad weather one hour after the match was due to commence (or by 7 p.m. in the case of *Ladies* and *Mixed* evening matches), the match shall be abandoned. Unless mutually agreed by the captains, a match will be abandoned one hour after cessation of play.

In the *Ladies League*, if no result is obtained (see 4.2), the match shall be re-arranged between the two clubs concerned. The home team must, within 3 days, offer 3 dates to the away team. The away team must accept one of those dates within 3 days of notification. Failure to do either within these time limits the match will be deemed conceded. The Results Secretary must be notified of any rearranged fixture date and outcome.

3.11 In all League and Knockout Competitions, the home team shall provide squash for all players on completion of the first round of rubbers. In the Mixed Leagues and Knockout Competitions, the home team shall also provide drinks and a light meal for all players on completion of the match. (Note the removal of requirement for home *Ladies* teams to provide drinks and a light meal for all players on completion of the match.)

3.12 Any player who concedes a rubber during a match will not be allowed to play in the remainder of the match.

3.13 Suitable tennis attire shall be worn for all matches in the Slazenger East Lancashire League. Appropriate footwear must be worn at all times.

## 4. RESULTS

4.1 The result of a completed match shall be based firstly on a rubber count, then on sets and finally on games.

4.2 If a match is abandoned after completion of one round of rubbers the **result** shall be based solely on the completed round, firstly on a rubber count, then on sets and finally on games. If these are equal the match shall be declared a draw. In order to obtain a result, the captain of either team may concede rubbers, sets or games to the opposing team. In the *Ladies League*, if no result can be obtained in this manner, the match shall be re-arranged as agreed between the two clubs concerned.

4.3 In the *Open* and *Junior Leagues*: One point is awarded for each rubber won and one point is awarded for winning the match.

4.4 In the *Ladies* and *Mixed Leagues*: One point is awarded for each set won and one point is awarded for winning the match.

4.5 In **all** Leagues the point for winning the match shall be halved in the event of the match being a draw.

4.6 Points for matches abandoned *without a result* shall be shared equally, with the exception of the *Junior League* in which points shall awarded for all completed rubbers.

4.7 Points for abandoned rubbers (or sets in the *Ladies* and *Mixed Leagues*) shall be shared equally.

4.8 The home team shall be responsible for notifying the result of the match to the Results Secretary (Open, Ladies and Mixed Leagues and Knockouts) or the Junior Organiser (Junior League) by telephone or e-mail, within 24 hours of the match being played, conceded or re-arranged. If the Results Secretary (or Junior Organiser in the case of Junior League matches) cannot be contacted, the home team should contact either the Chair or the Secretary.

4.9 Should a *Ladies League* match be abandoned without a result, or a *Junior League* match abandoned without a result and rearranged, the home team must inform the Results Secretary, by telephone or e-mail, within 24 hours of the abandonment.

4.10 The Results Secretary (or Junior Organiser in the case of Junior League matches) must also receive a completed Result Card no later than 7 days after the match is played. The Junior Organiser will use the completed results cards to extract the players' details and results to send to Tennis Lancashire.

4.11 Failure to adhere to the above rules (4.8, 4.9 or 4.10) shall result in **strict** enforcement of the following for each breach: the offending home club will be fined £5.00.

## 5. ELIGIBILITY AND STARRED PLAYERS

5.1 In the event of clubs entering two or more teams in any League, they must indicate, in writing to the Secretary before the commencement of the season, a complete list of **starred players**.

(i) **Three** starred players must be nominated for a Club's 'A' team in the Open League.

(ii) **Two** starred players must be nominated for all other teams except the lowest ranked of the multiple teams in each League, and in the *Mixed League* shall consist of one man and one lady.

All starred players shall be restricted to playing for the team for which they were nominated **or** a higher ranked team for the duration of the competition. Any club disregarding this rule shall forfeit the rubber or rubbers to their opponents.

5.2 The League Committee reserves the right to change the starred players if they have not represented the team for which they were nominated in at least half the matches by mid-season.

5.3 Clubs not having submitted a complete list of starred players in writing to the League Secretary before the start of the season shall be fined £10.00 for each week or part-week that passes before the listing is received.

5.4 Any player that represents any club in the league or knockout competitions must be a member of that club.

5.5 No player shall play for more than one Slazenger East Lancashire League Club in one season without the written permission of the League Committee, in any of the Leagues.

5.6 Players may, however, be permitted to play for different clubs in different leagues (e.g. a man or lady may play for one Club in the Open/Ladies League and another club in the Mixed League).

5.7 Applications for **transfer** of any player during the season must be made in writing by the prospective club and the player to the League Committee. The player shall, in all cases, not be permitted to play for a new club until the League Committee has given its written permission. The League Representatives of the clubs directly involved in players transferring or representing more than one club shall not be permitted to vote on the issue.

## 6. LEAGUE PLACINGS, PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

6.1 League placings shall be determined firstly on points and secondly, if necessary, on matches won, with drawn matches being counted as half.

6.2 Should there be a tie, for a Championship or a promotion/relegation place, the team winning more matches shall be placed higher (for this purpose, a drawn match shall be counted as half). If there is a tie on both points and wins, a play-off shall decide, the venue to be decided on the toss of a coin.

6.3 Promotion and relegation in all Leagues will normally consist of two up and two down.

6.4 The final composition of all divisions shall be at the discretion of the members present at the League A.G.M. (or Committee meeting at which the League composition is determined). However, in the event of sufficient teams entering the leagues, divisions of equal numbers shall be formed subject to:

- (i) a variation of one;
- (ii) the number of teams in a lower division shall not exceed that in a higher division;
- (iii) no division shall comprise less than six clubs.

## 7. KNOCKOUT COMPETITIONS

7.1 All league teams will be entered in the knockout competitions unless notification is given in writing to the Fixtures Secretary before compilation of the fixtures.

7.2 In the *Open 1* competition, only the first division teams are eligible to enter. A separate knockout, the *Open 2/3*, will provide the competition for all remaining teams. In both competitions, two pairs will play the opposing team in the best of three tie-break sets.

7.3 The draw shall be on the basis that, in the first round, the team higher in the draw shall be the home team. In later rounds prior to the final, the team that has played more away matches than their opponents will be the home team, byes being considered as home matches for this purpose. If both teams have had an equal number of home or away matches, the team placed higher in the draw shall be at home. If the same teams are drawn to meet each other in the semi-final of the same competition in successive seasons, the venue shall alternate. Venues for finals will be decided by the League Management Committee prior to the start of the season.

7.4 The *Open* competitions will be played on the dates stipulated in the fixture list or earlier when agreed by **both** captains.

7.5 The *Ladies* and *Mixed* competitions will be played during fixed weeks as stipulated in the fixture list. For **all** matches in the *Ladies* and *Mixed* competitions, the day and time for commencement of play shall be that designated prior to the season by the home team for their League and Knockout Fixtures, unless agreed otherwise by both team captains.

7.6 Any player representing a team in a knockout competition may not also represent a lower team *at any subsequent stage* of that knockout competition (or, in the case of the Open Division 1 competition, a team in the Open Division 2/3 competition).

7.7 No player shall play for more than one Slazenger East Lancashire League Club in one season without the written permission of the League Committee, in any of the Knockout competitions. Players may, however, be permitted to play for different clubs in different knockout competitions (e.g. a man or lady may play for one Club in the Open/Ladies Knockout and another club in the Mixed Knockout).

7.8 If a knockout match is abandoned **without a result** the match shall be restarted at the same venue on a date to be mutually agreed by the captains. Should a completed match be drawn, it shall be replayed, the choice of ground reverting to the away team.

## 8. INDIVIDUAL KNOCKOUT COMPETITIONS

8.1 The Honorary Referee will be a person (or persons) nominated by the League Committee. Any issues regarding forfeit of matches or 'scratching' of competitors will be taken by a number of Committee members with their decision being final.

8.2 Winners of individual matches are required to telephone the result to the Honorary Referee immediately after completing the match.

8.3 Any player who enters the League's Individual Competitions must be a member of one of the clubs participating in the League.

8.4 Players higher in the draw are to contact their opponents to arrange fixtures and they have choice of venue in the first or preliminary round and shall be called the 'Home' player(s), their opponents being called the 'Away' player(s). In succeeding rounds, the player(s) who has played more away matches than their opponents shall earn the right to play at home. Players having byes or walkovers in the earlier rounds shall be deemed to have won at home. If both players/pairs have played an equal number of away matches, the player/pair higher in the draw shall be the 'Home' player(s). The 'Home' player(s) should offer three alternative dates to their opponent (s). Please arrange matches as early as possible as your opponent(s) may be going on holiday.

8.5 Each player must take a minimum of **three** new Slazenger L.T.A. official tennis balls to each match. Winner(s) take the new balls, losers keep the used match balls.

8.6 All matches are the best of three tie-break sets.

8.7 Suitable tennis attire shall be worn for all matches; this includes appropriate footwear.

8.8 All players must be available to play on Finals Day. Any player who reaches a final and then cannot play will be scratched from the event.

8.9 Any decision of the Honorary Referee is final.

## **9. FINES**

9.1 All fines will be levied at the end of the season by the Treasurer.

**SUBJECT TO THE ABOVE RULES, MATCHES SHALL BE PLAYED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RULES LAID DOWN BY THE LAWN TENNIS ASSOCIATION**

*Revised December 2009*