

## Southport & District Tennis League

### Proposed Rule Changes by the League Executive Committee for 2022 Season

#### 1. Introduction

The S&D League Executive Committee has carried out a review of the 2020 league season and also considered helpful feedback provided by a number of clubs. Overall the season ran well although there were a couple of continually repeated problems:

- Many clubs were late confirming match results – chasing these up generates extra work for the League Match Secretary.
- The new rule that allows playing more than once in a week was abused on a large number of occasions when it was used to strengthen lower teams instead of its intended purpose of allowing players who had to “play up” to fill in for a missing player to also play for their usual team. The new starring rules that were intended to address this problem were found confusing by many clubs.

It is hoped that the proposed rule changes in this document will address these concerns and also tidy up some other anomalies in the current rules. All proposed changes from the previous rules are shown in red text.

There is also an additional rule change proposal submitted by a club and shown at the end of this document.

#### 2. General Meetings – allow online meetings

COVID has demonstrated the need to be able to hold General Meetings of the League online. Currently this has been allowed as a result of government action permitting all AGMs to be held online but it is sensible to make provision for this in our League Rules in case it is required in the future. Measures need to be in place for online meetings to make the number of attendees manageable.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
5a	The Annual General Meeting of the League shall be held in the month of February on a day and at a place and time <b>(which may be online)</b> appointed by the Executive Committee for the adoption of the Executive Committee report and audited accounts, any alterations to rules, the election of officers and the Executive Committee as required under Rule 4, the election of the Hon. Auditor, and such other business as may be transacted in general meeting.	Addition of online option for Annual General Meetings.
5f	<b>When meetings are at a physical location</b> , clubs shall have one vote per team <b>entered into the Summer League at the time of the meeting</b> providing the number of representatives is equal to the number of teams. <b>When meetings are online, clubs shall have one representative each who will be able to cast one vote for each team which that club has entered into the Summer League at the time of the meeting.</b>	Amendment to voting for online meetings and to make clear that the number of votes for each club is determined by the Summer League.

### 3. Miscellaneous Rules – Correction of complaints process

This corrects an incorrect amendment that was made to the rules when the League Match Regulations Sub-Committee (LMRSC) was introduced.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
7B	<p><b>Complaints</b></p> <p>If any club wishes to make a complaint against any other club or clubs the complaint shall be made in writing to the League Secretary or any of the particular League Secretaries concerned within seven days of the incident. Upon receipt of a complaint to any of the above officials, a copy of the complaint shall be forwarded to the club or clubs who are complained against and a written reply requested within 14 days. <del>The League Match Regulations Sub-Committee (L.M.R.S.C.) shall be convened to hear the complaint and all parties to the complaint shall be invited to attend the meeting. The absence of all or any of the parties to the complaint shall not invalidate any meeting of the sub-committee hearing the complaint.</del> <b>The complaint and any responses will be referred to the League Match Regulations Sub-Committee (LMRSC) who will decide on the appropriate action.</b></p> <p><b>Any club shall have the right of appeal to the Executive Committee over the decision taken by the LMRSC. In the event of such an appeal, the Executive Committee shall be convened to hear the appeal and all parties to the original complaint shall be invited to attend the meeting. The absence of all or any of the parties to the complaint shall not invalidate any meeting of the Executive Committee hearing the appeal. Any decision taken by the Executive Committee following the appeal shall be final.</b></p>	<p>This reflects the actual practice that has taken place in most cases. Without this change it is extremely cumbersome to handle complaints as two formal hearings might be required, one by the LMRSC and one on appeal.</p>
7C	<b>Other Appeals.</b>	Change of title in line with the change to rule 7B

### 4. Summer league – minor corrections to wording

Following a review of the Summer League rules a few improvements to the wording have been identified. None of these alter the way in which the rules are actually applied in practice.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B3	Ties for promotion and relegation, if level on points, sets won will decide. If level on sets, games will decide. If teams are level on games, then head to head will decide. If still level, a coin will be tossed. League <b>tables</b> should include sets for <b>and</b> against.	Correction of typing error.
B12	Any team that concedes a match will suffer a two-point penalty in addition to the loss of points from the conceded match. This rule will <b>not</b> apply to <del>all teams apart from</del> the lowest team in clubs with more than one team.	Rewording to improve clarity. (This rule was not applied in 2021 in recognition of the COVID related difficulties.)
B18	When entering match results, clubs may add additional <b>players</b> to any team so long as the player is already registered for a lower team at the same club. An email recording the addition(s) must be sent to the League Match Secretary within 48 hours of the addition being made.	Correction of typing error.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B24	All matches should start at 7.00pm apart from the first three and last two which should start at 6.30pm. All players in a team should be available to play at the appointed time. Any player not ready to play 20 minutes after the appointed starting time shall concede the first set 6-0. Or if 30 minutes after the <del>appointment</del> <b>appointed</b> starting time shall concede the first event 6-0, 6-0, or if after 60 minutes of the appointed starting time shall also concede the second event, 6-0, 6-0. The order of play in all matches shall be MIXED events first.	Correction of typing error.

## 5. Summer League – change to starring to allow for players playing for more than one team in the same week

At last year's AGM, rules about starred players were agreed as part of allowing players to play more than once in a week. The intention of these changes was to enable players to play for a higher team when it is short of players but still be able play for their own usual team. It was not intended that this rule would allow lower teams to be strengthened by players from higher teams but this has happened on quite a number of occasions. It has also been found that the starring rules introduced last year were over complex and hard to follow.

The rule changes below simplify the starring system and make it clear that the regular 4<sup>th</sup> player in a team should not also play for a lower team in the same week. To make it easier for clubs to identify their starred players correctly we propose to go back to the arrangement where starrings are not introduced until week 4 when teams should be more settled.

To ensure consistency of the rules all the proposed changes in this section will be voted on as one block.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B7	No player shall play more than one like event in the same match. A player may play for more than one team in the same week as long as they comply with the 'starring' described in Rule 9 <b>and are moving up to replace a missing player in a higher team.</b>	Added to make clear the conditions under which playing more than once in a week is allowed.
B9	Each club with more than one team in the League shall nominate <b>4 men and 4 ladies</b> for each team, excluding the lowest team, who will be known as 'starred players' <b>by no later than the Friday before the fourth week of the season.</b> The 'starring' shall be indicated by <b>adding an asterisk followed</b> by the number of the team for which they are 'starred' after their surname on the player registration. 'Starred players' may not play for a team which is lower than the one for which they have been 'starred' and must be regular League players.	Replaces the previous over complex rule.  Simplifies the starring of players and avoids the unfair strengthening of lower teams.
B10	Player registrations <b>and 'starrings'</b> must be sent to the League Planner Manager two weeks before the start of the season and in the spreadsheet, format as defined by the League Planner Manager. At the discretion of the League Planner Manager SMALL numbers of changes to the registrations MAY be <b>accepted</b> up to the Friday before the start of the season. All registration spreadsheets and any change requests must be copied to the League Match Secretary for information.	Clubs have found it difficult to star players before the start of the season. With 4 starred players in each team this would be more difficult and so starring will not be required until week 4.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B11	Up to four additional men and four additional ladies may be registered per team between the <del>7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup></del> 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> week of the season. Clubs may request a change to 'starred' players <del>between the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> week and/or</del> between the 7 <sup>th</sup> and 8 <sup>th</sup> 8 <sup>th</sup> and 9 <sup>th</sup> week of the season. Any change requests must be sent to the League Planner Manager and the League Match Secretary in writing or email to arrive no later than the Friday of the <del>3<sup>rd</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> week</del> 8 <sup>th</sup> week. Apart from these changes, and those described in Rule 18, no other changes to registrations or 'starrings' may be made except in the case of injury or as directed by the League Match Secretary.	As starrings are now not required until the 4 <sup>th</sup> week the time for amendments has been made one week later.

## 6. Summer League – 3 court clubs

This change is introduced to reduce unnecessary waiting around at a 3-court club for the 4<sup>th</sup> mixed pair.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B25	THREE COURT CLUBS: all matches will commence at 6.30pm. The order of play MUST be 1st, 2nd and 3rd MIXED. <del>Ideally 4<sup>th</sup> Mixed pair should be present at the appointed starting time but certainly no later than 7.00pm, when</del> The 4 <sup>th</sup> mixed pair must arrive by 7.15pm after which the 20-, 30- or 60-minutes lateness Rule (see above) will apply whether a court is available or not.	Realistically it is very unlikely that the 4 <sup>th</sup> pair will be able to start play at a 3 court club before 7.15pm.

## 7. Autumn/Winter league – selection of players

These changes clarify the eligibility of players for teams in the Autumn/Winter League. The leagues are constituted using the positions in which each team ended the Summer season and for that reason clubs are expected to make their team selections from their normal pool of players for those teams.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
A7	No player shall play more than one like event in the same match. A player may play for more than one team in the same week so long as they are <del>not unreasonably strengthening the team. moving up to replace a missing player in a higher team.</del>	Clarification of player eligibility.
A10	The League will use the player lists from the same year's Summer League but clubs may add additional players to teams when entering results so long as the team is not unreasonably strengthened. <del>The starring system is not used but it is expected that players who were starred for higher teams in the Summer League will not be used for lower teams in the Autumn league.</del>	

## 8. Summer and Autumn/Winter league – missing players

If a player (other than the 4<sup>th</sup> player) is injured during a match or unexpectedly does not arrive then it has always been unclear whether the other players should move up or whether the gap should be left in the injured or missing player's position. The change below is intended to clarify this.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
New rule	If a player is injured during a match or has been included on the team sheet but does not arrive in time for the second half of the match and no substitute has been found then for the remainder of the match the gap will be left in the position that the missing player would have occupied.	Clarification of what to do if a player is injured or unexpectedly missing.

## 9. Summer and Autumn/Winter League – recording and confirmation of results

Late entry of results and confirmation of results causes a great deal of extra work for the League Match Secretary.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B17	<b>Summer league:</b> The captain of the home team shall have submitted the results of the match, using the on-line system, within 48 hours of the match being completed. <b>Missing this deadline WILL result in the points being awarded to the away team unless a problem has been reported to the League Match Secretary before the deadline.</b> The captain of the away team shall have verified the results within 72 hours of the completion of the match. <b>Missing this deadline will result in the match being confirmed by the League Match Secretary. Any appeals against these actions must be directed to the LMRSC/EC via the League Match Secretary.</b>	This change makes clear exactly what actions will be taken if results or confirmations are late.
A17	<b>Autumn/Winter league:</b> The captain of the home team shall have submitted the results of the match, using the on-line system, within 48 hours of the match being completed. <b>Missing this deadline WILL result in the points being awarded to the away team unless a problem has been reported to the League Match Secretary before the deadline.</b> The captain of the away team shall have verified the results within 72 hours of the completion of the match. <b>Missing this deadline will result in the match being confirmed by the League Match Secretary. Any appeals against these actions must be directed to the LMRSC/EC via the League Match Secretary.</b>	The deadlines for entering results for the Autumn/Winter League have been altered to match the Summer League, for consistency.

## 10. Summer League and Autumn/Winter league – recording of cancelled matches

The rules do not currently make clear exactly how matches that have been cancelled should be recorded. It is proposed that such matches will be recorded as a tie with one league point going to each team but with no sets or games awarded. This means that it will be slightly better to play and draw a game than it will be to not play it and agree a draw.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B23	(Summer league) In the event of a match not being completed on the first or alternative night a further 14 days are allowed. Failing completion in that time, the match will be halved. <b>It will be recorded on the League Planner system as a “tie” with not sets or games being awarded to either team.</b>	Added a definition of how cancelled matches should be recorded on league planner.
A20	(Autumn/Winter League) Postponed matches due to weather conditions may be played on an alternative night to be agreed by both teams. The alternative night must be within 1 week of the original appointed match night. Any matches not completed within one week of the appointed match night will be assumed drawn. <b>They will be recorded on the League Planner system as a “tie” with not sets or games being awarded to either team.</b>	

## 11. Autumn/Winter league – start times

There has been confusion around start times for Autumn/Winter League matches with many clubs preferring a 6.30pm start although the rules previously specified 7pm. It is proposed to allow the home club to decide what time they prefer.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
A24	<b>Clubs may set the time of their home matches to either 6.30pm or 7pm so long as this has been specified to the League at least two weeks before the start of the Autumn/Winter League season. An alternative arrangement may take place for a specific match but only when it has been agreed in advance by both teams. If a start time has not been specified then 6.30pm will be assumed.</b> All players in a team should be available to play at the appointed time. Any player not ready to play 20 minutes after the appointed starting time shall concede the first set 6-0. Or if 30 minutes after the appointment starting time shall concede the first event 6-0, 6-0, or if after 60 minutes of the appointed starting time shall also concede the second event, 6-0, 6-0. The order of play in all matches shall be MIXED events first.	Allows clubs greater flexibility on deciding the start time for home matches.

## 12. Renumbering of Autumn League rules

The Autumn/Winter League rules will be renumbered to remove the gaps where rules that are not relevant to the Autumn/Winter League have been removed.

### 13. Proposals for rule change – match start times – by Hillside LTC

The League Executive Committee makes no recommendation on whether these proposals should be approved or rejected.

**Proposal 1:** That the start times of all league matches be changed to 6.30pm as floodlight restrictions at some clubs and/or lack of daylight mean that some matches starting at 7pm cannot be completed.

Proposed by: Peter McHugh (Hillside LTC)

**Proposal 2 (to be withdrawn if proposal 1 is accepted)** The following changes to the league rules are proposed with the new text shown in blue:

Rule 24. All matches should start at 7.00pm apart from the first three and last two which should start at 6.30pm and except for 'Restricted Clubs' (see below). All players in a team should be available to play at the appointed time. Any player not ready to play 20 minutes after the appointed starting time shall concede the first set 6-0. Or if 30 minutes after the appointment starting time shall concede the first event 6-0, 6-0, or if after 60 minutes of the appointed starting time shall also concede the second event, 6-0, 6-0. The order of play in all matches shall be MIXED events first.

New rule. **Restricted Clubs** - It is acknowledged that some clubs have restrictions on the time that they can play during evenings. This includes (but is not limited to) the time that they can operate their floodlights. For any clubs that cannot play until 11 pm with and without floodlights these clubs shall be referred to as "Restricted Clubs." The Restricted Clubs must (unless otherwise agreed with the away team) commence all home matches at 6.30 pm. The 20, 30 or 60 minutes lateness Rule (see above) will apply from this earlier time.

#### Explanation

It is understood that some clubs are only permitted to play until a set time, usually because of planning permission for their floodlights or due to having no floodlights at all. This can make it very frustrating when a match cannot be completed because floodlights have to be switched off or bad lights stops play. At such clubs, starting matches at 6.30pm instead of 7pm would give a much better chance of completing matches. It would also reduce the risk of injury that could be caused if attempting to play on without floodlights when the light is poor.

The reason for two proposals is that the first is the simpler one as everyone would then know what time all matches started without having to look up specific information for each club. However, it is recognised that some clubs may not have a 10pm curfew for floodlights and those clubs could potentially start and finish matches later which would be allowed under the second proposal.

**Proposed by: Peter McHugh (Hillside LTC)**

Rob Hemmings  
Chairman, Southport & District Tennis League