

Southport & District Tennis League

Proposed Rule Changes for 2025 Season

1. Introduction

The S&D League Executive Committee has carried out a review of the 2024 league season. As in previous years, a few issues were found during the season and it is hoped that the proposed rule changes in this document will address these.

By 2025 we had hoped to be able to introduce further rule changes to make use of the World Tennis Number (WTN) and use this to replace a number of current rules including those on “starring”. However, having investigated current Southport & District League players WTNs, we believe that the WTNs still need at least one more year to settle down and so we will postpone these change proposals until after the 2025 season.

All proposed changes from the previous rules are shown in red text. Rules will be renumbered appropriately after changes are approved by the AGM.

2. General changes

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
3d (New rule)	All clubs in the Southport & District League must display a full copy of these rules prominently within their clubhouse so that they are available for all members to view.	The rules should be available to all members in case there is any disagreement about them between teams as was sometimes the case in 2024.
7B	<p>If any club wishes to make a complaint against any other club or clubs the complaint shall be made in writing or email 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 or emailed reply requested within 14 days. Any complaints or responses sent by email must be in a separate document, not in the body of the email. The complaint and any responses will be referred to the League Match Regulations Sub-Committee (LMRSC) who will decide on the appropriate action.</p> <p>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. Such appeals must be sent to the League Hon. Secretary on a separate document, not in the body of an email, no later than 14 days after receiving a LMRSC penalty or decision.</p>	<p>Makes clear that complaints, responses, etc. may be sent by email (which they often are already) and specifies that they must be a separate document as this is much easier to manage.</p> <p>The second paragraph change gives clarification on how to appeal against an LMRSC decision.</p>

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
7C	Any club or player shall have the right to appeal to the Executive Committee on any matter and any such appeal or other application hereunder shall be dealt with in such manner as the Executive Committee may determine and their decision shall be final. Such appeals must be sent to the League Hon. Secretary on a separate document, not in the body of an email.	Amended for consistency with rule 7B. Appeals sent in the body of an email are difficult to manage and circulate.

3. Summer league changes

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
A	STRUCTURE The League shall consist of such one or more divisions as the Executive should determine. The EC will form each division at its first meeting prior to the date of the AGM.	Clarification on when the divisions will be formed following the date for entries allowed by rule B2.
B2	Clubs must notify the General Secretary of any changes they would like to make to the number of teams entered into the Summer League by at least 14 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for that year. Any new clubs wishing to enter the league must also apply by at least 14 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting for the year in which they wish to enter. If there are too many teams for the number of divisions then the AGM will vote on a proposal of which teams to include/exclude, the exact content of the proposal shall be decided by the Executive Committee.	Change entry deadline from 7 days before AGM to 14 to give more time for the league to be configured.
B3	The team scoring the most points in each division shall be the champion team of that division and shall be entitled to the custody of the Championship Trophy of that division from the League Presentation Evening until they are due to be presented at the next year's final. Clubs are responsible for any damage or loss of trophies awarded to them and must return them, polished, to the League. Immediately after the final they must be returned to the league for engraving prior to being re-presented at the League Presentation Evening.	Makes clear that clubs must look after any trophies that they receive and the timings of when clubs will receive them.
B.8	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 up to 3 times in a Summer League season. This rule is intended to allow players to <u>move up to replace a missing player in a higher team</u> and still play for their regular team. Anyone playing multiple times in a week will only be an eligible player for a team if, at the date of that team's match, they have played at least 50% of their league matches for that team or below. Appearances as a substitute for an injured player or in cup matches will not count towards the total. Starring (Rule 10) also still applies. Breaches of this rule will result in the player being treated as an "Ineligible Player" (see Summer League rule B17 for an explanation of Ineligible Players).	This has been reworded to make it clearer as it was apparent that it was not well understood in 2024.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B13 (part)	<p>... If a player's name cannot be found on the online League Planner system their name and LTA number must be sent to the League Match Secretary using the Match Comments form on the league website at: https://www.southporttennisleague.org.uk/wp/match-comments/ otherwise they will be treated as an "unknown Ineligible Player". Signed match scoresheets MUST be retained by the club until the start of the following season in case of dispute.</p>	<p>The new League Planner is very restrictive in allowing comments to be made so this is being introduced instead.</p> <p>Unknown Player changed to Ineligible player for consistency.</p>
B15 (part)	<p>... The substitute's name must be shown in the match results on League Planner for the events in which they have played and an email sent to the League Match Secretary using the Match Comments on the league website form at: https://www.southporttennisleague.org.uk/wp/match-comments/. If no substitute is found the injured player's name must not be shown on the scoresheet for any events sets that they have failed to complete.</p>	<p>The new League Planner is very restrictive in allowing comments to be made so this is being introduced instead.</p>
B24	<p>All matches should start at 7.00pm apart from the first three and last two which should start at 6.30pm. Courts must be made available for play 15 minutes before the official start time to allow players to "warm up". All players in a team should be available to play at the appointed time. All warm ups must be completed by 10 minutes after the official start time. Any player not ready to play 20 minutes after the appointed starting time shall concede the first set 6-0. Or if 40 minutes after the appointed 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.</p>	<p>Additions to encourage matches to start promptly to avoid issues with light at the end of the match.</p>
B27	<p>All league matches have precedence over cup matches except for the team or individual cup finals. If either team playing in a cup final has a league match scheduled for that night, the league match shall be rearranged for the alternative night of the home team.</p>	<p>Clarification added that this rule also applies to the individual finals day.</p>
New rule	<p>Players may only be registered for one Southport & District League club at any one time. They may be transferred between clubs no more than once during the season which must be before week 8 of the league season. Before a player plays a match for their new club they must have added the new club to their LTA registration and the new club must informed the League Match Secretary by email (at lms@southporttennisleague.org.uk) or letter. No player may play for two different clubs in the same week.</p>	<p>Explains the circumstances in which a player may change clubs during the season.</p>

4. Autumn League Changes

The following changes are proposed for the Autumn League rules to bring them into line with the proposed changes for the Summer League.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
A1	Teams wishing to enter the Autumn League are expected to have taken part in the Summer League in the same year and must notify the Autumn League Match Secretary of their wish to take part by the end of July. The League Match Secretary will have the discretion on whether to allow additional teams if requested and to determine their starting position in the league.	This rule allows additional teams to be entered in the Autumn League but only if approved by the LMS, to ensure a fair level of competition.
B.8.	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 up to 3 times in a Summer League season. This rule is intended to allow players to <u>move up to replace a missing player in a higher team</u> and still play for their regular team. Anyone playing multiple times in a week will only be an eligible player for a team if, at the date of that team’s match, they have played at least 50% of their league matches in the summer and autumn leagues for that team or below. Appearances as a substitute for an injured player or in cup matches will not count towards the total. Breaches of this rule will result in the player being treated as an “Ineligible Player” (see Autumn League rule B15 for an explanation of Ineligible Players).	This has been reworded to make it clearer as it was apparent that it was not well understood in 2024.
B11	No scoresheets will be used and all results must be entered online. The away team must give the names of the players to the home team at the time of the match to enable them to be recorded later. If a player’s name cannot be found on the online League Planner system their name and LTA number must be sent to the League Match Secretary using the Match Comments form on the league website at: https://www.southporttennisleague.org.uk/wp/match-comments/ otherwise they will be treated as an Unknown Ineligible Player.	The new League Planner is very restrictive in allowing comments to be made so this is being introduced instead. Unknown Player changed to Ineligible player for consistency.

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
B13	<p>In the event of a player being incapacitated after play in a match that has begun, so that he or she cannot continue playing the remainder of that event will be forfeit. A captain shall be entitled to include a substitute in any subsequent events in which the incapacitated player should have taken part, provided that the injury or other incapacity was caused after play in the match had begun and was not due solely to tiredness. If the substitute arrives more than 20 minutes after the court and players are ready to commence the subsequent event then they will forfeit the first set and if they still have not arrived after 40 minutes they will forfeit the entire event. The substitute's name must be shown in the match results on League Planner for the events in which they have played and an email sent to the League Match Secretary using the Match Comments form on the league website at: https://www.southporttennisleague.org.uk/wp/match-comments/ explaining the circumstances. If no substitute is found the injured player's name must not be shown on the scoresheet for any events sets that they have failed to complete.</p>	<p>The new League Planner is very restrictive in allowing comments to be made so this is being introduced instead.</p>
B22	<p>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. Courts must be made available for play 15 minutes before the official start time to allow players to "warm up". All players in a team should be available to play at the appointed time. All warm ups must be completed by 10 minutes after the official start time. Any player not ready to play 20 minutes after the appointed starting time shall concede the first set 6-0. Or if 40 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.</p>	<p>Additions to encourage matches to start promptly to avoid issues with light at the end of the match.</p>

5. Team Tournament rule changes

Rule	Proposed rule change	Comments on change
Team Tournaments Rule 4(e)	The Home Team will provide all the balls. The Away Team will pay half the cost of the balls and take half the balls home unless otherwise agreed by <u>both</u> team captains.	Allows flexibility if both team captains agree.
Spartans rule 2(c)	Eligibility (Players) To be eligible to play for a team in the Spartans Trophy a player must be a Registered Player for their club. They must have played at least 3 league matches during the entire summer league season for their club and must have played at least 50% of those their league matches for that team or a lower team.	Typing correction
Spartans rule 4(a)	The team designated the "Home Team" shall decide the venue. (The "Home Team" is the first named team in the draw.)	Clarification of which is the home team as the Spartans may not be able to be run using League Planner.
Spartans rule 4(d)	The Home Team will provide all the balls. The Away Team will pay half the cost of the balls and take half the balls home unless otherwise agreed by <u>both</u> team captains.	Allows flexibility if both team captains agree.