

# SOUTHPORT & DISTRICT TENNIS LEAGUE RULES 2025

(Changes from 2024 are indicated by red text)

*Please note this is an extract of the full league rules – this document shows the “playing” rules only*

## AUTUMN / WINTER LEAGUE

### A. STRUCTURE

1. 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.**
2. The Autumn League shall consist of such one or more divisions as the Executive should determine. The EC will form each division during August with teams allocated to divisions based on their placing in that year’s Summer League.

### B. COMPETITION

1. **Clubs are responsible** for highlighting any irregularities in relation in the Rules and should notify them to the Autumn League Match Secretary as a formal complaint in writing, by letter or by e-mail, within 7 days of the match being played. If email is used then the complaint must be on a **separate attachment and not in the body of the email**. If the complaint is about another club then a copy will be sent to them and they must provide a response within 7 days (later responses will not be considered). The League Match Secretary will forward the complaint and any response to the LMRSC for consideration.
2. The team scoring the most points in each division shall be the champion team of that division and shall be awarded a prize determined by the EC. The team scoring the second most points in each division will also be awarded a prize determined by the EC.
3. There will be no relegations or promotions and team’s results in the Autumn League will have no effect on their placing in the next year’s Summer League.
4. Ties for winners and runners up, 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 table should include sets for an against.
5. All clubs taking part must allocate 2 courts for use in Autumn League matches.
6. All matches shall be played under the laws of Lawn Tennis in the particular week appointed by EC/LMRSC and on the night submitted to the League at the beginning of each season if possible. (This night shall be Monday for 1st and 2nd teams). For the Autumn League, matches may be rearranged (e.g. due to weather, bad light or need for floodlights) if agreed by both teams. Any matches not played within 1 week from the appointed match night will be recorded as a draw, no matter what the reason.
7. Each match shall consist of two Mixed doubles, one Ladies doubles and one Gents doubles with a tie-break operative at 6 games all. Therefore, each of the four matches shall be worth 2 points and the completed match 8 points. Points awarded should be as follows: 2 points for a win; 1 point for a draw. Clubs must make every effort to field complete teams. Any gaps in a team must be in the lowest positions in the team and must only be in the club’s lowest team.
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 an Autumn League season. **This rule is intended to allow players to move up to replace a missing player in a higher team 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).**

9. Individual players may be registered for any number of teams but must still be played in order of strength. Clubs agree that the names of all registered players will be shown on the League results.
10. As with the Summer League all players must be LTA registered **and have obtained a World Tennis Number**. Clubs may register additional players with the LTA at any time and use them in a team but they must not be significantly stronger than those used in the same team in the Summer League for the same year. Players who were starred for higher teams in the Summer League must not be used for lower teams in the Autumn League.
11. 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 **Ineligible** Player.
12. Pairs must be played in order of strength. Teams as well as individual players within a team must be played in order of strength.
13. 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 **sets** that they have failed to complete.
14. 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.
15. Any team playing a player made ineligible under any of these rules shall forfeit all games and points won by that player whilst he or she was ineligible. Ineligible players must play in the lowest position in the team otherwise any pairings playing below the ineligible player will also forfeit all games and points. Breaches of the rules by a higher team will not penalise other teams playing on different nights.
16. 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. Missing this deadline will result in a one match point penalty for the home team unless a problem has been reported to the League Match Secretary before the deadline. However, the match results remain valid and must be entered into the online (League Planner) system. The captain of the away team shall have verified the results within 72 hours of the completion of the match. 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.
17. When entering match results, clubs may add additional players to any team as long as they are not unreasonably strengthening the team. **A comment giving the full name of the additional player must be recorded by the club on the League Planner system. \*See note at end of Autumn League rules.**
18. The cancellation of matches due to adverse weather conditions shall be made by 6.00pm to the person nominated on the League Planner website (*note: you must be signed in to see this*), or by 5.45pm in the matches due to start at 6.30pm.

19. (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. They will be recorded on the League Planner system as a “tie” with no sets or games being awarded to either team.
20. In the event of inclement weather or bad light during a match, the match shall be deemed to have been completed if four sets have been completed. All sets not completed or begun shall be deemed void and recorded ‘not played’ on the system. In the event of four sets not having been completed, the match shall be treated as a postponed match and replayed as a new match. The match must be “rescheduled” on League Planner by the home team before it is re-played.
21. Either team captain may insist the match is abandoned, either before or during play, if they consider conditions (for example, heavy rain or extreme heat) are dangerous for their players. If insufficient sets have been completed for the result to stand then the match must be rearranged.
22. 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 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.
23. The home team shall provide three new LTA approved tennis balls for each of the first two events.
24. All league matches have precedence over cup matches except for the 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.
25. Clubs are responsible for highlighting any irregularities in relation in the Rules and should notify them to the League Match Secretary in writing by letter or by e-mail within 7 days of the match being played. If email is used then the complaint must be on a **separate attachment and not in the body of the email.** The League Match Secretary will forward them to the LMRSC for consideration.
26. All communication by clubs with the League Match Secretary must be made via CLUB Match Secretaries only.
27. Any problems arising from the on-line system should be notified to the League Match Secretary and/or the League Planner Manager immediately by the Club Match Secretary.
28. The League Match Secretary shall report any irregularity in relation to the Rules to the LMRSC. Failure to comply with these Rules shall be subject to an LMRSC enquiry. The LMRSC shall have the power to impose any penalty or fine.

\*Please note that the highlighted clause in rule B17 is no longer possible (in most cases) on the new League Planner. Instead, please use the form on the League website at:  
<https://www.southporttennisleague.org.uk/wp/match-comments/>

This issue was noticed too late for an official rule change for 2025 and will be corrected for 2026.