

S&D Tennis League

Chairman's Report for 2025

Unfortunately, I have to start this report on a very sad note as halfway through last year our League Secretary, Pauline Pope, passed away unexpectedly. This is a huge loss for the league as she was one of the most capable secretaries I have ever worked with, a good friend and a great support to me in my role of Chairman and to the rest of the League Executive Committee. I'm sure she will be greatly missed by all who knew her.

I must also apologise for the difficulties the League has had with the cup competitions in 2025. An unfortunate combination of circumstances has meant that the main cups were unacceptably late (with two finals still to play at the time of writing) and we had to cancel the Spartans Cup completely in 2025. The good news is that we have plans in place that should avoid this happening again in 2026 so hopefully things will be back to normal!

On a much better note, the Summer and Autumn League ran well with 66 teams in the summer league and 24 teams entering the Autumn League. Although we had two additional teams in the Summer League this year, we managed to squeeze them into division 8 but this did mean that their matches continued during August which was not ideal. The, now infamous, rule 8 (playing twice in a week) again caused quite a few problems and almost certainly caused some unfair results. Consequently, as you will see from the proposed rule changes document that is being sent out with the AGM papers, there are some significant changes being proposed for the league this year.

We are all now slowly getting used to the new League Planner software and it would have been a much smoother year except that the LTA decided to introduce a requirement to have a specified gender for all players without giving us any advance warning! This created a lot of extra work for our League Match Secretary as well as for clubs. Hopefully the LTA won't think up something else new for 2026! It also became apparent that the World Tennis Number (WTN) does not currently get updated when an event is a draw (i.e. one set all) and this is making it slower to become an accurate reflection of player ability. It is improving but slowly! The LTA say that they are addressing this issue and also intend to make it appear more prominently in League Planner in the future. It is still hoped that eventually this will replace "starrings".

As a league we are very fortunate to have a strong Executive Committee who all put in a lot of work to make the League run so well. I'm not going to name them all here, but they all contribute a great deal and running the league without them would be impossible. There are still some vacancies on the league General Committee and it would be particularly welcome if those clubs not currently represented on the League Executive could put somebody forward as we want to reflect the views of all clubs as much as possible.

Rob Hemmings
Chairman, S&D League
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