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Southampton Lawn Tennis Association

(SLTA) Apsley League Rules

1 The League shall be played annually under the following rules of the competition and is governed by the rules contained within the LTA Competition Regulations, which can be found on the LTA website: (<https://www.lta.org.uk/lta-competition-regulations-2025.pdf>)

2 Membership of the League

- (i) Membership of the league shall be open to any club affiliated to the Southampton LTA, provided that a minimum of two courts are available for match play and are LTA Registered Venues.
- (ii) All clubs in the Apsley League must notify the League Secretary of their intention to remain in the league by the date of the Annual General Meeting. Failure to notify or attend the AGM will result in the club being fined or expelled from the league at the committee's discretion.

3 Structure of the League

- (i) The league shall be formed into divisions of nine teams, except for the lowest two divisions, which may be adjusted on a season-by-season basis to accommodate any alteration in the total number of teams in the league, to give an appropriate number of matches.
- (ii) Any club may enter more than one team, but not more than two teams from one club shall be allowed in the Premier Division.
- (iii) New entrants shall be placed in the lowest division.
- (iv) Each team except those in the lowest two divisions shall play each other in its division only once during the season, based on playing home and away in alternate years. The lowest two divisions will be formed to give between 5 and 9 matches during the season, depending on the number of teams.
- (v) 2 points shall be awarded for a win, 1 for a draw. If two or more teams complete their fixtures with equal points, the team winning the most events (rubbers) shall occupy the higher position. If points and events won are equal, the highest position shall be decided on the superior sets average or, if necessary, the superior games average. If the teams are still equal and the Championship promotion or relegation is affected, the teams concerned shall play off on neutral courts. If this match results in a draw, sets and, if necessary, games shall be taken into account in determining the winner.

When a pair retires from an event for any reason, the opponents shall be awarded all remaining games in that event.

When an event is conceded a score of 6-0, 6-0 will be assumed for the purpose of calculating sets and games averages.

- (vi) Before teams depart the match location, a fully completed match card is to be signed by both captains, or another team member, and this copy is to be sent to the League Secretary within 7 days. Both teams must retain a copy or photograph of that scorecard, or a second fully completed and signed scorecard.
- (vii) The captain or another person from the HOME club is to enter the results online within 7 days. If the result has not been entered by that time, the AWAY team captain is then to enter the result, within a further 7 days. The other captain must highlight any discrepancies to the League Secretary within 2 weeks of the posting.
- (viii) If more than two match scorecards are not received by the League Secretary or the match details have not been entered online, one point will be deducted for each incident occurring.

- (ix) The top two teams in each division shall be promoted to the next higher division, and the lowest two teams in any division shall be relegated, except when a team or teams withdraw from the League, when these numbers may be increased or decreased by the League Secretary, to rebalance the division numbers. If the lowest division is split into 'a' & 'b' divisions, then usually only the Champions will be promoted.
- (x) If a team gives a walkover to their opposition, there will be a 2-point deduction for each occurrence during the season from their points totals in the League Tables.
Any team defaulting with two or more walkovers during the season will be automatically relegated to the lowest division. If the team is already in the lowest division, the Committee will investigate and decide on their participation in future competitions.

4 Structure of the Team

- (i) Each team shall consist of 4 ladies and 4 men. Each match shall consist of 8 events: 4 mixed doubles, 2 ladies' doubles and 2 men's doubles. Each event will consist of 2 sets, with a tiebreak being played at 6 games all in both sets. If the event is tied at one set each, a 10-point "Match Tie-Break" will be played. The Match Tie-Break would be considered a "Game" and a "Set" when working out the League Standings.

Where more than one court surface is used during a match, the **AWAY** team shall have the choice of court allocation for both the Mixed Doubles and the Ladies'/Men's Doubles matches.

Notice Of The Team Pairings Must Be Declared Before Play Commences.

If any player is absent when called upon to play at the expiration of 15 minutes from the time agreed upon for the commencement of the match, the opposing team shall be awarded two 6-0 sets.

NOTE: Unless otherwise agreed by the clubs concerned, all matches are due to commence by 2.00 pm. If there are any changes to these published times, then the League Secretary must be informed of these changes before the match day.

- (ii) Only bona fide members of clubs shall be eligible to take part in any match, and no player shall play for more than one club in any one season. If a transgression is found, the rubbers of the transgressor(s) will be awarded to the opposition 6-0, 6-0 and the team violating this rule will have 2 points deducted at the end of the season for each match in which the infringement occurred.
- (iii) A Player who has played 3 times for a club's higher team(s) may not play in a club's lower team(s). If a transgression is found, the rubbers of the transgressor(s) will be awarded to the opposition 6-0, 6-0, plus all the rubbers below that rubber will also be awarded 6-0, 6-0 in the Mixed doubles section and the Men's or Ladies' doubles section to the opposition team.
- (iv) If a team is short of a player(s), the ineligible pair(s) will be considered the weakest pair(s) and play in the lowest positions.

5 Balls

Only uniform ITF-approved balls are to be used for league matches. The home team is to provide one set of 4 new balls for each mixed event, and centre bands are to be supplied.

6 Fixtures

- (i) Fixtures to be arranged by the League Secretary, to be played on Saturdays between the third Saturday in April and the third Saturday in September, unless both teams agree to play the match on the Sunday of the same weekend. The League Secretary is to be notified by both Match Secretaries beforehand of any match switched to the Sunday of the same weekend.

All matches must be completed by the end of September. The committee has full power to award points for unplayed and unfinished matches as they deem fit.

- (ii) Inclement weather will be the only cause accepted for the rearrangements of matches, with the responsibility for the decision to call a match off resting with the captain of the home team.

Regarding playing in high temperatures, the League Secretary will use the UK Health Security Agency's "Amber" Heat-Health Alert level as the criterion to determine whether a general instruction will be issued stating that all matches will be postponed.

Once play has started, the decision to continue playing or to curtail the match should be made by mutual agreement by the captains to safeguard against potential injury and damage to the courts.

The League Secretary is to be sent the date of any rearranged matches, in writing, by both clubs within 14 days of the postponement.

- (iii) If a match is curtailed due to inclement weather, it shall be continued or replayed according to the following formula:
 - (a) It shall be continued if four mixed events have been completed before the captains agree to the curtailment of the match. Under these circumstances, the teams shall be unchanged, and the remaining events may be played at any time convenient to the clubs and the individual players, provided they are completed by the end of September, the League Secretary is to be informed within 7 days of any such curtailment.
 - (b) If four mixed events have not been completed, then the match will be arranged to be played in full, at a later date, when the teams may be chosen without any reference to the teams selected for the original match. The League Secretary is to be notified in writing by both clubs of the rearranged date within 14 days of the postponement of the match.
- (iv) If due to the weather or conditions, events are not played/completed on the original match date and if the overall result of the match will not be affected (i.e., when one team has won 5 or more events), and then only with both team's agreement, teams can decide not to play these events, and therefore these events would become Void and not count in the final score-line of the match.
- (v) In the event of a club having to concede a fixture for whatever reason, a representative of that club must contact the match secretary of the opposing club and the League Secretary. The League Secretary will then confirm with both clubs concerned.

7 Administration

- (i) The Annual General Meeting of the League shall usually be held in the month of December. It is the obligation of every club to be represented. At the meeting, each club shall have one vote and the League Chairman a casting vote if necessary.
- (ii) The management of the League shall be in the hands of a Committee consisting of a Chairperson, League Secretary, the Association's Chairperson and two representatives from each division.

All posts are to be filled at the Annual General Meeting, and each appointment is for one year only; empty places may be filled during the season.

Successful candidates are eligible for re-election in the following year.

Both the Chairman and the Secretary of the Southampton LTA shall be ex officio members of the Apsley League Committee.

- (iii) Notice of proposed alterations of, or additions to, the Rules must be sent to the League Secretary no later than 15th November in any year.