

**BUCKS SUMMER SHIELD AND BUCKS VETERANS SHIELD
COMPETITION RULES**

1. ENTRY REQUIREMENT

- a) The competition shall be open to all registered Lawn Tennis clubs affiliated to the Bucks Lawn Tennis Association ("Bucks LTA") that are able to provide a minimum of two courts.
- b) An entrance fee will be payable in respect of each team entered and shall be notified to Clubs each season.
- c) The teams entered by the clubs shall be placed in divisions and shall play against each team in the same division. The number of teams in each division may vary according to the number of entries in each competition.

2. THE COMPETITIONS

The Bucks Shield (summer) competition is in three events:

- teams of two pairs, either Ladies or Men
- teams of two Ladies and two Men (called Medley)

The Bucks Veterans Shield (winter) competition is in seven events:

- teams of two pairs, either Ladies (40 and over) or Men (45 and over) called Veterans.
- teams of two pairs, either Ladies (50 and over), or Ladies or Men pairs (60 and over), called Supervets.
- teams of two Ladies and two Men (Ladies 40 and over; Men 45 and over) called Mixed.
- teams of two Ladies and two Men (Ladies 50 and over; Men 55 and over) called Supervets Medley.

3. CERTIFICATES

Certificates shall be awarded to the winners of all the Leagues.

4. SHIELD FORMAT

- a) Two points shall be scored for each match won (subject to the provisions of Rule 5c). One point shall be scored for each match drawn.
- b) The team with the highest number of points at the end of the season shall be the winner of the league. If two or more teams have equal points then the winners shall be determined firstly by the percentage of sets won to sets played, secondly by the percentage of games won to games played, and thirdly by the result of the match between the two teams.
- c) As a result of the competition, teams shall be promoted to a higher league or relegated to a lower league, except in the bottom league where adjustment must be made to take account of teams leaving or joining the league.

5. MATCH RULES

- a) A valid team shall be composed of two pairs playing in the order set out in Rules 6a and 6b. A valid team may also be of one pair in Men's, Ladies and Mixed (NOT MEDLEY) but such a team shall be subject to the provisions of Rule 5c.
- b) Each rubber shall consist of two Tiebreak sets and the winning team shall be that team that wins the higher number of sets.
- c) WINTER LEAGUES ONLY: If any team plays with only one pair, they shall receive a one-point penalty for each match so played. The sets of the missing pair shall be recorded as 6-0 6-0 to the opposing team.

6. MATCH FORMAT

- a) Men's, Ladies and Mixed: Before starting play the captains should place their pairs in order of merit. The order of play shall be as follows:
 - 1st round: 2 v 1, 1 v 2
 - 2nd round: 1 v 1, 2 v 2
- b) Medley: Before starting play the captains should place their Mixed pairs in order of merit. The order of play shall be as follows:
 - 1st round: Mixed 1 v 1, Mixed 2 v 2
 - 2nd round: Men's, Ladies
- c) Teams should be on court and ready to play at the agreed start time and delays should be reported to the Shield Secretary. If a team, or part thereof, is delayed and the playing captains fail to come to an agreement, then if a team is incomplete 15 minutes later than the agreed start time, the opponents shall be entitled to 1 set and 6 games for each rubber delayed as a result. Such rubbers shall commence at the second set. If a team is incomplete 30 minutes later than the start time, then the opponents shall be entitled to a further set and 6 games for each rubber delayed as a result.
- d) If a player sustains an injury and is then unable to continue, the opposition shall be awarded the remaining games due to be played by that player.
- e) Whenever possible the courts used in the match should be of a similar surface. Where there is a choice of surfaces

available, the home captain has a choice of surface. Should the chosen surface become unfit for play, the match may be completed on another surface.

- f) Visiting pairs should play their rubbers on the same court throughout.
- g) The home team is responsible for providing four new balls per court for the match. Should the home team be unable to provide new balls, or alternative balls which the away team deems suitable, the home team shall be considered to have defaulted, and the away team shall be awarded 2 league points and all set scores shall be recorded as 6-0 to the away team.

7. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

- a) A player can only play for a club if they are an eligible playing member of that club, as determined by the club's rules or management committee.
- b) The Bucks LTA requires that players have an active LTA membership (BTM).
- c) For the Bucks Shield competition, all players must have reached the age of 15 by 31st December of the year the competition commences.
- d) For the Veterans Shield each player must have reached the qualifying age prior to 31st December of the year the competition commences.
- e) No player may play for more than one club in the SAME event in any one season.
- f) In the Bucks Shield, players ARE permitted to play for one club in the Men's/Ladies events and another club in the Medley event.
- g) In the Bucks Veterans Shield competition, players ARE permitted to play for one club in the Ladies or Men's events and another club in the Mixed and Medley events in any one season. Players are also permitted to play for one club in one age group and another club in a different age group, but not for two different clubs within the same age group.
- h) Players ARE permitted to play for one club in the Bucks Shield competition and another club in the Bucks Veterans Shield competition.
- i) Where clubs have more than one team in the same division, the match between those two teams must be completed before any other match for either team. The players who represent the higher team in that match CANNOT then play for the lower team in any subsequent match; the players who represent the lower team in that match CAN play for the higher team, subject to them complying with Rule 7j.
- j) No player may play for a team if they have played more than one completed match for a higher-ranked team (or teams) in the SAME event in any one season.
- k) The scores recorded by ineligible players shall be removed by the Shield Secretary and the rubbers recorded as 6-0 6-0 to the opposition.
- l) Wheelchair tennis players are permitted to play in the competition, as per the ITF Rules of Tennis regarding Wheelchair & Able-bodied Tennis. If a wheelchair player is picked for an away match, the away captain should communicate this to the home team, in case there are any accessibility issues.

8. ARRANGING MATCHES

- a) all matches must be completed by 30th September in the Bucks Shield competition and by 31st March in the Veterans Shield competition, unless otherwise agreed with the Shield Secretary. When arranging matches in the Bucks Shield competition it is strongly recommended that September dates are left free for rearranged matches.
- b) where two teams from one club are in the same division, they must play their joint fixture first.
- c) all match secretaries are responsible for inputting the date and time of their fixtures onto the league website prior to the start of the season, and any anomalies they identify should be referred to the match secretary of the other club before the date is changed. Any disputes should be referred to the Shield Secretary.
- d) in the veterans Shield competition, no fixture shall start later than midday except where floodlights are available to begin or complete the fixture.
- e) the match venues (ie home or away) to be as directed by the Shield Secretary.

9. UNPLAYED MATCHES

- a) In the Veterans Shield competition, a team cannot concede a match to their opponents, for any reason.
- b) In the Bucks Shield competition, a team may concede ONE match per season as outlined in Rule 9e.
- c) If a team is unable to fulfill a fixture with a full team on the agreed date, they should first ask the opposition if they are willing to rearrange. The opposition can suggest a change of venue for the match but are under no obligation to agree to the match being rearranged. If the opposition ARE willing to rearrange the match, the match should be rearranged as outlined in Rule 13. If the opposition are NOT willing to rearrange the match, the team can play the match with one pair missing, subject to Rule 5c
- d) WINTER LEAGUES ONLY: if a team is unable to fulfil a fixture, even with one pair missing, and the opposition is not willing to rearrange the match, then the team shall be withdrawn from the league for the current season and the

results of any matches previously played shall be declared null and void. In the next season such teams shall be relegated a minimum of one division.

- e) SUMMER LEAGUES ONLY: if a team is unable to fulfil a fixture, even with one pair missing, and the opposition is not willing to rearrange the match, then the team can concede the match to the opposition – however, a team may only concede ONE match per season in this way; they must fulfil all their remaining fixtures with one or two pairs otherwise they shall be withdrawn from the league for the current season and the results of any matches previously played shall be declared null and void. In the next season such teams shall be relegated a minimum of one division.
- f) When a team fails to fulfil a fixture, the opposing team shall add a comment on the competition website reporting the situation or inform the Shield Secretary accordingly.

10. MATCH RESULTS

- a) team captains shall record and retain a copy of the result of the match, the set scores and game scores for each rubber and the names and LTA membership numbers of all the players.
- b) the winning team, or in the event of a tie, the home team, shall enter the match result details on the competition website within 48hrs of the match being played.
- c) the team that did not enter the match result details shall confirm that the website shows a true record. If the result is not confirmed, the Shield Secretary shall accept the result as entered.

11. COMMUNICATION

The captain (team contact) of the home team is advised to contact the away team in the week leading up to their match and agree a procedure and contact information, in the event of possible bad weather. Captains should also confirm that post-match hospitality will be provided and let each other know if members of their team will not be staying after the match.

12. BAD WEATHER/UNFINISHED MATCHES

- a) if bad weather conditions seem likely for the match start time, the captains of each team shall contact each other immediately before the away team commences its journey and the home team captain will decide whether conditions are likely to be acceptable for play to commence at the agreed start time.
- b) if conditions ARE thought to be acceptable to play, but then after the arrival of the visiting team or during the journey of the visiting team, the match is abandoned, then it shall be played on a later date at the visiting team's choice of venue. The choice of venue does not apply in competitions where matches are played home and away against each club.
- c) if conditions are NOT thought to be acceptable to play, the away team shall not travel to the match and the fixture shall be rearranged for a later date at the original venue (unless both captains agree otherwise).
- d) if a match is started and then subsequently abandoned with no result having been obtained, the match shall be replayed in its entirety on a later date at the visiting team's choice of venue.
- e) if a match is started and then subsequently abandoned, but a result HAS been obtained because one team has won at least 5 sets, then the match shall be deemed to have been finished. Scores of the completed rubbers should be input, but no scores shall be entered for either team in respect of the unfinished sets.
- f) In the event of extreme temperatures, the league organisers will email fixtures secretaries and/or captains to advise that either team can postpone a match, provided that it is immediately rearranged. If both teams are still willing to play, matches can go ahead along as sensible provisions are taken.

13. REARRANGING MATCHES

- a) if a match needs to be rearranged, the home club for the rearranged match should offer 3 dates to the travelling team; for weekend fixtures, these dates must be in weekends when neither team already has a match. The travelling team must then accept one of the dates offered.
- b) new dates for rearranged matches must be agreed within 7 days of the date of the original match; if this is not possible for any reason, the Shield Secretary must be informed and will decide next steps.
- c) if a match is not played/abandoned due to bad weather and a new date cannot be agreed before the end of the season, the match will be declared void, with neither team being awarded any points for the void match.
- d) it is the responsibility of the original home team to alter the date of any rearranged fixtures on the Competition Website.

14. DISPUTES

- a) Any dispute shall be referred to the relevant Shield Secretary initially. If necessary, the Shield Secretary shall raise the matter with the Bucks LTA Tournaments & Competitions Committee, whose decision shall be final and binding.
- b) Any club wishing to make a complaint concerning a match must do so in writing to the Shield Secretary concerned within 48 hours of the agreed match date.