

**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 five events:

- teams of three pairs, either Ladies or Men (with the highest League named Premier)
- 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), Ladies' pairs (60 and over) or Men (55 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. BUCKS SHIELDS (Premier Leagues)

The President and Hon. Treasurer of the County Association shall be, for all intents and purposes, the legal owners of the Bucks Shields, in trust for the Association. The Bucks Shields shall be presented to the winners of both the Ladies' and Men's Premier Leagues and replicas awarded to the winning Clubs.

4. CERTIFICATES

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

5. SHIELD FORMAT

- a) Two points shall be scored for each match won (subject to the provisions of Paragraphs 6c and 6f). 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 rubbers won to rubbers played, secondly by the percentage of sets won to sets played, and thirdly by the percentage of games won to games played.
- 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.

6. MATCH RULES

ANY THREE PAIR LEAGUES

- a) A valid team shall normally be composed of three pairs playing in the order set out in Rule 7a. A valid team may also be of two pairs, but such a team shall be subject to the provisions of Rule 6c. A team of one pair is invalid and shall be subject to the provisions of Rule 10.
- b) Each rubber shall consist of two Tiebreak sets and the winning team shall be the team that wins the higher number of sets.
- c) If any team plays with only two pairs 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. In the event of both teams playing with two pairs the played set scores shall be recorded, and the winning team shall be awarded two points, but both teams shall receive a one-point penalty.

ANY TWO PAIR LEAGUES

- d) A valid team shall be composed of two pairs playing in the order set out in Rules 7b and 7c. 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 6f.

- e) Each rubber shall consist of two Tiebreak sets and the winning team shall be that team that wins the higher number of sets.
- f) 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.

7. MATCH FORMAT

- a) Three Pair - Men's and Ladies: Before starting play the captains should place their pairs in order of merit. The order of play shall be as follows (home pairs shown first):
 - 1st round: 1 v 3, 3 v 2, 2 v 1
 - 2nd round: 2 v 3, 1 v 2, 3 v 1
 - 3rd round: 3 v 3, 2 v 2, 1 v 1
- b) Two Pair - 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
- c) Two Pair - 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
- d) 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.
- e) 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.
- f) 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 choice of surface. Should the chosen surface become unfit for play, the match may be completed on another surface.
- g) Visiting pairs should play their rubbers on the same court throughout.
- h) The home team is responsible for providing four new balls per court for the match. Only LTA official balls shall be used.

8. 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 recommends that players have an active British Tennis Membership (BTM).
- c) For the Bucks Shield competition, it is recommended that all players must have reached the age of 13 by the 31st December of the preceding year.
- 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. Likewise, players ARE permitted to play for one club in the Men's/Ladies two pair event and another club in the Men's/Ladies three pair event, subject to their complying with Rule 8e.
- 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 8j.

- 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.

9. 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.

10. UNPLAYED MATCHES AND RELEGATION PROCEDURES

- a) a team cannot concede a match to their opponents, for any reason, as it is not fair for a team to be awarded points without playing a match.
- b) 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 14. If the opposition are NOT willing to rearrange the match, the team must play the match with one pair missing, as outlined in Rules 6c and 6f.
- c) 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.
- d) 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.

11. MATCH RESULTS

- a) team captains shall record and retain a paper copy of the result of the match, the set scores and game scores for each rubber and the names 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.

12. 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.

13. 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 10 sets in the 3-pair league, or at least 5 sets in the 2-pair league, 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.

14. 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.

15. 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.