

EAST CHESHIRE WINTER TENNIS LEAGUE RULES
May 2026

LEAGUE OBJECTIVE

To provide competitive tennis for members from October to March annually.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Membership

The Management Committee shall decide whether or not a new Club or venue should be allowed to join the League.

2. Affiliation

The League shall be registered as an LTA Approved League.

An LTA Approved League can only allow entry to Member Clubs that are registered with the LTA. In line with this requirement, all Member Clubs must be registered with the LTA at the start of the League Season (i.e. as at 30th September each year).

The League will be an Associate Member of Cheshire County LTA LTD.

LEAGUE MANAGEMENT

3. Management Committee

The League shall be managed by a Management Committee, consisting of: Chair; Administrator; Treasurer; Secretary. In addition, the League may co-opt 2 people onto the Committee at any time.

4. Powers of Management Committee

The Management Committee shall:

- a) Conduct the business of the League
- b) Determine the constitution of the Divisions
- c) Use the League funds as they think advisable
- d) Deal with any matter not covered by these Rules
- e) Make decisions with regard to all abandoned matches
- f) Give a ruling on all disputes or appeals on any matter connected with the League
- g) Deal with offending Clubs or players

5. Meetings

Voting at all Management Committee and General Meetings shall be by a show of hands. In the case of an equality of votes the Chair has a casting vote.

Each league club may send up to two representatives to any General Meeting. A quorum for any General Meeting shall be representatives from eight league clubs.

The Secretary will give written notice of General Meetings to all league clubs not less than 21 days prior to the meeting.

5.1. Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting shall be held each year, in May or June. The Agenda shall include:

- a) Management Committee reports
- b) Annual accounts
- c) Election of the Management Committee
- d) Any rule changes
- e) Propose League fees for the following season.

All Clubs are expected to attend the Annual General Meeting. Any Club not attending will be fined £20.

5.2. Extraordinary General Meeting

An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held if requested in writing by at least six participating league clubs.

All Clubs are expected to attend an Extraordinary General Meeting. Any Club not attending will be fined £20.

5.3. Fixture Meeting

The Fixtures Meeting shall be held annually in September and is conducted by WhatsApp. Attendance at this meeting is compulsory. Each participating team must be represented by at least one person for each team taking part. Failure of a club to be represented may result in disqualification of that club's teams.

6. Amendment to the Rules

No alterations or additions to these rules shall be made except at the Annual General Meeting. 21 days notice must be given to the Administrator of any proposed alteration or addition which shall be circulated to all member clubs, along with any changes recommended by the Management Committee at least 14 days before the date of the Annual General Meeting.

Such alterations and additions shall not be deemed to be carried unless supported by a two thirds majority of the members present.

7. League Fees

Club and team membership fees shall be determined by the Management Committee and ratified at the Annual General Meeting each year.

LEAGUE STRUCTURE

8. Divisions

The League shall consist of a number of divisions generally consisting of 11 teams. Each team shall consist of two men and two ladies.

No club shall have more than two teams in the same division.

The Management Committee shall decide in which Division a new team will be placed.

9. Playing Season

The League will commence on October 1st and finish on March 31st in the following year.

PLAYERS

10. Player Eligibility

All players must be bona fide Club members.

If an unknown player (on a match result) cannot be added to a team without further effort by the League Administrator a £10 fine will be payable by the Club concerned.

No person shall be allowed to play for more than one League club in the same season except with the prior permission of the Administrator, which will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

For each occurrence, the penalty for breaching this rule is the loss of all (four) sets involving that player together with a 1 point deduction

No Player shall be allowed to play more than 12 matches per season.

For each match over 12, the penalty for breaching this rule is the loss of all (four) sets involving that player, together with a 1 point deduction

11. Playing Down/Playing Up

A person may play for higher teams on three occasions during the season.

On making a fourth appearance for a higher team, a player may not then revert to any lower team. The penalty for breaching this rule is the loss of all (four) sets involving that player.

A player may not “play down” in a team lower than that of which they are a regular member without prior agreement from the League Administrator. The League will consider a player is linked to the highest team for which he/she has played at least 4 matches during the previous season and:

- *Each year, a list will be provided to a Club by the end of August indicating that Club's players who are not permitted to play down below a particular team*
- *Should a team wish the player to be linked to a lower team for the upcoming season this will be allowed, but the player will not be able to play up for the duration of the season*
- *The penalty for breaching this rule during the season is the loss of all (four) sets involving that player*

MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

12. Fixtures

Each team will play the other teams in the division once during the season. Matches will be played on the day and at the time agreed at the Fixture meeting and as advised to the Administrator.

If a club has two teams in the same division, the match between those teams shall be the first match played by them.

13. Playing Conditions

The home team shall provide two courts of the same surface for a match, the choice of surface being at the home team's discretion. If floodlights are used, the home team shall be responsible for any cost involved. The home team must advise the away team of the time at which the lights need to be turned off.

14. Balls

The home team shall provide at least three new balls per court for a match.

15. Format

All matches will take the form of four events being a men's doubles and a ladies' doubles played simultaneously, following which the players will then change to play mixed doubles. Each event will consist of two sets with a tie-break operating at five games all. A match will consist of eight sets.

16. Late Arrival

If an event is not ready to start after 15 minutes from the specified start time, a pair who is ready to play will be given a walkover of the first set of 6-0. If the event has still not started 45 minutes from the specified start time, they will be given a walkover for the second set of 6-0. If neither pair from one team is ready to play within 45 minutes of the specified start time, their team will forfeit the match, which will be entered into the League Management software as a walkover.

17. Retirement

In the event of a player having to withdraw from further play for any reason the opponents shall immediately be awarded the necessary number of games to complete the set.

Any sets already completed shall stand and further sets equal to the maximum number of sets completed by any other pair shall be awarded to their opponents.

18. Unfinished Matches

If a match is started but not finished because of the weather or because the floodlights have had to go out for any reason, be it power failure or local government regulation, the result will stand if one team has won 5 sets or if 6 sets have been completed. Any sets that have not been completed will be left blank in the League Management software. If this condition is not met, the match will be replayed from the start.

19. Postponement

The decision over whether the courts to be used for a match are "playable" rests with the Home Captain.

If it is not possible to play a match because of bad weather, the home captain must, within 7 days of the original date, inform the Administrator and offer 3 other dates to the away captain. The captains must re-arrange the match and the home captain must inform the Administrator of the new fixture date within 21 days of the cancelled fixture.

If the home captain does not offer three dates within the 7 days, then the away captain must inform the Administrator. If the away captain does not respond within 7 days of

new dates being offered, the home captain must advise the Administrator of the name of the person contacted. Failure to re-arrange the match within the time shown will be dealt with under Rules 24 and 25.

POST-MATCH ARRANGEMENTS

20. Results

Results should be entered by the Home team into the League Management software within 48 hours of the fixture being completed.

21. Conceded matches

Where a match is conceded, this must be communicated to the Administrator. This can be done by either team.

The match will be entered into the League Management software as a walkover' entering a result of 8-0 in sets and 48-0 in games. In addition:

- A team conceding a match shall receive a one point deduction
- A team conceding a second match shall receive a further two points deduction
- A team conceding or voiding three matches shall have all their results for that season deleted. A team dropping out in consecutive seasons will not be eligible to play in the league during the following season.

Any matches not played by March 31st or not entered in the League Management software by April 8th will be declared null and void (i.e. no points awarded to either team).

22. League Positions

League positions will be shown in the League Management software, which has been set to award two points for a win and one point for a draw.

Final league positions will be decided on points total. If there is a tie on points, then "sets for minus sets against" shall decide. If there is still a tie, then "games for minus games against" shall decide. If there is still a tie, then the "head to head" result shall decide.

23. Promotion and Relegation

At the end of the season the top two teams in each division will be promoted and the two bottom teams relegated.

In addition, based on performance in the season just completed, teams may receive "Accelerated Promotion" and be promoted more than 1 Division. If this is the case, a minor reorganisation may result in teams finishing 3rd or 4th from bottom in a Division being relegated in addition to the bottom two teams.

The Champions and runners-up of each division shall be awarded a trophy each, which shall become the Property of the club concerned.

DISPUTES

24. Disputes

Any unresolved disputes will be decided by the Management Committee.

25. Breach of Rules

25.1. Breach of Rules by a Club or Team

If there is a breach of the Rules, the Management Committee reserves the right to take whatever action is considered appropriate including, but not limited to, deducting points, imposing fines or relegation.

25.2. Management Committee

The Management Committee have the authority to:

- a) Deal with any matter not covered by these rules
- b) Override any rule where it will significantly benefit the League

On any occasion where this rule is applied, details will be presented to the next AGM for explanation and, if appropriate, retrospective approval.

There will be no sanction against the Management Committee if the AGM disapproves of this rule being applied, provided that the Management Committee is judged to have acted in good faith.

DISSOLUTION

26. Winding Up the League

A resolution to dissolve the League shall only be proposed at an Extraordinary General Meeting and shall only be passed if carried by a majority of at least two-thirds of the participating league clubs present and voting.

The dissolution shall take effect from the date of the resolution and the Administrator and Finance Officer shall be responsible for the winding-up of the assets and liabilities of the League.

Any property remaining after the discharge of the debts and liabilities of the League shall be paid to another non-profit making body.

APPENDIX A

EAST CHESHIRE WINTER TENNIS LEAGUE GUIDELINES

These guidelines do not form part of the League rules but are maintained in the same document as they have a close relationship with the rules.

These guidelines are to help the Management committee to form all the League Divisions each season. They are also to inform all Clubs of the basis upon which decisions will be, and have been, made.

When setting out Divisions for a season, the priority shall be:

	Description	Rule
1.	Teams meeting the criteria for Accelerated Promotion	23
2.	Placing new teams in the correct Division	8
3.	Teams finishing 1 st and 2 nd in their Division get promoted	23
4.	Request made by teams will be considered	n/a
5.	A team finishing with 0 or 1 point in its Division will be relegated 2 Divisions	23
6.	A team finishing last or last but 1 in its Division gets relegated 1 Division	23
7.	If there are spaces in a Division after steps 1-9 have completed, then a team finishing 3 rd or 4 th (etc.) in the Division below will be reorganised upwards	n/a
8.	If there are insufficient spaces in a Division after steps 1-9 have completed, then a team finishing 3 rd or 4 th (etc.) from bottom in the Division above will be reorganised downwards	n/a
9.	Teams not impacted by Steps 1-8 will stay in the same Division	n/a

Guidelines linked to specific rules:

5.3 If a Club does not attend a Fixture meeting the fixtures for that Club will be set by the League Administrator. If any Club misses 2 Fixture Meetings in a 3-year period then they will be removed from the League for the season for which the fixtures are being set.

8. New teams will be placed in Divisions other than the bottom 2 if the Management Committee decides that it will be beneficial for the League.

11. (Playing Down/Playing Up)

To help Clubs understand how this can happen, here are some examples of players who were pinned to a team "in season" before playing for a lower team

- Played for teams 2 1 1 1 2 2 1 **2 2 2 1 2** (became pinned to team 1 after 4th match for them)
- Played for teams 4 4 4 6 4 **5 5** (became pinned to team 4 after 4th match for them)
- Played for teams 4 5 6 7 4 **7 7** (could not play below team 6 after playing 4 matches at that level or above)
- Played for teams 1 1 1 3 **4** 1 1 1 1 (could not play below team 3 after playing 4 matches at that level or above)

23 (Accelerated Promotion)

More care is needed higher up the League, particularly where set differences have not been dominant. Teams to be advanced a maximum of 3 Divisions – and a 3 Division jump will only take place moving from the lower echelons of the League. Only teams with perfect records should be guaranteed Accelerated Promotion and attention will be paid to “Set Difference” as well as walkovers, matches drawn and matches lost.

23 (Joint runners-up)

A team finishing 3rd in a Division but with the same points as the 2nd team receives a runners-up trophy but will not be promoted (they may move up because of guideline 10).

APPENDIX B: EAST CHESHIRE WINTER TENNIS LEAGUE: MATCH-RELATED GUIDELINES

Whilst there is no desire to reduce the competitiveness of the League, there are areas where teams/captains can operate in a way that enhances the smooth running of the League.

Pre-Matchday

- A few days before a fixture, Home team Captains are asked to send a message to the Away team Captain checking that they are OK for the date/start time/venue of the fixture [*venue means Home/Away rather than giving the ground address*]

A day or two before a fixture, Away team Captains are asked to send a similar message should they not have been contacted

Last season there was more than 1 occasion where a Home team had booked matches against 2 different teams on the same date/time/venue

Pre-Match

- Please book the courts for Winter League matches either for 3 hours or to have the ability to complete a match without getting chucked off the court (I know this is common sense but it is included in the guidelines on the basis that it has happened!!)
- Someone from the Home team should be at the Club at least 20 minutes before the scheduled start time for the match
- Please try to make sure that your courts are playable (not covered with leaves or rubbish) and that toilets are available to use (not locked)
- If an Away team arrives at a venue for a match and the match does not take place due to reasons linked to the Home team [*i.e. not weather-related*], the Away team should be offered the chance to host the rearranged fixture
- Observations have been made that there has been a “more casual approach” to match start times. The time shown in the League Management software is when the match starts, not the players arrival time
- The late arrival rule that starts “*If an event is not ready to start after 15 minutes from the specified start time, a pair who is ready to play will be given a walkover of the first set of 6-0.*” should be called by the team who are late rather than waiting for the “innocent” team to say something – in the hope that they won’t.

There have been multiple occasions of teams with latecomers feeling somewhat aggrieved that the rule is called – which does not feel fair

Post-Match

- Teams are encouraged to offer some post-match refreshments to their opponents. We are only talking about (shop bought) Tea/Coffee/Biscuits/Cake!

Score Entry

- Even though the rule says 48 hours, please enter results into the League Management software within 24 hours of the match taking place. You can register multiple people from your team to be able to enter results
- Score entry has been difficult for some. If people are having difficulties entering results into the League Management software, please try to get one of your players – or the opposition – to enter the result. Chrome on a Desktop/Laptop/MacBook/Tablet seems to have the fewest problems! The small screen size means that Mobiles do not function particularly well for the way in which information is presented

- If there is an unknown player (i.e. if there is no player with the name you are looking for when you try to select a player from the squad lists), then please:
 - If it is an Away team player then put the player's name into the comment field
 - If it is a Home team player then you should add the player concerned before submitting the result

APPENDIX C: EAST CHESHIRE WINTER TENNIS LEAGUE: FINES TABLE

For the 2024/25 season, this is a list of the penalties that exist for any breach of the League Rules.

RULE	BREACH DESCRIPTION	PENALTY
2	New Club is not Registered with the LTA as at 30 th September	Allow to play providing that Registration is completed by 30 th November
2	Existing Club becomes unregistered during the season	Suspended from the League with effect from 31 st March and only allowed to enter teams for the following season once LTA Registration is confirmed
5.1	Non-attendance at the AGM	£20 fine
5.2	Non-attendance at an EGM	£20 fine
5.3	Non-attendance on Fixtures WhatsApp meeting	None
10	Playing an "Unknown" player who is not currently linked to the League	£10 fine
11	Playing for a team lower than a player's "regular" team	Loss of the sets in the match the player took part in
14	Not providing at least 3 new balls per court for a match	None
19	Failure to rearrange a match within the terms of this rule	None
20	Failure to complete result entry in time (Home team)	None
20	Failure to complete result entry in time (Away11 team)	Match result entered by the home team will be confirmed as the result

Clubs may appeal against fines. A list of precedents where people appeal and the outcome of them will be added to this Appendix as and when they arise