

# **RULES OF THE SUSSEX MENS AND SUSSEX WOMENS SQUASH LEAGUE COMPETITIONS**

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# **RULES OF THE SUSSEX MEN'S AND SUSSEX WOMEN'S SQUASH LEAGUE COMPETITIONS**

## **1.0 LEAGUE MANAGEMENT**

**1.1** The Sussex Squash League Competitions will be managed by the Management Committee on behalf of the County Association. At the AGM each year a Men's League Organiser and a Women's League Organiser will be appointed to run the day-to-day affairs of the Leagues.

**1.2** Separate General Committee Meetings for the Men's League and for the Women's League may be held as required to discuss matters relating specifically to the Leagues. Each General Committee comprises member Clubs from their respective Leagues, and each Club participating in a League is entitled to send representatives to these Meetings. Each participating Club has one vote per League. Changes to the League Rules can be discussed at these Meetings but can only be ratified at the AGM.

**1.3** To qualify for participation in the Leagues, Clubs must be affiliated to the National Body, England Squash & Racketball. This involves payment of a fee comprising an element related to both the number of courts in the Club and to the number of squash members in the Club, i.e. all members playing in either the County Leagues or the Internal club leagues must be registered.

**1.4** An entry fee for each team entered in the competition must be sent to the appropriate League Organiser together with the official Entry Form detailing how many teams will be participating in the forthcoming season. Cheques must be made payable to Sussex Squash & Racketball. The level of fee will be decided at the AGM. Teams whose fees have not been received at the time the Fixtures Meeting is held will be liable to be omitted from the League.

**1.5** The format of the League will be decided from season to season, normally at the General Committee Meeting. In general the League will be divided into Divisions according to standard, but if it is thought appropriate, Sections on a geographical basis may be created. The number of teams in each division will normally be set to a minimum of eight although Divisions may contain less than eight to accommodate differing standards and the number of teams taking part.

**1.6** On the Entry Form (see rule 1.4), Clubs are required to nominate three Club Officials; normally the Fixture Secretary, the Club Captain and one other Official, together with their addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses. A complete

list of these officials will be accessible by officials from other clubs on the League Management System (LMS), in order to facilitate communication between Clubs in the event of a problem arising over a fixture, or any other matter. Clubs are also required to update on the LMS a list of their Team Captains complete with addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses.

**1.7** New Clubs wishing to enter the competition, or existing Clubs wishing to enter an additional team must apply to the League Organiser by the end of April. This will enable the new team to be considered for inclusion in the provisional format for the next season. Generally new teams, whether from new or existing Clubs, will be placed in the lowest Division but the General Committee has discretion to place such teams in higher Divisions if it thinks fit.

**1.8** No Club may have more than two teams in the same Division.

**1.9** Every endeavour should be made to complete the first half of the season by 31st December, and all matches must be completed by the end of April.

#### **NOTES:**

**1A** All Clubs are requested to supply their local press with match results, and in particular, are reminded that the name of the League Sponsor should be incorporated in the title of the League.

**1B** The Sussex Squash Leagues are members of the England Squash & Racketball National League.

## **2.0 PROMOTION AND RELEGATION**

**2.1** The promotion and relegation of teams at the end of each season shall be, subject to Rule **1.8**, as follows:

**2.1.1** The top two teams in a Division will be promoted to the next higher Division, and the bottom two teams will be relegated to the next lower Division. In the Premier or top Division of the League, only relegation of the bottom two teams will take place.

**2.1.2** In a format where the League splits into separate geographical sections, one team from the top of each section will be promoted up into the single section, and the two bottom teams from the single section will be relegated to the geographical sections as appropriate.

**2.1.3** In exceptional circumstances, e.g. where a team wins all its matches, a team in Division 3 or below may be promoted by more than one Division, subject to the agreement of the General Committee.

**2.1.4** Should a club remove a team from a division during the season, no lower numbered team from that club will be considered for promotion the following season.

### **3.0 FIXTURE DETAILS**

**3.1** Fixtures will be generated by the computer from details completed on the League Management System (LMS) by Clubs, regarding dates that are not suitable or available. These Fixtures Lists will appear on the website in good time prior to the Fixture Meeting.

**3.2** Where Clubs have two teams in the same Division, it will be arranged that the first match in each half of the season be between these two teams.

**3.3** A Fixtures Meeting will be held in July, unless advised to the contrary, to enable manual adjustments to be made to the Fixture Lists produced by the LMS. At the end of this Meeting, the Fixture Lists will be deemed to be "frozen". Where start times are missing clubs should add these details to their Home Fixtures on the LMS using the on-line facility provided.

**3.4** Unless prior notice is given to the League Organiser, a Club whose representative has not arrived at the Fixtures Meeting within 30 minutes of the start time as publicised, will be assumed to have accepted the fixture details as generated, as well as any alterations requested by their opponents.

### **4.0 QUERIES AND DISPUTES**

**4.1** Any query or dispute concerning a match should be submitted in writing to the League Organiser within fourteen (14) days of the event.

**4.2** After taking full account of all the relevant facts, the League Organiser is empowered to make decisions on all queries or disputes that have been received. However, at the League Organisers discretion a Code of Conduct matter may be referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

**4.3** If a penalty is awarded by the League Organiser or by the Disciplinary committee, the person or club involved has the right to lodge an appeal to the County Appeals Committee.

#### **NOTE:**

**4A** The County Code of Conduct & Disciplinary Procedures, a copy of which is held by each club participating in the League, should be referred to for further details.

## **5.0 MATCH START TIMES**

**5.1** All players are expected to arrive punctually at the time arranged for the match. However, 15 minutes grace shall be permitted to any late player or players. This period may be extended only by mutual consent of both Captains. Any player not arriving within 15 minutes of the time arranged for the start of the match (or such mutually agreed extension of that period) shall be deemed not to have arrived for the match at all, and the team to be a player short.

### **NOTE:**

**5A** It must be recognised that court time is at a premium and in deference to the host Club who are responsible for booking adequate and reasonable court time, and as a matter of elementary courtesy, all teams are requested to arrive at a time which will ensure that the match commences at the advertised time.

## **6.0 MATCH RULES**

**6.1** The ball to be used will be a “nonmarking” double yellow spot at the discretion of the Home side to comply with their Club Rules, PROVIDED always that the ball used bears or has the approval of England Squash & Racketball. See also NOTE **6B**.

**6.2** The Rules of Play shall be those in the current edition of the England Squash & Racketball Annual Handbook. In addition the current England Squash & Racketball Code of Conduct shall be observed at all times.

**6.3** Players are required to wear clothing in accordance with the current England Squash & Racketball ruling.

**6.4** Teams are to consist of five Club members.

**6.5** Only players who are bona fide members of Sussex Clubs may play in the competition. Although the competition is not restricted to Sussex qualified players, Clubs are expected to encourage such players.

**6.6** Women may play in the Men's League subject to the conditions in NOTE **6A**. Men may not play in the Women's League.

**6.7** No member may play for more than one Sussex Club in the same League during any one season. However, a Woman playing in both the Women's League and the Men's League may play for one Sussex Club in the Women's League and another Sussex Club in the Men's League.

**6.8** No member may play more than one Sussex League match on any one day. (A Woman playing in the Women's League and the Men's League may still only play one League Match on any one day, i.e. either for the Women, or for the Men, but not both.)

**6.9** The Home Captain is responsible for arranging that each match be refereed, and can call for independent referees or assistance from the visiting team, as required. The Home team is required to provide marking pads etc.

**6.10** There is a limit to the number of matches a member can play in each of the Sussex Leagues. In any one half of the current season, this maximum is equal to twelve matches.

**6.11** Any team arriving with one or more players short shall play its available players at the top of its order and shall forfeit string 5 if one player is short, and strings 4 and 5 if two players are short.

**6.12** If a match starts before it is realised that one of the teams is incomplete, the results shall be determined as follows:

**6.12.1** When the pairings fit within the framework of Rule **6.11**, the games shall continue and the results will stand.

**6.12.2** When the strings do not fit within the framework of Rule **6.11**, i.e. from the highest-ranking missing string and below all these games whether commenced or completed shall be awarded against the defaulting team.

**6.13** All matches should commence at the time stated in the Home Club's Fixture List, unless mutually agreed otherwise. If not mutually agreed, Rule **6.11** shall apply.

**6.14** In the event of a match not being completed because the courts of the Home Team are unfit for play, e.g. condensation problems, then the remaining strings whose games have not been completed shall be replayed on a mutually agreed date. The AWAY team shall have the option of playing the remaining strings on THEIR courts. The League Organiser must be advised of the postponement and of the rearranged date without delay.

**6.15** It is expected that all HOME clubs will provide food after the match. It is also expected that players from the opposition will stay for the food provided. If the home side is unable to provide food, or members of the away side are not going to stay for food, this must be communicated to the opposing side with as much notice as possible.

#### **NOTES:**

**6A** As a general guideline, at the end of each half season, Women should not have played more games in the Men's League than for the Women's League; differences in the number of teams in the Divisions concerned having been taken into account.

**6B** With respect to Rule **6.1**; in certain circumstances, for example where a match is to be played on cold courts, a "single spot" ball may be used, subject to mutual agreement of the two captains.

## **7.0 SCORING AND POINTS**

**7.1** Scoring will be English Scoring and will be the best of five games.

**7.2** One point shall be awarded for each game won in a match, and a bonus of five points awarded to the team winning the match. This means that there is a maximum of 20 points and a minimum of 14 points for the winning team, and a maximum of 12 points with a minimum of 0 points for the losing side.

**7.3** In the event of a match being conceded, the bonus points will still be awarded.

**7.4** The team with the highest number of points will win the Division but in the event of a tie on points at the end of the season the team that has won more matches shall be the winner. If the teams have won the same number of matches, the total number of strings won shall decide the winner. If no winner emerges on this basis, individual points will determine the result.

## **8.0 MATCH RESULT CARDS**

**8.1** Official match result cards are provided. Prior to the start of a match the captains of both teams must enter the names of their five players on their own result card and then exchange cards to complete the details.

**8.2** Once the match has been commenced it is not permitted to change the string playing order in any way.

**8.3** At the end of the match the match cards are to be signed by both captains as confirmation of the results recorded. The HOME side is responsible for updating the LMS with the Match Result details immediately after the match, using the on-line facility provided. Every effort should be made to do this as soon as possible after the match has been completed. Their match card should then be displayed on their Club notice board, as should the card for the away team. **If the result has not been entered on the LMS within fourteen days of the match taking place, the League Organiser will award the match to the away team. This will not be subject to subsequent review after this time.**

**8.4** The Away side should retain their signed copy of the match card. Should the Away side wish to contest the result entered on the LMS, this will only be considered if they have a signed and completed copy of the match card.

## **9.0 POSTPONED MATCHES**

**9.1** All matches must be played on the day arranged and in accordance with the Fixture Lists. The only exceptions to this Rule whereby Clubs can request a postponement are:

**9.1.1** Having a player or players on duty for a County, Area, or National Event, or engaged in a Sussex Closed Tournament.

**9.1.2** Exceptionally severe weather conditions preventing or hindering travel.

**9.1.3** Involvement in one of the England Squash & Racketball approved National Club Championships at a stage beyond the area final.

**9.1.4** Under no circumstances are injury or unavailability of players acceptable reasons for a match to be rearranged. However if both clubs agree to a rearrangement, giving a minimum of 2 weeks notice, the League Organiser may allow such a rearrangement.

**9.2** If a postponement takes place for any of these reasons, the League Organiser must be notified immediately, and a mutually agreed alternative date arranged as soon as possible, with the League Organiser being informed of the new date. In the event of Rule **9.1.4**, this date must be communicated prior to the original fixture date.

## **10.0 FIXTURES NOT HONOURED**

**10.1** Should a fixture not be played on the scheduled date, other than for reasons covered by Rule **9.1**, neither team shall be awarded any points.

**10.2** Should a team find themselves unable to fulfil a fixture, they are required to give their opponents at least 72 hours prior notice. Under these circumstances contact must be made by the defaulting Club with one of the three nominated Club Officials of the opposing Club (see Rule **1.6**). The League Organiser must also be informed.

**10.3** The penalties for not honouring a fixture are:

**10.3.1** For not fulfilling a fixture on the first occasion in a season: OPPONENTS: Awarded 20 points. DEFAULTING CLUB: Nil points for the match and 10 points deducted from total league points score, and may be ineligible for promotion.

**10.3.2** For not fulfilling a fixture on the second occasion in a season: OPPONENTS: Awarded 20 points. DEFAULTING CLUB: Nil points for the match, and 10 points deducted from total league points score, and automatic relegation at end of season.

**10.3.3** For not fulfilling a fixture on a third occasion in a season: The defaulting team shall be withdrawn from the League Competition, and all results of matches played up to the date of the third default shall be void and backed out of the results.

**10.4** Any team not honouring a fixture and giving less than 72 hours notice to their hosts, must be prepared to accept a claim from the Home side for court, and/or meal



expenses. Should a host Club find itself genuinely out of pocket in such circumstances, a reasonable claim for expenses can be sent to the Fixture Secretary of the defaulting Club, with a copy to the appropriate League Organiser. Similarly, should the Away side, having arrived on time, find the Home team unable to honour the fixture, a reasonable claim for travelling expenses can be made.

#### **10.5** Failure of individual players to arrive:

**10.5.1** A Team which fulfils a fixture but where one of the strings fails to arrive will forfeit that string, and any lower strings.

**10.5.2** A team where less than 3 players arrive will be deemed not to have fulfilled the fixture, and 10 (ten) points will be deducted from their total league points score.

**10.5.3** Where a team is aware that they will not arrive with 5 players, every effort should be made to advise the opposing team as early as possible.

## **11.0 RANKING, NOMINATIONS AND RENOMINATIONS**

**11.1** BEFORE THE FIRST CLUB LEAGUE MATCH OF THE SEASON each Club must update their list of ranked players using the on-line facility provided. (Prior to the update this screen will correspond to the list from the last ranking period of the previous season and it can be amended up to midnight prior to the date of the first Club Match.)

Against all player names, their England Squash & Racketball Registration Number must be added to confirm their eligibility. The completed ranking list will form the basis of monitoring that players are competing in the correct ranked order. At the midnight deadline, the new ranking list is moved to the LMS Club Page and is "frozen" for the duration of the current ranking period. However, a copy of the current list remains in the Club Password Protected Area to allow amendments to be made in preparation for the next ranking period - See Rule **11.4**.

**11.2** Teams within a Club are also ranked in the LMS in descending order of Team Numbers. The first string in the second team must have 5 non-"Ghosted" players above him (see Rule **12**) to be eligible to play. The first string in the third team must have 10 non-"Ghosted" players above him (see Rule **12**) to be eligible to play, and so on for each Club team. If, at any time after the League fixture List has been "frozen", a Club finds it has to withdraw one of its teams, the League Organiser must be notified. Withdrawal of a team will not affect the ranking of the teams below and any players remaining within the five ranking places associated with the withdrawn team will not be eligible to play for a lower team, except at the discretion of the League Organiser. It should be noted that players who have assumed a status of "Ghosted" under Rule **12** DO NOT count as ranked for the purposes of this rule.

**11.3** The Team, as written on the match result card, must show individual Club ranking numbers alongside each name, and a higher ranked player must not play below a lower ranked player; except under conditions of Rule **11.7**.

**11.4** After the initial ranking list of the season, re-nomination can be carried out on a monthly basis. The list in the Club Password Protected Area can be amended on-line up to 24.00hr on the first Tuesday in each month, after which it is "frozen" and supersedes the previous list on the Club Page. The final date for nominations each season shall be the first Tuesday in March. (If there has been no change in Club ranking since the previous list, there is no requirement to submit further monthly lists until such a change has taken place.)

**11.5** The ranking list shall include all reserves and any player who is likely to be asked to play for their Club. Any player who is not included on a current ranking list and who subsequently plays in a Club team, will automatically concede the string; except under conditions of Rule **11.6**. New players joining a Club should be ranked against existing players before being added to the next re-nomination list.

**11.6** The bottom team in any Club may play up to 2 (two) un-nominated players at any time during the season, but these players must then be added to the next re-nomination list together with their E.S. Registration Number. The un-nominated members should be placed in a string position commensurate with their playing standard. When the Match Result Card details are sent in on-line the full names and Registration Number of any un-nominated players must be entered in the boxes provided at the bottom of the Match Card Screen.

**11.7** To accommodate changes in playing form between monthly re-nominations, the playing order within a team may be changed providing it conforms to the following:-

- (i) The change must be between consecutive strings.
- (ii) Only one change per team per match is permitted.
- (iii) The change cannot be applied between the fifth string of one team and the first string of the team below.

**11.8** Clubs playing in the Premier League must mark on their ranking list any players who are considered 'professional' players – this will be loosely defined as players who have accrued PSA points and a ranking in the top 250, or those ranked in the top 50 in England. Any dispute over a player's qualification within this rule should be referred to the League Organiser. These players may play for the club in matches against other clubs with players so marked within their ranking list. Clubs playing in the Premier League, without any 'professional' players, must elect at the beginning of the season whether the opposition's professional players may play in matches against them. Each club's position will be clearly communicated to other Premier League clubs by the League Organiser prior to the start of each season. Clubs are not permitted to change their position during the course of the season.

**NOTES:**

**11A** The Ranking List should be prominently displayed at Clubs so that all players are fully aware of the situation, and so that the List can act as a ladder to promote play-offs and so reflect changes in form.

**11B** Rule 11.7 does not apply to the Women's League.

## **12 GHOST PLAYERS (applicable for second half of season only)**

**12.1** A "Ghost Player" is a nominated member who appears in the ranking list - generally at the top end - but who does not play matches. This has the effect of distorting the genuine strength of the lower teams by enabling higher ranked players to participate in these lower teams.

**12.2** To prevent "Ghost Players" from distorting Club ranking lists, players must qualify to be included in these lists by playing a certain minimum number of times.

**12.3** After the start of the second half of the season 2 (two) matches must have been played by each player in a club's ranking list otherwise affected players assume a status of "Ghosted". Such players ranked positions are NOT counted as part of Rule 11.2 and therefore a lower team highest eligible player will be correspondingly lower down their ranking list.

### **NOTES:**

**12A** "Ghost Players" must be included in the ranking list so that they remain eligible to play.

**12B** The fact that they have not played the required number of games does not prevent "Ghost Players" from playing anytime they are available.

**12C** Example - A club has two teams and 15 ranked players. Normally that club can select its second team from anyone positioned 6 or below on its ranking list. However if, for example, ranked players 3 and 4 have not played at least twice by the end of the first half of the season then they become "Ghosted". From that point onwards until they play their two matches the club will be forced to select its second team from ranking positions 8 and below only.

## **13.0 INELIGIBLE PLAYERS**

**13.1** Any tie won by, or below, an ineligible player shall be counted as a loss. An ineligible player shall be defined as follows:

**13.1.1** A string being played out of ranked order, allowance having been made for the situation under Rule 11.7.

**13.1.2** A player not included in the Club's current ranking list except under conditions of Rule **11.6**.

**13.1.3** A member playing more than the maximum number of matches permitted in each half of the season, as defined under Rule **6.10**.

**13.1.4** A string who fails to arrive on time- see Rule **6.11** and Rule **6.12**.

**13.1.5** A member playing more than one Sussex League match on the same day see Rule **6.8**.

**13.1.6** A member whose performance on court, from the start of the knock-up, is sufficiently impaired by illness, injury or excessive alcohol that the normal ranked position in the team cannot be justified.

**13.1.7** A member of a team who is not registered with England Squash & Racketball.

## **SPECIAL RULES RELATING TO WOMEN'S LEAGUE ONLY**

**14.1** A NEW Club member may be allowed to play as many matches as necessary in her playing standard position before the next nomination date. The League Organiser must be informed by telephone before the first match in which this player appears. The new player must be placed on the next nomination list.

### **NOTE:**

**14A** Rule **11.7** does not apply to the Women's League.

**14B** Rule **3.3**: In exceptional circumstances fixtures must be rearranged, prior to the start of the season, up to and including August 31st. The Womens League Organiser must be informed immediately regarding any such rearrangement and Clubs must confirm the change with their opponents by sending them fixture card details prior to the first fixtures.

**14C** Rule **9.1.1** shall read: Having a player or players on duty for Sussex County (Senior or Veterans but not Junior), Area or National event, or engaged in a Sussex Closed Tournament. Rule **9.2** must be respected.