

HOW TO RUN INTERNAL CLUB COMPETITIONS

LTA COMPETITIONS

Version: 2020.1
Published: June 2020



INTRODUCTION

Competition is a key part of a tennis programme at all venues. Having healthy, enjoyable, easy-to-access competitions attracts new players and keeps existing players in the sport longer.

The guide provides organisers with examples and practical tips to help run internal club competitions. These are a great way to engage existing members in competition and create a social atmosphere at your venue.

There are a number of benefits of organising competitions at a tennis venue:

- Retain members and attract new players to your venue by offering them regular activity
- Creates a healthy club environment with a competitive and social membership base, integrating older juniors and adults
- Competitions can generate income through entry fees / bar sales and raise the venue profile

CONTENTS

How to run competitions

- Before
- During
- After
- Promotion
- Software

Scoring formats

- How to choose a scoring method
- Approx. length per match
- LTA Ratings
- Fast4 Tennis
- Timed Tennis

Types of Internal Competition

- Internal Box Leagues
- Club Championships
- LTA Recreational Competition
- Fun Tournaments



HOW TO RUN COMPETITIONS

Listed below are some things to think about to help you plan an effective competition that appeals to a wide audience. This can help you improve the satisfaction of existing players and get them playing on a more regular basis.

Before

Here is a checklist of what you need to think about before you run a competition:

- What type of competition do I want to organise?
- Who am I hoping to attract?
- What costs are involved?
- When am I going to run the competition?
- Ensure you have the right equipment available, book the courts and recruit a team to help.
- How am I going to promote the competition and create interest?
- Organise any prizes (if relevant).
- Create an order of play and set of rules. Think about how many opportunities people will have to play.
- Confirm entries and ensure players understand the format. How long will the tournament be?
- Confirm that the helpers understand their role and decide on any social activities on the day.
- Be prepared for last minute entries, drop outs, no-shows and rain! Have a back-up plan.

During

Here are some tips to help people feel welcome and ensure you deliver a good experience on the day:

- Arrive in good time and set up any necessary equipment; courts, nets, lines, etc.
- Put up copies of the draws and rules so people can read them before the event starts.
- If possible get all players together at the start and welcome / give an overview of the day.
- Try and stick to the schedule and keep encouraging players throughout.
- Take some pictures / video footage which can be used to report on the event afterwards.
- Speak to players and find out if they are enjoying the event. Get existing members to talk to new recruits about social activities / what the tennis venue offers.
- Hold a presentation ensuring you thank the volunteers – don't forget to promote future events!

After

Gathering feedback will help you make improvements for next time and sharing the success of the event can help encourage new people to get involved:

- Get feedback from those who took part – listen to their ideas.
- Thank all the helpers – they will feel valued and more inclined to take part again.
- Raise some awareness post event with pictures and a write up on the venue website, local media, notice board, etc.
- Submit the results to the LTA if it was set up to count for LTA Ratings.

Promotion

An area which needs the most attention when organising a competition is the promotion. Having a plan in place that targets the type of people that might enter and gives them enough time to enter will help raise the profile of the tournament and ultimately increase the number of entries. The following ideas should get you started:

- Create posters and digital assets to promote your competition using www.mytennistoolkit.com
- Use the tennis venue notice board to put up posters and sign-up sheets.
- Promote events direct to your membership database via email / SMS, website or newsletter.
- Get your coach to encourage players from their coaching / social sessions to enter.
- Ask team captains to email or WhatsApp the competition opportunities to team players.
- Post on your social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Software

The LTA offers software to help you run your competitions.

Tennis Tournament Planner (TTP)

If you are interested in running tournaments such as Internal Club Box Leagues and Club Championships you can use the Tennis Tournament Planner (TTP). TTP is also used for LTA Approved Tournaments.

The benefits of TTP include:

- Online entry for your competitions and entry fee payment via the LTA website.
- Several draw types / formats.
- A website where you can publish draws, playing times, results.
- Automatic result loading for LTA ratings.

Visit www.LTA.org.uk/TTP

ClubSpark Competition

The ClubSpark Competition Module lets you take entries via your venue your website for Team Challenge, Quorn Family Tennis Cup and Fun Tournaments.

The benefits of ClubSpark Competition Module & App:

- Online entry for your competitions and entry fee payment via your venue's ClubSpark website
- Several draw types / formats
- PDF's of the draws for you to share.
- Automatic result loading for LTA ratings.

Visit www.LTA.org.uk/ClubSparkCompetitionsApp



SCORING FORMATS

How to choose your scoring method?

The key principle is that the length of matches generally increases as players improve and get older and players often prefer to play more short matches rather than fewer long ones. You will need to consider that timings are dependent on players' abilities and court surface. Scoring recommendations and average match times are listed below:

Approx. length per match

Scoring Method	Approx. Length per Match
Match Tie-break to 10 (2 or 1 point clear)	10-15 minutes
One FAST4 Set	20-30 minutes
Two FAST4 sets plus Match Tie-break	60 minutes
One full Set	30-40 minutes
Two tie-break sets plus Match Tie-break	75 minutes
Best of 3 Tie-break sets	75-90 minutes

LTA Ratings

The minimum format for results to count for ratings is:

- Red Ball – Match tiebreak (first to 10 points) or 10 minute timed tennis format.
- Orange Ball - Best of three tiebreaks (first to 7 points), one match tiebreak or 15 minute timed tennis format.
- Green Ball – One FAST4 set or 20 minute timed tennis format.
- Yellow Ball – Two FAST4 sets with match tiebreak in place of a third short set. One full set or 20 minute timed tennis format for players 10.2 to 9.1 only at Grade 6 and 7.

Players will need LTA Membership to have an LTA Rating. LTA Membership is free for anyone who is a member of an LTA registered venue. Players can sign up online at www.lta.org.uk/member/

FAST4 Tennis

FAST4 Tennis provides a simple, exciting way of speeding up a conventional tennis match. The fundamentals of tennis remain the same, but there are four innovative rules that ensure matches are fast, competitive, exciting and can be completed in a reasonable period of time.

In summary the rules of FAST4 are:

- First to 4 games wins.
- Tie-break at 3 games all to 7 points, 2 clear at 6-6.
- Match tie-break at 1 set all to 10 points, 2 clear at 9-9.
- No-ad scoring.



Timed Tennis

A fun competition format which makes it easier for coaches / organisers to schedule their competition time as the length of each match is known. The time element increases the excitement and the concept can be used with a number of match formats, e.g. singles, doubles and team events. It is also a great opportunity for ratings matches to take place in a coaching session. This will provide players with a stepping stone into further competition opportunities outside of the coaching programme.

How does it work?

Ball colour	Time
Red Ball Competition	10 minutes per match
Orange Ball Competition	15 minutes per match
Green or Yellow Ball Competition	20 minutes per match

Red & Orange Ball Timed Competition:

- Counts for Red & Orange match record.
- Each point won counts for one point.
- Each match is an extended tiebreak, e.g. 8-4, 12-6, 15-3.
- The player with the most points after 10 / 15 minutes wins.
- If scores are equal after 10 / 15 minutes a deciding point is played.
- Players to finish a point if started when 10 / 15 minutes is up.
- After the first point, players serve for two consecutive points then swap, like in a tiebreak.

Green & Yellow Ball Timed Competition:

- Counts for LTA Ratings (9.1 to 10.2 only)
- Mixed singles matches do count, however only at Grade 6 and 7.
- Normal game scoring with sudden death deuce (receiver picks the side they wish to receive).
- Each match is an extended set, e.g. 7-1, 8-0.
- If games played are equal after 20 minutes finish the game you are playing.
- If games played are not equal after 20 minutes, play must stop and the player with the most games wins.

Top Tips for Organisers:

- Matches should start and finish with whistle or claxon.
- Players should be encouraged to be as quick as possible between points.
- No need to change ends if playing indoors.
- Consider a timed tennis box league as a way of making good use of one hour court booking slots.

TYPES OF INTERNAL COMPETITION

Internal Box Leagues

Overview

- Good format for an internal singles league, with players competing against lots of different people.

Benefits

- Players compete in their own time and arrange their own matches.
- Creates activity at your venue during quieter periods.
- Suitable for players of all standards as you can have different boxes.
- Players can have competitive matches against players of a similar standard.

Organisation & activity

- We suggest you use TTP to take online entries and payment.
- Put all the players into a box of between 6 to 8 players (occasionally 5 or 9) based on standard.
- Set a deadline for when matches need to be completed, work on the basis of playing a match every week or every other week.
- You may need to chase players who don't play.
- Explain to players how the group will work, the scoring format (we suggest two FAST4 sets with a match tiebreak), and how the winner is calculated.
- You can either print the draw sheets and put them up at the club or publish the TTP file so that players can see the scores online.
- Provide players with a list of contact details for the other players' in their group if this isn't available at the venue.
- The winner is usually the player with the most wins. If there is a two player tie, take the winner of the match between them. In the rare instance of a three player tie, calculate by sets or games. If you are using TTP it will automatically work it out for you.

After the event / next step

- Introduce promotion and relegation and process the results for LTA ratings purposes.
- Provide prizes to the box winners or promote them on your social media channels.

Variation

- Starting beginner adults with a green ball will give them time to learn the game.

Club Championships

Overview

- The majority of tennis venues run an annual championship for their members.
- This is the opportunity for everyone at the venue to battle it out to become club champion.

Benefits

- Players compete in their own time and arrange their own matches.
- Finals Day can be a fantastic competition spectacle and social event – make it the biggest of the year!

Organisation & activity

- Decide when you are going to play the tournament. Will it be over one weekend or two months?
- Decide which events and age groups you want to run (i.e. men's / ladies' singles, doubles, mixed doubles, etc). Don't forget juniors and seniors.
- You may want to consider running B Draws if you have a wide standard of players, for examples Men from you're A, B and C teams could play in the A Draw, with players from your C, D and E teams competing in a B Draw.
- We suggest you use TTP to take online entries and payment.
- You can either print the draw sheets and put them up at the club or publish the TTP file so that players can see the scores online.
- Decide on when each round has to be played by write this on the draw or schedule the matches in TTP for the play by date.
- Provide players with a list of contact details for the other players' in their group if this isn't available at the venue.
- You may need to chase players who haven't played their match by the play by date.
- Make the necessary arrangements about Finals Day and communicate to all venue members.

After the event / next step

- Arrange the presentation and trophies for the winners – create an honours board at the venue or on the venue's website.
- Process the results for LTA ratings purposes.

LTA Recreational Competitions

The LTA offers the following recreational competitions:

LTA Youth Team Challenge has two formats to play in and enjoy.

Team Challenge 'Match Weeks' slot into weekly coaching programmes, usually halfway through a term, and are a great way to play some competitive, fun matches in small teams.

Team Challenge 'Festivals' are bigger events that can take place at any time, often on the weekends or during schools holidays. These can often involve the whole club and even be themed around events like Halloween. Teams compete in various fun formats over 2-3 hours with lots of prizes to be won.

Visit www.lta.org.uk/teamchallenge

LTA Local Tennis Leagues offer local singles competitions for players aged over 18 in over 160 leagues around the country and matches on thousands of park and public courts. More leagues are being added each week as courts reopen.

Visit www.localtennisleagues.com

Quorn Family Tennis Cup (QFTC) is an informal, family doubles competition. Mini (10 & Under) players play with an adult family member in a fun atmosphere at local venues. It encourages families to play tennis together, and eat healthy food to complement an active lifestyle.

Visit www.lta.org.uk/quorn-family-tennis-cup/



Fun Tournaments

Many clubs will run Fun Tournaments on one day or over half a day. These Fun Tournaments may be on a bank holiday or to support a charity. We have given two examples below.

Leveller

Overview

- A tournament which is a real leveller as better players need to win more points to win a match.
- The benefit is that it gives all members to compete with an equal chance of winning.

Organisation & activity

- Decide which events and age groups you want to run, e.g. men's and ladies' singles, men's and ladies' doubles, mixed doubles.
- We suggest you use the ClubSpark Competition Module to take online entries and payment.
- Ensure you publish that it will be using Leveller Scoring, and how it will be worked out.
- You need a small team of people to help decide the Leveller score for each player. The best players should be on zero and others could be on another number up to around 10.
- Each set is the first to 21 points and you play best of three sets. Players serve for five points then change over.
- If one of the better players (leveller score of 1) is competing against another player with a leveller score of 8, then each set would start 7-0.

Variations

- Play a doubles tournament where if you lose the first game you start the next game 15-0 up and so on. So if you lose the first three games you would start the next game 40-0 up.

Mixer

Overview

- A fun doubles tournament which usually takes place over an afternoon and gives players the opportunity to mix with lots of different people.
- Opportunity for everyone at the tennis venue to compete against each other in a fun tournament.
- Creates a great social atmosphere.

Organisation & activity

- Once you know the number of players, courts and the time you want to finish you can decide on how many rounds you want to play and whether each match should be based on number of games or time.
- After the first round of matches, the winning doubles pair on each court will move up a court (usually towards the club house) and the losers move down a court – see diagram on the next page. Pairs should split so you don't partner the same person!
- Ensure you have a method to keep track of scores such as a flip chart or clipboard. Get them to hand it in at the end so you can work out the top male and female players

