

Scheduling Matches

When deciding how to schedule a tournament, scoring methods and order of matches should be fair and consistent to all players. When organising your competition you will need to use basic arithmetic and follow logical processes.

When scheduling your tournament you will need the following information

- Time – How long can you have the courts?
- Courts – How many courts can you have?
- Players – How many do you have and what age and ability?
- What is format – compass, round robin etc?
- The number of matches a player can play in a day (see LTA Tournament Regulations)

Work out the number of matches you will need to play (see notes), divide the number by the time you have on all the courts allowing for factors such as an introduction, changeover and presentation. Then you will have an average time for each match and you can choose a suitable length for the scoring. You may need to reduce the number of players, change the format or get more court time if you do not have enough time to run the competition using an appropriate scoring method. For outdoor tournaments, do factor in some additional time for weather delays.

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 for the stages of mini tennis and for players aged 11 and over.

Scoring Method by Age Group	Approx length per match
8 and Under/Red Ball Match Tie break to 10 (2 or 1 point clear)	10 minutes
9 and Under/Orange Ball One short set	20 -25 minutes
9 and Under/Orange Ball Best of three Tie breaks 1 match tie-break to ten	20-25 minutes
9 and Under/Orange Ball Best of three Match Tie breaks 1 match tie-break to ten	30 minutes
10 and Under/Green Ball One short set to 4 with Tie break at 4-4	30 minutes
10 and Under/Green Ball Two Tie break sets plus Match Tie Break	80 minutes
10 and Under/Green Ball Two short sets plus Match Tie Break	60 minutes
11+ / Yellow Ball Two short sets plus Match Tie break	60 minutes
11+ / Yellow Ball Two tie break sets plus Match Tie break (recommended format all junior doubles matches)	80 minutes
11+ / Yellow Ball Best of 3 Tiebreak sets	75-90 minutes

Suggestions for a player friendly event

- Whenever possible play the Singles Main Draw First and Second Rounds, and the Consolation First Round on one day, play 2 subsequent rounds per day.
- As much as possible, schedule all yellow ball players to get 2 singles matches in the day.
- Parents do prefer to have an indication of specific competition days in “week long” competitions to assist with planning. If this is not practical or possible, then consider publishing “not before” dates for specific events. E.g. Girls & Ladies events will commence on or after Tuesday.
- There is no requirement to complete all first round matches before starting the second round. In fact this may be a better use of players and parents’ time, particularly in large knockout events.
- Consider using staggered draws or splitting an event into qualifying and main draw. This should help to avoid players of vastly different standard being drawn against each other in early rounds. The number of matches in an event will be the same as if you use a single knockout draw (see NOTES below), although the number of rounds will be greater.
- There is no requirement to play all finals on the last day of a tournament, particularly if there is no sponsor and you are not intending to engage umpires. Completing some events earlier in the week (where this is possible) will often be appreciated by players and parents.

Notes

(1) The LTA’s procedures in case of adverse weather are highlighted in the LTA Tournament Regulations.

(2) To work out the number of matches you may find the following helpful:

Round Robin Groups

Number of players in the box **multiplied by** (the number of players in the box, **less one**)

Divide the above result, by **two**.

E.g. 4 player round robin:

$$4 \times (4-1) = 12$$

$$12 \text{ divided by } 2 = 6$$

Knock Out Draws

Assuming that there are no consolation matches, then the number of players in a knockout draw will ALWAYS be the number of players, **less one**. This applies regardless of whether some players are staggered through to the 2nd, 3rd or later round, or whether an event is divided into qualifying / main draw.

E.g. 48 players in a knockout draw = 47 matches.

If however a 48 draw was split into:

A qualifying event of 32 players, producing 8 qualifiers
(16 first round and 8 2nd round = 24 matches)

And a main draw event of 24 (16 players plus 8 qualifiers)

(8 first round, 8 2nd round, 4 quarter-finals, 2 semi-finals + 1 final = 23 matches)

$$24 + 23 = 47 \text{ matches}$$