

LTA COMPETITION REGULATIONS

SUMMARY OF CHANGES FROM SEPTEMBER 2016

The LTA Competition Regulations will be amended as from 1st September 2016. This document summarises the major changes that will be made, most of which are needed due to the upcoming changes to mini tennis which supports our strategy to depressurise the tournament system.

Mini Tennis Red Ratings

From 1 September 2016, all existing Mini Tennis red players will have their red rating removed and we will no longer issue Mini Tennis red ratings to ensure the focus at this age is on fun and learning to play. (Appendix 5, 1.3)

Once a player has played 40 red matches (previously 66 matches including 20 wins to reach red 1) and is in their penultimate or last competition season, they will receive an Orange 4 rating and can start to compete in Orange ball competitions. (Appendix 5, 1.5)

To recognise and reward progression at this level and as a substitute for the loss of ratings, we will be introducing a number of new rewards including a congratulations email when they have played their first match and a t-shirt for all children once they have played 20 red matches. We will look to evolve these offers over time based on parent and coach feedback.

Green Ball after the age of 10

“Mini Tennis green balls may be used for junior and adult competitions graded 6 and 7 where publicised at the point of entry.” (5.52)

Whilst already in the ITF Rules of Tennis and the Competition Regulations for adults we are extending the rule to include 12U – 18U age groups, as well as adults, for players new to the sport to help ensure they have an enjoyable early competition experience by playing with a ball that will give them greater success and therefore hopefully encouragement to continue competing.

Orange Ball Tennis

“Scoring must be one match tie-break (first to ten points with either two clear points or ‘sudden death’ at nine all), the best of three standard tie-breaks (first to seven points with either two clear points or ‘sudden death’ at six all) or one short set to four games. Where reasonably practicable, each match will have a Court Helper to assist with scoring and line/net calls.” (7.6)

Mini Tennis orange grade 4 to 6 events should be played using the one match tiebreak scoring format. This change in scoring format will support in fostering an easier transition for players from red to orange ball competition, as this format is commonplace in red ball competition. We will also encourage orange ball tournaments to use ‘court helpers / scorers’ on all courts wherever possible to help young kids keep score and call lines which will in turn help to ensure a less pressurised environment for young kids (and their parents) and support matches to be played in line with the Fair Play values.

Continued overleaf

Overlapping Competition Regulations

“In relation to weeklong holiday tournaments a Player can only enter one competition at each grade in the same age group (where that age group is 12U – Open) taking place during one week. For the avoidance of doubt, the competition week runs from Sunday through to Saturday, some competitions that run for 8 days may start on the day preceding the competition week or finish the day after the competition week but fall into the competition week where the majority of the competition is held. If a player is found to have contravened the overlapping competitions regulation and competed in more than one event in breach of Regulation 3.10 then he/she will lose all ranking points obtained from the relevant competitions.” (3.10)

This is designed to reduce the number of competitions a player is entering and subsequently withdrawing from before the withdrawal deadline, which can cause considerable disruption to a tournament. The regulation replicates the current LTA Staged regulation 3.10 (b). This regulation will allow players and their parents to have a better idea if they have been accepted into a tournament, as the entry list won't change as much and it will also benefit the tournament organisers/officials in the planning of their tournament.

Acceptance of entries - Open events

“The organising committee may in Open age group events, at its discretion, give priority to players aged 19 & over, provided the LTA Competitions Team has provided prior approval and it is publicised online.” (3.14)

Following a successful pilot with the Aegon British Tour Tier 3 this rule will allow adult players to gain entry into the open competitions ahead of juniors. These adults, due to their low rating, would otherwise not be accepted and placed on the reserve list.

A copy of the LTA Competition Regulations effective from 1st September 2016 will be available online at www.LTA.org.uk/CompetitionRegulations from 1st August 2016 and a copy will be posted to all LTA Licensed Referees in due course.