



Judging Criteria

Nominations should reflect contributions and achievements within tennis or padel in 2026 and will be judged against the criteria below. Please ensure you read the criteria carefully before submitting a nomination.

Please note that nominations for Meritorious Service Awards are made by LTA Member Organisations directly or otherwise at the discretion of the LTA President. Nominations cannot be made by the public.

The full criteria will be included in a separate nomination form sent directly from the President's office in October.

Cathie Sabin Volunteer of the Year

Celebrating an exceptional volunteer who has made a real difference in tennis or padel, notably in the past year.

The nominee:

- Has made a significant voluntary contribution to tennis or padel worthy of recognition.
- Has helped tennis or padel to be more welcoming, enjoyable and inspiring.
- Has shown creativity, passion, and initiative in their volunteering.

Volunteers may be involved in clubs, organisations, communities, schools, universities, or parks. This may be a significant contribution or by leading an impactful project that has come to fruition this past year.

Club of the Year

Recognising an LTA Registered tennis or padel club that stands as a shining example of a well governed, thriving and sustainable grassroots club. *

The nominee:

- Has had success in membership growth and/or retention reflecting its welcoming culture and effective management.
- Has outstanding community engagement demonstrating the club's inclusivity and wide participation across all ages and abilities.
- Works to provide high-quality facilities all year round to members and players
- Has a strong club and coach relationship leading to excellent coaching and player development, with programmes nurturing all levels.

*NB: Examples of achievements might include growing or diversifying membership, improving facilities, fundraising success or community outreach projects.

Coach of the Year

For a club or community coach making a big impact in their venue both on and off court.

The nominee:

- Runs a successful and innovative coaching programme in tennis and/or padel that demonstrates participation growth, inclusion of diverse audiences, safeguarding standards and accessibility to local communities.
- Demonstrates evidence of best practise on-court coaching alongside adopting LTA programmes that drive participation.
- Demonstrates an outstanding commitment to ongoing professional development to be the best coach they can be (ideally LTA Accredited+).
- Supports and develops others through leadership and teamwork and is a positive role model on the wider tennis community.

If the Coach is not eligible to be Accredited+ (they hold an LTA Assistant or LTA Instructor qualification), they must demonstrate a strong commitment to their professional development through formal and informal CPD.

Competition of the Year

Recognising an outstanding, inclusive and enjoyable competition experience.

The nominee:

- Has been excellent in its organisation, delivery and communications.
- Has been welcoming and enjoyable for players, and spectators.
- Has demonstrated, safeguarding and safety practices.
- Has demonstrated inclusion by inspiring people from a range of backgrounds to take part.
- Is innovative and well-promoted, with good local partnerships, off-court ideas and has utilised LTA systems (such as the LTA Competition Management System) including the ITF World Tennis Number.

The competition could be an event or series of events for players of any age or ability including LTA Youth Team Challenge, inter-club leagues; club or park-based recreational competitions; higher level junior or adult tournaments including County Championships, a senior's tennis competition or a professional event.

Lifetime Achievement Award

Recognising an individual who has made an extraordinary, long-term impact on tennis or padel in a club or community setting.

The nominee:

- Has contributed to one or more tennis or padel venues or communities for over 30 years.
- Has helped make tennis or padel more welcoming, enjoyable and inspiring.
- Has shown strong teamwork or leadership in one or various roles over a prolonged period.
- Has supported tennis and padel communities and embraced change as the sporting landscape evolves.

It honours those who have made a lasting difference by increasing participation, improving accessibility, and strengthening sport in the local community.

Please note - this award is **not** suitable for those who have shown a long competitive playing contribution in tennis or padel.

Official of the Year

For an LTA Official making an outstanding contribution to tennis or padel competitions.

The nominee:

- Holds an LTA Officials Licence*
- Has shown an outstanding contribution to tennis or padel and goes above and beyond in their role.
- Is a role model for high-quality delivery and customer service.
- Shows a commitment to on-going professional development and learning.
- Committed to supporting events that embrace diversity and inclusion.

*A recognised County/District League Organiser, Court Supervisor, Competition Organiser, Umpire or Referee)

Park Venue of the Year

For an outstanding park-based venue which has made an impact in making tennis accessible to their community, notably in the past year

The nominee:

- Is an LTA registered park venue with achievements worthy of recognition*
- Has increased participation and offered quality playing opportunities that appeal to a wide range of local players.
- Has successfully engaged with the local community.
- Provides a safe, inclusive, welcoming, long-term viable, and environmentally sustainable tennis environment.

*Examples of achievements: facility improvements, more community partnerships, new outreach efforts, or fundraising successes.

Performance Coach of the Year

Recognising an outstanding coach developing international juniors or 14U/10U juniors on the player pathway.

The nominee:

- Holds LTA Accreditation+.
- Has made a significant difference to a player or group of players over the past year.
- Is a role model showing innovation, professionalism and integrity.
- Is committed to continuous personal and professional development.

Protect Where We Play Award

Recognising a venue or initiative leading the way in promoting environmental responsibility within tennis or padel. This accolade celebrates those who demonstrate excellence across the criteria below.

The nominee has demonstrated excellence across:

- Climate Action - taking action to reduce carbon emissions, whether through energy-efficient lighting, clean energy, or promoting sustainable travel
- Reducing Waste - such as through recycling schemes, responsible water management, plastic reduction, and sustainable sourcing.
- Supporting Nature - helping to protect and enhance local biodiversity.
- Community Engagement - engaging and inspiring players and the wider community to take positive action

These achievements should highlight a commitment to sustainability and the venue or initiative's positive impact on both the sport and the planet.

School of the Year

Recognising a school or not-for-profit school network using tennis or padel to make a difference to students.

The nominee:

- Is a registered member of the LTA Youth Schools website.
- Uses tennis to deliver curriculum PE and/or extracurricular opportunities with a significant number of students taking part.
- Offers meaningful competitive tennis opportunities for students.
- Has developed strong and sustainable community links including with a local LTA Accredited Coach and/or LTA Registered Venue, to encourage pupils to continue playing outside of school.

Tennis/Padel Opened Up Award

Celebrating those helping to break down barriers and open tennis and/or padel up to everyone.

The nominee:

- Creates safe, welcoming, and inclusive environments in community tennis or padel settings, actively removing barriers to participation.
- Uses creative and innovative approaches to engage under-represented groups.
- Makes tennis and/or padel fun, accessible, and relevant - such as through the use of adaptive equipment or tailored formats.
- Helps connect people to further opportunities to play, including signposting to other venues or programmes.
- Demonstrates clear social impact - improving lives, increasing engagement and connecting communities through tennis and/or padel.

Examples include involvement in programmes such as LTA SERVES, Open Court, Rally Allies, Walking Tennis, or partnerships with local community groups and charities.

University of the Year

Celebrating a university making tennis including padel accessible and engaging for students.

The nominee:

- Is registered with the LTA at the time of nomination
- Has made year on year progress, showing creativity in developing a wide and inclusive weekly programme including competition for all.
- Provides students with opportunities to gain life skills, training and experience through tennis and padel.
- Demonstrates how the university and/or students contribute to tennis development beyond the student body.
- Has built a strong tennis culture promoting teamwork and leadership.

Young Person of the Year

For a young individual who has made a positive impact through leading or supporting activity in tennis or padel.

The nominee:

- Is aged 14 - 24 as of 31 December 2026
- Is a positive role model and has inspired people from a range of backgrounds.
- Has shown initiative, creativity and dedication in their involvement.
- Has demonstrated a commitment to their personal development.

The award is largely for voluntary contributions but may include some paid roles. Roles include a tennis leader, club committee, coaching assistant, coach, competition organiser or Young Persons Welfare Ambassador. This could be in any setting including in a club, community, school, university, or park venue.

LTA Meritorious Service Awards

This special LTA Award, recognising volunteers who have made a significant long-term contribution to the LTA's vision for at least 20 years.

The nomination process will be communicated via the LTA President's Office with a separate nomination form in October each year.

Please note that this award is not appropriate for those who have achieved higher office such as LTA President (past or present), nor for current LTA Councillors.

Nominations for the Meritorious Service Awards are made by LTA Member Organisations directly or otherwise at the discretion of the LTA President. Nominations cannot be made by the general public – you will therefore not find this category on the nomination form.