

LTA County Tour

Referee and Organiser Guide

2026 Winter (1 September 2026 – 31 March 2027)



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INTRODUCTION

This document is intended to support the delivery of LTA County Tour events being delivered by venues, organisers and referees. The 10U – Open age groups (including the 11U age group) will once again use the 'FAST4 Tennis' format.

The LTA County Tour consists of Grade 4 tournaments for juniors and adults, with both Singles and Doubles competitions. Grade 5 competitions are part of the LTA Youth Local Tour. County Tour Tournaments are run over 1 day and ranking points count towards LTA Rankings for 11U – Open age groups and Recent Form for 9U – 10U.

Please find below some key points about the County Tour:

- The **FAST4** scoring format will be used throughout the circuit.
- Players will be able to play up to **4 matches in a day**, so organisers will be able to choose either:
 - 16 player elimination draw with first match consolation
 - 16 player compass draws
 - 8 player compass draw
- There are four rotations of Singles events and one rotation of doubles events per age group.

This guide should be used in conjunction with:

1. The TTP user guide which can be found on the LTA website – [Tennis Tournament Planner](#)
2. Information on the County Tour on the LTA website – [County Tennis Tour](#)

CONTINUING FOR 2026 WINTER

- Manual entries must be added to the tournament via the Competition Management System (not via your TTP file) so these are visible online
- 18U and Open County Tour events will continue to use 'Own Age Group Priority Acceptance' – organisers must ensure they have selected 'Own Age Group Priority' on the tournament factsheet for these events:

The screenshot shows a mobile app interface for editing a tournament event. The 'Event Information' modal is open for a 18U BS event. The form includes fields for Name, Grade, Start date, End date, Closing deadline, and Withdrawal deadline. Below these is a section for 'Own Age Group Priority' with a toggle switch set to 'YES'. Further down are fields for Entry restrictions, Consolation, Proposed Draw Size, Timings, Entry fee, and Draw Format.

Event Information	
Name	18U BS
Grade	Grade 4
Start date	09/07/2023
End date	09/07/2023
Closing deadline	27/06/2023 10:00:00
Withdrawal deadline	03/07/2023 10:00:00
Own Age Group Priority	☒ YES
Entry restrictions	LTA staged
Consolation	Yes
Proposed Draw Size	8
Timings	2pm
Entry fee	20
Draw Format	Compass

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

To help you understand your responsibilities as a venue / tournament organiser / referee, we have documented them below:

LTA COMPETITIONS TEAM

- Overall responsibility for the County Tour
- Co-ordinate the national schedule
- Create and distribute medals to County Tour referees and organisers
- Communicate with players about the County Tour prior to the season starting
- Update LTA webpages with County Tour information
- Co-ordinate the regional calendar of events
- Provide training and on-going support to tournament organisers
- Promote the County Tour throughout the region, with the support of County Associations

TOURNAMENT ORGANISER

- Ensure the Tournament Venue is LTA Registered
- Promote the event locally
- Order & provide balls for the event
- Engage a referee to run the event – this contact must be attached to the competition at least 14 days prior to the start date and must be a licensed referee at the time of the competition

TOURNAMENT ORGANISER OR REFEREE

- Manage the entries and queries from players and parents
- Create and maintain the acceptance list
- Make the draw and publish first match times
- Process the results after the tournament

TOURNAMENT REFEREE

- Run the event, with the aim of creating the best competition experience
- Be present and onsite for the whole competition
- Apply LTA rules and regulations
- Complete a risk assessment
- Complete and publish results within 72 hours of completing the event

Referees should not referee a tournament where he/she has a relationship with one or more of the players competing. If this is the case, you either need to find an appropriate organiser to run this event or ensure that another official is present on the day and that they deal with any incident that occurs involving your child

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- The LTA Staged Rule remains in place for Grade 4 events – more information available below and online - [LTA Staged Overlapping Competition Regulations](#).
- For County Tour Grade 4 events the closing deadline will be **10am** on the **Tuesday** 11-12 days before the event and the withdrawal deadline will be the **Monday** before the tournament at **10am**. (As the LTA Staged rule will apply to these competitions it is important that events all close at the same time).

LTA STAGED RULE

Tournament Organisers and players alike are reminded that the following rule from the LTA Competition Regulations will continue to apply to LTA Staged County Tour Competitions (both internal and external events); it restricts the number of competitions a player can enter:

In relation to LTA Staged Winter Competitions (ie. National Tour, weekend Winter Regional Tour, and weekend Winter County Tour tournaments) and Summer County Tour grade 4 weekend events a player can enter only one competition at each grade in the same age group taking place on the same weekend.

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.

If players contact you to request a late or manual entry you should always remind them of the above regulation and ensure that they are aware of the consequence of contravening the regulation. It is the player's responsibility to ensure they have not contravened the regulation by entering more than one event.

LTA PHOTOGRAPHY POLICY

The Lawn Tennis Association Limited (the LTA) strives to ensure that all children, young people and adults at risk are safeguarded from abuse and have an enjoyable tennis experience.

This document sets out the policy of the LTA for the capture and use of photographic, video or other images at the tennis competitions and tournaments run by the LTA (LTA Staged). For the avoidance of doubt, these guidelines also apply to live broadcasts on social media or other platforms.

The LTA is keen to promote positive images of individuals playing tennis and is not preventing the use of photographic or videoing equipment. However, please be aware that some people may use sporting events as an opportunity to take inappropriate photographs or film footage. This document sets out some guidelines for other tennis venues and organisations running tennis competitions on behalf of the LTA (LTA Approved).

The LTA Photography Policy can be found [here](#).

FAST 4 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 innovative rules that ensure matches are fast, competitive, exciting and can be completed in a reasonable period of time.

The FAST4 scoring format was revised on 1 September 2019 and is played as follows;

- **First to 4 games wins** – Hence the name FAST4. It doesn't matter how you get there, just make sure you get to four before your opponent does.
- **Tiebreak at 3 games all** – at 3 games all a tiebreak is played, first to 7 points, 2 clear at 6-6.
- **Match tiebreak** – if the score reaches 1-set all a match tiebreak will be played – first to 10 points, 2 clear at 9-9
- **No-ad scoring** – as soon as a game gets to deuce it's a sudden death point. The receiver chooses which side will take the serve. This applies to doubles too with the receiving pair deciding who returns the point.
- **Normal service let rule** – if the serve clips the net and lands in the service box, then a let is played.

As a result of the changes, FAST4 is now the only abbreviated scoring format and 'short sets' will no longer be used. The benefits of this change are as follows:

- Less anxiety created by the scoring format allowing players to focus on playing their best tennis.
- Players become familiar with the rules as they are using the same scoring format at all competitions – this means less confusion amongst players
- Events with 16-player draws are still possible

FAST4 Tennis format will be used for 10U – 18U age group events whilst the 9U events will use one match tiebreak to 10 points.

It is still permissible for players to play 4 FAST4 matches in one day.

The [LTA FAST4 webpage](#) has been updated to show the new FAST4 rules.

UNDERSTANDING THE FINANCES

To make the finances understandable, we've broken them down below and provided some examples. Venues may select their own entry fee and tournaments can be made more financially viable by running:

- two or more events at the same time/on the same day (depending on court space)
- one indoor and one outdoor event

The best options for organisers are to run:

- 2 x 8 player compass draws in different age groups or genders
- 16 player compass draw

OUTDOORS – GRADE 4 (YELLOW BALL EVENT)

Format/Variables	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Doubles	Orange Singles	Orange Singles
Players	8	8 x 2	16	16	8 pairs	8 x 2	16
Format	Compass	Compass	Elimination	Compass	Compass	RR to Compass	RR to Compass
Courts	2	4	4	4	2	4	4
Hours	5	5	6	7	5	4	6
Court hours	10	20	18	28	10	16	24
Entry Fee	£18.00	£18.00	£18.00	£18.00	£9.00	£18.00	£18.00
Income							
Entry Fees	£144.00	£288.00	£288.00	£288.00	£144.00	£288.00	£288.00
Expenditure							
Balls @ £11 doz	£22.00	£44.00	£44.00	£44.00	£22.00	£44.00	£44.00
Referee @ £75	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00
Administration	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Total	£122.00	£144.00	£144.00	£144.00	£122.00	£144.00	£144.00
Profit	£22.00	£144.00	£144.00	£144.00	£22.00	£144.00	£144.00
Profit per court/hour	£2.20	£7.20	£8.00	£5.14	£2.20	£9.00	£6.00

INDOORS – GRADE 4

Format/Variables	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Singles	FAST4 Doubles	Orange Singles	Orange Singles
Players	8	8 x 2	16	16	8 pairs	8 x 2	16
Format	Compass	Compass	Elimination	Compass	Compass	RR to Compass	RR to Compass
Courts	2	4	4	4	2	4	4
Hours	5	5	6	7	5	4	6
Court hours	10	20	18	28	10	16	24
Entry Fee	£20.00	£20.00	£20.00	£22.00	£11.00	£20.00	£20.00
Income							
Entry Fees	£160.00	£320.00	£320.00	£352.00	£176.00	£320.00	£320.00
LTA Indoor Court Grant*	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00
Total Income	£260.00	£420.00	£420.00	£452.00	£276.00	£420.00	£420.00
Expenditure							
Balls @ £11 doz	£22.00	£44.00	£44.00	£44.00	£22.00	£44.00	£44.00
Referee @ £75	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00	£75.00
Administration	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00	£25.00
Court Fees @ £10ph	£100.00	£200.00	£180.00	£280.00	£100.00	£160.00	£240.00
Total	£222.00	£344.00	£324.00	£424.00	£222.00	£304.00	£384.00
Profit	£38.00	£76.00	£96.00	£30.00	£54.00	£116.00	£36.00
Profit per court/hour	£3.80	£3.80	£5.33	£1.07	£5.40	£7.25	£1.50

**Indoor court grant just applies to Winter County Tour events run between November and February*

LTA SUPPORT – INDOOR COURT GRANT

The LTA will provide a grant payment of £100 to Organiser for each tournament day between 1st November 2026 and 28th February 2027 for Grade 4 events where at least one event has been completed using indoor courts with more than 5 players at the draw date. The grant payment is subject to receiving a completed invoice form by 31st March 2027. Invoices may be submitted to finance.system@LTA.org.uk and a template is attached.

LTA SUPPORT – MEDALS

The LTA will provide medals for all junior one-day County Tour (Grade 4 events). These will be sent directly to organisers.

BEFORE TOURNAMENT OPENS FOR ENTRY

Please action the following steps **before** a tournament opens for online entries:

1. Check all the details for your competition are correct in the Competition Management System and **ensure** that timings and maximum draw sizes have been provided
2. Ensure the referee has been confirmed for the event and that they have been added to the tournament in the Competition Management System. If they are managing the pre-tournament admin then they should be marked as the Tournament Organiser, if they are solely the referee they should be marked as the Tournament Referee.

TOURNAMENT PROMOTION – PRIOR TO CLOSING DEADLINE

Promote your WCT tournament using the following channels to minimise cancellations (please note that this is not an exhaustive list):

- Display posters at your venue/other local venues
- Display a FAST4 banner at your venue
- Produce flyers to hand out to players
- Encourage coaches at the venue to promote the event to players
- Promote on your social media channels

VENUE / EQUIPMENT CHECKS

We suggest that the following is done at least one week before the tournament:

- Check the court booking
- Ensure that you have tennis balls for the event
- Ensure you have the medals for the winner and runner-up of each event
- For 9U tournaments confirm who will setup the courts

CHANGE OF VENUE

Events **should not be moved** to a different venue after they have been approved. If a change of venue is required due to unforeseen circumstances then please contact the LTA via the [Enquiry Form](#) as soon as possible.

If venue changes are not requested beforehand, and approved by the LTA Competitions Team, this could result in future events being cancelled and applications for subsequent seasons may not be considered.

DURING THE ENTRY PERIOD

As soon as possible after the closing date (preferably same or next day) follow the steps below.

- 1. Set up your TTP file**
- 2. Import online entries into your TTP file**
- 3. Validate players**

Detailed information on each of the above steps is available in the [Competition Management System Organiser Portal User Manual](#).

If at any point, a referee/organiser accepts a manual entry from the player (who is having difficulties entering the competition online via the LTA website), they can add the manual entry to the competition via the Tournament Application Dashboard in the Organiser Portal by selecting the 'Entries' tab. Please refer to the above user manual for more information.

Ordinarily, no entry deadlines will be extended for competitions, save in exceptional circumstances. Organisers are reminded to keep an eye on entries in the run up to the entry deadlines and promote accordingly. Please remember that late entries can only be accepted in accordance with the LTA Competition Regulations 3.18.

ACCEPTANCES

All entered players will appear on the 'Main Draw' tab within the 'Roster' on TTP.

GRADE 4 EVENTS

Acceptance for Open and 18U event must be done according to:

1. Wild cards: A maximum of 1 wild card for every 8 places in the draw
2. Own age group priority – so players in the age group of the event e.g. players with a season age of 19 or older should be accepted first for Open events, and players with a season age of 18 or 17 should be accepted first for 18U events
3. LTA Rankings
4. By lot if more than one player has the same ranking

Acceptance for Yellow Ball age groups (11U-16U) must be done according to:

1. Wild cards: A maximum of 1 wild card for every 8 places in the draw
2. LTA Rankings
3. By lot if more than one player has the same ranking

Acceptance for 9U-10U age groups must be done according to:

1. 1 wild card for every 8 places in the draw
2. Recent Form (a player's best 3 tournament performances at that ball colour within the last 6 months)
3. By lot if more than one player has the same recent form

Further information is available in the [LTA Acceptance and Seeding Criteria](#) document.

COMBINING 9U & 10U GENDERS

If there are too few players to make a single gender draw then a tournament may become a mixed event, however please inform the players that the events will be combined. A player who wishes to withdraw due to the change in event should not receive withdrawal points. Please note that you will not be able to add new events to your TTP file and you will need to submit an [Enquiry Form](#) (ideally within 1 day of the Closing deadline) if you need to add a mixed event.

OVERSUBSCRIBED EVENTS

If events are oversubscribed there is an option to run a 'B draw', if approved by the LTA Competitions Team. The organiser must contact the LTA Competitions Team via the [Enquiry Form](#) at the closing deadline to request a 'B draw'. The LTA Competitions Team will review the request considering other graded competitions on the same date and then confirm with the organiser whether their request for a B draw has been approved.

If a B draw is approved, it will run at a lower grade than the main draw event. e.g. If a Grade 4 event is oversubscribed, the B Draw will be classified as Grade 5.

LATE ENTRIES

If at the time a player requests to be a late entry he/she would be seeded that player cannot be accepted. If however, the player would **not** be a seed his/her entry can be accepted and placed as follows:

- a) if the draw is not full the player can be accepted directly into the draw
- b) if there is a reserve list this player will be placed at the bottom and will be accepted into the draw when the player reaches the top of the reserve list and a space becomes available – **regardless of whether this player would now be a seed.**

The only exception to this regulation is if, for **justifiable reasons**, you wish to offer a wild card to a player who requests a late entry and would be a seed. If a wild card is awarded this player can then be accepted, however wild cards must be awarded in accordance with the LTA Competition Regulations – 3.20 (a maximum of 1 wild card for every 8 places in the draw). Please do not feel pressurised into giving wild cards to players who request a late entry.

Late entries must be manually added via your Organiser Portal in the Competition Management System. This is to ensure that late entries are visible online.

WITHDRAWALS

Monitor withdrawals and update the TTP file on a regular basis (following the steps for downloading entries in the above user guide) so that players can monitor their movement on the reserve list.

If you withdraw a player manually you should move them to the 'Exclude' list and record full detail of the withdrawal in TTP. You will also need to issue a refund. No withdrawal points are given to players who withdraw before the published withdrawal deadline. When a person withdraws you will obviously need to replace the withdrawn player.

DRAWS & SCHEDULING

DRAWS (TO BE DONE ON THE SAME DAY AS THE WITHDRAWAL DEADLINE)

- Set up Tournament Properties including match times and scoring format
- Add the Draw in TTP based on the recommended draw formats (see below) and the number of players. You may need to have byes or make a slight adjust to the format
- Re-validate your players so that the seeding can be made with the most recent rankings for that age group (this re-validation is only for the purpose of seeding, it does not affect the order of the reserves or acceptances).
- **Seed players as appropriate (based on acceptance principles)**, if you have a 16 player main draw you will need 4 seeds, if you have an 8 player draw you will only need 2 seeds. **NOTE: Seeding for 9U and 10U events is determined according to recent form. If there are two players with equal recent form then please draw by lot to determine the seeds.**
- You will then need to Make the Draw in TTP

NOTE:

If there are fewer than 5 players, then the tournament will not count for ranking points.

SCHEDULING

When scheduling your competition please consider the planned finish time of your event. We'd like to stress that events for younger juniors should not be scheduled to finish late into the evening on either Saturday or Sunday. We appreciate that available court time is limited but we would ask that organisers adhere to the following when planning their competitions:

AGE GROUP	TO FINISH NO LATER THAN:
9U/10U	7pm
11U/12U/14U	8pm Sat / 7pm Sunday
16U/18U	9pm

DRAW FORMATS AND SCORING FORMATS

DRAW TYPE	DRAW SIZE	FORMAT	SCORING
9U (1 day)	8 or 16	Round Robin to Elimination with Consolation or Compass OR Round Robin draw	One match tie-break (MTB) to ten points.
10U (1 day)	8 or 16	Compass Draw OR Round Robin to Elimination with Consolation	FAST4 Tennis - Best of 3 sets, with 3 rd set a MTB or one FAST4 set
11U-18U (1 day) Singles or Doubles	8	Compass draw	FAST4 Tennis - Best of 3 sets, with 3 rd set a MTB
11U-18U (1 day) Singles or Doubles	16	Elimination with Consolation or Compass draw	FAST4 Tennis - Best of 3 sets, with 3 rd set a MTB

SCHEDULE MATCHES

- Once you have made the draw you will need to schedule the matches, we suggest you print the draws to keep for reference
- Publish the draws after 4pm on the same day, to show all scheduled matches
- Publish the competition and check that draws are shown on the website.
- Ensure you have published before sending first match time emails
- Prepare and send players' first match time email

DURING THE TOURNAMENT

- Display the LTA Tournament Notices (including Code of Conduct and Player Notices) at your venue – you can download them from the [Organisers and Officials](#) area
- Brief all the players and parents before the start on all relevant items, such as the scoring format, number of matches, expectation of fair play. If you are running Mini Tennis events you could consider showing the relevant new Mini Tennis Scoring and Rules video to the players at the start of your event;
 - [Red video](#)
 - [Orange video](#)
 - [Green video](#)
- **Be visible**
- Log all results, code violations, withdrawals etc. in TTP
- Publish results throughout the day or once all matches for that day have been completed

AFTER THE TOURNAMENT (REFEREE RESPONSIBILITY)

- Check that all results have been correctly added to the tournament draws in TTP **Check that draw stages are correct.**
- Publish your results. **You should publish results as soon as possible and certainly no later than 48 hours after the tournament has finished.**

CONCLUSION

Thank you for taking the time to read through this guide – we appreciate it is quite a lengthy document but hopefully you have found the information useful and now feel ready to deliver your Winter County Tour competitions.

If you require any further support please contact the LTA Competitions Team, using the [Enquiry Form](#).

We wish you the best of luck for your upcoming events and thank you for delivering Winter County Tour competitions for the players in your area.