

MIDDLESEX SQUASH LEAGUE

RULES

Revised June 2009 - v9

MIDDLESEX SQUASH LEAGUE RULES

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MIDDLESEX SQUASH LEAGUE RULES

1. NAME

- 1.1 The name will be the "Middlesex Squash League".
- 1.2 The name may, at the discretion of the Committee, be prefixed by the name of the current sponsor(s).

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.1 The objective of the League will be to organize and encourage the playing of team squash in Middlesex, in a fair and sporting manner, with an emphasis on socializing after matches.

3. STRUCTURE

3.1 Sections

- 3.1.1 The League will operate separate winter and summer seasons, and will be divided into Sections which will include a Men's League, a Women's League and a Veterans' and Vintage League.
- 3.1.2 Other Sections may be added as required.

3.2 Management

- 3.2.1 Overall management of the League will be by a Committee made up of a General Secretary, an Assistant General Secretary, a Treasurer, and the Secretaries of the various Sections, none of whom needs to be a member of a competing club.
- 3.2.2 Each Section will be managed by its own Secretary.
- 3.2.3 Committee members will be elected at the AGMs, serve for one year and may stand for re-election.
- 3.2.4 Should a Committee member resign during the year, the Committee may appoint a successor for the remainder of the term.
- 3.2.5 The Committee may, at its discretion and in the best interests of the League, co-opt additional members.

3.3 Seasons

- 3.3.1 In winter the League will run from 1 September to 10 April.
- 3.3.2 In summer the League will run from 1 May to 31 August.

4. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

- 4.1 The main AGM will be held in June and will cover rule changes and any business other than that relating only to the Veterans' and Vintage Section. All clubs (not teams) must be represented at the AGM. Clubs not represented will be fined up to £50 at the discretion of the General Secretary
- 4.2 The Veterans' and Vintage Section will hold a separate AGM in July at which each team (not club) must be represented. Teams not represented will be fined up to £50 at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 4.3 Notice of each AGM must be advised to all relevant team secretaries at least fourteen days prior to the date of the meeting, together with any proposed alterations to the Rules.
- 4.4 Nominations to the Committee must be received by the General Secretary at least seven days prior to the meeting unless the AGM chairman is prepared to accept shorter notice.
- 4.5 Any Rule change proposed by a club must be seconded in writing by another club and submitted to the relevant League Secretary at least twenty-eight days before the AGM.
- 4.6 Each team individually represented at an AGM will be entitled to one vote.

- 4.7 Resolutions will be carried by a simple majority and the AGM chairman will have a casting vote.

5. EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL MEETING (EGM)

- 5.1 The General Secretary may call an EGM at any time when requested to do so either by the Committee or in writing by not fewer than ten member clubs.
- 5.2 Notice of the EGM must be sent to all team secretaries at least fourteen days prior to the date of the meeting.
- 5.3 If an EGM is called, representation will be as for Rule 4.1 or 4.2.

6. JOINING THE LEAGUE

6.1 Clubs

- 6.1.1 The League will be open to all clubs within Middlesex and adjoining Counties.
- 6.1.2 New clubs must be elected at an AGM.
- 6.1.3 Clubs must have their own courts, or access to public courts, with entertaining facilities.
- 6.1.4 No roving clubs will be admitted.
- 6.1.5 Clubs must be affiliated to England Squash.
- 6.1.6 Clubs which have not paid their affiliation fees to England Squash by 1 September may, at the discretion of the Committee, be excluded from the League.

6.2 Teams

- 6.2.1 Teams will consist of five players or three players, depending on the Section.
- 6.2.2 The number of teams per Division will be at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 6.2.3 Teams will not be admitted to the League any later than fourteen days after the start of a season.
- 6.2.4 New teams may be refused entry at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.

6.3 Entry Forms

- 6.3.1 Entry forms must be completed by all participating teams and submitted to the relevant League Secretary by the date published.
- 6.3.2 Teams returning forms late will be fined £10.
- 6.3.3 Forms returned marked "as last year" will not be acceptable.

6.4 Subscriptions

- 6.4.1 The winter subscription will be £30 per team if paid by 31 July, £35 if paid by 30 September and £50 thereafter.
- 6.4.2 The summer subscription will be £20 per team.
- 6.4.3 From the winter subscription an amount of £10 will be passed to the Middlesex SRA for junior squash development in the county.
- 6.4.4 Changes to the subscription rates must be approved by AGM resolution.

6.5 Goodwill Deposit

- 6.5.1 Each club with teams playing in the League will pay a goodwill deposit of £50.
- 6.5.2 This deposit, less any unpaid fines or debts, will be repayable on request to the Club when all its teams have withdrawn from the League.

7. ELIGIBILITY

7.1 Players

- 7.1.1 All players must be bona fide members of their club. If a player is not eligible, his match and all below it will be lost.
- 7.1.2 Without prior approval of the relevant League Secretary, a player may not play for more than one club in the same Section of the League in any one season.

7.2 Veteran and Vintage Players

- 7.2.1 Veteran men must be over 45 on the date of playing and women over 40.
- 7.2.2 Vintage men must be over 55 on the date of playing and women over 50.
- 7.2.3 Team secretaries must provide proof of age of a player if so requested by the relevant League Secretary.
- 7.2.4 Should an underage player play or attempt to play, both the player and the team secretary will be subject to disciplinary action as thought fit by the relevant League Secretary.

7.3 Player Registration

- 7.3.1 All winter teams, including single team clubs, must register five players per team (three players per three person team). All summer teams must register the top three of their five players.
- 7.3.2 Registration must be done prior to the first fixture of any of a club's teams in the same Section of the League. Failure to register in time will incur a penalty of seven points.
- 7.3.3 If any team lists more than five (three) players, only the first five (three) names will be registered.
- 7.3.4 Players with long term injuries should not be registered.
- 7.3.5 The order of registration will not necessarily be the playing order.
- 7.3.6 Registered players may not play in a lower team that season.
- 7.3.7 Unless prior dispensation has been obtained from the relevant League Secretary, all players registered must play a minimum two of the first five fixtures. Penalty for infringement will be two points per player, per match not played. This Rule does not apply to Men's Division 1 teams whose five registered players must instead play at least two thirds of all the fixtures. Failure to do so will incur a penalty of five points per player per match not played.
- 7.3.8 Players incorrectly registered for a lower team and subsequently registered for a higher team may, at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary, be treated as an ineligible player for all the lower team matches already played.
- 7.3.9 Players from a lower team may twice in a season "play up" in their correct position in a higher team without becoming registered for that team. Any other players playing above a registered player will be considered to be registered for that team and will be required to comply with the playing order rules.
- 7.3.10 If a registered player cannot play because of sickness or injury, a replacement player must be immediately registered with the relevant League Secretary.
- 7.3.11 Players who have played three or more matches for a team will become registered for that team and may not subsequently play for a lower team.

7.4 Strong Unregistered Players

- 7.4.1 A strong unregistered player may play above a registered player but will, at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary, be required to play at least half of the remaining fixtures of the team.
- 7.4.2 The player must be able to comply with Rule 7.5
- 7.4.3 Failure to play the requisite number of matches will result in a penalty of five points per match not played.

7.5 The Last Four Fixtures

- 7.5.1 To be eligible to play in the last four fixtures of the winter season, a player who will strengthen or maintain the strength of a team must have played at least three of the preceding matches for his club in the same section. In the summer, this will apply to the last three fixtures of the season.
- 7.5.2 For Divisions of eight teams or fewer, the qualifying number of games will be two.
- 7.5.3 At the discretion of the relevant League Secretary, a player who for medical reasons has failed to play the qualifying number of matches may be given prior dispensation under Rule 7.5.1 or 7.5.2..
- 7.5.4 Veterans' and Vintage League players who have reached the age qualification during the course of the season and who have consequently not played the number of matches under Rules 7.5.1 or 7.5.2 may take into account matches played for their club in other sections of the League in the same season.

- 7.5.5 In the Veterans' League a player who has played the qualifying number of matches for his club by combining his appearances for both veterans and vintage team matches will satisfy the requirements of Rules 7.5.1 and 7.5.2.

7.6 Pregnant Women

- 7.6.1 If a player is obviously pregnant, her opponent may refuse to play the match, in which case it will be void and no points will be awarded to either team.

8. FIXTURES

8.1 Arranging Men's and Women's Winter Fixtures

- 8.1.1 All teams will ultimately be responsible for arranging their own fixtures.
- 8.1.2 A fixtures meeting will be called within approximately two months after the AGM.
- 8.1.3 All teams must be individually represented at the fixtures meeting, the only exception being a club with two teams in the same Division. Any team not represented will be fined up to £50 and/or barred from the League for one season, both at the discretion of the Committee.
- 8.1.4 Teams will be deemed to have missed the fixtures meeting if they arrive more than thirty minutes after the advertised start time, or after the other teams in their Division have completed their fixtures, whichever is the later. In these circumstances, the other teams will complete a fixture list for them. No change to this list will be allowed by the Committee, other than to the home team games to enable them to be played on the team's designated match night.
- 8.1.5 Each team must hand a completed fixtures list to the relevant League Secretary at the fixtures meeting. Failure to do so will incur a £10 fine.

8.2 Arranging Summer Fixtures

- 8.2.1 All teams will ultimately be responsible for arranging their own fixtures.
- 8.2.2 The Summer League fixtures will be arranged by a date matrix.
- 8.2.3 Wednesday will be the match day for men and Tuesday for women.
- 8.2.4 Fixtures must be played during the week allocated unless prior permission to change has been obtained from the relevant League Secretary.
- 8.2.5 Teams which cannot play their home fixtures on the designated day must advise the relevant League Secretary and each opposition team secretary of the new fixture date. This must be done in writing and by telephone within two weeks of receiving the League fixture list and at least two weeks before the published date or the new date, whichever is the earlier. Verification of the new date must also be made by telephone to the opposition team secretary approximately two weeks before the published date and the new date. If these dates are in the same week, one telephone call will suffice. It is the duty of the home team secretary to ensure that opposition teams are fully aware of any changes to the published League fixtures list.

8.3 Arranging Veterans' and Vintage Fixtures

- 8.3.1 Each team must supply the relevant League Secretary with a list of available home fixture dates to enable him to prepare a fixtures list.
- 8.3.2 A form for this purpose will be provided by the relevant League Secretary and must be returned to him at or before the Veterans' and Vintage AGM.
- 8.3.3 Failure to supply a list of available home dates in time will incur a fine of £25 and, at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary, may result in exclusion of the team for one season.
- 8.3.4 The fixtures list will be despatched to team secretaries by 15 August.
- 8.3.5 Until 31 August team secretaries may, by mutual consent, change the dates on their fixtures list. Thereafter, Rule 8.6 will apply. All changes must be advised to the relevant League Secretary by the team initiating the change. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £5.

8.4 Days and Times

- 8.4.1 Unless approved at an AGM or fixtures meeting, no team may have a home match on a Saturday or a Sunday without the agreement of the opposition.
- 8.4.2 Matches will commence no later than 7.45 p.m.

- 8.4.3 Weekday matches may start before 7.00 p.m. only by prior agreement with the opposition (except if the Club has only one court).

8.5 Intra-Club Matches

- 8.5.1 Clubs with two or more teams in the same Winter Division must play their intra-club matches within the first four fixtures of each team. The penalty for failing to do this will be no points to either team for each such match played after the first four fixtures.

8.6 Changing Fixture Dates

- 8.6.1 Fixtures may be postponed or re-arranged only by mutual agreement. There is no obligation to agree to a change of date, and teams should do so only if it is not to their disadvantage.
- 8.6.2 A request to rearrange must be made no later than the Friday before the match or the points will be forfeit.
- 8.6.3 Agreement or otherwise must be given by the other team secretary within twenty-four hours of the request.
- 8.6.4 The team instigating the change must immediately confirm the cancellation and the new fixture date to both the relevant League Secretary and the other team secretary. Failure on either count will incur a fine of £5.
- 8.6.5 Winter fixtures due to be played after March 31 may be re-arranged only with the agreement of the relevant League Secretary and must be completed by 10 April or such later date as specified by him.

8.7 Cancelling a Fixture

- 8.7.1 A team cancelling a match within 48 hours will forfeit the points, refund any out-of-pocket court fees to the opposition, and be liable to a fine of up to £50 at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 8.7.2 A team cancelling, or failing to appear, on the day of the match will refund all out-of-pocket expenses of the opposition (i.e. court fees and/or food at a home match, or travel expenses away), and will be liable to a fine of up to £50 at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 8.7.3 Any expenses reimbursable under 8.7.1 and 8.7.2 must be paid within fourteen days of the request or the offending team will be suspended until such time as the payment is made. If such a suspension occurs, all points will be lost whilst it is in force, and no rearrangements of fixtures will be allowed under any circumstances.

8.8 Walkovers

- 8.8.1 A team giving a walkover must notify the relevant League Secretary, and the team receiving the walkover must submit a result card listing the players who would have played or a late card fine will be imposed.
- 8.8.2 When a team gives a walkover, a contribution to expenses may be payable to the opposition.
- 8.8.3 If the defaulting team has already played the away fixture, the contribution will be £50 (£30 for three a side teams) and will be payable in accordance with Rule 8.7.3.
- 8.8.4 If the defaulting team has yet to play the away fixture, the cost thereof will be shared equally by both teams, the visitors paying their share on the night. Failure to do so may result in immediate suspension.

8.9 Unplayed Matches

- 8.9.1 No matches can be mutually agreed to remain unplayed. Any match which remains unplayed at the end of the season, e.g. as a result of a failed re-arrangement, will be deemed to have been conceded by the team originally asking for postponement.

8.10 Double Headers

- 8.10.1 All matches must be played, re-arranged or conceded. No "double headers" (i.e. where the score from of one fixture is deemed to be the result for both the home and away matches) will be allowed.

9. CONFIRMING MATCHES

- 9.1 Each match should be confirmed by telephone no less than three days beforehand. It is the responsibility of the home team to ensure that the visiting team is coming.

10. MATCHES – ON THE NIGHT

10.1 Playing Order

- 10.1.1 Teams must play in the correct order of strength.
- 10.1.2 Players may not change places by more than one position relative to each other in any two consecutive fixtures in which the two players concerned are involved. Should they do so, the higher player will be considered ineligible for that match for the purposes of this Rule.
- 10.1.3 If an 'unfit' player plays, he will be deemed fit enough to play and must, subject to the prior approval of the relevant League Secretary, play in his correct position.
- 10.1.4 Teams must exchange their lists of players in playing order before the match commences. A team not so doing may have the fixture awarded against it.

10.2 Arrival of Players

- 10.2.1 Unless previously agreed by the teams, three players from each team must arrive within fifteen minutes of the advertised start time and the other two players must arrive within thirty minutes of the advertised start time. For teams of three players, these numbers will be two and one respectively.
- 10.2.2 All players must be present by the end of the third match.
- 10.2.3 Failure to comply will result in the loss of the match(es) of the player(s) concerned, and all below.

10.3 Incomplete Teams

- 10.3.1 Any team knowingly having only four players will be deemed to be without its No. 5 string.
- 10.3.2 Should a player fail to arrive, that string and all below will be conceded.
- 10.3.3 Any team which, without reasonable prior warning, turns out with less than a full team will be liable to a fine of £5 per player short.
- 10.3.4 Teams will not be fined for being short a player or players provided they have given their opponents sufficient warning to avoid a wasted journey. Details of such warnings must be noted on the results cards by both teams. Failure to do so may incur a £5 fine.
- 10.3.5 Teams which repeatedly turn out with less than a full team will be fined £5 for the third and subsequent offences.
- 10.3.6 Where a team is one player short on the night, an ineligible player may be brought in at No. 5 (No. 3 in a team of 3 players) provided that the League Secretary is advised in advance, the opposing team's captain is advised before the match starts and both teams record the ineligibility in their comments on the Results Card or the electronic advice of the match result. The rubber played by the ineligible player must be awarded 3-0 to the other player. *(New Rule added June 2009)*

10.4 Claiming a Walkover

- 10.4.1 Any team wishing to claim a walkover on the night must attempt to contact the relevant League Secretary before claiming the points.

10.5 Courts

- 10.5.1 It is the responsibility of the home team to book enough court time.
- 10.5.2 A change of court for matches in progress may take place only if both players agree.
- 10.5.3 If the courts are wet, either captain may, up until completion of the first game on either court, elect to postpone the fixture. After completion of the first game(s), there can be a postponement only if both captains agree, in which case the entire fixture will be replayed. If they do not agree, the match will continue.

10.6 Result Cards

- 10.6.1 Both teams must advise details of the match result to the relevant League Secretary, either by post on a result card or electronically, within three days. Failure to do so will incur a fine of £5 which for third and subsequent offences will rise to £10.

- 10.6.2 A result card must also be submitted for a walkover claimed under Rules 8.8.1 or 10.4.1.
- 10.6.3 Result cards sent to the wrong address will be automatically considered late.

10.7 Points

- 10.7.1 Teams in the Winter Men's and Women's Leagues will be awarded one point per game won, with the winning team receiving a bonus of five points, i.e. a maximum of twenty points per fixture.
- 10.7.2 Teams of five players playing in all the other leagues (summer and winter) will be awarded two points for an overall win, and one point for each match won, i.e. seven points are available per fixture. Where both teams are without their No. 5 string and the score is 2-2, two points per team will be awarded.
- 10.7.3 Teams of three players will be awarded one point for an overall win, and one point for each match won, i.e. four points are available per fixture.

10.8 After Match Supper

- 10.8.1 The host team will provide a meal and drinks at no cost to the visiting team.
- 10.8.2 As a courtesy, visiting teams should advise the host team at least twenty-four hours in advance if they have any dietary requirements or if any player cannot stay for the meal.
- 10.8.3 Failing such advice, the visiting team must pay the cost of each unwanted meal. Payment should be made on the night, or within five days of the fixture, and failure to do so will incur an additional £10 fine from the League.

10.9 Match Scoring System

- 10.9.1 At the relevant AGM prior to the beginning of a season a PAR (point-a-rally) system may be agreed either permanently or for the forthcoming season only for all or some divisions in the section of the League concerned. *(New Rule added June 2009)*

11. DETERMINING DIVISIONAL WINNERS

- 11.1 In each division the team with the most points at the end of the season will be the winner.
- 11.2 If two teams are level on points, the team with the higher number of wins will take precedence.
- 11.3 If the teams are level on wins, the aggregate match results between them will decide.
- 11.4 If the aggregate match results of the teams are the same, all the individual games of those matches will count, both for and against.
- 11.5 If still level, the difference between all individual games for the season, both for and against, will count.
- 11.6 If more than two teams finish level, and they cannot be separated by the above procedure, the aggregate match/game scores of those teams will be considered, as set out above.

12. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

12.1 Promotion

- 12.1.1 At the end of the season, the top two teams in each Division will be promoted.
- 12.1.2 Teams may not refuse promotion, except in exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the relevant League Secretary.

12.2 Relegation

- 12.2.1 At the end of the season, the bottom two teams in each Division will be relegated.

12.3 Divisional Restructuring

- 12.3.1 Notwithstanding the promotion and relegation criteria, the Divisions may be restructured by the relevant League Secretary. Approval for the restructured Winter Divisions must be sought at the relevant AGM.

13. WITHDRAWING FROM THE LEAGUE

- 13.1 A team may, without penalty, withdraw from the League for the following season provided it advises the relevant League Secretary of its intention in writing no later than ten days after the AGM.
- 13.2 Any team which fails to complete its fixtures, or which withdraws later than ten days after the AGM, will be liable to a fine of £50 at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 13.3 All points scored for or against a team which withdraws will be cancelled.

14. FINES AND PENALTIES

14.1 Fines

- 14.1.1 Any team not paying a fine within one calendar month of the date of issue will be penalized ten league points.
- 14.1.2 All fines outstanding at the end of a season must be paid before any team from that club will be admitted to the League for the following season.

14.2 Penalties

- 14.2.1 Points penalties will be applied as stated.

14.3 Suspension/Expulsion

- 14.3.1 The Committee will have the power to suspend or expel any individual, team or club when, in its opinion, it would not be in the interest of the League for that individual, team or club to remain a member.

15. APPEALS

15.1 League Appeals

- 15.1.1 Appeals against decisions by League Secretaries must be submitted in writing to the Committee.
- 15.1.2 Appeals against decisions by the Committee must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of the Middlesex Squash Rackets Association

15.2 MSRA Appeals

- 15.2.1 Non-urgent appeals will be heard by the full MSRA Committee at its next scheduled meeting. Urgent appeals will be heard by a special appeals sub-committee, convened by the MSRA Chairman and consisting of at least three other members of the MSRA Committee.
- 15.2.2 The appellant and up to two witnesses will be invited to attend the appeal hearing, along with two representatives of the League.
- 15.2.3 Those hearing the appeal may confirm, set aside, reduce or increase any penalties previously imposed, and have the power to suspend a player or official.
- 15.2.4 The MSRA Committee will not look kindly on frivolous appeals, particularly where a Rule has been clearly broken and the stated fine applied.
- 15.2.5 The result of the appeal will be communicated to the appellant, to the League and, where a disciplinary penalty arises, to England Squash.

16. TROPHIES

- 16.1 The League's trophies and mementos will normally be presented to the winning teams and runners-up at their AGM, but this may be varied at the discretion of the Committee.
- 16.2 If a team fails to collect its award, without prior notice to the Committee, the award will be forfeit and the fine for absence will be doubled (Rule 3.6).
- 16.3 All Divisional trophies must be returned to the relevant League Secretary within twenty-eight days of the end of the following season. Reminders will be issued to holders, and failure to comply will incur a fine of £15.
- 16.4 The Committee may, at its discretion, not allow trophies to be taken away after presentation.

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