

Gloucestershire Squash Association

County League Rules

1. League Purpose

The purpose of the league is to facilitate regular, competitive team squash among the squash clubs in Gloucestershire. This will enable development of the game and players in the county. Whilst it is an amateur league, and intended to have a social element and be enjoyable for all players, the top ranked players in the league will be eligible for selection to the representative county teams each season.

2. Eligibility & Registration to Play

1. All clubs which play at facilities within the County boundary of Gloucestershire shall be eligible to play in the Leagues.
2. All Clubs wishing to enter team into the leagues shall be affiliated to the Gloucestershire Squash Association (GSA).
3. Club which operate at facilities outside Gloucestershire will be able to field teams in the leagues at the discretion of the Management Committee of the GSA.
4. All players must be members of the clubs they represent.
5. All league players must become members of England Squash and must have a valid and current ES membership number entered into the league database **before playing their 3rd match** in the league. This may be administered via their club affiliation to ES or via individual membership.
6. Each player's ES membership number must be entered on the website by their respective team captain or club administrator where it will be verified automatically. Club administrators can see this information for all club players.
7. League fees for each team entering the league will be set annually by the GSA Management committee. Club must pay the appropriate league fees for all their team by the given deadline date following a club's entry request. Any club which fails to pay the appropriate fee may have their respective team(s) withdrawn from the current league.

3. League Format

1. The league will be setup into individual divisions of teams based on the size of the entry in any given season
2. Teams will consist of 5 players who are expected to play in ranked order from 1 to 5.
3. Matches will be played over 5 rubbers on a best of 5 system, the winner of each rubber being the player who first wins 3 games.
4. Teams will accrue 1 point for each game a player wins in the rubber they play.
5. The match will be won by the team which wins at least 3 rubbers. Five (5) points shall be awarded to the winning team of each match.
6. Each team will play each other team home and away during the regular season.
7. The Home team must provide hot food refreshment and drinks for the visiting team after matches during the Autumn and Spring league. This is not required for the Summer league but a social drink afterwards is always welcome!
8. There will be promotion and relegation at the end of each season for the team finishing at the top and bottom of each division respectively. Where divisions have a

large number of teams, this may extend to the top 2 and bottom 2 teams in order to allow progression of improving teams to higher levels in the league more quickly.

4. Match Rules

1. Matches are to be played in accordance with the "Rules of Squash", as defined and published by England Squash. At the time of writing, their website provides a summary, as well as the complete rules. Note that the rules restrict the length of any warm-up.
2. If the Rules of Squash contradict the league rules as set out in this document in any way, the league rules take precedence.
3. It is the responsibility of the Home team to arrange the referees / markers for the match and record the results for the matches.
4. The warm-up must be fair allowing both players adequate opportunity to warm up and acclimatise to the court. If unfair warm-up practices are observed by one or both players the marker may intervene to ensure both players have a fair warm up.
5. All matches in all leagues will play point-a-rally scoring. The premier divisions will play games to 11 and the teams in the numbered divisions will play to 15. Winner must win by two clear points in both cases.
6. If there are exceptional circumstances, such as a team is running out of court time and the courts are hot then the team captains from a numbered division may agree to play PAR to 11 to reduce the likely match time. This should be agreed before the start of the match.
7. Matches should ordinarily be played with WSF approved double yellow dot balls.
8. If conditions dictate (ie it is particularly cold) and both captains agree, single yellow dot or faster balls may be used on a match by match basis.
9. Teams should arrive and be ready to commence play within 10mins of the published start time. Thereafter, play should be continuous with players for the next rubber ready to go on court within the maximum of 10 minutes of the earlier tie being completed.
10. Failure to do so may lead to the opposing team claiming the first game of the next tie to be played. The League Secretary has the discretion on this issue and may either issue warning, sanction a game penalty, or issue penalty points to repeat offenders.
11. If a player is injured during the match and retires before the match is completed then the result should be entered at the point the match stopped and the injury icon used to indicate the injury. The system will calculate the team points as if the non-injured player went on to win the match but will exclude the result from the rankings.
12. If a player is injured during the match but chooses to play on to the end, then this is **not considered** an injury situation. The injured player **accepted the injury** and decided to carry on. In this case the match result is entered normally and the result **is** included in the rankings.
13. Any team without a full complement of players will be deemed to be without the lowest ranked player(s).

5. Team Ordering and Player Restrictions

1. The league philosophy is that team captains must place players in order of merit i.e. the strongest player at number one and the weakest at number five based on the current rankings available via the GSA website.

2. Teams may play out of order. If a lower ranked player is elevated in the order this shall be allowed as long as the players playing below them in the order for that match are ranked no more than 20% higher based on a simple ratio of current ranking points (ie Player A ranking / Player B ranking < 1.2). This recognises that week to week results can cause significant ranking variations which effect notional playing order and do not always reflect current player standards.
3. Players with provisional rankings based on less than 5 matches across any division in the league shall not be bound by this rule and can be played anywhere in the team order until such time as they have played a total of 5 matches.
4. For the last 2 matches in each league season, teams may not introduce any new players to the team who have a ranking above the average ranking for the team during the season. Where a team fields a new player without a ranking in such a match, the provisional ranking awarded by the squash level ranking system from the match result of that player will be used in the application of this rule. Team captains are responsible for ensuring their teams are in compliance with the ranking requirements.
5. Where a club has two (2) or more teams playing in the same division, players cannot switch between team and must select, and play for, only one of those teams during the season when they are in the same division. Switching between teams in the same division during the season is not allowed. In special circumstances, for example due to injury, permanent swaps may be allowed at the discretion of the league secretary.
6. Subject to point five (5) above, clubs with multiple teams playing in several divisions may move players between teams each week in order to field the highest standard of teams possible for the club. For example, it is acceptable for a club with an A team squad of 8 players to utilise 3 of those players in the B team when all are available to play in a given week.
7. There will be no limit on the number of matches an individual player can represent different club teams.
8. No more than 3 players who have played in a higher division that season may play for a lower team in the same fixture if those players have played 4 or more games in the higher division.
9. Subject to compliance with the other rules of this Section 5, players are allowed to play in multiple league matches for more than 1 team each week if they so wish.
10. Where teams are uncertain of the application of any of these rules, the team Captain may apply to the league secretary for a discretionary ruling at least five (5) days in advance of the match. In making any ruling the league secretary will confirm a decision to both team captains at least 48hrs before the match.

6. Match and Division Results

1. Match scores must be entered on the website (or, in an emergency only, notified to the League Secretary) within five days of the match date. Failure to do so will incur a 5 point penalty against the Home team.
2. All player names must be entered in full with no unknown players listed. It is the responsibility of both captains to ensure that the correct player name(s) are entered for both teams. Failure to do so will incur a 3-point penalty against the Home team. The Away team will also incur a 3-point penalty if the unknown player is one of theirs.

3. The away captain should make sure the home captain has the full player names of their team by the end of the evening.
4. Positions of teams within each division will be calculated on the following basis in the order of precedence set out below:
 - (1) Number of league points
 - (2) Number of league matches won
 - (3) Games points difference (Number of individual games won less number of individual games lost by the team)
 - (4) Head-to-Head match results between teams still tied
 - (5) Play-off between tied teams

7. Team and Player Conduct

1. All teams should arrive with a full complement and be ready to commence play at the time published for match start by the home team. This includes the home team having sufficient people present to provide referees and markers
2. Team and players are required to conduct themselves with due respect for the league, their club the other players and the markers.
3. Foul language, abuse or physically threatening behaviour by players or spectators is not acceptable in any circumstances.
4. Markers have discretion to warn player about their conduct and if necessary, award penalty points and games for occurrences of unacceptable behaviour.
5. Where occurrences of unacceptable behaviour are brought to the attention of the League Secretary, the GSA Committee shall have the discretion to take further disciplinary action as necessary to uphold the reputation of the GSA and the League.
6. Clubs shall be entitled to field players who are under 16 years of age.
7. It shall be the respective team captain's responsibility to ensure that all necessary safeguarding measures are in place and applied when team field juniors for any match.
8. Captains should be cognisant of the ES ruling that player under the age of 19 years are required to wear eye protection when playing in competitions.

8. Penalty Points

1. A Player who plays **three or more** league matches in the GSA without a valid ES membership number in the system, will incur a team penalty of two (2) points for each occurrence.
2. Teams who field a playing order in breach of the rules defined in section 5 above shall be subject to team penalty of three (3) points for each occurrence.
3. Fielding a player who breaches the rules of qualification for that team will result in a team penalty of four(4) points per occurrence.
4. Results not entered within 5 days of the match by the home team will incur a team penalty of five (5) points for the home team for each occurrence
5. The league secretary shall have discretion to rescind penalty points where circumstances justify this based on presentation from the team captain of the case for removal.

9. League Administration and Match Scheduling

1. The league secretary will provide the schedule of matches for each division prior to commencement of the season.
2. The default nights for scheduling of league division to play will be:
Premier division Tuesday evenings
Division 1 Wednesday evenings
Division 2 / 3 Thursday evenings
Where team have constraints on the nights they can play home games the league organiser will endeavour to accommodate schedule changes to allow for this. Teams will then be expected to play their away matches on the night set by the home team.
3. Where teams have constraints on nights they can play it is the team captains' responsibility to inform the league secretary of such constraint. The league secretary will then endeavour to schedule the matches in line with these constraints.
4. Club administrators shall be responsible for ensuring that up to date information is maintained on the league website for all their teams. This shall include team Captains name and contact details, club address match night and start times.
5. The home team is responsible for providing sufficient court time (40 minutes per tie) for the match to be completed.
6. If time runs out because the visiting team was late then the uncompleted tie(s) will be awarded to the home team.
7. If the match started on time, the uncompleted tie(s) will be awarded to the away team.
8. Rearrangement of matches is discouraged but it is recognised that there are circumstances in which it is unavoidable.
9. Where rearrangement is necessary, it is the responsibility of the requesting team to find a suitable alternative date.
10. Valid reasons for rearrangement shall include, bad weather such that it is dangerous to travel (e.g. snow), court closure and pandemic health rules.
11. Teams should ensure adequate notice of postponement is given the opposing side in order that home teams do not incur unnecessary costs and away teams unnecessary travel.
12. In most cases this will be at least 24hrs before the match but in emergencies, no later than 5pm on the day of the match.
13. Failure to give fair notice by the postponing team shall result entitle the non-postponing team be able to claim a walkover.
14. The rescheduled date must be no later than one week after the end of the season (based on the original fixture list).
15. If a date mutually agreeable to both team captains cannot be found then the requesting team will forfeit the match as a walkover.
16. When a date is agreed for rescheduling a match, the home captain shall be responsible for advising the league secretary of the date change. The League secretary will then update the official fixture list on the league website
17. In the event of a team not fulfilling a fixture during the Autumn or Spring season, 15 points will be awarded to the other team (and no bonus points).
18. Should a team be unable to put out at least three players for either of the last two fixtures of the season, that team will be penalised 5 points for each occurrence.

19. Any new team entering the mixed league will be placed at the lowest division, or in a more appropriate division if they can demonstrate to the league secretary that it is justified based on evidence such as ranking levels. They may still end up one division down so that they can 'prove themselves' over one league but we also don't want teams playing out of position as that just leads to a set of one-sided matches.
20. Each team will play all the other teams in the division both home and away.
21. The league secretary will have final discretion over which teams should play in which division but will provide justification if that means not applying the rules above.

10. Conflict Resolution

1. Any complaint or dispute about the application of these rules to matches shall be referred to the league secretary by email within 7 days of the dispute occurring.
2. If a dispute or situation occurs that is not covered by the rules, the league secretary will have discretion to decide on the matter subject to a right of appeal as outlined in point 3 below.
3. In all situations relating to the application of the rules, the league secretary shall give a decision within 14days, subject to a right of appeal to the GSA Management Committee within 14 days. The Committee will then review the decision within 14days and provide a final determination. No further appeals will be considered.

11. Summer League Rule Variations

1. Fixtures will consist of 3 singles, and 2 doubles matches.
2. Players must be ES registered as for the winter league with singles players and doubles pairings playing in merit order.
3. A full team consists of 7 players.
4. Where a team is unable to field 7 players, a player or players may play twice. This must be achieved by playing once in singles and once in doubles.
5. Any player who plays twice must forfeit one of the matches in which they play, the captain must confirm which match or matches will be forfeited before play commences. (Note a team of 5, would be entitled to forfeit a single doubles match rather than 2 singles matches if one pairing both also play singles.)
6. Results of forfeited matches will be entered as 3-0.
7. Teams play each other once, and the fixtures shall be organised so teams will alternate between a home and away fixture on successive weeks where possible.
8. The league is held over the summer months of June, July and August, dependent on the number of teams which enter.
9. All fixture costs including courts, balls lights and refreshments are shared equally between the teams. Captains should contact each other before the fixture to agree food and drink arrangements, and confirm the court and ball costs.
10. All other league rules are unchanged.