

## For the attention of all Club Secretaries and Staffordshire Inter-Club Tennis League team captains

First of all, the League committee hopes that everyone is keeping safe and well, and that we are all about to hit the courts as tennis returns to our lives once more.

Thank you to those of you who acted promptly to respond to the request for interest in submitting teams for the 2021 season. Regrettably, some clubs (Tipton Sports Academy, Stourbridge and Reedswood) felt the practicalities of participating in 2021 were too difficult and have decided to withdraw from the 2021 season. Hopefully, we will be able to welcome them back next year.

In addition, there have also been a significant number of team withdrawals and additions. With fixtures meetings being out of the question, the structure for the 2021 season is based upon keeping participating teams in the same divisions to which they were allocated for 2020, thus minimising the number of fixtures to be arranged.

As you will appreciate, 2021 plans may be subject to change according to national guidelines so, with that in mind, the league committee has decided to adopt the following key changes for 2021 ONLY:

### **DATES**

- The season will start on **Monday 17 May**. An earlier start could have been made but, with indoor venues unable to participate until that date, it was felt that every club should be treated fairly.
- The season will be extended with the last date for completion of all fixtures being **Sunday 17 October**. All match cards must be received by **Sunday 31 October**.
- Without the ability to hold fixtures meetings, 2020 fixtures have been brought forward to 2021 using the same date but minus one day. As an example, a fixture previously scheduled for Tuesday 12 May 2020 is now scheduled for Tuesday 11 May 2021.
- Because of the delayed start, matches previously scheduled for dates prior to 17 May 2020 must be re-scheduled by clubs themselves with relevant dates being advised to [the relevant divisional secretary](#) of the League by **Sunday 2 May**.
- Matches against new teams must also be scheduled by clubs themselves with relevant dates being advised to [the relevant divisional secretary](#) of the League by **Sunday 2 May**.
- Matches between two teams from the same club must be played before any matches against teams from other clubs are commenced. To avoid fixture congestion after 17 May, such intra-club matches may be scheduled to be played before 17 May (subject to national restrictions). Such dates must be communicated to [the relevant divisional secretary](#) of the League by **Sunday 2 May**.
- Any 2021 fixture can be re-scheduled before the season starts in accordance with rule 7.5(a). The deadline for making any such changes is **Sunday 2 May**.

**RULE 7.5 (a)** - "... The Home team must offer **THREE** alternative dates when the rearranged match might be played. Failure on the part of the Home team to give **THREE** alternative dates or failure on the part of the Away team to accept at least **ONE** of them will automatically mean that all rubbers will be forfeited by the offending team..."

- All 2021 fixtures have now been uploaded to the fixtures page of the League's website.

- With the uncertainty of Covid lying ahead of us, the League committee will aim to be flexible in accommodating any request from clubs where one or more players are incapacitated and seek to avoid risk to others. Circumstances will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

## **MATCHES**

- Because of the delayed season start and the possibility that more national disruption could lie ahead, the number of matches to be played in each division will vary:
  - For those divisions with eight or more teams they will meet each other only once. This affects four divisions:
    - Men's Div. 3 North (9 teams) – 8 matches to be played by each team (4 home, 4 away)
    - Men's Div. 3 South (8 teams) – 7 matches to be played by each team (4 teams playing 4 home + 3 away with the remaining 4 teams playing 3 home + 4 away )
    - Men's Div. 6 South (8 teams) – 7 matches to be played by each team (4 teams playing 4 home + 3 away with the remaining 4 teams playing 3 home + 4 away )
    - Men's Div. 7 South (11 teams) – 10 matches to be played by each team (5 home, 5 away)
    - The League committee has designated which are the home/away teams for these matches and which matches are to be “voided”. However, venues may be switched by mutual agreement of the teams concerned (provided this is communicated to [the relevant divisional secretary](#) of the League ahead of the fixture being played).
  - Those divisions with seven teams or less will meet each other twice (i.e. as normal).
  - Ladies' Div. 2 South (4 teams) - 12 matches to be played by each team (6 home, 6 away). Teams will meet each other four times (twice at home and twice away).
- The withdrawal of Tipton Sports Academy (and Walsall 's reliance upon their facilities) means that Walsall will be dependent upon the generosity of their opposing teams to host both their home and away fixtures.

## **PROMOTION/RELEGATION**

- There will be no promotion or relegation in 2021.
- Instead, cash prizes of £100 will be offered to the winners of each division.
- Clubs who have decided to withdraw one or more teams in 2021 will be allowed to reinstate any such teams in 2022 in the same divisions from which they were withdrawn. However, for 2021 and to aid clarity, teams will be named in consecutive order. For example, if a club has withdrawn its B team, it's remaining teams will now be identified as A, B, C rather than A, C, D.

## **WHAT DOES YOUR CLUB NEED TO DO?**

1. Before arranging fixtures, and as a matter of priority, it is important that opposing team captains have accurate contact information. Therefore, please advise the League

([admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk](mailto:admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk)) by **Tuesday 6 April** of any changes in club secretary, team captains and both their telephone number(s) and email details. Please check the [Clubs page of the League's website](#) to see what information is currently listed for your club.

2. View your club's team fixtures on the website. Confirmed dates for matches currently listed as scheduled or re-arranged must be advised to [the relevant divisional secretary](#), **by the HOME team**, by **Sunday 2 May**. To assist processing, please submit one email per team. Failure to confirm any fixture date will result in rule 7.5 (a) of the League's rules being employed, i.e.

***RULE 7.5 (a)** - "... The Home team must offer THREE alternative dates when the rearranged match might be played. Failure on the part of the Home team to give THREE alternative dates or failure on the part of the Away team to accept at least ONE of them will automatically mean that all rubbers will be forfeited by the offending team..."*

3. Registered Players – please email the League ([admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk](mailto:admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk)) by **6pm, Friday 14 May**, with any additions/deletions to your Club's previous (2020) list of players as detailed on the [Registered Players page of the League's website](#). Please DO NOT re-submit the entire list.
4. Nominated Players – please email the League ([admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk](mailto:admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk)) by **6pm, Friday 14 May**, with the names of those you wish to nominate for each team (where relevant).
5. Match cards – Clubs should use the blank match cards previously issued at the 2020 fixtures meetings. No new cards will be issued except to the captains of new teams (postal address information will be required). A separate email on the submission of match results will follow in due course.
6. Entry Fees – Fees previously paid for entry to the 2020 season will, of course, be carried over into 2021. Clubs entering new teams should make contact with the League's treasurer, David Haycox, via email ([djhaycox@gmail.com](mailto:djhaycox@gmail.com)) to make arrangements to pay the necessary fees via online bank transfer. Payments should be completed by **6pm, Friday 14 May**. A separate email on the required entry fees will be sent to the relevant clubs in due course.

**SUMMARY OF DEADLINES:**

Tuesday 6 April	Clubs to advise the League ( <a href="mailto:admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk">admin@staffstennisleague.co.uk</a> ) of any changes in secretary, men's/ladies captains and team captains. Mobile phone numbers and valid email addresses required.
Sunday 2 May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Last date for confirming currently unscheduled matches with opposing teams and advising <a href="#">the relevant divisional secretary</a>.</li><li>2. Last date for re-arranging previously scheduled fixtures and advising <a href="#">the relevant divisional secretary</a>.</li><li>3. Last date for confirming matches between teams of the same club and advising <a href="#">the relevant divisional secretary</a>.</li></ol>
6pm Friday 14 May	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Last date for receipt of amendment/addition/deletion of 2021 registered players.</li><li>5. Last date for receipt of nominated players.</li><li>6. Last date for receipt of outstanding team entry fees (where applicable - separate email to follow in due course).</li></ol>
Monday 17 May	Season starts.
Sunday 17 October	Last date for completion of fixtures
Sunday 31 October	Last date for receipt of match cards

Finally, please make every effort to act promptly with the requirements of this email. We are, of course, in exceptional times and need to help each other to find the easiest path forward.

Regards,

**The Committee**

[www.staffstennisleague.co.uk](http://www.staffstennisleague.co.uk)