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# NORTHUMBRIA SQUASH RACKETS ASSOCIATION

## LEAGUE RULES

### 1. Scope of the Rules

- 1.1 These Rules apply to the Northumbria Squash Rackets Association ("Northumbria Squash") Leagues ("the Leagues") consisting of the Men's and Ladies' Winter Leagues (collectively "the Winter Leagues", and individually "the Men's League" and "the Ladies' League" respectively), their related Cup Competitions and the Summer League, except where differences are noted below.

### 2. Qualification and Structure

- 2.1 The Leagues are open to teams from clubs who have paid league fees to Northumbria Squash and who are also affiliated to England Squash, the National Governing Body for squash. Failure to pay the relevant fees may result in expulsion from the Leagues.
- 2.2 A club wishing to enter a new team into the Winter Leagues must make an application in writing (usually by e-mail) to the League Secretary ("LS") by 30<sup>th</sup> June for the season commencing in September. New teams will normally be placed in the bottom division unless otherwise agreed by the Northumbria Squash committee. Clubs will be invited to enter teams into the Summer League during May for the season commencing in June, and these will be positioned at the discretion of the LS.
- 2.3 The Winter Leagues will be made up of a straight ladder of divisions. The Men's League will consist of six divisions each normally containing nine or ten teams. Numbers below the Premier Division may be adjusted where necessary to provide a balanced league. The Ladies' League will consist of a single division of up to ten teams in the first half, followed by two divisions of five and up to five teams respectively in the second half. The Summer League will consist of parallel divisions of up to 13 teams, depending on entries.

- 2.4 The three Cup Competitions related to the Men's League consist of the Men's Northumbria Cup for the top four Premier Division teams, Men's League Cup A for each club's highest-placed team in Divisions 1 to 3, and Men's League Cup B for each club's highest-placed team in Division 4 and below. The two Cup Competitions related to the Ladies' League consist of the Ladies' Northumbria Cup for the top four Division 1 teams and the Ladies' League Cup for the remaining Ladies' League teams. All Cup Competitions are straight knockout tournaments.
- 2.5 Teams in the Winter Leagues and Cup Competitions will consist of five players. Teams in the Summer League will consist of four players.

### **3. Fixtures**

- 3.1 Each team in the Men's League divisions will play every other in its division twice – once at home and once away. Each team in the Ladies' League will play each other once, either at home or away, in the first half and twice – once at home and once away – in the second half. Each team in the Summer League divisions will play each other once, either at home or away. "Double-headers" will not be allowed for League fixtures.
- 3.2 The Winter League season will normally extend from late September to early April taking account of Christmas and Easter breaks. The first full round of fixtures will be played by 31<sup>st</sup> December. The Summer League season will normally run from early June to late August with playoffs in early September.
- 3.3 The LS will publish a fixture list on the League website [northumbriasquash.leaguemaster.co.uk](http://northumbriasquash.leaguemaster.co.uk) normally by mid-August for the Winter Leagues and by mid-May for the Summer League. Clubs should contact the LS as soon as possible before these dates to notify any particular fixture requests and any changes in team numbers, match days and times, venues etc. Any subsequently requested changes to the published fixtures should be mutually agreed between opposing team captains, for the Winter Leagues by the deadlines of the end of September in respect of first half fixtures and the end of January in respect of second half fixtures, and for the Summer League before each team's first fixture is played, and immediately notified to the LS for amendment on the League website. Team captains are expected to act reasonably in reaching agreement on such requested fixture changes, and failure to agree should be notified to the LS for decision by the Northumbria Squash committee.
- 3.4 No fixture re-arrangements will be allowed in the Summer League once each team has played its first fixture, or in the Winter Leagues from 1<sup>st</sup> October in respect of first half fixtures, and from 1<sup>st</sup> February in respect of second half fixtures, other than in exceptional circumstances notified to the LS and agreed by the Northumbria Squash committee, and any team unable to play on a published date must concede the fixture.

- 3.5 The revised date of any fixture allowed to be re-arranged under Rule 3.4 due to exceptional circumstances should be mutually agreed between opposing team captains and immediately notified to the LS. For the Winter Leagues, the revised date should normally be in the same half of the season as the original date, and for the Summer League the revised date should be within 14 days of the original date, and in all cases no later than the final date for League fixtures published on the League website.
- 3.6 Should a team fail to arrive for a fixture on the arranged date or concede at less than 7 days' notice, the opposing team may claim out of pocket expenses against the conceding team such as court fees and food for home teams and travelling expenses for away teams. When a team fails to complete a home fixture during a season, the opposing team may claim 50% of expenses in lieu of the return fixture not being played. All such claims must be copied in writing to the LS.
- 3.7 All Men's League Premier Division fixtures will be played on Thursdays.
- 3.8 Where a club has two or more teams in the same Winter League division those teams shall play one fixture against each other before 31<sup>st</sup> October and the second fixture before 31<sup>st</sup> January, unless agreed otherwise with LS approval.
- 3.9 Where two teams from the same League division are drawn together in a related Cup competition, they may by mutual agreement of the opposing team captains and subject to LS approval play a forthcoming League fixture as a League and Cup "double-header".

#### **4. Player Registration and Nominations**

- 4.1 Ladies may play for teams in the Men's League, but men may not play for teams in the Ladies' League.
- 4.2 All players must be registered members of the club they represent and also be members of England Squash before playing in any match. Clubs are also required to appoint administrators to facilitate the posting of results and the registering and nomination of players on the League website.
- 4.3 A player may not concurrently represent more than one club in any one League season. This does not apply to ladies playing for one club in the Ladies' League and another club in the Men's League. On appeal to the LS by 1<sup>st</sup> January in each season, and subject to Northumbria Squash committee approval, a player may be allowed to transfer their representation in the Winter Leagues from one club to another, such transfer to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January in that season.
- 4.4 Each club must place on the League website, before the start of the relevant League Season, a team-by-team list of nominated players in their strict order of merit. Clubs must nominate a minimum of five players for each team in the Winter Leagues, and a minimum of four

players for each team in the Summer League. Winter League nominations apply for related Cup Competitions.

- 4.5 The LS reserves the right to scrutinise clubs' nominations and request authentication of the playing order by reference to published ranking lists, club leagues, ladders or challenge match results if not satisfied.
- 4.6 Clubs may re-nominate their team ranking orders for the second half of the Winter League Season on the League website during the interval between the first and second halves. In the absence of such re-nominations by each team's first match in the second half the existing nominated order will apply, except that players in the Men's League who have been nominated in a top-five position for their team but who have failed to play at least three matches for their club in the first half will be removed from the ranking order as at 1<sup>st</sup> January and may only be re-nominated in a top-five position if there are mitigating circumstances (eg. injury) notified to the LS and accepted by the Northumbria Squash committee.
- 4.7 The five highest-nominated players at any time in each club in the Men's League must play at least three League matches in each half, unless there are mitigating circumstances (eg. injury) notified to the LS and accepted by the Northumbria Squash committee. Failure to meet this requirement will lead to a 5-point deduction per defaulting player per default being applied to the club's first team at the end of each half.
- 4.8 New players may be introduced into the nominations, or existing nominations may be amended, at the discretion of the LS. Such approval must be confirmed prior to playing a match. In the Winter Leagues, a club may not introduce a new player into a top-five position in any team's nominations when the team benefitting from such nomination has less than half of its second half matches to play. Rule 4.7 will apply where such players are amongst the five highest-nominated in their club. In the Summer League, a club may not introduce a new player into a top-four position in any team's nominations when the team benefitting from such nomination has less than one-third of its matches to play.
- 4.9 A club with two or more teams in the top division of its Winter League may optionally nominate players for those teams in such a way that the teams are of broadly equal strength, based on the club ranking order. Such teams will be designated A, B, etc. accordingly. Once nominated to a particular team in this way, a player may not play for any other team during that half of the season.
- 4.10 In the Summer League, teams from the same club are deemed to be independent of each other and therefore players may play only for the team to which they have been nominated.

## **5. Playing Order Within Clubs**

- 5.1 A nominated player may not play below their nominated position, but may play above it due to the absence of higher-ranked players.

- 5.2 If a player nominated for a lower team plays in a Winter League match for any higher team on more than three occasions during any half, that player becomes tied to the higher team most played-for and ineligible to play for any lower team in League matches, including end-of-season divisional playoffs, for the rest of that half only (but may still play for the nominated lower team in Cup matches). Becoming tied does not affect the nominated order, which must be adhered to. Playing for a higher team in Cup matches does not count for the purposes of this Rule.
- 5.3 In order to be eligible to play in Cup semi-final and/or final matches, including the Summer League play-offs, a player must have already played at least three team matches for the relevant club in the relevant League during the season.
- 5.4 If a club has more than one team playing in the same League on the same day and one or more players from the higher team(s) are unavailable, any nominated player(s) may play for the higher team(s) provided that the correct nominated order is maintained within each team. It is not necessary to promote the next-highest ranked available player(s) from the next-lower team. This concession does not however apply where two teams from the same club are playing each other in the same division; in this case, where one or more players from the higher team(s) are unavailable, it is necessary to promote the next-highest ranked available player(s) from the next-lower team.
- 5.5 Some clubs have Junior teams playing in the Men's League as separate squads from the Senior teams. For the avoidance of doubt, a Junior team is regarded as if it were a separate club within its overall club and therefore junior players may not play for Senior teams within their club whilst continuing to represent a Junior team. Rule 4.3 regarding transfer of a player's representation will apply to all junior players.
- 5.6 No player is allowed to play for more than one team in the same Winter League or its related Cup Competitions on the same day, except that a player may play for more than one team in Cup Competition finals played on the same day. Ladies may play for one team in the Men's League and one team in the Ladies' League on the same day, subject to Rule 6.7 regarding playing order and start-time.
- 5.7 All matches must be played using the nominations in force at the time of the match.
- 5.8 Any irregularities in the result of a fixture due to non-observance of the above rules will mean that the ties of any affected player and all those playing below will be forfeit, or, at the discretion of the LS, the match may be treated as a conceded fixture. Teams flouting these rules on regular occasions may be subject to a deduction of points, relegation, or in extreme cases expulsion from the Leagues as decided by the Northumbria Squash committee.

## 6. Match Conduct

- 6.1 The Dunlop Pro double yellow dot ball (or other such ball as approved by the Northumbria Squash committee) must be used for all matches, unless mutually agreed between the two team captains. Balls must be new at the commencement of the match and are to be provided by the home team. In the event of the home team not providing an acceptable ball they shall forfeit the match.
- 6.2 The home team must pay the cost of courts for League matches and in the Winter Leagues only is expected to provide a meal for themselves and the opposition after the match. All players should make every effort to attend, but if any away team players do not require a post-match meal then the away team captain must notify the home team captain at least three days in advance of the match. If the home team is unable to provide food on a particular occasion, then the away team captain should be informed. Costs for Cup matches should be shared equally between the home and away teams.
- 6.3 All matches must be marked and it is the responsibility of the home team captain to ensure that this rule is observed. Markers will normally also perform the duties of the referee.
- 6.4 Each match should start at 7pm unless arranged otherwise in the posted fixtures or agreed by both teams concerned. Teams should preferably arrive en bloc to allow a prompt start.
- 6.5 Each team's players must play strictly in nominated order against their opposite number, and it is the home team captain's responsibility to ensure that the written team orders for each match have been exchanged by both team captains before the match commences. If players are later discovered to have played out of order, then in the absence of written evidence of the declared team orders, the away team will be deemed to have played in the correct order. The ties of players who are ineligible or who have played out of order and all those below will be conceded.
- 6.6 Each tie will be the best of five games, with Point-a-Rally scoring to 15 points (with "sudden death" at 14-all) in all Leagues and Cup Competitions except the Premier Division and Division 1 of the Men's League and the Men's Northumbria Cup, which will have Point-a-Rally scoring to 11 points (with "2-clear" from 10-all).
- 6.7 The normal order of play is 5-4-1-3-2 for Men's League and Cup matches, 5-4-3-2-1 for Ladies' League and Cup matches, and 4-3-2-1 for Summer League matches. If a team cannot comply with this they should contact their opponents before the match to agree a revised playing order. If players are not ready to start within 15 minutes of the appointed time, or within 15 minutes of the previous matches finishing, ties may be forfeit upon appeal to the LS.

- 6.8 Should any player fail to arrive without prior warning the other players will be moved up the order so that the team plays short of the lowest nominations. If lower ties have already been played then the missing players' tie(s) and all those below will be conceded unless extenuating circumstances are made known on appeal to the LS.
- 6.9 The whole of the match (all ties) must be completed within the day arranged.
- 6.10 In the event of a court(s) becoming unplayable, the results of completed ties shall stand. Uncompleted ties shall be abandoned and started from the beginning at the same venue at a date to be mutually agreed. If however the stoppage is only temporary and the court(s) can be made playable, then interrupted ties shall be restarted at the point of suspension provided reasonable time remains for the completion of the match.
- 6.11 If, after a prompt start has been made, a match has to be curtailed because courts become unavailable for further play, the home team shall forfeit the uncompleted ties.
- 6.12 In the event of a player becoming ill or injured during the course of a match, World Squash Singles Rule 14 (Illness, Injury and Bleeding) will normally apply.
- 6.13 The use of eye protection goggles, particularly for Juniors, is highly recommended.

## **7. Match Results**

- 7.1 The team winning the most individual ties will win the match. In the Summer League if the match is level 2-2 on ties, the winning team will be determined by i) the team winning the most games, and if still level then ii) the team winning the most points, and if still level then iii) the team winning the first string tie.
- 7.2 One point will be awarded for each game won with an extra bonus point for each eligible player in the winning team. Thus a maximum of 20 points (Winter Leagues) or 16 points (Summer League) is available to the winners of a match.
- 7.3 When a team concedes a match their opponents shall receive 20 points (Winter Leagues) or 16 points (Summer League). Teams conceding will receive zero points for the first match conceded and minus 20 points (Winter Leagues) or minus 16 points (Summer League) for the second match conceded. If a third match is conceded during the season then reference should be made to Rule 8.5.
- 7.4 Unless otherwise agreed it is the responsibility of the home team to ensure the correct result (ie match scores including game scores) has been posted on the League website within 5 days of the match being played. Teams consistently failing to comply with this may be penalised.

Any anomalies, i.e. players not registered or not nominated, disputed score etc. should be notified to the LS for action.

## **8. Promotion, Relegation and Withdrawal**

- 8.1 In the event of two teams finishing the season on equal points the higher position will be decided by i) the team winning most matches, then ii) the team with the higher difference between points won and conceded, then iii) the team with the better points record in matches during that season between the teams involved. If teams are still level and League championship, promotion or relegation issues are involved their positions will be decided by a play-off at a neutral venue or other venue mutually agreed between the teams concerned.
- 8.2 For the Men's League, automatic promotion and relegation will normally be 2-up/2-down. In addition, end-of-season divisional playoffs will be held at a neutral venue between the third-bottom team from each division and the third-top team from the division below, with the winning team being either promoted or not relegated, and the losing team being either relegated or not promoted, as the case may be. The Ladies' League will split from one into two divisions at halfway, with the top five teams remaining in Division 1 and the remaining teams relegated to a newly-formed Division 2. The Ladies' League will revert to one division at the start of the following Winter League season. In the Summer League there is no promotion or relegation, and the top two teams in each division, or the top four teams if in a single division, will go forward to the end-of-season playoffs.
- 8.3 A club's higher ranked team cannot play in a lower division than their lower ranked team(s). In the event of this occurring the teams shall swap places.
- 8.4 Where extra places become available through teams withdrawing from the Winter Leagues, these places will be allocated at the discretion of the LS.
- 8.5 If a club withdraws one of its teams from the Winter Leagues during the first half of the season, or from the Summer League, then all that team's fixtures for the season will be declared void. If a team is withdrawn during the second half of the Winter League season then all that team's first half fixtures will stand but all its second half fixtures will be declared void. A team conceding more than two fixtures during the season will be treated as having withdrawn. Rule 4.3 regarding transfer of a player's representation to another club, Rule 5.1 regarding not playing below their nominated position and Rule 4.6 regarding re-nomination of the club's ranking order will apply to all players nominated for the withdrawing team.
- 8.6 A club wishing to withdraw one or more of its teams from the Winter Leagues after the end of the season must notify the League Secretary



(LS) in writing as soon as possible and no later than 30<sup>th</sup> June for the Winter League Season commencing in September.

## **9. General**

- 9.1 The World Squash Singles Rules, except where they are modified by these Rules, shall be in force throughout any competition. A copy of the World Squash Singles Rules may be found via the England Squash website, [www.englandsquash.com](http://www.englandsquash.com).
- 9.2 World Squash Singles rule 15 (Conduct) is of particular importance. All persons participating in the Leagues should be aware of and abide by this rule. Mutual respect and sporting behaviour between players, markers/referees, coaches and spectators is expected at all times. Any infringement of this rule should be reported to the LS within 7 days of the event, for consideration by the Northumbria Squash committee.
- 9.3 A club may appeal to the LS or Northumbria Squash committee about any matter concerning the Leagues. In the case of a disputed incident an appeal must be made within 7 days of the incident. The Northumbria Squash committee's decision on all matters concerning the Leagues is final.
- 9.4 Changes to these Rules may be proposed to the LS, and are subject to the approval of the Northumbria Squash committee.