

League Secretaries Report to 2015 AGM

Opening Remarks

The Cambs League has matches throughout the year - certainly not the case in all counties. The only month in which there are no scheduled matches is January!! The full list of our competitions is:

- *Vets League in Feb/March,*
- *Men's and Ladies Doubles Leagues in April/May/June,*
- *Mixed Doubles in June/July/August*
- *Super Seniors from May to Sept*
- *The Grays Cup competitions during the summer*
- *'Winter' Leagues (Mens Ladies and Mixed) in Sept/Oct/November/December*

We are all fortunate to have continued commitment of Alison, Janice & Sylvia and as always a huge thank you to all of them for their unfailing attention to making your leagues what they are. Without the four of us working together it would be unlikely Cambs LTA could offer all these competitions

League Rules

There is a Rules item on the Agenda where we would like to look at two possible alterations to the rules - one a Grays Cup change & the other a potentially major change to League Rule 15. Please have a read of the notes later in the attachments so you can come armed with an opinion! At the same time I've attempted to explain the Committee's view on re-arrangements. Again, a healthy discussion would be good!!

Fulfilling Fixtures

I raised the point last year that a major strength of the Cambs League is that because fixtures are scheduled the vast majority of matches are played with minimal walkovers. But I also said that sadly I feel there is an increasing trend of matches not being fulfilled and walkovers being conceded.

In the 2015 summer season records show that 17 matches were conceded as walkovers or walkovers were applied when no information was received. This broke down as:

Mens - 6 walkovers conceded by David Lloyd, Buckden (2), Newmarket, & St Neots (2)

Ladies - 9 walkovers conceded by Comberton (2), Buckden (2), Cambridge, Culford, Cocks & Hens, Foxton & Haslingfield

Mixed - 2 walkovers by Fulbourn & Cambridge

So really this is another appeal to those clubs who are experiencing problems in fielding teams to consider carefully before entering whether players will commit

New Friends / Lost Friends

Following the withdrawal of both both Burwell and University Press in 2014, 3 further clubs are no longer entering teams due to lack of players which is sad to see. These are Thetford, Gt Staughton & Bar Hill all of which withdrew ahead of the 2015 summer season.

On the positive side numbers of teams in the main Summer & Winter competitions continue to increase, suggesting that the larger clubs are doing well in terms of the number of match players

Also on the positive side we welcome Chatteris to the Mens & Ladies leagues in 2016

Club Communications

As ever a big thank you to all of you who receive league emails and pass them on to the club captains/members. This process is absolutely crucial to the smooth running of the League

Looking Forward

Subject to the AGM agreeing the current Committee are willing to continue for a further year.

As I said last year I have been League Secretary since 2005 & I feel the time is right to say that we must find someone willing to take the Leagues into the future. No one has come forward & if nobody does it may reach the stage where there is no League Committee. I have prepared a resume of what we are looking for - see next page. PLEASE advertise this to all the members of your club



Cambs LTA League Tennis Committee



New Volunteers Urgently Needed

The Tennis Leagues in Cambridgeshire provide competitive play & enjoyment throughout the year for players from 35 different clubs in the County. In the last 12 months 372 teams from those clubs have entered our leagues and 35 teams have entered our one knock out cup competition.

The organisation of all this involves considerable effort, carried out at the moment by 5 volunteers. The rewards for being involved are many but perhaps the greatest is the friendships made with being in contact with volunteers, team captains and players from all these clubs. Plus of course in knowing that so many people are able to play competitive matches in our County

The Committee are very concerned that we have no plan for the future and so are appealing for at least 2 new volunteers. As a Committee we only meet twice a year so you will not be committing to numerous meetings. On the other hand we have frequent email & phone discussions on issues that arise

What Tasks Are Involved ?

These are summarised below - as you will see there is much to do. But you would not be asked to take on more than you want to. A gentle introduction is promised if that's what is wanted!

Collect Entries and Payments

Decide on Divisions, Promotions & Relegations

Schedule Matches using Online System

Compile & Publish Contact Lists

Manage Cup Competitions

Collect & Record Results including checks on player eligibility

Provide advise when asked

Deal with situations which arise including complaints

If new volunteers aren't found the Cambs League will reach the stage where it cannot continue in it's present form

We need new volunteers to become part of the Committee, and for one to take over as League Secretary at an agreed time in the future

For a friendly 'no strings' chat please ring Vernon on 01223 515867

Review of Competition - 2015

Overall

We now have 52 different divisions throughout the year (up 2 from 2014), with a new Mens Div 11 in the summer and a new Mixed Div 4 in the Winter. A total of 372 teams (+10 on 2014) entered the various league divisions over the 12 months since our last AGM. Plus of course the 2 Grays Cups. Once again it's really good that in the presentations of the trophies at the AGM there are 20 different clubs collecting their reward! Overall congratulations this year goes to Cambridge & Royston who with 8 & 7 trophies respectively have won the greatest number of competitions

Summer Leagues

A total of 201 teams entered in 2015 – 3 more than in 2014. This 2015 total breaks down as:

- *59 Ladies teams in 7 Divisions*
- *85 Mens Teams in 11 Divisions*
- *57 Mixed Teams in 9 Divisions (Same as 2014)*

Congratulations this year go to Cambridge who retain the County Championship in the Ladies & Mixed competitions and also this year add the title in the Mens Competition. A challenge to other clubs to meet!

So our summer leagues remain strong and with 1 new club for 2016 is looking stronger than ever in terms of numbers. 209 teams have entered for summer 2016

Grays Cups

Both the Ladies and Mens competitions were reasonably well supported all leading to a Finals evening at Hills Road on Saturday 3rd October. A good number of supporters enjoyed two competitive matches

In the Ladies, Histon played St Neots in a close and interesting match, which at half time stood at 2 sets each. After numerous long rallies HISTON just came out in front to win the Cup for the very first time in the clubs history, the final score being 5-3 . Congratulations to their 4 players, Jane Fidler (Capt), Margaret Chambers, Sheila Strachan & Nicky Wright.

In the Mens final Cambourne met Red Lodge. Cambourne had beaten the winners of the previous 3 years - Royston, in the semi final. At half time Red Lodge led 3-1 after some impressive tennis from all 8 players. Red Lodge won 3 further sets & one final set was conceded because of injury leaving a final score of 7-1. So RED LODGE are Mens Grays Cup Champions for 2015 - very many congratulations to their 4 players - Marco Mitev-Will, James Gemmell, James Spencer & Daniel Deniet

The entries for 2016 are in and in the Mens competition we have 23 teams - up by 2 from 2015. Sadly once again only 14 teams have entered Ladies teams with 1 withdrawal and 1 new team. It would be good to see more clubs entering Ladies teams in what is our only knock-out cup. Not too late to change your mind & enter if you wish. Just let me know before the end of the year.

Veterans Tennis

Vets

For a second successive year we ran two competitions in the Vets category

In the Spring running through late January to late March a league with teams of 2 men + 2 ladies. Age limits of 45 Men & Ladies.

From 16 teams in 2003 the league increased to 35 teams in 2015 so a really strong competition..

2015 Divisional Champions were:

Div 1: Cambridge 1
Div 2: Gt Shelford 1
Div 3: Huntingdon 1
Div 4: Virgin Active 1
Div 5: Royston 3

Entries for 2016 total 31 teams with 5 withdrawals but only 1 new team. I am really sad to see such a dramatic reduction but on the other hand it's better not to enter than to fail to fulfil fixtures. Lets hope we can build numbers back up in the future.

Super Seniors

New in 2013 we started a Super Seniors League for age 60+, so 2015 has been the third year of this competition.

In 2015 we had 6 teams enter the mens competition and 6 in the mixed, although in both cases one team found that their players were not willing to commit so just 5 teams played. In the Ladies just 3 teams entered but we went ahead on a home & away basis and so all players got 4 matches

Congratulations go to the 2015 champions who were:

Mens Super Seniors Champions - Risbygate

Ladies Super Seniors Champions - Histon

Mixed Super Seniors Champions - Cambridge

Whether we run this again in 2016 will definitely depend on numbers. I know that even this year a couple of clubs had trouble getting players to commit. The feedback on matches played has been that everyone has REALLY enjoyed both the tennis & the social aspect so it would be really sad if this dies out.

So please discuss the possibility of entering teams at your clubs next Committee meeting. Entries will be invited in March. Don't forget that joint teams with another club are allowed in this competition

Winter League

A total of 121 teams have entered the competition in 2015:

40 Ladies teams in 6 divisions (up from 37 in 2014)

51 Mens teams in 7 divisions (unchanged from 2014)

30 Mixed teams in 5 divisions (up from 25 in 2014 and from 21 as recently as 2013)

By far the strongest growth has been in the Mixed which really seems to confirm that the decision clubs took to play the mens/ladies and mixed on different weeks has really worked.

Congratulations to the various division winners in 2014 who were as follows:

		2014 Winners
MENS	1	Fulbourn 1
	2	Royston 1
	3	Royston 3
	4	St Neots 1
	5	Haslingfield 1
	6	Red Lodge 1
	7	Royston 5
LADIES	1	Cambridge 1
	2	St Neots 1
	3	Gt Shelford 1
	4	Risbygate 1
	5	St Neots 3
	6	Gransdens 2
MIXED	1	Exning 1
	2	Royston 3
	3	David Lloyd 1
	4	Saffron Walden 2

Agenda Item 9 - League Rules

Rule 15 Rule concerning start times and completion of matches

Existing Wording

15 (a) Matches must start at the time notified by the home club. Matches arranged for evening play must commence at **6.30pm** or before, except where a club has floodlights on the two courts to be used for a match. In that case matches may start at **7.00pm** PROVIDED the floodlights are usable until at least **10.00pm**. If it proves impossible to obtain a result, the usual procedure for completing the fixture shall be invoked. If there should be any dispute as to a suitable finishing time then it shall be regarded as unreasonable to continue play without floodlights after 9.15pm in May or 9.30pm in June or July for evening fixtures.

(b) If a pair or pairs arrive late, the opposing captain may **claim one set** 6–0 for each complete half an hour that each pair arrives late. If a team should arrive more than one hour fifteen minutes late then the opponents may claim the match

Draft New Wording

15 (a) Play must start at the scheduled match time shown in the fixtures.

(b) In matches arranged for evening play without floodlights play must commence at **6.30pm** or before. If there should be any dispute as to a suitable finishing time then it shall be regarded as unreasonable to continue play without floodlights after 9.15pm in May or 9.30pm in June or July

(c) Where a club has floodlights on the two courts to be used , play must commence at the scheduled time but no later than **7.00pm** PROVIDED the floodlights are usable until at least **10.00pm**.

(d) If a pair or pairs arrive late, the opposing captain may **claim one set** 6–0 for each complete half an hour that each pair arrives after the scheduled match time. If a team should arrive more than one hour fifteen minutes late then the opponents may claim the match

(e) Reasonable efforts should be made to ensure that evening fixtures are completed before bad light or floodlight timers interrupts play. It is the responsibility of the home captain to offer that shortened games are organised to bring matches to a conclusion, and such arrangements must happen except where the away team captain commits to return to compete the match if all sets are not finished. A home team captain can offer that where rubbers are in a final set, shortened games should be played to decide the set before bad light or lack of floodlights prevents further play. This could involve sudden death deuces, or where time is very short games starting games at deuce.

(f) Where the home captain does not take steps as outlined in 15 (e) the League organiser after receipt of the facts has the option to award the final set(s) to the away team or to instruct that the teams reconvene to finish the match

(g) If it proves impossible to obtain a result, the procedure detailed in Rule 13 (c) shall apply.

Grays Cup Rules - possible changes to rules on Choice of Ground & Result Notification

Existing Wording

1 **Choice of ground:**

(a): When one club shall have been entitled to choice of ground in the current competition a fewer number of times than its opponent, the former shall have choice.

(b): When two clubs have met in the previous year's competition the choice will go to the club that did not have the choice on that occasion.

(c): If (a) or (b) does not apply the choice shall be determined by priority in the original draw.

Draft New Wording

1 **Choice of ground:**

(a) In Round 1 the Committee will draw and schedule the matches. The first named team shall be the home team

(b) In subsequent rounds, if the clubs met in the previous year's competition the previous away team will be the home team. If the teams did not meet in the previous year, then whichever team has played or been drawn at home the fewer number of times in the current year competition will be the home team. Where this is equal the Organiser will spin a coin to decide home advantage

(c) In any round a team may concede home advantage to their opponents if BOTH teams agree.

(d) Draw order in the online system is not relevant other than in the first round

Existing Wording

7 **Result notification:** The winning team shall inform the organiser of the result within three days and also contact the likely next round opponent.

Draft New Wording

7 **Result notification:** The winning team shall inform the organiser of the result within seven days of the match being played. This must be in the form of a result sheet showing the full names of all 8 players

Thoughts on Rearranging Matches

The Rules are straightforward - the practice is sometimes a bit more complex:

The Rules

Say that "Matches must be played on the day fixed, the only acceptable reason for postponement being the unfit nature of the courts" . Teams are allowed to field only 1 pair if they cannot raise a full team in an attempt to gain a draw & to avoid the -2 points penalty for failing to field a team.

These Rules have applied for many years. Because we go to great trouble to schedule the matches the League Committee feel all this is reasonable.

The Practice

This is slightly different in summer & winter so I'll start with the winter as that's more complex:

1) Rearranging winter league matches. The Committee want the Rules to be followed and for matches to be played as scheduled. In dealing with any disputes we will always revert to the Rules if necessary.

If **BOTH** teams mutually agree to rearrange then as long as the Committee member managing the competition is informed we will accept this as we want tennis to be played at the end of the day.

When receiving a request to rearrange a team **MUST** give a clear answer one way or the other. An answer along the lines of "we'll try" is unfair as it leaves the requesting club without the option to field one pair.

However, if **EITHER** team wants to stick to the scheduled date then that is their right and the team who were struggling to field 4 players will either have to concede a walkover with the -2 points penalty OR send 1 pair to avoid that

Once agreement to rearrange is made then responsibility to actively make sure that the match is rearranged and played falls to the HOME team, even if they were not the ones who first requested a rearrangement. This is because they have control of the court times. They must follow the rearrangement rules - "the home captain must within a week offer the away captain three alternative dates, avoiding other League fixtures". Failure to properly rearrange will result in a walkover against the HOME team

If the match doesn't get played by the deadline date (usually 31 Jan in the winter) the AWAY team is awarded a walkover and the home team loses -2points. This can usually be reversed to a penalty to the away team IF it is clearly shown that procedures to rearrange were followed & failure to play on the rearranged date was the fault of the away team.

2) Rearranging summer league matches - is not allowed except as allowed in Rule 12. Where both teams agree to rearrange, this is done without the agreement of the Committee, though we tend to 'turn a blind eye' as long as the Committee member managing the league is informed & the match gets played.

Additional point - In both summer & winter ALL matches must have a result (be this an actual result or a walkover). The Committee have discretion to agree to leave matches unplayed where both teams are at fault though we won't do this if it adversely affects other teams promotion or relegation.