

# Competition Grading Guidelines

## Introduction

The grading of a competition is an indication to players of the likely standard of play and enables players and parents to apply for tournaments and leagues of an appropriate level. All competitions should be managed and delivered to a high standard although a greater expectation will be placed on tournaments and leagues at a higher grade.

## Grading Criteria

Competition gradings are decided by the LTA for each tournament and league and may change from year to year for a number of reasons. Approval of a competition grade is only applicable to that year. Some of the factors used to determine the grade of a competition are detailed below:

**Entry Numbers** - Previous year's entry numbers are used to review demand for an individual event, tournament or league.

**Entry Standard** – Previous year's entry standards are used to check the grade is suitable for the standard of the player base.

**Venue** – The number and type of courts will be considered along with suitable ancillary and catering facilities. Venue accessibility and location will be taken into account together with car parking arrangements. The number of satellite venues being used for the competition will be considered.

**Presentation** – Competitions should be properly presented. For tournaments, information should be available to players both at the competition venue(s) and beforehand. As a minimum, a tournament should have a clearly designated referee's/control desk which shall include sign-in sheets. The order of play, draw sheets, LTA code of conduct and other key notices should be displayed at the venue.

For leagues, players and team captains should be aware of the league rules and a copy of the rules should be available at all fixtures.

**Finances** - A competition should be able to demonstrate consideration of the financial aspects involved in managing their tournament/league. The tournament organiser/league organiser should be able to produce a financial plan for the competition if requested.

**Pre-Competition Administration** – Competitions must be created online using the Competition Creation tool, within the requested timescales. Leagues should be run using League Planner and must be set-up by completing an LTA League Application Form. This must be done in sufficient time for the league to be created ahead of the league commencement date.

**Post-Competition Administration (Results Submission TTP/LP, Online leagues, Code Violations, Withdrawals)** - Missing or late returns/late submission of results may render a tournament/league liable to downgrade.

**Feedback** – Feedback from previous competitions received from parents, officials, field team and other parties may be considered when reviewing the grade of a competition. Tournament organisers, league organisers, and/or referees will be made aware when negative feedback has been received.

**Officiating Requirements** - Minimum levels of officiating for tournaments (referee, court supervisors and umpires) are defined in the quality criteria table (appendix 1).

**Tournament Duration** - Minimum and maximum duration are defined for each grade in appendix 1. All multi age group junior individual tournaments should follow the **standard tournament week** which means you must start your tournament no earlier than Sunday and finish no later than Saturday (maximum of seven days).

**Draw Format** - A competition's choice of draw format will be monitored together with the provision of consolation events/matches (not applicable for leagues).

**Fair Play** – Competitions will be expected to adopt the LTA Fair Play values and relevant Fair Play material such as guidelines, posters and sign-in sheet should be displayed at competitions. Leagues - Organisers should ensure that team captains are aware of the LTA Fair Play values and communication should be made to team players about abiding by the Fair Play values in all matches.

**Match Completion rate (leagues only)** - The ratio of matches played to matches scheduled will be used to calculate the completion rates of leagues. Leagues with a low completion of matches may be liable to be downgraded.

## Grading Process

### Grading Process - Individual

Grade 1 to 4 competitions will be graded a minimum of 3 months before the start of the appropriate season. All competitions for the Summer Season (April to August) will be graded by December/January. All competitions for the Winter Season (September to March) will be graded by May/June. Grade 5-7 competitions will be graded when required.

We will consider all the above criteria when making a decision on grading, plus the distribution of competitions in the county, region and country. It is vital that we consider the player base of the area to ensure we have the correct number of competitions at each grade in a given time frame. The final decision on Grading is as follows:

- Grade 1, 2 & 3 – LTA Competitions Team (Support from Regional Tennis Competition Coordinators).
- Grade 4, 5, 6 & 7 – LTA Regional Teams.

### Levels of Support

To create a transparent system of accountability we have defined the levels of support the LTA can offer to tournaments and leagues. Hopefully this will allow players to clearly identify what they can expect from a competition and the level of supervision/support/advice the competition receives from the LTA.

- All competitions delivered directly by LTA Competitions Team will be deemed **“Staged By”**.
- All competitions delivered externally will be deemed **“Approved by”** upon completion of the appropriate application form, agreeing to abide by the relevant rules and upon sanction from both their local LTA Office and Competitions Team.

## Definitions

**Grade** – A standard of competition defining the ranking points allocated to any given player in an event (please note that different ranking points apply to individual and team competitions). The tournament grade also provides an indication of the standard of players:

- Grade 1 – National Level
- Grade 2 – National Level
- Grade 3 – Regional Level
- Grade 4 – County Level
- Grade 5 – Local Level
- Grade 6 – Local Level
- Grade 7 – Internal club competitions
- Grade U (Ungraded) – Assessment free competitions where results have been loaded

## Tournaments

**Tournament** – A collection of one or more events.

**Event** – This is a combination of Gender, Age and Type (Singles and Doubles). Examples:

### Mini Events

- 8 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 8 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles (Red)
- 9 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 9 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles (Orange)
- 10 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 10 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles (Green)

### Junior Events

- 12 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 12 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles
- 14 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 14 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles
- 16 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 16 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles
- 18 & Under Boys Singles/Doubles, 18 & Under Girls Singles/Doubles

### Adult Events

- Mens Open Singles/Doubles
- Ladies Open Singles/Doubles
- Mens/Ladies 35/40/45/50/55/60/65/70/75/80 & Over Singles/Doubles
- 35/40/45/50/55/60/65/70/75/80 & Over Women's Singles/Doubles
- Mixed Doubles

**Draw** – A sub-section of an event, an event may have just a single "Main Draw" or may be split into two or more draws (Main Draw, Qualifying, Pre-Qualifying, Consolation).

**Main Draw** – The main draw of any event must produce an overall winner in order to count for LTA rankings purposes. It may contain positional play-offs and a number of approved formats are permitted for a main draw within an event.

**Qualifying** – A draw allowing a group of players not directly accepted into the main draw on merit to gain entry (qualify). This can be run in any format and can produce as many qualifiers as required.

**Pre-Qualifying** – Events may be split into as many pre-qualifying draws as required, although in practice the number of stages will be limited according to the overall duration of the tournament.

**Consolation Draw** – Some tournaments will offer consolation draws within their events. This can guarantee a player more matches following defeat in the main draw.

## Leagues/Team Competition

**League** – A group of teams or clubs that compete amongst themselves. May be comprised of a number of divisions.

**Division** – A group of teams within a league that are grouped together based on standard and/or travel distance.

**Match** – One team competing against another team. During a match a number of rubbers will take place.

**Rubber** – One player (or doubles pair) competing against another player (or doubles pair) within a match.

**Fixture** – The agreed date for a match between two teams.

**Match Completion Rate** – The number of matches played out of the number of matches scheduled, expressed as a percentage.

The Appendix below illustrates the standards (competition delivery and player base) expected within tournaments at each grade (the table is not relevant for league competitions). Any competition that applies for a specific grade will be assumed to have agreed to meet the criteria of the grade applied for.

## Appendix 1 – Grading Criteria for Tournaments: Minimum Quality Delivery and Player guidelines

Grade	Referee Grade	Officiating (where >5 events run)	Minimum Draw Size †	Duration Summer Season (+ school holidays)	During Winter Season	Total number of players entered (where >5 age groups run)	Player Level	Acceptance & Seeding Procedure		
								Mini Tennis	12U – 18U	Open
1 – National	R1. An R2 referee may be considered.	Umpires for Finals. 1 court supervisor for every four courts.	32+	4+ days	2+ days	300+	Players ranked in Top 50	Rating & Recent Form	Ranking	Rating & Ranking
2 – National	R2. An R3 referee may be considered.	Umpires for Finals. 1 court supervisor for every four courts.	32+	4+ days	2+ days	250+	Players ranked in Top 50	Rating & Recent Form	Ranking	Rating & Ranking
3 – Regional	R3. An R4 referee may be considered.	Umpires for Finals. 1 court supervisor for every six courts.	16+	4+ days	2+ days	200+	Players ranked in Top 100	Rating & Recent Form	Ranking	Rating & Ranking
4 – County	R4. An R5 referee may be considered.	Court supervisors recommended where >8 courts utilised	16+ (8 is acceptable in winter and in all girls events)	2 – 4 days	2 – 4 days	50+	Any	Rating & Recent Form	Rating & Ranking	Rating & Ranking
5 – Local	R(T) or higher	No requirement beyond referee grade	8 + (5 min. for ranking points)	1 – 2 days	1 – 2 days	5+	Any	Rating & Recent Form	Rating & Ranking	Rating & Ranking
6 – Matchplay	R(T) or higher or attended Competition Organisers Course and DBS checked	No requirement beyond referee grade	NA	NA	NA	NA	Any	NA	NA	NA
7 – Internal Club	Competition Organisers or Coaches	No requirement beyond referee grade	NA	NA	NA	NA	Any	NA	NA	NA

### Notes

- † These figures are the minimum draw sizes for the most heavily subscribed events and do not necessarily apply to ALL events within a tournament.
- Mini Tennis Events often run on specific dates and over a shorter period of time.