

Matchplay Guidelines

1. Overview

Matchplay events are one-day singles competitions intended for match practice in a competition environment against other players of the same or similar standard.

Matchplays can provide excellent competitive opportunities for players of all ages and many matchplay programmes are operating successfully throughout Great Britain; they account for about one third of the overall sum of match results submitted.

This document is intended as a guide to running Grade 6 'External Matches' category matchplays. This means 'open' events which anyone may enter. If you are running 'closed' Grade 7 matchplays, ie restricted to club or squad members, please refer to your regional office for additional advice.

There are a number of regulations which govern the running of matchplays and organisers must follow these regulations which can be found in the [LTA Competition Regulations](#) page 51.

Matchplay competitions must be approved in advance by the LTA; their remit is to provide a balanced competitive structure so not all matchplay proposals may be approved. It is also recommended that local LTA regional offices are consulted about formats to ensure that they are valid for players' ratings. Competitions should be created individually in Tournament Organiser area and assigned unique codes so that events and results can be easily located. Multiple results should not be loaded under one generic competition code.

Matchplays are intended to supplement a player's competitive programme rather than being its mainstay since the concept of progressing through rounds in a traditional tournament draw is considered paramount.

2. Draw Formats

Some organisers prefer not to use standard draw formats and simply match up players on the day of an event to create a series of ad-hoc matches, depending on court availability and time constraints. Although many such events run successfully a more structured format is recommended so that there is consistency and players know what to expect.



Suggested formats are:

(a) 4-player knockout draw. The winners of the two first round matches take part in a 2nd match. Similarly the runners-up in each match also play each other in the 2nd round.

(b) 3-player round robin draw. Each participant plays the other players in the group ensuring two matches per event.

(c) 4-player round robin draw using shortened scoring format - each player contests 3 matches.

Organisers are expected to be realistic about the number of players they accept for an event.

Note: Draws should be made by the competition organiser; it is not permitted for players to request 'challenge' matches against particular opponents.

3. Match Formats

These should follow the recommended formats in the [LTA Competition Regulations](#). Yellow ball matches should usually be two standard sets with a match tie break at one set all. Where three matches are offered two short sets (tiebreak at 4-4) plus a match tie break should be used and this is also the format for 10 & under (green ball) events.

4. Eligibility and Age Groups

All matchplay participants must hold an active British Tennis Membership and have a British Tennis Rating.

Tournaments graded 1 to 5 must follow LTA competition age rules which are based on a player's age at the end of each competition season but, since matchplays are graded 6, there is no such requirement. A player's rating is intended to provide an indication of playing standard regardless of age however it is recommended that, where possible, players of a similar age are matched against one another because this is usually their preference and results in more evenly matched competition.

5. Ratings

In general players who participate in matchplay events wish to play others of the same rating as losses against such players do not count as 'qualifying losses' in the LTA ratings runs which are carried out quarterly. However it is not recommended



guaranteeing that players will *only* take part in matches against others of the same rating. Not only may this be impossible to arrange but it creates an environment which is contrary to the spirit of competition; players need to learn how to handle the consequences of losing as well as the benefits of winning. They may not, therefore, withdraw without penalty when scheduled to play against lower rated players.

Organisers should consider asking players, at the time of entry, whether or not they wish to be considered for an event, even if matches against opponents of same (or higher) rating cannot be guaranteed.

Matchplay events may be staged for a restricted range of ratings, e.g. 9.2 to 7.2 only.

Players' *current ratings* should be used for acceptance into matchplay events and not the ratings which players anticipate they will move to in the next ratings run.

6. Entry and Withdrawal Deadlines

It is recommended that application deadlines for matchplay events are no more than 7 days prior to the event date with withdrawal deadlines shortly afterwards. This reduces the likelihood of withdrawals having a negative impact on the draw and the ability to match players by rating.

If too many applications are received a reserve list should be published.

7. Withdrawals

In line with LTA Competition Regulations all player withdrawals from matchplay events *after the published withdrawal deadline* should be recorded (in TTP or in 'Offences' tab of excel results loading spreadsheet) so that withdrawal points can be imposed. This includes players who withdraw *during an event*, particularly where they are due to play an opponent of a lower rating. In such cases, organisers should not be lenient or waive points.

If players only contest one match in an event *through no fault of their own* (e.g. because opponents withdraw), then a proportionate entry fee refund should be made. Similarly, if a match against an opponent of the same rating has been guaranteed and on the day it is not possible to arrange, then an entry fee refund should be made.

8. Officiating

Matchplay results are formal competitions and must be refereed by either:

- a Referee holding a current LTA Officials Licence or



- an LTA registered coach
- an individual who has completed a competition organiser course or LTA Basic Referee Course

Where a large number of courts are in use an assistant should also be used ie. a court supervisor, junior competition organisers or tennis leader. The recommended ratio is one supervisor for every 6 courts in use.

Remember that the LTA Code of Conduct (pg. 56) must be enforced at matchplay events.

9. Results Submission

Tennis Tournament Planner can be used to run matchplay events. Alternatively, results, withdrawals and code violations should be submitted on an approved Excel spreadsheet available from your [LTA Regional Office](#).

Results, withdrawals and code violations should be submitted immediately after the conclusion of each event and *must* be submitted within 72 hours of completion of the competition. Prompt submission is of particular importance to players rated 10.2 to 9.1 who can increase their rating on a daily basis.

10. Reminders

DO...

- get your programme of events approved, in advance, by your local regional office
- make sure the scoring formats you select are legitimate for the competition ball colour
- be aware of ratings run cut off dates which are published on the [Ratings page](#) of the LTA website. This will ensure that players' results will be included in the most immediate ratings run
- check that all players have active British Tennis Membership and a British Tennis Rating.
- submit results via Results Manager or to your local regional office as soon as possible after completion of the event using TTP, or official results loading spreadsheet
- record match scores, withdrawals and code violation in TTP or on official results loading spreadsheet
- contact your local regional office for further information and advice

DO NOT...



- submit results selectively or submit incomplete sets of results ie. unless there are player withdrawals all draws should be completed with correct British Tennis Membership numbers and results (including scores)
- submit results on behalf of anyone else; occasionally players may request that you submit results from another competition on their behalf but this should never be done
- let players dictate who plays who; *you* are responsible for making draws and matching up players

Thank you for abiding by these recommendation and good luck with your matchplay competitions. If you have questions please email competitionsupport@LTA.org.uk .

