

# SUPPORTING YOU IN RUNNING RECREATIONAL COMPETITIONS AT YOUR VENUE

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COMPETITION RESOURCE



# CONTENTS

A resource for volunteers,  
organisers and coaches to run  
competitions at your venue



<b>HOW TO RUN COMPETITIONS</b> . . . . .	4
Before . . . . .	4
During . . . . .	5
After . . . . .	5
Promote your Competition . . . . .	6
Processing Results . . . . .	7
Learning to Compete . . . . .	8
Fast4 Tennis . . . . .	9
Timed Tennis . . . . .	10

<b>TYPES OF RECREATIONAL COMPETITION</b> . . . . .	12
Benenden Tennis Festivals . . . . .	12
Team Cones . . . . .	13
Quorn Family Tennis Cup . . . . .	14
Handicap Scoring . . . . .	15
American Tournament . . . . .	16
Internal Box Leagues . . . . .	17
Club Championships. . . . .	18
Open Tournaments . . . . .	19

# INTRODUCTION

Competition is a key part of a tennis programme at all venues.

Having healthy, enjoyable, easy-to-access competitions attracts new players and keeps existing players in the sport longer.

To support the volunteers, competition organisers and coaches at tennis venues, this resource provides practical ideas to improve and develop a sustainable competition programme for adult and junior players.

Whether it is a volunteer learning how to run competitions or the venue coach developing competition in their coaching programme this resource will help in their delivery.

The guide also provides volunteers with examples of running fun and social recreational competitions. These are a great way to engage existing members in competition and create a social atmosphere at your venue.

There are a number of benefits of organising competitions at a tennis venue:

- Retain members and attract new players to your venue by offering them regular activity
- Creates a healthy club environment with a competitive and social membership base, integrating older juniors and adults
- Competitions can generate income through entry fees / bar sales and raise the venue profile



# HOW TO RUN COMPETITIONS

Listed below are some things to think about to help you plan an effective competition that appeals to a wide audience. This can help you improve the satisfaction of existing players and get them playing on a more regular basis.

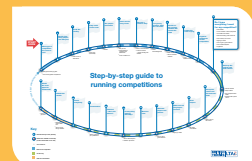
## BEFORE

Here is a checklist of what you need to think about before you run a competition:

- What type of competition do I want to organise?
- Who am I hoping to attract?
- What costs are involved?
- When am I going to run the competition?
- Ensure you have the right equipment available, book the courts and recruit a team to help.
- How am I going to promote the competition and create interest?
- Organise any prizes (if relevant).
- Create an order of play and set of rules. Think about how many opportunities people will have to play.
- Confirm entries and ensure players understand the format. How long will the tournament be?
- Confirm that the helpers understand their role and decide on any social activities on the day.
- Be prepared for last minute entries, drop outs, no-shows and rain! Have a back-up plan.

## VIEW ONLINE

A step-by-step guide to running a competition:  
[www.lta.org.uk/competitionresources](http://www.lta.org.uk/competitionresources)



## DURING

Here are some tips to help people feel welcome and ensure you deliver a good experience on the day:

- Arrive in good time and set up any necessary equipment; courts, nets, lines, etc.
- Put up copies of the draws and rules so people can read them before the event starts.
- If possible get all players together at the start and welcome / give an overview of the day.
- Try and stick to the schedule and keep encouraging players throughout.
- Take some pictures / video footage which can be used to report on the event afterwards.
- Speak to players and find out if they are enjoying the event. Get existing members to talk to new recruits about social activities / what the tennis venue offers.
- Hold a presentation ensuring you thank the volunteers – don't forget to promote future events!



### AFTER

**Gathering feedback will help you make improvements for next time and sharing the success of the event can help encourage new people to get involved:**

- Get feedback from those who took part – listen to their ideas.
- Thank all the helpers – they will feel valued and more inclined to take part again.
- Raise some awareness post event with pictures and a write up on the venue website, local media, notice board, etc.
- Submit the results to the LTA if it was set up to count for British Tennis ratings / rankings.

### PROMOTE YOUR COMPETITION

An area often overlooked when organising a competition is the promotion. Having a plan in place that targets the type of people that might enter and gives them enough time to enter will help raise the profile of the tournament and ultimately increase the number of entries.

**The following ideas should get you started:**

- Use the tennis venue notice board to put up posters and sign-up sheets.
- Promote events direct to your membership database via email / text, website or newsletter.
- Get your coach to encourage players from their coaching / social sessions to enter.
- Ask team captains to E-mail the competition opportunities to internal team players.
- Post on your social media accounts including Facebook and twitter.

For events that are targeting players outside of your tennis venue, you should try to link with key contacts you have in nearby venues and consider contacting your LTA County Office for additional support.

## PROCESSING RESULTS

Results from your coaching programme or formal competitions can be processed for British Tennis ratings. This helps players to see improvement in their game and provides local meaningful matches viewable online. For results to count for ratings a player must have a British Tennis Membership (BTM) and a British Tennis rating.

### The minimum format for results to count for ratings is:

- Red Ball for 8&U – Match tiebreak (first to 10 points) or 10 minute timed tennis format.
- Best of three tiebreaks (first to 7 points), one match tiebreak or 15 minute timed tennis format.
- Green Ball for 10&U – One short set (first player to win four games. A tiebreak is played at 4-4) or 20 minute timed tennis format.
- Yellow Ball for 11& over – Two short sets with match tiebreak in place of a third short set. One full set or 20 minute timed tennis format for players 10.2 to 9.1 only at Grade 6 and 7.

### How to process results?

The Clubspark Competition Module lets competition organisers record and publish competitions at their venues and submit results directly to our database. Clubspark Competition module can be used for all internal competitions.

The tool offers a quick and easy process to set up events and draws, including automatic lookup of registered British Tennis members to add to events and automatic results loading.

If you are interested in running external tournaments you can use the Tennis Tournament Planner (TTP). The benefits of TTP include:

- Unique 'Player database' providing up-to-date player information.
- Online entry for your tournament and entry fee payment using PayPal.
- Several draw types / formats.
- A website where you can publish draws, playing times, results.

If you are just running matches within your coaching programme or box leagues please contact your regional office and they can let you know about alternative options for processing results.

## BRITISH TENNIS MEMBERSHIP (BTM)

BTM is free for anyone who is a member of an LTA registered venue. Players can sign up to BTM online at: [www.LTA.org.uk/members/join](http://www.LTA.org.uk/members/join).

## LEARNING TO COMPETE

All players need to learn how to compete. Teaching your players the rules of the game as soon as they start coming to coaching / social sessions is a vital step to get them to compete. Help them to learn;

- What's in and out.
- How you can win a point.
- How to score a standard set and tiebreak.

### Scoring

**When players have learned about winning points then try these:**

- Learn serving order and correct side.
- Watch and score for other players.
- Score for yourself.
- Tiebreak scoring.
- Scoring a standard set.

### Competing – little touches!

Teaching your players some of the less discussed areas of a match situation will help them be better prepared in their initial experiences.

**Make sure your players understand:**

- The pre-match warm up (timings, usual shot sequence, etc).
- Spinning a racket / tossing a coin to determine who has the choice for the first game.
- The server's role in calling the score before the start of each point.
- How to behave on court (sportsmanlike conduct, not throwing the racket or using bad language).
- Shaking hands after the match.
- The British Tennis Fair Play values.

## VIEW ONLINE

How to score a tiebreak: [www.lta.org.uk/competitionresources](http://www.lta.org.uk/competitionresources)

The image shows a screenshot of a tennis score sheet. At the top, it says 'How to score a tiebreak scoring sheet'. Below this, there are two tables. The first table is a grid for recording points in a tiebreak, with columns for 'Player 1' and 'Player 2' and rows for '1st', '2nd', '3rd', '4th', '5th', '6th', '7th', '8th', '9th', '10th', '11th', '12th', '13th', '14th', '15th', '16th', '17th', '18th', '19th', '20th'. The second table is a larger grid for recording the overall match score, with columns for 'Game', 'Set', and 'Match' and rows for 'Player 1' and 'Player 2'.



## FAST4 TENNIS

FAST4 Tennis provides a simple, exciting way of speeding up a conventional tennis match. The fundamentals of tennis remain the same, but there are four rules that ensure matches are fast, competitive, exciting and can be completed in a reasonable period of time.

### How does it work?

- **First to four games wins**  
It doesn't matter how you get there, just make sure you do before your opponent does!
- **Tiebreaker at 3 games all**  
At 3 games all a tiebreak is played to 5 points. A deciding point will be played at 4 points all.
- **No ad scoring**  
If the score reaches deuce, it's a sudden death point. The receiver chooses which side to take the serve on. This also applies in doubles with the receiving pair deciding who receives the serve - however the pair cannot change positions. In mixed doubles the player of the same gender shall receive.
- **Play lets**  
If the serve clips the net and lands in the service box, there's no let and the ball is in play. If you are playing doubles either the receiver or the receiver's partner can play the return.



## TIMED TENNIS

A fun competition format which makes it easier for coaches / organisers to schedule their competition time as the length of each match is known. The time element increases the excitement and the concept can be used with a number of match formats, e.g. singles, doubles and team events.

It is also a great opportunity for ratings matches to take place in a coaching session. This will provide players with a stepping stone into further competition opportunities outside of the coaching programme.

### How does it work?

#### Red Ball Competition:

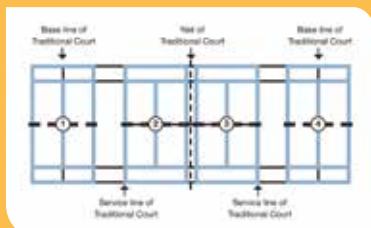
- 10 minutes per match.
- Counts for Mini Tennis Red match record.
- Each point won counts for one point.
- Each match is an extended tiebreak, e.g. 8-4, 12-6, 15-3.
- The player with the most points after 10 minutes wins.
- If scores are equal after 10 minutes a deciding point is played.
- Players to finish a point if started when 10 minutes is up.
- After the first point, players serve for two consecutive points then swap, like in a tiebreak.

#### Orange Ball Competition:

- 15 minutes per match.
- Counts for Mini Tennis ratings.
- Each point won counts for one point.
- Each match is an extended tiebreak, e.g. 12-5, 11-8.
- The player with the most points after 15 minutes wins.
- If scores are equal after 15 minutes a deciding point is played.
- Players to finish a point if started when 15 minutes is up.
- After the first point, players serve for two consecutive points then swap, like in a tiebreak.

### VIEW ONLINE

Setting up different court sizes for competition:  
[www.lta.org.uk/competitionresources](http://www.lta.org.uk/competitionresources)



**Green Ball Competition:**

- 20 minutes per match.
- Counts for Mini Tennis ratings.
- Normal game scoring with sudden death deuce (receiver picks the side they wish to receive).
- Each match is an extended set, e.g. 7-1, 8-0.
- If games played are equal after 20 minutes finish the game you are playing.
- If games played are not equal after 20 minutes, play must stop and the player with the most games wins.

**Yellow Ball Competition:**

- 20 minutes per match.
- Counts for AEGON British Tennis ratings.
- Counts for yellow ball ratings from 9.1 to 10.2 only.
- Mixed singles matches do count, however only at Grade 6 and 7.
- Each match is an extended set, e.g. 7-1, 8-0.
- Normal game scoring with sudden death deuce (receiver picks the side they wish to receive).
- If games played are equal after 20 minutes finish the game you are playing.
- If games played are not equal after 20 minutes, play must stop and the player with the most games wins.

## TOP TIPS

**Top Tips for Coaches / Organisers:**

- Matches should start and finish with whistle or claxon.
- Players should be encouraged to be as quick as possible between points.
- No need to change ends if playing indoors.
- Consider a timed tennis box league as a way of making good use of one hour court booking slots.

## TYPES OF RECREATIONAL COMPETITIONS

Recreational competitions are a great way to get adult and junior players on court and competing. This section gives practical examples of how coaches, volunteers and organisers can introduce fun and social informal competitions to their venue.

### BENENDEN TENNIS FESTIVALS

#### Overview

- **Benenden Tennis Festivals are a fantastic opportunity for clubs and venues throughout the country to host fun, themed competitions for local players. The festivals are a great way to encourage families to lead healthy lifestyles through tennis and be part of a health and wellbeing community that Benenden are at the heart of.**

#### Benefits

- A free themed pack to provide you with the resources and helpful tips needed to deliver a successful festival.
- A fantastic introduction to recreational competition for your players and a great way to create a fun atmosphere.
- Flexibility to deliver your event on a date that suits you.
- A great way of inspiring existing players and attracting new players to your venue.
- Opportunity to raise money for the venue by selling food and drink.

#### Organisation & activity

- The concept can be used with a number of match formats, e.g. singles, doubles and team events.
- Apply online ([www.lta.org.uk/benendentennisfestivals](http://www.lta.org.uk/benendentennisfestivals)) for your free

Benenden Tennis Festival pack(s) according to which of the following festivals you wish to deliver at your venue;

- **Aussie Open** – January/February
- **Girl, Set, Match (women/girls)** – March
- **Summertime Slam** – June/July
- **Monster Smash (Halloween)** – October/November
- Promote your event using posters, social media, email and word of mouth.
- Decorate your venue using the items in your pack and consider other ways you can make your event more exciting – provide food and drink that fits with the theme and encourage the players to bring props!

**In addition to the Benenden Tennis Festivals you could run a themed event based around one of the following events;**

- **‘Grand Slam’** – run a tournament at the same time as any of the other Grand Slams, offer food and drinks to match the tournament, such as wine and cheese at your French Open tournament or Wimbledon with players wearing all white clothing and offer strawberries and cream.
- **‘World Tour Finals’** – run this tournament during November for your top players. Consider playing late into the night with music during play, just like at the

Barclays ATP World Tour Finals.

- **‘Davis Cup’** – run this tournament during December by splitting everyone into small teams and players competing in both singles and doubles. All the teams should be named after a country – bring a flag!
- **Mini ‘Olympics-style’ Competition** – all players can be named after a country, competing in some tennis matches and other sports, such as 100m sprint, table tennis, etc. Who will win the most gold medals?
- **Christmas Cracker** – mulled wine,

mince pies and get the chairman to dress up as Santa!

## Secrets to Success

- Good local promotion
- Use music to create a fun environment
- Utilise the contents of the festival pack to theme your event and hand out prizes/giveaways
- Recruit a friendly organiser with lots of energy

## TEAM CONES

### Overview

- **A fun team competition which is usually played over a short period of time.**

### Benefits

- Opportunity to play lots of different people.
- Players compete as part of a team.
- It can be as quick as you like so works well if you only have a short time period.

### Organisation & activity

- Have two sets of coloured cones.
- Divide players into two teams - can be same or different numbers.
- Explain to the players they will play some singles matches and when they win a match they win a cone for their team. The team with the most cones at the end is the winning team.
- Line each team up behind one team cone.
- The first player in each line goes to court 1, next two players on court 2, etc.

- Each match is first to four points following tiebreak scoring rules.
- At the end of each match the winning player puts a cone onto the team cone stack and they can both join the back of their team line.
- The next two players go to the free court.
- If the teams have different numbers the player rotation will happen naturally. If they have the same number, organise players so they have different matches.
- At the end, count up the team cones and declare the winning team.

## QUORN FAMILY TENNIS CUP

### Overview

- The Quorn Family Tennis Cup is an informal, family doubles competition. Junior players play with an adult family member in a fun atmosphere at local venues. It encourages families to play tennis together, and eat healthy food to complement an active lifestyle.

### Benefits

- Provides venues with an opportunity to recruit potential new members in a fun and family-focussed environment.
- Venues are provided with a competition pack which includes promotional posters and banners, sign-up sheets, draw-sheets and prizes to give out to the participants.

### Organisation & activity

- Venues run a 1 to 2 hour fun competition during March, April or May.
- Held on a red sized court with soft (red) balls.
- Children aged 10 and under play doubles with an adult family member (18+).
- A small entry fee is encouraged so that venues cover their organiser costs.
- Winners of each Red Ball competition at each club earn an invite to a Red Ball Festival Day linked to an LTA Staged Grass Court event in June.

## HANDICAP SCORING

Many sports use handicap scoring systems – enabling the ‘rest’ to pit themselves against ‘the best’ on a level playing field.

### Overview

- **A tournament which is a real leveller as better players need to win more points to win a match.**

### Benefits

- Opportunity for all members to compete with an equal chance of winning.

### Organisation & activity

- Decide on when you are going to play the tournament, will it be over one weekend or six weeks?
- Decide which events and age groups you want to run, e.g. men’s and ladies’ singles, men’s and ladies’ doubles, mixed doubles.
- Ensure you publish that it will be using Handicap Scoring, and how it will be worked out.
- You need a small team of people to help decide the handicap score for each player. The best players should be on zero and others could be on another number up to around 15.
- Each set is the first to 31 points and you play best of three sets. Players serve for five points then change over.
- If one of the better players (handicap of 1) is competing against another player with a handicap of 8, then each set would start 7-0.
- Decide on when each round has to be played by.
- Arrange the finals day and make it a social event.

### Variations

- Play a doubles tournament where if you lose the first game you start the next game 15-0 up and so on. So if you lose the first three games you would start the next game 40-0 up.

# AMERICAN TOURNAMENT

## Overview

- A fun doubles tournament which usually takes place over an afternoon and gives players the opportunity to play with lots of different people.

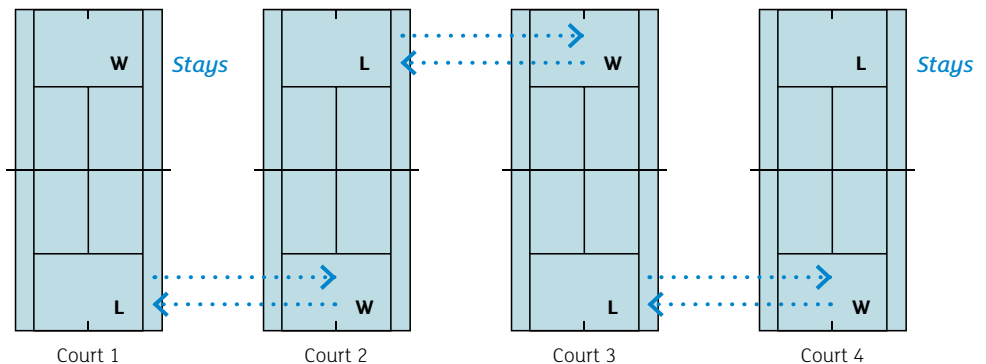
## Benefits

- Opportunity for everyone at the tennis venue to compete against each other in a fun tournament.
- Creates a great social atmosphere.

## Organisation & activity

- Once you know the number of players, courts and the time you want to finish you can decide on how many rounds you want to play and whether each match should be based on number of games or time.
- After the first round of matches, the winning doubles pair on each court will move up a court (usually towards the club house) and the losers move down a court. Pairs should split so you don't partner the same person!
- Ask players to bring a pen and paper so they can keep track of their scores. Get them to hand it in at the end so you can work out the top male and female players.

*"Top Spot"*





## INTERNAL BOX LEAGUES

### Overview

- **Good format for an internal singles league, with players competing against lots of different people.**

### Benefits

- Players compete in their own time and arrange their own matches.
- Creates activity at your venue during quieter periods.
- Suitable for players of all standards as you can have different boxes.

### Organisation & activity

- Put all the players into a box of between four to eight players.
- Set a deadline for when matches need to be completed.  
Chase players who don't play.
- Explain to players how the group will work, the scoring format (usual format is to play the best of two short sets with match tiebreak), and how the winner is calculated.
- Completing the scores - put a player's score in the horizontal box in the opponent's column, ensure scores are filled in for both players.
- The winner is usually the player with the most wins. If there is a two player tie, take the winner of the match between them. In the rare instance of a three player tie, calculate by sets or games.

### After the event / next step

- Introduce promotion and relegation and process the results for LTA ratings purposes.

### Variation

The different court size and balls used in Mini Tennis are a great tool to use for adults starting to compete. Starting beginner adult competition with an orange / green ball will give them time to learn the game.

## CLUB CHAMPIONSHIPS

### Overview

- The majority of tennis venues run an annual championship for their members. This is the opportunity for everyone at the venue to battle it out to become club champion.

### Benefits

- Players compete in their own time and arrange their own matches.
- Finals Day can be a fantastic competition spectacle and social event – make it the biggest of the year!

### Organisation & activity

- Decide when you are going to play the tournament. Will it be over one weekend or two months?
- Decide which events and age groups you want to run (i.e. men's / ladies' singles, doubles, mixed doubles, etc). Don't forget juniors and veterans.
- Decide on when each round has to be played by.
- Make the necessary arrangements about Finals Day and communicate to all venue members.

### After the event / next step

- Arrange the presentation and trophies for the winners – create a roll of honour board at the venue.
- Process the results for LTA ratings purposes.



## OPEN TOURNAMENTS

An open tournament is a competition which is open to players from your venue and the surrounding area. These competitions are graded (usually five or four) allowing players to be awarded rating wins and ranking points. The draw options could be an Elimination with consolation or Compass Draw.

**The formats appear in the LTA Competition Regulations and follow similar pre-event organisation:**

### Organisation

- Decide which events you wish to run (men's, ladies' or both) and the dates for the tournament.
- Organisers to contact the Regional Office so they can be informed about how a competition gets graded and added to the LTA website.
- TTP must be used to administer the tournament and will support the processing of results for ratings and rankings.
- Think about the entry administration - online entry and payment systems are available.
- Promote the tournament to your members and surrounding venues.

### Other considerations

- Discuss the tournament finances. To help reduce costs, consider using courts at off-peak times (at no / reduced rates) and request referee(s) from within the venue to organise the events at an agreed rate.
- Think about your target audience and what engages them on and off court (food / drink, other activities).
- The entry fee will differ across the country but feedback suggests a fee of £10 - £20 per event.

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