Operation of the BLT&SRC Tennis Singles League

The Tennis Singles League is mixed gender and open to all senior playing tennis members and junior members aged 14+; it has been popular ever since being introduced in 1993. A maximum of approximately 150 members applies (due to court-usage considerations) and a waiting list operates; but in practice, all new entrants are admitted at the end of the current playing round. A new league 'season' starts in July and usually runs until early the following May.

Playing Rules

(1a) The league is structured as a ladder of some 30 'boxes' each comprising 4-5 players. A playing round lasts 5-8 weeks, during which time each player plays one match against each opponent in their box. (b) All players are mutually responsible for contacting others to arrange matches. We strongly recommend using email and (c) each player is responsible for ensuring they can be reached by the email address held by the Club, and that they respond within a reasonable time to communications from other players in their box.

(2) **Match Format**. Please play each match to the approved *Two Short Sets* format: Two sets up to 5 (Standard Tie-break game at 4-4: i.e., first to get a 2-point lead and with at least 7 points). Then if you reach one set all: play a single 'Championship Tie-break' game in lieu of a final set (first to get a 2-point lead and with at least 10 points). This is an allowed format for Ratings-qualifying matches. We suggest booking 2 hours, to include a short (e.g. 5-10 minute max) knock-up. Please cancel your last booked slot if you finish earlier than that.

Scoring: The winner should post the score online as soon as practicable afterwards at https://www.bltsrc.co.uk/member/view_box*ssport*1 (please enter **both** your own **and** your opponent's score!). The winner of a completed match scores 10, the losing player's score is the total number of games they won throughout the match. E.g., if you won 5-4, 1-5, 1-0 you would post that as 10-9. For an incomplete match see 3b & c below. Please enter scores *carefully* in the correct rows/columns of the scoring webpage. If you have difficulties posting your score please inform us *promptly* – we can advise, or we'll just do it for you.

Walkovers!

(7b) To *claim* a walkover, post 'Walkover' for your own score - with 'Injured' (_not_ 0) for your opponent's *regardless of the actual reason for the claim*. For details about Walkovers see section 7 opposite.

Promotion & Demotion Process

4a) This takes place at the end of each round - based on players' total *games* won - not matches. As incentives to play, and to win - the scoring system automatically adds on a 'playing bonus' of 2 points for every match played, plus a further 2 for every (completed) match a player *won*. The winner of a box is promoted upwards by **2** boxes and the runner-up by **1** and the lowest scoring 2 players are demoted similarly, with exceptions applicable to the top 4 boxes (see 4b below) and to players meriting Fast-Track Promotion (see 5 below).

The Small Print

(3) **Defaults**. (a) If you are unable to play the remaining matches of a round for _any_ reason, post 'Injured' as your own score for each of the un-played matches as soon as possible, with 'Walkover' for your opponent's score. (b) Retirement. If your opponent retires once the match has started, post 10 for your own score, and for your opponent - the number of games they had won prior to retiring. (c) Abandonment. If you start a match, and then abandon _by mutual agreement_ – i.e., both of you needed to stop (e.g., adverse weather, out of time etc) - then the score is simply each player's games-won by the time you stopped. You may claim a walkover (see 7 below) against your opponent if they (d) cancel an agreed fixture, or (e) if they are not on court and ready within *10* minutes of your agreed starting time (i.e., a 'No Show'). (f) If you are the player offended by an opponent's default (or if match abandoned) we encourage you to agree a rescheduling to complete or replay the fixture, if possible, but you are not obliged to do so.

Promotion and Demotion (cont'd) (4b) The top-ranked player in each of boxes 2,3 & 4 and the bottom player in boxes 1 & 2 are moved by only one box level, not two. To accommodate the 3 newly promoted players arriving into Box 3, the 3 lowest-ranked are demoted from that box. (c) Please accept that some unexpected downward moves happen due to new entrants coming in above you. (d) Players must endeavour to play their matches: the Organiser may *reduce* the number of players promoted from a box (and similarly, increase the number demoted!) - to the extent that 50% or fewer of all matches in that box were played, regardless of the causes. (e) Players who play no matches for **2** successive rounds will be withdrawn automatically before the next round; (f) A Walkover result is deemed an un-played match for the purposes of rules 4d and 4e above.

(5) A '**Fast-Track Promotion**' scheme operates that overrides the normal 1 or 2 level promotion; it depends on a player's average games difference in their matches during the Round and on their distance measured downwards from the top of the league, whereby: (a) players who played at least 3 matches, lost none, and achieved an average games difference equating to *10-4 wins* across their results in a Round shall be promoted to a box number 20% numerically less than before (e.g. from box 30 to box 24, or from box 20 to box 16), similarly (b) for averaging 10-3 wins =25%, 10-2 =30%, 10-1 =40%, 10-0 =50% although (c) a ceiling of box 3 applies. (d) There is no equivalent fast-track demotion scheme. (e) The Fast-track scheme is not applied to players in the lowest boxes, at the Organiser's discretion.

(6) **Ties**. Regarding the ranking of players for promotion/demotion purposes - in the event of a tie, in which there is a subset of 2 or more players with equal totals of games-won, the Organiser ranks those players by considering, in the following order: (i) each player's *sub*total of games won solely from matches with others of the tying subset (including Walkovers), and only then: (ii) the total number of games conceded by each player across all their matches in the box.

(7) **Walkovers**. (a) You may claim a Walkover if your opponent (i) defaults for reason 3(d) or 3(e) above, or (ii) is unavailable to play or unresponsive via email given 2 'reasonable' requests offering dates, where the earliest of these offers was for a fixture *at least one week prior to the published end date* of the Round. You, the offended player, claim the walkover by the method described in 7b, (see Walkovers! opposite) and (c) must inform the offender by email on the same day. (d) When you post a Walkover, the System automatically awards you a notional match score of **9.** This is used only for promotion/ demotion purposes, i.e., no bonus points (see 4a) are awarded; walkover scores are ignored for Fast-track Promotion purposes and are excluded from historical records and ratings calculations. (e) Your own results may include no more than 2 Walkovers during a Round: excess Walkover results will be deleted. (f) Walkover results posted in favour of a player who has played no matches in the round shall be ignored/deleted.

(8) **Disputes**. In the event of a dispute between players, the Organiser, if requested, will attempt to facilitate an amicable resolution but will not adjudicate; we may treat a match as *unplayed* and annul the scores if it is apparent that those involved have not reached agreement by the close of the round.

Entering the League...

(9) Please: (a) Ensure all the contact details held by the Club about you are correct via the Club website's 'Search Members': https://www.bltsrc.co.uk/member/search_members - contact the Club to correct these if necessary;

(b) Email the Organiser with: (i) your name (plus, for a junior, that of parent/guardian), (ii) an indication of your **approximate starting box level** - talk to your coach or to other players you encounter e.g. at Club social doubles sessions, coaching squads, etc.

Organiser: Dan White (tennissinglesleague@bltsrc.co.uk)