



## Rules

### 1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1 All League competition shall be under the general management of the Hong Kong Ladies Tennis League (HKLTL) Committee.

1.2 The Committee shall consist of a Chairwoman or Co-Chairs, Treasurer, Secretary, Registrar, Scheduler, Social Coordinator and a Representative for each Division.

1.3 The Committee shall be responsible for:

- the registration of players and teams
- the grading of teams
- the division of teams
- the establishment of League schedules of play
- the arbitration of disputes between teams
- the management of funds

1.4 The Committee may, at its absolute discretion, vary or add to any aspect of the Rules and match scheduling, on a temporary or permanent basis. Any such Committee decisions will be communicated to all team captains. All Committee decisions will have been debated and are made in good faith. All Committee decisions are final.

1.5 All written communication to the Committee must comply with the guidelines below.

a. Written communication must come solely from team Captains. If other HKLTL players have legitimate matters to raise, this must be done via their Captains.

b. Written communication must be addressed solely to the relevant Division Representative, Secretary and Chairwoman. Only one written communication is allowed per team on any subject matter and must be factual and fewer than 500 words.

c. Written communications must be free from language that might be

perceived as impolite or threatening. Written communications must not make unsubstantiated allegations against any individual, team, the Committee or other member of the HKLTL. At the Committee's discretion, other content may also be deemed inappropriate.

d. There must be no lobbying by any other parties within or outside the HKLTL in relation to written communications.

e. Any written communication which does not comply with the above will be disregarded. Furthermore, depending on the nature of the noncompliance, and at the Committee's discretion, disciplinary action may apply including, but not limited to, suspension or permanent suspension or forfeiture of sets or matches. Past behaviour of the player or team will be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. The decisions of the HKLTL are final and no appeal is permitted.

1.6 The Committee shall decide on routine matters by Ordinary Resolution and non-routine matters by Special Resolution. An Ordinary Resolution may be passed by the Committee with a simple majority of more than 50% of the votes cast. A Special Resolution may only be passed by the Committee with at least 75% of the votes cast in its favour.

a. Routine matters set forth in rule 1.3 require an Ordinary Resolution. Non-routine decisions requiring Special Resolution include: major changes to match procedures, season duration or the number of divisions. The nature of resolution required on all other matters is at the discretion of the Chairwoman.

b. Special Resolutions require one week written notice to be given to Captains, who may then submit written communications on the matter in accordance with Rule 1.5. These communications will be shared with



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the entire Committee before the Special Resolution vote. There is no notice period or notification for Ordinary Resolutions.

c. Resolutions may be voted on at committee meetings, in which case only committee members present will be entitled to vote. Resolutions may also be voted on by email, in between committee meetings, in which case every committee member is entitled to vote.

d. Resolutions should be in the form of proposals to which each committee member can answer yes or no, rather than a menu of choices.

e. Where a committee member has self-interest in the outcome of a resolution, she must declare this to the Chairwoman in advance of the vote and the Chairwoman will decide whether it is appropriate to recuse the committee member from voting. When the outcome of a resolution will affect most HKLTL members or teams, recusing committee members may not be practical.

f. Committee members debating an issue in person must be respectful and concise. For resolutions made by email, each committee member may circulate one email to the Committee explaining their views on any proposed resolution, and this email must comply with rule 1.5c and be fewer than 500 words.

g. All decisions made by committee resolution will be final.

1.7 All matches are governed by the HKLTL and the International Tennis Federation Rules. The HKLTL booklet is available for download from the HKLTL website and players are responsible for making sure they are fully aware of the Rules.

### **2. REGISTRATION, ENTRIES AND ELIGIBILITY**

2.1 The season will consist of two sessions, commencing in September and January.

2.2 The maximum number of teams that may be registered for any season shall be 94 and the maximum number of teams per division is 12. Existing teams who re-register will have priority over new teams.

2.3 Registration of Teams: Entries for the League shall be invited before the beginning of each season from Clubs, Associations and any other interested persons.

a. Team Captains shall submit the Registration Form for their team, nominating a minimum of 6 players and a maximum of 12.

b. Full names and HKID numbers of team members, and the Captain's email address must be provided.

c. Players must be residing in Hong Kong for the year they have registered to play, and may be asked to provide proof of residency.

d. For teams re-registering, 4 players must be from the previously registered team, or they will be considered a NEW team.

e. All new teams must consist of a minimum of 4 players or 50%, whichever is the greater, at the level of the division they wish to be placed in.

2.4 Allocation of days for matches:

Monday	Division 5
Tuesday	Division 4
Wednesday	Division 3
Thursday	Division 2
Friday	Premier and Division 1

2.5 The registration fee per team for each year will be decided by the Committee and should be fully tendered when each Registration Form is submitted. No refunds will be given to teams for late withdrawals or if the season is cut short.

2.6 Once the registration deadline has passed, no player transfer to another team is allowed unless:

- the Captains of both teams, and the player concerned, all agree; or
- geographical relocation prevents



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that player from continuing to represent her original team; or  
c. there are other exceptional circumstances.

In all cases, the Captains and the player concerned must write to the Registrar explaining the reasons for the transfer. The transfer must be done prior to the first match of the season for the relevant division and will not be effective until approval is received from the Registrar and/or Division Representative.

2.7 Should a team withdraw after the Registration deadline:

- a. prior to match schedules being set, players of that team will be permitted to play for another team.
- b. after match schedules have been set, players of that team will not be permitted to play for any team as a member or as a guest for the upcoming year.
- c. exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Committee.

2.8 A Captain may on behalf of a player apply to the Committee for downwards regrading using a Re-grading Request Form ("RRF") which shall include: the player's written consent, valid reasons for downwards regrading and such other information as the Committee may deem appropriate. The RRF must be accompanied by an independent online assessment in support of the downwards regrading from a Coach on the HKLTL Approved List. The application will be reviewed by the Committee whose decision is final.

2.9 Players holding, or having held, a WTA ranking are not allowed to play in the HKLTL. All other players are allowed at the Committee's discretion. New players must complete a New Player Questionnaire which should provide a full and complete representation of the individual's playing history in all tennis leagues, local and overseas, and any kind of

ranking ever held. New players to all Divisions except Premier must also be assessed by a HKLTL-nominated coach, listed on the website, and a Coach's Assessment form must be submitted for that player. Non-disclosure of ranking and inappropriate use of higher graded players will be penalized by forfeiture of all points won by such players.

2.10 No player under the age of 18 years may register in the League.

### 3. ADDING OR DELETING PLAYERS

Players may be added or deleted from the commencement of the Fall / Spring session until four weeks after the first match of the respective division.

3.1 New members may be added by the Captain on the HKLTL website. Please allow up to one week for a player to be approved for play by the Registrar and/or Division Representative.

3.2 All sets played by an unregistered player shall be forfeited.

3.3 When a player has withdrawn from a team, that player may not register with another team during the same year. The player may return to her original team, should the circumstances for her withdrawal from the League change.

### 4. GUEST PLAYERS

4.1 Teams may use a maximum of 12 guest players. Guest players may play a combined total of 12 matches in any combination throughout the year. If a guest player plays at least six matches and wins at least 50 percent of their sets in those matches, the Committee will review their performance and may, if considered appropriate, regrade the player to a higher division at the end of the season.



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4.2 Guest players (except for Division 5) must be registered as a member of a team in a lower division (for example, if registered in Division 3, a player may guest for any division higher than Division 3). Captains must register their guest players using the form on the HKLTL website.

4.3 Division 5 may register guest players who are not currently playing in the League. In this case, their playing level should be appropriate to the division. See New Player Registration requirements (Rule 2.9).

4.4 A guest player may guest for one team only. However, if by the end of the Fall session, she has not played a match for that team, she may register to guest for another team in Spring.

4.5 Guest players may be added throughout the year.

4.6 Guest players must be approved by the Registrar and/or Division Representative prior to playing in their first match.

### 5. MATCH PROCEDURE

5.1 The date and location of match play is fixed by the Scheduler. A match schedule will include: participating clubs, associations and teams, Captains' names and telephone numbers. Captains should review the match schedule carefully.

5.2 The visiting team remains on the courts they started on.

5.3 Six new balls must be provided by the home team and must comply with ITF regulations.

5.4 A doubles format will be used and play shall be continuous from the first point of each set until the set is concluded. Each team will field two pairs, who will play two tie-break sets against each pair of the opposing team.

a. A 5-minute warm up between opponents is permitted before sets 1 and 3.

b. Twenty seconds are allowed between the end of one point and the start of the next.

c. Except for after the first game of each set (when no interval is allowed), a 90-second interval is allowed between games during the change of ends.

d. At the end of sets 1 and 3, a 2-minute interval is allowed.

e. At the end of each set, a brief toilet break is permitted (see Rule 7.5).

f. Between sets 2 and 3, up to a 10-minute break is allowed (see Rule 7.5).

g. No breaks are permitted before and during a tie-break.

5.5 The "official start time" is 9:30 am. Courts must be available at 9:00 am for warm-up.

a. A player who is not ready to play within 15 minutes of the official start time forfeits the first set.

b. A player who is not ready to play within 45 minutes of the official start time forfeits the first 2 sets. If the other pairs have not yet completed their first 2 sets, she may wait to play her remaining 2 sets.

c. A player who shows up at/after the official start time is entitled to only a 5-minute warm up with her opponents.

d. If a team does not show up within 1 hour of the official starting time, a 'walkover' will be declared. Any mitigating circumstances causing the late arrival will be considered by the Committee if reported within 7 days of the match.

5.6 Both Captains must identify players' full names and guest players on the weekly Score Sheet. It is the responsibility of the HOME team to email (not SMS) the Score Sheet, without delay, to the Division Representative.



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5.7 During match play, no interference is allowed from non-playing members, coaches or spectators. Coaching is acceptable between sets 2 and 3.

5.8 Players must complete all their sets. Failure to observe this rule, including leaving the court perimeter without reasonable excuse, will result in the forfeiture of incomplete and un-played sets by the player. Completed sets will stand but the player will not be permitted to continue against the other pair.

### 6. SCORING

6.1 One point will be awarded for each set won.

6.2 In the event of a walkover, 8 points will be given to the team awarded the walkover.

6.3 Winners of each division will be decided on point score aggregate. At the end of the year, should two or more teams achieve the same point score aggregate, a count back on matches won will decide the winner. If both teams won the same number of matches, then both teams will be declared co-winners.

6.4 At the end of each year of play, the winning team(s) from each division will automatically be promoted to a higher division while the lowest-scoring team(s) from each division will automatically be re-assigned to a lower division. Where either the Fall or Spring session is complete but the full year of play is cut short, the winning team(s) from each division of the completed session will automatically be promoted to a higher division while the lowest-scoring team(s) from each division of the completed session will automatically be re-assigned to a lower division.

6.5 At the discretion of the Committee, other teams may be promoted or demoted, to allow for more even grading of teams, and to facilitate the overall running of the League.

### 7. INJURIES AND BATHROOM USE

7.1 If a player sustains an injury on court resulting in bleeding and/or vomiting, play can be suspended for up to 15 minutes, to enable the player to assess and recover (with the exception of 7.2 and 7.3 below). Injury time-outs, for matters such as muscle cramping, should be taken at the change of ends or sets during match play unless it's an on-court injury. If a player is unable to resume play after the initial 15-minute injury time-out, she and her partner forfeit that set and any remaining sets with the same opposing pair. She may elect to play subsequent sets against the other opposing pair; however, only one injury time-out is permitted per person, per match. In 7.2 and 7.3, the 3-minute medical time-out will serve as that player's only medical time out for the match.

Example: Player A is injured while playing set 1 and is unable to resume play within 15 minutes. She and her partner will forfeit sets 1 and 2. They are eligible to play sets 3 and 4 but no further medical time-out for Player A is allowed.

7.2 If a player calls an injury time-out during a tie-break, she will forfeit one point and may only take a 3-minute break. Otherwise, the set is forfeited and a 15-minute injury time-out may be taken.

7.3 If a player calls an injury time-out at set point, she will forfeit one point and may only take a 3-minute break. Otherwise, the set is forfeited and a 15-minute injury time-out may be taken.

7.4 If a player is injured during the



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warm-up between 9:00-9:30 am, that player may be replaced by another team member prior to 9:30 am. If she arrives after the official starting time, Rule 5.5 takes effect.

7.5 A brief bathroom break is permitted between each set. A longer break of up to 10 minutes may be taken between sets 2 and 3.

7.6 ALL PLAYERS PLAY AT THEIR OWN RISK. The HKLTL and any participating teams will not be held responsible for any illnesses suffered or any injury sustained by a player during a match.

### 8. INTERRUPTION OF PLAY

If a match cannot be completed because courts are not available for play beyond 1 pm, then another date must be arranged as per rule 9.4. The host captain should determine court availability and make a decision PRIOR to starting the final sets. On the rescheduled date, the remaining sets are to be played in accordance with rules 9.2, 9.3 and 9.5.

### 9. INCLEMENT WEATHER & MATCH RESCHEDULING

9.1 A match may only be rescheduled once due to weather.

a. In case of wet weather, BOTH captains must be in agreement about court playability for a match to proceed. It is not necessary for both Captains to attend the venue to come to such an agreement. However, if they cannot agree, scheduled players from both teams must attend the venue to determine if the court is playable. If play cannot commence by 10.00am, the match will be rescheduled once.

b. In case of a Very Hot Weather warning before 9.00am, matches must proceed under a no-ad format. Matches will be played without an ad; when the score is at deuce, the next point will determine the game. The receiving pair will decide who will receive serve at deuce.

c. When the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is at 8 or above before 9:00 am, both Captains must agree to play, otherwise the match will be rescheduled once.

d. If a venue is closed due to high winds, the match will be rescheduled once.

9.2 If play is suspended due to weather-related events, only the completed sets will count in the rescheduled match. Any incomplete sets will need to be restarted from the beginning in the rematch. For example, if both teams won two sets, and they were both in the middle of their 3rd sets, then at the rematch, both teams must restart their 3rd sets regardless of the score in that set.

9.3 On the rescheduled match day, all team members are eligible to play, subject to the following conditions:

a. If one court has completed all 4 sets then none of the 4 players who have already completed their 4 sets may play in the rescheduled match (i.e. no player can play more than 4 sets per match).

b. Team members who participated in the original match must remain partners in the rescheduled match if both are playing.

9.4 The Division Representative must be copied on all correspondence regarding the rescheduled match.

a. Within 48 hours, the home team must offer three dates over a three-week period from the original match date and they must not fall within one week, on a holiday or during a holiday break or on a scheduled match date for either team.

b. If there are fewer than three weeks left in the season, dates offered will span the remaining week(s), including the rain-off week.

c. When a match needs to be rescheduled in the final rain-off week, dates must be on or before the final rain-off date. The final rain-off date is consid-



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ered a match day.

d. The away team must accept one of the offered dates within 24 hours of receiving them. If the home team cannot secure courts, a change of venue is permitted.

e. If no agreement can be reached within 72 hours on a day within the three-week period, there will be a designated day for the rescheduled match in the fourth week after the original match date:

Premier and Division 1 – Wednesday

Division 2 – Tuesday

Division 3 – Monday

Division 4 – Friday

Division 5 – Thursday

9.5 At the time of the rescheduled match, if weather prevents play again, both teams must go to the venue to split points. The only exceptions to the rule: if the venue is closed due to high winds, and/or if the Hong Kong Observatory issues the following warnings – Amber, Red or Black Rain alert, then points will be split evenly between the two teams. In all other cases:

a. If only one team goes to the venue, then that team will receive all eight points.

b. If neither team goes to the venue, then both teams will receive zero points.

c. Splitting un-played sets due to weather: all sets played, stand. The remaining un-played sets will be split. This may result in 0.5 points being awarded in the case of an odd number of sets remaining.

### 10. PROTESTS

10.1 Protests concerning a breach of the rules should be lodged by a team captain, in writing only, to the Division Representative, Secretary and Chairwoman within 7 days of the date on which the alleged breach of the Rules occurred. Only one protest communication may be submitted by

the captain and this should be direct, factual and less than 500 words. Following a protest, the team or player(s) concerned will be notified of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond. At the Chairwoman and/or Division Representative's discretion, further information may then be sought from the parties involved.

10.2 The team captains and players involved on both sides of the protest shall not, under any circumstances, engage in lobbying to support their position and will direct all communications on the protest to the Division Representative, Secretary and Chairwoman only.

10.3 The Committee, in its absolute discretion, may determine the outcome of any protest and may impose sanctions including, but not limited to, suspension or permanent suspension of players, team captain(s) and/or teams, forfeiture of sets or matches. Three protests made against the same team or player in a two year period may result in suspension or permanent suspension of team captain(s) and/or player(s).

10.4 Disciplinary decisions made by the HKLTL Committee are final and no appeal is permitted. (i) Failure to follow this complaints process, (ii) any bad-faith Protests or (iii) failure to accept the decision of the HKLTL Committee in good faith may result in further HKLTL sanctions.

### 11. ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

11.1 The HKLTL supports a tennis environment that is conducive to the enjoyment of the sport: free from threats, harassment and any type of bullying behaviour. We support diversity and the respect of others regardless of culture, ethnicity, belief, social/economic status, sexual orientation, family status, physical appearance, ability and circumstances.



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11.2 Bullying is unwanted aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. Bullying not tolerated by the HKLTL includes physical, verbal, social, relational aggression, prejudicial, sexual and cyber bullying. Any HKLTL player or team who engages in any act that constitutes bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including, but not limited to, suspension and/or forfeiture of sets or matches. The severity and pattern of such behaviour will be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. The decisions of the HKLTL Committee in this regard are final and no appeal is permitted.

11.3 Follow 10.1 guidelines for lodging complaints in regards to 11.2 bullying.

### **12. MOBILE PHONES AND SMART WATCHES**

12.1 Mobile phones, activity trackers, and smart watches must be silenced at all times. Use of any such devices for communications is permitted between sets 2 and 3 only.

12.2 A penalty of one set will be taken, from the set being played, and awarded to the opposing team. The penalty should be taken at the time of the rule violation, and not at a later instance.



## Basic Tennis Facts

### 1. NON-UMPIRED MATCHES

- a. The game of tennis depends on courtesy and fairness.
- b. The server announces the set score before starting a game and the game score before each point.
- c. Each player is responsible for the decisions on their half of the court. Each player should be completely honest with all calls made.
- d. The server shall not serve until the receiver is ready.
- e. Service calls: when receiving the serve, the partner of the receiver generally calls the service line for her while the receiver generally calls the center and side service lines.
- f. Serve hits the receiver or her partner before the ball bounces; the point is awarded to the server.
- g. A ball touching any part of the line is good. A ball is only "out" if a gap can be seen between the line and the ball. If there is any doubt about a call, the ball is "in" and no "let" should be played.
- h. "Out" calls reversed or disagreed upon: if an "out" call is corrected, the point goes to the opponents. If a player calls "out" and her partner calls "in", doubt has been raised, and the point goes to the opponents.
- i. Calls of "out" and "let" must be made instantly, audibly and visibly before the opponent has hit the return or the return has gone out of play. Otherwise, the ball remains in play. A delay in making the call implies that the ball was not seen clearly and is therefore "in".
- j. Playing or catching a ball before it bounces: if a player hits a ball that looks like it will land "out" before it bounces, she cannot make a claim on that point and the ball remains in play. If a player catches a ball before it bounces, the point goes to the opponents.
- k. Wide balls can be returned around the net post: a wide ball returned from outside the court may legally be hit around the net post so long as it

lands in the opponent's court on the first bounce.

- l. Disagreement on scores: if players cannot agree on the score, they should calmly discuss the points under dispute. If they fail to agree, they should go back to the last score on which they agree and resume play from that point.

- m. Ball marks: players are prohibited from checking ball marks on their opponents' side of the court, unless invited to do so. Ball mark inspections are only permitted on clay courts.

- n. Self-policing: players must volunteer honestly against themselves on violations such as double bounce, ball touching the body or clothing, touching the net or reaching over the net.

- o. Talking during points: there should be no conversation during the course of play other than brief instructions to your partner such as "mine", "out", "run" or "bounce it".

- p. Unsportsmanlike conduct: it is against all regulations to use loud, abusive or profane language, and to engage in racquet-throwing, slamming of balls, or intentional waving of the racquet or arms. Making distracting noises, clapping for one side only, continuous strolling to use towels or to get a sip of water, to rest between points or make a comedy of the match is also unacceptable.

### 2. SPECTATORS

Spectators and coaches should not be on the court at any time. Spectators or coaches may not volunteer advice on line calls, scoring or the conduct of the match. Coaching can only be done during the break between sets 2 and 3.

### 3. LETS

- a. Serve touches the net and lands "in": any player may call a "let" and the serve should be replayed.

- b. Serve touches the net then hits the receiver or her partner: this constitutes a "let" and the serve should be replayed.



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- c. Interruption during the delivery of a second serve: the server receives two serves.
- d. A ball from an adjacent court: when a ball interrupts play, either by rolling or bouncing onto the court, or creating a visible interruption behind the court, a "let" may be called by any player on the affected court and the point shall be replayed.
- e. Involuntary hindrance (ball falling out of pocket, hat falling off, etc.): the first time, a "let" is called. Any subsequent recurrences will result in the loss of a point.

### 4. FOOT FAULTS

During the service motion, the server shall not:

- a. Change position by walking or running (slight movements of the feet are permitted), or
  - b. Touch the baseline or the court with either foot, or
  - c. Touch the area outside the imaginary extension of the sideline with either foot, or
  - d. Touch the imaginary extension of the centre mark with either foot.
- Any of the above constitutes a foot fault. In a non-umpired match, a player may warn an opponent that she has committed a foot fault. Unless an official can be located, no other action may be taken.



### How To Play a Tie-Break

- Numerical scoring is used throughout the tie-break.
- The player whose turn it is to serve next, starts the tie-break by serving the first point from the Deuce court. After that, each player in turn serves 2 points, always beginning on the Ad court, and adhering to the service order of that set.
- Players change ends after every six points and at the conclusion of the tie-break game. The first pair to reach 7 points wins the tie-breaker (and the set) provided they do so with a margin of 2 points. Otherwise, at 6-all, the game continues until a 2-point margin is achieved.
- If a player serves out of turn or from the wrong half of the court, all play resulting from the error stands, but service will assume the correct order/side immediately.
- In the following set, the pair who served first in the tie-break will receive first.