

Guide to Managing and Avoiding Disputes

Weekly league matches should be a celebration of tennis where we all do our utmost to promote good sportsmanship, collegiality within our teams and fellowship with our competitors.

Protests can often be avoided with improved communication between teams and a better knowledge of the HKLTL Rule Book. When a protest is received, oftentimes there are two different versions of events and the Committee has no way to determine which version of events to believe. This can cause ill feeling between the teams involved, and sometimes even results in warnings or sanctions against one or both sides.

Captains (or their Acting Captain where they are not in attendance) are responsible to ensure the sportsmanlike behaviour of their teammates, to bring calm and common sense resolution to any incidents which arise, and where possible to avoid protests arising.

Each team should print out and bring a Rule Book with them during matches. If a team believes that a Rule has been broken, they should very calmly and politely advise the opposing team of the Rule breach, and where possible give them the chance to rectify the matter. If there is a refusal to rectify the matter, or a difference of opinion on the Rules, then they should further politely inform the opposing team that they reserve the right to protest, and then play on, without any display of anger or rudeness. It is important that the game and set where the incident happens are identified.

Some specific points which might be helpful to you in avoiding disputes:

- Each player is responsible for the decisions on their half of the court meaning points should not be replayed (see Basic Tennis Facts 1c).
- The server should announce the set score before starting a game and the game score before each point (see Basic Tennis Facts 1b). If the receiver fails to challenge this before the serve then this is deemed acceptance of the score.
- The server should not serve until the receiver is ready (see Basic Tennis Facts 1d).
- Injury time-outs for matters such as muscle cramping should be taken at the change of ends or sets during match play. Play may only be suspended for up to 15 minutes and only one injury time-out is permitted per person per match (see Rule 7 for further details).
- Play may only be stopped during a game for on-court injuries resulting in bleeding and/or vomiting. In these cases an injury time-out for up to 15 minutes may be taken (see Rule 7 for further details).
- The home team is responsible for the behaviour of its spectators, and if spectators are behaving poorly then the home team is responsible to take timely strong and active measures to warn and control their supporters. If the visiting team politely complain about the behaviour of spectators, and the home team take this complaint seriously and follow up with timely appropriate remedial action, then leniency is encouraged from the visitors.

Writing a protest is a last resort if you absolutely cannot resolve your issue. Captains are reminded to read Rules 10.2 and 1.5 before they lodge a complaint and to strictly comply with the guidance therein (including the 500 word limit) for communication with the Committee.