

HOVINGHAM AND DISTRICT MIXED TENNIS LEAGUE RULES 2026

- 1 Matches** will consist of 9 rubbers of 9 games each (changing ends after 5 games), and will start at 6:30pm. A home team with three courts has the discretion to start at 7:00pm but must so advise their opponents at least one week in advance of the fixture. The home team will provide light refreshments (unless a tea has been organised) and tennis balls (four per court), new for Divisions 1 and 2, good-condition for Division 3.

- 2 Scoring**

The winner of the match will receive two points, the loser nil. All scorecards are to be sent by email to the Secretary by the Home team within 24 hours of the match. The home team is responsible for retaining the hard-copy signed scorecard until the end of the season.

- 3 Promotion and Relegation**

In the 2026 league structure, just one team will be relegated and promoted from each division. The position of each team in each table is to be resolved firstly by points and then by overall games difference. If still equal, then by the games difference from the fixtures between the equally-placed teams.

In the event of an eligible team not wishing to stay in or be promoted to Division 1, that team will start in Division 3 the following season.

For clarification, please note that promotion and relegation takes place in the full ordered list of teams. If the structure of the league is different the following season, then a change of division for a “promoted” or “relegated” team may not take place.

- 4 Forfeited Matches**

If a team fails to fulfil a fixture, the result shall be a win by the other team while the conceding team shall have a point deducted from its total. The match score will be determined in accordance with the most favourable (for the non-conceding team) of (i) 41 games (ii) the average number of games it has won in fully-completed matches over the whole season or (iii) the games won in the equivalent fixture, if played that season.

- 5 Postponed Matches.**

A match may only be postponed in the event of bad weather and for no other reason. Matches rearranged for non-weather reasons will result in a one-point penalty for both teams.

In 2026, no rain rearrangements will take place in Divisions 1 and 2 and each team in a rained-off match will receive one point and zero games difference.

Rain rearrangements will take place in Division 3 in 2026. The rearranged match is to be played on the first Monday in August that has not already been designated as a league match or a postponement day for either team. If both teams agree to an earlier date, this is also acceptable. No games will be played on or after Monday 31-August and any games that have been impossible to rearrange after that date will result in one point for each team.

In the event of a match being brought to a premature conclusion because of adverse weather, the result will be decided:

- If one team has scored 41 or more games when the match is abandoned, the team with more games will win and the score at the time of abandonment will stand.
- If neither team has scored 41 or more games but a total of 41 games or more have been played, the score at the point of abandonment can stand if both captains so agree.
- In any other eventuality, the match must be re-arranged.

The home captain is responsible for players' safety and will normally have the final say if there is a dispute about the suitability of the conditions.

- 6 Teams** are to consist of three men and three ladies wherever possible but:

- A lady (or ladies) may replace a man (or men), but no more than three men may play.

- b) Teams in Divisions 2 and 3 (and B-teams in Division 1) may replace one lady with a boy aged 14 or under in a match. A team may only do this a maximum of three times in a season. [For clarification, this could be three different boys or the same boy three times].
- c) (i) If a team in Division 2 or 3 (or a B-team in Division 1) can raise five players but not six, the 3rd pair can be played by a single person who will operate in the doubles court. The three players will each serve three times in rotation.
- (ii) A person can only play once as a singles player per season. If a team wants to play five players on a second (or later) occasion, they must choose a singles player who has not already played as a singles player for this or any other team.
- (iii) A singles player can only record a maximum score of 5-4 on the scorecard regardless of the actual playing score.
- d) The minimum requirement for any team is two pairs.

All such variations must be clearly marked on the scorecard.

- 7 Nominated Players.** All A-teams are to nominate four regular players (two men and two ladies) to the Secretary before the start of the season. These four will not be able to play for B or C teams that season and, if they do, the nominated players will not count any games they score in the relevant lower-team match. [‘Regular’ means that the player will play in at least 50% of the league fixtures this season. Breaches of this rule will incur sanctions as determined by the Organising Group].
- 8 Injuries.** In the event of a player being injured during a match and being unable to continue, no other player may be substituted. Any games already played by the injured party will stand and the remaining games not played will be scored to the opposing team.
- 9 LTA-Ranked Players and LTA-accredited coaches.** May only play in a club’s top (or only) team. Pairs including such a person in Division 3 may only score a maximum of 5-4 each rubber on the scorecard. FYI, this does not affect LTA-rated players (different from ranked).
- 10 Queries and disputes** will be referred to the Organising Group who may seek advice from independent clubs. All sides have the right to be heard.

11 Spirit of the League

These rules are not exhaustive and it is up to clubs and captains to ensure that there is a spirit of fair play. Clubs should remember that this is a social league. In particular:

- a) Teams should play players of an appropriate standard in all matches;
- b) Teams are responsible for applying Rules 6, 7, 9, 10 and 11 fairly.

Breaches of the Spirit of the League will be considered by the Organising Group who have the power to apply sanctions in accordance with Rule 10.

12 Advice, not Rules:

- a) In April and August, 2-court clubs should start at least one pair at 6:00pm.
- b) Bearing in mind that the weather is local and fickle and weather forecasts are notoriously pessimistic, cancellations before 4:00pm on the day of the match should be frowned upon.
- c) The courtesies re teas are normally that teams either reciprocate home/away or pay for their away tea if they are not reciprocating at home.
- d) It is a courtesy to be ready to play at the appointed start time or be prepared to forfeit games.
- e) Clean and polish all cups before returning them.

- 13 The Brotherton Cup:** All members of Hovingham League Clubs are eligible to play, provided that they have played at least four matches in the Hovingham League that season. There are firm rules (as laid out in italics below) which must be adhered to.

*Cut-off date for entries is as promulgated. Maximum entries: 16 couples.
 Don't turn up on the day without registering. Don't register and then fail to turn up.
 Turn up for the regulation start – or don't play. Follow rules on food.*