

Hampshire SRA

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight (including Guernsey) Squash & Racketball Association

Squash League Rules from 2016 (updated August 2022)

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Hampshire SRA (“HSRA”) wishes to run league competitions. These are administered on behalf of the committee of HSRA (“the Committee”) by the League Organiser.
- 1.2. These leagues provide for competition among clubs which are located within the county and affiliated to England Squash (ES), as defined in the Constitution of HSRA. Nearby clubs who are affiliated to ES but are outside the county may also be admitted to play in the leagues, at the discretion of the League Organiser.
- 1.3. All players in the leagues must represent participating clubs, as defined in Rule 1.2 (“Participating Clubs”) and – as such – be members of ES.

2. Application of Rules

- 2.1. These rules (“the Rules”) apply to the Main, Ladies and Veterans leagues of HSRA. Any variations are detailed in the Rules.
- 2.2. The Rules may not cover every situation, but members are expected to comply with their general principles in any case of doubt. On behalf of the Committee, the League Organiser has the right to adjudicate over any ambiguity, to ensure fair play.
- 2.3. Any appeal against a decision of the League Organiser in the interpretation of the Rules should be made, in writing, to the League Organiser. It will then be referred to the Appeals Sub-Committee, acting on behalf of the Committee, for review and decision. The decision of the Appeals Sub-Committee will be communicated to the parties concerned by the League Organiser.
- 2.4. Any appeal against the decision of the Appeals Sub-Committee should be made, in writing, to the League Organiser. It will then be referred to the Committee for a decision and the decision of the Committee shall be final and binding.

3. League Administration and Registration

- 3.1. League administration will utilise a web-based league management system (“LMS”).
- 3.2. Registration forms to enter teams for the following season will be available (normally by means of updating team details online, in LMS) at least one month before the HSRA’s AGM), and will include details of registration fees.
- 3.3. Dates during which matches will not be scheduled (such as Christmas and Easter) will be preset in the system. Clubs may rule out other dates when registering (updating team details in LMS) up to a maximum of 25% of available dates.
- 3.4. Registration in this manner should be complete prior to the AGM.

- 3.5. All clubs must have paid their team registration fees by the date of the teams' first match. Teams that have not paid by this time will forfeit all points won until paid.
- 3.6. In the event of any other fees or charges which may become due not being paid within a reasonable time, the Participating Club may be removed from the current leagues and/or not allowed to enter the leagues in the following season, at the discretion of the League Organiser, subject to Rule 2.
- 3.7. Any Club not represented at the AGM will be fined £10.
- 3.8. The draft fixture list will be produced within one month of the AGM.
- 3.9. LMS passwords will be issued to club contacts by the League Organiser prior to the first club match.

4. League Structure

- 4.1. There will be a Main League, open to all players from Participating Clubs. At the end of the season, the winners of the top division in this league will be the Hampshire League Champions.
- 4.2. There will be a Ladies League, open to all female players from Participating Clubs. At the end of the season, the winners of the top division in this league will be the Hampshire Ladies League Champions.
- 4.3. There will be a Veterans League, open to all male players (aged 45 and over) and all female players (aged 40 and over) from Participating Clubs. At the end of the season, the winners of the top division in this league will be the Hampshire Veterans League Champions.
- 4.4. The number of divisions in each league and the structure of the leagues will be determined annually by the League Organiser, after clubs have indicated the number of teams they will be entering in the leagues for the coming season and a draft will normally be available at the AGM.
- 4.5. There will normally be approximately 10 teams per division.
- 4.6. Relegation and promotion in the leagues will normally be two teams promoted and two teams relegated.
- 4.7. Where teams are equal on points for and against at the end of the season, the team with the most number of matches won is considered to be better. If there is still a tie, then the results between the teams concerned will be the deciding factor. If these should be identical, the overall points for and against each team for the season will be taken into account.
- 4.8. A trophy will be presented to the winner of each league at the following AGM.

5. Teams

- 5.1. Teams will normally consist of five players per side, but this may be varied under Rule 4.4.
- 5.2. All participating players must be affiliated to ES. A one point penalty will be applied to any player who does not have a current valid ES number.
- 5.3. In any given league, a player may not play for more than one club in any one season, without (in exceptional circumstances) the express, written permission of the League Organiser. If a club uses a player in a league

who has already represented another Hampshire League club in that league during that season (without the prior express permission of the League Organiser), the match - that is all strings - will be forfeit and the points awarded to the opponents.

- 5.4. Any player who has not played for his/her club in any team earlier in the season may not play in the club's final four matches in that league (unless playing as an unranked player, if permitted to do so, under the terms set out in Rule 7).

6. Fixtures

[See Explanatory Note 1]

- 6.1. In each division, each team will play each other team once at home and once away. The fixture list will schedule each team to play each other team once before the end of the year and once in the following year.
- 6.2. All first half matches must be completed before the second half matches start and all second half matches must be completed by the published league end date. (This Rule applies notwithstanding 6.4 and 6.5 below.)
- 6.3. The fixtures, as published on LMS, determine when and where matches should be played.
- 6.4. Any conflict or problem with the fixtures list should be identified at the start of the season. Any team wishing to make a change should firstly agree the change with the opposing team (as far in advance of the original fixture date as possible) and secondly inform the League Organiser (as soon as possible and certainly before the original date of the match). The League Organiser will update LMS (and thereafter Rule 6.3 again applies).
- 6.5. Any such change, as set out in 6.4 above, should normally be agreed by the end of September. Thereafter, it is anticipated that any change will be only in exceptional circumstances, such as extreme weather. However, where a fixture is to be changed, the revised date must be agreed between the two clubs and advised to the League Organiser before the originally scheduled date or else Rules 6.3 and 6.6 will apply.
- 6.6. If a team does not turn up for a match, a walkover will be declared and the opponents will win all the points.
- 6.7. In addition, the team not turning up will receive a penalty of half the maximum points score for a match.
- 6.8. If an away team fails to turn up for a match or cancels with less than 24 hours' notice, the home team may incur financial losses in respect of bookings for courts and/or catering. On production of suitable evidence to the League Organiser, the home team may claim compensation from HSRA of up to £10 per string in the match in respect of losses actually incurred. In these circumstances, the away team will be fined the same amount by the Committee, which – subject to any appeal – should be paid within 28 days.
- 6.9. If a team has two walkovers awarded against it, it is expelled from that season's league and all of its previous matches are declared void.
- 6.10. Any team which is penalised a total of three times under Rules 6.7 and/or 8.6 is expelled from that season's league and all of its previous matches are declared void.

- 6.11. Where a club has more than one team in the same division, the fixtures between those teams must be played before other fixtures in each half of the season.

7. Ranking of Players

- 7.1. In respect of each league in which a club participates and prior to its first match of the season, each club shall input a ranked list of players on to LMS (including ES numbers), as the basis of team selection. This ranking should be a genuine representation of players' relative abilities.
- 7.2. Where players are eligible to play in more than one league, the rankings must be consistent across the different leagues.
- 7.3. Players must play in the order of the rankings and only those players included in the ranking list for each league are eligible to play, except as provided for in Rule 7.9.
- 7.4. For a five-player team, the five highest-ranked players are eligible only for the first team; the next five highest-ranked players are eligible only for the first or second teams and so on.
- 7.5. For a three-player team, the three highest-ranked players are eligible only for the first team; the next three highest-ranked players are eligible only for the first or second teams and so on.
- 7.6. Where two teams from a club play one another, all players in the higher-ranked team must be ranked higher than the highest-ranking player in the lower-ranked team (and note also Rule 6.11).
- 7.7. Changes to the ranking list may be made at any time during a month, to become operative **for the following month**. (For example, any change to apply in November must have been made on LMS by midnight on 31st October.)
- 7.8. Rankings for each month are clearly listed on LMS. However, current ranking lists must also be prominently displayed at clubs, so that both club players and visiting players may be fully aware of them.
- 7.9. In the lower divisions (see Rule 7.11), in respect of a club's lowest team only in that league, up to two unranked players may be played in each match. Any such player should be placed in a string which reflects his/her ability relative to the other players in the team.
- 7.10. Any player who plays as an unranked player must be added to the appropriate ranking list for the following month.
- 7.11. The provisions of Rules 7.9 and 7.10 for unranked players will be allowed only in divisions below the Premier and Championship of each league.

8. Playing of Matches

[See Explanatory Note 1]

- 8.1. All matches should be played in their entirety on the date (and starting at the time) published on LMS. It is the responsibility of the home team to ensure that courts are available.
- 8.2. Matches between five-player teams will be played on two courts and matches between three-player teams will be played on one court.

- 8.3. If a team has fewer than three players present and ready to play at the scheduled start of the match (two players, for a three-player team), the match may be abandoned, at the discretion of the opposing team, when Rules 6.6 and 6.7 will apply.
- 8.4. Once play has begun, it should be continuous (on both courts, where two courts are being used).
- 8.5. Any player who has not arrived at the match venue by the time all the other strings have finished will not be eligible to play and will count as a “no-show”.
- 8.6. A match may be played with fewer than the normal number of players, but the offending team will receive a penalty equivalent to a quarter of the maximum points for a match and Rule 7.3 will apply.
- 8.7. If a team is penalised on three occasions for being short of players, it is expelled from the that season's league and all of its previous matches are declared void.
- 8.8. Prior to the start of the match, both captains must enter the names of their players on a match card. Both captains may retain a copy of the match card, if required, but it is the responsibility of the home team captain to enter the result on to LMS, in accordance with Rule 8.15.
- 8.9. The Dunlop double yellow dot ES-approved squash ball must be used in all matches, unless both team captains agree otherwise. If a different ball is used, it must be used by all strings.
- 8.10. Clothing worn on court should be in accordance with ES rules.
- 8.11. The ES Code of Conduct is to be followed.
- 8.12. A marker must be used for all games. Whilst it is suggested that each team does its fair share of marking, it is ultimately the responsibility of the home team to ensure that there is a marker for all games and, if the home team does not provide one, then the home team will forfeit that string.
- 8.13. Each string is the best of five games and one point is awarded for each game won. The team winning the greater number of strings is awarded an additional five points (for five-player teams) or an additional three points (for three-player teams). Any string not played counts as 3-0 against the team forfeiting it (but note Rule 7.3).
- 8.14. The home team is expected to provide suitable refreshments after the match. The visiting team is expected to remain for the post-match hospitality.
- 8.15. Results of all fixtures must be entered on the LMS by the home team within 48 hours of the match. Points will not be awarded to teams failing to submit results on to the system.
- 8.16. In respect of any match score not entered on to LMS by the second day after the date of the match, the home team will lose one point for each day by which the result is late.
- 8.17. Any appeal in respect of a match must be made to the League Organiser, in writing, within 14 days of the match or (if in relation to the record on LMS) within 14 days of its posting on LMS, whichever is later.

8.18. Any appeal in respect of a ruling made by the League Organiser must be made, in accordance with Rule 2.3, within 14 days of the League Organiser's ruling.

8.19. Any appeal in respect of a ruling made by the Appeals Sub-Committee must be made, in accordance with Rule 2.4, within 14 days of the announcement by the League Organiser of the decision of the Appeals Sub-Committee.

9. Ghost players

[See Explanatory Note 2]

9.1. To prevent unfair distortion of the ranking lists, players must play on a certain minimum number of occasions as the season progresses, or they will become "ghost players".

9.2. Ghost players may still play for the club, as ranked, but otherwise they will not count in the ranking lists for team selection purposes whilst they are still ghost players. Thus, in applying Rule 7, ghost players will not be counted when assessing who are the highest-ranked players to determine eligibility for lower teams.

9.3. The complete ranking list submitted on to LMS is known as the STATED ranking list. If players later become ghost players, they will still be on this stated ranking list, but will not be included in the EFFECTIVE ranking list, which is what is used to determine who may play for each team.

9.4. In order to avoid becoming a ghost player, each ranked player must play in that league on at least the number of occasions set out by the League Organiser. A ghost player who subsequently achieves this number of matches played, then ceases to be a ghost player.

9.5. The ghosting position is very clearly recorded in the ranking lists on LMS.

Explanatory Notes

1) Match scores and penalties

- 1.1. For a standard five-string match, the maximum number of points won is three per string, plus five for the match win, in accordance with Rule 8.13. This gives a maximum score for a match as 20 points. In the case of a walkover, the team which fails to turn up loses the match by a score of 0:20, but also has 10 points deducted from its total score in the league.
- 1.2. For a three-string match, the maximum score (and potential penalty amount) is six points.
- 1.3. Where it is known that it will not be possible to play a fixture, the other team should be given as much warning as possible. However, Rule 6.6 still applies and Rule 6.8 should be noted.
- 1.4. In the case of a match being played with fewer than the normal number of players, a penalty of a quarter of the total score applies to the team which is short, i.e. five points or three points, in the examples above. Clearly, if one player is absent, the others must play as strings 1-4, irrespective of their normal playing positions (as per Rule 7.3).
- 1.5. These penalties (Rules 6.7 & 8.6) and the expulsion sanctions (Rules 6.9, 6.10 & 8.7) may be waived in advance for certain divisions, by the ruling of the League Organiser prior to the start of the season. (This has been the case in recent years for the Ladies League.)
- 1.6. Note that the operation of Rule 8.5 is likely to invalidate points for most or all of the match.

2) Ghosting Rules

Two examples to illustrate:

Example 1 - (5-player teams)

A club has two teams in the Main League and has 18 ranked players. Normally that club can select its second team from anyone positioned 6 or below on its **stated** ranking list. However, if the players ranked 3 and 4 have not played three times by 1st January, they will be ghost players*. While this is the case, the club will have to select its second team from position 8 and below on the **stated** ranking list (which will be position 6 and below on the **effective** ranking list).

Example 2 - (3-player teams)

A club has two teams in the Veterans' League and has 12 ranked players. Normally that club can select its second team from anyone positioned 4 or below on its **stated** ranking list. However, if the player ranked 2 has not played by 1st November, he will be a ghost player*. While this is the case, the club will have to select its second team from positions 5 and below on the **stated** ranking list (which will be position 4 and below on the **effective** ranking list).

* Unless the club's higher-ranked teams have not yet played the minimum number of matches scheduled by the threshold date.

Present Ghost Thresholds:			
By	Main	Ladies	Vets
01/11	2	1	1
01/01	3	2	2
01/03	4	3	(2)

but note also that (from 2016/17) there is an exception if a club's higher-ranked teams have not yet played a minimum number of matches.