

Middlesex Tennis Winter Cup Rules 2026 – 2027

Men's and Women's Doubles

1. Competition

This competition, which is open only to LTA registered clubs/venues within Middlesex **who have also "opted in" to Middlesex Tennis membership**, will be called the "The Middlesex Winter Cup". It will be played between September - March. It will be run in accordance with the Rules and Regulations and the Code of Conduct of the LTA.

2. Middlesex Winter Cup Management

The Management of the Winter Cup will be managed by Middlesex Tennis:
Becky Prangle (Competition Coordinator)
Ro Foley (Divisional Secretary)

3. Powers and Duties of League Management

- a) The Cup Management Committee is empowered to amend the cup structure and rules as they deem appropriate and its decision on any matter arising from the competition will be final.
- b) Middlesex Tennis may refuse an entry without giving a reason.

4. Winter Cup Structure

- a) Entry is online via the LTA Competition website.
- b) A club is only permitted to entering one Men's Team and one Women's Team in the Middlesex Winter Cup.

5. Fixture Arrangements

- a) All fixtures should be played on fixed dates, as shown on LTA Competition Website.
- b) In all divisions the club having choice of ground may decide on what surface the tie is played. All ties shall **be played outdoors** unless mutually agreed. The tie must be played on courts of a-like surface. If the home team does not have three like courts, then the opposing team has the option to take over the tie, and the Competition Coordinator must be notified.
- c) Each club will enter a team captain and their contact details on the website.
- d) Home team club captains are to liaise with the opposition team captain to confirm the start times and then update the website.
- e) The home team must provide refreshments after a match, which should be a minimum of sandwiches or something equivalent and a hot or cold drink. The cost of the food and drinks must be borne by the home team.

6. Team and Player Regulations.

- a) All players must have an LTA Advantage Tennis Membership number which links to the venue they are representing in this competition.
- b) All players must be a bona fide member of the LTA registered venue they are competing for prior to their first match and commit to representing that venue. A player may only represent one venue in the Middlesex Winter Cup.
- c) Each team should consist of three doubles pairs. In the event of a team not being able to field three pairs for the match they should field two pairs and concede all 3 points for the missing pair. The two pairs must play all three of the opposition's pairs. The two pairs must play as pair 1 and pair 2.
- d) Clothing worn for matches must comply with the clothing rules of each individual clubs. Any clubs that insist on predominantly white tennis clothing must ensure that all opposing teams are aware of this restriction prior to the match being played.

7. Format of Match

- a) A match will consist of nine rubbers with each pair playing against each pair of the opposing team and no finishing time should be set.
- b) Each rubber will consist of two tie break sets and a match tie break (first to 10 but with two clear points).
- c) If the score reaches deuce in any game a deciding point will be played. The receiving pair has choice of side but cannot change positions.
- d) Play should be continuous. There should be no warmup between rounds.
- e) The team which wins the majority of rubbers is the winner of the tie.

8. Matches not played or not completed

- a) In the event of bad weather or failing light, matches may only be postponed with the agreement of both Captains.
 - i. If no agreement between Captains is reached or no contact made, then the match is deemed to still be on and players are expected to be ready to play at the agreed start time.
 - ii. Where there is agreement to rearrange the match, the new date must be entered on the website by the home captain.
- b) If the tie is unfinished but the first two rounds have been completed, the tie will be decided on those two rounds only.

If the number of rubbers is equal the tie will be decided on the number of sets won and if the tie is still equal, then the number of games won will decide the winner.
- c) If a match is not started or a win has not been reached with less than two rounds completed, the match must be replayed on a mutually agreed date before the next date, or on a designated rain date. The home team must offer dates within 48 hours of the postponed match.

- d) If a match has started and it is not possible to agree to rearrange the match, the leading team (counting completed rubbers only) will be deemed the winner.
- e) In the event of a team conceding a match, the other team is deemed the winner and advances to the next round.

9. Order of Play

Order of Play and Courts are determined by lot prior to the start of the match. No pair shall play more than once on the same court.

10. Time of Play - Late Arrival

- a) The start time is determined by the home team. Play shall not start before 10am nor later than 1.30 pm unless with the agreement of both teams.
- b) Any 'knock up' must be completed by the start time.
- c) Any pair not ready to play within 30 minutes of the start time shall concede the first rubber 0/6 0/6.
- d) If the previously incomplete pair is on court ready to play by the completion of the matches in the first round, the second and third rounds are played to the rules.
- e) If a pair is not on court ready to play by the completion of the matches in the first round, the incomplete pair will forfeit a love set in the second round.
- f) If the previously incomplete pair is on court ready to play by the completion of the matches in the second round, the third round is played to the rules.
- g) Substitutes are only permitted for non-appearance and not because of injuries sustained during play.
- h) For a pair to be complete both players must be on court, changed and ready to play.
- i) All sets forfeited above must be indicated on tournament software using the "match abandoned" option and then adding a comment as to why the sets were forfeited.

11. Balls

A minimum of three new and ITF approved tennis balls per court must be provided by the home team.

12. Results

All results should be entered online by the winning team within 48 hours of the match being played. The losing team should check that they have been entered correctly within 7 days and if not, they should contact the Competition Coordinator immediately to make any changes.

Both team captains should complete and sign an official score sheet and should retain this score sheet in case of a subsequent query.

13. Divisional Finals, Promotions and Relegations

- a) A club may use up to two players who have not played in a previous round. All other 4 players competing in the final must have played for his/her club in a previous round.

*If a team receives a walkover in any previous round, they should name the team they intended to play, had the match gone ahead. This should be done within 72 hours of the scheduled date.

*If a team is struggling to get a team of 6 from players who have played previously and 2 new players, they may make a request to the Competition Coordinator to use a player of a lower standard (proven by WTN / playing for a lower team in the Summer/Floodlit leagues).

- b) The Divisional Winner is the team that wins the Final.
- c) Medals are awarded for Divisional Winners and Finalists.
- d) Usually both teams reaching the finals of Division 2 and if applicable 3 are promoted for the following year.
- e) Any team losing or conceding a match in Round 1 may be relegated for the following year.

14. Injuries

If a player is injured during play, he/she is allowed a five-minute recovery time. If after five minutes the player is unable to continue then he shall concede that match. In case of injury in the first set of the two-set match in round three, both sets shall be conceded irrespective of whether the match is completed. A player injured in an earlier round may return for a later round provided he/she is available to play at the start of that round.

15. Safeguarding

Team Captains should satisfy themselves that junior players (16&U) who are playing in their team are emotionally and physically able to compete with adults. Additionally, they should agree with the young player's parent/guardian who within their team will be responsible for the supervision and well-being of the young player before, during and after the match.

16. LTA Transgender Policy

The Middlesex Tennis Winter Cup is an inter-venue competition and falls into the "Specified Competitions" category with regards to the LTA Transgender Policy. For more information please see [here](#).