

Women's Softcourt Tennis League of Birmingham

Organized 1981

Womenssoftcourtleague.com

It shall be the policy of this league to follow the rules as stated in this directory and to play by "The Code" as written by N.E. Powell. This code makes a way for honest players to employ the same approach to all situations so that neither takes advantage of the other. It is the players' responsibility to be familiar with the rules of tennis listed in this directory and in "the Friend at Court," which includes "The Code," as well as USTA tournament regulations.

There will be seven levels in the Women's Softcourt League. All levels will compete Spring and Fall.

ANY TEAM OR PLAYER THAT DOES NOT ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING RULES MAY BE PENALIZED BY SITTING OUT A SEASON.

Play Days

Monday 3.0

Tuesday 3.5, 4.5

Wednesday 5.0

Thursday 4.0, 5.3

Friday 2.5

General Rules

1. **Rosters** are to be registered on The Women's Softcourt League Website no later than February 1st for Spring and August 1st for Fall. Spring League begins the second week of March. Fall League begins the day after Labor Day.

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General Rules

1. **Rosters** are to be registered on The Women's Softcourt League Website no later than February 1st for Spring and August 1st for Fall. Spring League begins the second week of March. Fall League begins the day after Labor Day.

2. **Matches** – Teams will play a maximum of 8 scheduled matches. This will apply for all levels with 9 to 15 teams (some divisions may have less). 16 teams or more constitute a second division of a level and will be treated in the same way. The Ethics Committee will select these 8 matches at random and by court availability at time of scheduling.
3. **Winners**- Each season the winners of a level with either; one, two, or three divisions will be determined by the number of matches won. If teams are tied in the number of matches won, the winner will be determined by the following: most sets won and then least games lost. If least games lost are tied there will be co-winners. **There will be no playoffs between divisions.**
4. **Prizes** Individual awards will be presented to the first and second place teams of each level for each season of play. Levels may have two or more divisional winners.
5. **Forfeits** – Team Forfeits will **NOT** be allowed. Position forfeits are allowed. Forfeits must start on position 4 with listed players moving up to the next open position. Additional forfeits proceed up the lineup. At least 4 courts (8 sets) must be played to count as a match, which can be done with as few as 3 players (ex: 3 courts of singles and 1 court of doubles).
6. **Scheduling**- during an invitation tournament, a religious holiday, or during a school break will be avoided if possible. It is the responsibility of the Club reps or Pros to notify the Vice-President or President in writing of scheduling conflicts at the time the rosters are due for league play.

7. Move ups-

- a. Any player at the #1 position in singles or doubles who receives 85% or higher overall and plays 75% of her matches at #1 will be notified to move to the next level. A player making her 85% stats one season may remain at that level the next season but must play the #1 position. After making stats 2 consecutive seasons the player must move up to the next level. An exception to this rule is that a singles or doubles player may sit out for the next season, and a doubles team may split up and remain at the same level playing only courts 1 & 2.
- b. **Rule 7A.** - Does not apply to the 5.3 level.

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- b. **Rule 7A.** - Does not apply to the 5.3 level.

c. The Ethics Committee has the authority to review any player at any time.

8. **Consecutive Team Wins** - Any 2.5 to 5.0 team that wins first or second place 3 consecutive seasons will be subject to review by the ethics committee. The committee along with the club pro will decide what should be done.
9. **Move Down Request** - Any player wishing to move down should notify the President with her request in writing. Failure to comply will result in a loss of sets. These requests are reviewed by the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee can require a player to play at the #1 position only, and anyone making her stats during that season will be required to move back up.

CLUB RULES

1. Each club entering the league must have at least 4 regulation softcourts, nets with adjustable straps, and be within a reasonable distance from each other. Admission to the Women's Softcourt League will be by approval of the Ethics Committee with priority given to clubs and teams already fielded.
2. Each club (except out of town teams) may field one or more teams at each level or teams that play on the same day provided they have club approval and the required number of courts. For example if your club has 4 courts, you may have two teams on any day; 8 courts allow 3 teams; 12 courts allow 4 teams; etc.
3. No new out of town teams can be allowed at this time.

TEAMS

1.
 - a. Teams must play at the level of the highest player on the team.
 - b. Teams must have a minimum of 8 players and a maximum of 16.
 - c. Teams must pay \$80 per season. One check per team or club should be sent to the Vice-President before the roster entry deadline. All rosters must be registered on the website by 5:00 pm on **February 1st for Spring and August 1st for Fall. After the deadline a late fee of \$80 will be imposed to the normal team fee.**

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2. Each team must have a captain or acting captain present for every match. Captains must be players on the team.
3. **Host teams-** must provide new balls, refreshments and have 4 courts playable by 9:00am. The host team is responsible for entering the match scores on the Women's Softcourt League website within 3 days after the match has been played. In case of rainouts see **MATCH PLAY**.
4. **Visiting teams-** must confirm scores entered on the website within 3 days after scores are posted. In case of rainouts see **MATCH PLAY**.
5. **Strength Roster**
 - a. Teams must determine the strength roster according to the strength of its members and must be entered on the website after schedules are posted and **prior** to league play. The deadline for strength rosters is midnight the night before league play. Failure to comply will result in the first set of each court being forfeited for each match played until strength roster is entered. New members added mid season must be added to the strength roster by your level coordinator before play.
 - b. On match day both captains will be required to present a copy of her teams' strength roster along with the written line-up to the opposing team captain. Captains should check that the lineup submitted is in accordance with the strength roster procedures before the match begins. If there is any question, the coordinator should be called prior to match play. A match cannot be protested once play has begun.
6. **Strength Roster Procedure**
 - a. Round robins or challenges are encouraged in order to determine strength each season. In the absence of round robins or challenges, it is acceptable to allow your club's tennis pro determine your strength roster.

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- b. **Singles-** All players must be listed on the singles portion of the strength roster.
- c. **Doubles-** All players must be listed on the doubles portion of the strength roster with at least two players at each position.
- d. **Special circumstances-** Move ups remaining at their current level and move downs may be required by the Ethics Committee to be listed at the #1 position on the strength roster. 5.0 USTA players are required to play at the #1 position.

PLAYERS AND SUBSTITUTES

1. **Requirements-** Players and substitutes may play for only one club in Women's Softcourt during a season. She must be at least 18 years old and a dues paying member in good standing with her club. Dependents of members (i.e. college students) are not allowed to play or substitute. If a softcourt player is an employee or the wife of an employee of her club the player will need a letter from that club's manager/owner verifying that the player has club/membership privileges.
2. **Skill Level**
 - a. Players and substitutes must play at the level appropriate to their skill in order to make play competitive.
 - b. New players entering the Women's Softcourt League may not play below their USTA rating. The only exception to this rule is as follows: A 3.0 USTA rating with stats of no more than 50% at that level would allow you to play on the 2.5 level of Softcourt.
 - c. Players with a 5.0 NTRP (USTA) rating must notify the Softcourt President of her rating and play no lower than 1st court at the 5.3 level of Softcourt. This will allow up to three 5.0 NTRP rated players (1 singles player and 1 doubles team) to play on match day.
3. **Adding New Team Members** – New players may be added during a season. Notify your level coordinator to add them to your roster.

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They should be listed at the bottom of your score sheet on match day.

4. **Substitutes** – Subs may play for both teams of the same level at her club . A sub from a lower level may play 3 times for any team at a higher level. Any player who subs for one team more than three times becomes a member of that team, forfeiting all sets played for the higher level team. **Substitutes from a lower level are not allowed to play the #1 position.**
5. Clubs that field 2 teams at the same level may not interchange players listed on their original strength roster. Exception to this rule is at the 2.5 level and line-up must be played according to the strength of that particular team.

Match Play

1. Match Format, Levels 2.5 – 5.3

- a. Play will consist of 4 courts of singles and 4 courts of doubles. The host club must have 4 playable courts ready before match play begins at 9:00 a.m. If weather conditions or temperatures below 40 degrees have delayed the match, captains can agree to delay or reschedule the match. See inclement weather.
- b. Two regular sets will be played in singles and in doubles. The Coman tie break procedure (first player to 7 points by a margin of 2 points) will be used to determine the winner of a set at the score of 6-6. Players will exchange ends of the court after the first point, and every four points thereafter. This tiebreak procedure allows doubles players to continue serving from the same side of the court as they have been doing throughout the set.
- c. Once sixteen sets are played, the team winning the most sets wins the match. If sets are tied, the total number of games won determines the winner. If games are tied, a tiebreak using the Coman tie break procedure (first team to 7 points by a margin of 2 points) will be played by the last doubles team on the courts. Start the tiebreak where you left off in the last set played. If your team leaves and cannot be called back in 15 minutes, you must forfeit the tiebreaker. A 15 minute break is

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allowed before the tie break is played.

2. Line-ups

- a. Team members (singles players or regular doubles teams) cannot move down more than one court without permission from her level coordinator before the match has begun. Players cannot jump over a team member (i.e.: from court 3 to court 1) listed on the strength roster without permission from the level coordinator prior to match play. When playing matches, the # 1 court must always be played by the strongest player or doubles team present on that day.
- b. Complete written singles and doubles line-ups, along with copy of your teams strength roster, must be exchanged by captains prior to starting play at 9:00a.m., and there can be no alterations to the line-up once play has started.
- c. Forfeits must start from 4th court and move up the line-up.
- d. Play must be continuous. There will be no rest break between sets. When changing sides, a maximum of 1 minute is allowed. The maximum time allowed between a singles and doubles match is 15 minutes, unless the player's partner is still in singles play.

3. Singles Play

- a. Play begins at 9:00 a.m. with a 5 minute warm-up allowed with your opponent.
- b. Lengthy warm-ups should be done prior to 9:00 a.m.
- c. There will be a 15 minute default rule (9:15) for the first set. At 30 minutes (9:30), the second set will become a forfeit.

4. Doubles Play

- a. Doubles teams must be present at 10:30 a.m.
- b. Warm-up is allowed as courts become available.
- c. The same default rule is in effect for doubles when a court becomes available after 10:30 a.m. and singles players are available for doubles play.

5. One toilet break is allowed per singles and doubles match.

6. **Defaults-** Play has begun. If one player is unable to continue due to injury or illness, after a 5 minute grace period, the player must default

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7. **Coaching-** Coaching (pro or any other consultation) is **not allowed** during match play. No linesman will be provided for matches, nor will foot faults be called. You are responsible for your own calls. Do not question line calls. Remember, when in doubt the ball is good.
8. **Unsportsmanlike Conduct-** Complaints of unsportsmanlike conduct must be filed in writing with the President. Anyone that continually violates rules or shows unsportsmanlike behavior will be reviewed by the Ethics Committee and may not be allowed to play softcourt.
First Offense- Put on file.
Second Offense- player is notified.
Third Offense- player will not be allowed to play the next season.
9. **Cell Phones** – Cell phones must be silenced (no vibration) on the court. Violation will result in loss of the game in progress or the next game if during changeover.
10. **Host Team Captain-**is responsible for entering scores on the Women’s Softcourt web site within 3 days of match play. **Visiting Team-** is responsible for confirming scores within 3 days once they have been entered. Captains will be notified by their Level Coordinator if scores have not been entered within 3 days. Failure to do so could result in a loss of sets as well as review by Ethics Committee.
11. **Inclement Weather**
 - a. If weather is questionable, both teams must go to the courts as scheduled.
 - b. If all 4 courts are not in playable condition by 9:30 a.m., you may reschedule the entire match, or play as much of the match as possible and reschedule the rest. The original line up must be used if play has started and postponed.
 - c. If match play has not begun, new line-ups can be exchanged at the rescheduled match.

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 - c. If match play has not begun, new line-ups can be exchanged at the rescheduled match.

- d. If singles play has begun but doubles has not, the line-up for doubles can be changed. Completed scores will stand. Incomplete matches will be continued with set, game, and point as they stood when play was halted. It must be noted who was serving, court position, etc. No stalling to start doubles will be tolerated.
- e. If singles play is complete, doubles may be rescheduled on an individual basis and must be completed in a 3 week period.
- f. Matches must be rescheduled and played within 3 weeks of the original match date. If the match is being played on an individual basis the 3 week period still holds.
- g. Both captains must agree upon a date after the host captain has submitted 3 possible dates within the 3 week period. (Make sure host club has courts available before submitting dates). If necessary, match may be played at the visitor's courts. Contact your Level Coordinator with the agreed match date. Rescheduled matches can only be canceled by bad weather not because key players are not available. Failure to complete makeup matches within the 3 week period will result in loss of 4 sets per team.

14. **Forfeits-** Forfeits must always come from the bottom up. If the lineup has been exchanged and it is discovered that a player will not be present, you must still forfeit the #4 position and move players up as needed. This will be indicated by drawing a single line through the player(s) not present and indicating the change of other players by arrows. Write forfeit beside the #4 position. Forfeits and inclement weather are the only reason for changes in the line-up once it has been exchanged. If play has begun on court 4, you must forfeit court 3.

PROTEST

1. All protests must be in writing. If a match is played under protest, the written score sheet must not be signed and the score sheet must not be confirmed on the Women's Softcourt web site. The protesting captain should choose "dispute" on the online score sheet instead of

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“confirm”. If both captains sign/confirm the score sheet, there can be no formal action taken.

2. Protest must be received by the President of Softcourt within 7 days of the match. The President will submit a copy of the protest to the team captain against whom it is filed.
3. A written response must be received by the President from the team against whom the protest is filed within 7 days of receipt of the protest.
4. The Ethics Committee will review both sides of the protest and will settle at their discretion.
5. No action will be taken on protests received after 7 days of the match. Any rulings or penalties will be in favor of the protesting team if a response from the opposing team is not received within the 7 days allowed.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. The Ethics Committee shall consist of the current officers.
2. The Ethics Committee duties are:
 - a. Review and settle all protests.
 - b. Help with rule interpretations and rule changes after executive board meetings.
 - c. Review all move down requests.
 - d. Nominate and approve slate of officers and level coordinators.

“confirm”. If both captains sign/confirm the score sheet, there can be no formal action taken.

2. Protest must be received by the President of Softcourt within 7 days of the match. The President will submit a copy of the protest to the team captain against whom it is filed.
3. A written response must be received by the President from the team against whom the protest is filed within 7 days of receipt of the protest.
4. The Ethics Committee will review both sides of the protest and will settle at their discretion.
5. No action will be taken on protests received after 7 days of the match. Any rulings or penalties will be in favor of the protesting team if a response from the opposing team is not received within the 7 days allowed.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

1. The Ethics Committee shall consist of the current officers.
2. The Ethics Committee duties are:
 - a. Review and settle all protests.
 - b. Help with rule interpretations and rule changes after executive board meetings.
 - c. Review all move down request.
 - d. Nominate and approve slate of officers and level coordinators.

EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. The Executive Board will consist of officers, Level Coordinators, and Club Representatives.
2. The Executive Board duties are as follows:
 - a. **President-** to schedule two meetings per year (prior to each season), preside over and conduct all business of the Women's Softcourt League, interpret rules, and chair the Ethics Committee.
 - b. **Vice President-** to schedule all match play with the help of other officers, perform the duties of the President in her absence, and to serve as President after her term as Vice President.
 - c. **Secretary-** to record all meetings, to oversee the printing of the book, and be responsible for the records of the League as well as any correspondence to member clubs. Secretary moves up to Vice President.
 - d. **Treasurer-** to be in charge of all finances, dues and expenses, and to order any awards and gifts to be presented.
 - e. **Past President-** to serve as advisor on all matters relating to softcourt. This position shall be automatically filled by the last president. In the event the immediate past president is unable to fulfill this role, the PPA will be appointed by the President.
 - f. **Club Representative-** to serve a minimum of 2 years, be the liaison between her club and the League by receiving all correspondence and forwarding it to players of her club. She is responsible for keeping players information updated on the web site, registering rosters on the web site, and sending in fees from her club each season. She must hold a captain's meeting each season to distribute packet information received at the general meeting, and inform captains of new rule changes and other league information. If a representative changes clubs, moves or becomes an officer, her old club must select a new representative.
 - g. **Level Coordinator-** to serve a minimum of 2 years, monitor scores and matches entered on the web site. Monitor the stats and standing records for the teams on her level. Keep up to date rosters and check status of subs and monitor the move up position of

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players. To contact team captains in violation of the strength roster procedures, and make any necessary changes.

- h. Captains-** to be familiar with all rules in the handbook, as well as USTA and Code rules. Record and confirm all scores on the web site. Notify her level coordinator of new players or subs, reschedule rain outs within 3 weeks of original scheduled match.
3. The Executive Board will elect new officers and coordinators at the end of the fall season. The term will begin January 1 of the following year. The current officers will nominate a slate of officers and coordinators, to be approved by the Executive Board. Only members of the greater Birmingham area can serve as officers.

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