

RULES AND POLICIES

2022



***WOMEN'S
SOFTCOURT
LEAGUE
of Birmingham***

www.womenssoftcourtleague.com

**Updated September 2022*

Women's Softcourt League Members

Brook Highland Racquet Club 3157 Brook Highland Dr. Birmingham, AL 35242	980-1000
Country Club of Birmingham 3325 Country Club Rd. Birmingham, AL 35213	803-4230
Greystone Country Club 5624 Greystone Way Birmingham, AL 35242	986-5154
Greystone YMCA 5414 Hwy. 280 East Birmingham, AL 35242	981-0144
Highland Park Racquet Club 3300 Highland Ave. S Birmingham, AL 35205	714-8652
Hoover Country Club 3140 Club Drive Birmingham, AL 35226	978-0375
Inverness Country Club 300 Inverness Parkway Birmingham, AL 35242	991-8612
Life Time Fitness 3051 Healthy Way Vestavia, AL 35243	547-3192
Mountain Brook Club 19 Beechwood Rd. Birmingham, AL 35213	871-5259
Mountain Brook YMCA 2401 20th Place S. Birmingham, AL 35223	870-0144

Old Overton Club 7251 Old Overton Club Dr. Birmingham, AL 35242	972-9034
Pelham Racquet Club 100 Racquet Club Pkwy. Birmingham, AL 35124	621-3380
Pine Tree Country Club 5100 Pine Whispers Dr. Birmingham, AL 35210	956-1598
Riverchase Country Club 2000 Club Drive Birmingham, AL 35244	988-8165
The Club at Lake Cyrus 1640 Lake Cyrus Club Drive Hoover, AL 35244	276-2165
Trussville Racquet Club 4601 Riverbend Rd. Trussville, AL 35173	661-0861
Trussville YMCA 5920 Valley Rd. Trussville, AL35173	655-2224
Vestavia Country Club 400 Beaumont Drive Birmingham, AL 35216	823-7971

Past Presidents

Ann Reynolds	1981	Birmingham CC
Katie Kemp	1982	Green Valley CC
Shirley Cunningham	1983	Riverchase CC
Linda Carey	1984	Riverchase CC
Linda Eiland	1985	Highland Park RC
Linda Stewart	1986	Birmingham CC
Judy Campbell	1987	Inverness CC
Linda Johnston	1988/89	Riverchase CC
Julie Darnell	1990/91	MBST
Patsy Cate	1992/93	Vestavia CC
Debbie Jackson	1994	Sportslife
Carla Lynn	1995	Heatherwood CC
Leslie Mackin	1996/97	Brook Highland RC
Glenda Boudreaux	1998	Greystone CC
Margie Murphy	1999	Greystone CC
Debbie Atchley	2000	SportsFirst Greystone
Martha Taylor	2001	SportsFirst Trussville
Ramona Cunningham	2002	Old Overton CC
Susie Barnes	2003	Pelham Racquet
Kelly Buck	2004	Pelham Racquet
Mary Kay Pickering	2005	Birmingham CC
Kim Rogers	2006	Mountain Brook Club
Anise Friedman	2007	Pine Tree CC
Susan Fillipini	2008	Riverchase CC
Lacy Sparks	2009	Vestavia CC
Christine Denniston	2010	Mountain Brook Club
Annemarie Wilson	2011	Altadena Valley CC
Bernadine Faulkner	2012	Pinetree CC
Tricia Golden	2013	Mt. Brook YMCA
Carla Cole	2014	Brook Highland RC
Sherry Butler	2015	Trussville YMCA
Emily Huntley	2016	Vestavia CC
Tracy Crutchfield	2017	Trussville YMCA
Sally McClanahan	2018	Inverness CC
LaVonda Keel	2019	Country Club of Birmingham
Meredith Vinson	2020	LifeTime Fitness
Kelly Miles	2021	Riverchase Country Club

Women's Softcourt Tennis League of Birmingham
Organized 1981 www.womenssoftcourtleague.com

The Women's Softcourt League of Birmingham's policy is to provide a place for ladies to play social weekday tennis, to encourage maximum participation of all eligible players, to follow the rules stated in this directory and to play by *The Code*, as found in **Part 2 USTA - Friend at Court Handbook of Rules and Regulations**. 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 **Friend at Court**, which includes *The Code*, as well as relevant USTA tournament regulations.

There will be eight 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, 5.3

Thursday 4.0, 5.5

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 first Monday of March. Fall League begins the day after Labor Day.
2. **Matches** - Softcourt is a weekday/daytime league. 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 invitational 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. *Singles: A player who plays 75% of the season at Court 1 and win 85% or higher overall (makes her stats) will be notified to move up to the next level. A player making her singles stats the first season may remain at that level the next season but must play the #1 position. After making stats second consecutive season, the player must move up to the next level. An exception to this rule- the singles player may sit out the next season after making stats 2 seasons in a row.*
Doubles: Players who play 75% of the season at Court 1 and win 85% or higher overall (make stats) will be notified to move up to the next level. Player(s) making her/their doubles stats the first season may remain at that level the next season but must play the #1 position. After making stats second consecutive season, the player(s) must move up to the next level. Exceptions to this rule- the doubles player (s) may sit out the next season after making stats 2 seasons in a row or may split up and remain at the same level playing only courts 1 and 2.

- b. **Rule 7A.** - Does not apply to the 5.5 level.
 - c. *The Ethics Committee has the authority to review any player at any time. A player making their stats at Court 1 and not moving up, but winning 85% or higher, in the next consecutive season, may be subject to the move up requirement even if 75% of that season's matches are not played.*
- 8. **Consecutive Team Wins** - Any 2.5 to 5.3 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 via electronic submission on Women's Softcourt League website, email or in writing. The Move Down Request form may be completed online and emailed directly to the President. Failure to comply will result in a loss of sets. The Ethics Committee reviews these requests.

The Ethics Committee can require a player to play at the #1 position only, and anyone making 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 soft courts, 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 maximum of 16.
 - c. Teams must pay \$70 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 \$70 will be imposed in addition to the team fee.**

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 9:00 am. 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.
 - c. Teams that fail to adhere to their Strength Roster will receive a "Default" and a loss of any games and/or sets won on the offending court. If there is a situation where a Team will need to play out of

Strength Roster, the Captain must request approval from their Level Coordinator prior to the start of the match.

6. **Strength Roster Procedure**

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 to determine your strength roster.

- a. **Singles** - All players must be listed on the singles portion of the strength roster with at least one player at each position.
- b. **Doubles** - All players must be listed on the doubles portion of the strength roster with at least two players at each position.
- c. **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 or #2 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. The Softcourt Ethics Committee reserves the right to request a cross check of tennis rosters to a club's membership rolls. 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: 1. 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. 2. A 5.0 USTA rated player may not play below the 5.5 Softcourt level.
 - c. Players with a 5.0 USTA rating must notify the

Softcourt President of her rating. 5.0 USTA rated players will be allowed to play courts 1 and/ or 2 in singles at the 5.5 Softcourt level. A maximum of 3, 5.0 USTA rated players may play on courts 1 and 2 in doubles. Either a 4.5 or 5.0 player may be allowed to play courts 1 and/or 2.

Adding New Team Members - New players may be added during a season. Notify the level coordinator to add them to the roster.

3. **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 *but will forfeit all sets played to date on the higher-level team as a consequence of violating the sub limit rule.*

Substitutes may not play the #1 position. They should be listed at the bottom of the score sheet on match day.

4. Clubs that field 2 teams at the same level may not interchange players listed on the original strength roster. Exception to this rule is at the 2.5 level and line-up must be played according to the Strength Roster position of the substituting player.

Match Play

1. Match Format, Levels 2.5 - 5.5

- 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 am. If the home team's courts are not playable one hour prior to match time and the home team does not have an alternate location, then the match shall be played at the opposing team's courts if they are playable and available. 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 Tiebreak 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 Tiebreak 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 tie break 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 allowed before the tiebreak is played.

2. Line-ups

- a. Complete written singles and doubles line-ups, and a copy of the team Strength Roster, must be exchanged by captains prior to starting play at 9:00 am. There can be no alterations to the line-up once play has started. If a line-up is not presented by 9:00 am, the first 2 games of singles on each court will be defaulted.
- b. *A player may play UP more than 1 court without prior Level Coordinator approval if there is no other higher strength rostered player available to play that match. For example: a player who is roster #3 on the SR may play #1 if there is no #2 or #1 SR player available. If a #2 or #1 player is present, you may not play a #3 or #4 over them without prior LC approval. You may never play a player more than one level BELOW their SR position without the LC prior approval. When playing matches, the #1 court must always be played by the strongest singles or doubles team present, which doesn't have to be the number 1 player (s) on the Strength Roster. Sandbagging is prohibited. See TEAMS, #5. Strength Roster, c. for consequences of violation of this rule.*
- 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.

- e. One toilet break is allowed per singles and doubles match.

3. **Singles Play**

- a. Play begins at 9:00 am with a 5-minute warm-up allowed with your opponent.
- b. Lengthy warm-ups should be done prior to 9:00 am.
- 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 am.
- 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 am and singles players are available for doubles play.

5. **Match Result**

- a. **Completed** - A completed match on a given court consists of two completed sets. No tiebreak will be used in the case of "split sets". Refer to Match Play, pp 9 - 10 in this book for set tiebreak procedures.
- b. **Retired** - A retirement occurs when a player is unable to continue playing a match or resume playing a suspended match because of injury, illness, or personal circumstance. In case of injury or illness, after a 5-minute grace period, the player must retire from the match. Any games won by the retiring player will stand and any un-played games will be awarded to the remaining player. For example, player B retires in the first set at 3-3. The score should be recorded as 6-3, 6-0 for player A. If the retirement occurs in the second set, the first set stands as is and the second set scoring follows the previously stated rule. If the player retires from her singles match and is able to play doubles, she may play her doubles match. **If**

the player is unable to play doubles, the team must forfeit doubles from the number 4 position. See Forfeit definition for guidelines.

- c. **Default** - A default occurs when play has begun and a player refuses to play for a reason other than injury, illness, or personal circumstances. A player's refusal to continue to play or resume playing a suspended match will be treated as unsportsmanlike conduct and the defaulting player will be penalized any games won, receiving a score of zero for both sets. Prior to recording a match as a default, please consult with your level coordinator to ensure the default criteria has been met.
 - d. **Forfeit** - A forfeit occurs before the match has started. A team forfeits a position/court when they do not have enough players at match start time. Forfeits must start at position 4 with listed players moving up to the next position. The team NOT forfeiting should list players on their score card. The forfeiting team should list "forfeit" on the scorecard.
6. **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.
7. **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 soft court.
- First Offense** - Put on file.
- Second Offense** - Player is notified.
- Third Offense** - Player will not be allowed to play the next season.
8. **Electronic Devices** - *No electronic devices of any kind may be used during play. All devices must be in silent mode - they may not be on vibrate. An electronic device that disrupts play on your court, any neighboring courts or use of the device during play will result in loss of the game in progress or the next game if during changeover.*
9. **Host Team Captain** - is responsible for entering scores on

the Women's Softcourt website 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.

10. Inclement Weather

- a. If weather is questionable, both teams must go to the home team's courts as scheduled.
- b. If the courts are playable but the weather is below 40 degrees, you can delay the start time of the match. If it is not going to reach 40 degrees either captain can cancel. However, both captains can agree to play. Try to play if you can. Match must be made up within the timeframe stated later in this section <letter h.>
- c. Lightning Policy - You must suspend play if notified by club staff of lightning in the area. Proceed to designated safe area until play can resume. If play cannot continue that day, follow rules outlined in sections <letters f-h.>
- d. If all 4 courts at either location are not in playable condition (as determined by **Match Play**) by 9:30 a.m., you may reschedule the entire match. If play starts and is interrupted due to weather, then the remainder of those matches must be rescheduled. The original line up must be used if play has started and been postponed.
- e. If match play has not begun, new line-ups can be exchanged at the rescheduled match.
- f. 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.
- g. If singles play is complete, doubles may be rescheduled on an individual basis and must be completed in a 3-week period.
- h. 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.

- i. Both captains must agree upon a date after the host captain has submitted 3 possible dates within the 3-week period. All 3 dates may not be on the same day of the week and must be on a weekday in the daytime. (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. If the 2 captains cannot agree on a date, then the level coordinator will select a date.
11. **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.

PROTESTS

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 website. The protesting captain should choose "dispute" on the online score sheet instead of "confirm". If both captains sign/confirm the score sheet, there can be no formal action taken.
2. Protests 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 protest.
 - b. Help with rule interpretations and rule changes after executive board meetings.
 - c. Review and vote on all move down requests.
 - 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. Each member of the Executive Board is allowed one vote on all motions. *All changes to major rules or policies requires a 2/3 majority vote of the Executive Board present.*
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 PP 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 website, registering rosters on the website, 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 website. Monitor the stats and standing records for the teams on her level. Keep up-to-date rosters, check status of subs and monitor the move up position of 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 website. Notify her level coordinator of new players or subs, reschedule rainouts 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.