

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA PLATFORM TENNIS ASSOCIATION MEN'S INTER-CLUB LEAGUE RULES AND REGULATIONS 2024-25

GENERAL

1. Match Nights & Starting Times. (D = Division)

- D1, D4 matches are played on Tuesdays;
- D2, D5 on Mondays;
- D3, D6 on Thursdays;
- D7, D8 & D9 nights are variable based on court availability.
- To avoid teams or clubs artificially holding themselves back in natural progression in order to stick to a favored night of play, a rotation of divisional night of play has been instituted. Divisions 1 and 4; likewise, divisions 2 and 5; and divisions 3 and 6 – will stay on the same respective nights of play but these will change each three-year period with the next change occurring in the 2025-2026 season. At least one year's notice will be given for such changes in order for players to rearrange their extracurricular, travel and other weekly schedules to accommodate their new night of play where possible. The change will be given at the preseason Captains Meeting.
- Scheduler will annually work out best nights for majority of clubs/teams in developmental Divisions 7-9, preferably to set up one consistent night of play across the division. Those few clubs/teams with issues are encouraged to reach out to opponents to reset night of play for conflict matches, and to re-roster players to ensure weekly subs are available.
- All matches start at 7:00 p.m., with the first 2 lines, (or all 4 lines if 4 courts are available). A 15-minute grace period is allowed before forfeiture is declared. Lines 3 & 4 begin at 8:00 or after Lines 1 & 2 finish. For matches with less than four available courts, forfeiture is declared at the later of 8:30p or when a court opens, unless otherwise agreed in advance between captains. No exceptions will be made unless captains have verifiably agreed otherwise beforehand.

2. **Court Availability** - Number of Teams per Division Night. A Club (or Township) is limited to the total number of teams per "Division Night" that their courts can support. A Club with 2 or 3 courts is allowed 2 teams per night of play. This allows for scheduling a home and away match for each team on that night. Thus, a Club with 2 or 3 courts can field a total of 6 teams, with 2 teams in D1 + D4 (Monday nights), 2 teams in D2 + D5 (Thursday nights) and 2 teams in D3 + D6 (Tuesday nights). A Club with 4 or 5 courts is allowed up to 4 teams per night of play, with that Club hosting 2 home matches on a given night. With the addition of a third developmental division "D9", the Scheduler has the flexibility to annually review court availability and all clubs' division level distribution of teams in order to make nights of play as consistent as possible within each division.

3. **Weather Postponements.** The only reasons for unilateral postponement are bad weather and power outages, with any other suggested issue to be brought to the Division Rep and/or Board before the match. All attempts must be made to make up the match, line by line at different dates and times, if necessary, within two weeks. Original lineups will be adhered to as closely as possible, injury and extended travel to be among the only exceptions for lineup change. Home captain will immediately enter the lineups with 0-0 scores until played and relayed to Scorekeeper for editing in final scores. Div. Reps or the Men's Board will rule on scoring matches not finished and scored on time, with stronger enforcement up to 0-8 score against the opponent shown by email/text exchanges to be least amendable reschedule date(s).

4. **APTA Rules.** APTA rules apply. APTA approved balls should be used for League play.

5. **New Teams.** Any new teams will be placed in the lowest division.

SUPERVISION & DISPUTE RESOLUTION

6. **Dispute Resolution.** The Division Representative is the first contact in the event there is a dispute between teams in the division. The issue is to be submitted to the Division Rep, via email, within 2 business days of the match. If the Division Representative cannot resolve the matter to the satisfaction of the team or teams involved, the team captain has 2 business days to submit an appeal (via email) to the President of the Men's Board. Such request must detail the nature of the dispute, all relevant circumstances and the redress the captain is seeking. The Men's President's decision is final.
7. **Division Representative Responsibilities.** The Division Rep supervises match activity within his division and is the first line of dispute resolution within the division. The Division Rep also ensures that captains enter their match scores onto the website in a timely matter. Division Reps will indoctrinate captains at Captains Meeting and/or by email that Captains are to make every pre- and post-match effort to agree on any disputes per spirit of our game. Division reps will be responsible, with Men's Board oversight, to monitor and enforce active nature of all players on their division's rosters. Reps will rule on rostering-down petitions, per Rule 11.

CAPTAINS & TEAM COMPOSITION

8. **Captains.** It is recommended that team captains serve in that capacity for the entire season. However, any changes should be forwarded to the Division Representative.
9. **Home Team Captain's Match Day Responsibilities.** It is required that the (acting) home team captain contact the (acting) visiting captain between 1:00 pm. and 3:00 p.m. the day of the match. The home team captain is responsible for checking the conditions of courts to determine if courts are playable in the event of bad weather and notify the visiting captain accordingly. In the event that bad weather persists or worsens throughout the afternoon and evening of play, home captain will provide updates to visiting captain as to start time of lines, changes to 7pm start (and 8:15 lines in case of less than four court availability) or postponement. These must be verifiably received by 6pm when visitors would likely begin travel. If such notification is not given by the home team captain by such time and courts are unplayable at 7:00 p.m. or start time(s) subsequently agreed by both captains, the failure of notification shall be reason for the home team to default the match. If such notification is given and the courts are playable at 7:00 p.m. or start time(s) subsequently agreed by both captains, neither team shall have grounds for complaint. NOTE: If direct contact with the visiting team captain or his substitute is not made, proof of attempted notification by the home team captain may be requested by Men's Board.
10. **Home Team Captain is Responsible for Posting Scores.** It is the responsibility of the home team captain to report the names of the players and their scores for each match on the website the day after the match. Scores not posted by the end of the day following the match will automatically default to 0-8 for the home team, this 0-8 to be absolutely enforced if scores not posted prior to following week's match. The visiting team score will be updated with their actual score, but the home team score will remain 0-8 and cannot be changed. Subsequent late reporting by a team may result in up to 0-16 being posted. Accurate timely score reporting via the website is very important.
11. **Rosters.** Team captains will enter and maintain their rosters online. At least 8 players are required for each team. Your initial roster is due the week before the season starts. Only players listed on one of your Club rosters can be used in matches, so include substitutes on at least one of your (lower) teams. Use of a player not fully-rostered (not a sub) on one of his club's teams ahead of time may be cause for default of the line on which the un-rostered person plays and lines below that. New players can be added during the season but must be entered before playing in a match.

To optimize our scorekeeping system, all rosters are to be completed between September 10 and 25 of each year. Changes thereafter should be minimal and can only be done by the Scorekeeper or other authorized Board member. If a higher-level player wishes to roster down a number of division levels, his new captain must write a petition to the Board and his Div. Rep with supporting background. Similarly, if an injury or other prolonged absence leads to the need to bring someone up from a lower team, written authorization from the Board is required.

12. One Club. A player may play for only one club during the season. The only exception is that a player may play for another club up to nine times provided it is in a superior division to the player's home club's highest team. Such "Guest" players will not be allowed to freeze up to the second club, and can only play in Challenge matches for their home club. Guest subs for D1 teams may not play in the D1 Playoffs. A player may only guest for one team on one club and each team may use only one guest. Teams must seek approval via the Division Rep and the Men's Board to use a guest player, and a guest must be rostered on the second team before they play.

13. Number of Roster Players. Each team must have at least 8 roster players listed (via the website) and with WPPTA/APTA due fully paid before the first match of the season. More than 8 are permitted – there is no limit, but they are then restricted to playing for that team. Before a player can play in any match, they are required to be listed as a fully rostered player on one of the team rosters for that Club. An option for Clubs with more than one team is to list “shared” substitute players (beyond the first 8) on a lower division team.

14. Playing on Other Teams at Your Club. No player may play for two teams in the same division on the same night, even if match is rescheduled to another date.

New for 2024/25: Lower division players may “sub up” on their club's higher division teams, and also play for their own lower division team. Players may “sub up” on any of the club's higher division teams 9 times, at which point they are “frozen in place” and may only play for the original team for the remainder of the season. Players will therefore no longer be able to “freeze up”.

There is to be no subbing among a club's multiple teams within the same division. The only exception is when both teams are the bottom two teams of a club and are playing in one of the developmental divisions: D7, D8, or D9. The division representative will oversee that this exception is not overused/abused.

To encourage play and development, a team with more than 8 active players can request the Men's Board move a line 3 or 4 player down to a lower division team.

15. Line-ups & Stacking. To promote captains working out potential complaints before matches, visiting captain shall present its written line up by email before 2:00 pm the day of the match. The home team shall present its written line-up as soon as possible after receiving the visiting teams' line-up and well before the time visitors must leave for the courts. Stacking is not permitted, and will take priority over violations of other rules, such as distribution time for lineups, when Reps or board considers forfeits or penalty sets against teams losing complaints/appeals. The best team should play line one, second best line two and so on. This rule envisions that each successive lower pairing in a team's lineup is more than 50% likely to lose to the line just above it. The penalty for "blatant stacking" determined by The Men's Board, is loss of match 0-8. If "blatant stacking" continues by that team, it may result in scores of up to 0-16 being posted. Issues should ideally be raised with opponent once lineups are exchanged, and compromise made where possible to prevent the need for complaints through the Reps and Board. Care should be given to appropriately line up subs according to their skill level, regardless of division in which they are rostered.

16. Active Players. *New for 2024/25* As per Rule 13, each team must start the season with at least 8, fully registered and available players. Rostering a “phantom” who has no intention of playing in

order to meet this requirement is strictly prohibited. If a captain has doubts about any player's availability, he should roster more than 8 players given that he will no longer be able to "freeze up" someone to fill a gap. With the end of "freezing up", it is envisaged that the instances of a properly rostered team falling to less than 8 "active" players should be greatly reduced and therefore there will no longer be strict enforcement of the former Active player rule. In the event that a rostered player becomes unavailable due to injury or moving from the area, a captain may petition the Board to move someone up from a lower team.

ELIGIBILITY, SCORING, STANDINGS & PLAY OF MATCHES

- 17. Match Format, Scoring, and Division Standing.** Matches will consist of 4 lines in all divisions. All matches will be best two of three sets. All sets will be decided by the traditional "first to 7" tiebreaker at 6-games- all. Matches are scored 8-1, 7-2, 6-3, 4-4, etc. The team winning the most sets will be the match winner, with each set won counting as one point. The percentage of sets won in all matches will determine a team's standing in its division.
- 18. Forfeitures, ineligible players.** A team not fielding 8 players forfeits line 4 first then 3 and so on. If a team forfeits line 1, even if due to an expected player's arrival too late past an agreed deadline, all lines are forfeited, giving an 0-8 result regardless of outcome of play of other lines. If line 2 is forfeited, lines 2, 3 and 4 all forfeit for that team. If line 3 forfeits, so does line 4. If an ineligible player is used the former rules apply. If an ineligible player is used on line 4 = loss of 2 sets, used on lines 1,2 or 3 = loss of 2 sets plus two additional sets. No match between same club/same division teams may be forfeited, or match will be scored 4-4, with penalty sets added at board's discretion.
- 19. Regular Season Tie-Breaks.** In addition to determining the division champion, the ranking at the end of the season helps determine the challenge match participants. To break ties at the top or bottom of final season division standings, the following tiebreakers will be employed in this order: Sets Won % figured to six decimal places (ten- thousandths of a percent); Head-to-Head Sets Won %; Head-to-Head Sets in most recent match; Head-to-Head Games in most recent match; Line 1 result in most recent match.
- 20. Court Reservations and Balls.** The home team is responsible for providing balls and reserving the courts well in advance for all home matches to avoid any conflict.
- 21. Refreshments, Apparel, Pick-up Play.** After completion of matches, players are encouraged to mix-up and play more. Appropriate apparel should be worn at all matches. It has become a pleasant custom that the home team and/or its players provide refreshments. Many teams are also providing food such as pizza or sandwiches and it is suggested that teams reciprocate the hospitality – especially since many players arrive directly from work without time for dinner. It's appreciated!

CHALLENGE MATCHES & PLAYOFFS

- 22. Auto-Promotion/Demotion & Challenge Participants.** Division winning teams will automatically be promoted to the next higher division, with the last place team being demoted to the next lower division.
The second-place team in each division may challenge the ninth-place team in the team above, with the third placed finisher challenging the eighth placed team in the higher division team. If second place declines to challenge, third place may challenge ninth place in the higher division. The winners will be in the higher division the next season. If a team that finishes 8th declines to

defend their position, the 2nd placed team from the division below will be automatically promoted and the 3rd place team will be able to challenge the 9th placed finisher instead.

The one exception to the above is that the winner of D2 must challenge 10th place in D1 in order to move up. Second place in D2 may challenge 9th place in D1 while third place in D2 may challenge 8th in D1.

New for 2024/25: The developmental divisions (D7-D9) will have an extra opportunity to challenge and be challenged. Fourth place teams in D7, D8, D9 may challenge the seventh-place team from D6, D7, and D8 respectively. The same rules regarding declining to challenge or defend will apply with the second-place team taking first priority and third place team taking second priority.

- 23. Challenge Notification.** The captain of a team wishing to challenge up must notify his Div. Rep., that of the next higher division and the captain of the team to be challenged (if known) by the day after his division's final standings are settled.

New for 2024/25: The team defending the challenge will play the home match the first week on the regular night for their division. The return match should be played the following week on the regular night of the challenging team's division. Deviation from this schedule is only permitted if mutually agreed between the teams.

- 24. Court Availability Issues.** If a Club with potential "court availability" problems is in a challenge position where their moving up would exceed the allowed teams in the higher division, its team will nevertheless be allowed to challenge and determine if there is court availability after all the club's challenges are completed. Challenge winners with no resultant court availability on the new night either find a new home club for that or another team of their current club, and report such to Div. Rep and Men's Board by April 1 of that year, or challenge teams will remain in their respective divisions. If there are any disputes, the Men's Board will resolve all "court availability" issues.

- 25. Challenge Format.** Each challenge will consist of a home and away match. The winner will be determined by the total number of sets won. The challenger must win in order to successfully challenge. Tie breakers will be employed in this order: Sets Won % to six decimal places; Total Games Won over the two challenge matches; If this results in a tie, the teams remain in their current divisions.

- 26. Challenge Match Eligibility.** Eligible Players are those who are not fully rostered on a club's higher-level teams and should typically be those that represent the team throughout the regular season. A player cannot play on a team unless he has played six matches on that particular team, or on a lower positioned team. A player who has not played at least two matches for the team they are subbing for must be approved by the Board. In no case may a player who has played at least half of his matches on an upper division team play for a lower positioned team in the challenge matches.

New for 2024/25: If a sub is needed, one can be used, but he must not have a better PTI than the player he is replacing (a +/- 3-point leeway is allowed). In the event that two or more rostered players are unavailable, the sub should not have a better PTI than the highest rated missing player. For example, if a team has 9 rostered players and is missing one with a 35 PTI and another with a 40-point PTI, the sub may have a PTI no better than 32 (35 points less the 3 point leeway).

Additionally, a player can only sub if they have not been "frozen in place" on a lower team as per Rule 14. For example, if a player rostered in D5 has already subbed for a higher team 9 times during the regular season, they may not sub for a higher team in the Challenge. If they have subbed 8 times, they would be able to play in one challenge match but not both.

Division Reps will review and approve playoff rosters.

Challenge Line Ups must be emailed to opposing captain & Reps of both divisions 24 hours in advance of match by visitor, then by home captain before midday of match day, exceptions to be made only for late cancellation(s) requiring Sub(s).

27. Division 1 Championships. The Division I champion will be determined by a playoff between the 7 teams having the best winning percentage. First week playoffs will be 2 vs. 7, 3 vs. 6 and 4 vs. 5. Second week play will be 1 vs. the lowest ranked team and the other two remaining teams will play each other. The winners of the second-round matches will play for the title in the third week. All D1 playoff matches will use the following tie-breaker format, in order, to determine the match winner: 1) Sets won %; (2) total Games won in match; (3) Sets won % in head-to-head regular season matches; (4) final Regular season standings position. No "Guest" players may be rostered.

28. Foot Faults. Deliberate foot faulting is a form of cheating and within reason teams are encouraged to enforce the foot fault rule. Players should warn opponents when foot faulting is persistent over the course of a match. The first called foot fault should result in a re-serve after which a foot fault results in losing the point. Teams should enlist agreed upon available line judges to call faults if there are complaints from either side.

Questions can be directed to, or rulings obtained from, the Division Reps who are found under "Contact Us" at the bottom of the home page.