

MIDDLESEX COUNTY BADMINTON ASSOCIATION – LEAGUE RULES 2024/2025

Management.

- The executive committee shall appoint a competitions sub-committee to organise and supervise competitions. The chairperson may or may not be a member of the executive committee.
- The sub-committee shall consist of not more than 6 persons. Three persons shall constitute a quorum.

Overriding principles.

- The competition will be played in accordance with the laws of Badminton as adopted by Badminton England. This includes “The Code of Conduct” requiring all players to behave in a civilised manner throughout the match, whether on or off court.
- The league exists to allow inter-club competition to take place in the spirit of friendship and fairness between amateur players in and around Middlesex.
- Rules are set out below. Where something is not written below, the committee has the power to deal with it.

1. League structure.

1a. The league is open to all clubs affiliated to MCBA. All clubs must have paid their subs to B.E. / MCBA in accordance with association rules and prior to B.E. affiliation closing date. Clubs affiliated to B.E. through a county other than Middlesex, must pay a Middlesex club affiliation fee of £10.00. **An affiliation fee for any players registered with a primary club outside of Middlesex will also be charged. The fee for individual players will be £2.00.**

1b. The league will run **4** disciplines: Open (formerly Men’s) 6s, Ladies 4s, Mixed 6s and **Hybrid 6s**.

1c. **Divisions will be organised as best as possible to include between 4 and 7 teams.** The ideal number is 6 and divisions may be re-organised as such post-season if necessary. **No teams will be demoted solely to re-balance divisions. The League Committee decision will be final.**

1d. Where there is more than 1 division, where relevant, the winning team shall be promoted and the 6th (and lower) placed team(s) shall be relegated.

1e. Play-offs will be held in May at The Dome. See section 9.

1f. New teams entering the league should expect to start in the lowest division. Exceptions may be considered by the committee e.g. where a new club enters with more than 1 team in any 1 format, **to avoid a big imbalance in division numbers or other reasons.**

2. Before the season.

2a. Online entry forms must be completed and sent together with the appropriate fees by the closing date mailed to all club secretaries and match secretaries. Entries not received by the due date or without the appropriate fees may not be accepted.

2b. The fees for entering the league shall be £13 per team entered.

2c. All players must be affiliated with Badminton England and MCBA.

3. Qualifying to play matches.

3a. Player registrations can be made throughout the season until March 31st. After this date, no players can be added to team lists, including players already on the database.

3b. You cannot represent more than 1 club in the same discipline. It is the individual players' responsibility to ensure they know which league they are playing in and for which club. Having played for 1 club, we will no longer be granting players the opportunity to re-register at a different club to play the same format – on the sole condition that these rules have been made available to all players to view. If clubs have not fully informed players of this rule before matches commence, the committee may, in any disputes, side with the player if they have been given misleading information about a fixture. This may cost the club points.

3c. You may play for different clubs in different disciplines, e.g. Mixed for 1 club, Open for another.

3d. If any club feels that an opposing club has played a player in a match who has otherwise complied with all the registration rules, but in reality is of too high a standard for a lower team, they may report this to the committee. The committee will then assess whether that individual is too strong for a lower team and void rubbers if necessary.

3e. This is an amateur league. Any player found to be receiving payment of any kind in return to play a match, will have all rubbers void and receive a ban for a year. The committee will consider further penalties for serial (players & clubs) offenders.

3f. Clubs using players on the England Performance list <https://www.badmintonengland.co.uk/team-england/> will need to contact the League Committee first and explain what the players links with the club and / or Middlesex County are. The League Committee will then decide if they can participate in the MCBL. Should an overseas international (current) player wish to participate in the MCBL, the club should make the League Committee aware. The Committee will then decide if they can take part or not.

3g. Any individual playing matches using an incorrect name will receive a 1 year ban. All rubbers will be void. The committee will consider further penalties for serial (players & clubs) offenders.

3h. If a player is deemed ineligible due to any of the reasons above (section 3), the full team bonus point will not be awarded for any matches they have taken part in.

4. Fixtures and fixture re-arrangement.

4a. All fixtures should be entered into the Middlesex Website www.middlesexbadminton.co.uk by October 1st. Any clubs unable to enter fixtures should contact the league committee. Clubs will be contacted if fixtures are not entered by deadline.

4b. Fixtures should commence in September. All fixtures must be completed by April 30th, absolutely no extensions shall be granted after this date.

4c. Once arranged, dates and venues should generally NOT be altered except where the venue becomes unavailable outside of the home team's control, or in cases of extreme weather. Clubs can ask the opposition to re-arrange a fixture, and if the request is accepted the new date should be

entered into the website as soon as possible. However this should be the exception, and clubs should expect the Committee to side with teams not wishing to re-arrange already agreed upon dates. Any teams refused a re-arrangement request should then make every effort to get the minimum number of players on court to complete the fixture. Club Match Secretaries spend enough time organising fixtures and cannot be expected to change things when dealing with 3rd party venues and an already full calendar. The Committee will ultimately decide if there is a dispute.

4d. The home team should confirm fixtures in advance (ideally 7 days latest) with the away team, to ensure there is no confusion over where and when the match is taking place.

4e. ALL teams should aim to play at least 40% of fixtures prior to the end of December.

4f. Clubs may use venues outside of the Middlesex County boundary for matches, however an away team not wishing to travel outside of Middlesex to play a fixture must highlight to the home team as soon as possible - preferably when the fixture is first made. In this case the home team must then find a venue either in Middlesex OR at a venue outside of Middlesex which the away team may find more suitable to travel to. We would ask all clubs / teams to be as flexible as possible, it may be easier to travel to a venue near Waterloo (for instance) with all its good transport links, than to somewhere like The Dome which is in a part of the county with bad transport links. Clubs must travel to all venues within the County boundary. For historical reasons Nomad's BC has always been welcome to participate in the MCBF and play their home games South of the River. Nomad's BC will be the only club exempt from this rule for now.

5. Nominations.

5a. Where a club has more than 1 team in the same discipline, it must nominate a minimum of 6 players for Open and Mixed, and a minimum of 4 players for Ladies, for all but the lowest team. Nominations must be made either before October 1st OR before the first match is played.

Nomination lists must be sent to the committee by email as well as set-up on the website. If nominations have not been submitted before the first match is played, the players involved in that match will be considered the nominated players for that team for the season.

5b. A nominated player cannot play for any lower team at any point in the season in that discipline. Breaching this rule will result in those rubbers being void and the full team bonus point removed for each infringement.

5c. A non-nominated player will be "tied" to the higher team on playing their third match for that higher team. They cannot play for a lower team after this. Any player found to have played down after being previously tied, will have those rubbers void and the full team bonus point removed for each infringement.

5d. Nominated players must feature in each match – a minimum of 2 in Open and Mixed, and a minimum of 1 in Ladies (does not apply to lowest teams). A -1-point penalty will apply for each infringement if you do not meet this requirement.

5e. All nominated players would be expected to have played four times before the end of the season. Any player not meeting this requirement will incur a -1-point penalty. The committee will consider league sizes and walkovers when enforcing penalties.

5f. In the case of severe injury, a player unexpectedly moving from the area or some other acceptable reason, then a substitute nomination may be made. A player being "busy" or "unable to commit" is not an acceptable reason. You may change a nomination with a previously not-nominated player who has played for that higher team but has not yet played down, however the

newly nominated player must play 4 times for the team they are now being nominated for, see rule 5e. You may also substitute using a player who has already played down but the rubbers from the lower team matches will be forfeit and full team bonus points lost. **In the event of this happening, a -1-point penalty will not be applied.**

5g. Nominations changes may be made up to and including March 31st. No nomination changes for whatever reason, may be made in April.

6. Match day.

6a. Matches should not be scheduled to commence before 7pm on a weekday or before 10am on a weekend without the agreement of both teams.

6b. A minimum of 5 hours of court time is required for both teams of four and six.

6c. The home team shall provide feather shuttles. The same brand / speed should be maintained in a match. **The committee suggests a civilised conversation should take place before the match IF the home captain is aware of an issue with the shuttles. Serial offenders may be penalised at the committee's discretion.**

6d. The home team shall provide a match sheet and ensure it is completed accurately with full names of the players as registered on the website. Both captains should sign. If names are unclear or if players are yet to be registered, do not guess / randomly enter names. In either case, please contact the committee.

6e. Agreed start and end times MUST be entered into the match sheet. Home teams can NOT extend playing time at the end of a match without agreement of the away captain.

6f. Play must be continuous.

6g. All 6s disciplines will consist of 9 rubbers. All 4s disciplines will consist of 8 rubbers. All rubbers are played as best of 3 games to 21 points (at 20-all the winning side must be 2 clear points ahead unless 29-all is reached when the first to 30 wins).

6h. Two points will be awarded for a win, 1 point for a draw and 0 points for a loss. We would prefer that all matches to be played with full teams, so to encourage this, if you turn up with a full (eligible) team we will give you 1 bonus point.

6i. In men's and mixed, where a club has more than 1 team in any competition, it is unacceptable for the higher teams to play a match with 2 pairs rather than 3. If a higher team only raises 2 pairs, as well as the bonus point not being awarded, it will receive a -1-point penalty and all lower teams will also receive a -1-point penalty. If the lowest team fields only 2 pairs, the bonus point will not be awarded but no further penalty will be incurred. If only 1 pair can be raised, the match must be conceded.

6j. All matches should aim to start and end on time. Assuming the match starts on time, opposing captains MUST discuss the possibility of shortening rubbers (if necessary) to 1 game of 21 rally points following the completion of at least 3 full rubbers. The away team must comply with the home team's recommendation or forfeit any un-played rubbers. If rubbers are not shortened by the 'home team', they will forfeit any un-played rubbers. If rubbers have been shortened but the match is still unfinished, the result shall stand on completed rubbers only.

6k. A team can claim rubbers if the opponents are 15 minutes late, but these must be played at the

end of the match if there is time remaining, that being the agreed finish time. One rubber may be claimed for each court available for every 15 minutes the opposition are late. Expect the committee to side with the team who turned up on time if there's a dispute.

6l. If a player is injured during play, they are allowed a 5-minute recovery time. If after 5 minutes the player is unable to continue then they shall concede that rubber. A player who is injured in an earlier round may return for a later round provided they are available to play at the start of that round.

7. Match claims, cancellations, concessions & withdrawals.

7a. If the away team cancels a match with less than 7 days' notice, they must cover court costs incurred by the home team. Where possible, the home team should try and ensure that no costs are incurred by reusing the courts or coming to an arrangement with the facility.

7b. Claimed or conceded matches must be notified to the committee in writing by both clubs with reasons for the claim / concession. **There may be reasons why a club has to give a w/o that are beyond their control, in which case the committee may consider not administering a penalty.**

7c. If any team withdraws from the league without completing its fixtures, the league table shall be adjusted as if the team had not participated.

7d. One walkover incurs a -1-point penalty. Any team conceding more than 2 matches in a season may be immediately withdrawn from the league by the committee and relegated to **start 2 divisions lower** than their current position the following season, should they wish to enter again.

7e. No match may be left un-played by mutual consent. Any match left un-played at the end of the season will result in **both** clubs being penalised as if walkovers had been given (-1-point penalties).

8. After the matches.

8a. Results should be recorded on the Middlesex website as soon as possible and no later than 1 week after the match by the winning team. Full player names should be entered accurately along with the scores in every game/rubber. The losing team must confirm the result / details within 7 days of the match result being entered. Where any information is disputed the league administrator must be informed. Matches not confirmed by the losing team by the above-mentioned deadline will be confirmed by the league administrator on the assumption that the information must be correct. In the rare event of a draw, the home team should enter the result.

8b. League positions shall be determined as follows: league points, match wins, rubbers difference, points difference, rally points won and lost. The Committee reserves the right to amend the above, depending on the fulfilment of matches throughout the season.

9. Play-offs

9a. Teams finishing 2nd in their division may challenge the team finishing 5th in the division above, to a one-off relegation / promotion play-off. If a 2nd placed team does not wish to challenge then the 3rd placed team may take up the challenge instead. If neither 2nd or 3rd placed teams wish to challenge there will be no play-off.

9b. If a challenged team is unable to accept the challenge for whatever reason, they shall be relegated, and the challenger promoted.

9c. To qualify for the play-offs, a player must have played at least twice for that team during the regular season. Appearances played for lower / higher teams **do not count** toward play-off qualification. If a player has played twice for a team but has subsequently been tied to a higher team, they do not qualify to take part in a play-off for the lower team. **There is no requirement to play 2 nominated players in play-off matches.**

9d. There will be a **£6.00** per head play-off match fee.

And finally....

- The association shall hold an annual general meeting after the season has ended. All clubs must send at least one member to attend the meeting.

Amended February 9th 2025