

Dear Barry

League Format

Following the proposal made by Northampton Tennis Club in the summer, the main committee at County have been thinking about how we can assist the League Executive Committee in making improvements and would like to propose to merge both the winter and summer seasons together into one league format.

We would like to propose that we hold one league commencing in February through to October with the existing number of teams (13) per league with home and away matches being played against each side.

We believe that this may provide a balance between providing competitive tennis at all levels all year round whilst not requiring the format of the league to alter too much. With team members required to be available for a greater period of time this would hopefully enable the matches to be fairly distributed over the season with each team two matches against their respective direct competition.

The above below highlights that overall there will be 9 less mens matches and 16 less ladies matches played over the course of the season, although this does not take into account those matches where clubs failed to field a side.

Division	Season	Mens				Ladies			
		Mens	Total	Proposal	Difference	Ladies	Total	Proposal	Difference
Division 1	Summer	12				10			
	Winter	10	22	24	2	10	20	20	0
Division 2	Summer	12				11			
	Winter	8	20	26	6	10	21	22	1
Division 3	Summer	10				10			
	Winter	8	18	26	8	9	19	20	1
Division 4	Summer	12				0			
	Winter	8	20	26	6	10	10	0	-10
Division 5	Summer	0				0			
	Winter	10	10	0	-10	8	8	0	-8
Division 6	Summer	0				0			
	Winter	12	12	0	-12	0	0	0	0
Division 7	Summer	0				0			
	Winter	9	9	0	-9	0	0	0	0
Total Matches			111	102	-9		78	62	-16

We have tried to balance the positives and negatives for such a change in the format and list a few of these below:

Positives:

- Each team plays each team twice;
- Quality and availability of team players to be judged against a 9 month calendar rather than 4 month (or in some cases isolated matches);
- Increased participation in tennis all year round which could also help address the reduced participation in the winter months;
- Increased flexibility and availability for more member court time for all clubs;
- League position to be judged over consistency over a greater period of time.

Negatives:

- Teams without floodlights to predominately play home matches over the summer months unless alternatives can be identified;

Teams may find it difficult due to the size of membership to run the same level of summer teams throughout the year.

Of course there will be further aspects that will need to be taken into consideration, two of which we list below, namely:

- Period of transition – If the proposal was accepted there would be an annual league rather than 2 season spread over two years. As a result in any year that there will be a period of transition. We would like to consider whether running the winter season up to December (the Winter break) could act as the full season in this instance with the new revised format commencing from February / March the following year?
- Confirmation of membership at club level – I am sure that County tennis club are like many others where the membership renewal period is March / April and one challenge we can foresee is how we confirm that players are full members of clubs and that players only play for one club in a season. This creates an issue where people join a winter membership and one club and summer membership at another. Whether we can look to say you can only play for one club in a season, or you can play for two clubs but only against the opposition once etc

Over the past few months we have spoken to other league club and had a mixed reaction although more positive rather than negative.

The above proposal to be considered for mens and ladies doubles in the first instance.

We recognise that it is a difficult job to run the league but we would appreciate it if the above could be considered for forthcoming seasons.

We will gladly circulate this letter to other clubs for discussion purposes and will happily talk about this topic, should this be considered appropriate at the league AGM or League Executive Meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

NCLTC