



LEAGUE RULES 2025 – 2026

1. NAME

- 1.1 The name will be the “Essex Squash League” or “ESL”
- 1.2 The name may, at the discretion of Essex SRA, be prefixed by the name of the current sponsor(s).

2. OBJECTIVE

- 2.2 The main objective of the Essex Squash League is to provide a structured, competitive, yet friendly environment where clubs can compete against each other. It also places strong emphasis on improving the standard of squash in Essex while encouraging friendship and socialising, particularly after matches.

3. JOINING THE LEAGUE

- 3.1 The league is open to all clubs within Essex.
- 3.2 New clubs must be ratified by the committee.
- 3.3 Teams must ensure they have access to courts on the required dates and be able to provide a post-match meal.
- 3.4 Clubs must be affiliated to England Squash.

4. TEAMS AND REGISTRATION

- 4.1 Teams will consist of five players or three players, depending on the Section.
- 4.2 The number of teams per Division will be at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 4.3 New teams may be refused entry at the discretion of the relevant League Secretary.
- 4.4 Entry forms must be completed by all participating teams and submitted to the relevant League Secretary by the date published.

5. FORMAT

- 5.1 The season will be split across three distinct periods. The Autumn-Spring season will run from September to April. The Essex Cup will be played from January-March. The Summer Slam will take place from May to July.

6. WINTER SEASON

- 6.1 The Winter season will be split into three divisions: Premier Division, East Division & West Division.
- 6.2 The Premier Division will comprise of a minimum of 8 teams and a maximum of 10. In an 8-team league, each team will play fourteen matches in the first phase, home and away against every team in the division. Following the first phase of matches, the league will split into two halves. The top four teams, known as the 'Super Four', will then play an additional six matches, against each team home and away. The bottom four teams, known as the 'Survival Four', will also play an additional six matches in the same format. The winner of the Super Four will be crowned Essex champion. The team finishing bottom of the 'Super Four' will be relegated.
- In a 10-team format, each team will play eighteen matches, home and away against every team in the division. The winner of the league will be crowned Essex Champion. The two teams finishing in the bottom two positions of the division will be relegated.
- 6.3 Division One will be split geographically and known as 'East Division' and 'West Division'. In an 8-team division, these divisions will follow the same format as the Premier Division. In the case of the East/West Division, the team who finishes top of the Super Four will have the option to be promoted to the Premier Division for the Winter Season of the following year. In a 10-team format, the team who finishes top of the East/West Division will be promoted to the Premier Division.

7. SUMMER SLAM

- 7.1 The Summer Season shall be officially referred to as the "Summer Slam" in all league communications, fixtures, and results.
- 7.2 Where feasible, the Summer Slam shall comprise one Premier Division, up to two First Divisions, up to two Second Divisions, and two Third Divisions. This structure may be adjusted to accommodate all existing and new teams. Divisions shall be regionalised, wherever practical, based primarily on club location and typical travel times, to minimise travel distances and costs.
- 7.3 The 2026 Summer Slam will operate as the inaugural season of three-player teams, on a trial basis. League placements will be determined prior to the season based on squad submissions, using SquashLevels rankings as the principal measure of player ability, alongside any additional relevant information provided by clubs. Once the season has commenced, league composition will remain fixed except in exceptional circumstances as approved by the organising committee.
- 7.4 If the three-player team format is deemed successful (based on participation levels, competitiveness of matches, and feedback from players and clubs) the Summer Slam leagues will thereafter operate on an annual promotion and relegation system, consistent with the Autumn-Spring league structure.

8. ELIGIBILITY

- 8.1 All players must be bona fide members of their club. If a player is not eligible, his match and all below will be lost.
- 8.2 A player may not play for more than one club in the same period of the league in any one season. An exception may be made by the relevant League Secretary for a player transferring to a different club subject to the following clauses being met:
- i) Both clubs approve the transfer of the player.
 - ii) The player has not played more than 50% of matches for their current team in that period.
- 8.2.1 Should the transfer be approved, the player will not be permitted to play in any matches against their former team for the remainder of the season.
- 8.3 All teams must nominate a minimum of five players (three players per three-person team). Players should be nominated in strength order.
- 8.4 Any player who might play during the season must be nominated to at least the lowest team, including those with long term injuries.
- 8.5 Nominated players may not play in a lower team that season.
- 8.6 Players from a lower team may “play up” for a higher team without being registered for that team. If a player “plays up” for three consecutive matches, without playing for the lower team, then they are automatically nominated for the higher placed team.
- 8.7 A player may play for a team in the East & West Division, providing the teams belong to the same club.
- 8.8 To be eligible for a team’s final two league matches of the season; a player must have made at least two prior appearances for that team in the same season. This rule is intended to prevent the introduction of new players solely for decisive promotion or relegation matches.

9. FIXTURES

- 9.1 Fixtures will be arranged by the League Secretary and communicated to team captains at least three weeks prior to the start of the season.
- 9.2 For the Winter season and Summer Slam, the nights for fixtures are set to improve player availability and ensuring all fixtures are fulfilled. The nights are fixed as such:
- i) Premier Division matches played on Monday evenings.
 - ii) West Division matches played on Tuesday evenings.
 - iii) East Division matches played on Thursday evenings.
- 9.3 Each team are responsible for setting their own start-time for matches. This should be done at the registration stage. Matches may start no earlier no earlier than 18:40 and no later than 19:40.

- 9.4 Fixtures may be postponed or re-arranged only by mutual agreement. There is no obligation to agree to a change of date, and teams should do so only if it is not to their disadvantage.
- 9.5 A team cancelling, or failing to appear, on the day of the match will refund all out-of-pocket expenses of the opposition (i.e. court fees and/or food at a home match, or travel expenses away).
- 9.6 A team giving a walkover must notify the League Secretary, and the team receiving the walkover must submit the online result card listing the players who would have played.
- 9.7 No matches can be mutually agreed to remain unplayed. Any match which remains unplayed at the end of the season, e.g. as a result of a failed re-arrangement, will be deemed to have been conceded by the team originally asking for the postponement.
- 9.8 All matches should be played, re-arranged or conceded. Double-headers should be avoided where possible.

10. MATCHES – IN ADVANCE & ON THE NIGHT

- 10.1 It is the responsibility of the home team to confirm that the visiting team is coming.
- 10.2 It is the responsibility of the home team to book enough court time to complete all the matches.
- 10.3 A change of court for matches may only take place if both players agree.
- 10.4 Teams must play in the correct order of strength, as nominated prior to the season starting and before any subsequent nomination periods (e.g. nomination period 2 for the Winter League).
- 10.5 If an “unfit” player plays, he will be deemed fit enough to play and must, subject to the prior approval of the relevant League Secretary, play in his correct position.
- 10.6 Teams must exchange their list of players of playing order before the match commences. A team not doing so may have the fixture awarded against it.
- 10.7 Each team must have a minimum of three players to complete a league game (two players in the Summer Slam). Any team knowingly having only four/three players will be deemed to be without its no.5 string/no.4 string.
- 10.8 Should a player fail to arrive, that string and all below will be conceded.
- 10.9 The home team shall provide two, unused, Dunlop double-yellow spot balls for every match. If both captains agree, a single yellow spot ball may be used if the temperature drops significantly enough for warrant the use of a single spot.
- 10.10 The Home Club shall provide adequate refreshments for the visiting team after the match.
- 10.11 The visiting team shall pay a fixed contribution of £50 to the Home Club towards the cost of providing refreshments. This payment must be made on the day of the match, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in advance between the captains.

- 10.12 Any visiting player unable to stay for refreshments must notify their own captain not less than 48 hours before the match. The visiting captain is responsible for informing the Home Club captain within the same timeframe.
- 10.13 The Home Club shall not be required to provide drinks for visiting players. Drinks are the responsibility of individual players, unless both captains agree otherwise prior to the match.

11. SCORING

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of the home team to “mark” every match.
- 11.2 Captains should provide score sheets and pens where possible to assist players marking.
- 11.3 Where possible, players should mark the string nearest to their own standard (e.g. string no.3 marks the string no.4 or string no.2 match).
- 11.4 Matches in the Premier Division in the Winter League and Summer Slam are played best-of-five, PAR scoring to 11, as per the WSF Singles Rules.
- 11.5 All other leagues are played best-of-five, PAR scoring to 15.
- 11.6 One point shall be scored for each individual game won. 5 bonus points will be given to the team who wins the most matches on the night.
- 11.7 It is the responsibility of the home team to submit the match result via the designated online system within three days of the match. Failure to do so may result in a walkover being given to the away side.

12. DETERMINING DIVISIONAL WINNERS

- 12.1 In each division the team with the most points at the end of the season will be the winner.
- 12.2 If two teams are level on points, the team with the higher number of wins will take precedence.
- 12.3 If the teams are level on wins, the aggregate match results between them will decide.
- 12.4 If the aggregate match results of the teams are the same, all the individual games of those matches will count, both for and against.
- 12.5 If all the above still provides no winner, then a playoff match between the two tied sides will be arranged.

13. PROMOTION AND RELEGATION

- 13.1 At the end of the season, the top team in each Division will be promoted.
- 13.2 At the end of the season, the bottom two teams from the Premier Division will be relegated.
- 13.3 Notwithstanding the promotion and relegation criteria, the Divisions may be restructured by the relevant League Secretary.

14. WITHDRAWING FROM THE LEAGUE

- 14.1 Any team may, without penalty, withdraw from the League for the following season provided it advises the relevant League Secretary of its intention prior to the league structure being finalised.
- 14.2 Any team which fails to complete its fixtures, or which withdraws after the league structure has been finalised, will result in all points scored for or against a team cancelled.

15. DECISIONS & APPEALS

- 15.1 Any requests to the Committee for a decision on the Rules must be made by a Club Representative and within seven days of the match or incident to which it relates and must be sent in writing (letter and/or e-mail) to the League Secretary.
- 15.2 The League Secretary, with support from the Committee where required, will adjudicate and respond to the respective Club Representative, within seven days of receiving the request.
- 15.3 Appeals against decisions made by the League Secretary must be submitted in writing to the Committee, within fourteen days of the decision being made.
- 15.4 Appeals can be made in writing to Dave Neller, Essex Squash & Racketball Association Chairman, by email to dneller@essexsra.com.

16. FEES

- 16.1 Each club must pay the League an affiliation fee per team for the upcoming playing season, commencing around September, by 1 October of that calendar year. The Committee will determine the amount of this fee.

17. APPENDIXES

- 17.1 WSF Singles Rules 2025