Milford Captain's Guidelines – Winter 2026

Contents

1. Pre-season 2
2. During the season 2
   a. Matches - general 2
   b. Junior players 3
   c. Home matches 3
   d. Away matches 4
   e. Match postponements 4
   f. Weather postponements 4
   g. Player availability 4
3. End of season 5
   a. Match fees 5
   b. Players' contact info 5
4. League software 5

***FS = fixture secretary**

Milford Captain's Guidelines – Winter 2026

1. Pre-season

- Introduce yourself to your squad. Create a WhatsApp group containing only your named players.
- As soon as you receive the fixture dates, pass these to your team, ask for any known non-availability.
- Consider creating a system that works for you which shows player availability. WhatsApp poll feature is an efficient way to manage specific fixtures. Best practice is a poll 2-3 weeks before each fixture, confirming team 10-14 days before each fixture. This allows selected players the opportunity to liaise and practise in their pairs, and to make alternative plans if not selected. Consider creating a separate WhatsApp group (labelled squad/date/time/location/opposition) for each fixture. This WhatsApp group can be updated (remove/add players) as you progress through fixtures.
- Ensure you and your players are aware of player eligibility rules – See **Player availability** below
- Familiarise yourself with the league websites and league regulations. Details can be found on the **League Tennis** page on the Milford club website, including links to the current season's league websites.
- Check that your fixture dates and times on the league website are as expected and report any discrepancies asap to our fixture secretary (FS), John MacPherson: tennisfixtures@milfordtennisandsquash.net
- You can print out blank match results sheets from the **League Tennis** page or enter the results straight into your phone once match complete. Make sure opposition captain has seen/confirms the results as correct.
- **Collect new match balls for all home matches** from Dan.
- You'll be included in the Milford Team Captains WhatsApp group where Dan will ask you to share Team Training links with your squads, ask you to collect tennis balls, etc.
- Encourage your squad members to attend the appropriate Team Training sessions – see the **League Tennis** page for further details.

2. During the season

a. Matches - general

- Contact the opposing captain around a week ahead of the match to confirm the start time, that they have a team, what they need to do to access the club. For minimal disruption, you may wish to hook the gate open using the chain. Their contact details are on the league site: click on the fixture in the 'Upcoming Fixtures' tab. Also agree with the opposition captain for both home and away matches what the hospitality provision will be, and let your team know. See **Home Matches – match teas** below.
- **Match results**: For Dorset matches, the home captain (or delegate) is responsible for entering the scores online, within 72 hours of the match. See section 4 **League Software** below for details on entry of results and other league software actions.
- Keep a paper record (or photo) of the result card of each match (ensuring all names are legible) ideally signed by the opposing captain. Any photos/paper copies can be disposed of once the result is correctly entered online.
- Dorset League matches are 'best of three sets' format, with the third set (if needed) being a 10-point champions tie-break. 1s v 1s, 2s v 2s in the first rubber. The home pair moves after each rubber. Can be useful to jot down rubber scores as you go along.

- Players arriving late: League Reg 10 states "if any player is absent for 40mins (30mins for any evening fixture) from the time agreed, then the opposing team (i.e. the pair affected by the late arrival) shall be awarded two love sets." In this instance, keep a note of time of arrival, and ensure you are ready and on court and do not further delay the start. It's important all your players are briefed on - and understand - this approach.

- If there is anything causing distraction, e.g. a dog beside the fence at an away match, deal with this at the time; do not wait until the match is finished as it's very difficult to address once the match is complete and the score noted.

b. Junior players

- There may be junior players (under 18) in some of our squads. If you will be including any juniors in your team for a match, read the **Protocols for junior match players** document on the **League Tennis** page.
- Whilst the majority of the responsibility for safeguarding a junior belongs with their 'chaperone' (i.e. parent, carer etc), there are also a few simple things for you to do as captain if you are planning to play a junior. The guidelines for both captains and chaperones are in the above document. Captains and adult players are under no obligation to act as 'in loco parentis' and parents should be prepared to escort their own children in this scenario.
- The safeguarding of any juniors playing for opposition teams is entirely the responsibility of the opposition team.

c. Home matches

- **Courts**

FS books all home match courts in advance. **At least a week before the match**, check that the booking is ok (on Clubspark) and let FS know asap if any issues; bookings can be updated if needed. Normally matches are on courts 1 & 2, but you'll see the specific courts on the court booking system. On occasions where there are two fixtures on one day, courts 4 & 7 will also be used. Players should be prepared and accepting of playing on any court surface.

Please slacken the nets when the match is complete if nobody is waiting to use the courts.

- **White board**

For the benefit of visitors and spectators, write which teams are playing on the white boards in the foyer and attach to the fence behind the match courts. Remember to take them down after the match.

- **Home match start times**

Usually:

- Saturday: 10:30
- Sunday: 10:30 or 14:00
- Tuesday: 18:30
- Thursday: 18:30. Also 13:00 (L60 only)

These times include time for warming up. If any team wants additional warm-up time prior to a match, a team member will need to book the additional time before the start time of the match.

- **Lights & evening match overruns**

Feed the floodlights as needed but only put enough time on the clock for the lights to go off by the 10pm cutoff. The match must stop by 10pm (even if the lights are still on) whether finished or not.

If an evening match is not completed before the 10pm cut-off, see League Reg 22 for what to do. This explains how the result of incomplete rubbers should be calculated.
Make a note if the match started on time, and whether either team arrived more than 15mins after the scheduled start, in case of any disagreement.
Keep a record of the game scores for any incomplete match, in case the reschedule picks up from where the incomplete match had finished.

- **Match teas**

Before match day, agree with your team and advise the opposing captain what refreshments you will offer, and ask your team to help with the provision.

Arrive ahead of match to check net heights, prepare white board, set the bar area up for refreshments, greet your opposition, direct them to water and changing rooms. After any refreshments, clean up and dispose of / share out unwanted food & drink. Instructions for dishwasher are located next to it. Avoiding leaving dirty dishes or surfaces for someone else to clear up.
If you are last to leave the club, ensure lights and appliances are all off, and all doors and windows locked.

d. <u>Away matches</u>

- The days and times for away matches are dictated by the opposition club; not all clubs can offer as many different match days as Milford can.
- Organise transport amongst your squad members; try to share transport / costs
- Agree a cancellation call time with the other team captain in case of forecast of poor weather.

e. Match postponements

- See the League Regs 5 & 6 on this subject. In summary, matches should only be postponed due to bad weather or unsafe court conditions. **Player availability is not considered (by the league) an acceptable reason for postponing.**

  Sometimes a postponement *is* requested for reasons other than the above. If a reschedule is agreed which then cannot be played on the new date for *any* reason (including bad weather), the team requesting the original postponement concedes a walkover.

f. Weather postponements

- Try to leave the decision about a weather postponement as late as possible (ideally until the match day) as forecasts are often unreliable. Check a forecasting site that has an hourly rainfall radar. If a weather cancellation *is* needed, this should be agreed between both captains early enough in the day to avoid unnecessary travel for either team.
- Match reschedules should be dealt with by the two FSs. For **home** matches contact our FS who will who will email you 3x dates that look reasonable for the home team. Ideally, check your team's availability before confirming your preferred dates. *You must reply to FS within 24hrs of email being sent and should only turn down any of the 3x dates if you definitely cannot field a team.* This date(s) will then be offered to the opposition by FS.
- For **away** matches the process is similar, but you are free to agree a new date directly with the opposition club. Just be aware of any other match dates that may involve your players, and also let our FS know of the new date.
- One of the FSs will update the fixtures date online.

g. Player availability

- If short of squad players for a match, seek a replacement from the squad below yours. E.g. M2 approach M3, not M1. This provides opportunities for players in lower squads to develop and demonstrate their ability. Those who are keen to play, but did not make a squad of their choosing, will at least know they will have a chance of playing as a replacement. If L1-5 need a player, they can seek a replacement from the lower squad or L60 (the latter being a 'standalone' squad'). If L60 need a player, priority should be given to age-eligible ladies who are *not* named in a mixed squad. Likewise M45 prioritise age-eligible men who are *not* named in a mixed squad.

- Consider compatibility of pairings if you need to field your team with a player from another squad. Out of courtesy, *always* consult with / inform the lower squad captain. This also helps with ensuring you don't squad-bound a lower player (e.g. if they play twice for you – see below).

- If you appoint a reserve player, be mindful and realistic about the request, i.e. if they're expected to be available until the time of the match, this is something they may not be able to commit to.

- If >4 players are available, the advice is to pick the four best players/pairings. As and when it becomes obvious in the season that the outcome of your remaining matches do not affect your position, i.e. you're safe in current division / you've secured promotion or relegation regardless, choose other players in the squad.

- If you use a player from outside your squad, check their eligibility for your team:
    - They *cannot* have played in the same Dorset league category (e.g. Ladies Doubles) in that season for any other club, irrespective of division. They *can* however have played in a different league category (e.g. Mixed Doubles) for another Dorset club, or in the same league category for a club in a different region e.g. H&IOW.

    - You can only use that player *once* for a higher team. If they play more than once for any higher Milford team(s) in the same league category (e.g. Dorset Ladies) they cannot be used by *any* lower Milford team in the same category. So check before the match with the other Milford team captain (and appropriate club captain) if you plan to borrow a player.

    - They must have an LTA Advantage Account, with MT&SC named as one of their venues.

  Any use of ineligible players, even if accidental, will result in the loss of the match rubbers in which they played.

- Any problems speak to the ladies' or men's club captains.

- **Try to avoid giving a walkover**: if you can't field 2x pairs, then 1x pair can play the match. Allow your opposition as much warning as possible if you intend to only turn out one pair.

  See League Reg 5 for the scoring and penalties for giving/getting a walkover. The current season's Regs can be found on the **League Tennis** page.

3. End of season

a. Match fees

As soon as all your matches are finished, collect match fees from your squads (£4 from each adult player for any home matches that they have played) and pay all the fees into the club by bank transfer to the club's bank account **(include the team name in the reference field).** For any Milford v Milford matches, match fees are shared between all (adult) players i.e. £2 per player.

Milford Tennis and Squash Club
Sort code: 30-95-32
Account: 00965771

b. Player's contact info

At the end of each season, delete/destroy any copies you have of squad lists in order to satisfy the club's GDPR / data protection obligations.
Ahead of the following season, new squad lists are communicated and a paper copy displayed in the club. This will not include any personal data.

4. League software

For guidance on using the league software (also known as Online League Planner or OLP) take a look at the **LTA League Support** site, in particular the **User Manuals** and **How To Guides**.

- You log on to the league sites using your personal LTA Account logon.

- Your contact details are visible on the league site to other club's captains. To amend your email or phone details, you do that on your LTA Advantage account. There is a useful guide on the **LTA League Support** site.

- If adding an 'Unknown Player' to a result for either team, make a note of their name(s), pairing and if possible, BTM number, in the 'Announcements' field for the fixture.

- Avoid using features such as home-and-away switch or match reschedule; any change of match time & location is by the respective FSs.

- As a team captain, you have Results Entry rights. If you want to delegate the input of scores to another team member, let our FS know who, so they can be given 'results entry' access rights. This can be given to more than one person.