

Wirral Tennis League Fixture Secretary Report 2016 for AGM

SUMMARY 2016: Most titles, playoff places and relegations were pretty well decided either before the last week of the season or even the last 2 weeks. The only critical positions decided during the last matches were Division 4 where Bertram 1 did enough to pip Hoylake 3 to the title, the bottom of Mens Division 2 where Prenton 2 managed to condemn Hooton 2 to a playoff and Wallasey Manor Ladies 1 doing enough in their last match to win the Ladies Division 1. There were 9 titles at stake which were won by 7 different clubs. Heswall 1 took over from Hoylake 1 as champions, a title they last won in 2000. Prenton 1 won the Mens championship for the 9th consecutive time. Wallasey Manor 1 won Division 2 and their Ladies were ladies champions. Bertram 1 & 2 won Divisions 4 & 6, both having been relegated last year.

Overall it has been quite a good season and we were reasonably lucky with the weather which caused a few problems on 3 Tuesdays and hardly any problems for Mens matches (all together 27 out of almost 500 needed to be rearranged). Again the introduction of the 3rd set match tie-break (made possible in a fair way by the scoring system) made a big contribution to completing matches. The number of problems was down (44 from 78) of which half were not fulfilling a full fixture which was much better than last year but still very disappointing. With Birkenhead 4 dropping out halfway through there is no team needing to apply for reelection because of not fulfilling fixtures. Other problems were caused by clubs not referring to the rules. To repeat the comment from The Fixture Secretary's report at 1988 AGM "*Mr. Lydiate appealed to club representatives to know the rules and therefore avoid problems*". If any rule is unclear or unfair then propose a change to the rules or the wording.

Thanks to the efforts of our Chairman Matt Webb the Wirral Tennis League has taken over the running of the Wirral Tankard (following the retirement of Linda & John Simpson) and the West Cheshire Winter League (following many years being run by Norman Nelson).

TEAMS 2016: There were 73 teams entered the league (47 mixed, 22 Mens and 4 Ladies), a record (there were 50 teams in 2003). The mixed league had 5 divisions of 8 teams and 1 of 7 reduced to 6 halfway as Birkenhead 4 dropped out. The men's league maintained 2 divisions with the 2nd Division having 14 teams. It would have been 3 divisions but there was a late entry after the original fixtures had been made. The ladies league was run in the hope that there may be more teams in future and should continue while clubs enter.

TEAMS 2017: It would be good to expand the ladies league, and we will return to 3 Mens Divisions if we have the same number of teams.

I have previously suggested a Veterans league: open to any suggestions: day of week / mornings/afternoons / format eg over 55/60, men only/ladies only/mixed as winter, 2 cross over doubles etc. There has been a little interest. Email me if your club is interested and if enough interest?

PLAYOFFS & PRESENTATION: Thanks to Alderley and Bertram for allowing the use of all their courts for the league's 4th playoff day and Alderley for their club for the presentation evening and specifically to the Paul Evans & David Martin at Bertram and Alderley Ladies (in alpha order: Jane Rimmer, Nicki Jones, Sam Evans, Sarah Guest, Sharon Lamb & Sue Marcks) for their hospitality, catering and general support. Also many thanks to committee members Sue Edwards & Louise Wilson-Jarvis for their invaluable help in making the day run as smoothly as it could. Unfortunately the day was not blessed with good weather and some matches were played in very very difficult conditions. The weather caused one match to be postponed halfway through and completed the next week. Disappointingly the final playoff at Bertram between Upton 1 and Thorndale 2 was moved to Bidston indoor because of pressure from both teams not wanting to delay the start. The irony is that if the match had been played at Bertram it would have been completed about 1 hour earlier (the match scheduled at the same time at Alderley between Hoylake 3 v Pinewood 1 was completed almost 1 hour earlier than the one at Bidston). In the rearranged match Hooton 2 were forced to make 4 changes and were a player short which possibly contributed to them being the only team not to be promoted (of the 6 playoffs). Almost the opposite of last year's playoffs when all incumbents kept their place.

The Presentation evening was a great success and seemed to be enjoyed by all who were there. All tickets taken, although it was disappointing that 7 clubs were not represented some for the last 4 years (Cheshire Oaks, Helsby & North Cheshire – Neston have missed the last 3).

HONOURS 2015: Congratulations to all division winners and to teams gaining promotion and commiserations to teams relegated or losing in Playoffs.

Division	Winners	Runners up	Playoff	Relegated
1	Heswall1: Many congratulations to Heswall1 for taking the title for the 1 st time since 2000 although they have been knocking on the door for most years since then and only lost 1 match (rearranged at Alderley1).	Prenton1: Their highest position ever having made steady progress since their promotion 6 years ago. Their position was helped by Hoylake1 losing 48-0 to Neston in last match of season.	Thorndale1: were in the playoff position very early on and remained despite changing some of their rankings half way through. The 2 matches won were against relegated Birkenhead1. They lost the playoff 10-2 to Heswall2 but 8 losing sets were very close	Birkenhead1: Survived through the playoffs last year but were favourites for the drop from very early in the season and lost all 14 matches.
2	WallaseyM1: Having just missed out via the playoffs last season they looked certain winners almost from the start and only lost 1 match to runners up Heswall2 and return to the top division after 2 years	Heswall2: easily scored the 25 points required in their last match at Hoylake2 who might have made it with a 48-0 win depending on C Oaks result at P Sunlight1. Won the playoff 10-2 in very difficult conditions.	Upton1: looked favourites to be near the bottom from 1 st match. They won 2 (Hoylake2 & Neston3) but suffered from injuries and availability. They were 12 pts above Neston3 but could have been caught in last match. They narrowly won the playoff 9-7	PSunlight1: looked favourites to be near the bottom from 1 st match. They won 2 (Hoylake2 & Neston3) but suffered from injuries and availability. They were 12 pts above Neston3 but could have been caught in last match. They narrowly won the playoff 9-7
3	Oxton1: make it 2 successive promotions and dominated from the start, won all 14 matches and finished almost 200 points ahead of Thorndale2	Thorndale2: were in playoff spot for most of the season and that was confirmed before the last 2 matches, neither of which they won. They gain promotion via the playoffs by narrowly beating Upton 1 8-6 indoor.	Pinewood1: Won Div4 last year narrowly over Hoylake3 and were in playoff position from the start of season. Their position was settled before the last 2 matches. They lost the playoff to Hoylake3 14-2 winning only 1 st Mens.	Prenton3: were in relegation position from the start and failed to win a match. They did get close to Pinewood1 losing 26-22 at Prenton.
4	Bertram1: bounce back to Div3 and together with Hoylake3 dominated from very early on. The 2 matches they lost were both to Oxton2 (including last match) but fortunately Hoylake3 could only draw at Neston4 and they finish 14 points clear making the 30-18 win at Hoylake3 most significant.	Hoylake3: are in the playoffs for the 3 rd year running and again narrowly just missed automatic promotion (this time not because of penalties). The only match lost was at home to Bertram1. They easily won playoff 14-2.	Heswall4: having won Div5 last year they were in the bottom 2 from start of season. They managed to finish above Birkenhead2 mainly by winning match12 (their only win) 34-14 at Birkenhead2	Birkenhead2: stayed up last year by virtue of the playoffs and Neston5 being a player short but this year they were certain to be in bottom 2 from the start of season. Their season was significantly affected by player availability.
5	Thorndale4: only just stayed up last year by a very narrow margin but started to draw away from the rest halfway through the season and looked to have the division won by match 10. They won 13 and drew with runners up at Hooton2 and won by over 100 points.	Hooton2: were runners up with 2 matches to go and nearly made it 2 promotions in 2 years but lost out to Heswall4 in the playoffs 10-6. They were 4-4 after the straights but because the match was completed the week after they had a weakened team including a player short.	Pinewood2: survived comfortably via the playoffs last year but lost to the same opponents this year 12-4 and return to Div6 after 2 years.	Port Sunlight2: went bottom after match 11, suffered from availability and are relegated after 5 years in Div5
6	Bertram2 bounce back after very narrowly being relegated last year. They were top from match 4, won all their 10 matches and finished	Thorndale5 lost out through the playoffs to Pinewood2 last year but gained revenge this year only losing to Bertram3 and a hammering from	Birkenhead3 finished bottom but do not need to apply for reelection because Birkenhead4 dropped out halfway through the season.	

Division	Winners	Runners up	Playoff	Relegated
	comfortably top.	WallaseyM3		
Men 1	Prenton1 had the division mathematically won by week11 but realistically earlier and won 13 and drew 1 (with WallasyM1). Prenton1 are still making this championship their own. It is their 9 th consecutive win. Who can stop them making it 10?	Thorndale1 : have made steady progress over the last years and finish in their highest position ever only 8 points above last years runners up Helsby1 despite only gaining 4 points from their last 2 matches.	Hooton1 finished only 4 points behind Prenton2 and lost the playoff to Oxtion1 6-2. They looked comfortable until match8 when they conceded the match to Hoylake1 which cost them 12 penalty points.	Hoylake1 oscillate back to Div2 and were favourites for the drop from the first match. They won 2 at home to Helsby1 and a walk over against Hooton1
2	Alderley1 after losing the playoff last year they were top from match1 and were guaranteed promotion with 2 matches left and finished undefeated winning 14 and drawing 2	Oxtion1 had the playoff position sorted with 3 matches to play and bounce back to the top division via the playoffs beating Hooton1 6-2. They drew their 2 matches with winners Alderley1 and only lost 1 match to 4 th placed Upton1	Thorndale4 were a late entry to the league and won 3 and drew 1 of their 15 matches. They beat local rivals NCheshire1 and Upton2 twice. An earlier entry would have enabled a 3 rd division to be created.	Upton2 like Thorndale4 also won 3 and drew 1 of their 15 matches and will need to seek reelection. They beat Bertram1, Thorndale2 & Thorndale4
Ladies 1	WallaseyM1 : were undefeated and won the division on their return to the league after not entering for the previous 4 years. They needed 14points in their last match to ensure their return gave them the title again.	Thorndale1 relinquish their title to their local rivals WallaseyM1 by the narrow margin of 10points and were also unbeaten. Both matches against the champions were drawn 12-12.		Oxtion1 had their only win against Prenton1 and will need to seek reelection however it would be better to have more Ladies teams.

REELECTION: Teams needing to seek reelection:

No mixed team because Birkenhead4 were withdrawn half way through season

Upton2 men – bottom of division2.

Oxtion1 Ladies - bottom of division 1

CHANGES 2016: Changes introduced for season 2016:

All matches to play 3rd set match tiebreak. No option to play full 3rd set

Each rubber worth up to 6 points instead of 2 (to remove the fraction where a rubber went to 3 sets)

Teams not fulfilling fixtures:

- equivalent of 2 matches then need to apply for reelection
- equivalent of 3 matches then record expunged
- equivalent of 3 matches 2 consecutive years then cannot apply for reelection

TEAM CHANGES 2016:

New teams:

Mixed: None

Men: Port Sunlight1

Prenton3

Thorndale4

Ladies: Wallasey Manor1

Deleted teams:

Mixed: Port Sunlight3

Ladies: Oxtion2

Withdrawn teams:

Mixed: Birkenhead4

FIXTURES 2016: Special fixture requirements: All special requirements requested were accommodated (E.g. 1st & 2nd teams at home at same time). If you have any special requirements then ensure I receive them before the end of the year and I will do my best to accommodate you.

WEBSITE: The website (www.wirraltennisleague.org) has received more hits than ever.

Unfortunately I have not had time to progress the electronic entering of scores however I have been discussing it with The LTA and there is a possibility that they can accommodate our scoring system. There may be a requirement for all players to be BT members (free to all club members) and points have been trebled to avoid fractions in preparation (e.g. instead of 2-0 it is 6-0 and instead of 2-1 (was 1.33-0.67) it is 4-2.

The website has continued to provide timely access to league information for all with:

Up to date league tables	Up to date results	Fixtures
Sunset times	Rearranged match details	Floodlight usage
Registrations	Rankings	Rules
Standard penalty tariffs	Problems	Committee
Club contacts	Links to member club websites	Committee decisions (mainly re problems)
History of league	History of all previous years league tables	Minutes of Committee meetings & AGM
News	Club location map and club addresses/telephone numbers	Statistics on every team's final positions (progress?) each year
All result cards from start of 2003	Link to West Cheshire Winter league	Photos from Playoffs, Presentations and clubs.

Matt Webb regularly updates a Facebook page which generates quite a bit of interest.

- Please advise me if there is anything else you would like to see on website
- If any club would like photos published then email them to me, especially the division winners & runners up
- I will also be happy to email any of the photos on the website. Just email me which photo

PROBLEMS 2016: Better, Down from 79 to 44 (49 in 2011) of which 22 were not being able to fulfil a full fixture which is better than last year but still disappointing.

To run any sport in a competitive environment requires a degree of organisation / commitment and administration. I think the league & clubs receive that from the WTL committee and therefore it is reasonable for the league and committee to expect a higher level of organisation & commitment from the clubs. There was some improvement from last season partly due to the introduction of rule 5.3 relating to not fulfilling fixtures. I repeat my comment from last year: it is not good enough to say "I just want to play tennis" – that cannot happen for all, some members of every club must organise! If clubs do not want to play and commit to a well organised and fair league then they can arrange friendlies!

I haven't analysed the problems this year except that half were because of not fulfilling a fixture in full or part.

FIXTURE SECRETARY / WEBMASTER: I have been Fixture Secretary for 14 years and there has now been a website for all that time.

REGISTRATIONS: I will leave the registrations on website and will have it up to date by end of year, so for next season please maintain them by advising any discrepancies, any players who have left your club in addition to new registrations. When registering a player ensure they are not registered with any other club (which would mean a transfer and requires at least 48 hours' notice to both Fixture Secretary & ALL previous clubs contacts). From next season It maybe that they must be BT Members?

NB Rule 6.1 & 10.1: All players must be bona fide playing members.

CONTACTS: Ensure your contacts are up to date otherwise your club could miss significant communication. Please check Contacts on website and ensure their details (particularly email and telephone are correct)

LEAGUE HISTORY: If you know of any history e.g. officers of the league please let me know. Does anyone know how the league rankings were determined in 1984 & 1985 (see website)?

THANKS: I thank the committee for their support and wish all clubs an enjoyable, successful and let's make it a problem free 2017 season. Please ensure your club and members are aware of the rules. They are there to try and ensure fairness for all. If you do not agree with or find anything unclear then please propose a change or clarification to the wording.

WIRRAL TANKARD: The introduction of a Plate competition with the final being played at the same venue as the main tournament was a great success and thanks must go to Matt Webb (for taking it on) and Sue Edwards and Mark Powers for their organisation and hosting the finals day plus PrentonLTC for their hospitality and catering.

WEST CHESHIRE WINTER LEAGUE: Again thanks must go to Matt Webb for his efforts to bring the West Cheshire Winter League under the wing of The Wirral Tennis League. There were a few changes introduced for the 2016-2017 season:

- The Divisions are now – Main (because Ladies are allowed to play in it) & Ladies (instead of Mens & Ladies)
- No requirement to confirm fixture
- Fixtures must be played on fixture date unless postponed because of weather (or played early with agreement of both teams)
- All requested fixture requirements were fulfilled including many restrictions.
- Match Numbers introduced
- New Results Cards
- Same scoring system as for Summer League
- As balanced (home & away matches) as possible fixture list
- Restructure of Divisions for 2017-2018 to 8 teams per division to provide:
 - Playing home & away for more balanced fixtures.
 - More closely contested fixtures. To date over a third of results have been 24-0 (4-0 in previous terms)
 - Fairer travelling for matches because playing home & away.
 - Decided by applying promotions/relegations and then taking top 8 for division 1 then next 8 for division 2 etc
 - Matches would start mid to late September because there would be 14 matches (1 extra).
 - Possibility of some form of playoff before summer season
- Still investigating possibility of teams entering their own results.

TO BE CONFIRMED:

1. Playoffs / presentation evening 2017 – Saturday 2nd September – venue?
2. Wirral Tankard: dates and venue for finals (see AGM agenda)

Geoff Dewhurst
Fixture Secretary
Wirral Tennis League
November 2016