

## Wirral Tennis League Fixture Secretary Report 2017 for AGM

**SUMMARY 2017:** There were still many titles, playoff places and relegations to be decided with 2 matches to play and still many with only the last match to play. The most closely contested was division 1 where any of the top 4 teams would have won if they had done better in their last match. In the end Prenton1 (38-10), Heswall1 (32-16) and Hoylake1 (30-18) won their matches and Neston1 (18-30) who were in prime position lost theirs. Prenton1 take the title for the first time by only 3 points (1/2 rubber) winning their last rubber, the 4<sup>th</sup> mixed. Only 11 points separated the top 4. Another very close finish was for a playoff place in division 5 where Upton2 drew their rearranged final match at home against champions Hooton2 despite losing 3 of the straights. There were 10 titles at stake which were won by 8 different clubs. Prenton1 won the Mens championship for the 10<sup>th</sup> consecutive time. Wallasey Manor retained the Ladies title. Hoylake Men won 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> divisions.

Overall it has been a good season and we were lucky with the weather which caused very few rearranged matches. Again the introduction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> set match tie-break continues to make a big contribution to completing matches. The number of problems was down (36 from 44) of which more than half were not fulfilling a full fixture (5) or part fixture (17) which was much better than last year but still very disappointing. 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.

It was the 2<sup>nd</sup> year that The League has run The Wirral Tankard and the West Cheshire Winter League.

**TEAMS 2017:** There were 75 teams entered the league (47 mixed, 24 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. The men's league was able to create a full 3<sup>rd</sup> division of 8 teams. The ladies league was run in the hope that there may be more teams in future and will continue while clubs enter.

**TEAMS 2018:** It would be good to expand the ladies league, and maintain 3 Mens Divisions. There are 2 applications to enter teams in the Mixed League which at the present time would make 9 teams in division 6.

I have previously suggested a Veterans league: open to any suggestions: day of week / mornings/afternoons / format eg over 50/55/60, men only/ladies only/mixed as winter, 2 cross over doubles, 2 sets etc. There has been a little interest. Email me if your club is interested and if enough interest?

**PLAYOFFS & PRESENTATION:** Thanks to Prenton for allowing the use of all their courts for the league's 5<sup>th</sup> playoff day and for their club for the presentation evening and specifically to Debbie Jones and Mark Powers for their hospitality. Also many thanks to committee members Sue Edwards & Matt Webb for their invaluable help in making the day run as smoothly as possible. There were logistical opportunities because there are only 7 courts at Prenton and the day did not start well with rain at the start. Surprisingly we only lost a short amount of time on the hard courts but lost 1 hour on the 3 astro courts. Despite the restrictions the day went well and the schedule was successful. A couple of matches were decided before all rubbers were completed and the incomplete rubbers were unfinished. The top 2 division playoffs resulted in the status quo remaining while the other 5 playoffs resulted in the runners up gaining promotion by beating the teams finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> to bottom. The closest was Men division 2. Pinewood 1 and Hooton 2 finished 4-4 in sets with Pinewood winning 37-28 in games.

The Presentation evening was a great success and seemed to be enjoyed by all who were there. All tickets were taken, although it was disappointing that 5 clubs were not represented some for the last 5 years (Cheshire Oaks, Helsby & North Cheshire. Neston have missed the last 4).

**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	<b>Prenton1:</b> Many congratulations to Prenton1 for winning the title by the narrowest of margins (3 points= $\frac{1}{2}$ rubber) for the 1 <sup>st</sup> time in the history of the league. In the last 4 seasons they have finished 4 <sup>th</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> and now 1st	<b>Heswall1:</b> Finished so close and could have retained title at last match by winning another rubber or even 1 match tiebreak in match 13 at home to Prenton	<b>WallaseyM1:</b> were in the playoff position very early on. They did win 6 matches including the last match at home to Neston1 30-18 which effectively stopped Neston from taking the title. They retain their position by winning the playoff 10-3 having been 5-3 at halftime	<b>Heswall2:</b> Return straight back to division 2. It is always very difficult to retain 1 <sup>st</sup> division status as a 2 <sup>nd</sup> team and lost all 14 matches.
2	<b>Birkenhead1:</b> Return to the top division after a very poor 2016. They finished above Thorndale1 by 36 points which was the difference in their 2 matches. They may stay up if they can maintain the 2017 team.	<b>Thorndale1:</b> came down last year via the playoffs and lost out to WallaseyM1 in this year's playoffs. Missed automatic promotion to a strong Birkenhead1 season.	<b>Prenton2:</b> looked reasonably safe with 2 matches to play but they were against top & 2 <sup>nd</sup> . Finished 14 points behind CheshireOaks1 who put out very strong teams in their final 2 matches. They easily won the playoff against Alderley2 to retain their place.	<b>Thorndale2:</b> return straight back to division2 having gained promotion last season through the playoffs. They looked favourites for relegation very early on and won 1 match against CheshireOaks1
3	<b>Upton1:</b> bounce straight back to division2 having been relegated via the playoffs last season and looked favourites from very early on. Only lost 2 to 2 <sup>nd</sup> (Alderley2) & 3 <sup>rd</sup> (Neston3). They finished almost 90 points clear of Alderley2	<b>Alderley2:</b> were in playoff spot for most of the season and that was virtually confirmed before the last match. They easily lost the playoff 13-3 to Prenton2.	<b>Thorndale3:</b> finished not far behind Heswall3 but could not gain enough points to catch them. Both had hard final matches against top and 3 <sup>rd</sup> respectively but did enough to finish above PSunlight1.	<b>PSunlight1:</b> suffer successive relegations and only finished 8 points behind Throndale3. They won 4 matches but only scored single figures in 6 matches including match 12 at Neston3
4	<b>Oxton2:</b> led the division for most of the season and confirmed it before last match. They only lost to 3 <sup>rd</sup> placed team WallaseyM2 and beat runners up Pinewood1 home and away. They finished in their highest position ever.	<b>Pinewood1:</b> having been relegated through the playoffs last season return to division3 through the playoffs by winning the 1 <sup>st</sup> 9 sets against Thorndale3. They gained their playoff place 28 points above WallaseyM2 despite losing 74-22 to them over their 2 matches	<b>Thorndale4:</b> having walked division5 last season they return having been in the playoff position for most of the season and losing the playoff 10-3 to Upton2. They couldn't quite catch Hoylake4 and did lose overall to them 51-45.	<b>Heswall4:</b> stayed up last year by beating Hooton2 in the playoffs but were in the relegation spot from very early on and could not quite manage to catch Thorndale4 contributed by having lost 54-42 over their 2 matches
5	<b>Hooton2:</b> easily won the division by a massive 130 points. They may be considered unfortunate to lose out in last year's playoffs because their match was completed the week after and they had players unavailable.	<b>Upton2:</b> narrowly beat Birkenhead2 to the playoffs by 4points winning the last 3 mixed rubbers in the rearranged match against Hooton2 to achieve a 24-24 draw. They won the playoff 10-3 against Thorndale4.	<b>NCheshire1:</b> couldn't quite catch Bertram2 (37 points) having significantly lost 73-23 over their 2 matches and were in the playoff position for most of the season. They just did enough to finish only 28 points above Thorndale5 and beat them 50-46 over their 2 matches	<b>Thorndale5:</b> gained promotion last season through the playoffs at the expense of Pinewood2. They won 2 matches at home to Bertram2 and NCheshire1 but return to division 5

<b>6</b>	<b>Pinewood2:</b> bounce back after being relegated through losing the playoff to Thorndale5. They may consider themselves lucky as they were only 8 points ahead of Oxton3 who were penalised for an unregistered player. They did however win 54-42 over their 2 matches..	<b>Oxton3:</b> Penalties cost them automatic promotion and they were nearly caught by WallaseyM3 (12 points). Home advantage between them and WallaseyM3 was significant both winning by massive margins 46-2 and 44-4 respectively		<b>Pinewood3:</b> finished only 13 points behind Oxton4 and did win 3 of their 12 matches but need to apply for reelection.
<b>Men 1</b>	<b>Prenton1</b> had the division mathematically won by week11 but realistically earlier and won all 14 matches. Prenton1 are still making this championship their own. It is their 10 <sup>th</sup> consecutive win. Who can stop them making it 11?	<b>Alderley1:</b> having been promoted last season they did very well to finish runners up 13 points above Neston1 by virtue of winning their 2 matches against Neston1 32-16. Their highest position since 2010.	<b>Prenton2</b> finished only 13 points above Oxton1 and are relegated by narrowly losing to Thorndale2 in the playoff. Prenton2 and Oxton1 both won their home matches 18-6 against each other.	<b>Oxton1:</b> having won promotion through the playoff return to division2 again. Will they oscillate again to division 1 next season?
<b>2</b>	<b>Hoylake1:</b> oscillate for the 5 <sup>th</sup> time, this time back to Div1. Will they be able to stay up next year? They finished 22 points above Thorndale2	<b>Thorndale2:</b> return to the top division for the 1 <sup>st</sup> time since 2009 by beating Prenton2 in the playoffs. They finished ahead of Upton1 by only 2 points (less than 1 set) winning match 14 22-2 to Upton's 10-14.	<b>Hooton2:</b> only won 1 match in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of season, finished 19 points behind Alderley2 and 18 ahead of PSunlight1. They were relegated in the playoff by Pinewood1.	<b>PSunlight1:</b> didn't win a match in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> half of season and are relegated to division3. Their only win was at Alderley2.
<b>3</b>	<b>Hoylake2:</b> won the division after entering the league for the first time and only lost 1 match to runners up Pinewood1. They had won the division by match 12 and the top 2 finished well above the rest.	<b>Pinewood1:</b> another new entry to the league gain promotion the 1 <sup>st</sup> time and after match 12. They only lost 2 matches to Hoylake2 and Upton2		<b>NCheshire1:</b> need to apply for reelection although they did win 2 and drew 2 matches. They finished bottom partly because of conceding 2 matches.
<b>Ladies 1</b>	<b>WallaseyM1:</b> won all their matches and retained the title having returned to the division last year	<b>Thorndale1 / Oxton1:</b> finish joint runners up to WallaseyM1 both having won their respective away matches 14-10.		<b>Hoylake1:</b> league rules state that they must apply for reelection.

#### REELECTION: Teams needing to seek reelection:

Pinewood3 mixed – bottom of division6

NCheshire1 men – bottom of division3

Hoylake1 Ladies - bottom of division 1

#### CHANGES 2017: Changes introduced for season 2017:

Playoffs:

1. The planned schedule by division will be specified in WTL CM1 Minutes.
2. When teams are known the schedule will be emailed to contacts and published on website.
3. The final schedule will be published as soon as possible following WTL CM2 which will give clubs over 2 weeks notice.
4. A player can only play in one mixed playoff and one Mens/Ladies playoff. If a player is selected for 2 playoffs which results in a clash of times then rescheduling will be required. Therefore if you have a player required to play in more than one playoff the fixture secretary must be emailed as soon as possible and before WTL CM2.
5. All matches played on playoff day must be at host venue.

## TEAM CHANGES 2017:

**New teams:** Mixed: Oxton4  
Men: Hoylake2  
Pinewood1  
Ladies: Hoylake1

**Deleted teams:** Ladies: Prenton1

**Withdrawn teams:** Mixed: Birkenhead4

**FIXTURES 2017: Special fixture requirements:** All special requirements requested were accommodated (E.g. 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> 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:** [www.wirraltennisleague.org](http://www.wirraltennisleague.org)

The results still had to be communicated using either the card or using proformas set up for each of the 3 leagues.  
Also see Winter 2017-2018

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	WTL West Cheshire Winter league	Photos from Playoffs, Presentations, Wirral Tankard and clubs.

Matt Webb regularly updates a Facebook page.

- 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 2017:** Better, down from 44 to 36 of which more than half 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 high level of organisation & commitment from the clubs. I hope the new result recording system in use this winter will also help eliminate some problems (eg late cards). 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!

**FIXTURE SECRETARY / WEBMASTER:** I have been Fixture Secretary for 15 years and there has now been a website for all that time. A new online recording system has been introduced for Winter 2017-2018 and has had many positive comments. It can be accessed using: [bowlingresults.co.uk/wirraltennis](http://bowlingresults.co.uk/wirraltennis)

**REGISTRATIONS:** The plan is to develop the result recording system being used this winter where registrations are made by the clubs. However from next season it maybe that they must be BT Members and their registration number entered with their registration?

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). In the new recording system the clubs can update their contacts within the system but that does not automatically transfer to the leagues email list. I will investigate to see if it is possible.

**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 2017-2018 Winter and 2018 Summer 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:** 13 teams entered the Tankard. The finals of The Tankard & Plate competitions were completed at Thorndale and our thanks to Thorndale for their excellent hospitality. Despite some inclement weather both finals were completed on time.

- Tankard: Congratulations to Heswall who beat Birkenhead
- Plate: Congratulations to Thorndale who beat Upton

**WINTER LEAGUE (WEST CHESHIRE):** Changes: There were a few changes introduced for the 2017-2018 season:

- Restructure of Divisions for 2017-2018 to 8 teams per division to provide:
  - Playing home & away for more balanced fixtures.
  - 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 started late September because there would be 14 matches (1 extra).
  - 2 up 2 down subject to applications/resignations
  - Possibility in future of some form of playoff before summer season but not this season
  - Matches postponed because of weather must have an agreed rearranged date on the day of postponement
  - Any rearranged matches must be completed by end of April
- All requested fixture requirements were fulfilled including many restrictions.
- New result entry system:
  - The system was available for testing for a few weeks before implementation and for registering players and checking pre registered players.
  - Once live, clubs were requested to input their home match results for the first 3 matches (131 of 132 results were entered as requested)
  - Starting from match 04 the system was fully up to date and most teams enter their results straight after their match, many using their smartphone.
  - Introduction took a great deal of effort and prompting to get system up and running and making sure the results entered agreed with the existing system
  - Thanks to all who helped but very disappointing was an email received from the Chester contact who would not enter his one retrospective result in time requested and sent what I consider a very rude email. Because of that it took me quite a time to audit the system.
  - A significant problem was that clubs had not registered the players before they played and it took me many hours to sort the problem following result entries for the first 3 matches.

**TO BE CONFIRMED:**

1. Playoffs / presentation evening 2018 – Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> (or possibly 9<sup>th</sup> September) – venue?
2. Wirral Tankard: dates and venue for finals (see AGM agenda)

Geoff Dewhurst  
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Wirral Tennis League  
November 2017