HONG KONG LADIES TENNIS LEAGUE

2026-27 RULES

1. ADMINISTRATION

1.1 All League competition shall be under the general management of the Hong Kong Ladies Tennis League (HKLTL) Committee.

1.2 The Committee shall consist of a Chairwoman, Treasurer, Secretary, Registrar and all divisions should be represented on the committee by a Division Representative. The Committee may add positions or modify roles as needed to facilitate management of the HKLTL.

1.3 The Committee shall be responsible for:

- the registration of players and teams
- the grading of teams
- the division of teams
- the establishment of League schedules of play
- the arbitration of disputes between teams
- the management of funds

1.4 The Committee may, at its absolute discretion, vary or add to any aspect of the Rules and match scheduling, on a temporary or permanent basis. Any such Committee decisions will be communicated to all team captains. All Committee decisions will have been debated and are made in good faith. All Committee decisions are final.

1.5 All written communication to the Committee must comply with the guidelines below.

a. Written communication must come solely from team Captains. If other HKLTL players have legitimate matters to raise, this must be done via their Captains.
b. Written communication must be via the online form ‘Change Request’ found in the Captains section of the HKLTL website. Only one written communication is allowed per team on any subject matter and must be factual and fewer than 500 words.
c. Written communications must be free from language that might be perceived as impolite or threatening. Written communications must not make unsubstantiated allegations against any individual, team, the Committee or other member of the HKLTL. At the Committee’s discretion, other content may also be deemed inappropriate.
d. There must be no lobbying by any other parties within or outside the HKLTL in relation to written communications.

e. Any written communication which does not comply with the above will be disregarded. Furthermore, depending on the nature of the noncompliance, and at the Committee's discretion, disciplinary action may apply including, but not limited to, suspension or permanent suspension or forfeiture of sets or matches. Past behaviour of the player or team will be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made. The decisions of the HKLTL are final and no appeal is permitted.

1.6 The Committee shall decide on routine matters by Ordinary Resolution and non-routine matters by Special Resolution. An Ordinary Resolution may be passed by the Committee with a simple majority of more than 50% of the votes cast. A Special Resolution may only be passed by the Committee with at least 75% of the votes cast in its favour.

a. Routine matters set forth in rule 1.3 require an Ordinary Resolution. Non-routine decisions requiring Special Resolution include: major changes to match procedures, season duration or the number of divisions. The nature of resolution required on all other matters is at the discretion of the Chairwoman.
b. Special Resolutions require one week written notice to be given to Captains, who may then submit written communications on the matter in accordance with Rule 1.5. These communications will be shared with the entire Committee before the Special Resolution vote. There is no notice period or notification for Ordinary Resolutions.
c. Resolutions may be voted on at committee meetings, in which case only committee members present will be entitled to vote. Resolutions may also be voted on by email, in between committee meetings, in which case every committee member is entitled to vote.
d. Resolutions should be in the form of proposals to which each committee member can answer yes or no, rather than a menu of choices.
e. Where a committee member has self-interest in the outcome of a resolution, she must declare this to the Chairwoman in advance of the vote and the Chairwoman will decide whether it is appropriate to recuse the committee member from voting. When the outcome of a resolution will affect most HKLTL members or teams, recusing committee members may not be practical.
f. Committee members debating an issue in person must be respectful and concise. For resolutions made by email, each committee member may circulate one email to the Committee explaining their views on any proposed resolution, and this email must comply with rule 1.5c and be fewer than 500 words.
g. All decisions made by committee resolution will be final.
h. When a Special Resolution has been determined, another vote will not be held within 3 years

1.7 All matches are governed by the HKLTL and the International Tennis Federation Rules. The HKLTL booklet is available for download from the HKLTL website and players are responsible for making sure they are fully aware of the Rules.

2. REGISTRATION, ENTRIES & ELIGIBILITY

2.1 The season will consist of two sessions, commencing in September and January.

2.2 The maximum number of teams that may be registered for any season shall be 94 and the maximum number of teams per division is 12. Existing teams who re-register will have priority over new teams.

2.3 Registration of Teams: Entries for the League shall be invited before the beginning of each season from Clubs, Associations and any other interested persons.

a. Team Captains shall submit the Registration Form for their team, nominating a minimum of 6 players and a maximum of 12.
b. Full names and HKID numbers of team members, and the Captain's email address must be provided.
c. Players must hold a valid HKID.
d. For teams re-registering, 4 players must be from the previously registered team, or they will be considered a NEW team.
e. New teams must consist of a minimum of 4 players or 50%, whichever is the greater, at the level of the division they wish to be placed in.
f. A team fielding an incomplete team - as defined by Rule 5.5(e) - three times in the current season may not re-register as an existing team for the following season.

2.4 Allocation of days for matches:

Monday	Division 5
Tuesday	Division 4
Wednesday	Division 3
Thursday	Division 2
Friday	Premier and Division 1

2.5 The registration fee per team for each year will be decided by the Committee and should be fully tendered when each Registration Form is submitted. No refunds will be given to teams for late withdrawals or if the season is cut short.

2.6 Once the registration deadline has passed, no player transfer to another team is allowed unless:

a. Captains of both teams, and the player concerned, all agree; or
b. geographical relocation prevents that player from continuing to represent her original team; or
c. exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Committee.

In all cases, the Captains and the player concerned must write to the Registrar explaining the reasons for the transfer. The transfer must be done prior to the first match of the season for the relevant division and will not be effective until approval is received from the Registrar or Division Representative.

2.7 Should a team withdraw after the Registration deadline:

a. prior to match schedules being set, players of that team will be permitted to play for another team.

b. after match schedules have been set, players of that team will not be permitted to play for any team as a member or as a guest for the upcoming year.
c. exceptional circumstances may be considered by the Committee.

2.8 A Captain may, on behalf of a player, apply to the Committee for downwards regrading using a Regrading Request Form ("RRF") which shall include: the player's written consent, valid reasons for downwards regrading and other information as the Committee may deem appropriate. The application will be reviewed by the Committee whose decision is final.

2.9 Players holding, or having held, a WTA ranking are not allowed to play in the HKLTL. All other players are allowed at the Committee's discretion. New players to all Divisions except Premier must also be assessed by a HKLTL-nominated coach, listed on the website, and a Coach's Assessment form must be submitted for that player. Non-disclosure of ranking and inappropriate use of higher graded players will be penalized by forfeiture of all points won by such players. Players must be at least 18 years old to register in the League.

3. ADDING OR DELETING PLAYERS

Players may be added or deleted from the commencement of the Fall / Spring session until four weeks after the first match of the respective division.

3.1 New members may be added by the Captain. Please allow up to one week for a player to be approved for play by the Registrar and/or Division Representative.

3.2 All sets played by an unregistered player shall be forfeited.

3.3 When a player has withdrawn from a team, that player may not register with another team during the same year. The player may return to her original team, should the circumstances for her withdrawal from the League change.

4. GUEST PLAYERS

4.1 Teams may use a maximum of 12 guest players. Guest players may play a combined total of 12 matches in any combination throughout the year. If a guest player plays at least six matches and wins at least 50 percent of their sets in those matches, the Committee will review their performance and may, if considered appropriate, regrade the player to a higher division at the end of the season.

4.2 Guest players (except for Division 5) must be registered as a member of a team in a lower division (for example, if registered in Division 3, a player may guest for any division higher than Division 3). Captains must register their guest players using the form on the HKLTL website.

4.3 Division 5 may register guest players who are not currently playing in the League. In this case, their playing level should be appropriate to the division. See New Player Registration requirements (Rule 2.9).

4.4 A guest player may guest for one team only and may switch teams at any time through the Fall and Spring if she has not yet played a match.

4.5 Guest players may be added throughout the year.

4.6 Guest players must be approved by the Registrar and/or Division Representative prior to playing in their first match.

5. MATCH PROCEDURE

5.1 The date and location of match play is fixed by the Scheduler. A match schedule will include: participating clubs, associations and teams, Captains' names and telephone numbers. Captains should review the match schedule carefully.

5.2 The visiting team remains on the courts they started on.

5.3 Six new balls must be provided by the home team and must comply with ITF regulations.

5.4 A doubles format will be used and play shall be continuous from the first point of each set until the set is concluded. Each team will field two pairs, who will play two tie-break sets against each pair of the opposing team.

*As a **trial** for the 2026-27 Season, HKLTL matches will be played with one regular deuce. Any second deuce will be played as sudden death and that point will decide the game. The receiving pair will decide who will receive serve for the sudden death point.*

a. A 5-minute warm up between opponents is permitted before sets 1 and 3.
b. Twenty seconds are allowed between the end of one point and the start of the next.
c. Except for after the first game of each set (when no interval is allowed), a 90-second interval is allowed between games during the change of ends.
d. At the end of sets 1 and 3, a 2-minute interval is allowed.
e. At the end of each set, a brief toilet break is permitted.
f. Between sets 2 and 3, up to a 10-minute break is allowed.
g. No breaks are permitted before and during a tie-break.

5.5 Match start time is 9:15am. Courts must be available at 9:00am for warm-up.

a. A player who is not ready to play within 15 minutes of the official start time forfeits the first set.
b. A player who is not ready to play within 45 minutes of the official start time forfeits the first 2 sets. If the other pairs have not yet completed their first 2 sets, she may wait to play her remaining 2 sets.
c. A player who shows up at/after the official start time is entitled to only a 5-minute warm up with her opponents.
d. If a team does not show up within 1 hour of the official starting time, a 'walkover' will be declared.
e. A team fielding fewer than 2 pairs will forfeit all un-played sets and points will be awarded to the opponent.

5.6 Both Captains must identify players' full names and guest players on the weekly Score Sheet. It is the responsibility of the HOME team to enter scores into League Republic by midnight of the Match Day.

5.7 During match play, no interference is allowed from non-playing members, coaches or spectators. Coaching is acceptable between sets 2 and 3.

5.8 Players must complete all their sets. Failure to observe this rule, including leaving the court perimeter without reasonable excuse, will result in the forfeiture of incomplete and un-played sets by the player. Completed sets will stand but the player will not be permitted to continue against the other pair.

5.9 All registered players are required to play at least one match a season. At the end of the season, a team will be penalized 4 points for every registered player who has not played. This rule also applies to players who register in the spring. A player may be exempted for medical reasons supported by a doctor's letter or permanent transfer from Hong Kong.

6. SCORING

6.1 One point will be awarded for each set won.

6.2 Winners of each division will be decided on point score aggregate. At the end of the year, should two or more teams achieve the same point score aggregate, a count back on matches won will decide the winner. If both teams won the same number of matches, then both teams will be declared co-winners.

6.3 At the end of each year of play, the winning team(s) from each division will automatically be promoted to a higher division while the lowest-scoring team(s) from each division will automatically be reassigned to a lower division. This rule applies if the full year season is cut short but either the Fall or Spring session is complete.

6.5 At the discretion of the Committee, other teams may be promoted or demoted, to allow for more even grading of teams, and to facilitate the overall running of the League.

7. INJURIES

7.1 If a player sustains an injury on court resulting in bleeding and/or vomiting, play can be suspended for up to 15 minutes, to enable the player to assess and recover (with the exception of 7.2 and 7.3 below). Injury time-outs, for matters such as muscle cramping, should be taken at the change of ends or sets during match play unless it's an on-court injury. If a player is unable to resume play after the initial 15-minute injury time-out, she and her partner forfeit that set and any remaining sets with the same opposing pair. She may elect to play subsequent sets against the other opposing pair; however, only one injury time-out is permitted per person, per match. In 7.2 and 7.3, the 3-minute medical time-out will serve as that player's only medical time out for the match.

Example: Player A is injured while playing set 1 and is unable to resume play within 15 minutes. She and her partner will forfeit sets 1 and 2. They are eligible to play sets 3 and 4 but no further medical time-out for Player A is allowed.

7.2 If a player calls an injury time-out during a tie-break, she will forfeit one point and may only take a 3-minute break. Otherwise, the set is forfeited and a 15-minute injury time-out may be taken.

7.3 If a player calls an injury time-out at set point, she will forfeit one point and may only take a 3-minute break. Otherwise, the set is forfeited and a 15-minute injury time-out may be taken.

7.4 If a player is injured during the warm-up between 9:00am and 9:15am, that player may be replaced by another team member prior to 9:15am. If she arrives after the official starting time, Rule 5.5 takes effect.

7.5 ALL PLAYERS PLAY AT THEIR OWN RISK. The HKLTL and any participating teams will not be held responsible for any illnesses suffered or injury sustained by a player during a match.

8. INTERRUPTION OF PLAY

If a match cannot be completed because courts are not available for play beyond 1 pm, then another date must be arranged as per rule 9.4. On the rescheduled date, the remaining sets are to be played in accordance with rules 9.2, 9.3 and 9.5.

9. INCLEMENT WEATHER & MATCH RESCHEDULING

9.1 A match may only be rescheduled once due to weather.

a. In case of wet weather, BOTH captains must be in agreement about court playability for a match to proceed. It is not necessary for both Captains to attend the venue to come to such an agreement. However, if they cannot agree, scheduled players from both teams must attend the venue to determine if the court is playable. If play cannot commence by 10.00am, the match will be rescheduled once.
b. ***[This rule is suspended to trial a short deuce format for the 2026-27 season -*** *In case of a Hot Weather Special Advisory before 9:15am, matches must proceed under a no-ad format. Matches will be played without an ad; when the score is at deuce, the next point will determine the game. The receiving pair will decide who will receive serve at deuce.****]***
c. When the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) is at 8 or above before 9:00 am, both Captains must agree to play, otherwise the match will be rescheduled once.
d. If a venue is closed due to high winds, the match will be rescheduled once.

9.2 If play is suspended due to weather-related events, only the completed sets will count in the rescheduled match. Any incomplete sets will need to be restarted from the beginning in the rematch. For example, if both teams won two sets, and they were both in the middle of their 3rd

sets, then at the rematch, both teams must restart their 3rd sets regardless of the score in that set.

9.3 On the rescheduled match day, all team members are eligible to play, subject to the following conditions:

a. If one court has completed all 4 sets then none of the 4 players who have already completed their 4 sets may play in the rescheduled match (i.e. no player can play more than 4 sets per match).
b. Team members who participated in the original match must remain partners in the rescheduled match if both are playing.

9.4 The Division Representative must be copied on all correspondence regarding the rescheduled match.

a. Within 24 hours, the home team must offer three dates within three weeks; the original match day being day 1 and the final day to schedule being day 21. The three dates may not all fall within a single week, on a holiday or during a holiday break or on a scheduled match date for either team.
b. If there are fewer than three weeks left in the season, dates offered will span the remaining week(s), including the rain-off week.
c. When a match needs to be rescheduled in the final rain-off week, dates must be on or before the final rain-off date. The final rain-off date is considered a match day.
d. The away team must accept one of the offered dates within 24 hours of receiving them. If the home team cannot secure courts, a change of venue is permitted.

9.5 At the time of the rescheduled match, if weather prevents play again, both teams must go to the venue to split points. The only exceptions to the rule: if the venue is closed due to high winds, and/or if the Hong Kong Observatory issues the following warnings – Amber, Red or Black Rain alert, then points will be split evenly between the two teams. In all other cases:

a. If only one team goes to the venue, then that team will receive all eight points.
b. If neither team goes to the venue, then both teams will receive zero points.
c. Splitting un-played sets due to weather: all sets played, stand. The remaining un-played sets will be split. This may result in 0.5 points being awarded in the case of an odd number of sets remaining.

10. FAIR PLAY

10.1 The highest level of sportsmanship is expected from every player. All teams are responsible for ensuring that fair play, honesty and respect are demonstrated at every match.

10.2 The HKLTL supports a tennis environment conducive to the enjoyment of the sport and free from threats, harassment or any type of bullying behaviour. The HKLTL supports diversity and respects all players regardless of culture, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual orientation, appearance, ability and circumstances. Bullying is unwanted aggressive behaviour that involves a real or perceived imbalance of power. No bullying is tolerated by the HKLTL including physical, verbal,

social, sexual, cyber or other aggression. Any HKLTL player or team who engages in any act that constitutes bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action.

10.3 Protests alleging a breach of the rules should be submitted by a team captain via the 'Complaint' form on the HKLTL website by the end of Day 3 after the Match Day (i.e. Day 1).

a. Only one protest communication may be submitted and must comply with rule 1.5 regarding communication to the committee.
b. Following a protest, the captain concerned will be notified of the complaint and given an opportunity to respond within 3 days.
c. The Committee, at its discretion, may request further information from the parties involved.
d. The team captains and players involved on both sides of the protest shall not, under any circumstances, engage in lobbying to support their position. Communication must remain only between the concerned parties and committee.
e. A determination will be made by the HKLTL Committee and no appeal is permitted. (i) failure to follow the complaints process, (ii) any bad-faith Protests or (iii) failure to accept the decision of the HKLTL Committee in good faith may result in further sanctions.

10.4 The Committee may determine the outcome of any disciplinary action resulting from protest or otherwise and may impose sanctions including, but not limited to, player/captain/team suspension or permanent suspension, or forfeiture of sets or matches. Three protests made against the same team or player in a two year period may result in suspension or permanent suspension.