

Section 3.6 – Delivering a Programme of Coaching and Competition

The tennis programme runs all year round; defined as running in all 3 school terms and a range of holiday activities running in at least 2 school holidays.

Coaching

The structure of the coaching programme includes some fundamental elements, allowing players of all ages and abilities to take part, learn, develop, train and compete, which in turn assists clubs to:

- retain more members on the programme because of an improved playing experience
- advertise sessions to specific groups of players
- ensure that members have the best possible playing experience because they are playing with others of the same or similar standard
- ensure that all competition is appropriate for all players by ensuring that players of the right standard have entered the event
- define course objectives for each course, by stipulating what players should be able to do by the end of a particular course

We regularly assess the programme at committee meetings; ensuring that ALL members/users are being catered for and new opportunities sought out to make the programme more effective. In order to do this, the head coach :

- Liaises with the coaches to decide/plan which players are to be offered which level
- Reviews all players and move them appropriately through the system
- Encourages coaches to identify the most talented and committed players and offer them a more intensive programme where they progress more quickly
- Liaises with the LTA Talent Performance Coordinator concerning talented players
- Makes sure that movements of players are sensitive to pairs or groups of friends
- Helps parents understand it is the decision of coaches to move players up
- Seeks feedback from players on the programme

Timings of sessions are also important i.e. if a player starts their red class on a Monday they are able to progress through to orange, green etc on a Monday, enabling their parents to plan their activities e.g. football/cricket are always the same evening as are brownies and cubs.

Competition

Competitions in the UK are categorized by Grades, ranging from 7 to 1. The higher the grade, the higher the standard and the more ranking points are available. The events which are organised as part of most successful tennis programmes' will fall between Grades 7 and 5, however, there are many forms of fun, informal competition: Informal American doubles, parent and child, wood and whites, winners up/losers down, Davis Cup, themed team tennis, mini tennis for adults, etc

Grade 7 Fun internal competition using any scoring option you wish mainly aimed at starter players. Due to the flexible scoring options, competitions at this grade do not count for ratings. All doubles competitions are allocated as Grade 7 as the rating system does not apply to doubles.

Grade 6 Competition within coaching - fun internal competition following a timed tennis format aimed at all players within the coaching programme held every half term. Competition within coaching counts for all mini tennis ratings and 10.2 and 10.1 yellow ball players.

Matchplays - one day match play events specific to a certain rating, ideal if you are new to competing as you play similarly rated players.

Grade 5 A one day events that are specific to a certain age group and are open to all abilities, results count for ratings and rankings.

Flitwick & Ampthill LTC take part AEGON team tennis, Road to Wimbledon and other local and county leagues to provide a variety of competitive opportunities. Head coaches and junior team managers are aware of the need for CRB Enhanced Disclosure for any volunteers involved with children, which can be done free of charge through the LTA.

To ensure that results can be recorded for each player's rating, the format should be one suggested within the LTA National Competition Framework – see the Competition Format Matrix for further details.

Player Ratings

Any member of Flitwick & Ampthill LTC can apply for FREE British Tennis Membership. BTM offers every adult, junior and mini player a rating. The ratings are designed to reward players for competing, inspire them to develop their game and offer the opportunity to compete more regularly and to be the best they can be.

There are many benefits of ratings for players and coaches:

- the best possible playing experience as they are playing with others of the same or similar standard
- easier to identify which products or courses are suitable
- easier for them to find suitable playing partners at the club
- easier to organise groups and competition by playing standard
- easier to advise players which course or competition they should enter
- members are likely to enjoy their tennis, recognising their own progress
- motivated to improve further could be used as a method to get more coaching

Results Submission

All results are submitted to the County Office, as they will count towards players' ratings – these will be recorded. There are a vast number of resources available to assist with integrated competition as part of the tennis programme, including training courses, formats and scheduling, workbooks on competition within coaching and examples of best practice. A regularly competing junior is defined by the LTA as being a player who plays at least 6 matches per year using the formats set out in the LTA National Competition Framework for red, orange, green and yellow ball.

The LTA is now promoting the use of TTP (Tennis Tournament Planner) for submission of results on line. If you are not familiar with TTP or require some training please contact your local County Office – alternatively, a standard excel results spreadsheet can be used for Grade 6 and 7 competitions.