

HOUSTON LADIES TENNIS ASSOCIATION (H.L.T.A.) LEAGUE RULES
(Revised February, 2010)

GENERAL

1. H.L.T.A. is a hard court doubles league made up of 4 levels. Each level is divided into flights based on ability - Open Championship-1, Open Championship-2, Championship, A-1, A-2, A-3, B-1, B-2, B-3 and B-4. Each large flight is divided into divisions based on geographical location of the playing site.
2. H.L.T.A. has two seasons - Fall season and Spring season. The exact start dates for each season will be determined by the Head League Coordinator and published on the web site (www.HLTA.com) prior to team registration.
3. Each team's registration fee and a roster with a minimum of 10 players must be completed on line (www.HLTA.com) by the published roster deadline date in order for that team to be qualified to play.
4. Any additions or subtractions to rosters must be made on line no later than the ROSTER CHANGE DEADLINE DATE. Each roster must have a minimum of 10 players and a maximum of 16. H.L.T.A. considers "regulars and substitutes" as equals in membership.
5. All team members must be paid members of H.L.T.A. All players listed on the roster must have registered and paid their dues on line. No one under 18 years of age may participate in H.L.T.A. matches. Any player who plays without being a member forfeits any wins. In addition, a penalty will be assessed as determined by the H.L.T.A. Board.
6. Determination of level and flight of teams is based on prior performance and points scored. This will be supervised by the Head Coordinator and Flight Coordinators. Prior performance is based only on a team's previous season's record. Any team (or player) that does not play for one season will be considered a new team (or player) when re-entering league.
 - (a) Winners will be moved up a flight and any team making 75% of the total points for a season will be invited to move up a flight provided the team retains six or more of its players from the previous season.
 - (b) A team winning less than 33% of its possible points will be reclassified for the upcoming season at the next lower flight. Any B-4 team not making 33% of its points will be allowed to remain at the B-4 level.
 - (c) A new team entering at a specific flight, or a team being re-formed to remain at the same flight may only consist of a combination of the following:
 - (1) players who played at that flight the previous season and whose team made its points;
 - (2) new players to H.L.T.A.;
 - (3) not more than 4 players from any higher flight;
 - (4) not more than 4 players from any lower flight.
 - (d) Any team that drops out after the league schedules are prepared or during the season shall not be eligible to play league the following season. This would apply to all members listed on that team's roster.
 - (e) All tennis professionals: current and ex-teaching pros, current and ex-touring pros who maintain a USTA rating of 5.0 or above must play at the Open Championship Level.
 - (f) Open Championship-1 will have a maximum of **12** teams. Any newly formed team may not enter at the Open Championship-1 level. Any Open Championship-1 team winning less than 33% of its possible points will be reclassified as Open Championship-2 beginning the following season. The method of determining end of season movement between the Open Championship-

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1 and Open Championship-2 levels will be determined by the Flight Coordinator and the Head League Coordinator prior to the start of the season. **The 75% rule does not apply to the Open Championship-2 level.**

7. Each team must have a Captain or Acting Captain **who are responsible for downloading their teams' mater schedule and score sheets.**

8. Court Requirements: Two courts allow 1 team; four courts allow 2-4 teams; six courts allow 5-6 teams, etc. **Any required court fee/guest fee/parking fee must be paid by the home team.** Playing site must have a restroom and water available.

9. The host team must furnish 4 cans of unopened yellow USTA approved, hard court, all court, heavy duty or extra duty balls. Balls designated for clay courts, practice balls and seconds are not permitted. The matches will be played using the balls opened by the home team.

SCHEDULE

1. Regular matches will be scheduled on Monday mornings. All matches will be played on the date scheduled except for matches postponed because of rain (See Section MATCH PLAY #8) and matches rescheduled pursuant to the SPRING BREAK rules below.

2. Home Team Captain will ascertain number of courts available (at least two required) and must contact Visiting Team Captain at least 4 days prior to their match (Note: no later than Thursday afternoon), to discuss place, order of matches and whether the upcoming matches will be played - all indoors or all outdoors. The Home Team Captain shall have first choice as to when her pairs shall play. The visiting team should be informed of home team's club dress code, if any.

3. Each team must have a Captain or Acting Captain present at every scheduled match. Captains MUST exchange line-ups before the match begins, and must record the scores after the match. ONCE LINE-UP SHEETS HAVE BEEN EXCHANGED, LINES OR NAMES CANNOT BE MOVED FROM ONE LINE TO ANOTHER. A substitute (a player that is not listed on the original score sheet) can be used in any line that has not begun play.

After the match, captains must sign both score sheets indicating their agreement of scores. In the event of a serious disagreement, captains should not sign the score sheets. They should then follow the procedures outlined in Rule 15 for filing a grievance. Home captains are responsible for reporting the scores online as soon as possible following the match indicating any defaulted lines and reason for the defaults. Visiting captains are responsible for confirming or contesting the reported online scores. If any difficulties are encountered, captains should contact their Flight Coordinator. Score sheets must be retained by the captain until the final standings are determined for the season.

4. All first matches should start at 9:00 a.m. with a warm-up not to exceed 15 minutes. For instance: #2 and #4 doubles at 9:00 a.m., #1 and #3 doubles at 10:30 a.m.. Generally, one and one half hours should be allotted each match for scheduling purposes. If a team has to travel a long distance a 9:30 or 10:00 starting time is permissible and all 4 teams may play at one time (courts permitting) if agreed upon in advance by both Captains. INDOOR TEAMS should book the courts for 4 hours to avoid being bumped.

5. There will be a 20 minute default rule in effect for all scheduled matches. **The official time for determining defaults is available at 713-529-4444.** Players are urged to report for their matches at least 15 minutes before the scheduled time. Default time for 2nd round matches will be immediately following completion of 1st round matches but not before 20 minutes after the scheduled time. For example, default time for a 10:30 a.m. scheduled match would be 10:50 a.m. provided the court is available for league play. This rule must be strictly followed. No

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personalities, extenuating circumstances, or other leniencies should be given. A default should not be played, and is credited to the team having both players present on time.

MATCH PLAY

1. Team matches will consist of 4 doubles matches.
2. Individual matches will be the best 2 out of 3 sets - playing regular scoring. The 12-point tie-breaker as specified by USTA will be in effect any time the score reaches 6-all in any set.
3. Scoring:
 - (a) 8 points will be counted for #1 doubles, 7 points for #2, 6 points for #3 and 5 points for #4. Total match score will be 26 points.
 - (b) A bonus point will be given for a 3 set loss, provided all three sets are completed. These points will be used to determine league standings.
 - (c) A total of all points at the end of the regular season will determine the winner of each flight, or each division where flights are so divided. In the case of a tie for first place in a division, a winner will be decided using the following method:
 - (1) Head-to-head season winner
 - (2) Sets won (entire season)
 - (3) Least sets lost (entire season)
 - (4) Games won (entire season)
 - (5) Least games lost (entire season)
 - (d) Any team winning a division will be moved to the next higher level the following season. (See General Rules 6.a.)
 - (e) All division winners will receive individual trophies.
4. **Play must be continuous.** All warm-ups, including service, must be taken before the **first point is played**. During the individual matches, a break not to exceed 10 minutes may be taken between the 2nd and 3rd sets only!
5. H.L.T.A. **STRONGLY** recommends that all electronic devices be left off the court, and under no circumstances are electronic devices to be used on the court.

If a player's electronic device rings, or otherwise makes noise on the court, the offending line will forfeit the game being played, or the game immediately following, if between games or sets. (A tie-breaker is considered to be a game.) Any player on the court can turn off and silence her electronic device at this time without further penalty. The subsequent ringing of an electronic device belonging to ANY PLAYER on the court shall result in the default of the match by the offending line.

If a player chooses to use her electronic device on the court during the match, OTHER THAN TO TURN IT OFF, her line will immediately default the match.

Players may use their electronic devices during the 10 minute break allowed between the 2nd and 3rd sets provided they are NOT ON THE COURT.
6. No children are allowed court side at matches at any time. Offending line will be defaulted.
7. A defaulted match, for any reason, is scored as 8 points for #1, 7 points for #2, 6 points for #3, 5 points for #4 for the opposing team. The name of all players, including those defaulting,

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must be written in the proper space on the score sheet, as if the match had been played as scheduled. If a match is begun and then must be defaulted because of injury or illness of a player, write the match score up to the point of default: "2-6, 4-3, 40-15, default - injury".

(a) Defaults must be made from the bottom up. Any default not from the bottom up will be loss of the line plus 5 point penalty. Any blatant withdrawing/retirement will result in loss of line plus 10 point penalty. **Tardy defaults will not be assessed extra point penalty, provided the tardy team shows up, and dressed to play, before all other matches have been completed.** When playing rain make-ups, defaulting from the bottom up does not apply.

(b) The default of four lines by a team is a serious breach of sportsmanship and shall subject the defaulting team to a penalty of up to 40 points. Within one week of the date of a four line default, the captain of the defaulting team shall notify the Flight Coordinator in writing of the reasons for such default. The Board, upon consideration of such written explanation, as well as any other information presented to the Board, shall assess such penalty as it deems appropriate.

8. In the event of rain:

(a) Completed matches will stand as played.

(b) Rained out matches must be completed within two weeks of the originally scheduled date or no points will be scored. If a rain make-up is also rained out, an additional two weeks from the date of that rain out can be taken to complete the match.

(c) Incomplete matches must be resumed at the same set, game and point as they stood when halted. (Any point played is always counted and never played again.) No player substitutions can be made.

(d) For any lines that have not started their matches, teams do not have to adhere to their original line ups when playing make-up matches. *Any players may be used as long as they are not already playing on another line.* **When playing rain make-ups, defaulting from the bottom up does not apply.**

(e) If line ups have been exchanged, but play cannot begin due to rain, the score sheets are rendered null and void, including any lines that were to be defaulted

(f) *In questionable weather*, teams scheduled for 9 a.m. matches must be at the playing site. Cancellation of matches by captains should not be made before 10 a.m. If rain occurs after matches have begun, be prepared to wait for 30 minutes to determine if courts become playable.

(g) In the event of a rain out, date, time and location of all rescheduled matches must be reported by both team captains to the Flight Coordinator within 48 hours. Home team is responsible for scheduling matches to be played as soon as possible. Each line may be scheduled individually.

(h) All rescheduled matches must be played at the home team's courts, unless a change of location is agreed upon by all **4 players**. Rescheduled matches do not have to be played under the same conditions (all indoors or all outdoors).

(i) Scores must be reported by the home captain and confirmed or contested by the visiting captain as soon as all lines are completed. When possible, two weeks will be allowed after the last scheduled match in the division for rain make-ups to be completed. However,

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longer seasons may only allow for one week. Determination of the final date for score reporting for each division will be made by the Head League Coordinator.

(j) Rained-out matches must be rescheduled at the discretion of both Captains. If mutual agreement cannot be reached, the Flight Coordinator may select a date. Once a rain make-up is mutually agreed upon, teams are committed to play on that date at that scheduled time (barring further rain).

9. No linesman or umpires will be provided for matches. Players are urged to call the score after each point, to avoid confusion.

10. No coaching will be allowed during matches, including the break between the 2nd & 3rd sets.

11. Teammates and spectators may not volunteer advice on line calls, scoring or the conduct of the match.

12. It is the home teams' responsibility to control the spectators conduct during match play. **No spectators will be allowed on the court proper.**

13. Poor conduct will not be tolerated. The Head League Coordinator may penalize a team who displays poor conduct as defined in the USTA Rules.

14. Unless otherwise specified, USTA rules will govern play. Also, "The Code" as a handbook of ethics and fair play should be understood and followed by every H.L.T.A. player. Captains and team members are urged to familiarize themselves with the official USTA rules and "The Code".

15. Any situation not covered by these rules should be referred to your Captain. If in doubt your Captain can contact your Flight Coordinator. She will either answer your question or contact the proper authority. Our official umpire will make the final decision where USTA rules are involved. The H.L.T.A. Board will make the final decision where H.L.T.A. rules are concerned. All official protests must be submitted to the Head League Coordinator in writing within 14 days of the scheduled match being protested. The score sheets of a protested match should not be signed. The score sheet, grievance form and a written explanation of the grievance should be mailed to the Head League Coordinator at the H.L.T.A. office or submitted on line.

SPRING BREAK

1. Teams will designate ONE week in the spring season to be recognized as their official Spring Break week. The captain of the team will notify her Flight Coordinator of their designated week prior to the start of the spring season. If no week is designated by a team, that team's declared Spring Break week shall be the league wide bye.

2. The Head League Coordinator will designate one week of the spring season as a league wide bye based on which date appears to accommodate the most teams. Teams whose designated week is not during the league wide bye may reschedule their match on either the Monday of the league-wide bye, the Monday following their last regularly scheduled match, or as a rain make up to be played within 2 weeks of their designated Spring Break week. If either team wants the match rescheduled, then rescheduling is mandatory. No team will be required to play matches during their declared Spring Break week. The choice of how the rescheduled match is to be played must be reported to the Flight Coordinator before the start of the season.

3. If a Monday is chosen, the matches are to be played as regular Monday matches with all four lines playing that day. For matches that are rescheduled to the end of the season, if the home team cannot provide courts, then the visiting team may do so. However, the original home team retains the right to set the line times. If neither team can provide courts then the Flight

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Coordinator should be notified. If a match is to be played as a rain make up, regular rain make up rules apply.

4. In the event of a rain-out the week prior to their Spring Break, teams will not be required to play over their Spring Break week. The teams may take an additional week (or even two weeks, in the event of conflicting Spring Breaks) to complete the match.

THE 12-POINT TIEBREAKER

1. The team that first wins seven points shall win the game and the set provided they lead by a margin of two points. If the score reaches six points all, the game shall be extended until the two point margin has been achieved. Numerical scoring shall be used throughout the tiebreaker. The team whose turn it is to serve shall be the server for the first point. Thereafter each player shall serve in rotation for two points, in the same order as previously in that set, until the winners of the game and set have been decided.

2. Players change ends after every six points and at the conclusion of the tiebreaker.

3. The team that served first in the set that ended in a tiebreaker shall receive service in the first game of the following set.