

GUIDE TO COMPETITION FOR PARENTS AND PLAYERS

What are the benefits of competing?

Through playing in appropriate competitions players can:

- ✓ Put the skills learnt in coaching into practice and develop further skills.
- ✓ Visit new places, meet new friends and have fun.
- ✓ Develop confidence and feel a sense of achievement.
- ✓ Learn how to handle winning and losing.
- ✓ Develop problem solving skills and learn how to solve problems themselves.
- ✓ Learn how to handle and deal with pressure.
- ✓ Develop a desire to keep working and keep improving.
- ✓ Develop their independence.
- ✓ Learn to manage their emotions throughout many difficult situations.

Where do I start?

All players will need LTA Advantage Membership to enter and play tournaments. A free account can be created on the LTA Advantage website. <https://www.lta.org.uk/advantage/> After joining, players will have a number and an account and can enter tournaments.

What should I enter?

Tournaments are divided into age groups and grades. A player's age for tournaments is the age they will be on 31st December in the current year. Players can play their own age group plus a minimum of one higher. Age groups and tournament grades for 2025 and 2026 are as follows:

AGE GROUPS FOR :	FOR 2025	FOR 2026	TOURNAMENT GRADES	
TOURNAMENT AGE GROUP	PLAYERS BORN	PLAYERS BORN		
8U (Red)	2017 or later	2018 or later	7	These are local tournaments, usually held at your own club. No ranking or recent form points are awarded
9U (Orange)	2016 or 2017	2017 or 2018	6	These are match plays where players will play matches against players of a similar level. No ranking or recent form points are awarded
10U (Green)	2015 or 2016	2016 or 2017	5	Local level tournaments and a good starting point for competition. Acceptance is "first come first served" and recent form/ ranking points are awarded
11U (Yellow)	2014 or 2015	2015 or 2016	4	County level tournaments for players training at a county level and with tournament experience. Acceptance is done by "ranking" or "recent form" for 9U-18U events. Recent form/ranking points are awarded.
12U (Yellow) 14U (Yellow) 16U (Yellow) 18U (Yellow)	2013 or 2014 2011 to 2014 2009 to 2014 2007 to 2014	2014 or 2015 2012 to 2015 2010 to 2015 2008 to 2015	3 2 1	Regional level tournaments for players experienced in competition and training at a high county or regional level. Acceptance is done by "ranking" or "recent form" for 9U-18U. Recent form/ranking points are awarded. 9U-18U National level tournaments for the top players in the country. Acceptance is done by "ranking" or "recent form" for all age groups or by winning a linked Grade 3 tournament (9U and 10U only). Points are awarded

Team Events

Team events are a fun and exciting way to compete. Team tennis events happen at different levels:

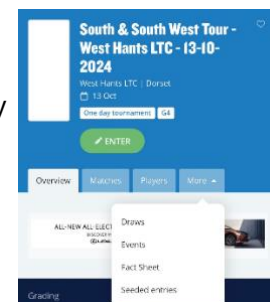
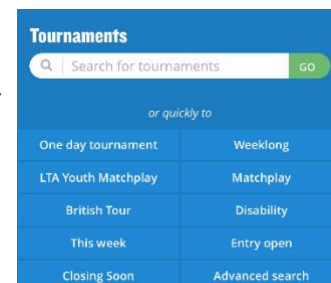
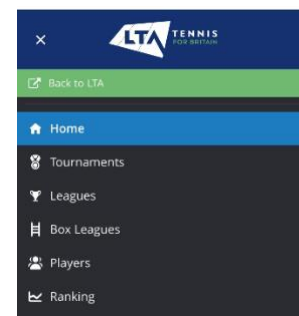


- Friendly matches between clubs
- Dorset Team Tennis, a team competition when players represent their club.
- Friendly matches between Dorset and other counties
- County Cup where all counties compete in groups, with a final play off for qualifying groups



How do I enter a tournament?

1. On the LTA tournament page <https://competitions.lta.org.uk> log in in using the account you previously created. The log in button will change to a circle with the players initials in.
2. Click on the menu bar (3 lines in the right-hand corner) This will bring up a list of options. Select “Tournaments”
3. Either enter the name of the tournament (if known) or click on “advanced search” and then “filters”. You can then enter the date range, age and grade you want and the distance you are happy to travel. Players should discuss the level of tournament they should enter with their coach; we would always advise starting off with Grades 5 -7. Once a list of tournaments has come up, click on the one you are interested in.
4. Each tournament has full details which can be found by clicking on the headings. The fact sheet (click “more” to access) will tell you the entry fee, the address, the referee, closing date, the draw size, draw format and the withdrawal date.
5. Enter the tournament by clicking on the “Enter” button and selecting the event. You will then go through a payment process and entry will be confirmed.
6. After the closing date, check the tournament page again, looking under events to see if you have been accepted. If you are on a reserve list, you might still move into the draw if another player withdraws. Keep checking. You can see your tournament entries by clicking on the round circle with your initials on and clicking on “entries”.
7. If you decide to withdraw you should do so before the withdrawal deadline listed on the sheet. There is a withdrawal button on the tournament page. You will get a partial refund of the entry fee, with a small admin fee retained, if you withdraw before the deadline.
8. If accepted, the tournament referee will send you the time of your first match and you will be able to look online to see the draw.
9. Turn up and enjoy!



The fact sheet says acceptance is done by “recent form” or “combined ranking”. What is that?

Points are awarded for all tournaments graded 1-5, depending on the round you reach in a tournament. The amount of points available depend on the level of tournament, with the higher level tournaments awarding the most points.

Recent form applies to 9U and 10U players. It is their best 3 sets of results in a 6-month period. These 3 sets of points are added together to give “recent form”. (8U do not have recent form points)

Combined Rankings are for 11U and older. A combined ranking is made up of a player’s best 6 singles results and best 6 doubles results in a rolling 12-month period. 3 singles and 3 doubles results must be from a player’s own age group. The other 3 singles and 3 doubles points can be from their own age group or up to 2 age groups higher.

Ranking and recent form lists update every Friday and can be seen by going on to your profile page. The tournaments that have been counted will have * next to them. If you go onto the menu button and select “combined ranking” or “recent form” you can see the overall lists for every age group in the country. You can filter this down to Dorset only.

How often should I compete?

A tournament schedule should be discussed with a players own coach. For county level players, and above, we recommend a minimum of once a month in term time, more in school holidays.

How do I represent my club or county?

To represent your club, speak to your coach to find out their selection criteria.

For selection into a County Cup team, you will need to be highly ranked in the county, competing regularly and attend county training regularly. County training is invitational only and players are invited by the 11U Performance Coach or an age group county captain. Players are selected through recent form, ranking, performance in tournaments, Talent ID days, Fun days or by recommendation from their own coach (followed by observation by a county coach). All players attending county training regularly will be considered when selecting teams for friendly county matches.

Useful Links

Dorset Tennis www.dorset-tennis.org.uk

LTA Competition Guidance www.lta.org.uk/compete