

AVON TENNIS – SENIOR TEAMS SELECTION POLICY AND INFORMATION

We are often asked how our Senior Tennis teams are selected to represent the County in national team competitions. Players want to know what they have to do, or have to achieve, in order to be considered. As a county we are committed to making the process open, far reaching and as transparent as we can.

Seniors Open Teams

We have both a men's and ladies' Open Senior team. These teams are for players of any age but in reality most players fall into a range between 19 and 34 years old.

The events they play are:

- The LTA Summer County Cup which is a doubles tournament played on grass (weather permitting) over a consecutive 5 day period normally commencing the third week in July. There are 13 grass court venues in the UK and our teams would need to travel to and from the venue that is hosting our division and stay overnight for the duration of the event. There are 6 Counties in each division that play each other with 9 doubles rubbers played by each County per day. At the end of the Tournament the top two teams gain promotion and the bottom two are relegated.
- The LTA Winter County Cup, which is both a singles and doubles tournament, is played indoors normally commencing the third week of November over 3 consecutive days from Friday to Sunday. Again teams will travel to and from the venue and stay overnight close by. There are 4 Counties in each division that play each other with 6 singles rubbers and 3 doubles played by each County per day. The top team gains promotion and the bottom team is relegated.

Ratings and ranking are used as a guideline, but are an ineffective method for selecting doubles partnerships. Therefore, and in particular for the summer events, the captain and the vice-captain work together and base selection on their broad knowledge of the players all over the county and can take into account performance at team trials and practice sessions.

Our Captains are experienced players themselves and know all their fellow players who should be considered. They liaise with the captains of the under-18 teams and also Ollie Bendall, our County Performance Co-ordinator, to maintain an in-depth knowledge of up-and-coming players.

Selection Expectations

When Team Captains choose players to represent the County they take into account the following attributes

- high standards of behaviour both on and off the court and to treat opposition players with full respect
- Player's effort, work ethics, commitment to play and dedication will be important considerations to selection.
- An ability to be a supportive and cooperative team player and a positive ambassador for Avon Tennis will be essential.
- Captains ideally ask for players to commit to the full week of Summer County Cup (5 days). It is understood however, that this commitment is not always realistic or practical. Captains will therefore consider players who can commit to less.
- For all Senior Open Events we kindly ask all players to deal with communications directly and take responsibility themselves.
- Doubles experience (through NCL, NPL, Team Tennis and Avon Tennis Friday night Summer league) is hugely beneficial.

Seniors Over-35's Teams

The LTA men's and ladies over 35's Inter-County Championships is held on grass courts at Devonshire Park, Eastbourne. Forty-four counties, divided into eleven groups of four teams, take part over three consecutive days in August each year. Again teams will travel to and from the venue and stay overnight. There are 4 Counties in each division that play each other with two singles and three doubles rubbers per day. Promotion and relegation applies to the team that finishes top/bottom in the division.

Team selection largely follows from earlier performance in the county's open teams, and can be based on player rating & ranking, the captains' knowledge of existing players, team trials and practice sessions (to establish the compatible pairings), and in reality player availability is often a factor too.

Seniors Age Group Teams

Seniors Tennis GB is a member organisation of the LTA dedicated to advancing the interests of the game of tennis for players of all standards aged 35 years and over. They manage and administer competitions for individuals and teams who are eligible to compete in seniors' competitions in accordance with the rules of the ITF.

Throughout the summer months Avon Tennis enrolls men's and ladies' teams in various age categories ranging from over 40's to over 75's. Each team plays 4 or 5 matches against other counties in a divisional competition with matches arranged to minimise overnight stays as much as possible.

Each age-group captain is responsible for the selection of players in their squads. They will undertake this responsibility in a number of ways based on a coach's recommendation, tournament results, application and attitude. Periodical open days and training sessions are also used as a means to evaluate playing abilities and to trial compatible pairings. Open days are advertised at all Clubs and venues and are open to anyone to attend. If you are interested in representing the County then in the first instance you should contact the relevant team captain for your age category who will be pleased to discuss this with you.

Other Considerations

Given family and work pressures, players may not wish to play for their county for many years, but later decide to return to top level competition. That means selection cannot be based on ranking and rating alone, but involves a greater consideration of results in league and other competitive matches. For players who would like to be considered for Senior Open Teams there is the Summer League doubles competition run by the County for both men's and ladies' teams which can help a player get noticed and give a good indication of their ability in a competitive environment.

**Avon Tennis Executive Committee
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