

Royal Park Tennis Club

Guidelines for Selection & Management of Junior Teams for the Northern Suburban Junior Tennis Association (NSJTA) competition

Overview

Royal Park Tennis Club ('the Club') recognises that children join a tennis club for a range of reasons. These include the development of tennis skills, enjoyment and having an avenue for social development in an environment that also promotes health and fitness.

When determining team composition for junior competition, the Club will be guided by:

- the preferences of players and parents/carers which will be communicated to the Club through the completion of the registration form as part of the registration process;
- the guidelines for team selection as outlined below, and
- Association competition guidelines and rules.

Whilst the Club's priority is for player development, attempts will be made to maintain a level of existing friendship support and other factors such as team balance, team performance, player development for future seasons, player safety, supporting parents with siblings in the club and the support of team managers.

Each season the Junior Committee's decisions are also impacted by practical issues such as the total number of players available and the spread of skills covered. Association competition format is also relevant. It is the Club's aim to accommodate the varying needs of all our members as best we can within the limitations we are faced with.

The policy for junior team selection and management as outlined below has been developed by the Junior Committee, reviewed by the Match and Team Committee and ratified by the Management Committee.

Guidelines for Team Selection

1. General

The junior program exists to provide a structured, team focused, challenging tennis experience for the youth of Royal Park Tennis Club. Teams will be selected by the Junior Committee, taking into consideration advice from Team Managers and Coaches, and entered into the NSJTA competition with a view to giving interested players competitive tennis opportunities commensurate with their ability.

2. Team selection framework

The Junior Committee ranks each player in accordance with the following:

- Relevant details of existing player and team results per match that are recorded progressively by the NSJTA during the current season;
- New players grading against players of a known standard, with note taken of any previous experience in other competitions, comments of coaches, etc.
- Relevant Team Managers are consulted for input/comment on the rankings proposed for players from their teams.

Ranked players are placed into draft teams according to rankings.

Proposed grades are placed against each team. The previous grade and the final previous corresponding seasons' results of each player's team are cross checked against each player to ensure that a player whose team finished higher on the ladder is not playing in a lower grade unless special circumstances warrant it.

3. Team Selection Procedure

3.1 Player Registration Procedure

Players wishing to play in competition matches must fill in a standard application form. Application forms (or suitable facsimile) MUST be in the hands of the Junior Committee by the specified closing date (usually 4 weeks prior to the closing date for team nominations to the NSJTA). Junior members must become a member of the Club (annual or pro rata) and pay a small competition fee (per season).

Acceptance of late entries will be at the discretion of the Junior Committee. In the event of insufficient entries to give balanced teams or to complete a team, the Junior Committee may approach potential players in order to field balanced, viable teams in the competition.

3.2 Selection and Grading Procedures

The Club endeavours to be as objective and as equitable as possible in formulating the procedures to be adopted. Players who feel they have been unfairly treated should submit their case in writing to the Chair, Junior Committee and the Club Secretary for consideration in accordance with Review procedures.

Players will be selected by the Club in accordance with the Framework at Section 2 above, and the following principles:

- The player must be available on most relevant competition match dates to be considered a full time player for a team.
- The player has submitted and signed the relevant application form with fee payment.

The NSJTA has the final say on grading – refer to Section 4 below.

3.4 Sibling Combinations

Where possible, and if requested, such combinations will be permitted to play together where they are approximately of the team standard and the team balance is not unduly affected. The final decision will rest with the Junior Committee.

3.5 Number of Teams

Teams will be fielded in accordance with the number of FULL TIME available players and to the extent of available court space.

3.6 Number of players per Team

Each team will generally consist of a minimum of players being four boys and four girls for mixed teams; five boys for boys' teams and five players boys and girls for the unisex teams. However, if players have other commitments (i.e. cricket/netball), consideration will be given to having extra players in these teams.

3.7 Team Finalisation

The Junior Committee will endeavor to have Team lists posted on the club notice board on the Sunday of the Grand Final weekend of the preceding season (late June and early December respectively). At this stage grading is still to be confirmed by the NSJTA. Team selection may be a sensitive and emotional issue and the timing is intended to reduce distraction to players participating in finals. Should the finals be delayed due to washouts, etc. the Committee at their discretion may post the teams at a later date.

4. Team Grading by the NSJTA

The final allocation of grades is conducted by the NSJTA and significant differences may occur between requested and allocated grades EACH season. In particular, there is always some disappointment as to whether teams are given an A Vs B grade, and/or B Vs C grades.

As far as can be ascertained, grading is done by the NSJTA purely statistically, and of teams as a whole, in comparison with teams from other clubs. No allowance is made for poorer stats due to playing in the higher positions.

The division of A grade into Friday evening and Saturday morning competitions may result in players being placed in a team higher or lower than their abilities or statistics, in order that the club field viable and competitive teams. Nomination by players to play only Friday or Saturday increases the likelihood of this happening.

5. Grievance Procedures

5.1 Lodgement of Requests for Reconsideration

Any request for reconsideration against Junior Committee selection decisions shall be in writing and be lodged with the Chair Junior Committee and Club Secretary within seven days following notification of the team selections. Such requests shall be treated with confidentiality by the Junior Committee and the Management Committee.

The Junior Committee shall review the protest and respond in writing with a copy to the Club Secretary. The Junior Committee Chair will consult with the Club Secretary before dispatching the response.

If the response is appealed by a player, then that Appeal must be submitted in writing to the Club Secretary who will provide a copy to the Junior Committee Chair. The Appeal will be referred to the Management Committee for deliberation.

The Club Secretary shall consult with the Junior Committee Chair and President on receipt of an Appeal and jointly determine the date for the Appeal to be heard. The Club Secretary shall inform the aggrieved member of the date of the hearing.

Members of the Junior Committee and/or Management Committee must not be biased against or in favour of the member concerned in either the Request for Reconsideration or Appeal processes.

5.2 Reconsideration Hearing

- A specially convened meeting of the Management Committee shall take place to hear the request for reconsideration. The meeting is chaired by the President. Members of the Junior Committee involved in the selection decision in dispute may be invited to attend, but shall have no voting rights at the meeting.
- A preliminary briefing shall be presented by the Junior Committee Chair on the selection decision in dispute before the hearing commences.
- The aggrieved member and at least one parent shall be required to attend and present their case in person to the meeting. In no circumstances shall a third party be permitted to attend to present the protest on the aggrieved member's behalf. If, for any reason, the aggrieved member is unable to attend the meeting as scheduled, the hearing shall proceed in their absence.

- Following presentation of the “protest” by the aggrieved member, the Junior Committee Chair shall report on the Junior Committee selection decision. The Junior Committee Chair may table any facts and evidence and seek the assistance of other Junior Committee members.
- Members of the hearing committee may address questions through the Chair to either the aggrieved member, or the Junior Committee Chair in satisfying themselves of any points arising in the course of the hearing.
- At the conclusion of the Junior Committee Chair's report, the aggrieved member shall be asked whether they now wish to withdraw their “protest” given the evidence presented for the selection decision.
- If the “protest” is not withdrawn, the aggrieved member shall leave the meeting and the Management Committee shall then vote on whether the protest shall be upheld or dismissed. If the selection decision is overruled, the meeting shall formulate a solution to the selection decision for implementation by the Junior Committee.
- The decision of the Management Committee is to be advised to the aggrieved member as soon as practical. The decision of the Management Committee is final.
- A record of the meeting is to be maintained by the Club Secretary or other Management Committee member nominated at the meeting. A letter outlining the decision of the Management Committee shall be forwarded within 7 days to the aggrieved member.

Team Management

Each Junior team will be managed by one, or more, parents of members of the team.

In order to keep in close contact with team managers and their teams, the Junior Committee will hold a series of meetings with team managers each season which will enable progress, grievances or problems of any kind to be discussed. During those meetings player participation will be reviewed and general information regarding social activities, etc. will be provided.

The meetings should be scheduled as follows:

- Prior to the commencement of the first season of each year
- At the conclusion of the first round of the season (7 matches)
- For team selection (after round 11 of the previous season, approximately)
- Plus optional extra meetings as required.

1. Team Management Procedures

The Club prepares an information folder for each Team Manager which includes contact details for all junior players and in particular their team. We ask the Team Manager to :

- make contact with each player to introduce themselves to the player and parents/carers.
- prepare a roster for the season so players are aware of when they are playing and allocate duty as required.

Substitute /Emergency players – From time to time a team may be short of registered players. When that occurs, the team manager should look to the team graded below to ascertain which player has a bye and request for them to fill-in. Contact should be via the Team Manager and then the player.

If a team is permanently short of registered players, due to injury, family commitments, late withdrawal from team, etc, the Team Manager must immediately advise the Junior Committee which would consider a number of options:

- a) bring up a lower team member permanently
- b) rotate players in from lower teams
- c) find a substitute

Co-ordinated arrangements are necessary to ensure all teams' needs are appropriately met in a balanced way. The chosen arrangement will be discussed with the Team Managers involved, and fit with the lower teams' roster and availability of 'rostered out' team members.

Other factors to be considered:

- player's previous instances of filling in for higher teams (limits of 3 games apply)
- each team's relative ladder position and strength of opposition in question (particularly in the second round)
- player's relative ranking in the lower team.

Substitute/emergency player inclusion in teams should take account of player ability/skill and any previous competition record/grading.

Where full agreement cannot be reached with Team Managers on substitute/emergency player arrangements, the Junior Coordinator will be the final arbitrator.

2. Finals Selection Policy for Team Managers

Teams have a choice of two selection options:

- Selecting what is deemed the strongest team and maintaining that group throughout the finals process
- Selecting the players in order of capability and then rotating the weaker ranked players in for the first finals round and bringing in the stronger players for subsequent rounds (you would play your fourth or fifth ranked players in the first round final and then replace those players with the higher ranked player the following week)

Teams usually include their strongest two boys and girls each week to be competitive. As each team is unique in its character and composition, the Club does not mandate a finals selection method. In the first instance, all players are given access to the team statistics and that they, with their parents' support, are consulted and encouraged to give input on which finals selection process they would prefer. *The team manager should implement the method that has majority support.*

If there is a lack of agreement over the order of capability, a secret ballot of all team members is to take place under the supervision of the Team Manager. The selected order will then be applied to the favoured process. In the event of a tie, the Junior Coordinator will have the casting vote.

The selection of teams to play in finals can become a very emotive situation if the focus is diverted from the original aim of healthy competition, in a supportive environment. It should be understood that differences of opinion are a fact of life and that whatever the process and whoever is left out, someone will feel disappointed about the outcome. It is very important that the team aspect of the decision making process is given substantial focus in all deliberations. The winning of a premiership pennant can be very satisfying. The involvement in a dynamic and supportive team can be equally so.

Approved by Management Committee March 2017

Sections extracted from main document – these would be for Junior Committee reference, but not for parents' handout

Player Registration Procedure

The Junior Committee will endeavour to contact all existing players if an application form has not been received by the closing date to confirm if a player is not continuing with junior tennis

Player ranking

Factors to consider:

- A player's results higher than the team average should have a positive influence on their ranking.
- If a player who played almost all matches in No.1 or No. 2 position in a team has results equal to or marginally better than the team average, then those results will be given a greater weight than the result of a third position player whose results are marginally greater than the team average.
- Due consideration should be given to the results of a player who has been injured, played only a few matches, had personal problems or any other special factors as advised by the team manager.

Team grade selection

Factors to consider:

- Reasonable efforts to accommodate all special requests of players such as family or friends who wish to play together should be made, with due regard to equity. Where different playing standards are involved, a player with a higher ranking may be required to play in a lower grade.
- Team members' compatibility and team balance should be considered and where possible necessary adjustments made.
- The resultant team ranking of players is produced only for the purposes of the immediate team allocation and competition season.

Team Grading by NSJTA

The NSJTA makes no allowance for poorer stats due to playing at the #1 position. Because of this, it is necessary that:

- a) All players, as much as possible without affecting team balance or playing in finals, are given the opportunity to play in the #1 or #2 position so as to avoid stronger players ending up with poorer statistics that will result in them being placed in lower teams. In A grades, where players are seeded, they may be re-ordered for the second round. (In finals, either order may be used but must be adhered to for the series).
- b) Players with poor statistics, which do not reflect their ability, may need to be placed in lower teams (temporarily) so as not to unduly affect the grade that their team is allocated. Should this be necessary, the reason for doing so shall be explained to the players and parents involved. Such players, at the direction of the Junior Committee in consultation with Team Manager will then play in a higher team as an emergency for three matches. After three matches, the player will automatically be made a permanent member of the higher team and eligible to play finals.

Team Managers should be considered by the Junior Committee with due regard to:

- tennis experience, organising and people management capability
- willingness to accept the responsibility
- accessibility, availability and interest.