

Crowthorne Tennis Club

Player Development Pathway Policy

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1. Objective

The objective of this policy is to set out clear guidelines for a player development pathway for all club members, whether they are league standard or beginners, existing or new members. This pathway provides clarity as to how the club assesses members playing ability, the structure of our Club Organised sessions and how a player can move up the pyramid, as their skills, expertise and experience develops – from a social club player to a league player.

NOTE:

This is a new approach & club Policy which will be trialed from 23rd September 2024 for a period of 4 months. There are new sessions being introduced and the nature, format and attendance of some existing sessions has been altered.

The Club Captains and the Committee will review and consider feedback from members during February 2025. The policy will be adjusted and updated as appropriate or required.

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2. Playing Ability

Crowthorne Tennis Club (CTC) offers both league-based competitive match tennis as well as social and recreational tennis. Selection for a club league team is carried out by the various club Captains. Social and recreational tennis is organised according to playing abilities.

We utilize the LTA Ratings Guide to assess our membership playing ability (see below). Our approach is to organize club sessions based on playing ability, to provide members the opportunity to play with and against players of a similar standard.

Our experience suggests this provides the most enjoyable tennis experience, irrespective of a players playing ability, as it allows players of broadly similar abilities to play together and enjoy matches which are competitive and not one-sided.

Assessment process:

As club tennis is social, by its very nature, the assessment process is informal and relies largely on two factors:

- knowledge and experience of the Club Night Organisers, supported by the Club Coaching team as needed.
- Player self-assessment and the type of tennis they are comfortable playing.

When a player applies to join the Club, they will either opt to take coaching lessons for a period of time or they will be invited to attend a Tuesday or Wednesday Drop In / Social Night for up to 3 sessions. This is the entry point for new and prospective members. This provides the prospective member the opportunity to play with and against existing members, get a feel for the club & its facilities and for the Tuesday/Wednesday Organisers to form a view of where they would best 'fit-in' with the club's playing ability pyramid and therefore which session would be appropriate to join.

If a new member has chosen to take lessons, before joining a club organised session they will be directed by the Coaching team as to when they have reached a sufficient standard to be able to join and enjoy the appropriate club session.

LTA Ratings Guidelines:

The full guide can be found on the CTC website [Ability Guide](#). Please note the guide is not an official LTA publication but has been compiled from information obtained from and collated from LTA resources and elsewhere.

The guide has been prepared only for the purposes of providing club members a more objective assessment of their playing ability through the full pyramid from Beginner to World Ranked and National Standard players.

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Below is a summary of the Ability Ratings and shows how playing ability is matched to the appropriate club organized session.

Description	GBR Playing Ability Rating	Club Organised session
Starter	11.3 upwards	Tuesday and Wednesday Evening Drop In / Social Night
Recreational	10.2 upwards	Tuesday and Thursday Afternoon Club Friday early evening Drop In / Social Friday Club Night
Intermediate	7.2 upwards	Thursday Club Night
Advanced	4.2 upwards	Tuesday Club Night
Elite	2.1 upwards	

Progression from one level to the next is entirely dependent on a player's own personal development or indeed, desire to play at a higher level. If a player feels they have reached the upper threshold of the session they play in, and they wish to play at the next level up, they should discuss with the Organisers of the higher level session. e.g. if playing on a Friday Club Night, discuss with the Organisers of Thursday Club Night. The relevant Organisers will arrange for the player to join a session or two. If the player meets the standard of the next level up and they feel comfortable, they will be invited to join that session. Part of the objective is to maintain the standard of play in the higher level session. Note: as a courtesy please inform the Organisers of the session you currently play in. A player cannot move to a higher level session without the approval of the organiser.

In the unlikely event of a disagreement or any other issues the matter should be referred to the Club Chair, Claudio Altini and the Welfare Officer, Sarah Mayhew.

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3. Club Night weekly playing sessions

Our policy is to run club organised sessions, during the evening peak hours, organised according to playing ability as well as Drop In / Social sessions, which are all-ability sessions.

Club Nights:

- Members register via a WhatsApp group / Google Booking Sheet to play for the entire session. Spaces are limited to the court space available for any particular session.
- Places must be booked in advance and selections will then be confirmed on the morning or evening before the event.
- For the booked Tuesday, Thursday and Friday sessions you must commit to the full two hours.
- These are run along playing ability i.e. Experience/Advanced, Intermediate and Recreational improver. This allows players of similar ability to play together.
- See CTC LTA Player Rating Guidelines as described above.

Advanced Club Night Tuesday 7pm - 9pm -: By Invitation only

Organisers: Matt Paxton, Steve Stow

Format:

- Exclusive session for invited players only, all 4 courts, maximum 16 players.
- Invitation is overseen by the Men's Captain in consultation with the Ladies Captain and Men's Deputy Captains. Advanced players are divided into 2 groups according to Playing Ability and match experience.
 - Group A: CTC Elite Player – top 8-10 players in the club
 - Group B: CTC Advanced Player – typically a player (male or female) who has extensive competitive match experience, and if not in a current league team, is still able to play at an advanced level both with and against men.
- Preference is given to Players in Group A, then Group B and will be regularly reviewed. An order of priority will be applied as follows:

Priority	Group name
1	Group A Full Senior
2	Group B Full Senior
3	Group A Nominated Junior
4	Group B Nominated Junior
5	Group B & C Full Senior (where a player crosses-over both groups)
6	Group C Full Senior & Nominated Junior

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- A Development Player Squad (Group C) will also be created for upper-intermediate players not in Group A and B. See 4. *League Team Player selection process* below.
- The Session is run ‘under match conditions’ with results logged.
- Pairings are selected based on the previous week’s performance and the players are ‘seeded’.
- Matches are competitive, and winning means players can get up the seedings. It’s run as a competitive session and players play to win.
- Nominated Junior participation follows the above grouping and the rules in place for Nominated Juniors to join adult sessions.

4. League Team Player selection process

We currently run Leagues Teams in the Berkshire LTA Summer and Winter Leagues.

The Men’s, Ladies, Mixed and Veteran’s Club Captains have sole responsibility for selection of players to represent the club in League competitions.

Team selection takes place before the start of the respective season’s calendar. Teams are then entered in the Leagues by the Club Secretary. Players selected are expected to commit to the full season, so as to ensure that all matches can be played.

NOTE: An updated selection process is going to be trialled for a period of 4-months starting from September i.e. Winter season. Based on feedback and learnings, it will be refined and put in place ahead of the start of the Summer season 2025/26.

Developing Team Players: The club recognises the need to create a pathway for both existing and new players who are not yet at “league standard” level but would like to develop their skills and to have an opportunity to compete for team selection. A developing players squad will be created to facilitate this process.

This will be known as the ‘*CTC Development Players’ Squad* (Group C). These are typically upper-Intermediate players, who are either new to league tennis or are developing their playing ability, so as to be able to play competitively. The Club Captains, deputies and other experienced players (both current and past league members) have committed to support the Development Squad achieve their aims.

This will be done by mixing-in with the experienced players, who will provide informal mentoring, coaching and advice on what is expected when playing in League matches to help develop and improve their skills and court-craft. In a non-pressured environment (like Tuesday evenings), should allow players the freedom to experiment and learn.

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This will be provided through the Thursday Club Nights. Movement into and out of the Development Squad will be fluid throughout the year. See *Thursday Club Night and Match Practice* below for more information.

Players who show improvement potential and a willingness to develop, are to be encouraged to supplement these sessions with formalised coaching from the CTC Coaching team.

Team Selection: Before the start of each summer season the Club Captains will issue communications to the members of Groups A, B and C, advising of the League programme for the upcoming year and asking/inviting players to join CTC league teams. Applicants are assessed and selections for Team squads are published after this. This will take place ahead of the Summer season only. Circa late February / early March each year.

Winter League: Players for the Winter Leagues are drawn from the same pool of players as the Summer Leagues.

Intermediate Club Night Thursday 5:30pm to 7:30pm – Intermediate and above (LTA Playing Ability 7.2 and above)

Organisers: Ray Loades-Bannon and David Jubb

Format:

- Currently 3 Courts. To be expanded to 4 courts to create additional capacity.
- This session is for all Intermediate players who meet the minimum playing standards as described above.
- Places must be booked in advance and selections will then be confirmed on the morning or evening before the event.
- Thursday WhatsApp group to be amended, to allow 'aspiring league players' to note their interest when signing up. Team Captains/assistants/ex team players (i.e. older players no longer playing league) to be added to the WhatsApp group. When there is interest indicated, one or two of the league players will join the 5:30 session and play with these players (e.g. court 4). This is effectively a try-out of players with potential. If a player demonstrates the potential to develop they will be invited to join the CTC Development Players Squad and invited to join the Thursday Match Practice session at 7:30pm.

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Match Practice Club Night Thursday 7:30 to 9:30pm - League Team players & Development Squad

Organiser: Matt Paxton

Format:

- Courts 1&2 are for **current match players only**.
- The team playing a match the following weekend will get first choice of the two courts. Players selected for a team are strongly encouraged to attend match practice ahead of a weekend match.
- Court 3 to be allocated to the prospective and inexperienced match players, selected at the 5:30pm Intermediate session i.e. the CTC Development players squad.
- The Development players will mix in with a willing group of experienced match players. This is a prime opportunity to utilise the courts for more match play and will give those interested in playing up, an opportunity to be seen. As they develop, they can be rotated into the match practice sessions on courts 1 and 2. This can be expanded to include court 4 if/as required.
- Court 4 will be held as a floating court for use either as an additional match practice court or an additional Development squad court. The organiser will assign on a weekly basis depending on requirements.
- There is a balance to be had in driving club improvements and success, while maintaining a high-level of match practice. This is up to the Captains to manage as appropriate.

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Recreational Club Night Friday 4:00pm to 6:00pm – Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above)

Organisers: Jon Hughes, Maddy Dunckley, Chris Constable, Steve Boakes and Claire Nottingham

Format:

- 2 courts – up to 8 players.
- This session is for all Recreational improver players who meet the minimum playing standards as described above.
- Places must be booked in advance and selections will take place at the courts at the start of the session.
- Booking is via the Friday Club Night WhatsApp.

NOTE: currently being trialed until 30th September 2024. This session will suit players who are able to play at 4:00pm and will ease demand on the 6:00pm session, allowing more players to enjoy Friday evening tennis.

Recreational Club Night Friday 6:00pm to 8:00pm – Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above)

Organisers: Yuko Tsubota, Chris Constable, Jason Haddock, James Smith

Format:

- 4 courts – up to 16 players.
- This session is for all Recreational improver players who meet the minimum playing standards as described above.
- Places must be booked in advance and selections will then be confirmed on the morning or evening before the event.
- Booking is via the Friday Club Night WhatsApp.

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5. Adult Singles Box League

Organisers: Jason Haddock, James Smith, Chris Harvey

Format:

- See Adult Singles Box League here for [Singles Box League Information & Entry form](#). This also includes League Rules, court availability and booking procedures.

Alongside the organized club sessions, which are all geared towards Doubles play, we are also launching a Singles Box league. The league will operate only in the Winter season. The league is open to all adult club members and Nominated Juniors (Level 1), provided you at least meet LTA Playing Ability level 10.2.

This league provides members with good quality singles matches, played against other members of similar abilities, in a league format, so facilitating skills development.

NOTE: During Summer 2024 a Singles Box League trial was run, with a small group of intermediate level players to assess interest and specifically to test format, rules, booking process, timings etc. The trial was successful and is now being launched across all playing abilities.

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6. Drop In / Social Sessions

Drop In / Social:

- Members register their interest to join a social drop-in via a weekly WhatsApp poll.
- Differing start times are offered.
- There is no limit to numbers, and there is no requirement to commit to the full allocated time. If numbers are over-subscribed, the organiser will arrange a rotation format to allocate playing time to all participants.
- No expectation or pressure to keep the numbers even or to have to stay for the full session. No-one should feel they cannot join or need to drop-out to keep numbers even.
- These are both all-ability and ability based sessions.
- There are 2 afternoon sessions, 2 evening sessions and 1 Ladies section session per week.

These are as follows:

Afternoon Drop In / Social: Tuesday 2:00pm to 4:00pm and Thursday 2:00pm to 4:00pm – Recreational and above (LTA Playing ability 10.2 and above)

Organiser: Lucy Head

Format:

- 2 courts for each session
- These sessions are for all Recreational improver players who meet the minimum playing standards as described above.
- Although booking is not required attendance polls are run on the Afternoon Club WhatsApp. This allows the organiser to plan according to numbers attending.

Evening Drop In / Social: Tuesday 5:00pm to 7:00pm and Wednesday 7:30pm to 9:30pm – Starter and above (LTA Playing ability 11.3 and above)

Organiser: Phil Timm

Format:

- These sessions are all ability sessions, however are intended as the entry point for both new members and inexperienced players, as they will have the opportunity to play with and against stronger players so as to be able to improve their skills, court craft and knowledge of the game.

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- Although booking is not required attendance polls are run on the Tuesday and Wednesday Drop in / Social WhatsApp. This allows the organiser to plan according to numbers attending.

Ladies Section Drop In / Social Wednesday 5:30pm – 7:30pm -: Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above)

Organiser: Bev Arnell

Format:

- 2 courts – up to 8 players.
- This session is for all Recreational improver players who meet the minimum playing standards as described above.
- Although booking is not required attendance polls are run on the Ladies Club WhatsApp. This allows the organiser to plan and arrange format / pairings according to numbers attending.
- Polls and other communications are via the Ladies Club WhatsApp.

NOTE: This is a new session and will be trialed from 23rd September 2024. The organiser is also considering a Saturday or Sunday session, likely to be focused more on players, playing in teams, so as to help develop team partnerships and playing patterns when playing in League matches. This will be run as an ‘informal’ trial and tweaked and adjusted as needed to find a format that works and the participants support.

7. Weekly Tennis Programme

The outline weekly programme is on page 12. See also Tennis Calendar [\[insert hyperlink\]](#) for individual coaching, Adults Single Box League (Winter only) and Club Championship (Summer only) court allocations.

Where there are no club organized sessions, these times can be booked for members use to play with other members or with a guest. Please note guests can only play as a guest of a member up to 3 times per year. See Guest Rules and fees here [Guest Fees](#).

Please note the booking rules, that apply when making bookings and also be aware that Court 4 operates on a priority booking system. These are all fully explained in the Tennis Calendar.

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Day of Week	Session	Session Times
Monday	• Junior and Mini Group Coaching • Adult Group Coaching – Beginners • Adult Group Coaching – Improvers	• 4:30pm to 6:30pm • 6:30pm to 7:30pm • 7:30pm to 8:30pm
Tuesday	• Morning Cardio Tennis – all levels • Afternoon Club – Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above) • Evening Drop In / Social Night – Starter and above (LTA Playing Ability 11.3 and above) • Advanced Club Night - Current, nominated and previous match players only	• 9:30am to 10:30am • 2:00pm to 4:00pm • 5:00pm/5:30pm to 7:00pm • 7:00pm to 9:00pm
Wednesday	• Ladies Drop In / Social Night – all levels • Evening Drop In / Social Night – Starter and above (LTA Playing Ability 11.3 and above) • Adult Group Coaching • Rusty & Dusty Racquets (prospective members only)	• 5:30pm to 7:30pm • 7:30pm to 9:30pm • 6:30pm to 7:30pm • 7:30pm to 8:30pm
Thursday	• Afternoon Club – Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above) • Club Night – Intermediate and above (LTA Playing Ability 7.2 and above) • Club Night - Match Practice (League Teams)	• 2:00pm to 4:00pm • 5:30pm to 7:30pm • 7:30pm to 9:30pm
Friday	• Early evening Club Night – Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above) • Club Night – Recreational and above (LTA Playing Ability 10.2 and above)	• 4:00pm to 6:00pm • 6:00pm to 8:00pm
Saturday	• Cardio Tennis – all levels • League Matches – Junior and Senior	• 9:00am to 10:00am • Times vary
Sunday	• League Matches – Junior and Senior	• Times vary