

## **Tips and advice for team captains)**

### **Before the season starts:**

1. Make sure you have full contact details for all the players in your team and tell them what your team's home night will be. Ask each of them how often they would like to play and check if they have their own transport to get to matches (you may need to arrange lifts or car sharing for players).
2. Work out all your fixtures for the season (day, date, opponents and whether home or away – you can view all your fixtures on the League website) then send a list of at least the first half fixtures to your team members and ask them to let you know if they are unavailable for any of these dates. Next, work out your team for each match and give your players a list of fixtures showing which three players are due to play each one. Tell them to let you know as soon as possible if they find they can't make any match they are due to play so that you can find a replacement.
3. Make sure you have enough players to field a team for every match. The lowest team in your club should have at least 5 players registered as they cannot 'borrow' other club players. Additional players can be registered up to the 31<sup>st</sup> January but not after that date.
4. Make sure you read and understand the rules of the League, especially rules 18 to 32 as these directly affect your players and your league matches. Also read and understand the laws of table tennis as adopted by the League and printed in your handbook.

### **When the season begins:**

5. It is important to check the League website for any amendment lists following publication of the handbook as these could include changes of home nights, contact details or even addition/deletion of teams.
6. Don't assume that your players will just turn up for every match. Check with those due to play a few days before each match so you will have time to find a replacement if there is a problem.
7. A player can 'play up' for higher teams no more than 3 times in total in a season. If you need to borrow a player or players from a lower team in your club then contact the team captain to check who might be available and to get those people's contact details if you don't already have them. Unless it is early in the season, make sure they have not played up 3 times already otherwise their sets may not count.
8. If you know weeks before that you will have a problem fielding a full team for a match then consider trying to arrange to play it in advance, on another date, if your opponents are able to agree a day with you and the premises are available. Inform your Divisional Secretary that you are going to do this and what the new agreed date is.
9. If you can't get a full team out for a match, even after trying to borrow players from a lower team in your club, then you can play the match with just two players instead of three (or even one player if really necessary). If you plan to play with two players or less then you must contact the opposing team captain in advance and tell them this is what you plan to do. The reason for this is that if they don't have a full team either then the match cannot take place (see rule 26c).
10. If you find it will be impossible, due to exceptional circumstances, to play a match on the due date then you must follow rule 29, which clearly tells you exactly what to do. You must not just agree a postponement with your opponents without first contacting your Divisional Secretary or you may lose all the points and you could be fined too. Where a match does not take place on the scheduled day, keep a record of any emails or telephone conversations in case there is a dispute later on and always keep your Divisional Secretary fully informed about what is happening.

### **When a match takes place:**

11. If you will not be present at a match then you should ask another member of the team to act as team captain on the night. That player should also be familiar with these procedures.
12. Make sure your players arrive promptly for a 7.30 start. If any player has not arrived half an hour after the fixed or agreed start time then the opponents can claim all that player's sets (see rule 26b.) although it is not normal for these to be claimed provided the match can carry on until they arrive. If you know one of your players will be late for unavoidable reasons then you should apologise to the opposing captain on arrival and they will usually accept his/her late arrival (it is up to them). If the sets in the match have to be played out of order to keep the match going until the missing player arrives then the other team must be allowed to choose the order in which the sets are played for the rest of the match, as they are doing the missing player's team a favour by not claiming his sets. If this means that some players have to play one set immediately after another then that cannot be helped.
13. It is up to the home team to provide a ball and a scorecard for each match. The ball does not have to be new but it should be a 3 star ball of a make and type approved by Table Tennis England for league play for that season and in good condition. You should have spares of the same make and type (i.e. plastic or celluloid) in case of breakages.
14. It is not compulsory for the home team to provide refreshments but it is considered a nice gesture to offer these if possible. Some clubs may offer tea, coffee, squash, canned drinks, etc. Many opponents will bring their own preferred drink with them anyway.
15. It is normal for the home team to umpire sets 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9 in a match and for the visiting team to umpire sets 2, 4, 6 and 8. All players should be encouraged to take their turn umpiring, even if someone has to sit near them and assist them until they feel confident doing it. Once a match starts then players cannot go off and practice on another table (see rule 26 d).
16. At the end of a set, players should shake hands and should also thank the umpire and shake their hand. Team captains should ensure that their players remember to do this.
17. Remember that the umpire's decision is final during play. If a dispute arises during a match that cannot be resolved by referring to the rules in the handbook then, if this affects the final result of the match, the dispute should be noted on the scorecard and the team disputing the result should immediately write or email the Divisional Secretary with details of the dispute. It is very rare for anything like this to happen.
18. It is up to the two team captains to ensure that the match scorecard is completed fully, accurately and legibly before they both sign it. Always get an experienced player to check it over if in doubt. Always print the names of the players clearly on the card and do not just put their first names or nicknames on the card as this can cause lots of problems for the Divisional Secretary. The home team captain should keep a copy of the result and should email, post or deliver the card to the Divisional Secretary, ideally by the day after the match.
19. Team captains should check that their team's results have been entered correctly on the website and notify the Divisional Secretary if they think an error has occurred.
20. If a complaint arises about a breach of rules, the behaviour of a player or club official, the decision of a league official or any similar matter then that must be dealt with in line with rule 49 in the handbook.

Being a team captain is not too difficult and can be very rewarding. Just remember that there are always other team captains, experienced players, club secretaries and league officials around who will be happy to offer help and advice if needed. Just ask! Enjoy your season.