



ST CHRISTOPHER'S TENNIS CLUB

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Guidelines for Weekend Social Tennis

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Version History

Version	Date	Author	Comments
1.0	17 th April 2020	Hari Haritharan	Initial Document
2.0	26 th April 2020	Hari Haritharan	New section "Importance of Arrival Time" and Reformat the "Scenarios and Grouping" section
2.1	29 th April 2020	Hari Haritharan	New section "Whiteboard Layout and Explanation" and minor updates.

Background

- STC weekend social tennis has evolved over time into a very strong part of St. Christopher’s Tennis Club.
- It started as a group with single digit and have more than doubled (26 on last count) in recent times.
- In order to manage this group effectively, few seasons back it was decided to appoint “Convenors”.
- Now, it is time to further improve on this step to have a more “Consistent & Balanced” approach going forward.
- A strong and healthy setup for the Social Tennis is important for the Club’s financial position and overall success.

Objective

- To address the common issues listed below. Doing nothing will exasperate the issues.
- To have a consistent, fair & balanced approach to encourage more participation & discourage any breakaway.

Issues

1. In the absence of agreed start time players come when it suits them and then expect to play immediately & to continue playing.
2. Due to different start time of the sets, mixing players to find a good balance is an issue.
3. General expectation is that early arrival warrants more matches, regardless of the balance in the playing four.
4. Unbalanced team leads to mostly a player making up the number to form a playing four.
5. Individual’s Expectation that leads to some benefiting and some frustrated due to lack of quality sets.
6. Players are allowed to choose their partners & opponents leaving some stranded.
7. Players deliberately missing their turn to manipulate whom they play with and against.
8. Convenors not consistent with their decisions... maybe due to lack of guidelines.
9. No history kept for the day which makes pairing & balancing more difficult.
10. Common disputes and heated exchanges are related to “Service/Line calls” & Game score.

Proposed Solution

1. Formalise Weekend Social Tennis start (8:30am) and end (11:30am) time.
 - a. It is very important to have a **formal “start time”** for social tennis. Subsequent points are reliant on the implementation of start time.
 - b. Fix 8:30am as the start time. Enough light all year around. Social sets will start shortly after.
 - c. Fix 11:30am as the end time for advertising “Court Availability” to avoid any confusion on court usage by the general membership.
 - d. Between the start & end time the courts are only available for social tennis.
 - e. “Social Tennis” in other clubs have a start time to easily manage the session.
2. Any courts occupied before the start time will need to stop, the courts bagged/watered and be ready for social tennis.
 - a. Convenors have the authority to stop the activity on the occupied courts.
 - b. History shows some members prefer to start early. They can start early but stop when it is time for ‘Social Tennis’.
3. Arrival time before the “start time” is **disregarded** for the purpose of arranging “official” social sets.

- a. Those in the clubhouse who are not ready to play by the start time, should opt out of set 1.
4. List the players into three categories based on the time of arrival for organising the sets.
 - a. **On-Timers:** Players who are present in the clubhouse on or before the start time.
 - b. **Grace-Timers:** Player(s) who arrive before arranging set 2.
 - c. **Late-Comers:** Player(s) who arrive after arranging set 2.
 - d. Section “Importance of Arrival Time” in Appendix discuss the categories in detail.
5. To consistently balance the teams, **the sets should start at the same time.**
 - a. Once a set has a formal conclusion, other sets that have played 8 games or more in total (each player had two servers, one from either side) should stop and remix.
 - i. Exception: If a set started late because of the “Grace Timers or Late Comers”, regardless of the score it should stop and remix.
 - b. 8 games limit is almost 70% of the ideal match (12 games) before the tie-breaker.
 - c. Leaving the decision to the players will bring inconsistencies & confusion.
6. Organising & Balancing the teams will be done by the Convenor.
 - a. Sections “Organising Teams” and “Balancing Teams” in Appendix discuss them in detail.
 - b. Setting up the teams will be done at the start time for the first set.
7. Role of the Club Committee.
 - a. Reinforce to all social players
 - i. The “Role of the Convenors”
 - ii. To accept the “set make-ups” arranged by the convenors.
 - iii. Perfect draw might not be possible for all the sets.
 - iv. It is possible that some might play more sets than others.
 - b. Nominate/Appoint Convenors and advertise to the social group.
 - i. Nominate a “Lead Convenor” for consistency who is impartial and robust.
 - ii. Nominate an “Assistant Convenor” as a fallback to the lead convenor.
 - iii. Appoint a “Stand-In” convenor as a fallback to lead & assistant convenors.
 - c. Club secretary will become the escalation contact for players having disagreement with the convenors.
8. Role of the Convenor(s).
 - a. Lead convenor.
 - i. Plays both days and present 10m before the start time and categories the players based on the arrival time as indicated in point 4.
 - ii. Responsible for forming a balanced team and if necessary, apply the selection process.
 - iii. Responsible for the session and have the authority to intervene to bring normality through conflicts and have the ability to overrule for a legitimate reason.
 - iv. Be aware of the misuse of the “sit-out” option, especially by the “On-Timers”, to avoid mixing and gain auto-inclusion to the next set.
 - v. Excused from bagging and watering to focus on organising the teams.
 - vi. Inform in advance to the Club Secretary of known absences.
 - b. Assistant Convenor.
 - i. Plays both days and will take charge in the absence of lead convenor.
 - ii. Assist the lead convenor with organising and balancing the teams.
 - iii. Inform in advance to the Club Secretary of known absences.
 - c. “Stand-In” Convenor.
 - i. Preferably plays both days and act as the lead convenor in the absence of regular lead & assistant convenors.
 - ii. Inform in advance to the Club Secretary of known absences.

- d. Ensure watering/bagging are shared equally by the playing group.
- e. It might be a challenge for the first 2-3 weeks after the change but then it will become easier.
- f. Organize a BBQ every 3 months and use this as an opportunity to obtain feedback from the players and develop as needed.

Conclusion

- Initially resisting change is natural but it will be generally accepted once it is "seen as working".
- The cost of doing nothing will hurt the weekend social tennis in the long run.
- These guidelines cannot cover every unique situation and common sense should prevail when the decisions are made.

Appendix

1. Importance of arrival time

- 1) For ease of presentation have shown two Groups; Group-A & Group-B.
- 2) Group A consist of “On-Timers” and “Grace-Timers” and Group B is only “Late-Comers”.
- 3) Group A:
 - a. These players are **eligible to play all sets**.
 - b. They are listed in the whiteboard in no particular order.
 - c. Majority of the players will be in this group.
- 4) Group B:
 - a. These players **will have to wait** for an “**available spot**” before they get a game.
 - b. Only if there are not enough players or a Group A player decide to skip a set, a spot will become available for a Group B player to be included in the team.
 - c. They are listed in the whiteboard in the order of arrival.
 - d. History shows only a very few might fall in this group.
- 5) While organising the teams, the “On-Timers” have a benefit over “Grace-Timers”. See section “Organising Teams”.
- 6) More no. of “On-Timers” will result in balanced teams for most sets which is the main objective of the social tennis.
- 7) Group B player will know what to expect and hence no disagreement.
- 8) Encourage “Late-Comers” to come early to minimise the waiting time.
- 9) A regular late comer with a valid reason can seek prior approval from the Club Committee/Convenor to be considered into Group A regardless of the time of arrival. Caring for disabled or Long-distance travel might be a valid reason. Late nights or Gym/Yoga are examples of non-valid reasons.

2. Organising teams

- 1) This process applies **only to “On-Timers” & “Grace-Timers”**.
- 2) Player(s) who will miss the set will be drawn from a hat. This could happen if,
 - a. more players are present than required to form a team(s); and
 - b. all wanted to play.
- 3) Player(s) are by default included into the next set, if
 - a. Volunteered to skip the previous set to give the spot to others; or
 - b. Missed the previous set due to the draw.
- 4) The difference between “On-Timers” and “Grace-Timers”:
 - a. For set 2:
 - i. “On-Timers” who missed set 1 will be included in set 2.
 - ii. “Grace-Timers” who missed set 1 due to late arrival, will go into the draw for set 2.
 - b. Successive Sets:
 - i. “On-Timers” with less no of sets will be included in the next set.
 - ii. “Grace-Timers” will go into the draw for the next set regardless of no. of sets played.
 - c. A player making an effort to arrive before the start time should be rewarded.
- 5) Due to the draw, it is possible that some might play more sets than others. But this is one of the features of social tennis.

Flow for Organising the sets

A simple formula to quickly select the playing four/eight/twelve.

Set 1:

- Step 1. Exclude those who volunteer to “sit-out”.
- Step 2. If multiple of 4, ignore next steps & proceed to pairing
- Step 3. Draw the players who will miss the set.
- Step 4. Proceed to pairing.

Set-2:

- Step 1. Exclude those who volunteer to “sit-out” or “Leave”.
- Step 2. If multiple of 4, ignore next steps & proceed to pairing. *“Grace Timers” can make up the nos.*
- Step 3. Include “On Timers” who missed set 1 (volunteered to “sit-out” or due to the draw).
- Step 4. Rest of “On Timers” & “Grace Timers” go into draw to pick who will miss the set.
- Step 5. Step-5: Proceed to pairing.

Successive Sets:

- Step 1. Exclude those who volunteer to “sit-out” or “Leave”.
- Step 2. If multiple of 4, ignore next steps & proceed to pairing. *“Late Comers” can make up the nos.*
- Step 3. Include who missed the previous set (volunteered to “sit-out” or due to the draw).
- Step 4. Include the “On Timers” with less no of sets.
- Step 5. Rest “On-Timers” & “Grace-Timers” go into draw to pick who will miss the set.
- Step 6. Step-6: Proceed to pairing.

3. Balancing teams

- 1) Tennis skills & Motivation of STC weekend social members are not expected to be same.
 - a. Only expectation that is common is to “have a good game”.
 - b. It can be achieved by having a team where partners & opponents with comparable Tennis Skills.
 - c. In the absence of a gauge, to form a balanced team consistently there needs to be a reference point.
 - d. The closest reference point is “Competition/Non-Competition” group of players. On last count there 17 competition & 9 Non-Competition players. *See section “Weekend Social Group” in Appendix for the full list.*
 - e. Even within these groups the skill level varies but not as much as between the groups.
 - f. There are exceptions but with this reference there will be a consistent approach to form a team.
 - g. This reference doesn’t have to be made public but just used while balancing the teams.
- 2) Avoid teams that have one dominant group.
 - a. 3 competition players & 1 non-competition player or vis-versa.
- 3) Mix the members so that they have equal no of sets with partners & opponents within the group and between the group.
 - a. Set-1: Comp/Non-Comp Vs Comp/Non-Comp
 - b. Set-2: Comp/Comp Vs Comp/Comp

- c. Set-3: Comp/Non-Comp Vs Comp/Non-Comp
 - d. Set-4: Comp/Comp Vs Comp/Comp.
- 4) This will give a consistent approach going forward. It can always be reviewed and tweaked.

4. Whiteboard Layout and Explanation

Lead Convenor: <Insert Name>				Date: <insert Date>				
Set	Court-1	Court-2	Court-3	Token	On-Timer		Grace-Timer	Late-Comer
					Initials	Total Sets Played	Initials	Initials
1				A				
2				B				
3				C				
4				D				
5				E				
6				F				
7				G				
8				H				
				I				
				J				
				K				
				L				
				M				
				N				
				O				
				P				
					No particular order			Order of Arrival Time

- All lines and headings in “bold” are to remain permanent.
- Headings “Set, Court-1, Court-2, Court-3” are self-explanatory.
- “Token” is the player identity. Scrabble alphabets can be used to draw. No draw for Late-Comers so no need for player identity. Any given day 16 players (On-Time + Grace-Timer) are listed.
- Headings “On-Timer, Grace-Timer, Late-Comer” are explained earlier.
- “Initials” represent player’s initials. Only the initials are written and not their names. Ease of writing and also less space required on the whiteboard.
- “Total Sets Played” is applicable only to the “On-Timers” and updated after every set. This enables the convenor to quick identify the “On-Timer” with “less no of sets” to include in the next set. No. of sets played by the “Grace-Timer” is of no relevance. Discussed earlier.

5. Scenarios and grouping

Shown couple of examples of different scenarios on whiteboard.

Scenario 1:

There are 6 players in the clubhouse by the start time. No “Grace-Timers” or “Late-Comers”.

Set-1:

- Draw.
- Players EE & FF will miss the set.

Set-2:

- Include players EF & FF because they missed the previous set.
- Draw for remaining players.
- Players AA & DD miss the set.

Set-3:

- Include players AA & DD because they missed the previous set.
- Include players EE & FF because of less no. of sets.

Set 4:

- All played equal no. of sets.
- Start again with the draw.

Lead Convenor: <Insert Name>				Date: <insert Date>				
Set	Court-1	Court-2	Court-3	Token	On-Timer		Grace-Timer	Late-Comer
					Initials	Total Sets Played	Initials	Initials
1	AA&BB/CC&DD			A	AA	2		
2	EE&FF/BB&CC			B	BB	2		
3	AA&EE/DD&FF			C	CC	2		
4				D	DD	2		
5				E	EE	2		
6				F	FF	2		
7				G				
8				H				
				I				
				J				
				K				
				L				
				M				
				N				
				O				
				P				
					No particular order			Order of Arrival Time

Scenario 2:

There are 7 players in the clubhouse by the start time. 2 “Grace Timers” and 1 “Late comer” .

Set-1:

- Draw.
- Players EE, FF & GG will miss the set.
- They can combine with HH and have a late start. This is not an “official set” because it could be “balanced or imbalanced” and also will stop regardless of the score when the other “official” set concludes.

Set-2:

- Include players EE, FF & GG because they missed the previous set.
- Draw for remaining players.

- Player II will miss the set.

Set-3:

- Include player II because he missed the previous set.
- Include players EE, FF & GG because they are “On-Timers” and played less no. of games.
- Draw for remaining players.
- Player AA will miss the set.

Set-4:

- Exclude player DD as he chooses to sit-out.
- Include player AA because he missed the previous set.
- Include players EE, FF & GG because they are “On-Timers” and played less no. of games.
- No draw as only four (BB, CC, HH & II) remaining and wanted to play.
- Player JJ is not considered since he is a late comer.

Set-5:

- Time 11:00am. All “On-Timers” decided to leave except player DD.
- Player DD combines with HH, II & JJ to have a set.

Lead Convenor: <Insert Name>					Date: <insert Date>			
Set	Court-1	Court-2	Court-3	Token	On-Timer		Grace-Timer	Late-Comer
					Initials	Total Sets Played	Initials	Initials
1	AA&BB/CC&DD			A	AA	3		J
2	EE&FF/GG&AA	BB&CC/DD&HH		B	BB	4		
3	II&EE/FF&GG	BB&DD/CC&HH		C	CC	4		
4	AA&FF/EE&GG	BB&HH/CC&II		D	DD	4		
5	DD&II/HH&JJ			E	EE	3		
6				F	FF	3		
7				G	GG	3		
8				H			HH	
				I			II	
				J				
				K				
				L				
				M				
				N				
				O				
				P				
					No particular order			Order of Arrival Time

* - Only because player DD decided to stay back, the late-comer got a set and the “Grace-Timers” had one extra set.

6. Weekend social group

Regular Players					Non-Regular Players				
No	Competition	Initials	Non-Competition	Initials	No	Competition	Initials	Non-Competition	Initials
1	Amares	SA	Raja		1	Alan			
2	Sandy		Thanga		2	Rick			
3	Jeff	JW	Basil		3	Tony			
4	George	GM	Dev		4	Chandran			
5	Phillip	PB	Vanthan		5	Andrew			
6	Hari	HH	Sri		6	Justine			
7	Siva		Ganesh		7	Shane			
8	Jack	JK	Bryan						
9	Suprio	SS	Rahu						
10	Stephen								