

Expectations of Behaviour at SSLTC

A Charter for etiquette, standards and a complaints procedure

This policy sets out good practice developed by the Lawn Tennis Association around standards and values expected to be adopted by Tennis clubs around the country.

In particular it covers player behaviour standards, Tennis Etiquette and SSLTC rules as they relate to expected behaviour. The policy sets out a code of conduct for all tennis members and visitors to follow. These are set out so that every member and visitor is clear about what is expected to create the right playing environment. This policy is seen as good practice and captures the behaviour expected at SSLTC as demonstrated by the vast majority of members. It is produced now to continue with the right tennis playing environment that members have enjoyed for many years. It also sets out a complaints procedure for members to follow to address any concerns there may be.

Finally, this policy sets out procedures once a complaint has been made and the role of the newly formed Etiquette Committee.

Aim of Policy

The aim of this policy is to:

1. Ensure that everyone is treated fairly and with respect.
2. To inform members about the standards of behaviour and etiquette expected so that we create the right playing environment for individuals and the club to flourish.
3. To identify the club rules that can be applied consistently; and
4. To create a complaints procedure so that, where there is a shortfall in behaviour, this can be addressed.

Setting standards and values is about the integrity of SSLTC and the image and professionalism SSLTC wants to project.

STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR, ETIQUETTE, CLUB RULES

Behaviour

SSLTC is responsible for setting standards and values to apply throughout the club at every level. Tennis should be enjoyed by everyone who wants to play the game. This policy is fully supported by the SSLTC Committee.

All members must treat other members with dignity with respect. Dignity is about respectful, responsible, fair behaviour. There must be no inappropriate actions, behaviour, comments or physical contact, which may cause offence i.e. mental or physical anxiety or hurt to an individual: Inappropriate actions include:

- Racquet throwing;
- Swearing;
- Being abusive or aggressive;
- Intimidating.
- Questioning another person's integrity over line calls or other actions.
- Causing danger to other players through your play.

Etiquette

SSLTC Etiquette Guidance is based on LTA and world best practice. The rules of tennis are set by the International Tennis Federation and can be found here: <http://www.itftennis.com/abouttheitf/rulesregs/rules.asp>

Tennis etiquette is different from the rules of the game. It covers a broad range of actions and behaviours which are traditionally considered acceptable on and around the tennis court. Here are some actions and behaviours that SSLTC recommends to members.

When playing please wear recognised sports clothing (not jeans etc) and most importantly "Tennis Shoes ". This is for two reasons, first, other shoes mark and damage the courts and second, non tennis shoes do not grip the courts as well and can cause accidents and avoidable injury if you were to fall or slip.

Show respect and courtesy

- To your opponent(s), your partner, and others on or near the courts. Keep your voice down and confined to your court as much as possible so as not to disrupt players on adjacent courts.
- If you get into a loud dispute with your opponent, take it off the court and away from other players.
- Do not criticise your partner or opponent, be positive and offer encouragement instead.
- All members and visitors: Please do not walk behind players whilst a game or a rally is in progress, this is to avoid distracting other members and most importantly to avoid any potential accidents on court.
- All members and visitors: Please do not walk behind a court on the pathway when a point is in play. Wait at the edge of the court for the point to finish and then quickly and quietly walk past the court and wait in turn at the next court if necessary. Preferably wait to be invited to cross behind a court.

Do not walk onto another court during a game

- Wait for the players to finish the game, or minimally the point, before walking onto their court.
- It is very distracting to have someone disrupt a game in progress, so if you must cross another court, do so after the game is finished, and go around the court, not through the middle.
- If you are trying to cross a court please wait until you are invited to and it is safe to do so.
- When you are crossing courts it is normal to do so at the rear of the court and not at the net.
- When you decide to cross behind other courts do so as quickly as possible and don't stop for a chat on the way.
- If a stray ball comes onto your court don't knock it back immediately, wait until the owners are ready and then hit it to the server's end.

Talking

- During play and particularly between games, keep the amount and volume of conversation down to a minimum necessary to play and enjoy your own games. Too much social chatter or debate can be disturbing to those on adjacent courts who came to play tennis.

Line calls

- Lines calls can be a problem and the majority of experienced players use what is known as the 'honour system'.
- Only call the lines on your side of the net.
- Call clearly and firmly what you see and what you honestly believe to be correct.
- If you are not absolutely certain or didn't see the ball clearly, the ball was IN and must be given in the opponents favour.
- If occasionally you have serious doubts as to your opponents eye-sight, ask politely if they are certain as to the accuracy of their call. If they say that they are, accept it and get on with the next point.
- If you feel your opponents regularly have difficulties making correct calls, start looking for different opponents!
- If in social friendly matches there is some doubt over a line call, offer to play the point again rather than cause undue aggravation and time wasting.

Ball management

- Balls should be kept either in hand, in a pocket or ball clip, or against the fence directly behind the centre mark.
- Any time your opponent has to walk a significant distance to get a ball, look around your side to see whether you can use that time to collect a ball that's similarly far away.
- If the server needs a ball, the player closest to a ball should get it and send it to the server.
- Send a ball to the server so that he/she can catch it easily with one hand. Advanced players seem to be able to get the ball to bounce once, softly, to the server, but most less advanced players should make the ball bounce twice to ensure that it arrives at a low speed.

- Never hit a ball hard toward the server's side with the intention that he/she will eventually collect it off the fence. Aside from the possibility of hitting someone who's not expecting a ball to be coming, you'll also probably cause the ball to bounce off the fence and roll either too far away or into the court where it will become a hazard. Also, it's rude to make the server pick a ball up off the ground when you could have sent it so that it could be caught after a bounce or two.

Keeping score

- The server must announce the score at the start of each game and at the start of the second point and each subsequent point in each game.
- If the receiver cannot hear the server's announcement of the score, he must ask the server to speak louder. You can't wait until the server believes he has won the game to try to reconstruct the scoring point by point.
- As a courtesy to others please use the game scoreboard on each court when it is in place. This will help others take an interest in your game and save time in planning the next game during club sessions.

Body Language

- Tennis can be a frustrating game if you are not getting your serves in or not hitting your shots, but try to remain upbeat and happy. Your opponent and/or doubles partner doesn't want to be playing tennis with someone who is miserable so cheer up! You are more likely to play better tennis if you are calm, relaxed, focussed, and in a positive frame of mind.

Close the gate behind you

- Whether you're coming onto the courts, or leaving, it is common courtesy to close the gate behind you. This will keep the balls inside the confines of the gate and they won't roll outside.

Do not retrieve your ball from the other court

- As with the above, it is common courtesy not to disrupt players on court during a match. If your ball rolls onto an adjacent court, wait for them to finish the game and kindly ask for "a little help" to get their attention. Under no circumstances should you run over onto their court in the middle of a game or point to retrieve the ball yourself.

Mobile phones

- All mobile phones and other communication devices should be switched off as these can disrupt play.

Pick up after yourself

- Don't leave empty cans or old tennis balls out on the court when you leave.
- Dispose of any rubbish you have in bins on or near the court – if there aren't any, take it with you.
- If you have old tennis balls that you don't want anymore, don't leave them on the court – give them to the coaching team for the juniors or if they are beyond hope, recycle them in the special bin provided between the clubhouse and the clay courts.

COMPLAINTS POLICY

The Complaints Policy outlines the steps that will be undertaken to investigate any complaint brought to the attention of the Etiquette Committee.

How do I make a complaint?

In the event that any tennis member who is at SSLTC (home) or away, feels that he, she has suffered inappropriate standards of behaviour of another tennis member, breach of tennis etiquette or club rules in any way, they should follow the procedures below.

- 1) The Complainant should report the matter in writing to the Club Secretary or Chairman.
 - 2) The report should include:
 - a) details of what occurred;
 - b) details of when and where the occurrence took place;
 - c) any witness details and copies of any witness statements;
 - d) names of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);
 - e) details of what steps were taken at the time to resolve the issue
 - f) details of any former complaints made about other incidents, including the date and to whom such complaint was made;
 - 3) If the person accused of inappropriate standards of behaviour, breach of tennis etiquette or Club rules, the Etiquette Committee:
 - i) will request that both parties to the complaint submit written evidence regarding the incident(s);
 - ii) may decide (at its sole discretion) to uphold or dismiss the complaint without holding a hearing;
 - iii) may (at its sole discretion) hold a hearing (whether or not such a hearing is requested by either party) at which both parties will be entitled to attend and present their case;
 - iv) may take action against the complainer if the complaint is deemed to be unfounded and malicious.;
 - v) will have the power to impose any one or more of the following sanctions on any person found to be in breach of any club policy:
 - (a) warn as to future conduct;
 - (b) suspend from membership;
 - (c) recommended removal from membership to the Management Committee ;
 - (d) exclude a non-member from the Club, either temporarily or permanently; and
 - (e) turn down a non-member's current and/or future membership applications.
 - (f) may choose to use a system of Green, Yellow or Red cards as an indication of seriousness of the offence.
- The Etiquette Committee will provide both parties with written reasons for its decision to uphold or dismiss the complaint within one (1) calendar month of such decision being made.
- vi) Either party may appeal a decision of the Main SSLTC committee) by writing to the Club Secretary within 3 months of the Club's decision being notified to that party.
- 4) When the Etiquette Committee meet they will take into account any background information deemed relevant including the personal circumstances of the person complained about. They will consider any development advice or guidance that may be appropriate that may be part to a resolution of the complaint.
 - 5) If a complaint is made about a member of the Etiquette Committee the person complained about will absent themselves from that Committee's meeting called to determine the outcome unless called to give their account.
 - 6) Such matters like stealing would amount to gross misconduct and highly likely to lead to removal from membership.

Removal from membership

The ultimate sanction to refuse membership or to expel from membership is covered in existing SSLTC Rule 7, which states:

Rule 7

- 7.1 The Management Committee shall have power to expel a Member when, in its opinion, it would not be in the interests of the sport or of the Club for him to remain a Member.
- 7.2 A Member shall not be expelled unless he is given 14 days' written notice of the meeting of the Management Committee at which his expulsion shall be considered and written details of the complaint made against him.
- 7.3 The Member shall be given an opportunity to appeal against the expulsion to an Appeals Panel, appointed by the Management Committee each season from members who are not serving members of the Management Committee. The Member can appear before the Appeals Panel at any such meeting to be accompanied by a representative or friend, who may answer complaints made against the member and to cross-examine any witnesses on behalf of the member. The Appeals Panel decision will be final.
- 7.4 The Management Committee may exclude the Member from the Club's premises until the meeting considering his expulsion has been held. For the avoidance of doubt, the member shall be entitled to attend that meeting for the purpose of making his representations.

Any person whose membership is terminated in these circumstances shall immediately be excluded from the Club premises and have no claim against the Club, the Management Committee, or any member thereof, except that any unexpired portion of his subscription shall be refunded. The Committee referred to in Rule 7...relates to the SSLTC Main Committee.

Points to consider

- Is there good and sufficient cause such as conduct or character?;
- Is the conduct or character likely to bring the Club or sport into disrepute? From the Oxford English dictionary
 - Conduct is the manner in which a person behaves;
 - Character is the distinguishing qualities of a person;
 - Disrepute is the state of being held in low public esteem.

SSLTC is situated in a residential area and has many residents that overlook the club directly. There are also many visitors, prospective members and other visitors to the club during tennis playing times. It is not unreasonable to suggest that any bad behaviour on or off the court that takes place could bring the club into dis-repute.

PUBLICATION

A policy is considered to have been 'implemented' when its content has been communicated to club members, and when non-members, guests and visiting teams are aware of its existence. All members and visitors must be made aware of the policy. To publicise this policy:

- This policy will be sent to all members and
- be displayed the main points of the policy in accessible and visible areas, such as notice boards.
- Be referred to on SSLTC web-site to inform prospective members and visiting teams.

Review

The Main Committee is responsible for reviewing the policy once implemented to ensure it meets the needs of the club and its members and will subject to amendment at the discretion of the SSLTC Committee.

THE ROLE OF THE ETIQUETTE COMMITTEE

The SSLTC Committee shall, as and when required, establish a disciplinary and complaints, Etiquette Committee, empowered to take appropriate action against any member or visitor if that committee is satisfied that the standard of conduct has fallen below the level of acceptable behaviour or a member has deliberately contravened the Rules LTA Disciplinary Code.

The Etiquette committee will operate within the spirit of the LTA Disciplinary Code and shall be made up of any three SSLTC members deemed to be impartial and unconnected to the member raising a complaint or subject to the discipline or complaint investigation.

The SSLTC Committee shall have powers to invoke the disciplinary procedure of its own volition if it identifies a potential breach of competition rules.

The SSLTC Club Secretary shall maintain a private record of all disciplinary investigations and outcomes which shall be used to ensure fairness.

Matters involving any potential child protection issue must be dealt with under existing LTA procedures on safeguarding children.

The Etiquette committee's powers in respect of etiquette at SSTLC shall be unlimited and will include the power to issue warnings and to impose a ban on a member found to be in violation of our rules or the rules and spirit of the game generally.

Any appeal will be decided by the full management committee of SSLTC and will be final.

The role of the Etiquette Committee is to:

1. Oversee tennis related matters regarding behaviour, etiquette and breach of tennis club rules.
2. Deal with any complaints relating to such issues and will ensure that the tennis complaints procedure is correctly followed.
3. Deliberate and take appropriate action as set out in the complaints procedure.
4. In the event that complaints procedure fails to achieve the committee's preferred resolution of a particular complaint, the committee will make detailed representation to the SSLTC Main Committee, as to the recommended course of action.

Etiquette Committee will take necessary steps to investigate any complaints of discriminatory practice that are brought to their attention in accordance with the club's complaints procedure. It is important that club members and guests know how to bring about a complaint, who they should contact, how decisions are made and what sanctions may be imposed if there has been a breach of the club policy.