

# Massachusetts Squash League & Tournament Rules

Updated October 3, 2023

## I. Section 1: League Teams

A. A Club may enter one or more teams in each of the Open, Women's, and Open Handicapped squash leagues. Also, a team may be formed of individuals with no club affiliation or limited facilities in which case the team will be considered an "away" team for league scheduling purposes.

B. Clubs must be willing to provide two acceptable courts for two playing periods starting between 6 pm and 7 pm on the designated night(s) for play unless their teams are designated as "away" only. See rule 3.B for the definition of acceptable courts for league play.

C. There is a \$100 entry fee per team for Mass Squash league play.

D. Any team located more than 40 miles outside of Boston, or any team belonging to a Club that possesses only one court or limited locker room facilities may be required to play away matches only.

E. Each team shall designate one player to be Team Captain and advise the League Chairperson of the Captain's name, address, email address, and telephone numbers prior to the commencement of league play. An assistant captain may also be designated.

## II. Section 2: Eligibility for Team League Play

A. Each team shall consist of a minimum of four (4) players, unless that particular league specifies a different number of players. Teams should sign up with at least 1-2 extra players in order to be sure there will be enough players available to play on league night.

B. Each team member must be a member of the Massachusetts Squash Racquets Association (Mass Squash) and United States Squash Racquets Association (US Squash) at the time a match is played.

C. Players are encouraged to play in their appropriate skill level leagues. No player shall begin season play in Open or Women's league competition at a level below his/her ability, based on his/her US Squash rating. If a player has no rating, he/she must obtain one by submitting the results of 3 recent matches to US Squash. Should a player's rating rise above the league limit during the season, he/she shall be allowed to complete regular season play and playoffs in that same league. The League Chairperson retains discretion over the above for rare circumstances and the right to promote any player out of the league if he/she clearly began play at too low a skill level. Any matches played stand, even if a player changes leagues later.

D. A player must have reached his/her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to playing any 50+ League match. Any junior (defined as <18 years old) participating in an adult league must have reached his/her 14<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to playing any adult league match, however there is no minimum age requirement for anyone playing in the premier Open 6.0+ League, only prior experience and adequate rating based on matches against adults. In all League Divisions, only one junior per match per team may play on any given night. All communications to juniors must include his/her parent/guardian, including emails and texts.

E. Matches played by ineligible members will be forfeited and scored as a default in calculating league standings. If both players are ineligible then the match will be considered a default by both teams and not included in the league standings (see rule 3.D).

F. A player may not play for more than one team in the same league during a season without the prior approval of the League Chairperson and League Coordinator of the league involved.

G. A player who plays 5 or more matches at a given skill level that is above the league division where s/he started the season or whose USQ rating has exceeded their respective league's ratings cutoff by the margin indicated below will be automatically promoted up to the higher league, and will be ineligible to play any further lower level league matches that season.

<b>Divisions:</b>	<b>Margin</b>	<b>EG (ratings above):</b>
Open 5.0+ (4.5-5.20)	0.20	5.40
Open 4.5, Open 4.0	0.25	4.75, 4.25
Open 3.5, Open 3.0	0.30	3.80, 3.30

### **III. Section 3: Matches**

A. League matches and matches in Mass Squash sanctioned singles tournaments shall be played according to the current World Squash Singles Rules (the "Rules"). For leagues, the scoring to be used depends on the league as follows:

1. For Open and Women's league matches, the visiting captain shall select and communicate to the home captain at least one-day prior to the day of the match the scoring system to be used for all of the individual matches to be played. The choices are limited to PAR-15 (win-by-two), and PAR-11 (win-by-two) as described in Part 2 and in Appendix 7 of the Rules.

2. Handicapped 50+ and Summer league matches shall utilize point a rally scoring to 15, specified in Appendix 7 as "Point-a-Rally (PAR) to 15", modified:

- (i) to account for handicaps as defined in Section 4 of these rules, and
- (ii) to provide that the player who scores 15 points first wins the game regardless of any tie at 14-all.

B. "Acceptable Courts" - Regular league matches shall be played on international, 21 foot wide courts where available, but may be played on 20 foot wide courts otherwise meeting international court specifications (typically, converted racquetball courts). Playoff league matches shall be played on 21 foot international courts only, even if the consequence is that a higher-seeded league team will not have the home court. Tin height should be set at 19 inches (standard amateur height) for all matches, otherwise subject to default.

C. Each member of the team shall play his/her opponent in a match of the best of three out of five games. One point shall be awarded to the winning member at each position and one bonus point to the winning team. In case of a tie, the winning team will be that team which has more games won and if the same, that team with more game points won. In the event that each team has the same number of matches, games and game points, 1/2 point shall be awarded to each team.

D. A defaulted match shall count as a 3-0 win with each game scored 11-0 (or 9-0 or 15-0 as

applicable). If both league teams default a given position, then neither team shall be awarded the point for the match and the match shall not be included in the determination of the bonus point. In this case, the total available points for each team shall include defaulted matches for the purposes of calculating league position (see rule 6.A).

E. If a player withdraws due to injury or other reasons, then the opponent wins the match. In league play, games and points won by said player before withdrawing are included in the determination of the bonus point. The winning player is given 11-0 (or 9-0 or 15-0, as applicable) games scores for any games not started at the time the player withdraws.

F. The Dunlop XX Yellow Dot is the official ball to be used in league play.

G. Each team's line-up of players shall be in order of their club's current challenge ladder which must be posted to the US Squash website to be considered valid, or in the absence of a valid ladder, according to the players' US Squash ratings.

H. The playing order for a team depends on the league as follows:

1. In the Open and Women's leagues the playing order shall be the ladder or rating order as of the match date. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the League Chairperson.
2. In the handicapped 50+ and Summer leagues, players should play in the order of their assigned handicaps (see Section 4 for details). A player's ladder position may supersede the handicap level if the handicaps are within one point of each other.

I. A team with fewer than the required number of players shall move all its players up so that it defaults at the lowest position (i.e., 4th position for 4 person teams). For example, if the #2 player on Team B is unable to play and the team captain cannot find a substitute, then on league night the following match-ups occur:

<b>Team A</b>	<b>Vs.</b>	<b>Team B</b>
#1		#1
#2		#3
#3		#4
#4		DEFAULT

If a team has commenced a match expecting all of its players to appear and one of the players does not arrive due to unavoidable circumstances, his/her position shall be defaulted. The remainder of this match shall be played as scheduled. Exceptions may be granted at the discretion of the League Chairperson.

J. All matches must be refereed. Each team should supply referees for two matches. Should one team be unable to referee a match, the other should do so. Referees should maintain neutrality during matches (abstain from coaching the teammate they are reffing).

***K. Mass Squash has adopted US Squash's policy on protective eyewear. During league matches or Mass Squash sanctioned tournaments, each player must wear lensed, protective eyewear that meets the current American Society for Testing and Materials standard (ASTM F803). Standard eyeglasses may not be worn in lieu of approved eyewear, even if they have plastic lenses and it is not acceptable to play without protective eyewear under any circumstances including mutual agreement by both players. Players who refuse to wear protective eyewear will be defaulted.***

#### IV. Section 4: Handicaps

A. Handicap rules apply to the 50+ and summer leagues only.

B. All players on the rosters submitted on the entry forms with a US Squash skill level indicated will be assigned a starting handicap for league play. Starting handicaps will not exceed -8 or +8.

Generally, the scale will be as follows:

Skill Level	Handicap
≥5.0	-6 to -8
4.5	-4 to -5
4.0	-2 to -3
3.5	-1 to 1
3.0	2 to 3
2.5	4 to 5
≤2.0	6 to 8

C. The individual match results will be reviewed by the League Chairperson after each week's play. Adjustments will be made if results indicate a player's performance is significantly different from his/her assigned handicap. Two consecutive wins or losses are also suggestive of a possible change in handicap.

D. Captains are encouraged to send suggestions for handicap changes for their own and their opponent's handicaps, particularly early in the season where team rating scales may have been different.

E. The starting score for a match shall be derived from both player's handicaps by calculating the difference between the two handicaps and setting the starting scores evenly around zero. If the difference is an odd number, the lesser skilled player will start with the higher score. For example:

1. Player A is rated -5 and Player B is rated 0; the difference is 5 points so Player A will start at -2 and Player B at +3.

2. Player C is a +2 and Player D is a +4; the difference is 2 and the starting score will be Player C at -1 and Player D at +1.

F. Following the completion of each game of the match, the handicaps and the starting scores for the next game will be adjusted as follows:

1. The losing player's handicap is raised one point.
2. The winning player's handicap is lowered one point.

Using the first example above, if player A wins game 1, the next game would start at -3 and +4. If Player B won game 1, the starting score for the next game would be -1 and +2.

#### V. Section 5: Scheduling of League Matches

Unless the Executive Board decides otherwise, each league will play weekly. League schedules for the upcoming season will be published prior to the start of the season. A sample weekly playing schedule is as follows:

A. Monday Open 3.0, Open 50+

Tuesday	Open 6.0+, Women's 2.5/3.5
Wednesday	Open 4.0, Open 5.0+, Summer League, Women's 4.5 RR
Thursday	Open 3.5, Open 4.5

B. Matches will start between 6:00-7:00 PM. Start times for each club will be indicated on the appropriate league schedule. In the event that 2 teams from the same club are home on the same night, it is the responsibility of such teams to reach an accommodation that will allow both to start as nearly as possible within the prescribed time. Home teams unable to comply with this schedule should discuss their situation with the appropriate League Chairpersons.

C. The captain, at his/her discretion, may default a player from an opposing team arriving more than 30 minutes past the scheduled match time for that player.

D. Captains should make maximum effort to have all matches played on their scheduled date and to avoid defaulting. If a player is not available for the scheduled day or time, captains shall take the following actions, in order of preference:

1. Substitute, using all possible players from the team ladder;
2. Substitute, using a player from a team ladder in the next lower skill level;
3. Ask the opposing team for an opportunity to reschedule in advance of the scheduled time;
4. Default.

Rescheduling requests should be limited by both teams and individual players and matches may NOT be played after the scheduled time. An opposing captain is not required to accommodate a rescheduling request.

E. In the event of bad weather or other exceptional circumstance forcing the postponement of a team match, the individual matches should be played before the date of the next team match. The League Chairperson shall make the postponement determinations. Any games not played by this time will be considered double defaults and will not count towards league standings. However, such matches will count towards an individual's requirements for playoff eligibility (see Rule 6.C).

F. The home team captain is responsible for reserving a minimum of two courts for team play at the date and time of the scheduled match. It shall be the visiting team captain's responsibility to contact the home team captain at least one day prior to the day of the match to exchange team lineups and confirm the playing time of the match, obtain directions to the home club and ensure that their team members arrive promptly for their matches.

G. It is the responsibility of both team captains to submit the match scores into the scoring system by 5:00 PM on the day following the scheduled match. Players' first and last names and game scores with points must be included. Captains are encouraged to include a match report with the scores which will be posted with the scores to the Mass Squash web site.

H. Any disputes or complaints relating to league matches or players shall be referred to the League Chairperson. The League Chairperson will consult with the League Coordinator if necessary. Any dispute that cannot be resolved at this level shall be referred to the Executive Board.

## **VI. Section 6: League Standings**

A. League standings shall be determined on a percentage basis by dividing the number of match points each team has won by the total number of match points available to said team. In the event of

a tie for any position, the standings will be determined by the head-to-head competition results between the tied teams, based first on (i) team matches won, then (ii) individual matches won, then (iii) individual games won, and then (iv) individual points won, between the tied teams. If still tied, the League Chairperson shall flip a coin to determine the rankings. Note that teams' win/loss records are not considered.

B. At the end of the regular season, playoffs will be held except in the Summer League whose Chairperson shall have discretion whether or not to hold playoffs. For Leagues with 3 to 5 teams, the top two teams advance directly to finals. For Leagues with 6 to 11 teams, the top four teams move on to the playoffs. For Leagues with 12 to 15 teams, the top six teams move on to the playoffs. For Leagues with 16 or more teams, the top eight teams move on to the playoffs. Seedings for the playoffs will be based on the final league standings.

C. Players must have played in at least twenty percent (20%) of their team's league matches to play in the playoffs at the end of the season. Matches won by default or cancellation or other exceptional circumstances shall count towards playoff eligibility.

D. If any team during the season shall have (a) defaulted 2 complete team matches; or (b) defaulted more than twenty percent (20%) of its individual matches, said team may be removed from all further league competition for the entire season. The League Chairperson may exercise his/her discretion in invoking this rule in the event of exceptional circumstances. The League Chairperson may also assess penalty deductions from a team's point total for defaults that (s)he considers excessive.

E. To encourage better knowledge of the Rules and safer play, teams in each league will be rewarded with additional points if all of their active players have taken and passed the US Squash Club Referee exam as of 11:59 pm on February 1 of each season. In regards to this rule, active players shall include any who have earned a match by default and any "not on roster" players. The referee exam points shall be the equivalent of having won an additional league match vs. the Referee Exam Team by a score of 5-0 (or 6-0 for league divisions that field 5 players per team weekly) and failure to meet the requirements shall be the equivalent of having lost an additional league match vs. the Referee Exam Team by a score of 0-5 (or 0-6 as applicable), all as shall be determined and implemented by the related League Chairperson in consultation with the League Coordinator.

F. The MA Squash League Championship Cup shall be awarded to the Club that earns the highest number of points during the semifinals and finals of league playoffs. Points are earned as follows in each division: 5 points for the final round winner, 3 points for the losing finalist, and 1 point for the losing semifinalists. Points are awarded to teams that play a semifinal or final match; if no semifinal is played (small divisions), no semifinal points are awarded. Any defaulted semifinal/final match earns points to the nondefaulting team. Teams composed of players from various clubs shall have their points awarded to the various clubs on a pro rata basis. In the event of a tie in League Championship Cup points, the Cup will be awarded to all clubs with the most League Championship Cup points.

## **VII. Section 7: Etiquette**

A. Players, team captains and referees shall conduct themselves on and off the court in league and tournament events appropriately at all times in accordance with Rule 15 of the World Squash Singles Rules. Serious breaches of same by players, team captains or referees should be reported in writing to the appropriate League Chairperson or Tournament Coordinator within one week, who will then inform the League Coordinator and Executive Board. The President of Mass Squash will appoint a subcommittee of three persons, including the related League Chairperson or Tournament

Coordinator, to gather evidence and conduct a full hearing of all those involved in the complaint(s). The hearing shall be held as soon as possible following the complaint and the subcommittee will report its findings to the President and the Executive Board immediately following the hearing. The President and/or the Executive Board will then inform the reported player of its findings and any penalty imposed in writing.

B. Breaches of Etiquette include:

1. Deliberately injuring an opponent;
2. Threatening bodily harm to an opponent, or others;
3. Intimidation of an opponent by actual physical contact during play or threat of same and/or verbal abuse;
4. Conduct (such as deliberately throwing a racquet against the wall, deliberately hitting a ball out of court, etc.) unbecoming to the game of squash racquets; or
5. Language (vilifying, obscene, etc. to opponent, self, gallery or officials) unbecoming to the game of squash.

C. Penalties imposed by the Executive Board, may be:

1. No action
2. Warning
3. Probation (for a specified period)
4. Suspension from Mass Squash play (for a specified period) or
5. Suspension and a request that the player not be certified to play in US Squash sanctioned tournaments until further notice from the Mass Squash Executive Board.

D. Probation means any further violation of the Mass Squash court etiquette rules could result in suspension from all Mass Squash sponsored activities for a stipulated period. Probation and suspension may be reported on the Mass Squash web site and to US Squash and/or WSA or PSA. Relief from penalty will be at the discretion of the Mass Squash Executive Board.

E. An appeal by a player may be made within one week of a penalty notification by a player enduring either penalty Number 4 or 5, or Number 3 if the probation period imposed is more than one year. Such an appeal will be heard before the Executive Board of Mass Squash including the subcommittee that had been appointed to review the complaint and other interested persons. The decision of the Executive Board following that hearing will be made within ten days of the hearing and will be final.

F. Lesser breaches of the accepted rules of the game of squash racquets viz: not clearing properly, refusal to accept let calls of an opponent in an un-refereed match, talking during play of a point, double-bounce hits called up for continued play, etc., are not a basis for complaints to the Executive Board. Such unsportsmanlike conduct should be resolved by the referee (see rule 3.J) if occurring in League matches.

## **VIII. Section 8: Softball Singles, Hardball Doubles and International Doubles Tournaments**

Each year Mass Squash will offer its members an opportunity to play in the Mass Squash Championship tournaments as follows:

Softball Singles  
Hardball Doubles  
International Doubles

Each player must be a member of Mass Squash and US Squash as of the start of the tournament or pay a fee equivalent to membership fees for both organizations. Mass Squash members shall be invited to participate in the tournament via e-mail at least one month prior to the start of the tournament. The tournament shall also be advertised on the Mass Squash web site to allow for registration of players who are not yet current members.

- A. The tournaments shall be administered by Mass Squash Executive Board members.
- B. The tournament schedule shall be determined by the Board. All finals matches for all tournaments shall be played on dates and at venues selected by Mass Squash.
- C. The draws for the singles softball and hardball doubles tournaments shall be sanctioned by US Squash and administered by the tournament director. The international doubles tournament draws shall be administered by a Mass Squash representative.
- D. Tournament draws shall be offered for the following player divisions:

Softball Singles:

- all skill levels for which there are team leagues (e.g. 4.0)
- age levels for both men and women (e.g. 50+) based on player participation in previous tournaments
- recommendations from Mass Squash members

Hardball Doubles:

- Open A, Open B and Open C
- Women's A
- Men's 50+ and 60+
- Mixed
- Parent-Child
- Siblings

International Doubles:

- Open 3.5, 4.5 and 5.5

For all tournament draws with fewer than four registrants, the draw shall be cancelled.

- E. For skill level draws, no player shall register to enter a draw at a level below her/his ability, based on his/her US Squash rating. Players may enter skill level draws at a level above her/his ability. Eligibility for skill levels draws will be determined by the draw coordinator of each draw based on fairness to each entrant and to the other players registered in the draw.
- F. For age level draws, each participant must have turned the minimum age of the draw by the date the tournament begins.
- G. Players may enter multiple draws: a limit of two skill level draws is strongly recommended. A limit of five total draws (skill level and age level) is also strongly recommended.
- H. Scheduling the time and location of all matches except the final match in each draw shall be conducted by the players.
- I. A volunteer Mass Squash member shall be assigned as "Draw Coordinator" to administer each draw. Draw coordinators shall be responsible for the administration of each draw as follows:



- Determining each player's eligibility for play in the draw in which they are registered based on skill level, age, gender and membership standing. If a player is deemed unqualified for play in a given draw, other draw coordinators shall be notified for potential inclusion in their draws as appropriate.
  - Creating each draw using the US Squash web site or otherwise including seeding the top 5-25% of players in each draw.
  - Establishing a schedule for each round of the draw including dates by which each round shall be completed.
  - Maintaining the schedule of matches played in the draw.
  - Entering results of matches on the US Squash web site or otherwise managing the draws.
  - Mediating all disputes between opponents including the scheduling of the time and venue of matches
  - Contacting all players in the draw prior to the start of the tournament with the following information: draw schedule; contact list for all draw participants; link to draw information on US Squash web site where appropriate.
- J. The scoring system used for all tournaments shall be according to US Squash rules unless specified otherwise by the Mass Squash Executive Board.
- K. All singles tournament matches shall be played on international, 21 foot wide courts where available, but may be played on 20 foot wide courts otherwise meeting international court specifications (typically, converted racquetball courts) only if agreed to by both players. Final tournament matches shall be played on 21 foot international courts only. All international and hardball doubles tournament matches shall be played on respective regulation courts.
- L. The Dunlop XX Yellow Dot ball shall be used in all singles and international doubles softball tournament play.  
The Slazenger Blue Doubles Hardball (red dot) shall be used in all hardball doubles tournament play.
- M. Protective eyewear for tournaments shall follow the Mass Squash rules in Section III K above.
- N. Players shall abide by the Mass Squash etiquette rules in Section VII above.