

# Lowlands Tennis Club – Etiquette Policy – Feb 2024



**Lowlands Tennis Club – Etiquette Committee - a sub-committee  
of the Lowlands Tennis Committee**

## **STANDARDS, ETIQUETTE AND COMPLAINTS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

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 Lowlands Club Rules. The policy sets out a code of conduct for all tennis members to follow. These are set out so that every member 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 Lowlands and 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 Lowlands Club and the image and professionalism Lowlands Club wants to project.

### **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR, ETIQUETTE, CLUB RULES**

#### **Behaviour**

Lowlands Club 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 **Lowlands Club Management Committee** and Tennis 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**

Lowland 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:

<https://www.itftennis.com/en/about-us/governance/rules-and-regulations/>

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 Lowlands Club 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.
- 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.

### **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 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 opponent's 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, 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.
- **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. 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 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 juniors.

## **COMPLAINTS POLICY**

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

This policy only applies to the Tennis Section of Lowlands Club.

### **How do I make a complaint?**

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

1. The Complainant should report the matter in writing to the Chair of the Etiquette Committee or any member of that committee.
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 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:
  - 3.1 will request that both parties to the complaint **submit written evidence** regarding the incident(s);
  - 3.2 may decide (at its sole discretion) to uphold or dismiss the complaint without holding a hearing;
  - 3.3 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;
  - 3.4 **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 (Recommend to Management Committee);
    - (c) **recommended removal** from membership to the Management Committee ;
    - (d) **exclude** a member from the Club, either temporarily or permanently (Recommend to Management Committee) ; and
    - (e) **turn down** a member's current and/or future membership applications (Recommend to Management Committee) .
  - 3.5 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.

- 3.6 Either party may appeal a decision of the committee to the County Association (including a decision not to hold a hearing) by writing to the [County Secretary] within 3 months of the Club's decision being notified to that party.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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 Lowlands Club Rule 12, which states:

#### **Rule 12**

***The Club may refuse membership or expel from membership only for good and sufficient cause, such as conduct or character, either in or out of the Club, likely to bring the Club or sport into disrepute. The Committee shall, by not less than a two thirds majority vote of the full Committee be empowered to terminate that person's membership. Appeal against such a decision may be made to the Club's members and decided by a majority vote of members attending the meeting convened, amongst other things for that purpose.***

***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 12....relates to the Management 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.

Lowlands is situated in a highly 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 Lowlands web-site to inform prospective members and visiting teams.

## **Review**

The Etiquette Committee is responsible for reviewing the policy once implemented. .

## **THE ROLE OF THE ETIQUETTE COMMITTEE**

The Tennis Committee in August 2009 established an Etiquette Committee to ensure effective running of such matters. 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 through the Tennis Committee to the Management Committee, as to the recommended course of action.

The Etiquette Committee will meet a least quarterly or more frequently if needed. All members of the committee will also be members of the Tennis Committee.

<b>Member</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mike Askew	Chair
Martin Lewis	Tennis Committee Member
Janice Howkins or Sue Hammond	Tennis Captain

Lowlands 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.

**Appendix A - Lowlands Tennis – Complaints Proforma**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>State what happened</b>
(a) <b>details of what</b> occurred;	
(b) <b>details of when and where</b> the occurrence took place;	
(c) any <b>witness</b> details and copies of any witness statements;	
(d) <b>names</b> of any others who have been treated in a similar way (provided that those people consent to their names being disclosed);	
(e) <b>details of any former complaints</b> made about the incident, including the date and to whom such complaint was made; and	



**Appendix B LOWLANDS COURT SCHEDULING**

<https://lowlandsclub.com/tennis/court-schedules/>