TENNIS SUSSEX

County Training & County Cup Selection Policy

Player & Parent Information

2026/27 Programme

1. Tennis Sussex County Training

Tennis Sussex aims to bring together the leading junior players from across the county to provide regular, high-quality training in a competitive and supportive environment.

County Training complements a player's regular coaching programme and provides an opportunity to train alongside other leading players from across Sussex.

Each County Training session will last approximately two hours, with sessions taking place approximately once a month.

There will normally be 10 County Training sessions per year for each of the following age groups:

U8, U9, U10, U11, U12, U14, U16 and U18 – Boys and Girls

A U7 Development Squad will also be introduced in the new year.

Sessions will take place at a range of clubs across Sussex. Wherever possible, each training group will have a consistent venue throughout the year.

Training will be held indoors wherever possible during the winter months, moving outdoors after Easter where appropriate.

2. Selection for County Training

County Training selections will normally take place during the week following the Sussex County Championships, held towards the end of August each year.

The intention is to provide a clear and transparent selection process while recognising that rankings alone may not always provide a complete picture of a player's current level or circumstances.

U11 and Above

For the relevant age groups, the top 12 eligible Sussex players will normally be invited to County Training based on their LTA ranking at the published annual selection date.

For the 2026/27 programme, the ranking cut-off will be the first Friday following the County Championships.

Injury Protection

A player who has represented Sussex in a County Cup team during the previous 12 months, but who has subsequently fallen outside the normal selection criteria because of injury, may continue to be invited to County Training.

In these circumstances, Tennis Sussex may request supporting medical evidence from an appropriately qualified medical practitioner.

This provision is intended to ensure that a genuine period of injury does not unnecessarily disadvantage an established county player.

U8, U9 and U10

For the younger age groups, where rankings may provide a less complete indication of player level and development, selection will be based primarily on:

- recent competitive results;
- current playing level and form;

- frequency and standard of competition;
- observed performance; and
- appropriate age-and-stage development.

Players are expected to compete regularly in order to be considered.

Reserve Players

Players immediately outside the normal County Training selection places may be placed on a reserve list.

Reserve players may be invited to attend individual sessions when places become available.

Where appropriate, priority may be given to players who have represented a Sussex County team during the previous 12 months but who were not automatically selected for the current County Training group.

Playing Up an Age Group

From time to time, a player may be invited to train with an older age group where Tennis Sussex believes this will benefit the player's development and/or the quality of the training environment.

A player invited to "play up" is expected to continue attending their own age-group County Training alongside the older group.

Where a player attends two County Training squads, the second squad will be offered at a 50% discount.

An invitation to train with an older age group does not change the player's eligibility or expectation to represent Sussex in their natural age group.

3. Attendance and Refund Policy

Regular attendance is important to the success of the County Training programme.

If a player is unable to attend a session, Tennis Sussex should be notified as early as possible so that the place can, where appropriate, be offered to a reserve player.

Where Tennis Sussex is notified by the end of the Wednesday immediately before the relevant training session, a 50% refund for that session will be provided.

Unfortunately, refunds cannot normally be provided where the required notice has not been given.

Refunds will be processed at the end of the relevant training block.

4. LTA Junior County Cup

The LTA Junior County Cup provides junior players with the opportunity to represent Sussex against other counties in regional and national team competition.

County Cup events take place at different points throughout the year according to age group.

County Training and County Cup selection should be viewed as two separate processes.

County Training is designed to provide a broader group of leading Sussex players with regular high-quality training and development opportunities.

County Cup selection is narrower and is focused on selecting the strongest available Sussex team for the relevant competition.

Therefore, being selected for County Training does not guarantee selection for a County Cup team.

Similarly, the composition of a County Cup team may vary from event to event depending on player availability, rankings, results, form and the particular requirements of the team.

5. Tennis Sussex County Cup Team Selection Criteria

Tennis Sussex will aim to select the strongest available team to represent the county at each County Cup event.

To be eligible for selection, players must:

- Not be suspended for a doping violation and/or a breach of the anti-corruption rules.
- Not be currently disqualified or suspended under the rules of the LTA or any other recognised federation.
- Agree to comply with the LTA Code of Conduct.
- Meet the relevant LTA and Sussex eligibility requirements, together with any other eligibility requirements applicable to the relevant County Cup competition.

Subject to eligibility, selection decisions may take account of a combination of objective results and informed tennis judgement.

Factors considered may include:

- LTA National Ranking;
- Universal Tennis Rating (UTR);
- recent match results and current form;
- performances against other players being considered;
- County Training performance;
- previous County Cup performances;
- commitment to the county programme;
- appropriate competitive activity;
- attitude and behaviour in training and competition; and
- where appropriate, the balance and requirements of the team.

No single factor will necessarily determine selection unless specifically identified as an automatic or Direct Entry criterion.

6. County Training Attendance

Players are expected to demonstrate commitment to the Sussex programme.

To be eligible for County Cup selection, players should normally have attended at least 50% of the County Training sessions available to them.

An exception may be made for a player who is training at an internationally recognised tennis academy, or are in full time boarding at premier “tennis school” and/or where Tennis Sussex considers there to be other exceptional circumstances.

Players seeking Wild Card consideration are also strongly encouraged to compete in the Sussex County Championships each August.

7. Selection Panel and Process

County Cup selections will be made impartially through the Tennis Sussex selection process.

County Captains will use their experience, knowledge of the players and relevant performance information to recommend a team.

Those recommendations will then be considered and ratified by a Tennis Sussex Selection Panel, consisting of:

- the County Performance Manager;
- a Tennis Sussex Board Director with responsibility for coaching and competition; and
- a representative of the Tennis Sussex office.

This structure is intended to provide appropriate oversight, consistency, fairness and transparency in selection decisions.

8. Direct Entry

For age groups where Direct Entry applies, a number of players may receive automatic selection based upon the published criteria.

Players ranked inside the National Top 32 for their age group may be eligible for automatic selection, subject to the relevant County Cup selection rules and an appropriate level of commitment to the Sussex programme.

Direct Entry should not be regarded as unconditional.

Tennis Sussex reserves the right not to select a player where there are significant documented concerns regarding conduct, attitude or behaviour in training, competition or while representing Sussex.

Where a Direct Entry player declines their place or is unavailable, that place will not automatically pass to the next-ranked player.

The resulting vacancy will instead be considered through the normal selection process.

9. Wild Cards

Remaining team places may be awarded as Wild Cards.

Wild Card decisions may take account of:

- current form;
- recent match results;
- County Training performance;
- head-to-head results;
- performances at the Sussex County Championships;
- play-off matches where appropriate; and
- the overall requirements and balance of the team.

Wild Card recommendations will be made by the Team Captain in conjunction with the Tennis Sussex Performance Manager, subject to the Tennis Sussex selection and ratification process.

A Wild Card provides a mechanism for Tennis Sussex to consider relevant performance information beyond ranking position alone.

10. Playing Up

Players will normally be expected to represent Sussex in their own age group when selected.

Where appropriate, a younger player may also be considered for an older County Cup age group where Tennis Sussex believes their inclusion would strengthen that team.

Training with an older County Training squad does not automatically confer selection for the corresponding older County Cup team.

11. Reserves and Match Selection

County Cup squads may include travelling reserves and, where permitted by the competition format, non-travelling reserves.

Selection for a County Cup squad does not guarantee that a player will participate in every match.

Once at an event, the County Captain has responsibility for determining the team and playing order for each day's matches, subject to the competition rules.

Captains may take account of factors including opposition, player form, fitness, team balance and doubles combinations.

12. County Cup Team Structure

Age Group	Direct Entry	Wild Cards / Selection Places	Match Format	Event Duration
8U Mixed	N/A	4 Boys & 4 Girls	4 Singles & 2 Doubles	1 day
9U	N/A	6 Boys & 6 Girls	4 Singles & 2 Doubles	1 day
10U	N/A	6 Boys & 6 Girls	4 Singles & 2 Doubles	2 days
11U	4	Up to 2	4 Singles & 2 Doubles	2 days
12U	4	Up to 2	4 Singles & 2 Doubles	2 days
14U	4	Up to 2	4 Singles & 2 Doubles	2 days
18U	6	Up to 2 + 2 non-travelling reserves	6 Singles & 3 Doubles	3 days

Team sizes and formats remain subject to the relevant LTA County Cup competition regulations.

13. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

For 8U–12U County Cup events, parents or guardians are responsible for transporting their child to and from the event and for supervising them when they are not under the direct on-court supervision of the team.

For 14U and 18U events involving overnight stays, teams will be supervised by the appointed Tennis Sussex coaches in accordance with the relevant safeguarding and event arrangements.

Specific information will be provided to parents ahead of each event.

14. Eligibility to Represent Sussex

Players must hold the appropriate LTA membership required for County Cup competition and satisfy the applicable county eligibility requirements.

For Sussex selection, players will need to meet the relevant LTA eligibility criteria relating to matters such as:

Players must be **LTA Members** and meet one of the following criteria:

- Born in Sussex, or
- Lived in Sussex for **at least six months**, or
- Have had Sussex as their **permanent residence for five consecutive years**, and
- Have **not represented another county** for at least six months.

Eligibility will be checked against the current LTA County Cup regulations before final team nominations are submitted.

15. Communication of Selection

- All players considered in any election meeting, including those who attended a selection day, and/or that represented the team in the same event in the previous year will be communicated with regarding the outcome of the selection meeting.

16. De-Selection (after initial selection)

A player may be removed from a selected team in the following circumstances:

- They are no longer eligible under LTA Rule 66
- They breach the LTA Code of Conduct and/or any relevant Tennis Sussex Policies
- Their condition or performance is no longer consistent with selection standards;
- They fail to disclose an injury, illness, or fitness concern.

Any decision to de-select a player will be communicated directly and clearly by the County Performance Manager.

17. County Cup Dates – 2027

The following dates are provided for planning purposes and remain subject to confirmation or amendment by the LTA.

Age Group	2027 Event Date	Tennis Sussex Ranking Cut-Off
8U	24 or 25 April	Friday 26 March
9U	Qualifying: 27 or 28 February*	Friday 6 February
10U	8–9 May	Friday 9 April
11U	12–13 June	Friday 14 May
12U	11–12 September*	Friday 13 August
14U	1–2 May	Friday 26 March
18U	19–21 March	Friday 12 February

**9U qualifying takes place on 27 or 28 February depending upon the relevant group. Players and parents should refer to the final LTA competition information once published.*

**Dates and competition structures should always be checked against the latest LTA information before travel or other arrangements are made.*

18. LTA Player Pathway & Aspirational Standards

Players and parents involved in the Sussex performance programme are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the LTA Player Pathway and Aspirational Standards.

These resources provide age-and-stage guidance for aspiring performance players and explain the types of training, competition and development experiences players may encounter as they progress.

They should be viewed as aspirational development guidance rather than a guarantee of selection or progression.

The LTA Player Pathway includes development opportunities and expectations across the junior age groups, from the early performance stages through to national and international junior tennis.

19. Anti-Doping Education

Players progressing through performance tennis should develop an understanding of their responsibilities in relation to anti-doping.

Players within the relevant age groups, together with their parents or guardians, are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the LTA's anti-doping education resources.

These cover areas including:

- prohibited substances and methods;
- medication;
- supplements;
- anti-doping testing;
- athlete responsibilities;
- Therapeutic Use Exemptions where applicable; and
- the consequences of an anti-doping rule violation.

Players born in or before the relevant LTA-designated year should complete any recommended anti-doping education.

20. Our Selection Principles

Tennis Sussex recognises that selection decisions are important to players and families.

Our aim is therefore to operate a process that is:

Fair – players are considered against consistent criteria.

Transparent – players and parents can understand the factors used in making decisions.

Performance-led – selection reflects appropriate evidence of playing level, results and current form.

Developmentally appropriate – particularly for younger players, consideration is given to age, stage and development rather than relying solely on rankings.

Impartial – County Cup selections are subject to a panel process rather than resting with one individual.

Team-focused – County Cup selection is ultimately about selecting the strongest appropriate team to represent Sussex.

Selection in junior sport will inevitably involve judgement. Rankings, ratings and results provide important evidence, but Tennis Sussex may also consider current form, development, behaviour, commitment and team requirements when making final decisions.

The overriding objective is to provide Sussex players with a high-quality county training environment while selecting teams capable of representing Sussex to the highest possible standard.

21. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the County Performance Manager to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with national competition standards.