

2025-26 BUCS TENNIS

PREMIER (NATIONAL)
MINIMUM OPERATING
STANDARDS



BUCS
British Universities
and Colleges Sport

MINIMUM OPERATING STANDARDS 2025-26

BUCS Tennis – Men's Premier (National) and Women's Premier (National)

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INTRODUCTION

Institutions competing in the BUCS Men's and Women's Premier (National) Tennis leagues must conform to the Minimum Operating Standards (MOS). These are outlined in this document and governed by BUCS. This MOS document is to be adhered to in conjunction with the [BUCS General Regulations](#) and [Tennis Sport Specific Regulations](#).

The MOS only applies to Men's and Women's Premier (National) and Men's and Women's National Championship within the Tennis competition structure.

Upon paying the entry fee to join and compete within the National League, each member institution is agreeing to adhere to these MOS and work with BUCS to facilitate an annual audit.

These MOS will be reviewed annually by BUCS, in collaboration with the League Management Committee (LMC) and the Sport Advisory Group (SAG) for Tennis. While collaboration is key to defining the contents of the MOS, the final decision on implementation will remain with BUCS as the competition owner.

Audit Process

BUCS will administer an annual audit to assess each member institution for its fulfilment of the MOS set out in this document. This process is mandatory for all member institutions and failure to comply may result in admittance to National League being denied or withdrawn.

The audit will comprise the following elements:

- Site Visit: an individual appointed by BUCS will conduct a site visit every two years to inspect facilities and discuss programmes with staff,
- Self-Assessment: each team submits documentation to BUCS (for example current coaching qualifications),
- BUCS Internal Audit: this is an ongoing process conducted by BUCS to ensure compliance on a short-term basis (for example weekly social media requirements).

The exact timeline for the audit process will be decided by BUCS on an annual basis through consultation with member institutions. In-person audits will take place every 2 seasons, every other season will consist of a virtual audit.

Measurement Process

1. Each requirement within the MOS is rated with a level of priority:
 - Tier 3 – High Priority
 - Tier 2 – Medium Priority
 - Tier 1 – Low Priority
2. The attainment of each requirement is measured on the following scale:
 - 3 = Suitable/meeting criteria
 - 2 = Adequate/working toward criteria
 - 1 = Poor/very little progress of meeting criteria
 - 0 = No evidence of attempting to meet criteria
3. The final score for each requirement will be measured using the following calculation:
 - $\text{Priority} \times \text{Attainment} = \text{Total Score}$
4. The final score for each section will then be added together and given as a percentage pass rate.

- Over 80% - Pass
 - 65-80% - Marginal Pass
 - 50-65% Marginal Fail
 - Below 50% - Fail
5. Each section of the MOS is weighted depending on the expectation of BUCS for National League institutions to address and include in their programme. This is as follows:
- Player Welfare – 30%
 - Tennis Commitment – 10%
 - Conduct & Behaviour – 15%
 - Facilities – 25%
 - Media and Commercial – 10%
 - Operations – 10%

In the first instance, if an institution achieves a score below 70%, they will be supported in developing an action plan to develop their offering in order to attain a pass in a second audit. Any institution that persistently fails an audit, or refuses to work toward attaining a pass, could ultimately face expulsion from National League.

Sections of the MOS, such as match-day operations and social media, are audited on an on-going basis by BUCS. For week-to-week requirements, such as submitting scores or social media obligations, a three-strike policy will operate with sanctions imposed at the discretion of BUCS following repeated breaches.

Future members

Teams competing in Premier (North/South) are eligible for promotion to National League through the playoff system outlined in [REG 8](#) and [Appendix 10](#) of the BUCS General Regulations. Teams in Premier (North/South) who are eligible to participate in the National League playoffs at the end of each league season will be asked to complete a self-assessment to give an indicative audit score. Should a team be successful in gaining promotion through the playoffs a full audit will take place to ensure compliance with that season's MOS. We recognise that it may take some time for newly promoted teams to put systems in place which enable them to meet all MOS criteria and therefore BUCS is happy to discuss an implementation timeline for newly promoted teams to have all elements in place. However, any MOS related to safety and player welfare would not be subject to this exception, this would include equipment, facilities, personnel, and institution policies.

The MOS is designed and implemented to increase the professionalism of National League and encourage higher standards. If a team in this position should fail the audit, they may be denied entry to National League.

Sanctions

The severity of sanctions imposed on teams will be based on two factors:

1. The priority tier which the requirement is aligned to,
2. The number of breaches of an individual requirement.

The following table is advisory as to the maximum sanction imposed:

Sanction Tier	First Breach	Second Breach	Third Breach
1	Written warning	Final written warning	Fine up to £100
2	Written warning	Fine up to £200	Fine up to £350
3	2 weeks to demonstrate compliance and up to £500 fine	Fine up to £750	Points deduction and fine up to £1500*

*decided by disciplinary panel

In each situation where a breach of MOS has occurred, an action plan will be agreed between BUCS and the institution so that the relevant MOS can be met. In this instance, the institution will have an initial two weeks to demonstrate compliance.

Each breach escalation is relevant to a specific requirement, and not inclusive of multiple tier breaches. For example, the first breach of either 1.1.1 or 1.1.2 are separate as opposed to cumulative.

If, after the third breach of a single requirement, the offending institution refuse to comply, they will be referred to a disciplinary panel to decide on the next stage of sanctioning which may include a further fine, points deduction, or expulsion from the National League. This process will consider the number of breaches, the sanction tier, and the cooperation/willingness to comply.

Further to the above, breaches of multiple tier 3 requirements throughout a season demonstrates a lack of compliance and willingness to adopt the highest priority requirements. In this instance the institution will be referred to a disciplinary panel for further sanctioning and this may include an additional fine, points deduction, or expulsion from the National League.

The timeline for the above processes is as follows:

In the first instance of becoming aware of a breach BUCS will communicate this to institutions within seven days,

- The offending institution will have seven days to respond and either accept the breach or appeal,
- An appeal will follow the BUCS Full Appeals Process in accordance with [REG 15](#) of the BUCS General Regulations,
- In the instance where an institution accepts a breach, or an appeal is unsuccessful, the relevant sanction will be imposed within seven days and a timeframe for paying fines will be communicated, if relevant.

Breaches of individual requirements will accumulate throughout a season. For tier 1 and tier 2 breaches, the accumulation is erased at the end of each season. For tier 3 breaches the accumulation lasts for two seasons; meaning the first breach is during season one, and the following season is season two.

1. PLAYER WELFARE

Any institution competing in the National League must place utmost importance on the welfare of players. Within each institution it is the responsibility of the named Programme Manager to ensure that players and staff are aware of the support services available to them internally.

The named Programme Manager should be:

- A member of institution staff,
- Preferably, a member of the sports department who has knowledge of the Tennis programme.

All institutions participating in the National League and with aspirations of joining must demonstrate a commitment to player welfare as a priority.

1.1 Academic Management

All National League institutions must understand that first and foremost players are in education to achieve academically. As such, each member institution must demonstrate the following:

No.	MOS	Sanction Tier
1.1.1	Always placing academic commitments as a priority over tennis participation.	3
1.1.2	Provide a support network to allow players to manage time effectively.	3
1.1.3	Demonstrate good relationships with academic staff to support players in managing their schedule.	2

1.2 Integrity/Anti-Doping

All players and staff members involved in BUCS National League Tennis will adhere to all rules and regulations pertaining to anti-doping.

1.2.1	No player or staff member will use or distribute a prohibited substance, as defined by the most current WADA prohibited list.	3
1.2.2	All players and staff will comply with UKAD testing procedures where required.	3
1.2.3	Each institution will ensure players are receiving, on an annual basis, education on how to avoid contact with prohibited substances and ensure they are competing as clean athletes. Additionally, Players are advised to access GlobalDRO and 'Informed Sport' and download the '100% me' App.	3
1.2.4	All players ranked 6 and above at each institution must complete both anti-doping and anti-corruption education on an annual basis, as determined by BUCS. Details about the required education will be provided by BUCS and will be sent to the Programme Manager of each institution.	3

In addition, BUCS Regulation 4.5 (Anti-doping) and [LTA anti-doping regulations](#) and apply

Players and staff at member institutions will not undertake any of the following:

1.2.5	Placing a bet (or asking someone to place a bet for you) on any BUCS Tennis match	3
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1.2.6	Misusing or passing on information to any third party, such as injuries or selection, which is not already public knowledge.	3
1.2.7	Accepting money or gifts from any third party in return for inside information or performance manipulation in a match.	3

In addition, [LTA anti-corruption regulations](#) apply

Adhering to these requirements will ensure all matches are contested on a level playing field and are won on merit. It is imperative that any individual aware of any of the above should report this confidentially to BUCS. BUCS takes a zero-tolerance approach to any form of corruption.

Any player, student or staff member associated with a BUCS National League Tennis institution found to be actively involved in match fixing could result in the associated institution having their membership revoked. This is in accordance with REG 5: Misconduct and Bringing BUCS into Disrepute.

The TACP and TADP rules apply at Covered Events. Any player, coach, official or staff member participating at these events in some capacity, which may come during or after their involvement with the BUCS National League, automatically become covered by these rules and regulations. To find out more, visit the [ITIA Website](#).

1.3 Tennis Coaching

1.3.1	A nominated Head Coach who is the primary deliverer of coaching and holds, or is working towards, an LTA Level 4 qualification as a minimum.	2
1.3.2	Any assistant coaches involved in the National League qualified to, or working towards*, LTA Level 2.	2
1.3.3	Head Coach to have completed the UKAD Coach Clean e-learning module.	2

*'working towards' a qualification is defined as a coach being enrolled on a course and completion is expected within 12 months of the audit date.

1.4 Risk Management

In advance of 1st October, the named Programme Manager will submit the following information to BUCS. *Sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 will be shared with all Programme Managers in the National League to ensure transparency and aid planning.*

1.4.1	A risk assessment of the primary match day facility.	3
1.4.2	The Programme Manager will have on file an up-to-date risk assessment for the training facility, as well as a documented emergency action plan, similar to that of the match day action plan for training sessions.	3
1.4.3	In the event that an institution changes their regular home venue for more than two matches then a risk assessment must be submitted to BUCS before the third match is played.	2

2. TENNIS COMMITMENT

The National League was designed to improve the competitiveness of the top tier of BUCS Tennis and provide more high-quality playing experiences. This means a commitment from member institutions to improve and sustain a high performance level, as well as wider participation and strength of the sport within the university.

Member institutions must demonstrate:

2.1	A management structure/steering group which manages, delivers, interprets, and develops the institution's participation in the National League.	2
2.2	An integrated plan for Tennis within the institution, which combines a sport development plan mapping the growth of tennis, with a performance development plan linked to participation in the National League.	2
2.3	A scholarship system in line with wider institutional strategies on performance sport.	2
2.4	Be signed up to Ace the Start and report all late starts via the Lateness Tracking form .	2

3. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

3.1 Training

4.1.1	The provision of training facilities and equipment to support the development of players in a safe environment.	3
4.1.2	Access to a team meeting room with audio-visual capability.	2
4.1.3	Access to an indoor strength & conditioning suite with free and fixed weights, cardiovascular machines, appropriate ventilation, and a supply of drinking water.	2
4.1.4	Access to physio support/clinic to support injury rehabilitation and physical development outside of match days.	2

3.2 Match Facilities

For all matches, it is the responsibility of the home team to ensure the following

3.2.1	Provide the correct number of courts which meet the requirements of the BUCS Tennis regulations and ITF Rules of Tennis and meet all the minimum requirements for match courts including net strapping and singles sticks to be present.	3
3.2.2	A designated seating area, with space for 4 people, on each court for players and coaches.	2
3.1.4	A scoreboard on each court which is visible for all players and officials.	1
3.1.5	Access to a supply of drinking water, within the same building as the tennis courts.	2

3.3 Match Operations

3.3.1	All players must wear team branded matching tops for singles and doubles matches.	2
3.3.2	Fixture timings must be strictly adhered to, the maximum time allowed for warm up is five minutes per rubber. <i>It is the responsibility of the non-playing lead to enforce this cut-off.</i>	3
3.3.3	Players and support staff must conduct themselves in a manner which reflects the values of tennis and is not in contravention of the LTA Disciplinary Code . Actions such as racket throwing, swearing, verbal or physical abuse would be in breach of this standard.	3
3.3.4	The home team must provide a designated 'non-playing lead' at all fixtures. The non-playing lead can be a coach, staff member or student but this individual must be present solely in a non-playing capacity and must be identified to the opposition.	2

4. MARKETING AND COMMERCIAL

Teams will comply with **National League Marketing and Commercial Guidelines** (to be shared ahead of the start of the season).

It is the Programme Manager's responsibility to share this internally with the relevant parties.

BUCS retains the right to adjust this document should there be significant changes throughout the season to any of the relevant areas.

4.1 Brand

Each participating institution will:

4.1.1	When provided by BUCS, use the digital and promotional toolkit to deliver inward- and external-facing promotional assets. Sign-off process to be agreed with BUCS.	2
4.1.2	Upon request, provide the institution's sport department logo, where required, in all formats (AI/EPS/PNG etc.)	2
4.1.3	Upon request, provide their institution's primary and secondary colour codes for graphic design purposes.	2

4.2 Resourcing

Each participating institution will provide the following:

4.2.1	Full and appropriate social media activation – as a minimum, every team must have their own Instagram account. Additional social media accounts are optional.	2
4.2.2	A designated media representative to coordinate promotion on digital platforms. This can be a club committee member or member of the coaching staff.	1
4.2.3	Adherence to digital and social guidelines (as outlined in National League Marketing and Commercial Guidelines) and use of the specific hashtags to drive conversation and fan engagement online as agreed.	1

4.3 Promotion

Each participating institution will:

4.3.1	The home team must post the final result of each fixture, including individual rubber scores, on social media within two hours of the final rubber of the fixture ending.	1
4.3.2	Provide access to training sessions and other collective team sessions for photo/video content, agreed between BUCS and the institution, if requested with reasonable notice.	2
4.3.3	Provide access to selected players and staff for interview at given times throughout the season with reasonable notice.	2

4.4 Broadcast

4.4.1	Institutions are encouraged to live stream their fixtures throughout the season but must advise BUCS of any planned streams at least 3 working days prior to the fixture. Where possible, live streams should adhere to the standards set in National League Marketing and Commercial Guidelines .	2
4.4.2	All institutions to work with BUCS & the LTA to support live-streaming at Super Weekends when applicable.	2

5. OPERATIONS

5.1 Data Capture

All data capture will be compliant with GDPR and any other data management legislation.

5.1.1	All participating institutions will provide BUCS with the names and contact details for individuals who fulfil the following roles within National League management/operations. This will be requested prior to the start of the season: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme Manager • Head Coach • Team Captain • Media representative 	2
5.1.2	Member institutions will support BUCS with any further collation of data as and when required, in line with GDPR.	1

5.2 Match Results

5.2.1	Results must be submitted online via BUCS Play within 2 hours of the fixture's end, including all rubber results and player names.	2
5.2.2	Results must be entered on the LTA Online League Planner no later than midday on the next working day, including all rubber results and player names.	2

Failing this, each institution must submit the match result in accordance with [REG 13: Results and Forfeitures \(Walkovers\)](#).

