



FAST4 FAQ

FAST4 FAQ Why has this been introduced?

The introduction and purpose of the widely used FAST4 tennis format into the bottom tier of each conference within the BUCS structures is to increase the opportunity for players to compete for their university in inter university competition.

The LTA FAST4 Development League was introduced for players who were not able to play for their university in the formal BUCS competitions. In 2019/20 (pre-Covid) 74 teams entered from 32 institutions, resulting in over 200 fixtures and 1,200 rubbers. This demonstrates the demand for FAST4 tennis and for competitive tennis by those who historically didn't make the BUCS teams. The aim is to integrate the teams from the LTA FAST4 Development League into the BUCS Tennis structures at the bottom Tier in each conference. FAST4 will mean shorter matches which, of course, is the critical factor in allowing capacity for more teams and players to be involved.

If an institution has 2 tennis teams, it is likely to only involve 8 student-athletes in those matches. It's possible that your 9th ranked tennis player doesn't have an opportunity to play for either team. This scenario would not occur in other sports, such as football or hockey, were the 9th ranked player would typically play for the institutions 1st team. We want to expand the competitive team tennis opportunities for these student-athletes.

Based on research, at least 1,000 students each year are turned away from their institution team tennis sides at the trials stage. Our goal is to make it easier for institutions to enter more teams into the BUCS leagues, giving more Type 2 students-athletes the opportunity to play team tennis for their institution with a meaningful fixture list.

Why FAST4?

FAST4 format is widely used in tennis competitions across the country, including British Tour level events. This format allows adult players who may have previously played at a high standard (such as good club level, county, national or international standard) the opportunity to compete in one day competitions whilst fitting this around their busy lifestyles.

FAST4 Tennis provides a simple, exciting way of speeding up a conventional tennis match. The fundamentals of tennis remain the same, but there are four rules that ensure matches are fast, competitive, exciting and can be completed in a reasonable period of time, meaning your court booking time and costs will be reduced.

The four rules are:

- First to 4 games win
- Tiebreaker at 3 games all
- Match tiebreak at 1 set all
- No ad scoring

What are the benefits?

- Two FAST4 BUCS fixtures can be played in the existing one BUCS Wednesday booking, if the institution has two teams playing at home.
- Student-athletes take 50% less time out of their day compared to the current format to play their fixture, this in turn reduces court booking costs.
- FAST4 team tennis matches take approximately 50% of the time that the current BUCS format takes to complete and therefore twice as many teams could play on one day, or if only one team is competing then court costs are reduced to up to 50%



- Players who may not have been able to compete previously due to not making the BUCS teams, or those who have a heavy academic timetable, will have the chance to compete in BUCS fixtures for the first time.

Now that there is no LTA Development League, what else can you offer?

We have a strong university network; we would be happy to provide you with a list of contacts in our Tier 1 programme within your region so friendlies can be arranged between universities.

In 2021-22 we gave the option for students to be part of the competition organiser course. This is something we want to offer again this year. This will give your students access to internal resources such as box manager and results manager. As the LTA Development League was ran by students, students can create their own box leagues and submit results via results manager.

Does this only affect the bottom tier, can it be applied to higher tiers?

The new format (FAST4) will only affect the bottom tier of each conference. The FAST4 format will not be applied to higher tiers at this point.

If a team is concerned about costs, should they be allowed to remain in FAST4?

There is no automatic promotion/relegation between Standard and FAST4 tiers. On an annual basis, teams in these tiers, plus any new teams, request entry/re-entry in either the Fast4 tier(s) or the lowest tier of full format tennis

Will there be a difference in BUCS points?

The FAST4 leagues will be treated as part of the Tennis structure and therefore will follow the standard BUCS Points principles.

Can we have more than 2 teams in a tier?

REG 8.3.1.3. has now been implemented to the bottom tier of full format tennis whereby "A Playing Entity can have a "maximum of three teams or 50% of the total teams in a league per institution, whichever is fewer, regardless of playing conference." This will also be introduced in the FAST4 tiers below this level.

How does this work with Team Championships?

TEN 5.1 In both the Men's and Women's Team Championships, in the Fast4 tiers, BUCS reserves the right to operate a maximum of four leagues per tier in a Conference (as opposed to the standard two), should entry levels permit, to enable more localised leagues.

TEN 5.2 In both the Men's and Women's Team Championships, in the lowest tier above the Fast4 tiers, REG 8.3.1.3 shall apply instead of REG 8.3.1.2.

TEN 5.3 In both the Men's and Women's Team Championships, on an annual basis – at the point of team entry – existing teams competing in the lower tier above the Fast4 tiers (with the exception of those teams promoted to the tier above), existing teams competing in the Fast 4 tiers, and any new teams, shall have the opportunity to request entry either at the lowest tier above the Fast4 tiers, or within the Fast4 tiers, for the following season. The final decision on league allocations shall sit with the BUCS Executive.

How much court time should I book?

TEN 7.1.2 FAST4 format A minimum reservation of 6 court hours MUST be booked by the host team for a fixture. This shall comprise at least 2 x 1 hour for doubles rubbers, and 4 x 1 hour for singles rubbers = total 6 court hours. Failure to book the minimum prescribed above



will result in the home team forfeiting any rubbers not completed should the match not be finished. For knockout fixtures, an additional 1 hour on 1 court MUST be booked in case of the need for a match tie-break (note TEN 11.5). The additional hour is for the match tie-break only and as such should be booked for immediately after the court hours booked for the normal fixture, not alongside any of these hours, and the normal fixture should be completed within the standard 6 hours.

How does the scoring work?

TEN 11.2.1 All singles and doubles rubbers shall be the best of three sets and will be played using no-advantage scoring. In no-advantage scoring at deuce there is one point to decide the game, the receiver(s) choosing whether to receive the service from the right half or the left half of the court, but in doubles the players cannot change positions to receive this deciding point.

TEN 11.2.2 The first two sets shall be tie-break sets with no-advantage scoring, first to four games with a tie-break (first to seven points, two points clear at six points all) played at three games all.

TEN 11.2.3 If after the first two sets the score is one set all a deciding set shall be played which shall be a 10-point match tie-break (first to 10 points, two points clear at nine points all).

TEN 11.3 To determine the match score the winner of each doubles rubber shall receive one point and the winner of each singles rubber shall receive one point.

TEN 11.4 In the event of a tie on match score in a league fixture, the match shall be considered a draw.

TEN 11.5 If a knockout match finishes 3-3, then a tie-break shootout (to 10 points) shall take place as follows. The tie-break shootout consists of three tie-breaks – two singles and one doubles – with players nominated as follows: Tie-break 1 (singles) – one of the original players from the first or second ranked singles rubbers; Tie-break 2 (singles) – one of the original players from the third or fourth ranked singles rubbers; Tie-break 3 (doubles) – a pairing comprising two of the other nominated players for the match. No player may play in more than one tie-break shootout. Players for each stage of the shootout should be nominated at the start of the shootout.

If you have any further questions regarding FAST4 please refer to our [Sport Specific Rules and Regulations](#) or email [Aimée Kaye](#) (Tennis Programme Coordinator)