

Club Captain's Report 2021-2022

The only constant is change

The theme of the last report was Fine Margins. This year's theme is most definitely that the only constant is change.

We saw last year's winter league abandoned due to covid interruptions. And when matches resumed, we played, but replaced shaking hands with tapping of rackets. We abandoned match suppers (to the delight of many!).

As a result of Covid relocations, we have lost team members such as Dave Crout staying in the States and Phil Bettles moving back to Bristol. And as I shall come on to later, we have demonstrated unprecedented adaptability in team players helping different teams.

The coming summer league will see yet more change, with the controversial decision to use a sudden death deuce or "no-ad scoring" in all matches. Introduced, I think, in 2014 to speed up US World Play matches to fit with TV scheduling, we will see the effect it has on our results!

This autumn will also see us completely change our court surface and lighting system.

So, change is the overriding theme for this year's report.

As the AGM always falls right on the crucial end to the winter league, I'd like to start with that:

Winter season 2021/22 - 9 competitions

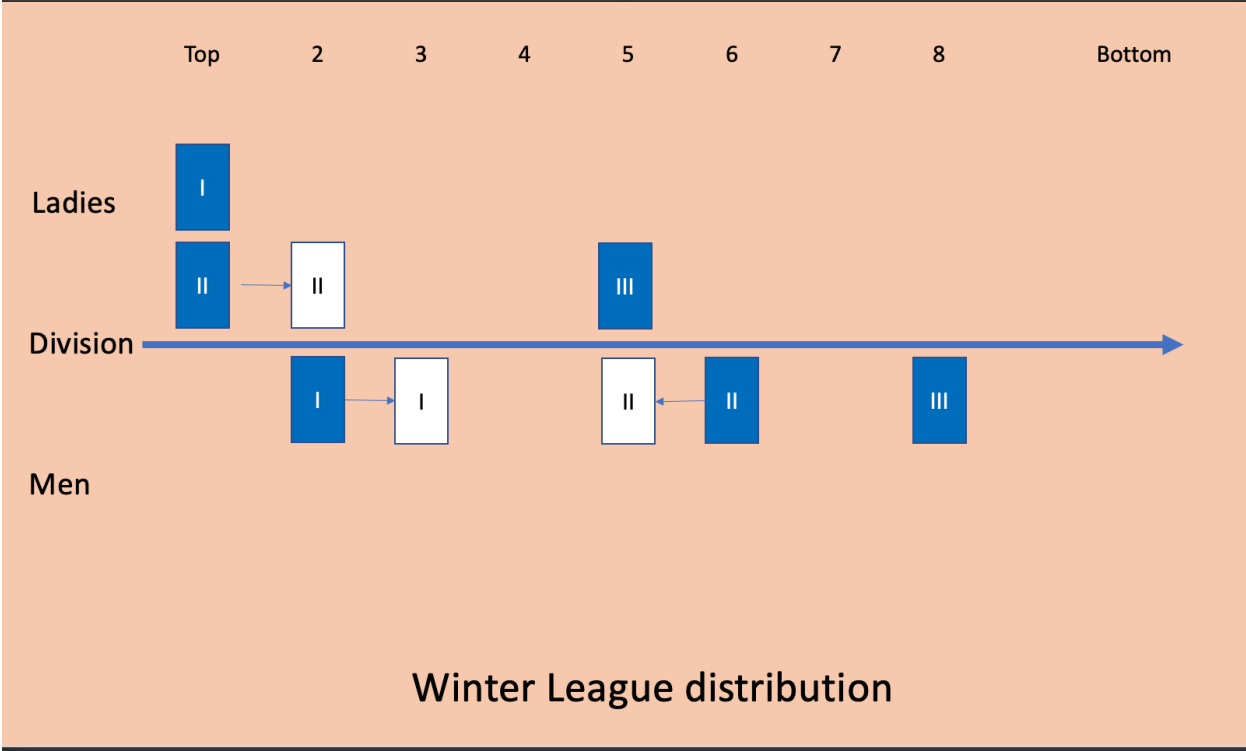
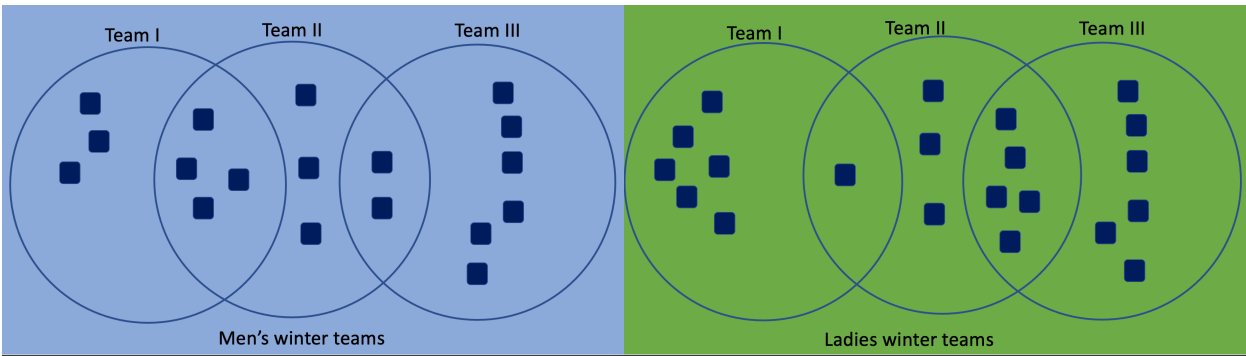
In the Winter floodlit, 1 x mixed, 3 x ladies teams, 3 x men's team and 2 x vets teams.

The winter floodlit season was started in September 2020 and runs to March 2021 but abandoned due to Covid and lockdowns.

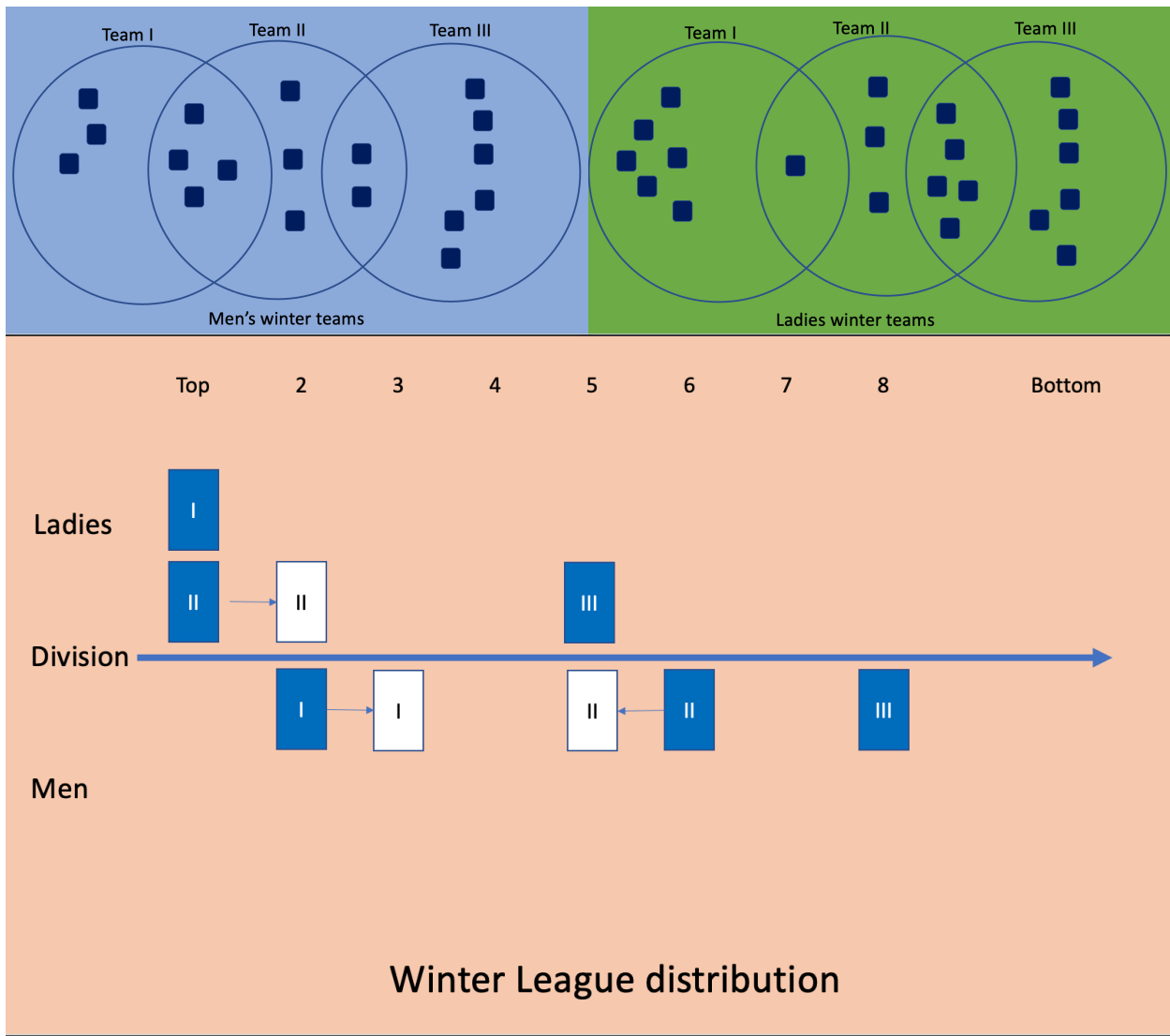
The 2021-22 winter season has all teams in action again.

Mixed – have struggled in Division 1, the highest division from the days when we had the likes of Dan Lynton but we have our last match 25th March to see if we survive relegation. Thanks to Vivian Gabb, our new recruit stepping in and Dave Sharp for being keen to play all matches.

Men's winter teams – looking at the men's situation, it occurred to me that the only visual device which could explain the collaboration required, was a Venn diagram! This illustrates how much the men have had to support all teams and great credit goes to Jeremy Tuck and Andrew Holden for managing that and ensuring we are legally playing up and down.



Winter League distribution



Men's I – currently 7th (playing tonight and Tuesday to stay in Division 1)

Men's II – 1st in Division 6 so promoted to Division 5 next winter

Men's III – 5th in Division 8

Women's winter teams

For the first time that I can remember, we have had two ladies teams in the top division. We top and tail the league! Captained by Grainne, our first team has smashed it with 93 points and can't be caught by Coolhurst, currently 2nd. But sadly, the second team, captained by Natalia will go down to division 2 next winter.

To be safe in Division 5, our ladies III team, captained by Michelle, rely on Potters Bar to get less than a draw in their last match.

Vets winter teams

Grainne is captaining the Vets 1st team, and with all matches played, we wait to see if we stay in Division 1. After setting up the Vets team a decade ago, our legendary Robby Sukhdeo , a covid survivor has asked for voluntary retirement, which we reluctantly granted! Again, Vivian Gabb, Dave Sharp and James and Milly Aiyliffe are stepping up.

Captained by Sally Meacher, our Vets 2nd team, are already sitting at the top of division 5 and wait to see if they can be overtaken or get promoted for the second year in a row, with Saly topping the leaderboard as player of the league for the second year in a row.

Middlesex Summer League 2021 (6 teams) finishing positions

Ladies I – Intermediate – 6 points clear of relegation – stay in Intermediate

Ladies II – 7th in Div 1 – a very respectable 54 points, relegated to Div 2

Ladies III – 5th in Div 4 – 85 points is a lot for 5th position! – stay in Div 4

Men I – 7th in Div 1 – relegated to division 2 for 2022

Men II – 2nd in Div 4 – promoted to division 3 for 2022

Men III – 5th Div 7 – stay in division 7

Middlesex Cup

The Middlesex cup is a doubles only knock-out competition, requiring teams of 6 and the order you play the opposite pairs is determined by pulling from the hat at the start of the fixture.

Club didn't enter teams this year.

Junior matches- refer to Joe

Aegon Team Tennis Competition (formerly NCL)

Only our juniors are now competing in the Aegon team tennis league – boys under 14 and girls under 16.

Finally

A big thanks as ever to captains and players for making this a successful and competitive small club. However, we have lost a bit of our core and so would really welcome new team players. We propose to hold an open Team practice night e.g. last Sunday of the month in

March and April after general play, where all are welcome. The new 'no-ad scoring' in the league makes it more like our General Play! We have club members who are strong 'hitters' and continuing the theme of change, this could be the year to step up to competitive play.

Thank you to Gill Parrott being such an awesome 'Fixtures Meister' and sorting out the fixtures, and court booking duties for all 42 matches. Thank you to Mike and Ian for ensuring there are always match balls and the courts are fit to play.

Thank you to all the team players, for turning out, playing in good spirit and representing Muswell Hill Methodists. Across the teams, we have over 100 players involved in matches!

Stay fit and enjoy your tennis.

Claire