

Independent Schools Tennis Association



www.istatennis.co.uk

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I.S.T.A. CHAMPIONSHIPS – Sunday 28th June to Wednesday 1st July 2026

to be held at

Willowbrook Tennis Centre, Eton College, Windsor, SL4 6HL.

Entries close: Monday 16th March 2026

All matches take place at Willowbrook which has 10 acrylic courts, 10 artificial clay courts and 24 astroturf courts. Some senior plate matches, some U15, and all U13 matches will take place on the astroturf courts. Players should have the appropriate footwear.

a) SUMMARY OF EVENTS:

Sun 28th June to Wed 1st July :

Youll Cup: U19 boys' team of two pairs
Thomas Bowl: U15 boys, 1 or 2 pairs
Asbury-Bailey Cup: U15 girls, 1 or 2 pairs

Mon 29th June– Wed 1st July :

Loveband Trophy: U19 girls, 1 or 2 pairs

Tues 30th – Wed 1st July:

John Barrett Cup: U13 boys, 1 or 2 pairs; check-in 8.45 am
Ralph Cake Trophy: U13 girls, 1 or 2 pairs; check-in 12.30 pm.

All events:

Please show due respect to ISTA volunteers, school staff and other players during the ISTA Champs.

Play will commence at 9.00 am on each day. For round robin events, players should be at the courts for check-in 15 minutes before their scheduled start time.

Competitors are expected to play in all consolation, plate or shield events for which they qualify.

In order for all events to run smoothly, competitors are expected to be available (and within earshot) at their scheduled match time or when they are playing in a group. Please do not just wander off and expect one of the ISTA team to have to come and find you.

If you have requested seeding, please ensure that the seeded pair plays the event (or a suitable replacement player is found). It causes a considerable headache to organisers if seeded pairs withdraw. Schools are encouraged to have reserve players on standby, especially if seeded.

If pairs do not appear for a considerable time after called to go on court, they may (as a last resort) be liable to be scratched, unless there are extenuating circumstances.

b) **FORMAT OF EVENTS – BOYS**

1. **YOULL CUP (U19)** **Sunday 28th June to Wednesday 1st July**

A school's **team comprises two pairs** who play a three-set match (with tie-breaks at 6-6 and the third set a championship tie-break) against their opposite pairs. A school's Youll Cup second pair must not be stronger than its first pair. If the score is 1-1 after the doubles matches, a one-set deciding doubles with one player from each of the first and second pairs will be played (tie-break at 6-6). Please note that a maximum of five players can be used during the whole tournament (and not a player who has played Thomas Bowl).

2. **YOULL SHIELD** is for Youll Cup losing quarter-finalists. This is played on a knock-out basis, matches having the same format as the Youll Cup.

3. **CLARK TROPHY (U19 PLATE)** **Sunday 28th June to Wednesday 1st July**

All schools losing their first match in the Youll Cup will take part in the Clark Trophy. The format is the same as for the Youll Cup.

4. **THOMAS BOWL (U15)** **Sunday 28th June to Wednesday 1st July**

All competitors must be under 15 on August 31st 2025, that is to say born on or after 1st September 2010. No player may represent his school in this event and in the Youll Cup or the John Barrett Cup in the same year. A school may enter one or two pairs, with the first pair not necessarily being the stronger pair. However, if the school has requested seeding for a particularly strong pair and the pair has been seeded, then this pair must be nominated as first pair and play as such.

The Thomas Bowl is run as a round-robin in the initial stage on Sunday 28th June (morning or afternoon), with matches of one set.

In the second stage, from each Thomas Bowl round-robin group the two top pairs progress to the main Thomas Bowl knockout; the third and lower placed pairs proceed to the Phillips Cup (see below).

The main draw Thomas Bowl knockout matches will be best of 3 sets, tie-breaks at 6-6, and the third set a championship tie-break. The knockout stages will eventually produce the winners of the Thomas Bowl, and the pairs for the Thomas Shield and the Springthorpe Boys Cup.

5. **THOMAS SHIELD (U15)**

The Thomas Shield is for losing quarter-finalists in the Thomas Bowl knockout. The Shield is played on a knock-out basis, with matches having the same format as the Thomas Bowl knockout.

6. **SPRINGTHORPE BOYS CUP** **Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July**

The Springthorpe Cup is a knockout event for pairs that qualify for the knockout stage of the Thomas Bowl but then lose the first match they play. The format is best of two short sets to 6 games followed by a championship tie-break.

7. **PHILLIPS CUP (U15 Plate)** **Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July**

All pairs that finish third or below in their group in the Thomas Bowl first stage round-robin will take part in **the Phillips Cup**. The format of the Phillips Cup is a round robin (matches of one set), followed by a knockout stage for group winners (matches one set tie-break at 7-7).

8. **JOHN BARRETT CUP (U13)** **Tuesday 30th June 8.45am –Wednesday 1st July**

All competitors must be under 13 on August 31st 2025, that is to say born after 1st September 2012. Neither IAPS nor junior schools of senior schools are permitted to enter teams in this event (i.e. competitors must be from an Independent 11-18 school). Players may not play in this event **and** also in either the Thomas Bowl or the Youll Cup.

Each school may enter **one or two** pairs. All players will have matches on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Matches will be one set to six, and will be on a round robin basis. On the second day, group winners and probably runners-up will then play a further round robin followed by a knockout. There will also be a consolation event (a round robin followed by a knock-out) for those not qualifying for the winners & runners-up event. Thus all players can expect to play extensively on both days.

Please note that all teams will be required to register at 8.45 a.m. in order to have a prompt 9.00 a.m. start. No play is scheduled for Tuesday afternoon, to allow the courts to be used by the U13 Girls.

c) FORMAT OF EVENTS – GIRLS

9. **LOVEBAND TROPHY (U19) Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July**

A school may enter one or two pairs, with the first pair not necessarily being the stronger pair. However, if the school has requested seeding for a particularly strong pair and the pair has been seeded, then this pair must be nominated as first pair and play as such. **The initial stage of the Loveband Trophy is run as a round-robin**, with matches of one set. **The Loveband Trophy knockout matches** (following the round robins, for probably the top two pairs per group) will be **best of 3 sets**. Some knockout matches will take place on Monday afternoon, others will take place on Tuesday.

All pairs must be available to start their group matches at 9.00 a.m., or at 11.30 a.m., on the Monday.

10. **LOVEBAND SHIELD (U19) Tuesday 30th to Wednesday 1st July**

This is for Loveband Trophy losing quarter-finalists, and has the same format as The Loveband knock-out.

11. **LOVEBAND PLATE (U19) Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July**

All pairs coming third or below in their group in the round robin stage of the Loveband Trophy will take part in the Loveband Plate, the first stage of which will be a round-robin format; it will probably be played on Monday afternoon. The Loveband Plate KO will start on Tuesday for those coming first or second in their Loveband Plate 1st stage boxes and also for losers of their 1st round Loveband KO matches played on Monday. The Loveband Plate KO will follow the same format as the Loveband Trophy knock-out.

12. **ASBURY-BAILEY CUP (U15) Sunday 28th June to Wednesday 1st July**

All competitors must be under 15 on August 31st 2025, that is to say born on or after 1st September 2010. No player may represent her school in this event and in the Loveband Trophy or the Ralph Cake Trophy in the same year. A school may enter one or two pairs, with the first pair not necessarily being the stronger pair. However, if the school has requested seeding for a particularly strong pair and the pair has been seeded, then this pair must be nominated as first pair and play as such.

The initial stage of the Asbury-Bailey Cup is run as a round-robin on Sunday 28th June (morning or afternoon), with matches of one set.

In the second stage, from each Asbury-Bailey round robin group **the top pairs** progress to the **Asbury Bailey Cup knockout where the matches will be the best of 3 sets**. Lower placed pairs proceed to the Asbury-Bailey Plate.

13. **ASBURY-BAILEY-SHIELD Tuesday 30th June to Wednesday 1st July**

The **Asbury-Bailey Shield** is for losing quarter-finalists in the Asbury-Bailey knock-out. Matches have the same format as the Asbury-Bailey knock-out.

14. **SPRINGTHORPE GIRLS CUP Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July**

The Springthorpe Cup is a knockout event for pairs that qualify for the knockout stage of the Asbury-Bailey Cup where they then lose their first match. The format is best of two short sets to 6 games followed by a championship tie-break.

15. ASBURY-BAILEY PLATE (U15) Monday 29th June to Wednesday 1st July

All pairs who do not qualify for the Asbury-Bailey knockout will take part in **the Asbury-Bailey Plate**. The format of the Asbury-Bailey Plate will be a round robin (matches of one set) followed by knockout stage for the group winners (where the matches will be one set, tie-break at 7-7).

16. RALPH CAKE TROPHY (U13) Tuesday 30th June (12.30p.m.) to Wednesday 1st July

All competitors must be under 13 on August 31st 2025, that is to say born after 1st September 2012. Neither IAPS nor junior schools of senior schools are permitted to enter teams in this event (i.e. competitors must be from an Independent 11-18 school). Players may not play in this event and either the Asbury-Bailey or Loveband.

Each school may enter **one or two** pairs. All players will have matches on both Tuesday and Wednesday. Matches will be **one set** to 6 games, and will be on a round robin basis. On the second day, group winners and probably runners-up will then play a further round robin and then a knockout. There will also be a consolation event (a round robin followed by a knock-out) for those not qualifying for the winners & runners-up event. Thus all players can expect to play extensively on both days.

Please note that all players for this event need to register at 12.30 p.m. on Tuesday; Wednesday's registration time will be announced on Tuesday 30th June

d) ENTRY FEES

Annual subscription	£25.00 (please remember to add this to form the total entry fee)
Youll Cup	£35.00 per team
Thomas Bowl	£25.00 per pair
Loveband trophy	£25.00 per pair
Asbury-Bailey Cup	£25.00 per pair
John Barrett Cup (U13 Boys)	£25.00 per pair
Ralph Cake Trophy (U13 Girls)	£25.00 per pair
Penalty for late payment	£50.00 per school

e) ENTRIES AND DRAW

Entries should be made by MONDAY 16TH MARCH 2026 by completing the Google entry form. An invoice will automatically be generated on submission of the entry form. Payment of the affiliation and entry fees should be made electronically to Independent Schools Tennis Association, sort code 30-97-55, account number 00258933, giving as Reference the name of the school entering; follow the instructions on the invoice.

Please make every effort to ensure that your school processes the **payment within fourteen days** after you have submitted the entry. For an obvious reason, **ISTA has introduced a late payment penalty of £50.**

Please send a notification of payment to ISTA's Hon Treasurer, Ms Carolyn Nicholls, cen@cranleigh.org, stating clearly the name of the school for which the entry is made.

The draw is scheduled for 7th May 2026..

f) ARRIVAL; REQUESTS FOR A LATE START; OTHER REQUESTS

Schools should be available to play from 9 am, and should tick the entry form to confirm that they will be able to do so; **check-in for round robin events will be 15 minutes before the scheduled start time.**

A school with a long distance to travel may request a late start on Sunday only (Monday for Loveband). Teams should request a late start only if necessary. The requested time of a late arrival MUST be clearly given on the entry form, with the reasons specified and justified.

Please note that in 2026, as it is a Sunday start to the whole ISTA Championships (except the Loveband Trophy), it will not be possible to request a Monday start for the Youll Cup (Under 19 boys), Thomas Bowl (Under 15 boys), or Asbury-Bailey Cup (Under 15 girls). There will be no exceptions to this ruling. However, a school travelling a long distance may request a late start as outlined above. Please note that the **Loveband** Trophy will start on Monday 29th June; late starts can be requested for this event if travelling long distances, but the latest permissible start time will be 11.30 a.m. Monday.

g) START TIMES on court:

To help them plan travel and accommodation, schools should understand their start times as being those stated on the Championships Details for the different events, unless schools have requested to start at a later time. Where ISTA requires pairs to start significantly later in the day than the general time advertised, schools will be notified by early June. Please appreciate that ISTA will still need to make some late adjustments to individual match timings because of withdrawals (schools do try to keep these to a minimum but a few are bound to happen); schools will be informed later in June when this happens.

Details of how to get to the Willowbrook Tennis Centre, Slough Road, Eton, SL4 6HL will be emailed to schools shortly before the Championships. Draws with provisional timings will also be posted on the ISTA website shortly before the Championships; from experience we know that publishing a draw or a set of first-stage boxes, and then having to make changes, causes confusion that is better avoided.

h) ACCOMMODATION

Schools have to make their own arrangements with hotels or other establishments, and so should examine the websites and talk to staff to check for the best deals and arrangements for extending or shortening stays. For accommodation in the Windsor area, use www.windsor.gov.uk, click on 'accommodation' to find hotels, b & bs etc. It is very helpful.

Schools may choose to stay at one of the Travelodges, www.travelodge.co.uk. There is one conveniently in Slough, 01753-516897 (but check its parking arrangements for minibuses), another near Heathrow, and one in the middle of Windsor. There are some cheap deals involving family rooms, but check the conditions.

i) DRESS CODE

We strongly recommend that a school organises its own tennis team-strip. Players then look smart and identifiable as belonging to a particular school because the tennis clothing can carry the school's badge, logo or name, or have distinctive style and colouring. Additionally, it helps referees and spectators see which teams are on court, and follow the progress of matches.

Each item of clothing worn on court at the Championships should be recognised tennis clothing and predominately white unless the school team clothing has a coloured scheme (but a coloured shirt must be the school tennis shirt – not just some practice shirt!). If the weather is cold, smart recognised tennis track suits may be worn for the warm-up. Colleagues in charge of tennis are urged to ensure all players are suitably dressed. The referee reserves the right to ask players who are incorrectly dressed to change their clothing.

Tennis footwear: shoes should be suitable for acrylic surface and for synthetic clay (called "Smashcourt") or for astroturf. Shoes may not be trainers, nor leave black marks on the court surface.

j) TOURNAMENT TELEPHONE NUMBER, & colleagues' mobile numbers.

For the duration of the tournament, **the tournament telephone number will be 07850-046555.** The reserve number will be 07711-617 349. Schools and players are asked to ring in if they have any problems during the tournament, especially if they are delayed and will be arriving late on any day. **Colleagues in charge should issue these numbers to players and parents travelling independently.**

Colleagues i/c teams are asked to give the numbers of their mobiles to the referees to ensure that players can always be contacted. This reduces delays.

k) USE OF WHATSAPP

As in recent years, the Hon Sec Adrian Blackman (07525 498736) is organising a WhatsApp group for colleagues i/c teams. Please ensure that you authorise him to join you to the group if you wish to. We recommend this. It makes it simple for referees to contact schools and to get players to where they are needed. However, please note that schools should not expect their pairs to be messaged by WhatsApp when they are needed; this form of communication for referees will only be used after other methods have not worked.

l) REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments, including hot meals, will be available on the main site. We ask that all teams clear up their own litter. The amount of litter left each year has been a considerable headache to the Committee and Eton's groundstaff, so please make every effort to support us with this. There will be no credit facilities available from the catering providers but card receipts can be issued.

m) CODE OF CONDUCT

L.T.A tournament regulations and codes of conduct will apply. The decision of the referee in all matters is final.

n) PRIVACY NOTICE

Please note that ISTA will use contact details or other information supplied only for the purposes of administering the Championships, and that we will retain the information supplied only for as long as necessary for the purposes of administering the Championships effectively.

Please also note that the contact details of other teachers should not be used by anyone for any purpose other than communication about the ISTA Championships. Under no circumstances should the entire ISTA distribution list be shared, or used for advertising or marketing purposes.

Photographs of players will only be used for the ISTA website and / or social media. It is assumed that schools give permission for photos of their players unless schools let us know in writing which pupils are not allowed to be photographed.

o) REPRESENTATIVE MATCHES

There will be ISTA representative matches against the **All-England Club for both girls and boys** on Thursday 30th July 2026. We are truly honoured to receive the invitation to play the AELTC on the hallowed grass courts of Wimbledon and this will be a very special occasion for any selected player. **If you would like one of your very strongest players at Under 19 age group to be considered for this team, please contact the Honorary Secretary** providing player details (including singles WTN and recent best results) by Monday 16th March. Please only nominate your player if you are definite that they are available on Thursday 30th July. Final team selection will take place during the ISTA Championships and the players will be informed before the end of the Championships. Please contact the Honorary Secretary if you have any questions regarding this.

There will also be a fixture against **the Public Schools' Old Boys LTA** (see below). The date for this match will be confirmed in due course. Please let the Honorary Secretary know if you would like one of your players to be considered for this match, and advise him to keep the date free. There will also be a fixture against **Independent Schools Tennis – Old Girls (ISTOG)**. We are delighted that this association has been founded and are very keen to support this match. The match date will be communicated in early 2026. please contact Kerry Watts (kerrymwatts1@gmail.com) if you would like one of your players to be considered for this match, and advise her to keep the date free.

p) INDEPENDENT & PUBLIC SCHOOLS OLD BOYS LTA (IPSOBLTA) and INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS TENNIS - OLD GIRLS (ISTOG)

School leavers are encouraged to join the IPSOBLTA (boys) or ISTOG (girls). These fantastic alumni associations offer an attractive fixture list of matches against universities, clubs and schools and are a great way to keep your tennis going beyond school and to stay in touch. Matches are good fun, and membership is free for the first five years after leaving school. Please contact Adrian Blackman (ajblackman@reeds.surrey.sch.uk) if you are interested in joining IPSOBLTA (boys) or Kerry Watts (kerrymwatts1@gmail.com) if you are interested in joining ISTOG (girls).

Adrian Blackman, Honorary Secretary, ISTA.

1st January 2026