

Abingdon & District Aunt Sally Association



2025 Summer Season

In addition to the revised and updating of the league rules which were discussed and agreed at the 2025 Annual General Meeting the Committee thought it would be worthwhile to introduce one or two advisory topics, where the rules do not specifically apply, but which, in the views of your committee serve as "best practice". These are not rules, but it is suggested that all teams should take note of these, and team Captains should, in the spirit of our sport, try and ensure that these "best practices" are observed and maintained by all players wherever possible throughout the season.

The 4th leg

It has been a tradition since the league's inception back in 1960 that a "4th leg" is played known as the "beer leg". In the early days, when beer was less than 20 pence a pint, that was not too onerous, but nowadays with beer costing more like £5 a pint, that is a bit more challenging. Together with the introduction of handicaps in the Premier and A sections the practice of playing a beer leg has, in some games, caused the tradition to falter and, in some cases, the 4th leg doesn't happen which we believe is an essential part of our game and helps to support landlords/ladies etc. The beer leg is also an ideal time to give others the opportunity to take part by substituting for match players, or in many cases giving non registered players a chance to play our game often for the first time and hopefully get involved!

Our suggestions therefore are:-

- 1) The custom of the losing side "buying a pint" for their winning opponent changes to an expectation of the winning opponent asking for, and expecting, only a "half pint" reward
- 2) Where a handicap applies the team captains agree that this applies unless different players are involved in the leg where the captains agree an alternative handicap solely for the beer leg.
- 3) The captains agree to play the beer leg differently, by increasing (or decreasing) the number of players or by playing "one against one" rather than "team against team"
- 4) Whatever, we want the fourth leg to be retained in all matches and we are making these suggestions to encourage it, we are reliant on both captains to jointly agree how best to make that happen.

FOOD

Last year we became aware that food was being served long before matches were completed largely, because it was hot food and kitchens close early. Food is expected to be available, but not until matches have been completed and we can all retire to the bar (or on occasions given the English weather) the garden and enjoy the banter, a drink and some light refreshment all together.

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There is no expectation that food must be cooked, sandwiches etc are perfectly acceptable, but hot food being served before the first leg has been completed (that happened on more than one occasion last season) is really not what is expected.

So, all we asking is that teams try to co-ordinate the provision of the post-match food to coincide with the end of the match which normally would be expected to be around 9.30.

Respect & Conduct

We know that sport, yes even Aunt Sally, provokes a lot of emotion and often disappointment and that can cause, occasionally comments, outbursts, and sometimes just plain bad language being verbally and often loudly expressed.

We would just like to remind everyone that we are guests in the pubs and clubs where we play.

Other people and children may be in the garden who are not involved in the game and if we behave inappropriately, they and your opponents and even your team mates can be offended. So, without wishing to restrict passion and emotion team captains please try and instil a code of conduct in your teams that is acceptable to all. This includes team mates, opponents, callers and sticker uppers who all deserve our respect every Wednesday evening - they are all trying hard and doing their best!

Children (under 18's) in pub gardens

Last year we encountered an unfortunate situation when a young player was asked to leave a pub where she was playing because the pub had an obscure regulation that children were not allowed in the garden after 9pm. We had never been aware of this before and it led to a match having to be abandoned. It was a "One off" but caused a lot of distress. It seems it is a licensing rule and, as far as we know only applied to Greene King pubs that were formerly Hungry Horse establishments.

We are not expecting any similar problems this year, but it would seem sensible if team captains or secretaries could just check that there are no restrictions applying to children in their "host" venue.

Your committee would rather have not had to issue these advisory notes, and they are certainly not rules nor do we plan to introduce them as rules in the future. The need, we felt, was to just remind ourselves of the need to apply common sense and good behaviour, respecting others as we embark on our Summer 2025 season.