



Chichester Racquets & Fitness Club

Sporting Merit Membership Overview

At Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club, our goal is to foster an inclusive and welcoming environment where individuals of all skill levels can participate in their chosen sport. We take pride in providing high-quality facilities and cultivating an atmosphere that supports both recreational and competitive play. Whether a player is a beginner or an advanced competitor, we strive to encourage progression at all levels.

To maintain this commitment, it is essential to promote sporting excellence among our members. This development cannot rely solely on our dedicated coaches or occasional external competitions. Instead, we must cultivate a core group of competitive athletes within our club to inspire and challenge others through training and competition.

At the entry levels of racquet sports, our club offers numerous opportunities for player development. However, as players advance to higher levels, transitioning from proficient to elite becomes increasingly challenging due to the limited number of highly skilled participants. Recognising this, it is common practice among sports and fitness clubs to offer a limited number of complimentary memberships to elite athletes or individuals who contribute significantly to the club's growth and success.

At Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club, we seek to support and integrate individuals who bring a higher level of inspiration and competitiveness into our community.

Introduction of the Sporting Merit Membership

As of March 2025, Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club offers a **Sporting Merit Membership**, a limited number of full memberships granted at no cost for a period of up to 12 months. These memberships will expire in April following the approval date.

The Sporting Merit Membership is a reciprocal arrangement whereby recipients are expected to contribute meaningfully to the club. For example, a high-performance athlete may enhance the club's competitive standing by representing Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club in league matches, enabling our teams to compete at higher levels. However, the intent extends beyond merely securing victories; these individuals may also be expected to engage with other members by:

- Participating in training sessions and team practices
- Offering guidance to fellow members to help them develop their skills
- Engaging with the club's social media to promote activities and achievements

Additionally, these memberships may be awarded in other scenarios, such as supporting individuals who face financial hardship or other challenges that would otherwise prevent their participation in the club. We recognise that many individuals bring unique value to Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club, and this membership is designed to support those who make a meaningful contribution to our community.

Application and Approval Process

To ensure financial sustainability and fairness, these memberships are not granted based on a fixed set of criteria (e.g., solely at the county level). A rigid approach could significantly impact the club's revenue, while an overly exclusive policy restricted to national-level players may not align with the club's needs.

All applications will be reviewed at the discretion of the Board, assessed on an individual basis. Final approval will require authorisation from either the Club Manager or a designated Sub-Committee.

Flexibility and Adaptability

As an independent club, Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club has the flexibility to allocate Sporting Merit Memberships in alignment with evolving needs. For example, if squash participation is declining or requires external engagement, a greater number of memberships may be allocated to this sport. Conversely, if padel has a high level of participation, fewer memberships may be necessary. This adaptability allows Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club to make strategic decisions that best serve its members year after year.

Renewal and Future Applications

It is important to note that receiving a Sporting Merit Membership for one financial year does not guarantee eligibility in subsequent years. The club's needs may change, even if an individual's circumstances remain the same. Additionally, re-application will consider past contributions and adherence to the expectations set forth in the original agreement.

We encourage all eligible individuals to apply or re-apply, understanding that these memberships are granted as exceptions rather than guarantees. While not all applications can be approved, we hope that all members, regardless of membership status, continue to enjoy their time at Chichester Racquet & Fitness Club.