

Guidance for Tennis Venues, Coaches & Players in Wales

**COVID-19: RETURN TO RESTRICTED PLAY
PLAY SAFE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO RESTRICTED PLAY**

EFFECTIVE 22ND JUNE 2020

INTRODUCTION

We know how important it is for people to be active, and the particular role tennis can have in the physical and mental wellbeing of those that play it. By its very nature, tennis is an activity whereby close person to person contact can be avoided.

Based on the Welsh Government guidance and adjustment of lockdown restrictions, Tennis Wales & the LTA have developed a set of practical guidelines to follow so that tennis can be played in Wales during lockdown, where the local environment allows.

These guidelines apply to both tennis and padel, and outline adaptations so that tennis activity can be enjoyed in a way that is in line with Welsh Government advice and helps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. They include measures to limit hand to shared surface contact and minimise unnecessary interactions with others.

VENUES

Tennis venues across the country are all different and operate in different local contexts. Making an assessment of whether a safe exercise environment can be provided depends on a range of factors, which apply differently at each venue. It is the responsibility of each tennis provider, coach and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment.

COACHES

Coaching is permitted if it is outdoors, physical distancing can be maintained, and is with members of your household and / or members of one other household at a time.

Coaches and coaching providers across the country are all different and operate in different local contexts. Making an assessment of whether a safe exercise environment can be provided depends on a range of factors, which apply differently at each venue. It is the responsibility of each tennis provider, coach and facility to make that assessment based on their local environment.

PLAYERS

At all times, players should adhere to the Welsh Government's social distancing guidelines (staying at least 2m away from others), only meet up outdoors with members of one other household, and practice public health advice for hygiene.

In line with the Welsh Government's restrictions, all tennis activity should be conducted locally within the advised 5 miles radius of home.

Given the length of time tennis activity has been suspended, it is advised that anyone returning to court eases themselves back in to play gently.

Please be aware that not all courts may be open, as venues will need to make an assessment based on their own individual circumstances as to whether they feel they can facilitate safe play at their venue. Where they chose to remain closed please respect this decision.

Should you have any questions, [please refer to the FAQs on the LTA website](#).

IMPORTANT: Do not leave your home to play tennis if Welsh Government advice means you should stay at home because you or someone you live with has or has had symptoms of COVID-19, or you are in the most vulnerable category and have been advised to shield from the coronavirus.

Detailed guidelines for players, venues and coaches are provided on the following pages.

GUIDELINES FOR TENNIS VENUES

VENUE MANAGEMENT

- Ensure your club committee / management oversees and maintains the implementation of measures. Venues are advised to take time to ensure they reopen safely, rather than rushing
- All activity should be consistent with the government guidance regarding health, travel, social distancing and hygiene at all times
- Venues must consider safety first, particularly minimising the risk of infection/transmission. A thorough risk assessment should be undertaken, and appropriate measures put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are protected. A risk assessment template is available from the COVID-19 section of the venue [Resource Library](#) on the LTA website
- Guidelines will be updated as we progress through the different phases of Government measures – Tennis Wales remains in discussions with Government and so we recommend you check the official position at www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus on a regular basis to stay abreast of the latest recommendations
- Any measures venues put in place to enable tennis activity to resume need to be capable of being flexed or changed quickly if tighter movement/social distancing is reintroduced in the future or when the restrictions are further relaxed

FACILITIES

- Outdoor courts only should be open, with indoor courts and bubble courts remaining closed
- Clubhouses can be opened in a limited way for operational reasons (e.g. to switch on floodlights) or to access courts.
- Toilet facilities can be opened if the venue wishes, but particular care should be taken by those using them and those cleaning them. Where they are open, ensure soap and water is provided.
- All social spaces and gyms should remain closed
- Ensure nets are maintained at the appropriate height to avoid players having to adjust them, and remove net winders
- If your courts require dragging (e.g. clay) or drying after rain, have a nominated person to do this or make disposable gloves and spray available for players to use
- Remove any other unnecessary equipment and items from courts (e.g. benches)

HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

- Ensure usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained (in some cases this may require limited access to the clubhouse being possible)
- Guidance on delivering first aid during the coronavirus pandemic is available on the [St John Ambulance website](#)
- Make hand sanitizers or wipes available for use at entrance/exit to venue/courts where possible (Hand sanitizer stations can be sourced from the LTA Buying Group - see <https://www.ltabuyinggroup.co.uk>)
- Clean all common touchpoint surfaces (gates, door handles, handrails etc) regularly, wearing disposable gloves

TENNIS ACTIVITY

- Limit activities to court rental and coaching activity to no more than two people per court (other than where doubles pairs are from the same household, all players are from the same household, or a coach is taking a session with multiple players from the same household)
- No extra-curricular or social activity should take place

COURT ACCESS

- Ensure measures are in place to minimise encounters between people, including in car parks and at entrances
- Where safe and appropriate, doors and court gates should be left open during playing hours
- Consider different entry and exit routes to the courts/venue where possible, and ensure this is clearly marked
- Consider marking two metre distances at appropriate points, such as the entry gates to courts

EQUIPMENT

- Players should bring their own equipment - it is advised to avoid use of communal rackets or tennis balls
- Use of coaching equipment (e.g. cones) should be limited, with any equipment used cleaned and wiped down afterwards

BOOKINGS & PAYMENT

- Operate online booking for courts and sessions where at all possible, or alternatively phone bookings
- Implement a short buffer period (e.g. 10 minutes) between court/session booking slots to allow time for players to leave before the next players arrive
- Consider staggering the start time of court bookings so that players do not all arrive/leave at the same time
- Take any payments online, and avoid handling cash
- Online bookings can be facilitated through ClubSpark, which is free for all LTA Registered Venues, and via a free online national booking platform - LTA Rally - which makes it easy for players to find, book and pay for courts from their mobile phone. Email rally@lta.org.uk for more information on how to sign up to ClubSpark or Rally

COMMUNICATION

- Communicate with your members/customers clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place at your venue, and guidelines they are asked to follow
- Ensure signage on guidelines for playing tennis safely and promoting hygiene measures is clearly displayed (and ensure these remain up to date as restrictions change)
- Posters that can be used to aid communication will be available from the COVID-19 section of the [Resource Library](#)

COACHING

- It is important that both recreational play and coaching activity resumes. Venues should liaise with their coach(es) to ensure an approach to activity is agreed that is feasible to deliver safely, and how coaches can be supported to deliver lessons

SPECTATING & SUPERVISION

- Spectating should be actively discouraged. Where attendance of a parent/guardian (non-participant) or a carer for a disabled player, it should be limited to one per player where possible, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the sessions (consider marking out specific boxes/areas for this purpose)

COMPETITIONS

- The initial focus during this phase should be on facilitating recreational and social play, and letting players spend time practicing
- Some formats of competition will be able to resume before others, and [Local Tennis Leagues](#) and singles box leagues/ladders can be played as long as they adhere to the guidelines in place
- All LTA staged and LTA approved competitions (grade 1 to 6) up to at least Sunday 26 July 2020 have been cancelled
- LTA approved competitions (Grade 6) such as Matchplays and Leagues may be able to resume earlier than 26 July based on Government advice - we will provide an update on these competitions in due course.

GUIDELINES FOR TENNIS COACHES

COACHING ACTIVITY

- All activity should be consistent with the government guidance regarding health, travel, social distancing and hygiene at all times.
- Coaches and coaching organisations must consider safety first, particularly minimising the risk of infection/transmission. A thorough risk assessment should be undertaken, and appropriate measures put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are protected - you are advised to liaise with your venue when doing this. A risk assessment template is available from the COVID-19 section of the venue [Resource Library](#) on the LTA website
- Guidelines will be updated as we progress through the different phases of Government measures - the LTA remains in discussions with Government and so we recommend you check the official LTA position at www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus on a regular basis to stay abreast of the latest recommendations
- Any measures coaches put in place to enable tennis activity to resume need to be capable of being flexed or changed quickly if tighter movement/social distancing is reintroduced in the future or when the restrictions are further relaxed

COURT LIMITS

- Coached sessions should be limited to activity with members of one other household only at a time.
- Members of the coach's own household may also be present, but must adhere to strict social distancing.

MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Social distancing between players, and between the coach and players should be maintained at all times.
- Adaptations to drills and how you provide feedback/instruction may be needed to ensure social distancing guidelines can be safely adhered to

EQUIPMENT

- Consider new or fresh tennis balls where possible for each lesson. To facilitate this, consider using less balls per lesson (e.g. one or two cans). Use 'live ball' exercises over basket feeding so less balls are needed. Balls that are stored for 72 hours, can then be re-used
- If 'live ball' drills over the net are difficult for your players based on their level, adapt the drill to make it easier, or consider the use lower compression balls to facilitate rallying (e.g. green ball with adults)
- It is advised the coach should be the only person to touch the tennis balls and players use their feet/racket to return them. Where players need to handle tennis balls (e.g. serving toss), it is advised they should bring their own, clearly marked tennis balls that only they touch
- Players should bring their own equipment – it is advised not to allow racket sharing or use of communal rackets
- Use of coaching equipment (e.g. cones) should be limited, with any equipment used cleaned and wiped down afterwards
- Ensure all equipment is removed from the court at the end of the session

HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

- Ensure usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained (in some cases this may require limited access to the clubhouse being arranged)
- Guidance on delivering first aid during the coronavirus pandemic is available on the [St John Ambulance website](#)
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- Avoid touching your face

BOOKINGS & PAYMENT

- Operate online booking for coaching sessions where at all possible, or alternatively phone bookings
- Implement a short buffer period (e.g. 10 minutes) between session booking slots or finish sessions slightly early to allow time for players to leave before the next players arrive
- Take any payments online, and avoid handling cash

COACHING YOUNG CHILDREN

- The same guidance applies for coaching children as for adults, with coaching only permitted with members of one other household in each session.
- Red court guidance: The same guidance applies for coaching 'red stage' children as for adults, with coaching only permitted with members of one other household. If more than one coach wishes to run one to one 'red stage' sessions at the same time, then a maximum of two red courts should be set up per full sized adult court. Adequate space and care should be provided around these smaller courts to maintain social distancing
- Guardian (non-participant) attendance should be limited to one where possible, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the session

COMMUNICATION & VENUE LIAISON

- Coaches should liaise with the venue to ensure an agreed approach to activity that is feasible to deliver safely, and explore how coaches can be supported to deliver sessions
- Communicate with your customers clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place for your sessions, and guidelines they should follow when attending

GUIDANCE FOR TENNIS PLAYERS

STAY UP TO DATE

- Government information around social distancing is available [here](#) and should be read in full
- Be aware guidance can change and restrictions may be reintroduced - ensure you have checked the latest version of the LTA's guidelines for tennis players on the LTA website

BEFORE LEAVING HOME & AFTER YOU RETURN

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before leaving home to go to the court (or use an alcohol gel if washing hands is not possible)

COURT BOOKINGS

- Where the facility allows, ensure you have booked a court in advance and make payment online
- Play should only take place on outdoor courts, with indoor courts and bubble courts remaining closed
- The LTA's online booking platform has courts that can be booked in parks and clubs nationwide - the site www.lta.org.uk/rally will be live.

EQUIPMENT

- Take hand sanitizer with you to the tennis courts
- Take all your own equipment (do not share equipment such as rackets, grips, hats and towels)
- Only take the minimum amount of equipment with you that you need to play
- Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles before and after use
- Bring a full water bottle, and do not share food or drink with others
- Bring your own tennis balls that are clearly marked (e.g. with your initials)
- Ensure you take all your belongings with you at the end of the session and do not leave anything on court

TRAVELLING TO AND FROM THE COURT

- Stay local. Only travel to tennis facilities within 5 miles of your house.
- Avoid using public transport
- Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there
- Avoid touching court gates, fences, benches, etc. if you can
- Allow others to leave before you enter the court - if you need to wait then do so away from the courts and clear of the gates
- Ensure you leave the court before the end of your allotted time so that it is empty for the next players
- Arrive changed and ready to play. Shower at home, and do not use the venue's changing area
- Do not congregate after playing. No extra-curricular or social activity should take place

COURT LIMITS

- Singles play is permitted and where doubles can be played between 2 household groups or 4 players from the same household.
- Coached sessions should be limited to members of the coach's household and one other household only at a time.

MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Stay at least two metres away from other players at all times (including during play, when taking breaks and before and after play)
- Do not make physical contact with other players (such as shaking hands or high five)
- Stay on your side of court and avoid changing ends, or agree to change ends at opposite sides of the net
- Avoid chasing the ball down to another court if other players are using it

EQUIPMENT & FACILITIES

- Use your own clearly marked tennis balls
- Avoid using your hands to pick up tennis balls that aren't yours - use your racquet/foot to hit/kick them to your opponent or return them to another court
- Avoid using other equipment such as courtside benches, net handles or court sweepers where possible
- When playing padel, try to avoid touching the court walls
- Be aware that onsite toilet facilities may not be open

HYGIENE

- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- Avoid touching your face

COMPETITIONS

- The initial focus during this phase should be on facilitating recreational and social play, and letting players spend time practicing
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