

COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines

Effective 2 July 2020





COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines for Continued Play

Background

1 May 2020

The National Cabinet considered and endorsed the “National Principles for the Resumption of Sport and Recreation Activities”, which had been developed by the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee. These Principles help provide a pathway for a staged return of community and professional sport and recreation Sport in a COVID-19 Environment”, which had been developed by the Australian Institute of Sport, provided a guide to the staged resumption of sport and recreation in Australia.

June 2020

The NSW Government announced the progressive easing of restrictions, with the consequence that, from Saturday 13 June 2020:

- The number of people allowed to visit homes increased from 5 to 20;
- The number of people allowed to gather outdoors increased from 10-20; and
- The number of people permitted in classes and group booking in indoor recreation facilities increased from 10-20

Effective 1 July 2020

The NSW Government has issued a new Public Health Order (PHO), in which it has given specific directions in relation to community sporting activities. Pursuant to the PHO:

- Where community sporting activities (including training sessions) involve more than 20 participants, the organiser of those activities must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan;
- “Participants” include players, people who are training, officials and spectators; and;
- The maximum number of participants at a community sporting event must not exceed 500

The Government maintains its direction that occupiers of premises must ensure that there is at least 4 square metres of space for each person on the premises.



We all know tennis is a unique sport with many benefits – the main one being health and wellbeing. The very nature of our game ensures there is a vital role our sport can continue to play for the benefit of the community as we endure the COVID-19 pandemic.

Tennis clubs, associations, coaches, operators and local councils across the country are all different and operate in different local contexts. Making an assessment of whether a safe exercise environment can be provided also depends on a range of factors, which will apply differently within each council area and at each venue – it is the responsibility of each council, coach, club and operator to make that assessment based on their local environment.

The final assessment of whether a tennis club or venue can operate safely within the current Government guidelines does not rest with Tennis NSW – we can only provide a set of recommendations and guidelines to operate within based on the most recent advice from our Federal or State Governments.

The **COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines for Continued Play** provide details on how outdoor courts can remain open for use to help ensure people remain active, subject to strict social distancing and hygiene practices being implemented.

Should a club, coaching operation or tennis facility choose to remain closed indefinitely, we will respect that decision as the club, association, coach or council is far better placed than the Governing Body to determine how best a venue can implement the proposed guidelines to ensure that local community play can continue safely and within the ever stricter guidelines laid down by Government.

These guidelines have been developed to reduce the likelihood of spreading the COVID-19 virus through tennis. Before attending a tennis venue or playing tennis, you should consider your individual situation noting that the COVID-19 virus can spread very quickly and result in very serious medical complications in some people. Like any activities, there are some inherent risks involved and by participating you are accepting those risks.



COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines for Continued Play

We all must take responsibility to minimise the effects and potential spread of COVID-19.

Before you play

Stay at home if you:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have been overseas or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days
- Have flu-like symptoms
- If you are in a high risk health category, then you should not be administering or playing tennis at any time during this period. The Federal Government have listed the following as high-risk categories:
 - Persons with weakened immune systems
 - Any person aged over 70 (over 60 for people with pre-existing medical conditions, or over 50 for Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people with pre-existing medical conditions)
 - Persons with diagnosed chronic medical conditions (such as lung conditions and kidney failure)
 - People with diabetes
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
 - Very young children (Under 5) and babies

Club & venue operations, club-houses, social spaces and amenities

Tennis NSW encourages all participants to download the COVIDSafe app to help speed up the process of identifying anyone who has been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. Learn more: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app>

It is highly recommended that all clubs keep records of who attends your activities and their contact details.

Please note that, under the current Public Health Order, organisers of any tennis activities involving a gathering of more than 20 participants must:

- Develop and comply with a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#) that addresses the matters required by the COVID-19 checklist approved by the Chief Health Officer for sporting competitions and published on the [NSW Government website](#);
- Keep a copy of the COVID-19 Safety Plan and make it available for inspection by an authorised officer as requested

We recommend that any volunteer-managed clubs or venues not in a position to operate within the guidelines consider engaging a qualified Coach or operator to manage and oversee tennis operations.

Any volunteer clubs considering re-opening should make use of the Tennis NSW Return To Tennis resources which are available [here](#).



Should the club or venue be comfortable that they can effectively maintain tennis activities at the venue, then the following guidelines should be observed:

- Clubhouses or adjoining facilities can be re-opened allowing for at least 4 square metres per person people – users should also continue to adhere to social distancing protocols
- Outdoor premises must allow for 4 square metres per person, to a maximum of 500 people. Users should continue to adhere to social distancing protocols
- Where available, the use of automated / online booking and court access systems are strongly recommended to assist with the recording of users / visitors to your venue.
- Place signage near entrances with the social distancing rules and etiquette on them
- Ensure regular cleaning and sterilization of the venue in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines
- Social spaces including outdoor seating and shaded areas can be re-opened – users should continue to adhere to social distancing measures
- Showers and change rooms can be re-opened
- Toilets can be re-opened
- In respect of indoor tennis and associated facilities:
 - There can be no more than one person per 4 square metres (including staff) on the premises
 - **Operators must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan**

Attending tennis activities

- Wherever practical, clubs and venues should be manned throughout to ensure all social distancing protocols are observed and regular cleaning and hygiene can be observed
- Only people core to playing or coaching should be on court or at the venue
- Arrive and leave as close as possible to when you need to be there
- In order to comply with relevant Child Safety guidelines, one parent/guardian should accompany younger children and continue to be present for the duration of the tennis activity.

Social distancing

Tennis holds a unique advantage as a sport which requires no direct contact between players. You can also:

- Touch racquets instead of the regular pre or post match handshakes
- Keep 4 square metres away from other people while watching or attending an outdoors tennis activity.

Behaviours

To protect against infection, you should:

- Wash/sterilise your hands before and after you play and avoid touching your face while playing
- Not share water bottles and bring your own full bottle
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand-sanitiser when available, before and after eating, after going to the toilet, sneezing and coughing
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue immediately
- Avoid touching your face
- Keep your distance from people who are obviously sick
- Be aware of what surfaces you touch.



Organising tennis activities

- Each venue must develop their own COVID-19 Safety Plan taking into account all of the tennis activities your venue intends to offer
- Group tennis activities (for example: coaching sessions or competitive matches) can be conducted but, **if these activities involve more than 20 participants, they must be conducted in compliance with an appropriate [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)**. The 4 square metre rule and social distancing must be observed by all participants
- Tennis activities must involve no more than 500 people
- Multiple group activities can take place within the one venue (for example: multiple coaching sessions or multiple competitive matches between two teams)
- Promote a 'Play & Go' policy of not permitting players to arrive at the venue early nor should they be encouraged to remain at the venue after their match
- Promote prevention techniques and lead by example
- Implement ways to minimise contact for both participants and coaching staff
- Plan for increased levels of staff/volunteer absences
- Keep your team and your participants informed of the actions you are taking
- Keep records of anyone using your venue and their contact details (Guest HQ is a resource that has limited free services – [click here](#))
- Payments to be made online or via EFTPOS – avoid handling cash

Coaching & Squads

- Group coaching (for example: coaching sessions or competitive matches) can be conducted but, **if these activities involve more than 20 participants, they must be conducted in compliance with an appropriate [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)**. The 4 square metre rule and social distancing must be observed by all participants
- Squad training may recommence
- Continue to maintain social distancing (1.5m) at all times including when giving feedback and while the player is resting
- Limit the use of coaching equipment such as target cones
- Minimise student handling of coaching equipment e.g. balls, cones, markers
- Payments to be made online via EFTPOS – avoid handling cash.

Tennis equipment

There is no specific evidence that balls can spread COVID-19. We do know that on hard surfaces contamination by respiratory droplets from an infected person can potentially survive up to three days. Therefore, you should:

- Make sure you clean your hands before and after coming off the court
- Do not touch your face after touching a ball, racquet or other tennis equipment
- Use new balls and racquet grips where possible
- Use fewer balls per session
- Replace all balls if someone with/suspected to have COVID-19 comes in contact with them
- Restrict balls to a particular group, court or day of the week. One idea is to label them with a permanent marker
- Clean all tennis gear with alcohol-based disinfectant including racquets, towels, coaching gear such as target cones
- Don't use unnecessary equipment such as drop down lines.



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Clean environment

Providing a clean environment to play tennis in is important. Make sure you:

- Provide soap, hand-sanitiser or wipes at all main contact points like the desk and café
- Clean all surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and tables, at least once a day wearing disposable gloves
- Clean any surfaces which may have blood, bodily fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them
- Wear personal protective equipment including aprons, gloves and masks when handling food
- Regularly remind and encourage everyone, particularly juniors, of the need to wash hands regularly and adopt the other principles of a good hygiene strategy
- Display signage about handwashing and hygiene techniques at strategic points like all sinks, eating areas, drinking areas and on the side of court.