

COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines

Last updated 13 May 2020 to come into effect 15 May 2020





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The Federal Government has recently announced a [Roadmap to a COVIDSafe Australia](#) outlining a 3-step process for the easing of restrictions. Further to this, the [NSW Government announced](#) easing of restrictions from 11:59pm Thursday 14 May. Based on these new directions Tennis New South Wales has provided the following recommendations under 'Level 1' guidelines.

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 activities without compromising the health of individuals or the community. In addition, the National Cabinet agreed that the "Framework for Rebooting 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.

What now?

After assessing the new framework from the National Cabinet, on 10 May 2020, the NSW Government announced that outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people will be allowed in NSW from Friday, 15 May 2020, in addition to the easing of restrictions in relation to cafes and restaurants (10 seated patrons), visitors to a household (up to 5), weddings (up to 10 guests), funerals (up to 20 mourners indoors; up to 30 outdoors), religious gatherings/places of worship (up to 10 worshippers), the use of outdoor equipment and outdoor pools.

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.



COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines



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

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

Any volunteer clubs considering re-opening should make use of the Tennis NSW Return 2 Tennis resources which are available [here](#).

Should the club or venue be comfortable that a suitably qualified Coach or operator can effectively maintain tennis activities at the venue, then the following guidelines should be observed:

- All indoor courts and gyms are to be closed
- Social spaces including outdoor seating and shaded areas can be re-opened – users should continue to adhere to social distancing measures
- Clubhouses or adjoining facilities to be used **ONLY** for administrative purposes such as taking court bookings and payments
- Showers and change rooms to be closed
- Toilets are for emergencies only
- Venues with a café or restaurant are restricted to take-away service only – no cash payments.

Tennis facilities not managed by a club or operator

Consider providing the venue for individual coaching or casual court hire, in which case:

- Where available, the use of automated / online booking and court access systems are recommended.
- Place signage near entrances with the social distancing rules and etiquette on them
- Venues without automated booking systems may consider an open gate policy to encourage the community to be healthy and participate safely in accordance with the guidelines.



- Ensure regular cleaning and sterilization of the venue in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines

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, preferably 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 1.5 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

- Limit community tennis activities to:
 - casual play
 - Singles & Doubles
 - Intra-club competitions (social, flex leagues, challenge ladders, etc.)
 - Inter-club competitions
- Limit the number of players per court to a maximum of 4 people
- Advise players not to change ends
- Promote prevention techniques and lead by example
- Implement ways to minimise contact for both participants and coaching staff
- Postpone any social gatherings – 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
- Plan for increased levels of staff/volunteer absences
- Keep your team and your participants informed of the actions you are taking
- Keep records of who attends your activities and their contact details
- Payments to be made online or via EFTPOS – avoid handling cash
- Consider leaving gates ajar during opening hours so players do not need to use handles to enter.



Coaching & Squads

- Group coaching is permitted under the following guidelines:
 - Red Ball – limit of 4:1 Player / Coach ratio to each full size court / half court / defined Red Ball court
 - Orange / Green Ball – limit of 4:1 Player / Coach ratio to each full size court
 - Adult Drills – limit of 4:1 Player / Coach ratio on each full size court
- Squad training is permitted under the following guidelines:
 - Maximum of 4 players on a single court at any given time
 - Coach to maintain social distancing either from outside or within the court
- Live ball drills and game-based play is recommended over basket-based
- Advise players not to change ends
- 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
- Do not let the student handle any coaching equipment
- 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.

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.