

COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines Tennis NSW

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Last updated 1 April 2020

This is a rapidly evolving issue, please refer to this page regularly for the latest advice and guidance on dealing with COVID-19.

In line with health advice, all of the following non-essential activities and businesses have been temporarily shut down since midnight on 25 March 2020:

- registered clubs
- gyms, indoor sporting venues (this includes indoor dance classes)
- cinemas, entertainment venues (including music halls, concert halls, amusement parks, billiards, pool or gaming arcades)
- casinos and nightclubs
- restaurants and cafes will be restricted to takeaway and/or home delivery (drive through allowed)
- religious gatherings, places of worship (excluding small weddings and funerals that comply with the four square metre rule, which can proceed).
- dine-in eating at shopping centre food courts (take-away food can be served and shopping centres remain open)
- real estate auctions and open house inspections (by private appointment only)
- auction houses, auction rooms
- outdoor and indoor markets (with the exception of food markets)
- beauty salons including tanning, waxing and nail salons
- tattoo parlours, spa and massage parlours (excludes health-related services such as physiotherapy)
- sex services premises and strip clubs
- betting agencies
- indoor and outdoor play centres
- community and recreation centres, youth centres, community halls
- health clubs, fitness centres, yoga, barre and spin studios, social sporting activities
- saunas, bathhouses, wellness centres
- swimming pools
- galleries, museums, national institutions, historic sites, libraries

On 27 March 2020, in consultation with the tennis community and the NSW Government, the Board of Tennis NSW resolved to recommend that all tennis activity cease from midnight. That included all tennis clubs, venues, academies and centres; all tennis programmes and coaching; including one-on-one coaching, all club, association and social play; and all public court hire bookings.

On 29 March 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the National Cabinet had agreed that, from midnight on 30 March 2020, both indoor and outdoor gatherings would be limited to two persons only, with few exceptions that included people of the same household going out together. The National Cabinet agreed that playgrounds, skate parks and outside gyms in public places would be closed and that boot camps would be reduced to two persons, including the trainer.



On 1 April 2020, the NSW Government issued updated guidelines allowing people to go outside and exercise. Any form of exercise is to be undertaken in compliance with the Public Health Orders, meaning that people must not participate in groups greater than two persons at any point in time. Therefore, individual sports such as tennis and golf can continue provided the Public Health Orders are complied with.

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, association, 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.



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
 - 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

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, at least 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 court hire and individual coaching
- Shorten programs, booking times to create a buffer between sessions
- Limit the number of players per court to a maximum of 2 people (including any coaches)
- Advise players to not change ends
- Where practical use every second court or ensure there is suitable distance (minimum 10 metres) between any playing or coaching groups
- Promote prevention techniques and lead by example
- Implement ways to minimise contact for both participants and coaching staff
- Postpone any social gatherings
- 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
- Leave gates ajar during opening hours so players do not need to use handles to enter.

Coaching

- No group coaching should take place – limit coaching to individual coaching for a maximum of 1 player
- Live ball drills and game based play is recommended over basket based
- Advise player to not change ends
- Maintain social distancing 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 - coach to pick up balls and feed drills
- 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 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, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them
- Wear personal protection 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.

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

- All indoor courts and gyms are to be closed
- Any social spaces including outdoor seating and shaded areas to be closed or cordoned off
- Clubhouses or adjoining facilities to ONLY be used 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