PLAY SAFE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO MANAGED PLAY

These guidelines apply to England only. They have been produced in line with Government announcements on the easing of lockdown restrictions, and the subsequent Government guidance on gatherings, public spaces, and outdoor activities and the phased return of outdoor sport and recreation published on the Gov.uk website.

Alongside these guidelines, coaches should read updated information published by Sport England and the Government guidance for personal trainers and coaches.

Guidelines for playing tennis in Scotland can be read here and for Wales, here.

INTRODUCTION

We know tennis coaches are keen to offer a full range of sessions for customers as soon as it is safe and appropriate to do so. By its very nature, tennis is an activity whereby close person to person contact can be avoided, with the Government saying tennis is a good example of an activity that can be undertaken in a way compliant with social distancing restrictions.

Based on our continued discussions with Government and following the further easing of restrictions, the LTA has developed this updated set of practical guidelines for coaches to follow so that tennis can be played in England, where the local environment allows.

We have indicated the key additions and updates to these guidelines for Version 3 of this document with [NEW] and [UPDATED] on the following pages.

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

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.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the guidelines for players and venues, and all elements of the guidelines should be considered to ensure activity can be delivered safely.

Should you have any questions, please refer to the FAQs on the LTA website.

[NEW] IMPORTANT: Where a local lockdown is in place alternative measures and guidelines may be in place – coaches in these areas are advised to check our main coronavirus information page at www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus before playing.
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 must be undertaken (or updated if one previously completed), 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.
- Coaches who have had their normal activity disrupted and have a need to coach outside of their normal venue, should seek prior permission from the venue, local authority or operator who is in charge of the tennis facility, before undertaking coaching.
- 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 social distancing is reintroduced in the future or when the restrictions are further relaxed.

COACHING LIMITS

- Coached sessions should be limited to group sizes of no more than six, including coach(es).
- You can meet with different clients in a single day as long as it is in gatherings of no more than six and you are maintaining social distancing.
- [NEW] Any individual groups should not interact with anyone outside of the group they are attending the venue with (e.g. players on another court or in a different coaching group).

DELIVERING MULTIPLE GROUPS [NEW]

- Coaching activity such as Summer Camps that have two or more groups of up to five (plus a coach) is permitted as long as the groups are kept completely separate and the sessions are delivered independently of each other.
- Coaches should not move between courts or groups, and each coach should only interact with one group for as long as the group is on site.
- There should be no more than six people per adult court.
- Clear instructions should be provided to participants in advance so that they know which coach and which court to report to.
MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Social distancing between players, and between the coach and players should be maintained at all times
- Coaches should ensure this is emphasised to participants at the start of each session, and that they are clear on how they should maintain social distancing for each drill before starting it
- With small group coaching permitted, adaptations to drills and how you provide feedback/instruction will be needed to ensure social distancing guidelines can be safely adhered to. The LTA has provided guidance as to how adaptations for LTA Programmes can be made – including LTA Youth Tennis for Kids drills and adult programmes such as Cardio Tennis, Tennis Xpress and Tennis Tuesdays
- Coaches should encourage players to avoid running down balls within an exercise if it could compromise social distancing

HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

- Ensure usual access to first aid and emergency equipment is maintained
- Guidance on delivering first aid during the coronavirus pandemic is available on the St John Ambulance website
- Hand hygiene is imperative - hand sanitise at intervals if you have to touch communal surfaces
- Avoid touching your face
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve
- If a player you have coached develops symptoms of COVID-19, they should be directed to follow the Government’s ‘test and trace’ guidelines, which can be read on the Gov.uk website

EQUIPMENT

- [UPDATED] Coaches do not need to use new or fresh tennis balls for each lesson, and are no longer advised to be the only person to touch the tennis balls
- Where new or fresh balls aren’t used or where players handle tennis balls as well as the coach, then extra care must be taken to ensure the coach and players do not touch your faces during play, and you should all clean your hands before the session and immediately after finishing (use alcohol gel if required)
- [UPDATED] Players should bring their own equipment where possible – however, use of communal rackets can be done subject to thorough cleaning processes between uses
- Any coaching equipment used (e.g. cones) should be wiped down and cleaned rigorously afterwards
- Ensure all equipment is removed from the court at the end of the session

BOOKINGS & PAYMENT

- Operate online booking for coaching sessions where at all possible, or alternatively phone bookings
- [UPDATED] The previous precautionary measure of a short buffer period between session booking slots has been relaxed and is no longer advised, but coaches should still consider what appropriate measures can be implemented to allow participants to enter and leave the courts safely, which depending on the set up of the venue may still involve finishing sessions slightly early to allow time for players to leave before the next players arrive
- Take any payments online, and avoid handling cash
- [NEW] To support NHS Test and Trace, coaches should keep a temporary record of your customers and visitors for 21 days, in a way that is manageable for your business, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed

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

COACHING YOUNG CHILDREN
- The same guidance applies for coaching children as for adults, with group sessions of no more than six (including coaches)
- Red court guidance: The same guidance applies for coaching ‘red stage’ children as for adults. A maximum of three red courts should be set up per full sized adult court, covering a group of no more than six people (including coach) in total per adult court
- Adequate space and care should be provided around these smaller courts to maintain social distancing - consider using a safe barrier between courts (e.g. barrier tape). If there are additional mini red sessions being run by other coaches at the same time these should take place on separate adult courts.
- If you feel your youngest groups would be unable to reasonably maintain social distancing with five players plus a coach consider not re-commencing those sessions until restrictions are further lifted and prioritising sessions with older children first
- Guardian (non-participant) or carer attendance is permitted and is not counted as part of the maximum group size of six, but should be off court and limited to one per child where possible, with social distancing strictly observed while watching the session

COACHING IN SCHOOLS
The LTA has developed this section in line with guidance from The Department for Education (DfE), Association for Physical Education (afPE) and ukactive.

The ‘Planning guide for primary schools’ published by DfE on 14th May advises school leaders to ‘limit external visitors to the school during school hours’. In addition, they have also provided the following position statement to ukactive, specifically relating to children’s activity providers:

“Given that it is vital to minimise travel and maintain social distancing, schools should only have staff from external organisations on site where it is absolutely essential to enable them to stay open for children of critical workers and vulnerable children and to ensure those children are safe. Before going to a school you should check with them whether or not your presence is essential. Schools should not be asking you to attend if it is not essential.”

The ultimate decision about pupil safety will depend on context and geography, and is therefore for individual Head Teachers to make, in consultation with their Governing Boards.
The LTA advises tennis coaches not to make proactive approaches to schools, to offer their services during this phase. However, to maintain strong relationships and club links with your existing schools, it could be worthwhile ‘checking in’ with your school contacts, recognising what a difficult time is for them, you’re here if they need any support and you look forward to working with them again in the future. In addition, it is a good opportunity to signpost to the personal development and cross curricular LTA Youth Schools content online at: www.lta.org.uk/schools

However, you may find that a small number of school leaders may make the decision to invite you into school to support the delivery of PE & School Sport through tennis. In this instance, we would advise that you have a conversation with them to determine if your presence is essential, as per DfE’s guidance referenced above. In addition, you could also refer to afPE’s guidance published on 21st May, initially asking the following three questions:

1. Have they reviewed their risk assessments before re-commencing PE / school sport?
2. Does the proposed activity meet the Government requirements?
3. Are their plans consistent with the requirement of any whole school/employer expectations which may have developed in response to the national guidance?

afPE’s guidance goes on to provide a self-review tool around 9 areas including: protective measures and hygiene, teaching areas and self-distancing within lessons. The LTA would encourage schools to use this tool to plan and prepare for any PE / school sport activity.