



# **Guidance for Officials & Competition Organisers in England**

**COVID-19: RETURN TO COMPETITION**

**Version 2.1 – Published 10 September 2020**



**TENNIS  
FOR BRITAIN**



## COVID-19 SECURE GUIDELINES - RETURN TO COMPETITION

These COVID-19 Secure 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, officials and competition organisers should make themselves familiar with any updated information published by [Sport England](#) and with [Government guidance for providers of outdoor facilities](#).

Guidelines for playing tennis in Scotland can be read [here](#) and for Wales, [here](#).

### INTRODUCTION

We know Officials & Competition Organisers will be keen to provide competitive opportunities as soon as it is safe and appropriate for them 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 officials and competition Organisers to follow so that tennis competition 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 competitions and padel competitions, 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.

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

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the guidelines for venues, coaches and players, 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](#).

# GUIDELINES FOR OFFICIALS & COMPETITION ORGANISERS

**IMPORTANT:** Where a local lockdown is in place alternative measures and guidelines may be in place – officials and competition organisers in these areas are advised to check our main coronavirus information page at [www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.lta.org.uk/coronavirus).

## SECTION 1: PREPARATION & FACILITIES

### VENUE MANAGEMENT

- Ensure your club committee/venue management team oversees and maintains the implementation of measures in relation to staging of competitions, and any updates to them. All activity should be consistent with the government guidance regarding health, travel, social distancing and hygiene at all times
- **IMPORTANT:** Venues must consider safety first, particularly minimising the risk of infection/transmission. A thorough risk assessment should be undertaken (or updated if one previously done) ahead of staging a competition, as well as an event delivery plan in line with the Government's [guidance on organising outdoor sport and physical activity participation events](#). This should ensure appropriate measures are put in place to ensure participants, staff and volunteers are protected, and to minimise risk. Risk assessment and event delivery plan templates are available from the COVID-19 section of the venue [Resource Library](#) on the LTA website
- Both indoor and
- 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](http://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 social distancing is reintroduced in the future or when the restrictions are further relaxed – be aware that if restrictions are tightened at a national or local level, this may prevent scheduled competitions from being held

### COURTS

- Both outdoor and indoor courts can be used for competitions – the guidance in this document covers both instances, but please note the use of indoor courts is subject to additional measures around limiting spectating and supervision, as outlined in Section 2 of these guidelines below
- 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, venues are advised to 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, and ensure appropriate cleaning measures are in place items that remain in place. Equipment such as benches may be returned if necessary to provide

support to participants, but regular and appropriate cleaning must be undertaken

## VENUE FACILITIES

- Clubhouses and pavilions can be opened for the public to access outdoor courts, use the toilet, or purchase food and drink
- Where toilet facilities are opened, particular care should be taken by those using them and those cleaning them. Where they are open, ensure soap and water is provided
- Indoor facilities such as changing rooms (other than toilets) and gyms can be opened (subject to specific guidelines), but use of changing facilities and showers should be avoided where possible, with participants asked to arrive ready to play and to shower at home
- Venues providing such indoor access should consider ensuring clear signage is in place so people can find their destination quickly, putting in place queue management or one-way flow measures, and limiting the number of customers in the building, overall and in any particular congestion areas – **particular emphasis should be put on clear signage for the staging of competitions in instances where participants and other visitors to the venue may not know their way around as well as regular users**
- Further guidance for the reopening of clubhouses and pavilions is [provided on the Government website](#)

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

- In line with the Government's guidance, the event timetable should be designed to permit only as many people as can be admitted whilst social distancing is maintained at the event at any given time. Event areas must be designed in order to maximise the available space for each participant and minimise the amount of time participants spend in proximity to each other.
- Ensure measures are in place to minimise encounters between people, including in car parks and at entrances
- Consider marking two metre distances at appropriate points, such as the entry gates to courts, referee desk and areas for the parents

## 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](#)
- Further information for those who may need to act as a 'first responder' role in a sports setting is available on the [Government website](#)
- Make hand sanitizers or wipes available for use at entrance/exit to venue/courts and buildings 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 - attendees should be advised to clean their hands with hand sanitiser after touching shared surfaces such as gates.
- Where safe and appropriate, doors and court gates could be left open during the competition
- Further guidance on maintaining hygiene at your venue is [available on the Government website](#)

## ENTRIES

- Operate online entry for all competitions including recreational competitions to ensure you do not exceed the allowed competition size, and also make it easy to record attendee details
- Take any payments online, and avoid handling cash
- Online bookings can be facilitated through Online Tournament Entry or ClubSpark Events Module (Recreational Competitions only)

## SECTION 2: COMPETITION ACTIVITY

### PRE-ATTENDANCE SYMPTOM CHECK

- Anyone attending a competition in any capacity should undergo a pre-attendance self-assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms [using the information on the NHS website](#) before leaving home. No-one should leave home to participate in tennis if they, or someone they live with, has symptoms of COVID -19, currently recognised as any of the following:
  - A high temperature
  - A new, continuous cough
  - A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste
- Should an individual have demonstrated any such symptoms, they must follow [NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation](#)
- **[UPDATED]** Anyone required to self-isolate for any other reason should also not exercise outside their own home or garden and should not exercise with others. This includes if they have been asked to isolate by NHS Test and Trace because they are a close contact of a known COVID-19 case, or if they have returned from a [travel destination not included on the Government's travel corridor list](#). In all of these instances, they should not leave their home to take part in a tennis competition

### NHS TEST & TRACE

- If someone who has played in your competition 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
- To support NHS Test and Trace, officials and competition organisers should keep a temporary record of all those on site for the competition for 21 days, in a way that is manageable, and assist NHS Test and Trace with requests for that data if needed

### COMPETITION ACTIVITY

- LTA approved competitions (Grade 2 to 6), team competitions and recreational competition can be staged – however any competitions staged must all continue to follow our Return to Competition Guidance, in line with the Government's [guidance on organising outdoor sport and physical activity participation events](#)
- Competitions can take place indoors and outdoors
- We aim to restart the LTA Regional & National Disability Competition Calendar from the end of September

## COMPETITION SIZE

- **[NEW] IMPORTANT:** While informal social play group size is limited to a maximum of six people by law (from Monday 14 September), the government has confirmed that **organised activity for larger groups, including tennis competitions, is permitted** as an exception to the limit of six. This is provided the activity is in accordance with the COVID-19 Secure guidelines published by the LTA for venues, coaches, players and competitions.
- The Government has made it clear that organised larger group tennis activity is only permitted where this is the case, and is subject to a thorough risk assessment and event delivery plan, taking into consideration the relevant LTA and Government guidance, and ensuring clear and appropriate risk mitigation measures are in place. Government has published detailed [guidance on organising outdoor sport and physical activity participation events](#).
- **[UPDATED]** Competition draw size may need to be limited depending on a range of factors including the COVID-19 secure capacity of the venue
- **[NEW]** We recommend that competition organisers very carefully consider the maximum capacity that they can operate at safely and whilst ensuring social distancing can be maintained at all times. This will vary across venues, and so competition organisers should produce detailed risk assessments and event delivery plans taking into account these factors
- Any individual groups should not interact with anyone outside of the group they are attending the venue with (e.g. players on another court)
- All groups are to be self-sufficient i.e. an official or competition organiser should not oversee two separate competition groups at a time, unless a court supervisor is appointed to each group and the referee minimises interactions as far as possible

## SCHEDULING ADVICE FOR ONE DAY EVENTS/MATCHPLAYS

- To minimise waiting time for players on site, a competition should ideally be organised so that the schedule is 1 round on, 1 round off i.e. for 4 courts you should accept a maximum of 16 players
- Consider only running 1 or 2 events per day based on the number of courts available and do not exceed the allowed size of a competition. For example on one day you could run 7 x 4 player round robin groups, 3 x 8 player draws, or 1 x 16 player draw & 1 x 8 player draw to keep within the max number
- Draw formats could be matchplay draws, round robins, compass draws or knock out with consolations.
- You can run singles and doubles events
- Carefully plan the schedule so you know how many people will be at the your competition and do not exceed the allowed size of a competition
- We suggest either Two Sets + MTB or Two FAST4 sets + MTB as the scoring format
- Consider the other needs of the club members and venue coaches – shorter days mean members and coaches can use the courts after matches have been completed or the venue may want to only provide so many courts leaving some for members or coaches
- In the event of a prolonged rain relay, officials and competition organisers are encouraged to make an early decision on



## RAIN DELAYS

- In the event of rain, attendees should use an umbrella or if they drove, return to their own vehicle, to maintain social distancing if there is insufficient outdoor cover from the rain to maintain social distancing.
- **Attendees should not gather indoors to shelter**
- In the event of an extended delay, officials and competition organisers are encouraged to make an early decision with regards to cancelling the competition to avoid attendees waiting around for a prolonged period

## MAINTAINING SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Social distancing should be observed by all those attending the competition. Officials and competition organisers should be fully aware of the latest Government advice on staying alert and safe (social distancing), which can be read [here](#)
- Participants should be advised to limit their interactions with anyone outside of those they are competing (e.g. players on other courts)
- Encourage players not to congregate on/around the court before & after play
- There should be no skin to skin contact for players. Racket taps are allowed but shaking hands or elbow alternatives are not permitted
- A socially distanced presentation can take place but Medals/Trophies should remain in boxes/packaging or players can take them out the boxes and be collected from the table (not passed). This should only be held outside.

## SUPERVISION & SPECTATING

### OUTDOORS

- Attendance by spectators and non-participating children should be avoided and minimised where possible
- Where attendance of a parent/guardian (non-participant) is required, or a carer for a disabled player, it is permitted, but should be off court
- Where possible, players should be restricted to one non-participant and, where possible, dependants should not be brought along
- Remind attendees who are accompanied by children that they are responsible for supervising them at all times and should ensure they follow social distancing guidelines
- Supporters, parents, and other spectators should remain socially distanced whilst attending events. Spectator groups must be restricted to discrete six person gathering limits and spread out, in line with government guidance
- Consider marking out specific boxes/areas for this purpose
- Spectators should not congregate in the clubhouse

### INDOORS

- All of the above guidance in place for outdoor competition also applies to indoor competition, but there is also some further additional guidance that applies for indoor competition
- The guidance to avoid or minimise attendance by spectators and non-participating children is especially the case within indoor facilities
- Consider controlling spectator numbers through pre-booking or other controls at access points
- Only parents/guardians watching a player on court at that time should be in the viewing area/balcony – others may wait in another appropriate designated area in a socially distant manner, or in their car

## EQUIPMENT

- Players are advised to bring and use their own equipment – where any equipment is shared it should be subject to thorough cleaning measures between use
- Any equipment used (e.g. mini tennis nets, orange lines, scoreboards) should be cleaned and wiped down afterwards
- New or fresh tennis balls are not need for each match, but extra care must be taken to ensure the players do not touch their faces during play, and anyone involved in the match should all clean their hands before the match and immediately after finishing (use alcohol gel if required)

## INCLUSION

- Although activity levels were at a record high prior to COVID-19, participation of disabled people in sport has been disproportionately impacted by the coronavirus outbreak – the staging of inclusive and disability-specific competitions is therefore particularly encouraged
- Competition organisers and officials are encouraged to read [guidelines published by Activity Alliance](#) to assist the reopening of activity in a welcoming and accessible way. Those running visually impaired tennis activity can also refer to [guidance on the British Blind Sport website](#)
- When running an inclusive event please provide competitors clear guidance on social distancing protocols, venue layout and rules surrounding guides/assistants. For more information please contact [disabilitycompetitions@lta.org.uk](mailto:disabilitycompetitions@lta.org.uk)

## COMMUNICATION

- Communicate with your players/parents clearly and regularly, making them aware in advance of the measures you are putting in place at your competition, and guidelines they are asked to follow
- Make participants aware that undertaking any activity, including tennis, has the potential for increased risk of transmission of COVID-19, and advise attendees to read [Government guidance on staying safe outside your home](#)
- Ensure a fact sheet is provided and/or ensure your emails highlight all guidance to players/parents
- Encourage attendees to bring their own hand sanitiser. Participants should be discouraged from bringing any equipment, baggage or clothing that is not essential for their participation.
- Ensure signage on guidelines for maintaining social distancing and promoting hygiene measures is clearly displayed (and ensure these remain up to date as restrictions change)
- Where possible, player/parent briefings should be provided in advance of the event day, with consideration given to suitable methods of communication to inform participants of any last-minute changes. Where any briefing is provided on the day, this should take place outdoors where social distancing can be observed. This should not be held indoors
- Posters that can be used to aid communication will be available from the COVID-19 section of the [Resource Library](#)