

OPERATOR GUIDANCE



 BARCLAYS


**FREE PARK
TENNIS** 

PRODUCT OVERVIEW

Barclays Free Park Tennis is a free, organised tennis session, designed to be delivered weekly, all year round, on a Saturday or a Sunday morning at 10–11am by two trained and DBS checked volunteer ‘activators’ at park sites across England, Wales and Scotland.

Sessions have been designed to help anyone play tennis. All children aged 12 or under must be accompanied by an adult. Sessions will be run on a **minimum** of three courts if the park has three tennis courts, however sessions can also be delivered with a reduced player capacity on two courts. Sessions will be bookable on the LTA website, with the operator uploading session availability via a new session category in the Coaching module on ClubSpark, which can be switched on by an LTA colleague.

The Barclays Free Park Tennis product will provide a fun session that appeals to the widest cross section of the public, whilst also providing an entry point into tennis for those that have not played before, or who have not played in many years.

A photograph of a man in a blue t-shirt and black shorts, smiling and holding a tennis racket on a blue tennis court. The background shows a chain-link fence and greenery.

Each park delivering Barclays Free Park Tennis will be sent an equipment pack containing:

- 8 adult rackets
- 20 junior rackets
- 150 balls, split equally between red, orange and green
- 25 court markers
- Barrier tape
- Clipboard
- First aid kit
- Mesh bag for ball storage
- Wheeled bag for ease of transport

PRODUCT AIMS

Barclays Free Park Tennis aims to provide an organised opportunity to play, that attracts players who don't have access to their own equipment or who don't have anyone to play with. It also aims to provide a free opportunity to play tennis, particularly aimed at those who have not played before or have not played for a considerable time.

The ambition is for weekly Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions to be delivered in hundreds more parks across England, Wales and Scotland over the coming two years, leading to 100,000 players participating that could be led to other opportunities to play. This will also result in over 2,500 activators being trained, providing an opportunity to grow a coaching workforce.



FEATURES

Free to book and play

Delivered weekly all year round on a Saturday or Sunday morning at 10–11am

Sessions bookable on ClubSpark and will appear on the LTA online booking platform

Sessions are open to all, appealing to families and female audiences

Operator can liaise with the local authority to identify opportunities to target key user groups

Sessions delivered by trained volunteer Barclays Free Park Tennis ‘activators’

Minimal equipment required to deliver sessions, with free equipment pack provided

BENEFITS

- Sessions will attract players who are unable to pay for coaching sessions, or court bookings
- Minimal barriers to book/play resulting in an increased database of players

- Provides a uniform and consistent product that can be advertised nationally

- Enhances the customer journey to court
- Allows players to easily find their nearest session
- Promotes other opportunities to book at your park to players

- Opportunity to attract high numbers of players on to court
- Chance to promote other opportunities to play to a larger number of players
- Hits the audience groups most likely to attend

- Allows sessions with bespoke/more specific target audiences to be delivered

- Creates a new volunteer workforce with opportunity to upskill to qualified coaches
- Builds community engagement
- Promotes engagement from other existing organisations

- Allows players to try tennis without buying equipment in advance
- Enables players who don't have equipment to play



INSURANCE COVER

Insurance for the delivery of Barclays Free Park Tennis is covered by the LTA's insurance policy with Howdens. This covers all coaches and activators to deliver Barclays Free Park Tennis at any park site providing the following pre-requisite conditions have been met:

- All activators, including volunteers and coaches, have completed the LTA's online training
- All activators have an LTA approved, valid DBS check or Tennis Scotland approved, valid PVG check for Scottish park sites
- All sessions are delivered in accordance with the product guidelines, including:
 - Two activators are present for each session
 - Barclays Free Park Tennis content is delivered
 - The park is an LTA registered venue

We recommend that all activators shadow the delivery of Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions by a coach or more experienced activator, before being the lead deliverer themselves.

Howdens also have a page online specifically for LTA Accredited Coach Insurance with more detail.

DEPLOYMENT GUIDELINES

DBS/PVG

Activators must complete an enhanced DBS check completed by LTA, or signed up to the DBS Update Service, within the last three years. We recommend that all volunteers sign up to the DBS Update Service within 30 days of completing their DBS check. This is free of charge for volunteers, allows for other organisations such as the local authority or park operator to view changes to your certificate, and can be set up to automatically renew each year. In Scotland this will be a PVG check.

SAFEGUARDING

Barclays Free Park Tennis activators must complete the safeguarding training aspect of the online training or have undertaken the safeguarding training within the last three years through the LTA.

FIRST AID

Whilst not a mandatory LTA requirement, the LTA recommends where practically possible that there is a first aider on site that is able to respond should an incident happen. This could be the person delivering the Barclays Free Park Tennis session, or another individual on site. In all instances the first aid kit provided with the equipment bag should be available on site, this should be kept re-stocked with supplies by the park operator.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The operator must complete a full and thorough risk assessment as part of LTA Venue Registration, and is responsible for completing these periodically throughout the year. Barclays Free Park Tennis activators should conduct a brief inspection of the court surface, and surrounding fencing to ensure there are no obvious hazards before play commences. There is a Risk Assessment template for activators to use in the activator portal which will be available to download once training is complete.

RECRUITING ACTIVATORS AND PLAYERS

An editable 'Activator Role Advert' can be downloaded from the [Parks Support](#) section of the LTA website. You can use this to post location-specific Barclays Free Park Tennis opportunities on volunteer websites such as:

- [The Big Help Out](#)
- [UK Sport](#)
- [Mumsnet](#)
- [Do IT](#)
- [CharityJob](#)
- [LinkedIn](#)

In addition to the above websites that rely on potential volunteers finding your activator role, there are also many existing activity, sport and health groups that are set up to help you find volunteers to deliver sporting opportunities. These include:

- [StreetGames](#)
- [Active Partnerships](#)
- **Local volunteer centres – [NVCO](#)**
- **Local authority volunteer databases**
- **Care partners, such as Parkinson's UK**
- **Friends of the park groups**
- **Local clubs may have members who wish to volunteer**
- **LTA County Associations**
- **Many businesses offer rewards and incentives to employees to volunteer**

It may also be possible to contact (or ask the data owners to contact on your behalf) potential volunteers who are already on databases of people who already take part in sport, activity or volunteering in the community. These could include:

- Local authority sports/activity databases
- Existing Barclays Local Tennis Leagues players or competitive tennis players



You may also find that **young adults in education** are looking for opportunities to volunteer, to **build their CVs and learn skills that transfer into the workplace.**

Why not target people from:

- BTEC Sports Courses
- The University Tennis Co-Ordinator
- Nearby Universities
- School PTAs

The LTA will also be sharing the opportunity of volunteering at Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions to players, existing volunteers, Level 1 coaches, and to attendees of major events.

One of the most effective ways of recruiting volunteers is for a coach or operator to directly suggest or ask a person, usually in a face-to-face situation. We therefore recommend approaching existing attendees of Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions or other coaching sessions at the park in your recruitment campaign particularly if there is an existing and engaging team of volunteers to join.

In addition to the above we have a range of digital and printable assets that are downloadable from [My Tennis Toolkit](#) to help you advertise your sessions to both activators and Players.

There are examples of how other operators have successfully recruited Activators in [this](#) document.

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HOW TO BECOME AN ACTIVATOR

1A

Some potential activators may find the opportunity via the LTA website or volunteer websites, but may not know the park name they wish to volunteer at. These people can complete the onboarding journey using the name of the local authority they wish to volunteer in. We will then work to link the Barclays Free Park Tennis activator with the operator of the parks in that authority.

1B

Other potential Activators will be discovered by yourselves and will know the name of the park they wish to volunteer at. You can direct them to sign up to an LTA account and complete the activator on-boarding process by giving them this link: www.lta.org.uk/register/?primaryRole=Parks+Activators

2

The activator will need to create an LTA account and complete the onboarding process, which only takes a few minutes.

3

Activator completes the 2–3 hour online training course and undertakes an LTA volunteer DBS check which usually takes less than 14 days to be returned.

4

Operators will be notified via automated email that the activator has completed the training and has a satisfactory DBS check.

5

The activator will be sent a “next steps” email including a link to sign up to create a ClubSpark account.

For some activators, their first session can be a daunting experience. To make sure activators feel confident and competent, the LTA recommend that new activators shadow/assist the delivery of two sessions before going on to lead a session themselves.

The person that leads those ‘shadow sessions’ should be trained and familiar with the content of Barclays Free Park Tennis to ensure they can role model what good delivery looks like, such as a coach or an experienced activator.

If this is not possible within your organisations stock of parks, your local LTA representative will be able to introduce you to the nearest opportunity. This is not a mandatory requirement but will help with quality and satisfaction for activators, operators and participants.

6

Operator adds the activator to their ClubSpark account in the ‘Administrators’ section using the ‘Coaching’ role. This will allow activators to have access to the weekly registers, remove players from sessions and cancel a session.

7

Once the operator adds the activator to a Barclays Free Park Tennis session on ClubSpark, the activators listed will receive a branded hoodie, sent to the delivery address they provided in the onboarding process.

8

Operators will assign one activator to receive the equipment bag and should be identified as the lead activator on ClubSpark within that session. Activators will be notified via their platform if this applies to them, with the equipment being sent to the same address as their hoodie. Operators should discuss this with the activator prior to adding the activator to the session.

A detailed support guide to onboard activators can be found [here](#).



HOW TO SET UP SESSIONS ON CLUBSPARK

Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions must be set up on ClubSpark using the Barclays Free Park Tennis module, which can be made available to you by your LTA Delivery Manager – please let them know which Parks / ClubSpark accounts you wish this to be made available for.

ClubSpark have produced guidance for both operators and activators to assist with setting up sessions, taking registers, and supporting your players which is available [here](#).

The LTA are working to help retain activators, but in order for us to do this well, activators must be accurately assigned as delivering each individual session. On ClubSpark, you should add all qualified activators to your coaching team, and then assign the two specific activators that are delivering, to each weekly session. This will allow us to know which activators are actively delivering at which parks and take steps to help you to retain them for longer, and present other opportunities that may be of interest to them.



LAUNCHING ACROSS A NETWORK OF SITES

In order to launch Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions, gain traction and attract volunteers and players, we recommend the model outlined below.

Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions must be delivered by a minimum of two people who have both completed the online training. This could be made up of one coach and one activator, or two activators.

We also know that many activators could be recruited from existing participants of the Barclays Free Park Tennis session, hence why launching the sessions – possibly with a coach assisting delivery – as soon as possible is of vital importance. However, to provide a consistent player experience, and to upskill and provide vital experience to the activator, we recommend the activator rather than the coach is the lead deliverer at as many sessions as possible.

Operators should work with their LTA Delivery Manager to prioritise which of the parks within their portfolio to launch first, before coaches move on to other parks to launch additional FPT sessions. This could be based on a combination of Indices of Multiple Deprivation score, likely number of attendees at the sessions, or local authority requirements.

Operators will need to set expectations and minimum standards for activators to match those of your business. These may include:

- Who to contact in case of an emergency cancellation of a session - should the activator contact you, or should they cancel the session on ClubSpark.
 - We have Produced a Risk Guidance document that is available for activators to download to mobile devices to to print and take to the sessions, which provides guidance on what to do in a variety of situations. This is available in the Activator Portal once the activator has completed training.
- We recommend that should the need to cancel a Barclays Free Park Tennis session at late notice arises, this is completed on ClubSpark at least 90 minutes before the session was due to start. This will then allow time for the platform to email all participants, and for them to receive this email before leaving their homes.
- How activators confirm with you that they are able to deliver the session you have assigned them to.
- How far in advance you need notice if activators are unable to deliver a session.
- How equipment is collected at the end of sessions to avoid losing balls or rackets etc., and how it's transferred from one activator to another if required for next week's session.



STORAGE OF EQUIPMENT

For some parks, the storage of Barclays Free Park Tennis equipment is worth consideration – especially if you have a team of activators, with different people delivering sessions each week. By offering your activators a place to store equipment on or near the Barclays Free Park Tennis location, you remove the need to transfer or transport equipment to and from the park each week.

The examples below have been used in existing parks to great effect.

- Use existing infrastructure. Parks often have small buildings in them that may be largely disused, but could safely store Barclays Free Park Tennis equipment between sessions. Local Authority Officers or Park Rangers could advise on such opportunities.
- Other options may be to collaborate with any local community groups, cafés or businesses that may operate in the park, to explore any storage options with them.
- On Court Storage Boxes. There are a range of on court storage option available, ranging from smaller, weatherproof heavy-duty polypropylene boxes to larger metal containers, both of which are lockable, can be secured to the court surface or fencing, and could safely contain Barclays Free Park Tennis Equipment. Kit bags measure approximately 100cm long, 60cm high and 60cm wide.

In either example above, if the equipment was secured with a coded lock or padlock, all activators could be given this code, granting them easy access to the required equipment each time they deliver sessions.

Note: It is worth considering that that different solutions of storing equipment, can negatively impact its performance and longevity: for example balls may bounce less when cold, and damp can impact tennis racket grips.

DEVELOPING YOUR ACTIVATOR TEAM

You can keep activators engaged with the delivery of Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions in the following ways:

1. DISCOVER THEIR MOTIVATIONS

Try to find out the reasons your activators have volunteered so you can help them to get what they want from the experience.

2. COMMUNICATE REGULARLY

- Keep them updated on news and developments.
- Check in frequently and provide volunteers with the opportunity to raise any concerns, issues or ask questions.
- Enable them to share what they enjoy about their role, and areas they perhaps would like to review or develop, or new experiences they would like to try.
- Listen to any ideas they may have on how they would like to fulfil the role, encourage creativity, or how the experience could be improved.
- Involve them in decision-making. Consider inviting them to attend meetings with your wider coaching workforce.

3. ENCOURAGE THEM

Let your volunteers know that they are making a difference! Volunteers like to feel that they have made an impact, so make sure they know! As well as thanks, always share any member survey results, fundraising achievements or community recognition awards.

4. RECOGNISE THEIR CONTRIBUTION

As simple as it may sound, thanking activators for their time and effort is often forgotten about or overlooked, and is unfortunately, one of the main reasons why sports volunteers quit. Ways to recognise volunteers include:

- Volunteer award evenings- end of season events, or to coincide with National Volunteers' Week, are a great opportunity to recognise the hard work and commitment of your volunteers
- Regular recognition and appreciation of volunteers in newsletters, or other communications- this can be either as individuals, or all the volunteers collectively
- Recognising a 'Volunteer of the Week/Month' through social media platforms

- Personal thank-you letters/emails- either from someone who has benefited from the volunteering, or perhaps from someone in a leadership position
- Regular ‘shout-outs’ or claps at activity sessions- this is often most impactful coming from the participants who have benefitted from the volunteers’ efforts

5. MAKE IT FUN!

Volunteers want the time they give to be enjoyable! Think about how you can make being part of your volunteering team fun and exciting. This might be through social opportunities so volunteers can stay more connected and work better as a team, or through a WhatsApp group to help volunteers feel supported and that they are part of a fun group of people. Evidence shows that those who enjoy their volunteering, have met more people or made friends through volunteering, keep giving their time for longer.

6. OFFER CHANCES TO DEVELOP

Demonstrating commitment to the development of your volunteers can lead to a greater sense of engagement and value by the volunteer.

Most activators will only take responsibility for running sessions and complete registers, whilst the operator manages the up-loading of sessions on to ClubSpark and booking courts etc. In some cases where an operator has developed a very engaged activator team, the operator may wish to grant the activator additional access on ClubSpark to complete these tasks and take more ownership of the admin of the Barclays Free Park Tennis sessions. To allow this, activators will need to be assigned the “Court Booking” rights at the required venue within their ClubSpark profile.

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