

# COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines

Effective 5 June 2020





## COVID-19 Community Tennis Guidelines for Continued Play

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#### Effective from 1 June

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](#) a further easing of restrictions from 11:59pm Sunday 31 May. Based on these new directions Tennis New South Wales has provided the following recommendations under 'Level 2' 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 a further easing of restrictions.

From Monday 1 June 2020, the following will be allowed:

- [travel to regional NSW for a holiday](#)
- [visits to museums, galleries and libraries](#)
- [pubs, clubs, cafes and restaurants](#) can have up to 50 customers

Rules that continue to apply include:

- the [4 square metre rule](#)
- [physical distancing](#)
- [hygiene and safety requirements for businesses](#)

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



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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.

*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.*



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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**

Tennis NSW encourages all participants to download the COVIDSafe app to help speed up the process of identifying anyone who has been in close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19. Learn more: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/apps-and-tools/covidsafe-app>

It is highly recommended that all clubs keep records of who attends your activities and their contact details.

Tennis NSW recommends each business and community tennis facility prepare a COVID Safety Plan. You will need to ensure your COVID safety plan is available for inspection by authorized officers if required to do so.

We recommend that any volunteer-managed clubs or venues not in a position to operate within the guidelines or in a position to develop a robust COVID Safety Plan consider engaging a qualified Coach or operator to manage and oversee tennis operations.

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



Should the club or venue be comfortable that they can effectively maintain tennis activities at the venue, then the following guidelines should be observed:

- Clubhouses or adjoining facilities can be re-opened allowing for at least 4 square metres per person, to a maximum of 100 people – users should also continue to adhere to social distancing protocols
- Outdoor premises to allow no more than 500 people at any one time
- Where available, the use of automated / online booking and court access systems are strongly recommended to assist with the recording of users / visitors to your venue.
- Place signage near entrances with the social distancing rules and etiquette on them
- Ensure regular cleaning and sterilization of the venue in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines
- Social spaces including outdoor seating and shaded areas can be re-opened – users should continue to adhere to social distancing measures
- Showers and change rooms can be re-opened
- Toilets can be re-opened
- All indoor gyms are to remain closed

### **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, 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

- Each venue should develop their own COVID Safety Plan taking into account all of the tennis activities your venue intends to offer. Each COVID Safety Plan should take into account the current Public Health Order which can be found [here](#).
- Group tennis activities (for example: coaching sessions or competitive matches) can include **no more than 10 participants, plus one coach, per court.**
- Multiple group activities can take place within the one venue (for example: multiple coaching sessions or multiple competitive matches between two teams).
- 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
- Promote prevention techniques and lead by example
- Implement ways to minimise contact for both participants and coaching staff
- Plan for increased levels of staff/volunteer absences
- Keep your team and your participants informed of the actions you are taking
- Keep records of anyone using your venue and their contact details
- Payments to be made online or via EFTPOS – avoid handling cash

## Coaching & Squads

- Maximum of 10 players plus one coach per court per session
- Group coaching may recommence
- Squad training may recommence
- 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
- Minimise student handling of coaching equipment e.g. balls, cones, markers
- 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.



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## *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.