



Framework for Playing Tennis during COVID-19

September 2020

Republic of Ireland



Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to extraordinary demands on every one of us as individuals, as parents, as families, as workers, as business owners, as players and as clubs. We have never had to deal with the demands and complexities which COVID-19 brings to even one area of our lives, not to mind all areas of our lives at the same time.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been characterised by the European Centre for Disease Protection and Control as a “marathon and not a sprint”.

There is no real precedent on how to deal with a global pandemic of this nature and scale. Governments and consequently National Governing Bodies of Sport here and all over the world are making decisions based on the best information available at a given point in time. It is changing constantly.

While, at the beginning, it was arguably “easier” to focus on the disease suppression and containment, life is more complicated than that. The longer this disease is with us, the more complex the issues and the higher the impact of the ongoing restrictions on every aspect of our lives.

We have learned a lot over the last six months and these learnings are informing our future approach:

- The power to control this pandemic is in our hands – individually and collectively
- People in Ireland and within our sport are willing to follow public health advice to protect themselves and others
- Cooperation and solidarity across our sport is vital

if this disease is to be contained

- No single preventative measure is adequate to control virus transmission – what matters is a combination
- There is an ongoing need to minimise the risk of cases/clusters and respond decisively when new threats/clusters emerge
- If the disease spreads in the community, it will have the greatest impact on the vulnerable and this will impact our members, many of whom are of an older age profile
- Rapid identification and contact tracing of new cases is central to the government’s response

The Republic of Ireland as a country is moving from a short-term emergency response approach to COVID-19, to a medium-term approach to managing risk and repairing the damage that COVID-19 has inflicted on society.

To this end, a Framework for Restrictive Measures has been developed and released by the Irish Government to help us to go about our daily lives as much as possible, while managing the behaviour of the virus.

The framework accounts for periods where there is low incidence of the disease, with isolated clusters, low community transmission, through to situations where there is high or rapidly increasing incidence, widespread community transmission and the pandemic is escalating rapidly in Ireland and globally.

The framework recognises the need for society and

business to be allowed to continue as normally as possible. The Government’s strategy, in line with the public health advice, is suppression.

In response to the Government’s Framework our team, in consultation with Sport Ireland and its Return to Sport Expert Group, and in line with Government Guidelines, have developed a framework of restrictive measures that is specific to Tennis in the Republic of Ireland.

The protocols and restrictions reflect each of the relevant levels and there are clear differences in sporting activity between the higher and lower levels of the plan.

The framework is also designed so that either national or county level restrictions can be applied.

We are asking that clubs make themselves aware of and implement the measures contained within the framework to help safeguard staff and members. This will allow all of us to play safely and keep our communities safe while the threat of COVID-19 exists.

It is designed to allow individuals, families, coaches and club administrators to better understand, anticipate and prepare for and implement the measures government might introduce to stop escalation of the transmission of the disease.

Our measures and procedures are under constant review and updated as advice from government, health authorities and governing bodies evolves in line with the gradual lifting of social restrictions.

High Performance

The framework outlines that certain exceptions exist for Professional & Elite Sport athletes. High Performance is defined by Sport Ireland and Tennis Ireland as covering those who are:

- Professional Sports People or Sports people who participate within professional competition
- A Member of a high-performance team funded by Tennis Ireland e.g. Davis and Fed Cup
- Those who compete at major international events including European and World Champions, Olympic and Paralympic Games, Grand Slam, ATP, WTA, ITF Men / Women's World Tour

Coaches, Trainers or essential support personnel are also included in respect to the activity referred above.

Patrons / Spectators:

The limits on patrons/spectators refer to those individuals who attend an event purely to spectate. These individuals do not have a specific or active role/function in the delivery of the event. Players, Officials, Support Personnel, Media etc. are not included in Spectator Figures.

Domestic travel

In certain Levels of the framework, people will be advised to stay in their county or other defined geographical area apart from work, education and other essential purposes, if appropriate. Where Sporting Activity is allowed i.e. for professional, elite

competition or training, travel will be permissible by participants and support personnel to fulfil these pre-existing fixtures / activities.

Travel for sports training or competition outside of these purposes should not take place. In addition, travel should not take place to spectate sport when there is a 'no travel' notice.

Indoor / Outdoor Limits for Sporting Activity

Outdoor: Further clarification on the previous figures of 200 is currently being sought and will be circulated in due course. Until then, the previous maximum number of 200 should not be exceeded.

Indoor: Additional work will need to be conducted with the sector on determining indoor figures which consider the size of the venue and the nature of activities. At present the previous maximum number of 50 should not be exceeded.

'Pod' System

- Organised Tennis training / coaching / activity / play can continue to do so in multiple groups or "pods" once sufficient space is available and strict public health protocols are in place. Following advice, Tennis Ireland is recommending that no more than 6 players can operate as a pod per court. An exception would be for red ball courts where up to 8 players can operate as a pod.
- The use of multiple pod's is to assist with minimising the number of people in a group while acknowledging that some outdoor facilities

have the capacity to cater for larger numbers of people in a safe manner and within public health guidelines. People participating in pod training can be from different households.

- The number of pods in a given facility or area will depend on the overall size of space available.
- The space between pods will depend on the nature, duration and intensity of the session but it should be clearly evident that the pods are independent groups not interacting with one another. At a very minimum Social Distancing of 2m between pods should be implemented.
- Depending on the frequency of activity (i.e. multiple times in a week) it may be helpful for participants to stay within the same pod.
- A coach or instructor may oversee more than one pod and should be counted in the overall numbers.
- The coach should not move freely between pods but rather oversee the activity of the pods.

Playing / Coaching during Levels 2 & 3

Level 2 Training / Playing / Coaching

Outdoors: Training can take place in pods of up to 6 players per court

Indoors: Training, exercise and dance classes can take place in pods of up to 6 inside (exemption for High Performance Players / Teams).

Level 3 Training

Outdoors: Non-contact training only in pods of up to 6 players per court.

Indoors: Indoor Courts should be closed. (While not explicitly noted in the Framework an exemption extends for high performance players with regards to indoor training)

Gyms / Swimming Pools

Tennis Ireland is mindful that a number of its member clubs have Gyms or Swimming Pools within their operation and the guidance is as follows;

Level 2 Gyms & Exercise:

These can open with protective measures, taking

account of public health advice, including social distancing. Pod systems can be used to facilitate Group Activity where space is available. Maximum limits for indoor venues will remain at 50 at present.

Level 2 Swimming Pools:

These can open with protective measures, taking account of public health advice, including social distancing. Pod systems can be used to facilitate Group Activity and lessons where space is available. Maximum limits for indoor venues will remain at 50 at present.

Level 3: Level 3 allows for individual training only, no organised Group Activity including Exercise classes should take place.

Swimming Lessons: Additional Clarification on whether Swimming Lessons can take place in Level 3 has been sought. In the meantime, they should be treated as Group Activity and not take place during Level 3.

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Booking	In Advance. Online or by Phone	In Advance. Online or by Phone	In Advance. Online or by Phone
Type of Play	Singles and Doubles Casual play and Competitive Play subject to protective measures	Singles and Doubles Casual play and Competitive Play subject to protective measures.	Outdoors Only – Singles and Doubles Casual Play Only No competitions, matches or events to take place. (exemption for High Performance Players) Play subject to protective measures
Who may play	Members, Members Guests and Visitors U18's can play without supervision but clubs have discretion to insist on their own requirements. Club organised programmes should adhere to TI Safeguarding and COVID -19 Protective measures	Members, Members Guest and Visitors Players over 16 can play without supervision of Parent or Guardian but clubs have discretion to insist on their own requirements. Players under 16 should be supervised by a parent or guardian. Club organised programmes should adhere to TI Safeguarding and COVID -19 Protective measures	Members and Members Guests Only Players Under 16 to play with supervision of a parent or guardian Club organised programmes should adhere to TI Safeguarding protocols

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Clubhouse	<p>Toilet facilities, locker room, shop</p> <p>The opening of the Club Restaurant and Bar is subject to government guidelines</p>	<p>Toilet facilities, locker room, shop.</p> <p>The opening of the Club Restaurant and Bar is subject to government guidelines</p>	<p>Toilet facilities, locker room, shop.</p> <p>The opening of the Club Restaurant and Bar is subject to government guidelines</p>
Coaching	<p>Coach should prepare a risk assessment for approval by the Club.</p> <p>Maximum of 6 players per court and subject to social distancing measures and Player coach ratio of 1:12</p> <p>8 players per court for red ball activities, subject to social distancing</p> <p>Adequate supervision should be in place to assist and ensure social distancing is maintained.</p> <p>Provincial and National Programmes can be delivered subject to social distancing requirements.</p>	<p>Coach should prepare a risk assessment for approval by the Club.</p> <p>Maximum of 6 players per court and subject to social distancing measures and Player coach ratio of 1:12</p> <p>8 players per court for red ball activities, subject to social distancing</p> <p>Adequate supervision should be in place to assist and ensure social distancing is maintained.</p> <p>Provincial and National Programmes can be delivered subject to social distancing requirements.</p>	<p>Coach should prepare a risk assessment for approval by the Club.</p> <p>For outdoor coaching a maximum of 6 players per court and subject to social distancing measures.</p> <p>No Indoor Coaching</p> <p>Adequate supervision should be in place to assist and ensure social distancing is maintained.</p> <p>Provincial and National Programmes to operate outdoors only</p>
Court Type	Outdoor and Indoor Subject to strict protocols	Outdoor and Indoor subject to strict protocols	<p>Outdoor Only</p> <p>Indoor Courts Closed</p>
National Training Centre	<p>NTC to open for access by Public</p> <p>Provincial and National Programmes can operate subject to social distancing requirements. Ratio of 1:6</p> <p>Indoor and Outdoor Courts</p> <p>Open for nominated Performance Players</p> <p>Gym equipment utilised subject to cleaning</p>	<p>NTC to open for access by Public</p> <p>Provincial and National Programmes can operate subject to social distancing requirements. Ratio of 1:6 per court</p> <p>Indoor and Outdoor Courts</p> <p>Open for nominated Performance Players</p> <p>Gym equipment utilised subject to cleaning</p>	<p>Provincial and National Programmes to operate outdoors subject to social distancing. Ratio of 1:4 per court</p> <p>Indoor Courts Open for nominated Performance Players Only</p> <p>Gym equipment utilised subject to cleaning protocols</p>

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	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Competitions	Internal, Open and League Competitions permitted A maximum of 200 spectators can attend outdoor matches or games. A maximum of 100 spectators can attend indoor matches or games.	Internal, Open and League Competitions permitted Up to 100 patrons/spectators outdoors (social distancing measures to apply) Up to 50 patrons/spectators indoors	All Competitions postponed No matches or events to take place



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