

Covid-19 Action Plan for Clubs

KEEPING MEMBERS ENGAGED DURING LOCKDOWN

With adult members not allowed access the club during the current lockdown, the Tennis Ireland Development Team put their heads together to compile ideas on how to keep these adults and the club “in touch”. We also developed some thoughts on promoting junior tennis during this period.

Senior members - active and connected

1. Invite members to a **brainstorming meeting** online. Present your best ideas and look for the members ideas.
2. Engage regularly using social media platforms, Mailchimp, club website, Facebook etc. Younger members may have valuable expertise with platforms such as TikTok and Instagram.
3. Use an **‘idea box’** on your website or social media to get ongoing member suggestions.
4. Engage with the **club coach** and work with them to initiate projects – they are the professionals.

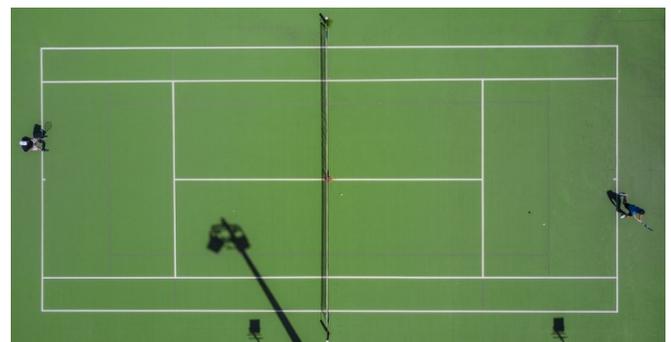
Junior Tennis

With the restriction on adult play leaving courts free in the evening hours, **a real opportunity** exists to grow youth tennis over the lockdown weeks.

1. A great chance to get junior members who are not attending regular coaching sessions **back on court**. Offer something that differs from the normal activities. This is a good time to experiment – has the club

previously offered Cardio style sessions for younger players?

2. **Reach out to schools**. Offer non-member sessions in the evening for pupils, and use them as an opportunity to recruit new members. Ask schools within walking distance if they would like to run PE sessions on the courts. A good opportunity to develop relations with the schools. Some schools are tight on space and see the benefit of getting the children out of the school and into a new and exciting environment. It could generate some revenue for the club. Your Local Sports Partnership may support the initiative with some funding.
3. As only juniors are currently permitted to play, consider special offers for membership. Either for a few weeks or the remainder of the membership year. Example: Sligo Tennis Club launched a ‘Lockdown Lessons Deal’ where new juniors could try out coaching for a special lockdown rate. The club had a 20% increase in their coaching programme numbers.



4. St Anne’s Park Tennis Club in Dublin introduced a **monthly membership deal** – thus generating revenue and attracting poten-

tial new members who may not yet want to commit for a full year.

5. Work with your **coaching team** to add extra sessions like ‘tots tennis’, match play sessions, doubles skills and tactics – take full advantage of court availability.

Teens

1. While keeping child protection to the fore, remember that your youth members will want to hear from **their peers** at the club.
2. Teen drop out is a recognized issue in tennis. Can we use the current exceptional circumstances, when other outlets for teens are limited, to bring **previous players/members back** to the club?
3. Look for opportunities to involve current teen members. They could produce a short video ‘*A Day at our Club*’ introducing the benefits of the club for their peer group. (A video could also be done for the club as a whole - show members and prospective members what goes into the upkeep of the club and the passion people have).

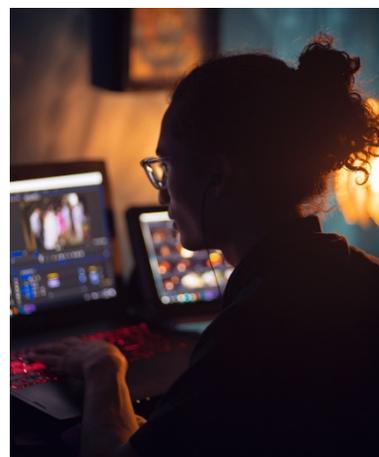
Tennis Ireland has opened up our **Play and Stay Assistant** online course to all teenagers free of charge. More: <https://www.tennisireland.ie/coaches/play-and-stay-assistant/>

Online activities

1. Plan and deliver a schedule of virtual activities for all members - club webinars, online quizzes with questions on the rules of the game, tennis history, ‘name the player’ etc.
2. Encourage senior members to set up their own online fun evenings - karaoke, charades, book clubs, music clubs, cookery advice.
3. Utilise **expertise within the membership**. Invite members with the necessary skills and qualifications (e.g. physiotherapists) to be guest speakers. Yoga, nutrition, physical health advice and fitness classes and challenges (track with fitness apps,

and incorporate prizes). Helps members prepare for the ‘return to play’ from both a physical and mental standpoint.

4. Incorporate activities parents can do with their children at home.
5. Run joint online events with other clubs and other sports.
6. Arrange **virtual challenges** using apps such as ‘Strava’ - ‘Walk to Wimbledon’, ‘Swim the Channel’. Can be completed at member’s regular playing time so they remain ‘connected’.
7. Coaches can run Zoom sessions for adults. Subject choice is very wide. It could be, technical, tactical, mental or physical. Given that players cannot get on court, popular subjects might be “Maintaining fitness for the return to tennis” or “Visualization for Tennis”.
8. A coach could send **short video clips** or still photographs of top players in action. Choose clips that illustrate important teaching points e.g. “*Note how Federer is fully stretched when he contacts the ball on the serve*”.
9. ‘Jigsaw’ (<https://jigsaw.ie>) provides free support to young people between 12 and 25, youth leaders and parents on mental health issues. Jigsaw could deliver as part of the virtual schedule an online sessions.



Community Outreach

Position your club on the community map as ‘people-friendly’.

1. Ask members to get involved supporting the elderly, with charitable or environment-friendly organisations. Work with meals on wheels, VDP, Oxfam, recycling, energy saving.
2. Involve the teen members in the outreach projects. They will learn the importance of helping those who are less privileged. Charitable activities can be linked to school projects or Gaisce.

Show your appreciation of member support

It's important that your members continue to feel a part of the club community and are kept engaged and motivated. The committee should **thank members for their support**. Retention is key and members who feel appreciated and wanted are more likely to stay around. Research shows that the cost of recruiting a new member is a lot more than retaining a current one. *"Acquiring a new customer is anywhere from five to 25 times more expensive than retaining an existing one."*

Promotion

1. Contact local newspapers and radio stations, which normally report a lot on sports. Feed 'good-news' stories to these local media.
2. Connect your story to the big story (health). Stress tennis as **one of the healthiest sports** to play - non-contact and naturally incorporating social distancing.
3. Let the media know about any community outreach programmes you might be delivering.
4. Start preparing text and photos now for a publicity blitz when the club is about to reopen.
5. Ask members to use their personal social media accounts to share positive stories and images about the club.



6. Local Sports Partnerships are also looking for interesting stories to promote. Get in touch with your local LSP (<https://www.sportireland.ie/participation/local-sports-partnerships>) and tag them on social media.

Club History

1. Take a look back at days gone by. Pull together a **'club video'** showing success on the court, fun times, happy events and celebrations. Include pictures of junior and senior team events, celebratory evenings, captain's events, league wins, championships, club anniversaries, Christmas competitions. Ask members to contribute from their own photo files and records.
2. Run weekly 'Throw-back Thursday' style campaigns on social media.



Catch up on off court plans

Now is a good time to work on projects that the club has not had a chance to develop during busier times (e.g. Tennis Ireland's Clubmark scheme).

1. Create a strategy for the recession that threatens in the year ahead.
2. Are your **Safeguarding** requirements up to date? Check your Risk Assessment and Safeguarding Statements.
3. Plan a big event for next year when it's (hopefully) safe. One theme might be celebrating and thanking members who are frontline workers.
4. Review your Constitution, the roles and responsibilities of committee members, and club policies and procedures.
5. Review, adapt and update the club development plan - important for **Sports Capital Grant** applications.
6. Are some groups isolated or not as connected as they might be to the overall club? If so, work to bring them 'into the fold'.

ClubSpark

Are you looking at updating your club website, court booking system and on-court programme scheduling?

We are working with ClubSpark to develop and offer Clubs access to a comprehensive Club Management Platform in the coming months.

For more information: contact your Development Officer.



Zoom and other online platforms

Zoom and similar platforms have been a lifesaver for many of us this year. Tennis clubs have benefited by being able to conduct committee meetings workshops, webinars, AGM's etc.

We have provided links to some good Zoom tutorials below.

The Development Team has some expertise with Zoom, and can **advise clubs** on this popular platform. More: contact your Development Officer.

LINKS AND CONTACTS

Zoom Tutorials

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360029527911>

Facebook - YouTube - Zoom - Instagram

<https://app.box.com/s/p4sjqx5m6beuc98q8-grd7cx8glab442w>

Club Matters Website

<https://learn.sportenglandclubmatters.com/course/view.php?id=71>

Tennis Ireland Guidelines Level 5

<https://app.box.com/s/6f94mlz1wfi2kjyc59zqa3-grgpqgjv56>

YOUR RDO

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