



# COVID-19 Guidance for Tennis Tournament Organisers in Northern Ireland

during the Pathway out of Restrictions

**These updated Guidelines will come into effect in  
Northern Ireland from 23rd April 2021**





## Return to Restricted Competition

**Always follow the Government Guidelines of  
Good Hand Hygiene – Respiratory Etiquette – Social Distancing.**

### Safe every step of the way

Tennis is a Sport for Life. We know playing tennis provides great mental and physical health benefits for our players. We, therefore, must ensure that tennis is only played within a safe environment.

Competition is at the heart of our sport and is something our clubs do so well. Working together in line with the relevant government guidelines we can ensure that this continues to be the case. This practical guide, prepared by our team in line with Government guidelines, outlines the robust measures Tennis Ireland would like clubs based in Northern Ireland to implement and maintain to help safeguard staff and members during the current phase of reopening.

These measures cover each step in running a Club or Open Competition. They should be used for all forms of competitive play in Northern Ireland and until further notice.

Clubs should refer and adhere to the protocols contained in the Plan for Playing Tennis during Level 2 of “The NI Executive’s Pathway Out of Restrictions” document whilst running competitions. Players should refer and adhere to the protocols contained in the COVID-19 Guidance for Tennis Players whilst competing.

## Tournament Organisers

**Clubs should consult with their insurance provider to determine that they are covered to run Tournaments during this period.**

### Tournament Committee

- The tournament committee should be aware of all Tennis Ireland and Club guidelines in relation to COVID-19. (linked above)
- The Tournament Committee should work closely with the clubs COVID-19 Committee and should appoint a COVID-19 Officer to work with the Tournament Director and Tournament Referee for the duration of the event to ensure all guidelines have been implemented and are being followed.

### Entry

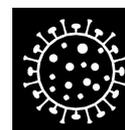
- As always players will have to accept the Tournament Rules and Regulations as a Condition of Entry. Clubs must include a number of pre-screening questions for players in these Rules and Regulations. These questions may change over time, so are included **HERE** along with sample Rules and Regulations.
- Only online entries and payments should be accepted. This will aid Contact tracing if required.

- Clubs should restrict entry in all events based on the number of slots available to them – please contact [competitions@tennisireland.ie](mailto:competitions@tennisireland.ie) for help modelling your time-slots and entry.
- Clubs may wish to consider quotas for the number of their own members allowed to enter as well as the number of events allowed per player.

### Format/Scheduling

To ensure Social Distancing can be maintained and managed, tournament officials should ensure the following protocols are implemented during tournaments;

- No less than 1hr 30min time slots for all 3 set No-Ad matches.
- No less than 1hr 15min times slots for 3 set No- Ad + Match Tiebreak matches.
- No less than 1hr time slots for all Fast4/Pro-Set Matches.
- NO-Advantage i.e. First Point after Deuce scoring must be used for all 3 set matches. This ensures matches are finished within the 1hr 30min time slot (Clubs should set out



- whether receiver or server gets to choose side in the Tournament Rules and Regulations).
- Singles and Doubles events are allowed.
- All matches should be scheduled for a specific court when the schedule is published online. Players should be asked to arrive no earlier than 15 min before their scheduled time.
- Initial match start times should be staggered by at least 15mins for half your courts. This is to avoid crowding at check-in.

Eg. Club has 6 courts.  
3 courts should start at 17:30  
3 courts should start 15 mins later at 17:45  
This pattern should follow for rest of the day.

## Check-in

- The Check-in desk should be staffed by only one person. If two people are required, they should be sitting at desks at least 2 metres apart.
- Those working at check-in desks should either bring their own or be given at the outset of the tournament any material they require – pen, ruler, highlighter etc.
- Check-in desks should be thoroughly cleaned by the person at the end of their shift. 2 metre queue markers should be placed in front of each check-in desk in order to ensure social distancing.
- Thought should be given on the best location for the Check in / Tournament Office. The office should have a queue management system in place. Signage should be placed outside regarding the numbers allowed in at any one time. This number will change depending on the size of the office. Signage on public responsibility for personal sanitising and physical distancing should also be provided at the entrance to the office
- Clubs should ensure that sufficient COVID-19 Information Posters are located around the club environs
- A separate desk with markings for each of the club's courts should be set up close to the check-in desk. One player only should be instructed to collect their tennis balls from here – with reference to the guidelines on tennis ball use.
- One player only should return to provide the score and the tennis balls after the match

- At all times, players and organisers should take extra care when handling tennis balls and should sanitize/wash their hands regularly.
- If a player's court is not ready upon check-in, then the player should be asked to return to their car until called.

## Officiating

- The Tournament Referee and Supervisors should act as Roving Off-Court Supervisors. Players should be encouraged in the first instance to resolve any disputes themselves.
- Supervisors should be aware of all social distancing guidelines and should engage with any player who may need to be reminded on these.
- Supervisors should only go on court if there is no alternative. They should maintain their social distance at all times. If required to remain on court, they should position themselves at the opposite side to where players are sitting/standing at change of ends, and during change of ends move to the centre of the court to allow players to cross at opposite sides of the net.
- If the Tournament Officials choose, they should be allowed to wear face coverings in times when physical distancing is difficult.

## Protections for Staff and Spectators

- To limit risk, consider who are at Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19 and consider whether you should be engaging staff / volunteers at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of all ages with certain underlying medical conditions).
- In advance of the Tournament, encourage staff and players to wear face coverings in times when physical distancing is difficult. It would be important to be aware that cloth face coverings should not be placed on anyone who has trouble breathing, who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without help or is a child under 13 years of age. Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms.
- Support healthy hygiene by providing supplies including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot pedal rubbish bins.



- Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., club entrances, eating areas, restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other germs, such as, by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering. Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on PA system. Prior to the tournament taking place ensure that participants are contacted about behaviours that prevent the spread of COVID-19 (such as on tournament websites, in emails, and through club social media accounts).
- Players should not to shake hands or embrace, and should be careful in maintaining social distance with their doubles partner.
- Wearing a face covering can help reduce the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Where social distancing may be a challenge, it is recommended that face coverings should be utilised while attending Tennis events.

### Behind Closed Doors - No Spectators

- All Tournaments as well as league matches must now be run behind closed doors. No spectators should be allowed on-site.
- Only competitors, tournament staff/volunteers needed for the running of the competition and supervisors are allowed.
- Players should leave the venue upon completion of their match.

### Junior Supervision

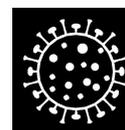
- Parents/Guardians, as always, are required to remain on-site for the duration of a match but should social distance at all times or wait in their car.
- Parents/Guardians are not considered spectators, as they are required to be present in a supervisory capacity. In an effort to keep numbers low, only 1 parent/guardian should attend. If a club cannot provide the required space for social distancing, then parents/guardians should be asked to remain in their cars for the duration of the match.

### Tennis Balls

- Shared Tennis balls can be used, but players should be reminded that extra care must be taken by them not to touch their face during play, and that they should clean / sanitise their hands before play, during play (at the change of ends) and immediately after finishing.
- Balls should be replaced if someone suspected of having COVID 19 comes in contact with them.
- Consider using a disinfectant spray on balls when they have been returned.
- Using new balls on a regular basis is encouraged and we would suggest that tennis balls are reused for no more than two matches.

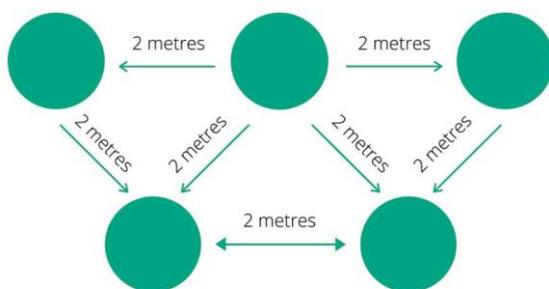
### Court Furniture/Scoreboards

- Court Furniture – chairs, bins etc are only allowed on court where protocols are in place for surfaces to be cleaned at the end of every match. This requirement is the same for Scoreboards, where only one player is nominated to change the scoreboard for the duration of the whole match.
- Furniture, scoreboards, and other such touch points should be wiped down between matches either by players or a court supervisor, therefore sanitising wipes should be available.
- Single-Sticks, if used, should only be put in place and removed by a court supervisor. If they fall during a match a supervisor should be called.



## Prize-Giving

- All presentations should take place outdoors. All players/officials should be placed at least 2 metres apart (see diagram below). During this period of increased restrictions, It is suggested that prize-givings are conducted as individual matches are completed or at the end of each time slot.
- Prizes should be placed on a central table with participants being asked to come forward individually to collect before returning to their assigned space.



**Prize-giving group all at least 2 metres apart**

## Changing Rooms

- Toilets can be opened but only subject to the club being able to implement sufficient cleaning protocols.
- Care should be taken to ensure that they do not become overcrowded. A one in one out system should be implemented.
- Changing rooms should remain closed and Clubs should ensure this information is communicated to all competitors in advance of the tournament

## Catering

- Club restaurant/cafes/bars are not allowed to open during this phase.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

With potentially increased numbers of people on site, it is important to have a plan to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces (e.g., play equipment, door handles, sink handles,) within the club facility. Clubs should develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection. Consideration should be given to the safe and correct use and storage of cleaners and disinfectants, including storing products securely away from children. Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes. The use of gloves when removing rubbish bags or handling and disposing of rubbish and washing hands afterward should be mandatory.

## Managing a Player / Spectator / Tournament Official with Symptoms

The designated COVID-19 Officer should take care of the management of any persons with COVID-19 symptoms. The COVID-19 Officer should immediately separate any person displaying or complaining of COVID-19 related symptoms from other people and ask this person to wear a facemask if possible.

The designated person managing the situation should try to maintain at least 2m from the person with the symptoms and should wear a face mask and wash their hands regularly. If they are well enough to go home, arrange for them to be transported home by a family member, as soon as possible and advise them to inform their GP by phone of the symptoms. If they are too sick to go home or advice is required, contact 999 or 112 and inform them that the sick person is a COVID-19 suspect.

All persons who have been in close contact with the suspect case will need to be informed to restrict their movement for 10 days or until further information is available. i.e. a negative test result of the suspect case. The most common signs and symptoms of COVID-19 are :

- a fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above)
- a cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
- shortness of breath or breathing difficulties
- loss or change to your sense of smell or taste – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Each club must take their own circumstances and club infrastructure into account when applying these guidelines. **Social distancing measures must be maintained at all times.** The Tennis Ireland Competitions Department will be able to help you with all scheduling/planning issues. You can contact us at [competitions@tennisireland.ie](mailto:competitions@tennisireland.ie) and find information on Entry Models, Budgets, Rules and Regulations etc [HERE](#)





**Tennis  
Ireland**

*Sport For Life*

**Tennis Ireland, DCU, Glasnevin, D9**

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