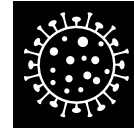




# A Practical Guide for Clubs **Returning to Play Tennis** following the COVID-19 Restrictions

**During Step 3 of the Northern Ireland Executive  
Approach to Removing the Covid-19 Restrictions**





## Step 3

The guidelines in this document relate to **Phase 3** of Tennis Ireland's Roadmap to Reopening Tennis in the Northern Ireland.

These measures are part of the third Step of lifting the public health restrictions that were put in place to protect us from COVID-19. They come into effect on top of the measures in Step 2.

These measures will come into effect when the Northern Ireland Executive decide that it is safe to do so.

Some clubs may wish to remain at a phase of reopening or impose increased restrictions at their own facilities. Such clubs are entitled to maintain such restrictions if they so wish.

While people are encouraged to stay local there are no restrictions in relation to travel distance during this phase of reopening.

This Step allows:

- Outdoor activities with groups of 30 people. In all cases, maintain social distancing as far as possible and any contacts should be brief.

### Safe every step of the way

- |                      |                         |                        |
|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Club Committee    | 5. Clubhouse Facilities | 9. Getting Home Safely |
| 2. Club Access       | 6. To the Courts        | 10. Club Competition   |
| 3. Booking & Arrival | 7. On Court – Playing   |                        |
| 4. Check-in Protocol | 8. On Court – Coaching  |                        |

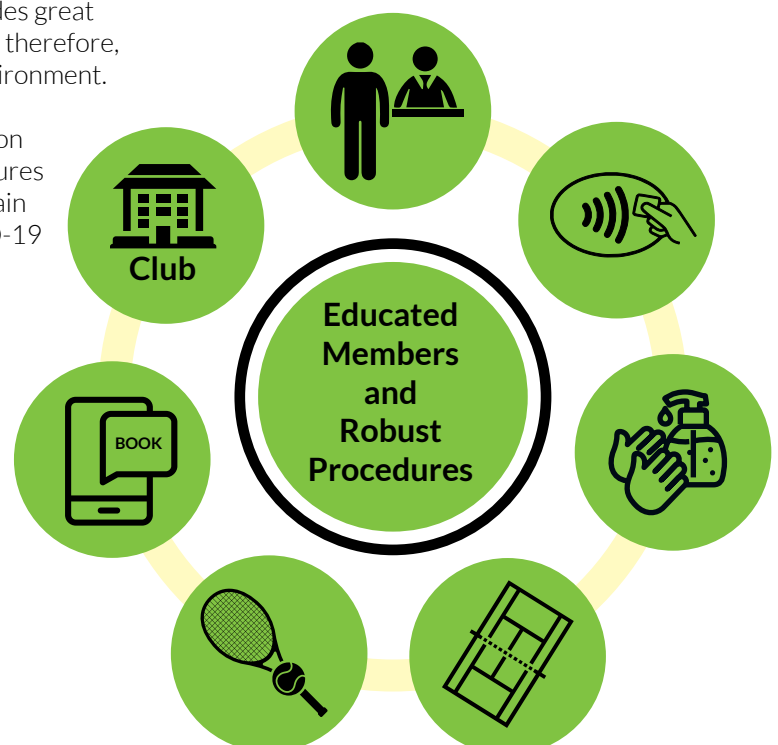
Tennis is a Sport for Life. We know playing tennis provides great mental and physical health benefits for our players. We, therefore, must ensure that Tennis is only played within a safe environment.

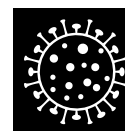
This practical guide, prepared by our team in consultation with Government Guidelines, outlines the robust measures Tennis Ireland would like clubs to implement and maintain to help safeguard staff and members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow all of us to play safely.

The measures, which relate to Step 3 of the Northern Ireland Executive Approach to Removing the Covid-19 Restrictions, cover each step of the journey from home to the club gate and back home again.

These measures should be in place until further notice.

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.





Clubs that feel they are not ready or will have difficulty proceeding to Step 3 should follow the Step 2 Guidelines.

### Summary of Changes in this Phase

- **Internal club competitions can be run subject to appropriate protocols**
- **Both singles play and doubles play is now permitted with people from outside of your household, as long as you remain 2 metres apart as much as possible**
- **Coaches are allowed to work with up to 6 players per court subject to social distancing**
- **Visitors to clubs are allowed subject to appropriate contact tracing protocols being in place**

## 1. Club COVID-19 Committee

Tennis Clubs should continue to operate with an assigned COVID-19 Officer and committee responsible for managing issues and queries relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. This committee should continue to:

- Check with their insurers if any amendments to their policies are required to cover COVID19 issues and to consult with them in relation to their risk assessments.
- Ensure they review and that the club can comply with all of the protocols outlined in this phase.
- Ensure that the club and its members adhere to NHS / Public Health advice in all cases.
- Ensure that sufficient NHS COVID-19 information Posters are in place.
- Consider the operation of a court booking system that, if possible, allows for staggered play and perhaps allow 5 minutes between booking slots for players to exit and enter without interaction. If this cannot be done it would be advisable that players understand the need for social distancing while entering and exiting the courts and wait in a designated waiting area.
- Ensure that the club maintains accurate records of who is playing and when. This should include all persons on court and not just the one making the booking. This must be carried out for coaching sessions as well, and in the case that a parent/guardian is present in the club that must also be recorded. This will help with contact tracing if necessary.

- Be responsible for informing all members of the updated COVID-19 guidelines and insist on full cooperation.
- Ensure that the contact details for all members are up to date as this will assist with contact tracing should it be necessary.
- Listen to feedback and contact Tennis Ireland if there are issues not covered under these protocols.

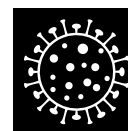
## 2. Club Access

- Clubs can, if they so choose, allow visitors to the club provided the club keeps accurate, preferably electronic records of contact details to assist with contact tracing.
- Junior Players undertaking casual play should still be supervised by a parent/guardian, however the club does have discretion to remove this requirement for junior players aged 16 years and over if they so choose.
- To access the club in this phase of the reopening, a player should:
  - Not have been out of the country in the last 14 days.
  - Not have been around someone with symptoms of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
  - Not be in a period of self-isolation and/or cocooning under the current Health Policy Rules.
  - Not be displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Have a pre-reserved playing time.

It is recommended that COVID 19 Training is provided for all staff / volunteers.

## 3. Booking and Arrival

- Booking a court time in advance is still advisable for all players, including visitors, preferably via a court booking system, website, app, or phone. This will assist should contact tracing be required subsequently.
- All players should ensure their club has their up-to-date contact details (phone and email).
- Both singles play and doubles play is now permitted with people from outside of your household, as long as you remain 2 metres apart as far as possible.
- All players, and not just the player making the booking, should be included in the booking notes. If there is a change to who is playing, it is advisable to make sure the booking is updated.



- Players should continue to travel to the club alone, or only with a member of the same household.
- Players should continue to observe social distancing at all times and resist the temptation to mingle.
- Players should sanitise their hands using dispensers provided at the entrance to the club and courts or indeed should bring their own.
- Players should head straight to their designated court unless required to check-in
- Players can utilise toilet facilities, however, toilet facilities must be subject to regular cleaning protocols.

#### 4. To the Court

- Both singles play and doubles play is now permitted with people from outside of your household, as long as you remain 2 metres apart as much as possible.
- Courts that are side by side can be utilised.
- Players should enter the court one at a time.
- Entrances / Gates to courts should remain open, if safe to do so, perhaps tied back to prevent use of handles.
- Rubbish bins can be provided but should be cleaned regularly.
- Other court furniture including scoreboards chairs/benches and net winders can be reinstated subject to daily cleaning protocols.
- Any player(s) repeatedly not following the club directives should be asked to leave the club.
- This phase allows spectators but only subject to social distancing protocols being implemented.

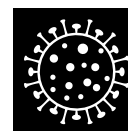
#### 5. On the Court - Playing

- Physical distancing should continue to be observed throughout the period of play, particularly on change of ends and entering and exiting the court. Players should change ends at opposite sides of the net.
- Players should continue to refrain from handshakes and high fives.
- Equipment such as towels, food, and drink must not be exchanged between players.
- Players should avoid touching their face after handling a ball, racquet, or other equipment.
- Players should, ideally, bring a small bottle of hand sanitiser with them and keep it in their pocket or bag for regular use.

- Players do not now need to use their own clearly marked tennis balls – however, if you choose to use shared balls then extra care must be taken to ensure you do not touch your face during play, and you should clean your hands before play and immediately after finishing (use sanitising gel if required).
- Players should still avoid using their hands to pick up tennis balls from other courts where possible - use your racquet / foot to return them.
- Players should remain apart from other players when taking a break.

#### 6. On the Court – Coaching

- Coaches should prepare and present a Risk Assessment document and get approval to coach from the COVID 19 Committee.
- Coaches can have up to 6 players on each court subject to social distancing measures being in place. Care must be taken with regards to the handling of tennis balls and drills should allow for social distancing to remain.
- For Red Court activities up to 8 players can participate on one court.
- Coaching sessions should be booked and recorded.
- Coaches should brief their students and/or their parents of the protocols that should be followed in advance of the session.
- Coaches should ensure students have registered their contact details with the clubs.
- Exercises that require continuous play are recommended.
- Coaches should continue to limit the use of equipment such as cones, drop lines and targets.
- Do not let players manipulate the practice equipment. Coaches should take charge of picking up the balls.
- Players should use their racquet or their foot to push balls back.
- If the club is implementing a Youth Tennis Camp, guidelines for their safe implementation can be found [here](#).



## 7. Getting Home Safely

- Once play has finished players have the option of leaving the premises promptly, sanitising their hands on the way out using a courtside dispenser.
- Clubs should make provision for thoroughly cleaning accessible areas and ensuring that all “touch areas” are cleaned thoroughly each day.
- If a player becomes unwell after playing, they should first contact their GP/NHS and then inform their club. The club should contact the NHS and follow the advice provided to them on the next steps.

## 8. Competition

Internal club tournaments are allowed in this phase of reopening.

More information on the safe operation of competitions can be found [HERE](#) and you can contact [competitions@tennisireland.ie](mailto:competitions@tennisireland.ie) with any questions you may have.



***Tennis  
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*Sport For Life*

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