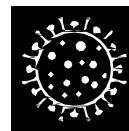




# Plan for Playing Tennis during Level 2 of The NI Executive's Pathway Out of Restrictions

**Effective from April 12<sup>th</sup> 2021**





# Level 2

## Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to our country and our sport. The pandemic is not over and the disease has continued to evolve and generate new challenges for us all.

While the various vaccines and their delivery provide a clear pathway for us, we must continue to be mindful of the risks involved in everyday life and the need to:

- wash hands properly and often
- practice social distancing
- cover coughs and sneezes

We must continue to be agile and flexible in our response while recognising that one year on, imposing and adhering to restrictions places an enormous burden on us all.

This document which references the NI Executive's [Pathway Out of Restrictions](#) outlines the protocols that should be implemented in clubs during this level of reopening society during COVID-19.

We have learned a lot over the last 12 months and these learnings are informing our ongoing approach:

- The power to control the level of transmission 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

Northern Ireland as a country is moving to reopen society once again.

To this end, a Pathway out of Restrictions has been developed and released by the NI Executive to help us to go about our daily lives

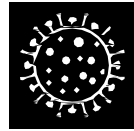
as much as possible, while managing the behaviour of the virus.

The plan recognises the need for society and business to be allowed to reopen albeit with restrictions.

The Executive's strategy, in line with the public health advice, is suppression.

In response to the Executive's plan our team, in consultation with Sport NI and the Department of Culture have developed a framework of restrictive measures that is specific to Tennis in Northern Ireland.

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



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 to prevent an escalation in 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.

### Safe every step of the way

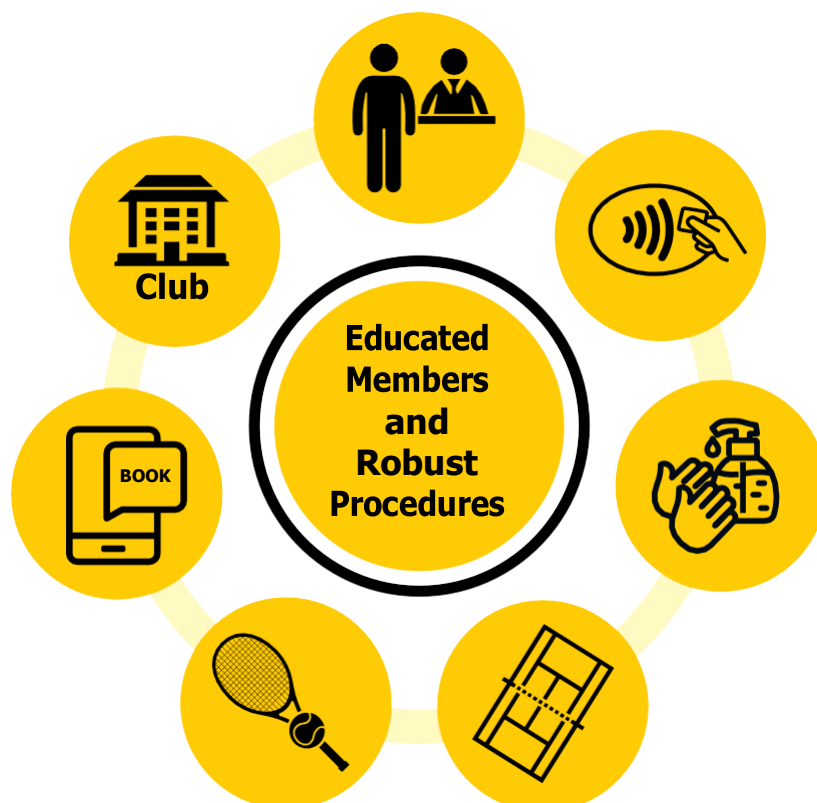
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|----------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Club Committee    | 4. Check-in Protocol    | 7. On Court - Playing  |
| 2. Club Access       | 5. Clubhouse Facilities | 8. On Court - Coaching |
| 3. Booking & Arrival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

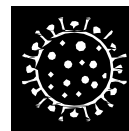
This practical guide, prepared by our team in line with NI Executive Guidelines, outlines the robust measures Tennis Ireland and its Ulster Branch would like clubs to implement and maintain to help safeguard staff and members during the COVID-19 pandemic. This will allow all of us to get back on court safely and improve the wellbeing of members across the country.

The measures, which relate to Level 2 of the NI Executives Pathway out of Restrictions, cover each step of the journey from home to the club gate and back home again.

These measures should be in place from April 12<sup>th</sup> 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 movement between levels as outlined by Government.





## 1. Club Covid-19 Committee

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

- Check with their insurers if any amendments to their policies are required to cover Covid19 issues.
- Ensure they review and that the club can comply with all the protocols outlined before reopening their club
- 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
- Operate a court booking system that, if possible, allows for staggered play and perhaps allow 10 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.
- Ensure that tournaments and events are postponed during Level 2 but allow internal singles Ladder matches and World Tennis Number matches to take place.
- Be responsible for informing all members of the 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

There are some exceptions that pertain to High Performance Players and these are defined as covering those who are:

- Professional sports people and those

who participate within professional competition.

- A member of a high-performance team funded by Tennis Ireland e.g., Davis and Fed Cup, Team Ireland programme recipients
- 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.
- Nationally ranked Junior Players are not considered to be High Performance players

## 2. Club Access

During Level 2, the clubhouse should be closed to members except for emergency access.

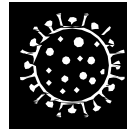
Facemasks must be always worn when indoors.

Courts should only be accessed by staff and members only.

Children should always be supervised during play.

To access the courts in Level 2, a player should:

- Be a current member
- A parent/guardian should accompany any player under 16 years
- Not have been out of the country in the last 10 days
- Not have been around someone with symptoms of Covid-19 in the last 10 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.



### 3. Booking and Arrival

- Booking a court time in advance is advisable, 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).
- Outdoor play only is allowed during this phase of the reopening. No indoor play should take place in this level with an exception for High Performance Players. Doubles play is permitted.
- 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 travel to the club alone, or only with a member of the same household.
- Ample car parking spaces should be available to ensure social distancing. If players must park next to another car, they should wait for the other person to exit or enter before doing so themselves.
- Players should arrive at the court entrance no more than 5 minutes prior to the reserved playing time. It is important that players maintain social distancing and wait in a pre-designated waiting area that allows for social distancing
- Players should observe social distancing at all times and resist the temptation to mingle
- Locker rooms must remain closed during this phase. Players should arrive in Tennis attire and change footwear at the car or at home
- Players should sanitise their hands using dispensers provided at the entrance to the club and courts
- Players should head straight to their designated court unless required to check-in
- Players should ensure that they utilise toilet facilities in their own home prior to arriving at the club.

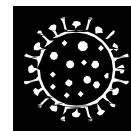
### 4. Check-in and Club Shop Protocol

- The Clubhouse should remain closed except for emergency access or to check in.
- Two-metre queue markers should be in place at any single-entry point whether at the clubhouse reception or at the entrance to courts
- Only one person at a time should be permitted inside the reception area
- A two-metre exclusion zone should be in place at the service desk and, if possible, a protection screen should be fitted.
- If your club has a shop for essential tennis items that are available to purchase these should be gathered by staff upon request
- Food and beverage items should not be available, and people should be encouraged to bring them from home if required
- Club vending machines should be placed out of commission during this phase
- Any Purchases should be paid for by contactless card payment only

### 5. Clubhouse Facilities

- Protocols for cleaning clubhouse facilities should be in place prior to opening and during operation.
- Clubhouse access for members should only be when necessary and be limited to the Club Reception if required to check in.
- Toilets can be utilised during Level 2 but on a one in / one out basis.
- Changing rooms and showers should remain closed during this Phase of reopening
- Players must provide their own racquets and equipment
- Chairs should be removed from the reception area to prevent people congregating





## 6. To the Court

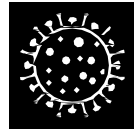
- Play is allowed outdoors only during this phase of the reopening. No indoor play should take place in this level of reopening.
- Doubles play is permitted
- Courts that are side by side can be utilised.
- Players should enter the court one at a time
- Entrances / Gates to courts should remain open, if safe to do so, perhaps tied back to prevent use of handles
- Rubbish bins should be removed, and all items brought on court should be taken home afterwards.
- Other court furniture should be removed including scoreboards, chairs/benches and net winders.
- Shoe cleaners should be removed
- Any player(s) repeatedly not following the club directives should be asked to leave the club
- Nobody but the players should be allowed on the court. There should be no spectators present during this phase of reopening
- Parents supervising children should be mindful of social distancing.

## 7. On the Court - Playing

- Physical distancing should 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 must refrain from handshakes and high fives
- Equipment such as towels, food, and drink must not be exchanged between players. Players should be encouraged to bring their own drinks and towels.
- Players should avoid touching their face after handling a ball, racquet, or other equipment.
- Players should ideally bring a small bottle of hand sanitizer with them and keep it in their pocket or bag for use.
- Players should remain apart from other players when taking a break.
- Caution is advised for those who intend to engage in high intensity training following a recovery from Covid-19. Individuals should seek medical advice prior to a return to playing / training.

## 8. On the Court – Coaching

- Coaches should prepare and present a Risk Assessment document and get approval to coach from the Covid 19 Committee.
- Coaching sessions should be booked with the participants contact details recorded.
- Coaches should brief their students and/or their parents of the protocols that should be followed in advance of the session
- Coaching should only be provided to club members during this phase of reopening.
- Coaches should ensure a player has registered their contact details with the clubs.
- As much as possible, coaches must try to remain on the same court and adjust their schedules to stay on-site for the minimum amount of time required.
- Exercises that require continuous play are recommended.
- Coaches should limit the number of tennis balls used and not use basket drills or feeding during this phase
- Coaches should 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 at the end of a session.
- A pod, up to a maximum of 6 players can be coached per court.
- A maximum of 4 players can operate on the court at any one time while remaining in their own sections of the court with up to 2 other players rotating in and out as required.
- A pod of 8 players per court is allowable for red ball activities, subject to social distancing protocols being implemented
- All activities are subject to strict social distancing and those players not on court must always maintain a clear 2m distance from others.

**9. Getting Home Safely**

- Once play has finished players should leave the premises promptly, sanitising their hands on the way out using a courtside dispenser.
- Restaurant and bars should remain closed until restrictions are eased so there should be no congregating in these areas
- Clubs should make provision for thoroughly cleaning accessible areas and ensuring that all “touch areas” are cleaned thoroughly daily
- 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



***Tennis  
Ireland***

*Sport For Life*

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