

Badminton England Return To Play Update

Published July 19th 2021



Introduction

The Government's announcement to move to Step 4 of their roadmap is hugely welcome news for our sport and I am delighted that it means we can now welcome back all forms of badminton across the country.

The last eighteen months have been incredibly difficult in so many ways as we all faced challenges that we could never have imagined. The strength and resilience that you, the badminton community, have shown has been inspirational and has undoubtedly played a part in getting us all to this long-awaited point.

I appreciate that many challenges may still remain despite legal restrictions being lifted and we are committed to continuing to support you as much as we can.

Some of you may continue to face difficulties with your venue not being fully open so we will carry on our work with facility operators to open up more courts and find alternative venues where they are needed. I have no doubt that some will have some anxiety about returning to play without restrictions when it is something we have become accustomed too for so long. Rest assured, however you are feeling about returning to play, we are here to help and look forward to welcoming you back on court whenever you feel ready to do so.

We are also aware that our coaches have been hugely affected by the last 18 months and we will ensure we do all we can to help you get back on court and delivering your sessions again. Resources and guidance will continue to be available to help on our [Return to Play](#) and [Resource Hubs](#) and you can always contact us direct via our [contact form](#). The following guidance also outlines how we will continue to support our sport at all levels to return to play.

As we begin to emerge from the restrictions, we have such an exciting period ahead of us as a sport. As I write, the start of the Olympic Games is just a week away, which will be followed by the Paralympic Games that will include badminton for the very first time, and then we have a home Commonwealth Games in 2022 to look forward to.

All of this while we have the excitement of welcoming back players, new and old, to courts across the country.

Over the summer we will be running a national campaign to encourage people back on court and help more to see badminton as a sport for them, all leading to The Big Hit in September.

Finally, it leaves me to say a big thank you to you for everything you have done to keep our sport going during this extraordinary time. From adhering to the measures faced to date, playing in homes and gardens, and having to deal with stop - start returns to play, all while making sure that your members, players, volunteers, officials and coaches stayed engaged, safe and healthy. It is hugely appreciated.

Now, we can return to court, renew our friendships and have great fun again doing something we all love.

Adrian Christy
Chief Executive

Roadmap

Step 1
8 March



- Schools reopen
- **Curricular and extracurricular/out of school hours delivery** of badminton in schools permitted – schools have final decision on what is permitted – see Government guidance
- **Disabled people** – organised group play permitted indoors and outdoors
- **Pathway players** – socially distanced training for pathway players at recognised elite training venues

Step 1
29 March



- Rule of 6 or two households applies outdoors; organised outdoors sport permitted
- **Recreational (self-organised) outdoor badminton** – permitted with maximum 6 players or two households
- **Organised (by club/coach) outdoor badminton sessions** – permitted; group size of 15 (coach to player ratio 1:15)
- **1-1 coaching** - permitted for adults and juniors (coaches permitted to coach a household); no limit on number of clients in a day

Step 2
12 April



- Indoor leisure centres permitted to reopen; adult activity permitted for individuals or household only; Young people activity permitted (Under 18s – includes those 17 on 31/8/20 who have turned 18 since)
- **Adults** – household only singles or doubles permitted
- **Young people** – junior clubs/organised sessions/coached sessions– all permitted with a maximum group size of 1 coach to 15 players. More than one group permitted based on social distancing being adhered to.
- **1-1 coaching** – permitted for adults and juniors (coaches permitted to coach a household); no limit on number of clients in a day
- **Tournaments** – localised junior tournaments permitted

Step 3
17 May



- Rule of 6 or two households indoors; domestic travel and overnight stays permitted; gatherings of up to 30 permitted outdoors
- **Organised badminton** – singles and doubles permitted; maximum group size 16 for clubs/No Strings Badminton/organised sessions/coached sessions (30 outdoors)
- **Recreational activity** - singles and doubles permitted – rule of 6/two households indoors (30 outdoors)
- **Tournaments** – junior circuit tournaments permitted
- **Coach education** – courses to resume

Step 4
19th July



- No legal limits on social contact
- **Play** – all play permitted
- **Tournaments** – all tournaments permitted
- **Coach education** – courses permitted with no restrictions

The following guidance outlines what Step 4 of the Government roadmap means for our sport, including the lifting of all legal restrictions on all forms of play.

We also appreciate, however, that challenges will still exist as people continue to return to play and we also understand that some of you will be anxious about returning to play with no restrictions in place after such a long period of time.

That is why we have also outlined below some of the considerations badminton clubs, coaches and groups may wish to continue with, as well as outlining what we will continue to do to support the badminton community to safely get back on court.

From Monday 19th July (Step 4 of the Government Roadmap)

Self isolation and NHS Track and Trace

Whilst all activity is now permitted guidance relating to self-isolation and test and trace remains. You should ensure:

- All participants in attendance (including players, officials, organisers, volunteers, and spectators) are aware of COVID-19 symptoms and the need to self-assess before attending every sporting activity. These are:
 - A high temperature
 - A new, continuous cough
 - A loss of, or change to, your sense of smell
- Any participant or other attendee reporting symptoms does not attend and is directed to follow [NHS guidance](#) on testing and self-isolation.
- Any participant informed that they need to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace, does not leave their isolation location in order to participate to participate in sport.
- Participants are aware of any increased risk associated with taking part in sporting activity.
- Participants are strongly advised to comply with public health restrictions and avoid high-risk behaviour outside the sports setting to reduce the risk to their fellow participants when they do attend.
- Good hand hygiene continues to be essential – wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – you should wash your hands before leaving to play and, on your return, to home.

Face Coverings

- Face coverings are no longer required by law, but the Government expects and recommends that people should continue to wear them in crowded and enclosed settings.
- Participants do not need to wear a face covering while taking part in activity.
- Coaches are not required to wear face coverings while present in a work or volunteering capacity.
- Clubs and players should also follow the guidance of your venue and any local recommendations that may be in place.

Testing

- No legal requirement requiring participants to undertake lateral flow tests or use self-certification before attending badminton activity.
- However, your sport provider may ask you to take a Covid19 test before participating in activity. This helps them ensure that sport can take place safely.

Risk Assessment

- Providers are required to continue to carry out a risk assessment that includes risks from Covid19 and should consider points in the rest of this guidance.
- Whilst legal restrictions have been removed, Covid19 is still very prevalent in the wider community and, as such, we will continue to provide our [risk assessment template](#) for clubs, groups and coaches to use.

Venue

- No indoor capacity limits.
- You must follow your venue's guidance and any stipulations they have in place to minimise risk.
- The use of changing rooms is permitted but you should follow your venue's guidance in relation to these and aim to minimise use where possible.

Supervision and Spectators

- No limits on spectators and numbers permitted.

Play

- All forms of play (casual and organised) permitted.
- No legal limits on social contact.
- No maximum group size limits.

Competition

- Tournaments & Competition – all tournaments and competition permitted.
- Specific guidance will be available for tournament organisers.

Coaching

- No maximum group size limits.
- Coach Education courses permitted with no restrictions.

Managing Equipment

- It is recommended that clubs and coaches organising sessions should ensure that hand sanitiser is available for players.
- It is recommended that sharing equipment is minimised where possible.
- If equipment needs to be shared, it should be cleaned between users, where possible.
- You should avoid sharing water bottles and other refreshment containers.

Inclusion

- Research shows some are anxious and cautious about returning to play with no restrictions in place so consider what you can do to reassure your players
- Remember, some players may need additional support or adaptations to support their participation. Further guidance is available [here](#).

Travel

- There are no restrictions on domestic travel to participate in sport and physical activity
- Car sharing and minibus travel permitted
- Overnight stays and room sharing permitted

Considerations

Whilst all legal restrictions are removed as part of Step 4, we appreciate some may wish to continue with the changes that have had to be implemented over the last year. Clubs and coaches can implement measures as they see fit in relation to their sessions to minimise risk. This could be to provide reassurance to your players and members who may have some anxiety about returning to play or because it has eased the administrative burden of running your sessions. Outlined below some of these recommendations that you may wish to remain in place for your sessions. It should also be noted that your venue may also continue with certain measures to minimise risk, and these should be followed.

Prebooking

Many clubs, groups and sessions have found the introduction of pre-registering for sessions has been a welcome addition. It has allowed coaches and sessions to better plan activity and ability groups to ensure everyone attending has a great experience. We will continue to provide access to our club management tool – [Discover Badminton](#) – free of charge which will allow clubs to manage pre booking for sessions.

Online Payments

In addition to pre booking, the ability to take online payments has reduced administrative time required and also meant there is no longer the need to collate payments at the start of sessions. Again, the Discover Badminton tool gives clubs, groups, and coaches the ability to manage online payments.

Grouping Players

The need to group players for sessions has been a common requirement throughout the pandemic when play has been possible. This has been to adhere to maximise group size guidance and to minimise interaction between players. Whilst maximum group size limits have now been removed and interaction within sessions now permitted, sessions may wish to continue to utilise pre-determined groups for their players. This could help with session management and ensuring that all players have a positive experience in relation to ability and experience.

Covid19 Officer Role

Whilst there is no longer for groups to have a Covid19 Officer in place, many have found having a lead volunteer to welcome and support players has been a welcome addition to their sessions for both session management and player experience. We will continue to provide resources and support for clubs and volunteers to effectively manage their sessions.

Continued Support

Whilst the Government announcement has confirmed the removal of legal restrictions from Monday 19th July, we appreciate challenges will still exist in relation to return to play. We are committed to supporting the badminton community to get back on court as soon and safely as possible and continuing to provide this support beyond this stage. As such we will continue to:

Provide support for clubs, coaches & volunteers

Throughout the pandemic we have been committed to providing the right support to our badminton community through periods of inactivity and in relation to return to play. This has included contacting every club and coach at the start of the pandemic to understand what support was required through to provide the required training and resources to clubs and volunteers to help them meet the requirements of the various guidance in place. Badminton England will continue to provide this support through our free [Resource Hub](#) which includes resources to help you get back on court, manage your sessions and provide a positive experience for your players and members.

Provide support specifically related to facility challenges

Facilities have been a continual challenge for so many throughout the last 18 months as they have looked to return to activity with sports halls being repurposed for other activity or closed all together for long periods of time. We expect that some will continue to face these challenges even with legal restrictions being removed. We will therefore continue to do all we can to help and ensure everyone can find a place to play.

This will include continuing work hard to understand and share the current facility state of play with the badminton community to promote where space may be available to book, to develop our partnerships with [school facility management companies](#) to open up access to more facilities, work with leisure operator partners to ensure appropriate levels of provision is available and use our facility insight to understand where the support available from our Facilities and Regional Teams is needed most. If you are continuing to face facility challenges, please complete our [Venue Feedback Form](#) so we can see how we might be able to help.

Work to ensure opportunities all levels of player

Whilst some players may feel anxious about getting back on court, we have also seen increase in demand from new or returning players from such a long period of inactivity. We are committed to ensuring opportunities are available for anyone that wants to play badminton regardless of ability, background or experience. During the last year we have consulted extensively with the badminton community and beyond about the barriers people face when looking to play badminton and how we can make the sport more inclusive. We will continue to develop our work in this and will be launching our new Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategy shortly.

In the meantime, we will continue to support clubs and coaches to get back up and running so they can provide the great opportunities to new and existing players again. We are also working with partners across the country to launch new and support existing No Strings Badminton sessions. If you are interested in setting up a new No Strings Badminton session, please [contact us](#) to discuss further.

Consult with and provide support for leagues

We hugely value the opportunities that local leagues provide to players across the country and appreciate that for many having a competitive opportunity to play is a key part of their weekly routine. We are therefore committed to supporting leagues get back up and running and understanding the support required. We are consulting with leagues in this area in the next couple of months, as well as getting their views on where the National Team League may fit within the wider league structure. If you would like to be involved in this consultation and provide your views, then [please get in touch](#).

Restart and support local competitive opportunities

The announcement that all legal restrictions on play will be removed means that all forms of competition and tournaments can return. This will include the Badminton England circuit tournament as well as local competitive opportunities. Visit our website to find out more and [find opportunities](#) to compete near you.

Restart and deliver coach education courses

Coaches are so vital to our sport and will continue to support existing coaches to get back on court as well as restarting our coach education courses to train and support new coaches. This will see local face to face courses resuming. Visit our website to find out more and [find a course](#) near you.

Support schools to reintroduce and continue to offer badminton activity

Whilst schools and teachers have provided such a valuable provision to pupils and families throughout the pandemic, we are aware that activity at school has had to be adapted to adhere to Government guidance. We are committed to ensuring young people can be introduced to and play badminton with the introduction of at home and National School Sport Week virtual activities over the last year. We want to continue to support schools, and external deliverers such as clubs and coaches, to help them provide positive experiences for young people in and out of school with our recently launched Teachers' and Coaching in Schools guide demonstrating this. Both of these are available for free on our [Resource Hub](#).

Disclaimer

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of Badminton England or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party on the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. Badminton England and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

