

COVID-19 Best Practices

Tina Riedl (Austria Badminton Association) 4th November 2020

When the government decided to restart after lockdown, every sports association were asked by ministry of sports to write down recommendations, how our sports can be possible under the circumstances which were mandatory in general. So for example how badminton can be played under the circumstance that there has to be a mandatory distance of 2 metres (like it was when Austria started to relaunch everything after lockdown middle of April). So for each sports there are existing so called “sports specific COVID 19 - recommendations of action” (in German: “sportartenspezifische COVID1 9-Handlungsempfehlungen”). So we had to write down every action which has to be considered if a person wants to participate at a badminton training within following all safety instructions which were set by the ministry of health. This included actions that has to be taken in advance, during the training and after finishing the session:

Examples:

- For actions done before training: it is mandatory that there is kind of calendar (best: online), so that is secured, that there will be not too many people in the hall at the same time.
- During training: how can it be secured that the minimum distance (at the beginning it was mandatory to have 2 m distance in between) can be maintained all the time. F.e. by fixing, that there is only 1 person per halfcourt allowed, to recommend how changing sides on court should be done...
- After training: f.e. to secure that the coming people are separated from the leaving people by using different entries. That the people are not allowed to use wardrobes or showers and go home immediately.

These badminton specific COVID 19-Recommendations of action are still mandatory, but had to be adapted several times, depending which things were reallocated by government (or restricted again).

Two examples:

- first there was a mandatory distance of 2 m, next step – beginning from May – was, that this 2m distance could to be lower for just short-termed action (that was the time, when we could push through, that also badminton doubles is allowed).
- the number of allowed people in the hall is/was always changing. At the beginning it was set by number of person /10 m², beginning with summer it was general set for all indoor activities (no matter of the size of the indoor area).

Concerning data and/or statistic you also mentioned, I can report, that I was writing a longer explanation to the ministry of sports and health to convince them that in badminton doubles the distance between the partners is most of the time 2 metres and is just below maximum for a few seconds during match play. The need for this explanation was: at this time the ministry allowed playing doubles in tennis, but did not do so for badminton. Their (own) explanation was, that badminton is not allowed, because the court is smaller and they were convinced that in doubles the players are always touching themselves because of the smaller space on court. ***(Different types of recommendations in German available upon request).***

Savvas Christofidis (Cyprus Badminton Federation) 11th November 2020

Right after the lockdown and as soon as we were allowed to start training sessions, our federation has prepared in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Cyprus Sports Organisation a Return-To-Training Protocol for clubs, athletes, coaches and officials in Badminton.

A COVID 19 officer is always assigned now for all trainings and tournaments with the main responsibilities to make sure that the provisions of the protocol are strictly followed. The officer is also in charge of allowing access only to athletes and coaches, performing a clinical examination for anyone entering the hall and keeping a registry for every participant for tracking purposes.

Our main focus on preventing the spread was based on:

1. Social distancing and use of masks for everyone, except athletes on courts.
2. Special attention to personal hygiene, with available soap and hand sanitizer at all times.
3. Disinfection of surfaces on a regular basis.
4. Adequate and frequent ventilation of sport halls.

A similar protocol was prepared for tournaments and is frequently updated. We understand that for every country is different and it all depends on the epidemiological situation, but our priority was always to keep a close cooperation with health experts and follow their recommendations. ***(Protocol - return to training PDF available as per request)***

Kasper Thy Jessen (Gibraltar Badminton Association) 16th November 2020

COVID 19 action plan for restarting badminton in a safe environment Below, please find our action plan which includes the following points:

- 1) Methods for ensuring social distancing
- 2) Sanitisation/hygiene protocols (No access to changing rooms where avoidable- Use of showers prohibited for the foreseeable future)
- 3) Nature of the activities to be restarted
- 4) Access control

The action plan is based on a staggered start where we will introduce different groups when we feel the association is ready to handle new groups.

The following conditions outlined below are to be implemented by the Association and facilitated by the GSLA:

- Allocation twice a week in a sports hall (minimum once in the Tercentenary Sportshall) with a minimum of 5 courts available (if there are less courts available, we will reduce the number of players accordingly)
- Maximum of 2 players per court and no more than 10 players at any time during any session. We will have a sign-up system for players and the committee will confirm who will be able to attend so there will be a maximum of 10 players showing up per session.
- The committee will keep a log of the different players attending to ensure that the system is fair (rotate between players) and it will also allow us to keep a track of members in case someone were to become sick; other players can then be informed.
- There will always be a committee member present at every session to deal with any issues that may arise and to liaise with GSLA staff and/ or the caretakers at the school.

- All players and committee members are to follow the following guidelines:
 - Keep the required social distancing
 - No handshakes or other physical contact at any point during the sessions
 - Members to follow all instructions from GSLA Staff / committee members or they will be excluded from the sessions until the GSLA is satisfied they can come back.
- The Association will provide hand sanitizer solution at every session to be used when entering and exiting the facility. It will also be available during the playing sessions to wipe the equipment down.
- Hand soap can also be provided if needed and the Association will obtain this before the first training session.
- All players will have their own playing gear, and this will be a requirement for players to be able to attend. The Association will NOT allow players to share rackets etc.
- All members who attend will be required to sign a declaration stating that they will follow the new rules and stressing that failure to follow these rules could result in the loss of all badminton's allocations – this is being prepared at present. *Would the GSLA want to see the declaration?*

The plan is outlined below:

1. The Association would start with 2 sessions in week one for the senior squad when the go-ahead is given by the GSLA.
There will be 6-8 players and the National Coach at these sessions.
The National Coach has been given the guidelines for training and will keep the exercises and matches to two players per court.
2. In week two, we would begin to open up the sessions to full members of the Association.
Depending on the times we are allocated, we would give members an allocation of 1 hour with 15 minutes in between sessions to ensure that players do not overlap and we don't have too many players around at the same time.
We expect to have 2 timeslots in one evening so we can have up to 20 players playing in one evening but no more than 10 in any one time slot (court numbers permitting)
The committee member will be helping to organise games / training for the members, so that no issues arise. We will not be running a league but could make small competitions on the game nights if members are interested.
3. If we see the sessions are not being filled, we will start including our social members after the first 2-3 weeks.

4. Junior sessions: We do not envisage introducing this until the new season starts in September or October. In a normal season we do not offer junior training over the summer, but we will discuss this further with the committee and see if there is a demand / coaches available to introduce one session a week if needed.

Jennifer Pizzuti (Italian Badminton Federation) 6th November 2020

Currently players at a higher level, that compete for the participation of the National Championships and that are in the National Ranking, are authorized to train and a few clubs have been able to organize National Tournaments and National Team matches during the last weekends.

Of course it has been very difficult to re-start due to the many restrictions according to the laws of our Country, but starting from May 2020, we managed to go back on court, firstly with the National Team in Milano, in our Federal Sport Center, then in Rome, with the national Para badminton team.

FIBa has created a specific Commission composed of the Federal doctor, some members of FIBa's board and staff for the writing of the security protocol anti COVID-19 for training and tournaments. For these last events the Federation has trained staff members as COVID managers, people able to assist the hosts to respect the laws and restrictions anti-COVID.

Here is a dedicated section where security protocols have been published.
<https://www.badmintonitalia.it/covid-19.html>

FIBa's board has dedicated financial support as well, for clubs to restart their activity.

Another useful support we gave to our clubs and players was the constant updates we gave from Ministries and the National Olympic Committee, info that we published on our official website and social networks. ***(Document of the polytechnic institute with the indication of the risks level in Badminton in Italian available upon request)***



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Jo'anne Cassar (Badminton Malta) 31st October 2020

We are lucky to say that sports has been back in action on a training level since last June and competitions resumes mid-July, here in Malta. We have since drafted guidelines based on what BEC & Sportmalta advised.

We are pushing for bubbles/small groups of players and that players stick to 1 doubles player during the training session. We can say this worked well when we had 1 positive case who was playing for 1.5hrs with the same partner. In this way the partner was the only direct contact of the +ve case. Opponents were not, however they still decided to get tested, and resulted -ve. In this way having too many people quarantine for no reason can easily be avoided. ***(Guidelines attachments in English available upon request)***

Dennis van Putten (Badminton Netherlands) 2nd November 2020

Here you can find all the information about our communication about Badminton and COVID-19 in our country: <https://www.badminton.nl/overzicht-berichtgeving-badminton-en-corona>. ***(Badminton guideline and roadmaps in Dutch available upon request)***

Matevz Srekl (Slovenia) 2nd November 2020

In March 2020, everything stopped, also all practices (total lockdown, you could move it only in your community). At the end of April we could slowly begin or start with practice outside. At the beginning of May we were allowed to practice in the sports halls for the best players, so every day was allowed for more players and we slowly started with all ages until end of May. In June we organised a national junior team event, so we made one tournament. Through the summer holidays we had several training camps (this year was the first time we gathered all the best players from age 13 till senior at the same place at the same date). This was great. In September we started as every year, we organised tournaments so it looked normal, but then came October and things went down. So right now we have lockdown as in March/April, but top sport is allowed, so our best players (senior) could practice on a daily basis in the halls. All competitions stopped and now we're waiting for further instruction.

We prepared some guidelines with cooperation with our Institute for health, but more or less were clubs depended on their own and owners of a sport halls (sport halls had regulations how to enter or exit, non using wardrobes and so on... so many of them didn't want to open for us). For tournaments we need special permission of our Institute for health.

The one of good thing that we could mentioned from COVID-19 time, that we finally change our season, so now it is our badminton season same as calendar year. Before that we had badminton season the same as a school year and then we had problems with playing international tournaments. I was struggling for few years to change this, but always was a problem how to do this, while one generation will lose their national junior championships.... this year we cancelled all junior championships in May so this was the best time to do this. There is no link to press conference (it was from April), but I find out some link where was mentioned about badminton: <https://www.24ur.com/novice/korona/dovoljeni-sporti.html>

Natasha Cutter (Badminton Wales) 10th November 2020

As a federation, our return to badminton is still in it's infancy. In between lockdowns, we've been able to get most of our squad players back on court – but only for singles. We still aren't able to play doubles due to the 2-metre distancing rule. We have been lead by Sport Wales and the Welsh Government who, back in June, said that we could have our elite players back on court. This was only our para #1, Jack Wilson. Leisure centres reopened in July so individuals were able to play singles and clubs could start to think about going back to a very different sport!



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We have medically screened our squad, and they all have to sign disclaimers before they turn up for training. We are currently limited to groups of 15 players. For the clubs, we've had regular Zoom meetings to discuss the changes to regulations and to offer support. We've found these to be hugely beneficial as not only are we able to support the clubs, they're able to support each other and share what's worked for them.

At the moment we have hit a dead end – we are only able to get 15 in a group, we are not able to play singles – and it doesn't look as if we'll be able to progress past this for some time as our COVID cases are on the rise again.

We have found the Zoom meetings to be an essential part of getting clubs back on court – we aren't able to think about schools just yet. We have also found that, by nominating a COVID-19 officer within each club, we're able to keep on top of the Track and Trace, Health and Safety assessments, etc, within each active club. ***(Member and Club guidance attachment in English available upon request)***

**Information accurate at time of information collection*