



2020-21 Tennis Requirements and General Recommendations

With the support from the USTA and the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Ohio schools are required to follow state COVID-19 general guidance for “Youth, Collegiate, Amateur and Professional Sports”

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>

Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with Covid-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your area.

Visit the COVID-19 General Guidance Document for further requirements and recommendations that apply to all sports, including tennis. Please know that some of the requirements and recommendations in this sport-specific document duplicate state guidance.

*A **requirement** must be adhered to and followed. A **recommendation** is a consideration to the sport and allows for optional guidelines. Recommendations are not required but are permitted.*

REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for Coaches

- Coaches must wear face masks at all times, including arriving and departing the facility and during active play.

Requirements for Facility Hosts

- Inform the local health district when events are scheduled and establish a plan to handle those persons who fail a symptom assessment or temperature check or exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Predetermine areas for all participants, coaches, contest officials and game-day personnel to shelter in the event there is lightning and/or thunder.
- Limit sideline personnel to participants, coaches, medical staff and game-day staff.
- Do not provide any congregation areas at the court or facility.
- If possible, provide designated space (locker room, classroom, etc.) for officials’ pregame and post-game activities. If the designated space cannot accommodate six-foot social distancing of all officials, then a separate space should be provided where officials can observe six-foot social distancing and be removed from spectator/team interaction.
- Clearly review prior to the contest mandates, best practices and school/host facility policies with visiting team administrators and/or coaches and officials as they relate to, but are not limited to, parking; entrances and exits; medical care; spectators; ticketing; locker rooms/showers; athletic

training rooms and restrooms; water; towels; equipment, and shelters in the event there is inclement weather.

RETURN TO COMPETITION

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

BEFORE YOU PLAY

Make sure that your state and region allow tennis play, satisfy the Federal Government's gating criteria (as outlined in the "Opening Up America Again" guidelines) and has been designated an essential business and/or has entered Phase One of the Phased Comeback.

- States and regions with no evidence of a rebound and that satisfy the gating criteria a second time may proceed to Phase Two of the Phased Comeback, in which all individuals, when in public recreation areas, should maximize physical distance from others.
- Be aware that although restrictions are eased when your state and region move from Phase One to Phase Two or Phase Three of the Phased Comeback, safety precautions must remain in place until there is a universal vaccine or effective treatment for the coronavirus.
- The OHSAA and the USTA Medical Advisory Group highly recommends competitive players ease their way back into play prior to competition. Given the layoff from competing, players will be more susceptible to under-training, over-use and other injuries.
 - The OHSAA strongly recommends at least three weeks of on court and off court conditioning before competition begins.
- Arrange to play only with family members or others who live in your household or with individuals who are considered to be low risk.
- Do not play if any of you:
 - Are exhibiting any symptoms of the coronavirus. According to the CDC, people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported—ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus: fever, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
 - Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - Are a vulnerable individual and your state and region is in Phase One or Phase Two. A vulnerable individual is an elderly individual and/or an individual with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma and those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy. (For states and regions in Phase Three, a vulnerable individual can resume public interactions, including playing tennis, but should practice physical distancing.)
- Participants and coaches from visiting teams and officials should arrive at the contest facility dressed in partial or full uniforms or coaching/officiating gear and should plan to leave the contest facility in partial or full uniforms or coaching/officiating gear (e.g. not dress or change in visiting locker rooms).
- Consideration should be considered to limiting contests against only teams in your local area or, if out-of-state, against teams located in counties that are contiguous to Ohio.
- Coaches should not share clipboards, whiteboards, dry erase boards, headsets or any other equipment used for coaching purposes.
- Contest officials should not share whistles, or any other equipment used for officiating purposes.
- When conducting temperature checks, take into account the potential for environmental factors causing an elevated temperature. Should the temperature be elevated, it is appropriate to

isolate the individual and recheck the temperature after 5-to-10 minutes of sitting in a cool environment.

PREPARING TO PLAY

- Wash your hands with soap and water (for 20 seconds or longer) or use a hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available, before going to the court.
- Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles. Do not share racquets or any other equipment such as wristbands, grips, hats and towels.
- Bring a full water bottle to avoid touching a tap or water fountain handle.
- Use new balls and a new grip, if possible.
- When not actively playing, please adhere to all proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and facemask protocols.
- If you need to sneeze or cough, do so into a tissue or upper sleeve.
- Arrive as close as possible to when you need to be there.
- Avoid touching court gates, fences, benches, etc., if you can.

DURING PLAY

- Try to stay at least six feet apart from other players. Do not make physical contact with them (such as shaking hands or a high five).
- When playing doubles, coordinate with your partner to maintain physical distancing.
- Avoid touching your face after handling a ball, racquet or other equipment. Wash your hands promptly if you have touched your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid sharing food, drinks or towels.
- Use your racquet/foot to pick up balls and hit them to your opponent. Avoid using your hands to pick up the balls.
- Maintain physical distancing if changing ends of the court.
- Remain apart from other players when taking a break.
- If a ball from another court comes to you, send it back with a kick or with your racquet.

AFTER PLAY

- Leave the court as soon as reasonably possible.
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer after coming off the court.
- Do not use the locker room or changing area. Shower at home.
- No extra-curricular or social activity should take place. No congregation after playing.
- All players should leave the facility immediately after play.

USE FOUR OR SIX TENNIS BALLS

Although unlikely, it's possible that a tennis ball can transmit the COVID-19 virus, as virtually any hard surface can transmit the disease. So, here is an extra precaution you can take to keep safe when playing tennis:

- Open two cans of tennis balls that do not share the same number on the ball.
- Take one set of numbered balls and have your playing partner take a set of balls from the other can.
- Proceed with play, making sure to pick up your set of numbered balls only. Should a ball with the other number wind up on your side of the court, do not touch the ball with your hands. Use your racquet head or feet to advance the ball to the other side of the court.

OHSAA Facility Host Recommendations

- If applicable, stagger the entry of all participants, coaches, officials, student game-day auxiliary groups and spectators to adhere to six-foot social distancing.
- Consider multiple points of entry to help ensure there is six-foot social distancing.
- Use contact-less payments where possible.
- Bench water may be provided by the facility host, but the visiting team/participants should supply their own coolers unless agreed upon by the facility host. If used, water coolers shall be sanitized prior to use and frequently during the contest and disposable one-time-use cups shall be utilized.
- Limit press box space to essential personnel only and demonstrate social distancing as much as possible.
- Appoint an individual(s) who is responsible for assisting the host facility manager(s) in logging all incidents and action plans when mandates have not been followed and/or incidents occur; logging recommendations for improving the host facilities' game-day strategies, and creating reports on said items that were logged.

COVID-19 Resources:

- Ohio Department of Health Coronavirus Website (coronavirus.ohio.gov)
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov/coronavirus)