

# BADMINTON WALES RETURN TO COURT MEMBERS & CLUB GUIDANCE

## Return to Court: The starting point

In May 2020, the Welsh Government set out a traffic light-style approach to the easing of the regulatory restrictions in place during the first wave of the pandemic ([Unlocking our society and economy: continuing the conversation](#)). This moved from lockdown, through red, amber and green stages in different areas of our lives. The approach was cautious and involved moving at different speeds in different areas, based on the best evidence available at the time.

In August, the Welsh Government published the Coronavirus Control Plan for Wales. This described the approach to managing coronavirus in Wales, from prevention, through to local action to manage outbreaks and incidents, to all-Wales measures.

On 14th December 2020 the Welsh Government published a new [Coronavirus Control Plan](#). This sets out four alert levels that can be applied across Wales, depending on the infection rate of the virus. These range from alert level one (low risk) to alert level four (very high risk). The Control Plan sets out what each alert level means, what is allowed, and why and when we move between levels can be found. See [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) about the alert levels](#).

*“In Wales – just as in the rest of the world – we have all endured a long and difficult 2020. The approval of the first COVID-19 vaccine in December, coupled with the start of our vaccination programme has been a genuine breakthrough in the pandemic. This brings with it the promise of a brighter future.*

*The process of vaccinating everyone will take time; it will be a while before we see the benefits of this vaccination programme and a future without restrictions to our daily lives – what we could call alert level zero. We can be optimistic but we must also be cautious. We all need to work together to Keep Wales Safe”.*

*Mark Drakeford  
MS First Minister of Wales*

*Vaughan Gething  
MS Minister for Health and Social Services*

This document establishes the approach Badminton Wales are taking for the sports practical return to the court and the club environment. The Members and Club guidance is a live document that needs to be flexible and adaptable to allow the easing of WG guidelines. All members and clubs returning should continue to follow the latest Government Guidelines, on a daily basis, outside of the environment in order to control the spread of the virus. More information on the up to date Guidance can be found on the [Welsh Government website](#).

Covid-19 remains a fastmoving situation, however, we want to ensure that our Members and Clubs have the visibility of the return to court plan.

On Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021, the First Minister for Wales announced the easing of restriction allowing Wales to enter Alert Level 2 which enables Badminton Wales Members and Clubs to move to the next stage of our Return to Roadmap.

Updated for V8

### Coronavirus Alert Levels in Wales

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- Alert level one (low risk)**  
This represents the level of restrictions closest to normality, which are possible while infection rates are low and other preventative measures, such as social distancing and working from home, remain in place.
  - Alert level two (medium risk)**  
This includes additional controls to limit the spread of coronavirus. These may be complemented by more targeted local actions to manage specific incidents or outbreaks.
  - Alert level three (high risk)**  
These represent the strictest restrictions short of a firebreak or lockdown. This responds to higher or rising level of infections where local actions are no longer effective in containing the growth of the virus.
  - Alert level four (very high risk)**  
Restrictions at this level would be equivalent to the firebreak regulations or lockdown. These could either be deployed as a preventative firebreak or as a lockdown measure.

## Return to Court

This declaration document has been developed by Badminton Wales in accordance with our Return to Court Roadmap.

The past year has been a hugely challenging time for all sports and community activities. Badminton Clubs, coaches and members have all been impacted in many ways and our focus is to return our Badminton Members and Clubs to the sport we love in a safe manner. This document will give the badminton community and those involved in the organisation of the clubs and players time to prepare for the return to court as much as possible. The health and safety of our members is our priority so please follow the guidance carefully to ensure that all returning do so to a safe environment whilst continuing to follow government guidelines.

Badminton Wales Return to Court Roadmap released in June 2020 provided the traffic light phased return of our sport. V3 of our Roadmap released in April 2021 has been updated to align to the Alert Levels in place and will help to provide practical guidelines to follow so that badminton can be played as conditions allow. Information and guidance will be subject to change in response to government guidance and the document will be updated in accordance. BW aim to review this document regularly however this document may not be fully up to date on the day you read it.

Specific venues will provide their procedures to ensure compliance with government restrictions, the following aspects of the Members and Clubs Return to Court experience is divided into 10 categories which will need to be followed:

1. Indoor Badminton
2. Hall Set Up Example (dependant on venue)
3. Before Play
4. Organising safe sessions
5. Equipment / Coaching
6. Spectators / parents
7. Safeguarding
8. After Play
9. Alert Level Phased Return
10. #CLUBREADY Toolkit

It is a requirement that each Club must appoint a COVID Officer for the Club. Each activity session must have a Responsible Person (usually the Coach) present.

- Take a register of attendees
- Ensure COVID self-declarations are made
- Ensure guidance is communicated to participants
- Monitor for compliance with measures
- Ensure safe dispersal at end of session



All COVID Officers, Responsible Persons & Coaches must be aware of Covid-19 related safety, hygiene and social distancing protocols - [Covid-19 Awareness Course for the Sports and Recreation Sector](#) is available at a discount for all affiliated clubs and registered members of Badminton Wales and will help ensure clubs, coaches and host facilities are following relevant government guidelines and provide a positive re-introduction to sport and recreation for all participants.

A risk assessment must be completed before each session – you can find a template in the #COURTREADY Toolkit.

In a club setting, a disclaimer document (template available in the #COURTREADY Toolkit) signed and dated by all members of the club returning to play is advisable. Clubs should keep a copy of the fully completed document on file for Insurance purposes. These measures should be in place until further notice. The measures and procedures outlined in this document are under constant review and updated as advice from government, health authorities and governing bodies evolves in line with the gradual lifting of restrictions.

## 1. INDOOR BADMINTON

In order to return to the courts this document provides guidance for the restart of indoor badminton in a safe manner. Badminton Wales will provide protocols and processes that members and clubs should follow to ensure everyone is kept as safe as possible as they return to the court and to mitigate against the risks of potential transmission within the environment. During this initial phase, the game of badminton will look and feel different from what players are used to so that play is safe but that opportunities to play are still created.

- Singles play
- Doubles can be played between the same household/extended households (one other household)
- Modified Doubles between people from separate households can be played at Alert level 2. In order for Badminton Wales to bring Doubles play back for all, we must implement modifications to ensure that the time period spent under 2 metres is minimal. Badminton is not a contact sport but there are instances where players do come into contact, all be it for a very short period of time during play.
- There will be limited numbers allowed onto each court and into each sports hall (max capacity is venue dependent – indoor group size of 30 people max whilst distance is maintained).
- The 30 people excludes
  - U11 year olds – max capacity is venue dependant
  - 11-18 year olds excluded in group size number if activity is exclusive for U18
- Venue specific restrictions will be in place and need to be considered when planning the return to court to ensure available space for safe physical distancing.
- There will be equipment rules in place for rackets and guidance on the use of shuttles.

Procedures will include all aspects of the Badminton experience, from hall set up, organising safe sessions before finally stepping on court to play. Players will be required to comply with the rules on distancing off-court throughout unless the players are from the same/extended household (one other household).

## 2. HALL SET UP

Government guidelines on 2m distancing between players maintained off court. Singles and Double play (between the same household/extended households - one other household), plus Modified Double between separate households. Indoor group size of 30 people maximum (excluding U18 if activity is exclusive for U18) ensuring 2m is maintained with max capacity venue dependent.

## 3. BEFORE PLAY

From 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020 face covering should be worn when entering an indoor facility and throughout the duration of the visit.

The only occasions when face coverings are not required to be worn inside an indoor facility:

- When you are taking part in sport and exercise.
- If you have a reasonable excuse not to wear one – as detailed in the [government guidance](#).

Clubs **MUST** ensure that facilities have suitable hand washing stations available / alcohol- based hand gel / hygiene facilities at multiple locations in the venue (please check with venue specific protocol). Clubs should encourage all members carry their own hand gel and to regularly practice good hand hygiene throughout the session while observing the strict distancing guidance. Ensure COVID self-declaration are made by members.

*You must stay at home if you:*

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have been overseas – please read the [Foreign Travel Government Advice](#)
- Have flu-like symptoms or are feeling unwell.
- A continuous high temperature.
- A loss of taste or smell.
- A new continuous cough.
- Live with a person over 70 years of age or a person who is considered [vulnerable](#).

*You must:*

- Check with your GP prior to playing if you are in a high-risk health category.
- Find out what protocols are in place at the club/venue.
- Ensure club has up-to-date contact details for its members.
- Ensure club COVID Officer is known to the members.

## 4. ORGANISING SAFE SESSIONS

All players shall use their own equipment, such as rackets, shoes, drinking bottles, towel (sweatbands) etc. Equipment must not be shared with other players. Players to ensure they have enough rackets with strings as sharing of equipment is not permitted under current guidelines. This also means no handshakes before, during and after the training.

During the badminton session all body contact off court must be avoided and a distance of 2 metres maintained between players.

On-court: -

#### Doubles Modification

In order for Badminton Wales to bring Doubles play back, we must implement modifications to ensure that the time period spent under 2 metres is minimal. Badminton is not a contact sport but there are instances where players do come into contact all be it for a very short period of time during play.

#### Matches

- The modifications include: -
  - Players break for 1 minutes every 10 points played
  - Move to their own designated space to towel down before resuming play to ensure that close contact time in a match is reduced
  - 1-minute break after 20 point | 30 points until the match is won
  - At 20-20 there is a sudden death rather than the 2 clear points again reducing the time
    - Partnerships would remain for the same for the entire session
  - Maximum match length – 15 mins with a minimum of 15-minute break before resuming doubles match play

The same doubles pair shall play together during the session. In case one of the players show signs of COVID-19 symptoms, immediate and necessary Venue Operator guidelines should be followed.

An immediate direct communication shall be established to the rest of the training group at the venue.

- Session must be managed by the appointed session COVID officer / Responsible Person.
- Check venue specific guidelines /restrictions on Indoor group capacity of 30 people max may vary whilst ensuring 2m distancing in maintained. This should be known when planning.
- Pre-booking attendance must be implemented by the club to enable the COVID officer to manage/limit the amount of players attending. We recommend that players should not be allowed to join the session without pre-booking.
- Venue specific guidelines will determine the amount of time needed to minimise the risks between any back to back sessions.
- Players should arrive ready for the session – check venue specific guidelines regarding changing rooms facilities and toilet facilities.
- Player to arrive and leave as close as possible to session timings.
- It is recommended that only one parent/guardian should accompany younger player where possible minimising the number of individuals in the venue.
- As well as providing them with all the relevant information required to attend you should
  - Communicate how the session will be managed safely for those looking to attend so they know what to expect.
  - Share clear guidelines they need to follow before they attend including facility specific guidance (car parking, access, arriving and leaving), player guidelines, and session information.

To protect against infection:

- Players must refrain from handshakes and high fives.
- Follow government guidelines on distancing at all times.
- Do not share food, towels, drinks, equipment.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand-sanitizer, after going to the toilet, sneezing and coughing.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue in your own bag and bring it home with you.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Keep your distance from people who are obviously sick and notify session COVID Officer-Responsible Person / Venue COVID Officer.
- Try not to touch any surfaces, but if you do sanitize your hands as soon as possible.
- Remain apart from other players when taking a break.
- Any player not on court must remain at least 2 metres from those playing and each other.

## 5. EQUIPMENT / COACHING

- It is recommended that players should bring their own hand sanitiser in addition to the provision at the venue.
- Players / Coaches must bring and only use their own equipment. This includes any training equipment, towels and water bottles.
- Players should not share this equipment with or use the equipment of other members.

Players are encouraged to bring the following to ALL sessions:	Coaches / Volunteers	Equipment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drinks for whole session - water bottle labelled with players name.</li> <li>• Rackets– no sharing of equipment (enough to cover the whole session in case of strings breaking – recommended minimum of 6)</li> <li>• Anti-bacterial hand gel /Anti-bacterial wipes</li> <li>• Towels</li> <li>• Spare kit as required (plus separate bag to put dirty kit in)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face covering is not required if Coach is actively participating in the session.</li> <li>• Coaches instructing from back/side of the court should use face shield/face covering as best practice.</li> <li>• Bring own Anti-bacterial wipes/hand sanitiser</li> <li>• Maintain distancing regulations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must only touch your own equipment</li> <li>• Allocated seating area which you are responsible for clearing at the end of every session</li> </ul>

- It is recommended that cleaning equipment with a disinfectant spray at the beginning and conclusion of training. Equipment to be cleaned when applicable throughout training sessions.
- The sharing of shuttles is permitted on your allocated court. Please ensure you have thoroughly washed your hands (in accordance with Government guidance) or used hand sanitiser immediately before and after play. You should avoid touching your face.
- Players must avoid using their hands to pick up shuttles from other courts; where possible - use your own racket to return them.

- Equipment bags should be stored in an allocated place at least 2 metres from the back of the court and any other players.
- Ensure you take all your belongings with you at the end of the session and do not leave anything on court.
- Avoid using/touching other equipment such as nets, posts, court mops where possible. If you have to set up or take down nets, for example, please use appropriate PPE (disposable gloves) and ensure you wash your hands immediately afterwards in line with Government guidance.
- A coach (or assistant coach) is the Responsible person for the session.
- Additional guidance has been provided for coaches on how to manage sessions. This may also be useful for other groups to help them organise sessions.

## **6. SPECTATORS / PARENTS**

Spectators should be discouraged unless a child is playing in which case, we recommend that one parent/carer may be permitted per child to supervise their child whilst following distancing guidelines.

## **7. SAFEGUARDING**

Clubs must ensure that all safeguarding requirements are in place prior to any junior activity commencing. This means there is a designated Welfare Officer to manage all concerns from parents and young people.

Remember, some players may need additional support or adaptations to support their participation.

## **8. AFTER PLAY**

- Once the session has finished players should leave the club promptly.
- Hands should be washed and sanitised as soon as possible.
- Ensure own equipment is cleaned thoroughly after use.
- If an player becomes unwell after the session, they should first contact their GP/ NHS and then inform their club COVID officer / session Responsible Person. The club will then follow advice provided to them by the NHS on the next steps.
- Members should be encouraged to remind other members of the guidelines, in a gentle way, when they witness poor practices.
- Repeated poor practice should be reported to the club COVID officer as soon as possible.

[Frequently asked questions](#)

## 9. ALERT LEVELS IN WALES

ALERT LEVEL 4– LOCKDOWN	ALERT LEVEL 3	ALERT LEVEL 2	ALERT LEVEL 1
<p>Exercise with members of your own household. Outdoor Badminton can be played with family members, at home.</p> <p>BW Shuttle Time Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Badminton At Home</li> <li>• Couch to Court</li> </ul> <p>Face to Face Club activity cancelled, clubs maintain remote engagement with members.</p> <p>Solo training, or with family members, at home or within walking distance of home.</p> <p>Clubs to plan for return to facility use and engage with facility operators/ providers to develop a safe Return to Use Plan at the dedicated Badminton facilities where appropriate.</p>	<p>Indoor Facilities to open with venue specific guidelines and protocols in place.</p> <p>Indoor Badminton to restart with restrictions on group numbers (15).</p> <p>Only singles be played with distancing measures in place.</p> <p>Double can be played where each member of a pair comes from the same/extended household (one other household).</p> <p>Groups of 15 excluding U11</p> <p>U18 excluded in group size number if activity is exclusive for U18</p>	<p>Indoor Badminton with restrictions on group numbers (30).</p> <p>Double can be played where each member of a pair comes from the same/extended household (one other household).</p> <p>Groups of 30 excluding U11</p> <p>U18 excluded in group size number if activity is exclusive for U18</p> <p>Modified version of Doubles training and matches can be introduced at Alert Level 2.</p>	<p>Groups of 50 excluding U11</p> <p>U18 excluded in group size number if activity is exclusive for U18</p> <p>Double can be played where each member of a pair comes from the same/extended household (two other household).</p> <p>Modified Doubles training and matches can be played at Alert Level 1.</p> <p>League badminton may resume whilst maintaining distancing in line with PHW / WG and BW guidance on doubles.</p>

**BW ARE CURRENTLY IN ALERT LEVEL 2 (17<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2021) OF THE PHASED RETURN TO COURT**

## 10. #COURTREADY Toolkit

Badminton Wales want to ensure that all Clubs and Members can deliver Badminton safely. Badminton Wales will support you every step of the way. We have provided a Toolkit with resources, templates and training links so that together you can get back on court as quickly and as safely as possible. #COURTREADY gives you the tools and checklist to complete before recommencing Badminton activities.

1. #COURTREADY Checklist
2. Disclaimer
3. Risk Assessment
4. Register
5. Access to First Aid Statement
6. Visuals inc. Posters
7. [Covid-19 Awareness Course for the Sports and Recreation Sector](#)
8. Duty of Care and Guidance for Clubs
9. Test, Trace, Protect Procedure
10. #BeActiveWales Fund
11. FAQ

If you have any further questions of queries please get in touch.