Eton Fives: Return to Play Guidelines

Introduction

The Eton Fives Association feels that Eton Fives is a low risk activity and can therefore be resumed with immediate effect.

Low risk does not mean no risk, however, and the health and safety of all players, coaches and organisers of the game is our main priority.

The following guidelines are designed to mitigate the risk involved as much as possible; it is the responsibility of all players and organisers to ensure that these guidelines are adhered to.

The guidelines have been reviewed by the Department for Digital, Media, Culture & Sport, who have commented that "your guidance includes the elements that we would expect to see to enable a safe return to activity, in line with government guidelines."

These guidelines are valid from 12/05/21 but may be subject to change should government guidelines change.

Before Playing

Risk Assessment: All clubs and groups of players must develop a written COVID-19 plan and risk assessment prior to activity. This should be based on the EFA guidelines and must be completed in conjunction with each individual centre. Participants should be asked to consider if their age or underlying health may caution against participation.

Symptom Check: All players, officials, volunteers and spectators must undergo a self-assessment for any COVID-19 symptoms. No-one should leave home to participate in sport if they, or someone they live with, has symptoms of COVID-19 currently recognised as any of the following:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- A loss of, or change to, their sense of smell or taste

Should an individual have demonstrated any such symptoms, they must follow NHS and PHE guidance on self-isolation

Travel to training and matches: Participants are encouraged to follow best practice for travel including minimising use of public transport. Walk or cycle if you can.

Arrival at venues: Clubs should strictly limit the time spent congregating at a venue before activity begins. Meet-up times should reflect this. This includes arriving changed and ready to begin. Exceptions may be made where safety and safeguarding measures require this e.g. supporting disability athletes with minimum time spent waiting or in changing rooms.

Test and trace: Activity organisers should collect written information on participants at both training sessions and matches. This must be detailed enough to allow NHS Test and Trace to contact all participants if a player becomes ill with COVID-19. These records must be kept for 21 days and in a format that can be sent to the EFA Secretary Gareth Hoskins on request.

During Play

Social Distancing: All players and spectators must adhere to social distancing while off court. There should be no shaking hands or touching gloves. Water bottles or other refreshment containers should not be shared. Participants should bring their own, in a labelled or highly distinguishable container.

There is an additional risk of infection in close proximity situations where people are shouting or conversing loudly, particularly indoors and when face to face. If possible, players should therefore avoid shouting or raising their voices when facing each other.

Equipment: Where possible, gloves should not be shared and each participant should have their own gloves. Where gloves absolutely have to be shared or kept together each person using them must wash or sanitise their hands immediately after. Gloves and balls should be cleaned after each session; washable inner gloves for all players could be considered.

Injuries: Injuries during play should still be treated as participant wellbeing is utmost. The best way to protect yourself and others is through rigorous cleaning, personal hygiene and regular hand hygiene. After contact with an injured participant, clean your hands thoroughly with soap and water or alcohol hand sanitiser at the earliest opportunity. This advice is applicable to all situations, regardless of whether there was close contact or the minimum social distancing was maintained. Avoid touching your mouth, eyes and nose.

Spectators: Supporters, parents, and other spectators to remain socially distanced whilst attending events. Spectator groups must conform to government guidance on outdoor gatherings and social distancing.

Venues

All clubs must adhere to any specific guidelines and regulations issued by each individual venue, as well as the guidelines listed here. These may include such things as booking systems, car parking, entrances and exits, one-way systems and access to toilet facilities. Some venues may continue to be closed to external users for the foreseeable future.

Game Adaptations

Versions of the game can be played that further mitigate risk, including top step v down step singles games or "2 up 2 down" with the court divided into quarters. For more information on these options, contact the EFA.

Indoor courts

The vast majority of Eton Fives courts are outdoors. Before May 17th, it is not possible to play at venues which are fully indoors. From May 17th onwards, Fives on indoor courts can happen with any number of participants, as long as it's undertaken in line with the rest of these guidelines and adheres to the capacity restrictions for indoor sport facilities.

Adherence to guidelines

All clubs and players must commit to adhering to these Covid-19 specific adaptations. Participants must be clear that they are opting in to participating as defined in the sport-specific guidance with regard to risk and risk mitigation.

Eton Fives Association. 12/05/21.