

RETURN TO PLAY RECOMMENDATIONS: ADULT AND JUNIOR LEAGUES

Updated January 6, 2021

Subject to Change

In accordance with the latest rules and government regulations, the USTA Eastern section has created additional guidelines and recommendations to help parents, players and other spectators prepare for competitive play.

The section recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected different parts of the section in different ways and with different timing. Therefore, governmental restrictions placed upon players may vary by localities, cities and states. The additional guidelines below delineate specific health and safety measures for those participating in or administering a USTA Eastern tournament or Junior Circuit event.

We know many play tennis to stay mentally and physically fit and active. Luckily, the sport is a natural social-distancing activity that limits close person-to-person contact. But the section needs your help to ensure play stays safe and healthy. Please keep up-to-date with evolving federal, state and local laws, rules and regulations regarding COVID-19. USTA Eastern will make every effort to revise its own guidelines based upon the most current updates.

To review the most recent state and federal information, please visit the following links:

- [CDC](#)
- [Connecticut](#)
- [New Jersey](#)
- [New York](#)

For non-sanctioned tournaments listed on USTA digital platforms all of the below are strongly recommended but not required.

Facility Recommendations (Management)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- The host organization/club must comply with local government and health officials guidelines for the administration of sporting events and maintain regular contact with authorities.

- Ensure that there are no congregation areas at the court and/or facility.
- All common area chairs and tables should be stacked, roped off or removed from the area to prevent congregating and touching.
- All gates and doors should be roped off or left open to prevent touching. If the facility has a wide open side entrance to the courts, its use is recommended.
- All court gates and stair rails should be wrapped with caution tape to discourage touching. If this is not possible, they should be wiped down every hour.
- Limit the use of indoor spaces by keeping all locker room and shower areas closed.
- Mark out separation distances in toilets, at food outlets and other locations where people gather, including tournament offices.
- Remove food offerings in common areas (fruit, granola bars, etc.)

HEALTH, SAFETY & HYGIENE

- Display signage about handwashing and hygiene techniques at strategic points such as sinks, eating areas, drinking areas and on the side of the court.
- Make disinfectant soap, hand sanitizers or wipes available at all main contact points.
- Regularly remind and encourage everyone—particularly juniors—that they should wash hands often and adopt other principles of a good hygiene strategy.
- Clean all surfaces—including counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures and toilets—several times a day wearing disposable gloves.
- Provide containers to dispose of contaminated items, tissues and used personal protective equipment (PPE). Dispose safely.
- For more on youth sports considerations, visit the [CDC website](#)
- Refer to [USTA cleaning and disinfection considerations](#)

ON COURT/MATCH PLAY

- Display proper court signage indicating court #'s and directions to access those courts within your facility.
- Consider different entry and exit routes to the courts/venue where possible, and ensure these routes are clearly marked.

- Distance tournament players and spectators six feet apart and if possible mark separation distances in the lobby area.
- Place or remove benches/chairs on opposite sides of the court and disinfect after every match.
- All score tenders should be removed to prevent touching.
- Remove water coolers or stations from the courts.
- Have staff manage all line/court sweeping.
- Capture and retain accurate participant information in the event contact tracing becomes necessary.
- If possible, broadcast announcements on public announcement systems.

Player Recommendations

- Check with the host facility ahead of time for any protocols that may apply at that facility. This may include a waiver.
- Prepay court fees.
- Prepare for bathrooms not being available at the facility.
- Arrive at the facility close to assigned start time and be ready to play. Depart immediately when your individual match is complete.
- Bring your own water bottles, towel, masks, gloves, or any other personal equipment. Store them inside your tennis bag when not in use.
- Use headbands, hats, towels or wristbands to avoid touching your face during play. Clean hands often—before, during and after matches. Do not share racquets or any other equipment such as wristbands, grips, hats and towels.
- Exchange line-ups and report scores electronically, if possible.
- Clearly verbalize the score at the start of each point.
- Maintain safe social distance between players during the racquet spin at the start of a match.
- Set up on opposite sides of the netpost, and switch on that side of the court only. If this is not possible, players should set up at a minimum of six feet apart from each other.
- Offer an acknowledgment such as a nod, a thumbs up or a “good match” instead of shaking players’ hands.
- If you are uncomfortable sharing tennis balls, bring your own can of balls.



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- When playing doubles, coordinate with your partner to maintain physical distancing.
- Use racquet/foot to pick up balls and hit them to the opponent. Avoid using hands to pick up balls. If a ball from another court comes to your court, send it back with a kick or with your racquet.
- Refrain from bringing communal snacks and drinks to matches.