

Guidance to Clubs and Tournament Managers for holding tournaments in England during Covid-19

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Introduction

1. This document is intended to help clubs and tournament managers plan their events in a way that complies with the regulations when they start to consider holding tournaments. It has been reviewed and approved by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) on 11th June 2020 and updated on 2nd July
2. This is clearly a fast-moving situation and Government guidance can be relaxed or tightened at any time. Clubs should be prepared to react to changes, and players should be aware that this may include cancellation of an event at short notice.
3. It is essential that at all stages of planning an event, the latest Government and CA guidance should be taken into account. At the time of writing, the following are recommended reading:
 - [Guidance for providers of outdoor facilities on the phased return of sport and recreation in England](#)
 - [FAQs: what you can and can't do after 4 July](#)
 - Full CA guidance about playing croquet during Covid-19 more generally (washing equipment, hygiene etc.) <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2577>
 - For the latest updates to CA guidance, including 'Precautions for Playing Croquet' and the 'Clubhouse Re-Opening Checklist', see: <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?p=press/news&NewsID=6949&pup=y>
 - For the Government's advice on re-opening bar and kitchen facilities see: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/restaurants-offering-takeaway-or-delivery>
4. Clubs located in, or close to, Wales or Scotland should also consider different guidance that may be applicable to them or visiting players.
5. The final decision whether or not to hold a competition or tournament is left entirely at the discretion of the clubs, who in addition to this guidance should take into account the views of their members, rules stipulated by landlords, the nature of the tournament and any other local conditions.

Guidance for size and format of event

6. The format of the event must ensure that no more than 4 players are on a court (or 2 players on a half-size court) at any one time, with no exception made for members of the same household or support bubble. and all other Government guidelines (groups, social distancing) are met throughout the duration of the tournament.
7. This includes, but may not be limited to:
 - i. Entry size must be no more than 4 x number of courts so that social distancing can be maintained during play and at all other times.

- ii. Whilst restrictions are in place on staying away from home, clubs should expect players who cannot travel from their home on a daily basis to withdraw once it become clear that local accommodation will not be available. For this purpose home includes a household that is part of their 'support bubble' if they are in the appropriate category to have a support bubble (i.e. lives alone or a single parent with children).
 - iii. Tournaments must be run under one of the following scenarios, all of which have been approved by the DCMS on 11th June 2020. It is likely that most would be run under scenario 3 but the other stricter conditions are included so that clubs can exercise more control if they wish or in case Government regulations are tightened again.
 - 1) **Scenario 1.** Tournament entries may be restricted to no more than the maximum size of groups allowed under Government guidance.
 - 2) **Scenario 2.** Players may be restricted on any one day to a group of no more than the maximum size of groups allowed under Government guidance. Players in different groups should not interact during that day (this will require them to play on different courts, not eat lunch together etc.)
 - 3) **Scenario 3.** Players may be restricted in any one session to a group of no more than the maximum size of groups allowed under Government guidance. A session will be a period of play before a break so is likely to be a morning, afternoon or evening session but - for instance - could also be 0930-1100, 1110-1340, 1350-1520 etc. Players in different groups should not interact during that session (this will require them to play on different courts, not eat lunch together etc.)
8. As an example, we consider a four-court club operating under current restrictions for groups of no more than six people, and the implications of each of the three scenarios.
- i. **Scenario 1.** This would effectively limit the number of people in a tournament to six players until the group size is increased.
 - ii. **Scenario 2.** The maximum tournament entry size at our nominal 4 court club could be 16 (4 courts x 4 players per court), but for each player if you considered all the people with whom they shared a court during a single day, you would find a total of five other players. The practical implication of this is that on each day the tournament would be divided into groups of up to six (the current group size) who would only play games between themselves.

For instance, on a four-court club this could permit a tournament of 12 players who play in two groups of six players on day 1, with each group playing a mini-league of 5 games with no interaction of players in other groups. The top three players in each mini-league could then, on day 2, play another mini-league (again with six players) to determine the overall winner. These six players would be in their own group on day 2, and not interact with the other 6 players in the tournament.
 - iii. **Scenario 3.** Tournament entry size would be limited to 16 players, in the nominal 4 court club, with no more than four players on any one court at any

one time. Those players would remain in their group for the session, which would be defined by the tournament manager before play commences and would be separated from the next session by a clear break, e.g. morning session separated from afternoon session by lunch break. Breaks should be taken alone, or with either the morning group or the afternoon group, but not a mixture of both.

Preparations prior to the event

9. Clubs must consider the whole end-to-end ‘user journey’ when planning safe operating practices; this means all activities from the time of arrival on site to leaving, not just the sporting activity. As well as considering players, this activity must also include staff (if applicable) or volunteers at the club.

10. This includes, but may not be limited to:

- i. **Ensure that it is clear that anyone who is symptomatic or suspects they have been exposed to the virus does not take part and remains at home.**
- ii. Clubs should set out all the lawns before players arrive.
- iii. Indoor facilities, apart from toilets and through-ways, should be kept closed unless the club has decided to open its bar and kitchen under the new Government and CA guidance effective from July 4th.
- iv. Additional arrangements may be required for more frequent cleaning of any areas that are open. This should include appropriate signage regarding queuing arrangements, and ensuring that appropriate hygiene facilities are provided (e.g. disposable towels and hand sanitiser)
- v. If hoops need to be brought in each night then it would be preferable if the same person/small group of people is responsible for setting out and bringing in.
- vi. Provision must be made for players to shelter at the social distance in force at the time of the event. It is important to consider bad weather. A typical shelter found at most clubs may only accommodate one person unless the social distance plus mitigation measures can be enforced. Players’ cars may provide an option if other facilities are limited.
- vii. Until catering is permitted, all players must bring their own refreshments, including drinks and food, and they should be told to take all their rubbish home with them. Players will assume there are no bar and catering facilities open unless the club specifically informs them otherwise
- viii. Arrangements should be made for somewhere for players to eat their packed lunches at the social distance currently in force and within their allocated group. Again, bad weather should be considered. This may mean gazebos, sitting under umbrellas or in their own car.
- ix. Clear instructions should be sent to all the players about the club rules for arrival, hand washing, toilets, equipment cleaning, shelter etc. This should

include instructions to players to arrive and leave in the clothes they will be playing in.

- x. Arrangement needs to be made to clean equipment (particularly balls and clips) between games in accordance with CA guidance.
- xi. Clubs should consider posting the CA poster/infographic (available at <https://www.croquet.org.uk/?d=2595>) around the lawns as a reminder to players.

Guidance for managing the event

11. Do as much of the draw and arranging of games in advance of the tournament as possible. Let players know who they will be playing and on which lawn in advance if possible. An implication of this statement is that block or knockout play is preferred to Swiss formats.
12. Stagger start times so that everyone is not arriving at the club at the same time.
13. Inform the players of the format before the event. Avoid players asking for advice or instruction by telling them everything beforehand and putting up notices with the same information.
14. If the tournament is being run under scenario 3 then the beginning and end of session times must be clearly conveyed to the players.
15. Avoid requiring players to congregate at a manager's table to write results on a board. One suggested method is to ask players to text or phone results to the manager at the end of the game or the end of the day.
16. Players may call for a referee, provided one is available without causing a breach of latest guidance for size of a group. All refereeing will require maintenance of social distance. This may mean the referee will ask the players to move away whilst testing static positions (for example, balls on/off court, hoops scored/not scored, balls in/not in contact, wirings). For questionable shots the referee should take the best position possible whilst maintaining social distance. Referees may use their own phones to provide high speed images of strokes if that enables them to referee effectively at a greater distance.
17. Managers should ensure that they restrict their own activities to a group of the maximum allowed size in any given session.
18. Maintain, for at least 21 days, records of games and lawn allocations to support contact tracing should it subsequently be required.

Notes on Tournament Regulations

19. Attention is drawn in particular to the following provisions of the Tournament Regulations which clubs may need to rely upon in order to make appropriate adjustments to events in order to comply with the guidance above.

- M1(k) (Emergencies). The CA considers that this regulation applies to all events taking place during the Covid-19 pandemic. This Regulation requires that the manager takes actions necessary to protect players and the club. This may include:
 - Alterations to the published programme to adopt a different format or a reduced number of players (C2(c))
 - Refuse entry to certain players, for example those who would be unable to commute to/from the club each day or who are displaying symptoms (C3(e))
- M2(g) (Sanctions), includes breaches of Covid-specific requirements (including distancing and hygiene measures), and may result in disqualification and being asked to leave the premises.
- C2(b) (Titles for Events) still applies. If the requirements of, for example, a Championship cannot be met, the event should either be downgraded or not held.
- P4(b) (Reporting) Players should report to the manager at the start and end of play, and results at the end of each game/match in accordance with arrangements made for each event. It is not expected that this will be a face-to-face arrangement.

20. The following regulations are amended during the Covid-19 pandemic

- L4 (Alternate Stroke Doubles). This variation is suspended.
- Appendix 1 –The use of flags, corner/off-side markers and clips should be in accordance with general CA guidance about playing croquet during Covid-19.

21. The CA does not intend to impose any penalties on players who withdraw due to Covid-19, whether that is imposed (for example, due to isolation requirements) or personal choice. Consequently

- An administrative fee under Regulation P3(g) should not be imposed
- Withdrawals, even at short notice, will not be subject to sanction under Regulations P2(c) or P3(h)

Changes Log.

2 July. Paragraph numbers added. Throughout: ‘gathering’ changed to ‘group’; ‘social bubble’ changed to ‘support bubble’. Paragraph 3 - additional links on catering guidance. Before Paragraph 4 - paragraph on ‘elite sport’ removed. Paragraph 7. iii. 3) - additional example inserted to illustrate session length. Paragraphs 10. iii., vi., and vii. - updated to reflect changes from 4 July. Paragraph 10. x. - ‘clips’ added.