

The Badminton Return To Play Roadmap - Universities

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Introduction

The last six months have been a hugely challenging time for us all and sports and physical activity have been a key area of society that has been missed. Our players have all been impacted in many ways. However, the good news is that we are now able to implement guidance that allows the return of badminton to universities, with effect from October 2nd 2020. This document provides all the information you will need to deliver badminton within your university, whether that is team training nights, an intra-mural competition, or as part of a BUCS inter-university competition. Alternatively, you could run an organised social session in the form of a No Strings Badminton group, to provide your students with the opportunity to play in a non competitive, organised atmosphere.

It provides practical guidelines to follow so that badminton can be played where local conditions allow it. Our aim is to provide as much information as possible and to support you as best we can to make your return to play as easy as possible. To do this, we are also providing the following:

- FAQs – we have already started to answer your questions and will continue to update this as more questions arise.
- Resources and tools – this includes access to Re-Activate COVID awareness training, a risk assessment template, Covid-19 Officer details, FREE access to No Strings co-ordinator training and ideas for competition.

You will find these on our return to play hub at: www.badmintonengland.co.uk; if you can't find the answer to any questions you may have, please contact us directly via our [contact form](#).

Alignment to guidance

This guidance document has been developed in accordance with both [Government](#) and [BUCS](#) guidelines. They are accurate at the date of publication but are subject to change in line with government guidance. You will be aware how rapidly the situation can change but we continue to remain in close contact with the relevant parties and, should any of the restrictions change, we will issue revised guidance as soon as we are able to.

BUCS have announced that following discussions with the Government in England, indoor sports for students, which are run by the university, are now exempt from the rule of 6 within the specific situations outlined below. This exemption applies to over-18s taking part in organised sport for educational purposes, However the exemption does not translate to recreational sport on university campuses.

The exemption for indoor sports remains for Higher Education across all three tiers, however it is recommended you contact the University Senior Leadership Team and Health and Safety office for internal confirmation. It is also advised that you contact your local authority as some decisions are being pushed down to local leaders to make, therefore local guidance may vary (BUCS, Return to Play Advice, October 16).

You can keep up to date with the latest guidance through our [website](#) and social media channels.

Before playing

- Keep up to date with [Government guidance](#) on social distancing and gathering sizes.
- If you are symptomatic or living in a household with someone else who has a possible or confirmed Covid-19 infection you should remain at home.
- Good hand hygiene is essential – wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds – you should wash your hands before leaving to play and on your return to home.

Venue

- It is the responsibility of each user (individual, coach, club, group) to understand the specific requirements of the venue you are using.
- You must follow the venue's guidance to maintain social distancing on entering and leaving the venue and whilst moving around it.

Safe sessions (coaching, clubs & competition)

- The following guidelines apply to any organised university badminton session:
 - You must complete a risk assessment for each session or match based on the venue, the activity you plan to deliver and your players to ensure the session can be delivered safely and in line with guidelines – you can find a template [here](#).
 - Each session must have an appointed [Covid-19 officer](#). This would ideally be the session organiser so they have the most control over how the session runs.
 - All coaches, officials, No Strings coordinators and Covid-19 officers should complete the [ReActivate COVID awareness training](#).

Spectators

- Spectators are not permitted at any event, competition or match.

Safeguarding

- Universities must ensure that all safeguarding requirements are in place prior to any student badminton activity commencing. This means there is a designated Welfare Officer to manage all concerns.
- It is very important to be aware of, and to focus on, mental health and well-being at times of uncertainty. Remember that many of your players may have been through a difficult period and need reassuring on their return to play.

Inclusion

- Remember, some players may need additional support or adaptations to support their participation. Further guidance is available [here](#).

Playing badminton

- Both singles play and doubles play can take place in groups of people from different households, as long as you remain 2 metres apart as far as possible.
- You can play singles and doubles using all areas of the court, within the respective court markings – if social distancing between adjacent courts cannot be maintained, you should only use the singles court markings.
- We recommend that you do not change ends. If you adopt the match play option 2 for your training sessions or are playing BUCS league matches, you must not change ends.
- Players are advised to limit their interactions with anyone outside of the group they are playing in (e.g. players in another group).
- Other than where players are from the same household or part of a support bubble, follow Government advice on staying alert and safe, and:
 - Stay at least two metres away from other players (including during play) as much as possible, when taking breaks and before and after play.
 - Do not make physical contact with other players (such as shaking hands or high fiving).
 - Avoid chasing the shuttle down towards another court if other players are using it.
 - For doubles, consider agreeing in advance which player will take the shot if a shuttle travels to the centre of the court.

Managing Shuttles and Equipment

- As a university organising a session or match, you should ensure that you provide hand sanitiser for all players in attendance.
- Players and coaches must take all their own equipment they need for the session, keeping to essential items. You should only use your own racket.
- You should not share equipment, and should clean and wipe down your equipment before and after use.
- Shuttles should be allocated to a group of players in line with how you are organising the session in the hall. Players within that group can share shuttles but should adhere to strict hygiene rules and should not handle any shuttles allocated to other groups.
 - We recommend that shuttles should be changed after each match if changing opponents.
 - Players should avoid using their hands to pick up shuttles from other courts; where possible - use your own racket to return them.
- Bring a full water bottle, clearly marked and do not share food or drink with others.
- Equipment bags should be stored behind the court you are playing on and 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, ensure you wash your hands immediately afterwards in line with Government guidance.

Organising your session

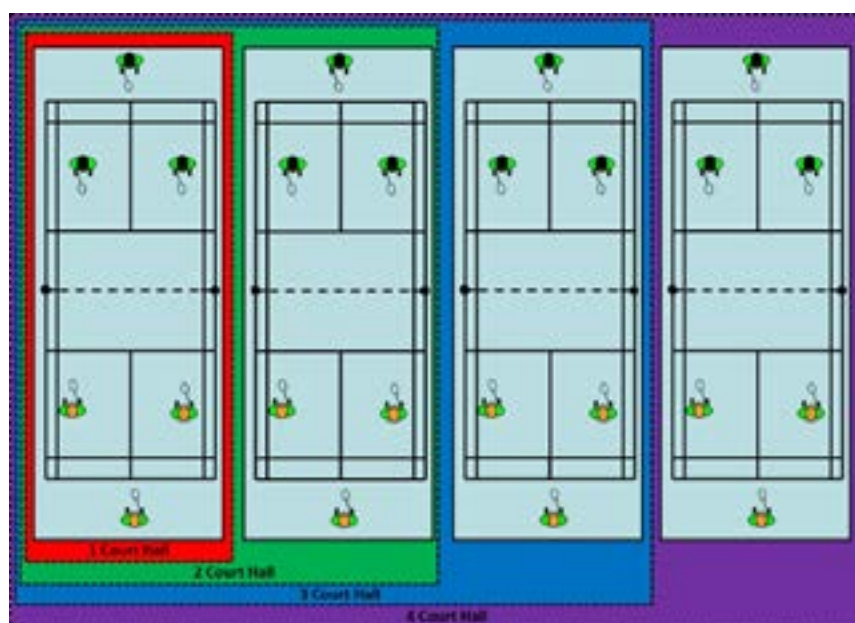
- All sessions should be managed by the identified Covid-19 Officer, who is able to take part in play providing they are still able to effectively manage the session.
- All movement on and off court and around the hall must be controlled by the designated session Covid-19 Officer. You should adopt a one-way flow around the hall where possible.
- You must implement a pre-booking system which will enable you to keep attendance records for all sessions and matches, including who played in what groups for a minimum of 21 days in order to comply with the NHS Test and Trace. Badminton England has made a booking system available to assist you in managing your sessions and groups.
- If collecting monies from players, you should use online or contactless payment wherever possible.
- If delivering back to back sessions, end the first session early and start the next session late in order to reduce the risk and provide safe change overs of players. No players from the first session can attend the second session.
- More advice and tools to help you run and organise sessions can be found [here](#).

Running a team training session;

You now have two options when delivering a training session:

Option 1 – Casual play

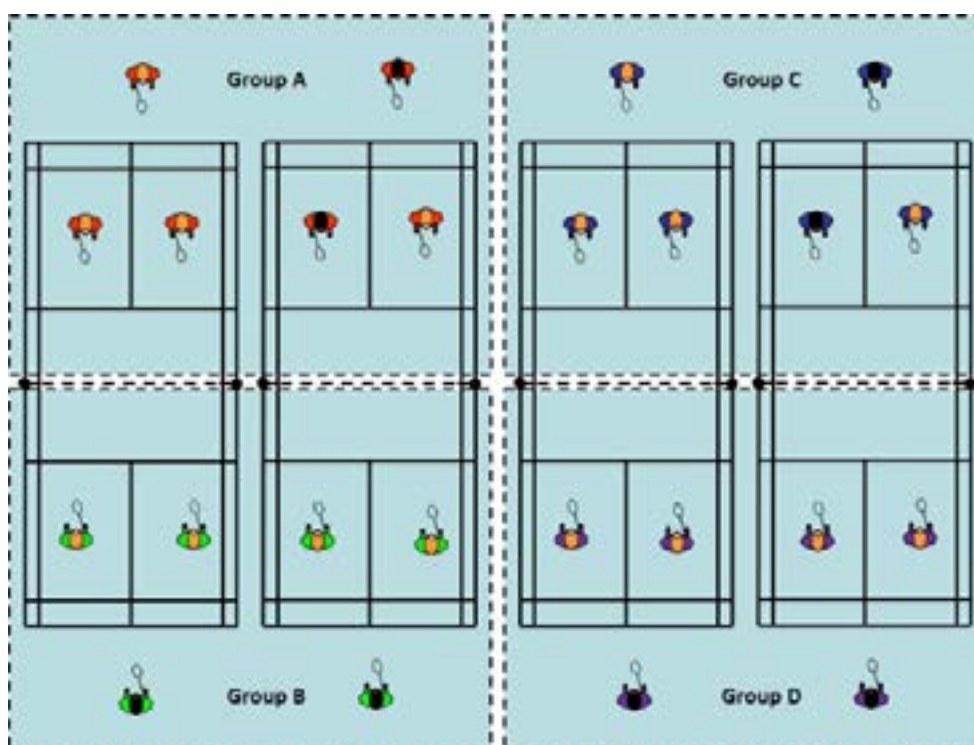
- A maximum of six players can be grouped together; depending on the total space available ensuring that social distancing is maintained.
- Players must stay within their allocated group during a session, but they can rotate within the group providing social distancing is maintained within the group.
- If you use a pegboard within your session then you must have one for each group of players where someone is designated to run the pegboard or the session Covid-19 Officer must manage a pegboard for each group in the session



Option 2 – Match play

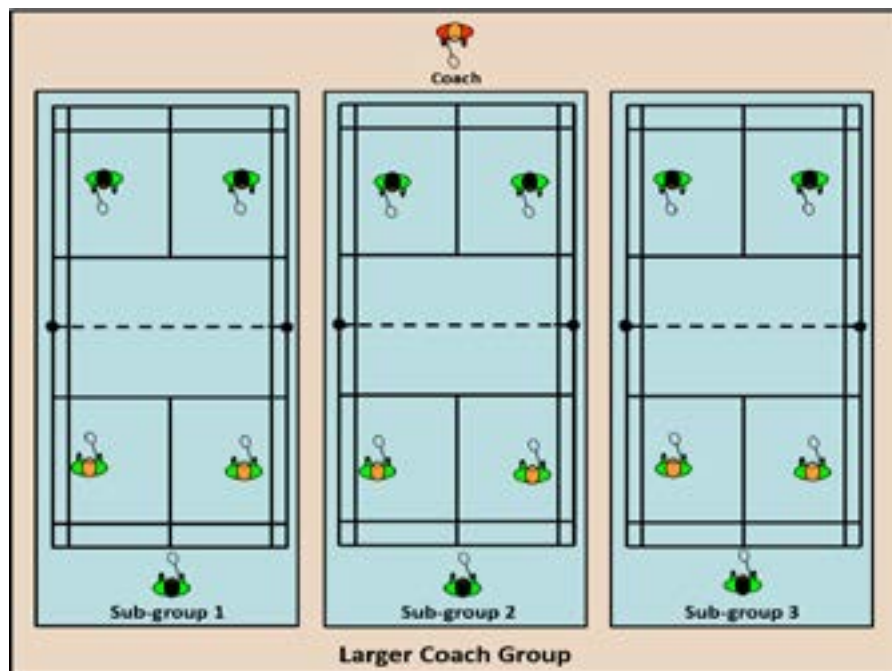
- This format mirrors that now allowed for the return of competitive matches and offers teams greater flexibility in match play whilst maintaining the required group size.
- Players can be placed in groups of up to a maximum of 6 players; they can partner for a match with any other player in their group.
- To facilitate match play, one group of 6 (Team A) is able to play against another group of 6 (Team B). There can be no rotation between the groups, i.e., no player from Team A can partner a player from Team B, but any combination of players in Team A can play any combination of players in Team B. for example
 - Match 1: A1 & A2 vs B1 & B2
 - Match 2: A3 & A4 vs B3 & B4
 - Match 3: A5 & A6 vs B5 & B6
 - Match 4: A1 & A6 vs B1 & B6
 - Match 5: A2 & A4 vs B2 & B4
 - Match 6: A3 & A5 vs B3 & B5

The diagram below illustrates how this could be organised within a four court hall



Coaching

- Coaching can take place in groups of students from different households. As the guidance on group (gathering) sizes changes regularly, please check our [website](#) for the latest advice.
- A coach can coach on a ratio of up to 1: 15, with players being split into separate sub-groups of no more than 6 players. (See figure 1).
- Players can rotate within their individual smaller sub-group but social distancing must be maintained within this sub-group. They cannot move sub-groups or to another larger group within a session.
- You can have more than one group (up to 15) in a hall. This depends on the space available, your ability to maintain social distancing and maintaining sub-groups of no more than 6.
- Groups should be spread over an appropriate number of courts to allow for social distancing to be maintained within the group.
- A coach (or assistant coach) is needed for each group (up to 15) if any coaching is to take place. Players cannot move between groups during a session.
- Coaches are permitted to coach another group after the conclusion of the first 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.



Competition

- All guidance around pre-planning, organising and running safe sessions; playing badminton and the use of equipment, including shuttles, as set out in this document, must be followed by anyone organising competition at any level.
- Players can be placed in groups of up to a maximum of 6 players; they can partner for a match with any other player in their group.
- To facilitate a match, one group of 6 (Team A) is able to play against another group of 6 (Team B). There can be no rotation between the groups, i.e., no player from Team A can partner a player from Team B, but any combination of players in Team A can play any combination of players in Team B. for example
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 - Match 6: A3 & A5 vs B3 & B5

Intra Mural Competition:

With competitive opportunities not yet available in all sports, why not run an Intra Mural competition. An Intra Mural competition allows you to foster some spirited rivalries between the societies of your university, engaging more students in competitive badminton.

Preparation

- Choose a competition format, this could be a on-off competition such as a round robin or a knockout, or an ongoing competition such as a league or a ladder.
- Check availability with the university sports centre and that they are happy for this event to go ahead.
- Try to think of a time where the majority of students will be available and then book this slot, try to secure a weekend booking or a Wednesday evening (when students are free from lectures for BUCS events).
- Fill out a [risk assessment](#) and make sure your insurance covers you for the event.

Marketing

- Advertise your competition around the university and via social media.
- Contact the committee of each of the societies you'd like to take part so that they are aware of the competition.
- Ask your SU for the details of other societies who you think may be also interested.
- Keep in regular contact with teams and societies. Keep track of entries so you know who will be in attendance.
- Send final information around to all players so that they are aware of the day's schedule and to avoid confusion.

More information on running an Inter Mural competition can be found on the Badminton England resource hub, inside the Club Toolbox group, you can register for access [here](#).

Team Matches (Inter University Fixtures):

- BUCS League matches can take place between two teams of up to six players. Players in each team can partner with any other player from their team and play against any combination of players from the opposition – as the [above](#) competition example shows.
- All matches should be managed by the identified Covid-19 Officer, who is able to take part in play providing they are able to manage the match and do not exceed playing numbers. The role of Covid-19 officer can be shared amongst players in the same team and it is the responsibility of the home team to fill this role.
- The home team shall be responsible for ensuring that visiting teams are aware in advance of any venue specific guidance and match arrangements.
- Each team in the match should be allocated one side of the court/hall and play from that side for the duration of the match, i.e., teams pick an 'end' and there is no changing of end between games/sets/rubbers.
 - Match/league organisers may want to introduce a ruling to direct how sides are allocated, such as 'away team chooses end'.
 - Players from different groups should not share the same the side of the net at the same time, even during warm-ups. It may be necessary to warm-up with the opposition, unless you can allocate different courts or times to warm-up.
- It is recommended to allocate teams separate areas when off court, ideally the side of the courts they are playing on.
- Players may not play more than one match over a day.
- The diagram shows a typical league match between two teams of 6 players - teams are allocated sides of the court for play and off-court seating, with off-court seating placed at 2m intervals. NB: There may be play on adjacent courts that is not linked to the match in any way



No Strings Badminton

No Strings Badminton is suitable for all abilities, providing an easily accessible, social and enjoyable environment for those new to the game or looking to start again. The aim of No Strings Badminton is to offer an enjoyable environment for those new to the game or looking to start playing again. We are encouraging facilities to start a new session or restart their previous programme to provide opportunities for new and existing casual players to access organised activity.

No Strings Badminton sessions are led by a co-ordinator, this person needs to be able to:

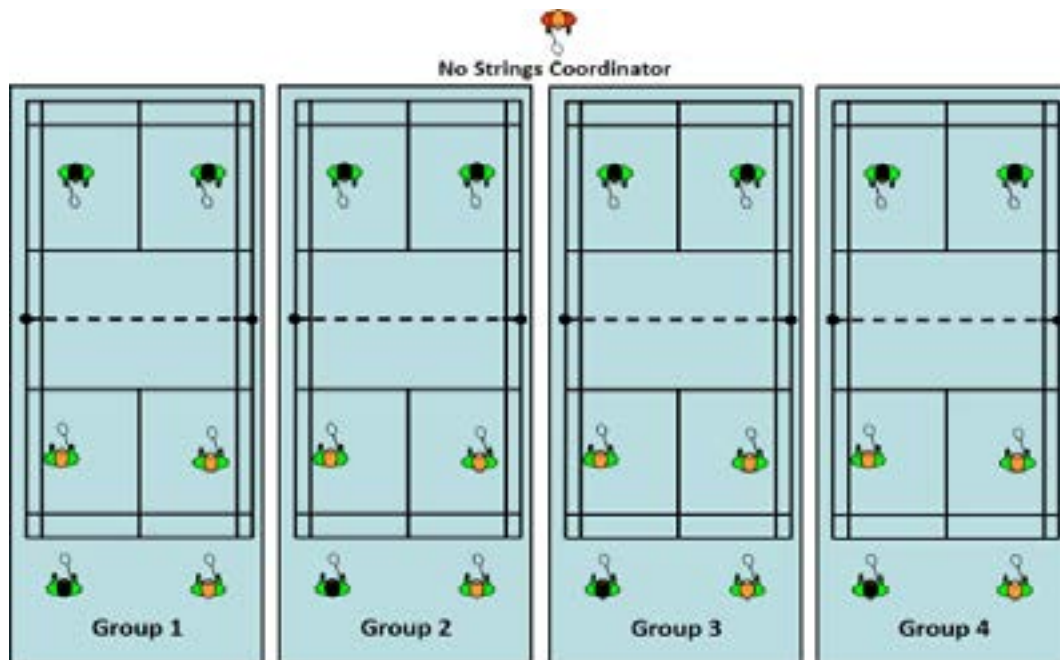
- Ensure everyone feels welcomed & encouraged to be active
- Organise sessions and ensure everyone is rotated on court for games
- Facilitate a relaxed environment that allows participants to meet new friends and have fun
- Motivate everyone to come back week after week.

To access the FREE e-learning module to become a No Strings co-ordinator and start the journey of adding social sessions to your programming, please complete the following [form](#). No coaching qualifications are required to become a co-ordinator, you just need to be passionate about getting more people to play badminton.

There is also a selection of free marketing materials available, which you can use to advertise your session, please drop a member of the team an [email](#) to get hold of these.

The following recommendations will support you to start a new session or to restart your No String sessions:

- A booking system should be in place to manage session numbers and keep records of players for 21 days for track and trace purposes – we have provided this free to coordinators through our [Discover Badminton platform](#).
- The No Strings coordinator should take on the [Covid 19 Officer responsibilities](#) and have completed the [ReActivate COVID awareness training](#).
- Sessions should be managed in bubbles of 6 with multiple bubbles allowed in the hall at one time. Players must not switch bubbles within a session and must not join another bubble during the same day (please see the image below)
- To allow the No Strings coordinator to facilitate the session and maintain social distancing guidelines they should not take part in play.
- Shuttles can be shared within a group of players but must be quarantined for 72 hours after the session unless they can be cleaned and sanitised. Rackets should not be shared.
- Players should arrive ready to play to reduce usage of changing facilities pre and post session.



If you would like to discuss your No Strings programme or require further information please contact: nostringsbadminton@badmintonengland.co.uk

Disclaimer

Please note that the subject matter covered in this guidance is in no way exhaustive and the material does not stand on its own nor is intended to be relied upon as a substitute for obtaining specific legal advice. Individual circumstances will differ. The information contained in this guidance is given in good faith but any liability of Badminton England or its professional advisors (including their respective members or employees) to you or any third party which may arise out of the reliance by you or any other party of the contents of this guidance is hereby excluded to the fullest extent permitted by law. Badminton England and its professional advisors accept no duty of care or liability for any loss occasioned, whether caused by negligence or otherwise, to any person acting or refraining from actions as a result of any material in this guidance. We would strongly recommend that you consult professional advisors on specific issues before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this guidance.

