

RESTARTING INTERNATIONAL
BADMINTON TOURNAMENTS

PROTOCOLS FOR PLAYERS & TEAM ENTOURAGE



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1.0 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic saw the suspension of both domestic and international badminton tournaments with the Yonex All England Open being the last World Tour event in March this year.

However, with the world showing some signs of recovery from the pandemic and many aspects of life returning to a “new normal”, some governments have given the go ahead for sports competitions to restart, albeit with many restrictions.

It is understandable that there are still concerns on the spread of the virus and these measures, including the mandatory testing, are designed to alleviate some of these concerns.

The BWF is also preparing to restart international badminton tournaments and the following guidance has been published to advise players and team entourage of the new protocols and procedures that will be implemented at BWF Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour events in 2020.

The measures put in place aim to create the safest possible environment for all stakeholders involved in the tournament including players, organising committee work force, volunteers, media and technical officials.

Key to creating a safe environment is the creation of a “badminton family bubble” and this involves making it mandatory for each and everyone in this bubble to be tested at each tournament.

As the situation around COVID-19 will hopefully improve as time goes by BWF may remove some of the guidelines and/or provide dispensation to some of the described procedures. If, however the situation worsens BWF may also strengthen the guidelines and request additional requirements be put in place.

2.0 Protocols for Players and Team Entourage – Pre-Event

2.1 Communication from BWF

In advance of each BWF Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour tournament BWF will communicate to each entered Member Association the latest travel and tournament information.

2.2 Pre-tournament Testing in Home Country

All players must undertake a COVID-19 test within 3 days before departing for a tournament and return a negative test result. This is to ensure that participants have at least travelled and start the Championships with some assurance that they are COVID-19 free. The BWF and the local host will advise participants on this on a tournament by tournament basis. This is at the team/player/entourage own cost.



2.3 Safety on Flights and in Airports

Players and team entourage should strictly follow guidelines issued by the aviation authorities and airlines concerned. General personal hygiene measures such as regularly washing hands, not touching face, physical distancing and wearing face masks are highly recommended.

3.0 Protocols for Players and Team Entourage - During Event

3.1 Transport from Airport to Hotel

Where possible transport will be arranged so that large teams have their own dedicated transport to the official hotels. In addition, physical distancing measures will be in place which will mean not all seats can be used.

For smaller teams mixed transport may be used with physical distancing measures implemented.

3.2 Hotel

The official tournament hotels will generally remain shared hotels with other guests not associated with the event – unless other arrangements are implemented by the tournament host. Therefore, it is important that players and entourage take measures to mitigate the risks associated with this. These include avoiding close gatherings, maintaining physical distancing and wearing face masks where necessary such as when taking lifts.

Many official hotels now offer gyms and other wellness facilities and players and team officials should follow any guidelines implemented by the hotels.

3.3 COVID-19 Testing for Players and Team Entourage

To ensure the safest possible environment for players and entourage BWF will be implementing a COVID-19 testing plan for each Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour tournament which will entail a group of accredited personnel being tested prior to each event. The aim is to as much as possible create infection free 'bubbles' within the venue environment. All players and team entourage will be required to undertake COVID-19 PCR tests at each Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour tournaments.

BWF will provide a financial relief package to help hosts test players and team entourage up to the accreditation limit stated in the prospectus. Teams are required to limit the number of personnel in the entourage based on a need-to basis. Any accredited entourage over and above the accreditation limit will be required to undertake testing at their own cost. There will be at least one mandatory test per player per event.



3.3.1 Testing Procedure

The exact testing procedures will be determined by the local health authority or designated testing body at each event and will be communicated to Member Associations before the tournament. The tests will be carried out in a secure environment at a designated test facility on arrival (typically the Saturday and Sunday – or earlier depending on start of the tournament) before the event with results available as soon as possible. In addition, follow up testing during the weeks of competition will be conducted with a relevant frequency (will be announced at a later time), to continuously validate that the Green Group Personnel (see section 3.4) is not infected. **Accreditation passes will only be issued to Green Group Personnel (see section 3.4) once a negative test has been obtained.**

3.3.2 Testing Method

The PCR testing method will be used as this test is effective in confirming the presence of COVID-19 virus. This test requires having both nose and throat swabs taken and the samples are analysed to confirm whether the individual is infected or not.

Depending on the locality, a test result can be obtained between 30 minutes to 72 hours.

3.3.3 Testing Strategy

The testing strategy is divided into the following:

- a) Players / entourage leaving home country to participate in first tournament – all players / entourage leaving from their home base must be tested and possess documentation to state that they have tested negative for COVID 19. The cost is to be borne by the respective Member Association/player(s)/entourage.
- b) Players entering a new country after traveling or playing in a competition in a different country – players /entourage to be tested upon arrival either at the airport, venue or other designated testing facility with results to be received as soon as possible. Tournament activities will not include qualifying rounds as limitation will have to be put on number of participants and to ensure that the schedule of the tournament can be conducted in an appropriate way.
- c) Further testing will be done during the week to continuously validate that participants are free from infection. Exact timing for testing to be notified to participants ahead of the tournaments, but if needed further testing can be required with a short notice notification. **All testing activities are mandatory and a prerequisite to getting an accreditation and access to the tournament.**

It is highly recommended that the majority of players aim to arrive in a tournament city latest by Sunday morning (earlier for Major Championships – i.e. Tuesday/Wednesday, but latest Thursday) so as to ensure the tests are carried out and results obtained before official practice begins.

3.3.4 Protocols in the Case of a Positive Test

The exact protocols will be determined closer to each event and communicated in advance to Member Associations. Generally, the person testing positive will be asked to isolate between 7-14 days depending on domestic requirements.

3.4 Accreditation

Players and team entourage that have been tested and obtained a negative result will be designated green and be given a Green accreditation. The Green Group includes personnel who will come into direct contact with players and team entourage. Everyone within the Green Group will be required to undertake a COVID-19 test as previously defined.

Green Group Personnel:

Players	Stringers
Team Entourage	Visual Reality
Umpires	Shuttle Control
Referees	FOP Management Team
Line Judges	Player Assembly Point Managers
Tournament Doctors	Anti-doping Control
BWF Staff and Partners	Prize Presentation Ushers and Presenters
Team Liaison Officers	BWF Appointed Media

3.5 Accreditation Zones

The tournament venue will be broadly divided into three accreditation zones – green, orange and red. Players and team entourage will be included in the Green Group of accredited personnel. The local organising committee will aim to segregate the three areas as much as possible. However, due to venue constraints, there may be times when orange accredited personnel will need to be in or pass through the green accredited areas. In these instances, it is mandatory for the orange group personnel to wear face masks.

3.6 Transport to the Stadium

All vehicles used to transport players and entourage will be regularly disinfected, and the drivers will be required to wear face masks. Physical distancing measures will also be in place, so not all seats will be utilised.

3.7 Temperature-screening and Contact-tracing

Each day, all accredited persons including players and team entourage are required to be temperature screened each time upon entering the venue.



At some events, it may be necessary for players and entourage to provide contact details to the local health authorities as part of their COVID-19 contact tracing protocols. BWF will provide more information on this on an event by event basis.

3.8 Face Masks

It is mandatory for all personnel in the Green Zone to wear face masks. However, for players preparing for matches, face masks are not required.

3.9 Warm Up Courts and Practice Courts

To ensure physical distancing is carried out, a maximum of 8 players are permitted to practice on each warm up court at any one time. In addition, the warm up courts are strictly limited to those players with upcoming matches. BWF and the local organising committee seek the assistance of the players to ensure these measures are implemented.

The local organising committee will design the practice court schedule in a way that limits the number of players within the practice hall at any one time.

Practice on the competition courts before play each day may be suspended until further notice.

3.10 Players' Lounge

At some tournaments, the players' lounge provision may be reduced or not implemented if physical distancing rules cannot be met. As per other areas of the stadium, players and entourage should practice good hygiene when inside the lounge.

3.11 Players' seating area

A player seating area will be available at each tournament and will be arranged so that close contact between players and spectators is not possible. It is important that players and team entourage follow the physical distancing measures that are in place in the seating area.

4.0 Protocols for Players and Team Entourage - During Matches

4.1 Assembly Point

In general, there will be less people in the player assembly point area than at previous tournaments. Line judges will walk on to court separately to players.



4.2 Pre and Post-match Protocols

Instead of shaking hands, players can touch rackets with their opponents and nod/put their hand across their chest when greeting the match officials.

4.3 Shuttle Dispenser

A shuttlecock dispenser will be provided at each end of the court. When a player wants to change a shuttlecock and is allowed to do so by the Umpire, the player can take a shuttlecock from the dispenser and return the used shuttlecock to the Service Judge with the racket or drop it into the shuttle box.

4.4 Coaching

Only one coach is permitted per player/pair per match until further notice.

5.0 Protocols for Players and Team Entourage - Post match

5.1 Media Obligations

The players will be required to undertake post-match media obligations as outlined in the BWF Regulations. There will however be new protocols in place to ensure the safety of players, media and translators.

The mixed zone or media interview area will be stationed nearby the field of play exit as per previous tournaments. The only media allowed into these areas will be appointed and managed by BWF, and will be much reduced compared to previous BWF Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour events. It is mandatory for media and translators appointed by BWF to undergo COVID-19 testing and therefore all interviews carried out in the Mixed Zone and/or interview area will be conducted by media who have tested negative for COVID-19.

In addition, the interviews in the mixed zone and/or interview area will be conducted under physical distancing rules with the media and translators required to wear face masks.

Post-match on court interviews will not be carried out until further notice.

5.2 Prize Presentations

Before each presentation, the players will be required to sanitise their hands. Children and other entourage are not permitted in the presentation area.

During presentations, physical distancing measures will be followed and prize presenters will be instructed not to verbally communicate with players. A group photo observing physical distancing rules will be carried out at the end of each presentation.



6.0 Player Appearances for Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour Sponsors and Partners

Players appearances are an integral part of the BWF Major Championships and HSBC BWF World Tour and will be continued at forthcoming tournaments. However, these appearances will be adapted to ensure the safety of players and all stakeholders involved. BWF will provide further information on player appearances to the Member Associations concerned in a timely manner.