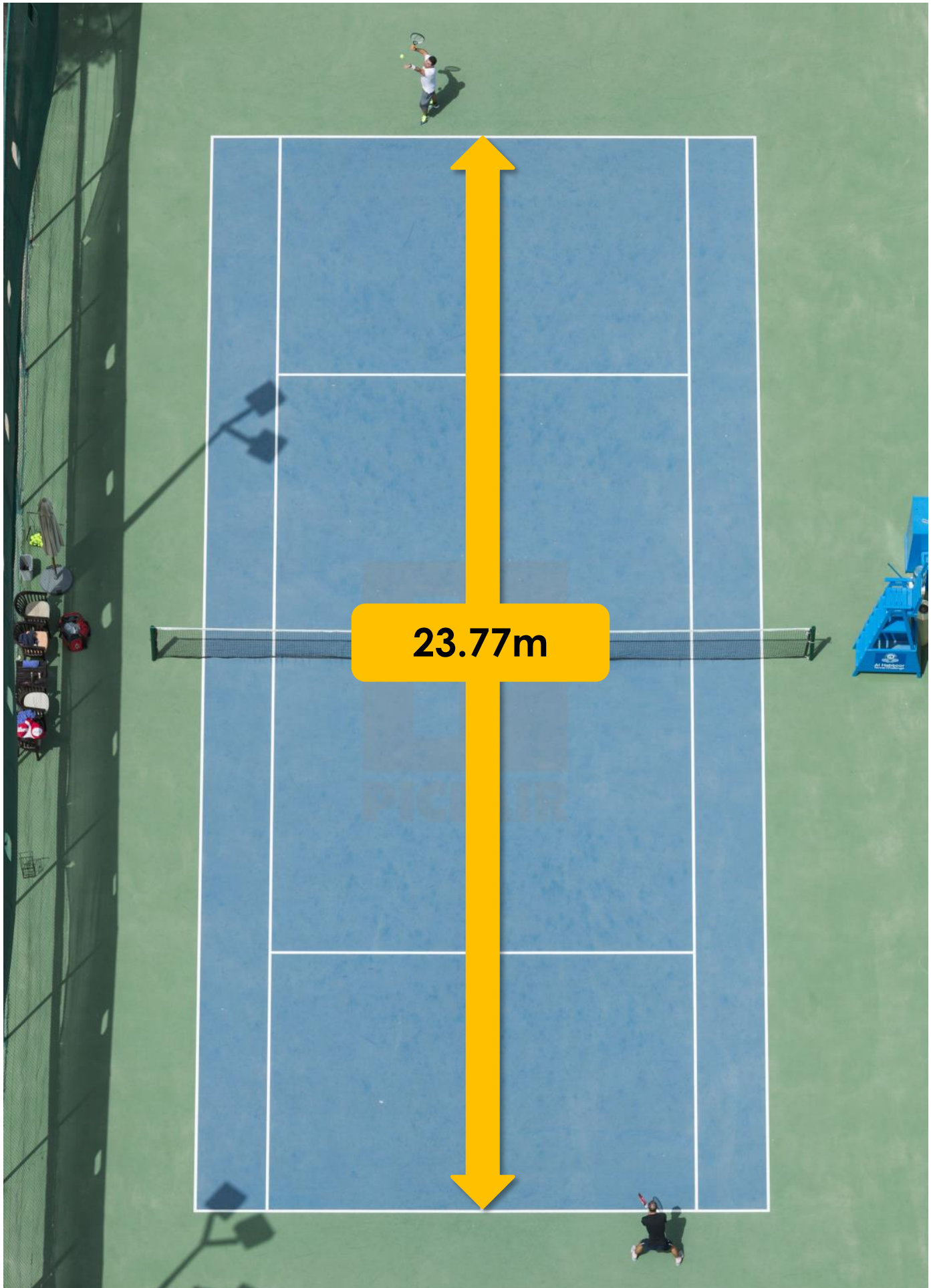


# COVID-19: Proposal for the return of tennis in South Africa.





# Overview of this proposal.

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## Introduction

This proposal for the return to play of tennis is submitted by Tennis South Africa to the National Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, the honourable Minister of Sports, Arts and Culture and the National Command Council - for consideration.

Sport (and tennis) makes an important contribution to the physical, psychological, and emotional well-being of South Africans. These are important aspects that need to be closely considered, as we continue to collectively fight the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

While Tennis SA recognizes that public safety must remain the number one priority during this national crisis, our concern is that a blanket approach to regulating sport, in the current COVID-19 environment, will severely damage the ecosystems of many sporting codes in this country. As such we believe that increasing attention must be given to understanding the differences between team and individual sports, as well as contact versus non-contact sports.

This proposal makes the case that tennis (as well as other non-contact, individual sports) needs to be considered as a low risk activity, in the context of the national risk adjusted strategy. This document further suggests that some limited and highly regulated tennis activities could be allowed - even under level 4 of the national risk adjusted strategy.

With the above in mind, this proposal includes guidelines for how tennis could return in a staggered and manageable basis, in a way that is completely aligned to the five alert levels of the national risk adjusted strategy. These tennis guidelines have been shaped by international best practice, including guidance from the International Tennis Federation, but also consider our local conditions.

### **Key principles of this proposal:**

1. The resumption of sport – starting with low risk individual and non-contact sports - can contribute many preventive health care and social cohesion benefits to our society, as we grapple with the current pandemic.
2. The resumption of any sport (including tennis) must be based on international best practice and objective health and safety information.
3. Any guidelines for the resumption of tennis must include a plan for regulating coach behaviour, as well as detailed contact tracing processes.

### **Why should you consider tennis?**

**It is a perfect social distancing sport:** Tennis is an individual and non-contact sport and so poses a much lower risk of transmission. In South Africa it is played outdoors, normally with only two people on the court. The distance from baseline to baseline on the court is 23.77m.

**There are clear lessons from other countries:** As of the end of April 2020, a number of countries including Australia, Spain, Germany, Sweden, the Czech Republic,

Portugal, Argentina, and Hungary have already authorized the playing of tennis under certain restrictions. These international learnings have been incorporated into this proposal.

**Global research shows tennis is a low risk COVID-19 activity:** In Italy, one of the country's leading Universities - Politecnico di Torino - has collaborated with the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) to release a 400+ page report detailing its findings about which sports are safest in a coronavirus pandemic environment. The study lists 387 sport disciplines that have been categorized from 0 to 4 depending on the risk of COVID-19 spread. On this scale, 0 represents non-existent risk, 1 weak risk, 2 medium risk, 3 high risk, and 4 very high risk. Among the factors considered are the conditions for training, competition, and public presence. According to the study, sports that fall into the 0 category, with 'almost no possibility' of spreading the infection, are disciplines like sailing, open water swimming, golf, and **tennis**.

**Two aspects to consider with regards the resumption of tennis in South Africa:**

1. The resumption of tennis for recreation, training, and coaching purposes.
2. The resumption of tennis events and tournaments

This document demonstrates that, with the correct health and safety processes in place, there are very low risks associated with the resumption of tennis - specifically for recreation, training, and coaching purposes – even under level 4 of the lockdown. However, we do recognize that due to the obvious risks associated with events and tournaments – the hosting of these is not practical at the current time.

**The reminder of this document is divided into three key parts:**

- Part one of this document proposes specific tennis specific restrictions for each level of the national risk adjusted strategy.
- Part two of this document provides detailed health and safety guidelines for players, coaches and facilities should tennis, specifically for recreation, training, and coaching purposes, be allowed under level 4 and down of the national risk adjusted lockdown strategy.
- Part three of this document provides detail on how the regulations would be communicated and managed – especially in terms of ensuring compliance with the regulations, as well as in terms of contract tracing.



## Tennis & the risk adjusted strategy

The following is a proposal as to how tennis activities can be integrated into the national risk adjusted strategy from level 4 downwards.

CATEGORIES	LEVEL 5	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 1
<b>Must observe all general government guidelines</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Tennis Clubhouse</b>	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open	Open
<b>Bathroom Facilities</b>	Closed	Emergencies Only	Emergencies Only	Open	Open
<b>Tennis Coaching</b>	Not allowed	Max. 2 players per court	Max. 4 players per court	Max. 8 players per court	Regular coaching
<b>Use of Floodlights at Clubs</b>	No	No	No	No	Yes
<b>Protective Masks during coaching</b>	Closed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Return to normal
<b>Social Distancing</b>	Closed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Return to normal
<b>Hand Sanitiser</b>	Closed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Cleaning of Coaching Equipment</b>	Closed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Handling of Tennis Balls - Coaching</b>	Closed	Coach only	Coach only	Coach only	Return to normal
<b>Facility Access - Coaching</b>	Closed	Coach and players only	Coach and players only	Coach, players, parent	Return to normal
<b>Social Tennis</b>	Closed	Only amongst family living together	Singles only, each player to provide own tennis balls (marked)	Doubles permitted	Return to normal
<b>Court Reservations - Coaching</b>	Closed	Made by coach	Made by coach	Made by coach	Return to normal
<b>Court Reservations - Social Play</b>	Closed	Made by member	Made by member	Made by member	Return to normal
<b>Maximum permitted - Social Play</b>	Closed	1 court per family	No. of courts = Max	No. of courts = Max	Return to normal
<b>Club Canteens</b>	Closed	Closed	Closed	Open for refreshments	Open for refreshments

Note: No social gatherings would be allowed before or after training/lessons until Level 1. Once the training session or lesson is completed then the player would be required to leave the venue immediately.



The following section details the guidelines that could be put in place should tennis for recreation, practise or coaching purposes be allowed.

## 1. Guidelines for Coaching

### 1.1. The process for regulating coaches

- Coaches to apply to Tennis SA for a COVID-19 coaching license. This is a monthly license.
- Any Tennis SA licensed coach can apply for the license. All coaches sign an agreement which includes key terms and conditions that compels the coaches to comply with all rules and regulations in related to COVID-19
- Non-registered coaches must first meet the minimum requirements before they can qualify to apply for a COVID-19 License.
- The COVID-19 license is an addition to the existing Tennis SA Coaching License.
- Coaching only permitted at affiliated courts.
- Coaches to confirm which club they are coaching at.
- Provinces to advise Tennis SA asap of all affiliated clubs, with secretary and chairperson contact info (cell and email).
- A list of coaches permitted to coach will be posted on a month to month basis on the Tennis SA Website and circulated to Provincial President and secretary and the coaching chairperson. In this way all key stakeholders for monitoring the policy are informed and updated.
- Coaches to submit at the end of the month (as part of their re-application for issuing of a new certificate) a completed logbook containing names and contact info of all pupils. Tennis SA have designed the template for the coaches and they simply complete the document.
- Upon submission of the database (and for those on a registered coach payment scheme, once payment is received) the next certificate is issued for the following month.
- By including the Province, club Chairperson and coaching chairperson they can verify any issues and provide oversight on individual coaches.

### 1.2. Coaching Venues:

There are 4 categories of tennis coaching venues which needs consideration:

1. **Affiliated club courts** – A club that is affiliated and in good standing with Provincial Tennis Association.
2. **Non-affiliated club courts** – A club that is not affiliated with Provincial Tennis Association.
3. **School Courts** – Facilities belonging to government and private schools.
4. **Private Courts** – Courts that are privately owned and on a residential or gated community property.

The registered coach will be the immediate supervisor and will liaise directly with the affiliated club. The coach and the venue will both be held accountable for implementation and both will sign the agreed COVID-19 form.

## **2. Guidelines for Play – Players and Coaches**

### **2.1. Before you Play:**

YOU MUST STAY AT HOME IF:

- Have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have been overseas or exposed to someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- Have flu-like symptoms.
- Or are in a high-risk health category.

ATTENDING TENNIS ACTIVITIES:

- Only people core to playing should attend tennis activities such as players, and coaches.
- All will be required to arrive and leave as close as possible to the time of the practise of lesson.
- Only one parent/guardian should accompany younger children where possible. Parent/guardian must remain in the car.

SOCIAL DISTANCING:

Tennis holds a unique advantage as a sport which requires no direct contact between players. You can also:

- Touch racquets instead of the regular pre- or post-match handshakes.
- Be sure to keep 1.5 metres away from other people while watching, attending or playing any tennis activity.

### **2.2. Behaviours to protect against infection:**

- Wash/sterilise your hands before and after you play and avoid touching your face while playing.
- No sharing of water bottles. Bring your own full bottle.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or hand-sanitiser when available, before and after eating, after going to the toilet, sneezing, and coughing.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes and dispose of any used tissue immediately.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Keep your distance from people who are obviously sick.
- Be aware of what surfaces you touch and do not touch equipment such as net, net handle. If you do, you must clean these before you leave.

### **2.3. Organising Tennis Activities**

- Coaches must always keep a valid COVID-19 Tennis SA Coaching License as well as RSA ID with them.
- Implement a 15-minute buffer between participants, to ensure ALL equipment can be cleaned.
- Limit the number of players per court to a maximum of 2 people – singles only or as per the respective Levels permit.
- Promote prevention techniques and lead by example.
- Implement ways to minimise contact for both participants and staff.



- Postpone any social gatherings.
- Plan for increased levels of staff/volunteer absences.
- Keep your team and your participants informed of the actions you are taking.
- Payments to be made online or via EFT – avoid handling cash.
- Leave gates ajar during opening hours so players do not need to touch handles to enter.
- Provide sanitising facilities at the gate for cleaning each time the pin pad and gate are used and put a notice up to this effect.
- Group coaching should take place only where full social distancing is possible and as per the respective approved risk level being in place.
- Group coaching should be limited to maximum of 4 players per court. An exception would be where all participants are family members or are otherwise in one home.
- Teaching professionals should be assigned specific courts—and possibly specific days and times.
- Position the players at well-spaced stations.
- Live ball drills and game-based play is recommended.

#### **2.4. Tennis Equipment:**

There is no specific evidence that balls can spread COVID-19. We do know that on hard surfaces contamination by respiratory droplets from an infected person can potentially survive up to three days. Therefore, you should:

- Make sure you clean your hands before and after coming off the court.
- Not touch your face after touching a ball, racquet, or other tennis equipment.
- Use new balls and racquet grips where possible.
- Use fewer balls per session.
- Replace all balls if someone with/suspected to have COVID-19 comes in contact with them.
- Restrict balls to a particular person, court, or day of the week. One idea is to label them with a permanent marker.
- Clean all tennis gear with alcohol-based disinfectant including racquets, towels, coaching gear such as target cones.
- Do not use unnecessary equipment such as drop-down lines.
- Limit the use of coaching equipment such as target cones.
- Do not let the players handle any coaching equipment.
- Only the coach should pick up the balls.
- Encourage players to use their racquet/foot to push balls back and/or hit them to their opponent to avoid using hands and touching the balls.

#### **2.5. Providing a clean environment to play tennis at venues:**

- Provide soap, hand-sanitiser, or wipes at all main contact points.
- Net strap and net winders must be cleaned after every lesson or use.
- Clean all surfaces, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and tables, at least once a day wearing disposable gloves.
- Clean any surfaces which may have blood, body fluids and/or secretions or excretions on them immediately.
- Regularly remind and encourage everyone, particularly juniors, of the need to wash hands regularly and adopt the other principles of a good hygiene strategy.
- Display signage about handwashing and hygiene techniques at strategic points like all sinks, eating areas, drinking areas and on the side of court.

- Close all indoor spaces including showers, changerooms and gyms.
- It is recommended that toilets remain for emergency use only.
- Clubhouse and bar facilities should remain closed until further notice.

### **3. Guidelines for social club tennis:**

Tennis does not require direct person-to-person contact, therefore, players can enjoy the many physical and mental benefits that tennis offers so long as they practice social distancing by keeping 1.5 metres apart from other players to ensure a safe exercise environment, along with following the various safety recommendations as set by Tennis SA, Local Government and the facility being utilized. In all cases the safety and wellbeing of each individual is of primary concern.

#### **3.1. Level 4 Lockdown:**

- Families, who live together, can play amongst themselves (in their family bubble) only on a court.
- Court to be reserved within the club court booking system.
- Clubhouse to remain closed.
- No tennis to be played after dark.

#### **3.2. Level 3 Lockdown:**

- Maximum of two adults permitted on a court to play “organised” social tennis.
- All basic sanitary elements to be followed and masks to be worn.
- Each player to provide their own tennis balls, which are marked, with each player only handling their tennis balls.
- Court to be reserved within the club court booking system.
- Clubhouse to remain closed.
- No tennis to be played after dark

#### **3.3. Level 2 Lockdown:**

- Doubles can be re-introduced (4 players per court).
- All basic sanitary elements to be followed and masks to be worn.
- Each player to provide their own tennis balls, which are marked, with each player only handling their tennis balls.
- Clubhouse can re-open and to act according to Government guidelines in terms of selling of refreshments.
- No tennis to be played after dark.

#### **3.4. Level 1 Lockdown:**

- Regular club activities can be re-introduced with continual care on hygiene and player wellness.



## Communication, Regulation & Tracing

### Example Infographic:

This would be shared on all Tennis SA digital platforms and coaches would be required to display it prominently at their coaching venues.

## GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COACHES AND PLAYERS

				<b>CLUB ENTRANCE</b>
<b>Check COVID-19 coaching license</b>	<b>MAX 2 per court</b>	<b>Restrict balls to specific person</b>	<b>A supervisor must be on duty</b>	<b>Minors to be dropped/fetched at entrance</b>
<b>Only attend during organized days</b>	<b>Plan for 15 min between lessons</b>	<b>Coach to maintain distance from pupils</b>	<b>Only use of toilets in an emergency</b>	<b>Club bar/shop to remain closed</b>
<b>No sharing of benches or chairs</b>	<b>Change ends in a clockwise direction</b>	<b>Courts to be prepared by the Coach</b>	<b>After completion of lesson, return home</b>	<b>No parents or guardians permitted onsite</b>

### BASIC HYGIENE RULES

- Always maintain 1.5 m distancing
- Wash hands before and after lessons
- No shaking of hands and no "high fives"
- Remember to sneeze in your elbow
- Remain at home if you, or any member of you family has any symptoms of COVID 19

Regular updates can be found at  
[www.tennisa.co.za](http://www.tennisa.co.za)

**Example coach application form – data fields:****COVID-19 COACH APPLICATION FORM:****COACH INFORMATION**

<b>Surname</b>				
<b>Full Names</b>				
<b>ID nr</b>				
<b>Contact Details</b>	Cell nr	Tel nr (W)	Tel nr (H)	E-mail address
<b>Physical address of coaching facility</b>				

I \_\_\_\_\_ (Coach Name) confirms that as a residential coach at \_\_\_\_\_ (Name of the club/Facility) will follow the coaching rules and regulations set out by Government, Tennis SA Covid-19 coaching documents along with any guidelines of the facility being used.

Coaches Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_ on this the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

**FACILITY MANAGER/CLUB CHAIRPERSON**

<b>Surname</b>	
<b>Full Names</b>	
<b>ID nr</b>	
<b>CONTACT NO:</b>	

I \_\_\_\_\_(Club chairperson/Facility Manager) confirms that \_\_\_\_\_(Name of the coach) is our residential coach who is in good standing with the club, we hereby gives him/her permission to conduct coaching lessons under the rules and regulations set by Tennis SA during this Covid-19 lockdown. If you have any queries, please do contact me on the information above.

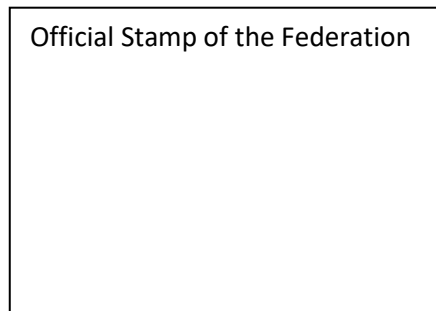
Club Chairperson/Facility Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed at \_\_\_\_\_on this the \_\_\_\_\_day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2020.

**OFFICE USE ONLY:**

I \_\_\_\_\_ Coaching Manager approves the application for the above coach for coaching during Covid-19 coaching licence.

Coaching Manager Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## Example license certificate:

Please note that the below is for example purposes only.



**TENNIS SOUTH AFRICA  
2020 COVID-19 LICENSE**

This Certifies That

**Ghizela Enslin**

**IS A CERTIFIED PRO# COACH**

**Date of Issue: 01 JUNE 2020**

**Valid Until: 01 JULY 2020**

**This license entitles coaching to be permitted as per signed  
COVID-19 Terms and Conditions signed and submitted to TSA.**



TSA COACHES CHAIRPERSON

TSA COACHES MANAGER

## Example coaches Logbook for contact tracing:



### TENNIS SOUTH AFRICA - COACHING – COVID-19 COMPLIANCE RECORD SHEET

Coaching Venue: .....

Name of Licensed Coach: .....

Month.....

DATE	PLAYER'S NAME	PLAYERS CELL PHONE NUMBER	TIME & DURATION OF LESSON	COACH SIGNATURE	COMMENTS