

GCTA 2020 Special COVID-19 Rules & Assumption of Risk and Release Agreement

The following guidelines are MANDATORY for PLAYERS pursuant to Governor Mike DeWine's office and the Ohio Department of Health

1. Stay home if you are sick or do not feel well.
2. Arrive no more than 10 minutes early or wait in designated waiting areas or in your car.
3. Follow instructions and signs when checking in, ordering food, beverages, etc.
4. Wait until called to the court or until the group ahead of you has clearly left the court.
5. Use social distancing and maintain at least six feet between individuals in all areas.
6. Do not gather in groups of more than 10.
7. Do not touch other players' racquets, tennis balls, gear, etc.
8. Avoid using your hand to pick up balls; use your racquet/ foot to pick up balls to hit back to your opponent or another court.
9. Use your own tennis balls (for example, clearly mark yours or use a different color).

The following are RECOMMENDED BEST PRACTICES for PLAYERS pursuant to Governor Mike DeWine's office and the Ohio Department of Health

1. Allow space between cars in the parking lot.
2. Wear a mask or face covering when entering buildings or interacting in close proximity to others.
3. Practice good personal hygiene including washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, using hand sanitizer, refraining from touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands, coughing and sneezing into an elbow, etc.
4. Avoid touching gates, fences, benches, etc.
5. Bring trash bags, water and supplies. Plan to carry out trash and other items.
6. Avoid using locker rooms or changing areas.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is extremely contagious, spreading easily through person-to-person contact. Federal and state authorities recommend practicing social distancing as a means to prevent its spread. Participating in GCTA programs could increase the risk of contracting COVID-19. Even with all the precautions in place, the GCTA is unable to guarantee a participant will not be exposed to a health risk therefore, participation is at your own risk.

In an effort to reduce risk for all participants, the GCTA will follow all of the above listed state guidelines and has set forth the following additional rules, terms, and conditions:

Before a match:

1. All players must sign the team's assumption of risk and release of liability form prior to playing in a match.
2. Home captains should notify the visiting captains at least 3 days in advance if the home facility has special rules in place this summer (e.g. site-specific waivers must be executed, courts alternating start times, or having limited match times).
3. Bring your own towel to matches and practices.
4. Bring your own drinks to matches and practices.
5. Bring a marker or pen to use to mark your balls (more information below).
6. Consider bringing your own hand sanitizer to matches to use during the match. Do not share sanitizer with other players.

Pre-match protocol:

1. Captains or another representative of the host club must meet players in or near the parking lot and direct them to the court that they are playing on. Regardless of whether all four players are present, go directly to your court.
2. If any player is exhibiting signs of flu-like symptoms, the captain or other team representative should immediately remove them from the lineup.
3. Given the transmissibility of COVID-19, if a team must cancel a court on the day of a match because a player is feeling ill and/or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, that team will not be penalized regardless of when the cancellation occurs. The court that the sick player was to play on will be rescheduled within one week substituting a different team member who did not already play in that match and the other three original players. No other line-up changes, player substitutions or court changes may be made if this consideration is invoked by a team. Matches defaulted or forfeited for any reason other than match-day illness will be recorded pursuant to GCTA rules.
4. To help with this scenario, the GCTA recommends captains have an alternate available. If the alternate can make it to the courts within 30 minutes of the original start time, the match should be played with the alternate. The GCTA will monitor teams using this rule inappropriately and may take action as necessary.
5. In the case of a rainout once players are at the court the GCTA recommends that captains do NOT attempt to find an alternate location but rather simply reschedule the match. This is to help avoid players huddling in an area and thus breaking the social distancing guidelines,
6. Captains will NOT exchange paper lineups. Prior to the match, the home team captain should verbally inform the other captain of his/her lineup. The home team captain should inform the visiting captain of the players on court 1. Then, the visiting captain will verbally inform the home captain of the visiting players on court 1. This format should continue for all courts. Captains then simply send their players to the appropriate court for the match.
7. Home teams are responsible for providing balls for each match. See rule changes below for play for impacts on the number of balls that need to be provided per match.

Rule changes for play:

1. Each player **MUST** have 2 balls that **ONLY** that player touches. These should be marked or otherwise distinguished from the other players' balls on the player's court and the courts neighboring the player's court.

Ball Distribution

To achieve the rule above, each GCTA court should have 3 cans of unopened balls at the start of the match. One player should pour 2 balls into the first player's hand. At that point, that player should use his/her marker to place his/her initials on both balls. This process should be continued until all players have 2 balls.

Once marked, the player should place the 2 balls in the pocket on his/her non-playing hand side. (The left pocket for right-handed players, the right pocket for left-handed players.) With 2 balls in his/her pocket, the player is reminded by a full pocket that they should not pick up the next ball that comes near them. Players may choose to leave their balls near their bag or at the back of the court when their balls are not in play.

2. Players **MUST ONLY** handle the balls with their mark on them. Other balls that come to them should be directed to the appropriate player or at the back of the player's court with the racquet or with their foot.
3. If a court splits the first two sets, the court **MUST** play a super tiebreaker using Coman side-switching to decide the third set (first to 10 by 2 points). **Do not play a third set for fun.**

Third Set Coman Tie-Break Instructions:

The first serve in the Coman match tie-break is awarded to the team that did not serve last in the second set. Either player on a doubles team may serve first. The tie-break follows normal service rotation. Side switching in a Coman tie break is as follows: Players switch ends after the 1st point, then after every FOUR points (switch at the 5th point, the 9th point, the 13th point, the 17th point, etc.). The tie-break ends when one team reaches 10 points and that same team is ahead by two points or more. The first team to 10 points by two wins the third set and the match. The third set is recorded as 1-0 in favor of the winning team.

4. A five-minute break will be permitted before playing a third set tiebreak.
5. Do not shake hands at the end of the match. Simply stay on your side of the court and exchange appropriate acknowledgments.
6. Immediately leave the court and the facility once your match is complete.

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7. Text the results of your match to your captain. Do not write down scores on a scoresheet. Captains are to share scores after the match via text message or email. Home captains are responsible for entering the scores within one day.

Post match:

1. No refreshments are to be provided by the home team.
2. Leave the club or facility as soon as your match has completed. As much as we all enjoy the social aspects of tennis, because of the COVID-19 guidelines, we cannot engage in on-site socializing this summer.
3. If a player develops COVID-19 symptoms and/or is diagnosed with COVID-19 within 14 days after a match, that player MUST notify his or her captain. The captain MUST contact the men's or women's league chairperson and provide the player's name along with the first date the captain was made aware of the player's symptoms.
4. Dispose of your balls after the match. Take the balls you used and dispose of them at your home.

Assumption of Risk and Release of Liability As Condition of Membership:

As a pre-condition to GCTA membership this season, each participant must agree as follows:

I understand and agree that the risk of serious illness and death cannot be eliminated for GCTA play notwithstanding the above precautions. I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, BOTH KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF OTHERS. I, for myself and on behalf of my spouse, heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE, DISCHARGE, COVENANT NOT TO SUE AND AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS the GCTA, its officers, directors, officials, agents, and/or employees, other member participants, and owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the Event ("RELEASEES"), WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL ILLNESS, DISABILITY, DEATH, or loss or damage to person or property RELATING TO INFECTIOUS DISEASES, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

MY ACT OF PARTICIPATING IN GCTA PLAY SHALL EVIDENCE MY AGREEMENT TO THIS ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE. I UNDERSTAND THAT I AM GIVING UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS IN ORDER TO PLAY IN THE GCTA THIS SEASON.

Be careful this summer and remain alert for updates!

Follow pre-cautions to protect your health and ease your way back into play prior to competition. Given the layoff from competing, players will be more susceptible to under-training, over-use and other injuries.

Keep an eye on the GCTA women's or men's website for any updates on play that are related to COVID-19. Should the state of Ohio, County Board of Health or other government bodies change the guidelines for social distancing, the GCTA will update the Tenniscores website in an effort to ensure everyone has the latest information on GCTA play this summer.