



Local leagues resumption date announced

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Following the successful re-opening of indoor sports facilities on Saturday, Table Tennis England is moving into Stage 3 of our return to play roadmap – with a target date of September 1st to resume local league competition.

Clubs across the country undertook extensive work to prepare for Saturday's return, and their diligent response has enabled us to move into Stage 3 – preparing for localised competition.

That opens the way for Stage 4 – local competition resumption – on September 1st, with social distancing and hygiene restrictions continuing to be in place.

Greg Yarnall, Table Tennis England's Head of Development and Volunteering, who has been leading the Covid-19 response, said: "We have spoken to clubs which successfully opened up over the weekend and have been impressed with the procedures they have put in place to meet Table Tennis England and Government guidance.

"We thank clubs for their hard work in this area and it has given us confidence to move into stage 3 of the roadmap and set a date in principle for stage 4.

"The date for stage 4 will be revised if there are any tightening of restrictions from the Government or DCMS and/or there are significant reports of the current guidance not being met. Leagues will then need to make their own decisions based on club/venue availability and player feedback, the target of a September return is to provide leagues with an opportunity to commence some form of league table tennis where local need allows."

Our Stage 3 guidance document that can be seen [here](#). The current ready to return guidance will be reviewed and we will release as soon as possible more detailed guidance on local league play, along with recommendations on how this can be managed, with the safety of participants and volunteers in mind.

The areas that will be looked into will include recommendations of the number of players that can be safely managed in a local league match depending on the size of the space/venue, the use of umpires, and suggested formats.

We will email leagues and counties directly when this guidance is ready, providing as much notice as we can so they can start preparing.

As doubles play has been ruled out for national tournaments until further notice, and for national leagues for the duration of the 2020/21 season, we recommend that local leagues also take this approach as they plan for their return.

Leagues can continue to book in one-to-one sessions with a Table Tennis England member of staff to explore potential options, challenges and solutions by visiting [clicking here](#).

Alongside this announcement, we have regrettably had to cancel the first two Grand Prix events of the season at Crawley on September 19-20 and Preston on October 31-November 1, plus the first weekend of the Veterans' British League (VBL) on October 3-4.

The Crawley cancellation fits with our [cancellation and refund policy](#) for 2020/21 national events, which sets out a schedule of dates by which the viability of each national event, and our ability to deliver it safely, will be assessed in line with Government guidance, our own return to play protocols and practical requirements. This enables us to give appropriate notice to all parties.

The 'stop/go date' for Crawley is today and, because of the Government's 'bubble of 6' guidance and question marks over the availability of the venue, we are not in a position to commit to the event.

The venue for the Preston Grand Prix at the University of Central Lancashire has been closed for the rest of the year. The venue is also due to host England versus Spain in October and discussions are ongoing on hosting this 'behind closed doors'.

The venue for VBL has been closed by the local authority until the end of October, and so it is not therefore possible for the first weekend of this competition to take place, and it has not been possible to identify an appropriate alternative venue.

Teams which have entered British League have been charged only 50% entry fees in anticipation of potential disruption, and the BL Committee will now consider an alternative VBL programme to enable meaningful competition to take place later in the season.

The projected venue closure does not currently impact on the Junior British League weekend on November 7-8.

We can confirm that [entries for the National Cadet League and National Junior League are now open](#), with cut-off dates and a refund policy in place in case not all weekends can be staged.

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