

Dear …………………. MP

As Government starts to discuss the exit routes as we move towards a relaxing of the restrictions I feel it is important to present to you the fact that tennis is without doubt the safest sport, which does not require any rule changes nor variations to the core of the sport and as such should be the first sport to return.

Like Government, we have been looking at the scientific research and there have been a number of reports from around the world over the last couple of years which have highlighted the fact that tennis is the number one sport for health and wellbeing. Research includes that from Oxford and Loughborough Universities, The Mayo Report, publications in Medical Journals and even on the NHS’ own website.

It shows that people playing tennis may live up to 9.7 years longer than the norm. In comparison cycling shows 3.7 years, and 1.5 years for going to the gym whereas running or playing football have been shown that they do not have a statistically significant reduction in the age of death. Indeed, we know that tennis is truly a sport for a lifetime and unlike most other sports can be enjoyed across all ages from 3 to 93 and provides the genuine opportunity for mixed participation.

Independent research commissioned by the Tennis Foundation, and undertaken by ComRes, has shown that 91% of those surveyed said that tennis has had a positive impact on their life. 64% of people said they felt more confident since playing tennis and 60% said they felt happier since playing tennis. Confirming that tennis can bring a range of physical, mental and social benefits and can be used as a vehicle to help individuals realise and achieve their personal potential and reduce stress, anxiety and other such mental health issues. Further statistics highlighted that 63% of people who played tennis felt less isolated which after the current restrictions are lifted will, without doubt, be a major factor as we look to help people address their personal wellbeing.

In addition to the scientific research in practical terms the vast majority of tennis is played outdoors which gives it a further advantage against other sports some of which are only played indoors. Indeed 55 people can be put onto a doubles tennis court and still maintain their social distancing. Only golf can possibly challenge this, yet golf cannot return without a change in the rules of the game.

Tennis clubs are able to implement court booking systems which with staggered timings ensure that there are no groups of people arriving or leaving at the same time or reduce booking times so that one set of players can leave before the next set arrive. The majority of clubs have this option at present and all clubs have access to this online programme free of charge.

The Coaching Foundation has been established as a not for profit organisation to represent the coaching industry in these very difficult times and beyond. The Think Tank has been modelling and visioning the future of tennis and coaching and has now established a tennisISsafe campaign providing new safety measures, check lists, risk assessments, protocols and policies to ensure that tennis clubs are operating as safely as possible, coaches work within a specific agreed code of conduct so that tennis players old and new can enjoy their sport again in confidence knowing they are playing in a safe environment.

There are so many reasons why tennis should be one of the first sports to return. The simple fact that there is a net across the court and the nature of the game ensures that people cannot get within 2 metres of each other in singles matchplay and even in normal club level doubles. Indeed, the research shows us that in club doubles the average distance between opponents is over 8 metres and between partners is still over 5 metres so maintaining social distance is just the ‘norm’ for tennis.

I would ask that you consider these points in your discussions as we look to reintroduce sport and help to ensure that Government and the decision makers are fully aware of the health and wellbeing benefits of tennis, the natural social distancing of the sport and the infrastructure that is already in place to ensure a safe return to tennis

If you require any further input, advice or support then please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Tennis Coach