



ENGLISH SHORT MAT BOWLING ASSOCIATION

ESMBA Statement June 2020

Dear County Secretary,

Back in March when the decision was taken to postpone events due to the Coronavirus outbreak, no one imagined four months on our lives would still be so affected by it.

The Government is slowly allowing activities to start again, albeit with restrictions. But indoor activities like Short Mat Bowls are still being advised to stay closed as are many of the venues we all use. As such the ESMBA strongly recommends that all its Counties and clubs follow this until it is safe to do so and remain closed.

The ESMBA is having ongoing conversations with its various partners and venues to try and find a safe way to start playing again in line with Government guidelines. We can now see that with the cap on the number of competitors within a confined space, that National and County events will struggle to happen at least in the next couple of months. It is expected that there will now be a gradual restarting of our sport, likely to be around September/October with clubs going back to practice before leagues, county and National events start to happen.

The ESMBA management committee are looking at possible guidance for clubs and then Counties but are waiting for Government information to be issued, so that we are in line with these. We understand it is going to be a very difficult time for members to continue so the ESMBA are looking at ways to help both professionally and financially to its members via its County set up. We are also looking at the diary ahead and areas where changes can be made to allow for a later or reduced start to the season. Information will follow as details are confirmed.

This is a first in all our lifetimes and has been a very testing time for many of us. Hard mentally for many of our members that rely on our sport for social interaction. But after making such a sacrifice with social distancing and shielding as we have so far, we owe it to ourselves and others not to rush back now. The positive selling points of portability and relatively small space required to play Short Mat Bowls, together with the Government guidelines make the situation of managing a safe return very complex.

Barry Hedges

ESMBA Chairman on behalf of the ESMBA Management Committee