

# Returning to play with success – The Belvidere Community Centre and Wallasey Redcaps

 *Theme: returning to play*

## Defining the Issue

The Coronavirus pandemic and national lockdown is having a significant impact on physical activity and sport, including table tennis. Facilities are working tirelessly to successfully get the sport back on its feet and recover from the damage.

## Background

The Belvidere Community Centre in Wallasey, was founded in 1971 as a place for children and young adults with additional needs to socialise. They continue to strive for social inclusion and welcome people of all abilities to take part in their multi sport and activity package.

Towards the beginning of 2020, after the Centre Manager Peter Jones found two Butterfly table tennis tables and a collection of bats and balls in storage, Belvidere introduced this to their offer.

Once equipment was installed, there was a clear interest and uptake among users, inspiring Belvidere to create a more competitive alternative to the more social game of ping pong.

With guidance from Table Tennis England, this led to the formation of Wallasey Redcaps Table Tennis Club, who use Belvidere as their playing space and deliver weekly sessions.

Later, Coronavirus and the national lockdown forced Belvidere to temporarily shut their doors and pause all activity.

As soon as restrictions were eased and activity could resume, Belvidere were keen to restart their social ping pong and club table tennis sessions as soon as possible.



## Approach

Following the easing of lockdown and Coronavirus restrictions, Belvidere were quick to reopen.

*“As soon as we were allowed, we restarted our social ping pong and club table tennis sessions. These were easy to deliver compared to other activities and will remain part of our core offer during this time.”*

Guidance on returning to play was received through attendance at support webinars and newsletter communications from Table Tennis England.

*“We were really impressed with the prompt and simple communications provided by Table Tennis England. These were a major part of our return and gave us the confidence we needed to ensure our approach was safe.”*

The rule of six, designed to control numbers at social gatherings, has been thought to benefit the game by giving players more practice time.



*“You can have a good session with six people. Compared to a lot of other sports, I think table tennis lends itself to this size of group. For as long as we must, and thereafter, we’re keen to continue the groups of six rather than deliver sessions to larger groups for longer.”*

*“As a result of the rule of six, we’ve noticed performance improvements and new players picking up good technique quicker.”*

*“Table tennis is the one game which I’ve been involved in where everybody always plays with a smile on their face. It’s great to be back, giving the centre a function in the community.”*

## Key Learnings

1. Be reactive to changing circumstances.
2. Utilise all available guidance and advice on returning to play.

## Further Information

For more information on returning to play, please click [here](#).



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