



Return to Play Guidelines

This document is to help guide your youth club or adult team to return to play. Everyone must take additional steps to help ensure members have a safe training and playing environment. These additional steps are outlined here and incorporate recommendations from the CDC, USOPC, US Youth Soccer, and US Soccer. This document was pieced together by PA West Originally and adjusted to fit the needs of New Hampshire, the NHSL, and NHSA.

These guidelines are only applicable once New Hampshire is in “Phase III” – allowing for competition between teams and league play. While some of these practices do apply to “Phase II”, and perhaps even “Phase I” – the premise of this resource is to be a guide for clubs as competition continues moving forward. Clubs must follow specific guidelines from state and local health departments in addition to utilizing the recommendations provided in this document. Clubs may be more restrictive but cannot loosen the requirements set forth by the convening health authorities.

New Hampshire’s Department of Health’s requires following the state and CDC Guidelines for COVID-19. CDC Guidelines offer four areas for action in youth sports: Promote Behaviors To Reduce Spread, Creating a Healthy Environment, Utilizing Healthy Operations, and Preparing For Illness.

GETTING STARTED

Club/Team Responsibilities:

- Create and distribute protocols to members.
- Confirm player registration and activation with your NH Soccer registration contact.
- Confirm with the state association what insurance coverage is in place.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.
- Plan to provide hand sanitizing stations and waste receptacles at fields for individual participant use.
- Prepare training and game day plans in accordance with these guidelines, as well as those from state and local authorities.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to players and parents who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.



Additional Resources:

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

US Youth Sports Return to Activity Notice:

- https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/assets/1/6/usys_rta_notice_051920.pdf

USOPC Coronavirus Update Page:

- <https://www.teamusa.org/coronavirus>

CDC – Additional Information

Symptoms of Coronavirus:

- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fabout%2Fsymptoms.html

Coronavirus Prevention & Treatment:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>

CDC GUIDANCE #1 – BEHAVIORS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD

The CDC outlines the following items as important in reducing COVID-19



Wash hand with soap and water frequently.



Do not attend practice or game if not feeling well.



Cover coughs and sneezes.



Per public health recommendations, wear masks except when playing.



Avoid touching your face.



Follow all CDC guidelines as well as those of your local health authorities.

Additional Precautions:

	Coach	Club	Player	Parent
Check temperature before attending practice or game.	✓		✓	✓
Wash with soap and water or use hand sanitizer during breaks in training and games and after training and games.	✓		✓	✓
Have adequate supplies of hand sanitizer.		✓		
Post signage reminding members to practice good hygiene.		✓		
Message members with reminders about good hygiene.		✓		
Disinfect non-washable equipment like cleats, ball, guards, gloves.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promptly leave after training and matches.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Avoid using locker rooms	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bring your own water bottle; do not share.	✓		✓	✓
Avoid carpooling.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Shower immediately upon returning home.	✓		✓	✓
Bring and use hand sanitizer to every training and games.	✓		✓	✓

CDC GUIDANCE #2 – CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The CDC recognizes the importance environment plays in the spread of disease. They offer a number of important steps toward creating a healthy environment. The goal is to provide players the safest training and playing environment possible.



No sharing of water bottles, snacks, or equipment.



Per public health guidance, masks should be worn when at all possible.



Physical distancing should be observed by players when possible and by all others at all times.

Additional Precautions:

	Coach	Club	Player	Parent
Hand sanitizer station on every bench.		✓		
Handwashing facilities should be available when possible.		✓		
Strict adherence to schedule. Prompt start; finish as scheduled. Prompt arrival and departure.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Record all attendees (participants and spectators) at practices/games by club designee (coach, asst. coach, team manager at practice/team manager, field marshal, club COVID coordinator at games). This practice will aid in tracking if needed by public health authorities.		✓		
Discourage the use of carpools and ride shares.		✓		
Restrooms should be cleaned regularly (minimum hourly) using disinfecting cleaners; use should be as directed by the manufacturer.		✓		
If more than one team is using a field for training at the same time...training areas should be at least 20 yards apart.	✓	✓		
Team "huddles" should observe social distancing; no handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, etc.	✓		✓	
Parents should remain in their cars during training.		✓		✓
Organize "stations" for each player at or around the bench area that are at least 6 feet apart in which players must keep all of their belongings. They shall be required to return to their "station" only during breaks.	✓	✓		

	Coach	Club	Player	Parent
Spectators are permitted at games. Those from the same home may sit together. Those from different homes must sit 6 feet apart. They should remain in their cars until shortly before kick-off and return to their cars immediately following the final whistle.		✓		✓
There will be no post-game handshake or team huddles. Players should clean up their gear and join their parents in their cars promptly.	✓		✓	
Pre-game and half-time huddles should observe social distancing; no handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, hugs, etc.	✓		✓	
Avoid training indoors but when necessary be sure the area is well-ventilated with good air flow.		✓		
No post-game snacks.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Concession stands are not recommended.		✓		

CDC GUIDANCE #3 – UTILIZE HEALTHY OPERATIONS

CDC recommends establishing operational protocols that put in place the elements vital to player, parent, and staff safety.

	Coach	Club	Player	Parent
Staggered start times when multiple teams are using the same training site on the same night; staggered start times also apply on game day.		✓		
Allow time between training sessions and games to permit cleaning/disinfecting to avoid possible passing of the virus between teams via cross-contamination. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Best practice: hold arriving team in their cars until departing team has entered their vehicles. 		✓		
Training areas/equipment should be cleaned with a disinfecting cleaner (follow manufacturer's usage instruction) immediately after practice before the next team arrives.		✓		
Coaches will be sure their players have cleaned their stations and the technical area and leave promptly.	✓	✓		

	Coach	Club	Player	Parent
Home club will clean the technical areas with a disinfectant cleaner (follow manufacturer's usage instruction) prior to the teams from the next game arriving.		✓		
Record all attendees (participants and spectators) at practices/games by club designee (coach, asst. coach, team manager at practice/team manager, field marshal, club COVID coordinator at games). This practice will aid in tracking if needed by public health authorities.		✓		
Before a club or team may begin to return to play, it must publish a notice to all players, parents and soccer families outlining the risks of returning and detailing how the club intends to minimize or eradicate those risks. Clubs should maintain record of parental/coach acknowledgement of risk.		✓		
All 'return to play' activities must be published as being voluntary. For example, if a child chooses not to attend tryouts for teams, the club must accommodate that child's return at a later date.		✓		
Stated club policy on all club personnel and coaches wearing protective gear (masks, gloves).		✓		
Clubs must provide hand sanitizer at each bench area for all activities.		✓		
Plan for all player areas to be disinfected following every match and training session. Training for those disinfecting the player areas should follow the directions on the disinfectant label.		✓		
All state and local health guidelines and protocols should be followed.	✓	✓	✓	✓
Provide adequate outdoor space for training.		✓		
Before any and all activity (e.g. practice, tryout session, etc...) coach and player health assessment must be made incorporating the following elements. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must ask- have you been in contact with a person with COVID-19? • Must ask- have you had a cough, fever, or loss of taste or smell? 		✓		
Coaches alone shall be permitted to touch equipment, including training discs and cones; do not enlist help from players or parents.	✓	✓		

CDC GUIDANCE #4 – PREPARE FOR ILLNESS

CDC guidelines require having a plan in place when illness returns. The plan will help control and mitigate the effects of COVID-19.

	Coach	Club	Player	Parent
Have a communication plan in place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare to notify coaches and families if the organization becomes aware of a participant or a coach/admin has developed COVID-19 and may have been infectious to others while at a youth or adult activity. Maintain participant confidentiality regarding health status. 		✓		
Have an action plan in place, in case of notification of a positive test result.		✓		
Train and educate all staff on protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations and other necessary safety information.		✓		
Be prepared to shut down and stop operations.		✓		
Develop plans for temporary closure of indoor facilities and cancellation of outdoor activities or camps for proper disinfection.		✓		

ADULT TEAM RESPONSIBILITIES

	Team	Player	League
Adult teams should follow the criteria listed above.	✓	✓	✓
Create and distribute protocols to members.	✓		✓
Have a communication plan in place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain participant confidentiality regarding health status. 	✓		✓
Be prepared to shut down and stop operations.	✓		✓
Record all attendees – players/managers/spectators.	✓		
Check temperature before attending a game/practice.	✓	✓	✓
Do not attend the game/practice when not feeling well.	✓	✓	✓
Staggered games times and game arrival/departure procedures.	✓		✓
Practice physical distancing in the team bench areas.	✓	✓	
Minimize contact away from the game play.	✓	✓	✓
Bring and use hand sanitizer.	✓	✓	✓
Be sensitive and accommodating to players who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.	✓		✓
Notify the league of a COVID-19 diagnosis.	✓		