



US Youth Soccer National Office  
9220 World Cup Way  
Frisco, TX 75033

## **US Youth Soccer Return to Activity Notice**

Version 1.0, 5/13/20

The purpose of this document is to provide athletes, parents, coaches, and soccer organizations with information they can use to assist them with developing their return-to-activity programming in the context of COVID-19. Given each organizations vastly different resources, this document cannot be prescriptive; rather, it should spark thoughtful deliberation among those who intend to use this information to create their own unique return-to-activity programming plan specific to their situation. Many of the recommendations rely upon rules and regulations set forth by public health authorities, which will be different across the country. In addition, we all must recognize that there will be other logistical and implementation challenges for activity organizers, participants and their families given COVID-19.

The information in this document is NOT intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content, including text, graphics, images, and information, are provided for general informational purposes only. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, US Youth Soccer makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the completeness of this information. Further, you should seek advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials in your area if you have specific questions. These guidelines address only early phases of return-to-play and additional guidelines may, or may not, follow as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.

Most if not all states will have a phased approach to reopening businesses and easing of social distancing requirements. This may vary from state to state and town to town. Youth sports may not be a high priority for state officials, or even addressed, which poses significant challenges for those planning a return to youth soccer activities. USYS State Associations and related soccer organizations need to be aware and adhere to all Federal, State and Local guidelines and requirements.

Finally, although the young and healthy may be subject to less severe cases of COVID-19, every case of this disease is potentially life-altering or deadly, particularly in those with risk factors that may occur within our communities. Health consequences may be long-standing and only apparent weeks after initial infection and recovery. Until COVID-19 is either eradicated, a vaccine is developed, or a cure is found, there is no way of eliminating the risk of infection. This should always be at the forefront when designing and considering return-to-activity



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programming. USYS State Associations and soccer organizations should be in contact with their respective insurance carriers to determine that all coverages are appropriate for the organization and its needs. The risks of participation should be clearly communicated to parents and participants in your respective programs.

### **A Phased Approach based on Federal, State and Local Guidelines**

#### **Phase 1: State health authorities require shelter in place, stay at home order.**

- Individual training sessions can be held in participant home/residence using their own equipment.
- Coaching occurs virtually. No coaches or other athletes should be present during individual training.

#### **Phase 2: Public health authorities lift shelter in place requirements, but continue to prohibit group activities.**

- Individual training sessions can be held in participant home/residence or outside (maintaining social distancing) using their own equipment
- Coaching occurs virtually. No coaches or other athletes physically present during training.

#### **Phase 3: Public health authorities allow small group activities.**

Below are suggested criteria for participation in permitted small group training sessions (includes athletes, coaches and staff).

- No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and have no known exposure to someone that has been ill in 14 days.
- Live in training location/community and have not travelled for 14 days prior to beginning training.
- Have no above normal temperature readings; temperature checks should not be conducted by staff but by players and their families prior to attending training.
- Upon arrival to training, coaches or staff should ask each athlete if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should be sent home and instructed to contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible.



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- Appropriate infection prevention supplies should be present in multiple targeted areas (e.g., hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, hand wash stations, etc.).
- Small group training sessions should take place outside in an area where social distancing can be maintained.
- Participants should use their own equipment and properly sanitize the equipment after every training session.
- Participants should use their own water bottle, towel and any other personal hygiene products.
- Avoid any activities that may require direct or indirect contact (e.g. bumping) between athletes.
- Establish a cleaning schedule/protocol for equipment with the proper use of disinfectant before, during, and after training.
- Ensure participants are wearing appropriate personal protective equipment, (gloves, face mask, etc.)
- While coaching can occur onsite, coaches must maintain social distancing from all participants.

## **Introduction of Principles and Responsibilities**

### **Club Responsibilities:**

- Create and distribute protocols to members.
- Contact insurers to ensure all coverages and communicate that information to participants prior to commencement of initial training.
- Have an effective communication plan in place.
- Identify strategies for working with public health officials to notify adult leaders, youth and their families if the organization becomes aware of a participant or adult leader has developed COVID-19 and may have been infectious to others while at a youth activity.
- Maintain participant confidentiality regarding health status.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.
- 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.



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- Develop plans for temporary closure of indoor facilities and cancellation of outdoor activities or camps for proper disinfection.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.
- Provide hand sanitizing stations and waste receptacles at fields for individual participant use.
- Develop a relationship and a dialogue with local health officials.

**Coach Responsibilities:**

- Ensure the health and safety of the participants.
- Inquire how the athletes are feeling. Send home anyone you believe acts or looks ill.
- Follow all state and local health protocols and guidelines.
- Ensure all athletes have their own individual equipment (ball, water, bag etc.)
- Ensure coach is the only person to handle equipment (e.g. cones, disk etc.); do not enlist parental or attendee assistance.
- All training should be conducted outdoors and compliant with social distancing per state or local health guidelines.
- Always wear a face mask, even when not actively coaching.
- Coaches should maintain social distance requirements from players based on state and local health requirements.
- Have fun, stay positive – players and parents are looking to you for leadership.
- The use of scrimmage vest, or pinnies, is not recommended at this time.

**Parent Responsibilities:**

- Ensure your child is healthy, and check your child's temperature before activities with others.
- Consider not carpooling or very limited carpooling.
- Stay in car or adhere to social distance requirements, based on state and local health requirements
- When at training, wear a mask if outside your car.
- Ensure child's clothing is washed after every training.
- Ensure all equipment (cleats, ball, shin guards etc.) are sanitized before and after every training.
- Notify your club immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason.



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- Do not assist your coach with equipment before or after training.
- Be sure your child has necessary sanitizing products with them at every training.

#### **Players Responsibilities:**

- Take your temperature daily and especially before activities with others.
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after training.
- Bring, and use, hand sanitizer with you at every training.
- Wear mask before and immediately after all training.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment, water, food or bags.
- Practice social distancing, place bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- Wash and sanitize all equipment before and after every training.
- No group celebrations, high-5s, hugs, handshakes, fist-bumps, etc.
- Follow all CDC guidelines as well those of your local health authorities.

### **Best Practices for TOPSoccer**

#### **General Guidance:**

- Registration tables (if utilized) should be cleaned prior to event.
- Registration desk assistants/staff should wear a mask and disposable gloves.
- Every person should be required to clean his or her hands with readily accessible hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer needs to be present on registration table(s).
- Emphasis should be placed on electronic forms. Try to move away from paper registration forms.
- Sign in sheets and name tags should only be written by the registration desk assistants/staff vs individual registrants. Pre-printed name tags via electronic registration are encouraged.

#### **Players and Volunteers (including TOPSoccer Buddies):**

- Greet players/parents at the beginning and administer screening questions about player illnesses and those within their household members.
- Check temperatures.
- Make masks and gloves available to those who want to wear them.
- Utilize hand sanitizer prior to, during, and after participation.



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- Participants and attendees should use their own water bottle, towel, and personal hygiene products.

**Equipment:**

Prior to each session:

- All equipment that is touched during play should be disinfected with spray/wipes.
- Only staff should touch equipment, if possible.
- All pennies (vests) should be washed prior to each session.
- If using another facility's equipment (e.g. goals, benches), they should be sanitized/cleaned before and after sessions.

**Exercises:**

- Emphasis should be placed on exercises that allow players and buddies to practice skills with 6 feet of distance from each other, if possible.
- Exercises should avoid transitions that involve "physically tagging a teammate" such as relay races or tag. Use alternative visual cues.
- Consider small-sided games.
- Reduce the amount of time (and total number of players).

**Closing rituals:**

- No handshakes, high-5s or group celebrations; consider alternatives that avoid contact like New Zealand Haka-style dance, hand waves, gestures, etc.

**After the session:**

- Have a wastebasket available for masks and gloves.
- Require everyone to use hand sanitizer before leaving sessions.
- Use disinfectant spray/wipes on high traffic areas, especially gates, door handles and water fountains.



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### Resources

CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Move United: <https://www.moveunitedsport.org/>

Special Olympics: <https://resources.specialolympics.org/resources-to-help-during-the-crisis>

Special Olympics Infographic: [https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/covid-19/SO\\_CoVid19-Infographic-English.jpg?\\_ga=2.93243544.460203483.1588346705-2032247575.1588346705](https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/covid-19/SO_CoVid19-Infographic-English.jpg?_ga=2.93243544.460203483.1588346705-2032247575.1588346705)

Federation for Children with Special Needs: <https://fcsn.org/>

Autism; Wearing a Mask Social Story: <https://paautism.org/resource/wearing-mask-social-story/>