

North State Soccer



Return to Play Plan

PURPOSE:

These Recommendations for Returning to Play in a Training Environment (the Recommendations) are provided to assist North State Soccer (NSS) safely and gradually resume soccer training while reducing infection risk in the setting of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These recommendations do not supersede or replace any applicable local, state, regional or federal health guidelines or requirements, which should be adhered to by all clubs. To date, published local, state, and regional guidelines and requirements vary widely. Each team should conform to the guidelines and requirements that apply to them and should routinely monitor any changes to these guidelines and requirements.

Training during this time is absolutely non-mandatory. No team is required to train. No player will be at any disadvantage in terms of position on a team or minimum playing time by choosing to not attend training. These are requirements for returning to training for those teams and players who wish to do so at this time.

CONTEXT:

Soccer presents its own inherent risks of disease transmission with respect to SARSCoV-2, the novel coronavirus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as other communicable diseases. Nonetheless, particularly with respect to COVID-19, member organizations will encounter widely disparate levels of local infection and disease spread, local public health guidelines, available resources for testing and preventive measures, and training / competition environments. These recommendations are intended to provide a phased return to training that will be implemented at different times within our immediate organization based on local disease burden, local restrictions and gating criteria, local resources and club environmental characteristics.

Even if local laws or restrictions may accommodate for immediate return to full team activities, and account for the possibility of a local resurgence of COVID-19 cases. In addition, certain groups within our organization, cannot adequately accommodate the requirements of a given phase in certain environments (for example, social distancing in younger age groups), then those groups should not progress until the next open phase when social distancing requirements are more lenient.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

General hygiene practices to reduce the risk of spread of infection:

The following practices should be reinforced within the NSS soccer organization and community to mitigate transmission of any communicable disease.

- Avoid touching your face.
- Frequently wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover mouth and nose (with arm or elbow, not hands) when coughing or sneezing and wash hands afterward.
- If you have any symptoms of upper respiratory infection you shall **STAY AT HOME.**
- Frequently clean commonly used team equipment (soccer balls, cones) with an antiseptic cleanser.
- Avoid contact with other individuals (shaking hands, for example).
- Maintain a distance of 6 feet between you and others.
- **Stay home if you feel sick** and contact your health care provider.
- **NOTE:** As contact is allowed and scrimmages go into effect, recommend each player has their own pennies that they wear to and from practice and are responsible for cleaning

COOPERATION & RESPONSIBILITY:

Each stakeholder as outlined below has a responsibility to cooperate within the framework of this plan.

Club

- Distribute and post Return to Play protocols
- Post appropriate Covid-19 signage around sports park facility to remind parents and players
<https://www.signs.com/coronavirus-signage/>
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that may be uncomfortable with returning to play.
- NOTE: This is inclusive of tryouts. If a player needs to make other arrangements outside of tryouts, then the parent needs to reach out to the coaching staff.
- Train and educate all staff of Return to Play protocols (Phase 1 thru Phase 5)
- Symptom monitoring and plans for medical evaluation of symptomatic staff and players.
- Methods for dissemination of information regarding proper hygiene practices, social distancing requirements, and disinfection measures in all training environments, (Following CDC or local health recommendations).
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing, as outlined in this document, and as applicable to the various phases

- NOTE: Due to phased protocols, grass fields and other fields may have to be utilized to accommodate all team usage.
- Identification of lead / contact person(s) for matters relating to COVID-19 in terms of prevention, event planning, case reporting, and dissemination of information.
 - Case reporting to club membership, club staff, and local health authorities.
 - Emergency response planning and coordination with local emergency medical services for all medical emergencies, including COVID-19.

Coach

- Follow all Return to Play protocols
- Identification of lead / contact person(s) for matters relating to COVID-19 in terms of prevention, case reporting, and dissemination of information.
- Case reporting to club membership, club staff, and local health authorities.
- Send athletes home if they are not feeling well
- Ensure all athletes have their own individual equipment (ball, water, shin guards, pinnie, etc.)
- Ensure activities provide adequate social distancing, as applicable
- Respect players, parents and families by accommodating those that may not yet be comfortable returning

- Keep a daily list of all participants with contact information with rapid notification information in the event someone becomes ill
- Maintain a copy of the Covid-19 waiver
- Coaches shall bring disposable water bottles for use by players who forget their water to prevent heat illness.

Parent

- Ensure your child washes or brings their own hand sanitizer as available prior to drop off and immediately after pick-up
- If you are not comfortable having your child return to play do not send them. Contact the coach, voice your concerns. Your coach will notify you of the next phase as it progresses.
- Check child temperature prior to attending any activities
- Ensure child's clothing is washed after every activity
- Ensure all equipment (cleats, ball, shin guards, pennies) is sanitized prior to any activity
- Notify Club/coach if your child becomes ill for any reasons
- Supply your child with individual sanitizer
 - NOTE: Hand sanitizer will be supplied by your coach if you do not have your own.
- Adhere to all social distancing expectations

- By bringing your player you are certifying that your player has no signs or symptoms (reference Appendix A)
- Ensure your child has plenty of water
- Coaches may distribute pennies for use during practice, but players may not exchange pennies once they have been assigned. Following every practice, pennies must be washed or kept by the player to whom they are assigned. **No sharing of pennies**

Player

- If you are not comfortable with returning to play, **DON'T**
- Adhere to all Return to Play protocols
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after all activities
- Ensure all equipment (cleats, ball, shin guards) is sanitized prior to any activity
- Do not share water, food, or equipment
- Respect and practice social distancing, as required in these guidelines
- Place equipment, bags, etc. at least 6 feet apart
- No high 5's, handshakes, knuckles, or group celebrations. Air high 5's are acceptable

Commitments to abide by

National and local recommendations and restrictions regarding hygiene, social distancing, limits on the size of group gatherings, and any other means of reducing the spread of COVID-19. Please see CDC and county guidelines regarding returning to youth sports: (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>) (https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/docs/libraries/hhsa-docs/covid-19/athletic_practice_guidelines_6-8-2020.pdf?sfvrsn=b297f389_0). NSS should share these guidelines with their membership (on the club website, for example) and post reminders regarding hygiene and social distancing at their facilities and training grounds.

MEMBER ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Returning to training involves a step-by-step re-initiation of safe training environments for players. Recommendations for returning to competition will be addressed separately based on county guidelines and next transition will be communicated by NSS board. For each phase provides an incremental return to soccer participation that is intended to account for both:

- The risk of both COVID-19 resurgence; and the risks of overtraining and injury due to a rapid return to play. This timeline is intended to prioritize athlete health and well-being, including but not limited to the risks presented by COVID-19. These recommendations do not supersede national, state or local laws or requirements. Member clubs should continually abide by all applicable restrictions in their community and should attempt to comply with all recommended guidelines where possible.

PHASE 1: TRAINING AT HOME

While local shelter-in-place orders are in effect and group gatherings are prohibited, clubs limit participation and activity to individual training at home, or training with household members, under the guidance of virtual coaching modalities.

PHASE 2: SMALL GROUP TRAINING AT FACILITIES/FIELD (Socially Distanced/Modified Training Environment)

This phase can begin once local stay-at-home restrictions are no longer in place and group gatherings are permitted, but when social distancing requirements still apply. At this point, clubs can take steps to ensure a safe transition to small (local government/county recommendations) group training environments at their facilities. In Phase 2, clubs should implement the following recommendations:

- Prior to attending any training event, each player should check his or her temperature at home, and refrain from participation if he or she has a fever (100.4 degrees F).
- Prior to participation, staff should obtain verbal confirmation from each participating player that:
 - a) The player has not had any close contact with a sick individual or anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (see Appendix C).
 - b) The player has not had a documented case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - c) The player is not currently demonstrating or suffering from any ill symptoms (see Appendix A)
- Any player reporting or demonstrating symptoms of illness at any point should be removed from training (or prohibited from training) and should seek guidance from his or her physician before attempting to return to training.
- Training groups may not exceed **10** participants and no contact at this time and maintaining 6 feet apart from other participants.

- Each group should be given a designated time to arrive and depart the training grounds or facility. Players and coaches shall remain in the same groups during Phase 2. More than one group may train simultaneously (within local restrictions regarding group gathering size), but each group should train in a designated area, at least 6 feet from other groups, and even further if possible.
- Individuals should maintain social distancing guidelines during arrival and departure from training, and efforts should be made to stagger arrival and departure times to minimize potential interaction with other groups.
- Other individuals in attendance (family members, for example) must stay away from the field and maintain at least 6 feet between other individuals in attendance.
- In the event of an injury, staff may assess and facilitate management of the injured individual in accordance with proper first aid management. Family members may participate in injury management as necessary but other players should maintain proper social distance.

EQUIPMENT:

Training areas must be separated and specifically designated such that groups will not touch the same surfaces (benches, for example).

Players should bring their own equipment (ball, hand sanitizer, water bottle, training vest(s), towels, etc.) such that no equipment is shared between players. Players and coaches may contact another individual's soccer ball with their feet but should not contact it with their hands.

Surfaces that may be contacted and shared by players (benches, balls, for example), should be disinfected before and after use. Equipment used by staff (cones, for

example) should not be handled by players or other attendees and should be disinfected after use.

FACILITIES AND TRAINING GROUNDS:

Hand sanitizer should be readily available at all training grounds and facilities. Each coach and player should have their own hand sanitizer. Players and coaches should disinfect their hands prior to and immediately after every group session and after any contact with a shared surface.

All surfaces that players/staff may contact when entering and leaving the facility (gates, doorknobs, etc.) should be disinfected between sessions and after the final session of the day. When possible, gates/doors should remain open to reduce contact with potentially contaminated surfaces.

Restrooms should be cleaned regularly to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Hand sanitizer and/or soap and water should be available and used immediately before and after restroom use. If this is not feasible, restrooms should remain closed.

PHASE 3: LIMITED TEAM TRAINING

Further guidelines will be determined by NSS board based on current Shasta County guidelines, and will be updated as county guidelines change.

PHASE 4: FULL TEAM TRAINING:

Further guidelines will be determined by NSS board based on current Shasta County guidelines, and will be updated as county guidelines change.

PHASE 5: RETURN TO LOCAL COMPETITION

Further guidelines will be determined by NSS board based on current Shasta County guidelines, and will be updated as county guidelines change.

APPENDIX A:

Symptoms of COVID-19 Infection: Individuals with COVID-19 can exhibit symptoms ranging from mild to life threatening. The most common symptoms associated with infection include:

- Fever (100.4 degrees F)
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath
- Less common symptoms that may still be evidence of COVID-19 infection include:
- Sore throat
 - Congestion
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - Headache
 - Muscle / joint pain
 - Sudden loss of taste or smell
 - Chills

APPENDIX B:

Return to Play Following Confirmed or Suspected COVID-19 Infection These recommendations are intended to guide decision-making regarding players or staff with a suspected documented COVID-19 infection in order to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Symptomatic player / staff with suspected or laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 infection: Cannot attend club events until: a) At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since resolution of fever (defined as 100.4 degrees F) without the use of fever-reducing medications and respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND b) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared. OR: c) Resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND d) Improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath), AND e) Negative results of an FDA authorized molecular assay for detection of SARS-CoV-2 RNA from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens. Player / staff with laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 who have not had any symptoms: Cannot attend club events until: a) 14 days after date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test assuming no symptoms since that time. If symptoms develop, then management should be guided as above for symptomatic individuals. OR: b) Negative results of an FDA authorized SARS-CoV-2 RNA test from at least two consecutive respiratory specimens collected.

If a player tests positive the player shall only be cleared for return to play by NSS president and the county health department.

APPENDIX C:

Return to Play Following Exposure to a Suspected or Diagnosed Case of COVID-19 These recommendations are intended to guide decision-making regarding players or staff following exposure to a suspected or diagnosed case of COVID-19 infection in order to reduce the risk of disease transmission. Any asymptomatic player or staff member who has been exposed to an individual with a suspected or diagnosed case of COVID-19 should be restricted from participation for at least 14 days and monitor for any symptoms consistent with infection. If asymptomatic after 14 days since last exposure, they can return to participation. In general, you need to be in close contact with an individual to contract the disease. In this case, exposure means any one of the following:

- Caring for a sick person with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.
- Living in the same household as an individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.
- Being within 6 feet of an individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection for around 10 minutes or more.
OR: Coming in direct contact with secretions from an individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection (being coughed or sneezed on, sharing water bottle or utensils, for example).

If a player has been exposed the player shall only be cleared for return to play by NSS president and the county health department.

APPENDIX D:

WAIVER/RELEASE FOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES INCLUDING COVID-19

ASSUMPTION OF RISK / WAIVER OF LIABILITY / INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

In consideration of being allowed to participate on behalf of (North State Soccer) athletic program and related events and activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates, and agrees that:

1. Participation includes possible exposure to and illness from infectious diseases including but not limited to MRSA, influenza, and COVID-19. While particular rules and personal discipline may reduce this risk, the risk of serious illness and death does exist; and,
2. I KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for my participation; and,
3. I willingly agree to comply with the stated and customary terms and conditions for participation as regards protection against infectious diseases. If, however, I observe and any unusual or significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participation and bring such to the attention of the nearest official immediately; and,
4. I, for myself and on behalf of my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin, HEREBY RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS (North State Soccer) their officers, officials, agents, and/or employees, other participants, sponsoring agencies, sponsors, advertisers, and if applicable, owners and lessors of premises used to conduct the event (RELEASEES), WITH RESPECT TO ANY AND ALL ILLNESS, DISABILITY, DEATH, or loss or damage to person or property, WHETHER ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES OR OTHERWISE, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IF FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

Name of participant: _____

Participant signature: _____

Date signed: _____

(_____) By initialing here I have read, understand and agree to adhere to the return to play plan from NSS

FOR PARTICIPANTS OF MINORITY AGE (UNDER AGE 18 AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION)

This is to certify that I, as parent/guardian, with legal responsibility for this participant, have read and explained the provisions in this waiver/release to my child/ward including the risks of presence and participation and his/her personal responsibilities for adhering to the rules and regulations for protection against communicable diseases. Furthermore, my child/ward understands and accepts these risks and responsibilities. I for myself, my spouse, and child/ward do consent and agree to his/her release provided above for all the Releasees and myself, my spouse, and child/ward do release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Releasees for any and all liabilities incident to my minor child's/wards presence or participation in these activities as provided above, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR NEGLIGENCE, to the fullest extent provided by law.

Name of parent/guardian: _____

Parent guardian/signature: _____

Date signed: _____

(_____) By initialing here I have read, understand and agree to adhere the return to play plan from NSS

APPENDIX E:**COVID-19 Team SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE****COVID-19 Team SCREENING QUESTIONNAIRE****Player Name:** _____**Team Name:** _____**Date:** _____

Prior to player beginning practice, if thermometer is available, take a temperature reading and ask screening questions, and record all below:

Temperature greater than 100.4F YES NO Reading-

SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. Are you feeling ill/feverish? **YES NO**
2. Are you having chills? **YES NO**
3. Do you have a new or worsening cough? **YES NO**
4. Do you have a new or worsening shortness of breath? **YES NO**
5. Do you have a new or prolonged sore throat? **YES NO**
6. Have you had a fever in the last 72 hours **YES NO**
7. Have you shown/had symptoms in the last 10 days **YES NO**
8. Have you been in contact with anyone that tested positive with Covid 19 **YES NO**

PROTOCOL FOR YES ANSWERS:

If a Player answers yes to any question:

1. Isolate them from other players and refer them to an appropriate healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment.

REMIND Player TO:

Wash their hands and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer often.

Do not shake hands, touch or hug others.

Use physical distancing of six (6) feet or greater whenever possible

Personnel should follow CDC, along with any applicable local county public health protocols regarding COVID-19 directives/orders.

Do not come into practice if feeling ill/feverish or showing any respiratory illness signs.