



Half Moon Bay American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) COVID-19 Health & Safety Protocol

Introduction

Half Moon Bay AYSO (HMBAYSO) is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization existing primarily for the promotion and education of recreational soccer aimed at enriching children's lives through world class youth soccer programs. With the existing COVID-19 situation in our country and San Mateo County, it is essential that we continue to take precautions to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus. Nonetheless, health experts recognize the role of outdoor recreation and exercise in promoting child mental health, physical fitness, and cognitive development. The HMBAYSO Board of Directors is thereby submitting this operational protocol to demonstrate how we intend to allow for a safe return-to-play for local children for a Spring 2021 program.

The plan complies with the latest official orders and guidance by the State of California, namely the CDPH guidance for Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports (<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/outdoor-indoor-recreational-sports.aspx>), issued on February 19, 2021 and updated on March 16, 2021, CDC and San Mateo County Health.

HMBAYSO understands the challenges and importance of containing the virus in group settings. As such, this proposed plan includes measures that provide additional safety practices to keep our program above the required safety standards. While we strive to fully implement and achieve our safety goals, we do understand that it might be impossible to completely prevent the spread of COVID-19 even given all the prescribed safety guidelines and precautions.

This protocol will govern all HMBAYSO activities for the Spring 2021 Season (ending as late as June 27, 2021). Should the San Mateo County adjusted COVID 19 case rate exceed 14 per 100,000, HMBAYSO will suspend all activities for the Spring 2021 season. Conversely, as the COVID 19 public health situation improves, we will proceed to adjust this protocol for seasons beyond Spring 2021 (e.g. Fall 2021 season to begin in August, 2021), following all State and local health guidance as may be issued from time to time.

Return to Play Phases

HMBAYSO will adhere to the following phases as recommended by the US Soccer Federation, the highest soccer governing body in the country. The phases and core features are:

Phase 1 - Individual Training (Within Teams)

- COVID-19 prevention and response protocols in place and followed
- Allow familiarity with Covid-19 protocol to form good habits and compliance
- Training within teams, subject to a maximum of 12 players and 3 adult coaches. Note: any older team (players born 2008 or earlier) with more than 12 players will be divided into two groups, each with at least one adult coach
- Maintain social distancing at all times during training (players and coaches to remain 6 feet apart)
- Use of face coverings at all times by all adult volunteers. Use of face coverings at all times by players, even during heavy exertion as tolerated. Face covering required during player arrival and departure
- No sharing of any equipment (balls, cones, hydration devices, jerseys, hair ties, shinguards, etc.)
- No indoor team training, activities or gatherings; no team gatherings outside of soccer training
- The minimum duration for Phase 1 will be one week, but the actual duration may be longer

Phase 2 – Full Team Training

- COVID-19 prevention and response protocols in place and followed
- Allow familiarity with Covid-19 protocol to form good habits and compliance
- Full team training allowed (maximum of 13 players per team, except for teams with players born 2008 or earlier, which can have up to 22 players per team)
- Social distancing maintained at all times, except where not possible due to the nature of normal soccer competition
- Use of face coverings at all times by all adult volunteers. Use of face coverings at all times by players, even during heavy exertion as tolerated. Face covering required during player arrival and departure
- No sharing of any equipment other than soccer balls (e.g. no sharing of hydration devices, jerseys, hair ties, shinguards, etc.), and soccer balls may not be touched by uncovered hands
- No indoor team training, activities or gatherings; no team gatherings outside of soccer training
- The minimum duration for Phase 2 will be one week, but the actual duration may be longer. And, at any time during Phase 2, the HMBAYSO Board could decide to revert to Phase 1

Phase 3 – Full Team Competitions

- COVID-19 prevention and response protocols in place and followed
- Introduction of full team competitions
- All competitions will take place among and between HMBAYSO teams, with one potential exception.
 - If it is not possible for teams with older players (born 2008 or earlier) to compete within HMBAYSO due to the presence of only a single team in Half Moon Bay, competition will only be allowed as follows
 - Against AYSO teams from within San Mateo or Santa CLARA County AND
 - Only while the opposition's county in the Orange Tier AND

- Only after a HMBAYSO Board review and approval of that AYSO Region's Return to Play Protocol
- Teams limited to one match per day
- Full team training allowed
- Social distancing maintained at all times, except where not possible due to the nature of normal soccer competition
- Use of face coverings at all times by all adult volunteers. Use of face coverings at all times by players, even during heavy exertion as tolerated. Face covering required during player arrival and departure
- No sharing of any equipment other than soccer balls (e.g. no sharing of hydration devices, jerseys, hair ties, shinguards, etc.), and soccer balls may not be touched by uncovered hands except as necessary when the ball leaves the field of play during competition or by a goalkeeper not wearing gloves
- No indoor team training, activities or gatherings; no team gatherings outside of soccer training or competition
- At any point during Phase 3, the HMBAYSO Board could decide to revert to Phase 1 or Phase 2

Additional Notes re: face covering requirement for players

For additional clarity on the requirement listed throughout this document for face coverings to be worn by players at all times, even during heavy exertion as tolerated, please refer to the [American Academy of Pediatrics' Interim Guidance on Return to Sports](#). Of particular note in that guidance:

- It is important that the face mask fits the athlete well and is worn over the nose and below the chin.
- If the face mask is removed for a break, the athlete should remain at least 6 feet away from all other individuals.
- Any face mask that becomes saturated with sweat should be changed immediately.

HMBAYSO Organization and Volunteer Requirements

HMBAYSO (Region 1099) operates under the umbrella of the National AYSO Program and each Region follows its specific guidelines. All AYSO volunteers are Safe Haven certified as required by the National AYSO Program. Safe Haven requires a mandatory reporting protocol to safeguard players and family members from bullying, harassment, hazing, physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and sexual misconduct.

- All AYSO Volunteers are required to pass a background check and must be 18 years or older, with the exception of youth referees
- Volunteer coaches are officially trained and certified for the corresponding age group in AYSO to lead and teach age-based teams; higher certifications required for older age groups.
- Volunteer Coaches and Referees are required to pass online instruction in Concussion Recognition and Management (CDC Heads Up Concussion Action Plan) and the NFHS Sudden Cardiac Arrest course (<https://www.simonsheart.org/>) before being certified.
- HMBAYSO maintains control of the playing situations for its youth athletes, with the ability to establish stable teams and enforce no mixing among teams.
- HMBAYSO will use Cunha field in Half Moon Bay for all practices and games, which has sufficient space to ensure social distancing requirements are met.

General Safety Measures for All Volunteers, Parents/Caregivers and Players

- Prior to the start of any soccer activities, a copy of this document will be provided to all volunteers, parents/guardians, and players. The document will be sent electronically, posted on the HMBAYSO website and, upon request, provided as hard copy
- All parents/guardians, volunteers and players will be required to sign an agreement to comply with the safety measures set forth in this document as a condition of participation
- All volunteers and parents/guardians of participants will be required to sign a liability waiver outlining our safety protocols and rules and acknowledging that they understand the risks, symptoms, and plan of mitigation regarding COVID-19
- All volunteers and parents/guardians of participants will be additionally required to sign a waiver of responsibility that National AYSO requires for participation
- All AYSO Volunteers and spectators will be required to wear a cloth mask or face covering that is compliant with CDC guidelines at all times when present at the fields of play
- All players will be required to wear face coverings when entering and exiting the fields, when participating in activities, even during heavy exertion as tolerated, and when on the sidelines / not actively participating.
- No physical touching or contact between players and/or volunteers will be permitted, nor will any distancing of less than 6 feet be allowed, except as periodically encountered as a result of normal soccer competitive activity
- Coaches will be instructed to enforce the social distancing rules for team members and compliance with safety measures.
- Signage will be posted at the field entrance to inform visitors and participants that they are not permitted to enter the facility if they have a cough or fever, or symptoms of COVID-19. Signage will also include that all onsite participants (including spectators and volunteers) must maintain a minimum of six-foot distance from one another (except for members of the same household). When possible, HMBAYSO will use the signs provided by the CDC and San Mateo County websites.
- The handling of any training equipment (other than soccer balls) will be limited to coaches only. And, players can not touch soccer balls with uncovered hands, except as necessary when the ball leaves the field of play during competition or by a goalkeeper not wearing gloves
- Practice and game times will be appropriately staggered to prevent crowding at field entry and exit points, but there still may be several practices or games occurring at the same time
- If any coach, player or team volunteer tests positive for COVID-19 (see Positive COVID 19 Test Notification Procedure section below), the HMBAYSO Safety Director (Shig Tanaka; hmbayso.safety@gmail.com) will notify families of all team members and all Team Volunteers of their possible exposure, while maintaining the individual's confidentiality. All HMBAYSO activities for the team will cease for a minimum of 14 days from the date of the team's last exposure to the team member with a confirmed positive test.
 - a. After 14 symptom-free days from the date of the last exposure to the team member with a confirmed positive test, any Team coach, player or volunteer (other than the one who tested positive), may resume soccer activity with the team
 - b. Players, Coaches or Volunteers who test positive must provide to the HMBAYSO Safety Director (Shig Tanaka) evidence of medical clearance by meeting criteria from the quarantine and isolation directives (available at <https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus>) In addition, under no circumstances will they be allowed to participate in HMBAYSO activities before the **later** of:
 - i. a minimum of 14 days from the date of the confirmed positive test

- ii. the receipt of a negative COVID 19 test for the virus
 - iii. no COVID symptoms are demonstrated by the individual who tested positive
- In addition, if a player tests positive during Phase 3 of the Return to Play, for any opposing team played within the past 14 days, the Safety Director will also notify all families of all team members and all Team Volunteers of their possible exposure, while maintaining the individual's confidentiality. Families and Volunteers associated with the opposing team will be encouraged to exhibit heightened vigilance, but will NOT face any restriction on soccer activities outside of their individual or team's health situation
 - a. Exception: if it is known that a member of the opposing team had close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes) with the individual testing positive, then the opposing team will also cease all HMBAYSO activities for a minimum of 14 days from the date of exposure.

Safety Measures in Place for Volunteers

- HMBAYSO will employ all necessary safety features and protocols to reduce the risk of infection for their coaches and other team volunteers. All Volunteers will be educated on how to recognize the Symptoms of COVID-19 so that they know how to act responsibly if they detect or exhibit symptoms according to CDC resources.
- Coaches and any Team Volunteer must wear a face mask at all times while at the Field. HMBAYSO will provide hand sanitizer to all volunteers
- Before participating in any on-field activity, all coaches and other registered team volunteers must fill out an electronic form answering the following questions to determine if the volunteer is experiencing or has experienced any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 3 days (Note: during Phase 1 and 2 of the Return to Play the questions will refer to the past 7 days)
 - Fever (>100 °F / 37.8°C)
 - Sneezing?
 - Coughing?
 - Shortness of breath?
 - Sore throat?
 - Severe fatigue or muscle aches?
 - Loss of taste or smell?
 - Headache?
 - Nausea or Diarrhea or vomiting?
- Additionally, volunteers will always be asked (all Phases of the Return to Play)
 - Contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
 - Traveled outside the US in the last 14 days?

The answers will be recorded in a confidential log that can only be accessed by the HMBAYSO Board

If the answer is YES to any of these questions, the Coach or Team Volunteer cannot participate in soccer activities and must NOT come to the field area. They should consider getting a test for COVID-19, and, if testing positive, should follow the return to play procedures outlined in the General Safety Measures section. Under no circumstances should an individual participate in AYSO activities if any of the above screening criteria are answered with a "YES".

If the answer is NO to all of the questions above, the Coach or Team Volunteer staff member is allowed to participate in the day's activity

- Coaches and Team Volunteers can participate in activities with only one team to limit the exposure to other players and to enable contact tracing in case of a COVID-19 positive infection within HMBAYSO.
- In the event that a Coach is unavailable for a practice or game, the session will be cancelled unless another coach is available that has not had contact with any other team for 14 days.
- Coaches and Team Volunteers will have to use hand sanitizer to wash their hands prior to coming to the Field

Safety Measures in Place for Players

HMBAYSO will employ all necessary safety measures and protocols to reduce the risk of infection for its players.

- Parents will be encouraged to take the temperature of their player prior to arriving at the field. Any player with a temperature greater than 100°F/ 37.8°C should advise their coach and stay at home and not be allowed to participate.
- Any player who arrives at the field without appropriate face covering will be sent home
- Before participating in any on-field activity, a coach or other registered team volunteer with all ask participants (12U Divisions and older) and parents (10U Divisions or younger) the following questions to determine if the player is experiencing or has experienced any COVID-19 symptoms in the past 3 days (Note: during Phase 1 and 2 of the Return to Play the questions will refer to the past 7 days)
 - Fever (>100 °F / 37.8°C)
 - Sneezing?
 - Coughing?
 - Shortness of breath?
 - Sore throat?
 - Severe fatigue or muscle aches?
 - Loss of taste or smell?
 - Headache?
 - Nausea or Diarrhea or vomiting?
- Additionally, players will always be asked (all Phases of the Return to Play)
 - Contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days?
 - Traveled outside the US in the last 14 days?

The coach or other registered team volunteer will record the responses from each player in a confidential log that can only be accessed by registered Team Volunteers and the HMBAYSO Board

If the answer is YES to any of these questions, the player cannot participate in soccer activities and must leave the field area immediately. They consider getting a test for COVID-19, and if testing positive, should follow the return to play procedures outlined above. Under no circumstances should an individual participate in AYSO activities if any of the above screening criteria are answered with a “YES”.

If the answer is NO to all of the questions above, the designated Coach or Team Volunteer will take the temperature of the player. If the temperature is lower than 100°F / 37.8°C, then the player will be allowed to enter the field after first using hand sanitizer provided by the Coach or Team Volunteer to wash his / her hands

- Players can participate in activities with only one team to limit the exposure to other players and to enable contact tracing in case of a COVID-19 positive infection within HMBAYSO.
- If a player must move from one team to another and the request is approved by the HMBAYSO Board, he/she must wait a minimum of 14 days from date of last participation with the old team before participating with the new team
- A coach or other designated team volunteer will disinfect all training equipment before and after each practice session to protect players
- All players must apply hand sanitizer before any on-field activities, and should have a personal supply of hand sanitizer at the field for any necessary application during soccer activity.
- Coaches will advise players to avoid touching their own faces, and if this behavior takes place, coaches will instruct players to apply hand sanitizer
- Players are instructed to avoid physical contact, including high-fives, handshakes, hugs, etc. Coaches or other designated team volunteers will monitor behavior and multiple violations will result in the athlete being asked to leave the field.
- No throw-ins or heading of the ball will be allowed in practices.
- Goalkeeper gloves cannot be shared among team members on the same day
- Players must not touch other players' belongings and/or training equipment (other than soccer balls)
- Players must notify the coach or other adult immediately if they begin to feel unwell, and the coach or other Team Volunteer will assure that the child is removed from the training area and notify the parents
- A Coach or Team Volunteer reserves the right to remove a child from the field area if the child is displaying potential symptoms of COVID-19 and, if so, will notify the parents.
- Parents will be required to pick up their players promptly at the conclusion of the training session.
- Carpooling will be discouraged, but if players carpool, everyone in the vehicle will be asked to wear a face mask.
- HMBAYSO will have a no congregating policy for players (and parents) in parking lots, at drop off zones, at entrance/exit areas to the facility, before or after training sessions.
- If a parents/guardian/household member of an AYSO participants tests positive or is clinically diagnosed with COVID-19, they immediately notify Team Volunteers. All HMBAYSO players living in the same household must not participate in any HMBAYSO activity before the **later** of:
 - a minimum of 14 days from the date of the confirmed positive test or clinical diagnosis
 - the absence of any COVID symptoms

Safety Measures in Place for Spectators

HMBAYSO will employ all necessary safety measures and protocols to reduce the risk of infection for its families/guardians.

- All spectators (ages 2 and older) must wear CDC approved face coverings at all times while at the field and during entrance and exit from the field. No exceptions. Referees and Coaches will be instructed NOT to allow play to start/continue if any unmasked spectators are present

- Only one spectator (non registered volunteer) per player is allowed at the field during practices, and only for the purpose of age appropriate supervision and emotional support
- Spectators are allowed at games, but are limited to immediate household members and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision and emotional support
- All spectators must maintain a minimum of six-foot distance from one another (except for members of the same household)
- To encourage distancing, spectators will be allowed to stand in “non-traditional’ youth soccer locations (behind the end line or in the corner behind the touch line on the players/coaches side of the field). But, if adequate distancing can be maintained, spectators are encouraged to watch from the sideline opposite coaches/substitute players

Positive COVID-19 Test Notification Procedure

If any coach, player, or other AYSO Team volunteer tests positive for COVID-19 or has persistent symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection at any time

- They must immediately notify our Safety Director, Shig Tanaka, at **hmbayso.safety@gmail.com**. Our Safety Director will notify our Assistant Regional Commissioner (Dylan Ragozin), and will inform all potentially exposed coaches, players and volunteers of the potential exposure, while maintaining the individual’s confidentiality.
- They (and all of the members of their team) must not participate in any HMBAYSO competition, until they have satisfied all requirements outlined earlier in the General Safety Measures section
- In COVID-19 positive situations, the county health department is responsible for identifying and notifying other contacts, so some families might be contacted twice (once by AYSO for immediate AYSO exposures, and once by the county)