

Taughannock Soccer Club
Return-to-Play Protocol & Considerations
July 6, 2020

Purpose:

To establish a practical protocol promoting player & community safety and reducing infection risk in the setting of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

To date, published local, state, and regional guidelines vary widely. All of our teams will adhere to the guidelines and requirements that apply and club administration will routinely monitor any changes to these requirements.

These guidelines are applicable to club practice sessions. Specific guidelines for return to local competition will be included in a later document.

The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content is provided for general informational purposes only. These guidelines do not supersede or replace any applicable local, state, regional or federal health guidelines or requirements.

General Hygiene Code of Conduct

The following recommendations adapted from US Soccer should be followed by all participants (players, parents/guardians, administrators, coaches). As a reminder, returning to play is a personal choice and participants should feel comfortable determining if they would like to resume activities.

General Health.

1. If you are sick or have symptoms of an illness:
 - a. Stay home. Stay home regardless of what is causing your illness.
 - b. If you are confirmed or suspected to have COVID-19, practice self-quarantine measures as guided by the CDC and contact your physician.
 - c. To discontinue quarantine and return to sport, players must be symptom free without medication for 24 hours.
2. If you have been in close contact (within 6 feet) with someone who is suspected or confirmed to have COVID 19:
 - a. Begin self-quarantine for 14 days and follow the most up to date CDC guidelines.
3. Advise your club administrator if any possible exposures have occurred in your team, training or club environment.

Physical Interaction

1. Maintain “social distancing” of at least six feet unless there is an exception noted below.
2. Avoid activities involving high levels of group interaction.
3. Avoid general physical interactions including hugging, “high fives” or passing objects by hand.
4. Participants and any additional persons on site should avoid close contacts and follow all social-distancing guidelines.
5. Distance yourself from anyone exhibiting signs of sickness.

General Hygiene

1. Avoid touching your eyes/mouth/nose as much as possible.
2. Wash or sanitize your hands often and after close contacts.
 - a. Use soap & water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
 - b. When soap & water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
3. Cover your mouth & nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.
 - a. Follow with washing or sanitizing your hands.
 - b. Dispose of tissues in a sealed trash can.
4. Avoid spitting and coughing as much as possible.

5. All participants are recommended to wear new or clean PPE upon arrival, departure and when not physically active during activities. PPE should cover the nose & mouth, be breathable, consist of cotton or wick-type material and follow CDC guidelines. PPE should be new or clean for each training session; and disposed or thoroughly cleaned after each training session. Coaches, trainers, and/or other individuals who are not directly engaged in activity are required to wear face coverings.

Equipment & Training Gear

1. Where possible, use individual equipment.
 - a. Do not share personal equipment or gear (e.g. water bottles, pinnies, etc)
 - b. Soccer balls should be provided by the club and may be shared.
2. Sanitize sports equipment after each training session.
3. Wash all training gear after each training session.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES & CONSIDERATIONS

CLUB ADMINISTRATORS

Facility Scheduling

Arrival and departure times should be staggered to minimize potential interaction with other groups and promote social distancing during arrival and departure from training. Separate arrival, drop-off and departure zones should be designated when possible.

Provide adequate field space for social distancing. There should be no more than two small groups or one full team on a regulation size field. Different groups should not share equipment and should maintain social distancing from each other at all times. Separate teams and age groups should not mix.

No individual group should exceed gathering limit for the Southern Tier region.

Facility Setup & Equipment

Provide and maintain hand hygiene station with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible. Provide coaches with thermometers.

Ensure appropriate receptacles are at fields including sealed trash can.

Have spare masks available.

Communications

Establish a communication plan for coaches, players and parents/guardians with a consistent means to provide updated information.

Distribute & conspicuously post Return to Play guidelines & safety precautions. Post signage inside and outside of the area to remind coaches/players/parents/guardians to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols.

Educate coaches on Return to Play protocols and receive affirmation of understanding.

Records

For contact tracing purposes, maintain a list of all session attendees. For privacy purposes, the list should be securely stored & not shared publicly. In the event that someone participating in an activity becomes ill, refer to this list for "tracking & tracing" to determine who may have been directly exposed to illness and advise them accordingly as determined by local health officials. (For minors, use parent/guardian contact information). Include:

- a. Date
- b. Venue

- c. Name
- d. Phone
- e. Email Address
- f. Specific training session i.e. time/field/coach etc.

Staff a Check-in Station which:

- a. Administers Health Screening Questions (CDC's Coronavirus Self-checker) to affirm medical clearance to participate and takes player temperatures. (Players who have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher may sit for 10 minutes and have their temperature rechecked. If it is still 100.4°F or higher, they will not be able to attend the session/game.)
- b. Provides hand sanitizer.
- c. Confirm that players have adequate hydration.

COACHES

A. Session Preparation

Waivers & Clearances

Receive the Communicable Disease Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement.

Receive necessary medical clearances for all players.

Arrival Plan

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.

Parent/Guardian Communication

Review the plan ahead of time with players & parents/guardians outlining designated time to arrive & depart and hygiene recommendations.

Be sensitive and accommodating to parents/guardians that may be uncomfortable with returning to play.

Equipment

Ensure all athletes have their own equipment except for balls.

Coaches are the only one to touch cones, discs, & other training equipment.

Use only designated equipment. Some equipment may be "off limits" to ensure safety.

Sanitize hands following contact with frequently touched surfaces.

Sanitize balls before training using anti-bacterial solution of at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.

Prewash pinnies, if using. Pinnies will remain with the player. Place at personal station before participants arrive.

Or designate a specific color for players to arrive in.

Set up "personal prep stations" for players i.e. a line of cones 6+ feet apart in an area to the side of the training field.

Ensure that a "check-in" station (detailed above) is set up and staffed by a coach or club administrator.

B. Session

Behavior

Coaches must maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet from players.

Coaches should wear a face mask at all times.

Facilities & Equipment

Only coaches are allowed in the equipment shed.

Players should not pick up field equipment, move goals or handle training equipment.

Session Planning

Limit the number of training session participants until control of the environment can be confirmed.

If players within a team or age-group are divided into smaller session groups, players should remain in the same groups as much as possible.

Players may share balls in foot drills with avoidance of the use of hands.

GKs may use hands if they are wearing gloves. Gloves should be disinfected after use.

For goalkeeper training, plan for one soccer ball per goalkeeper that will not be shared. If the goalkeeper is involved in an activity with field players and using their hands, use the goalkeeper's designated ball.

Avoid throw-ins and heading.

Include mainly exercises that provide for adequate social distancing. Modify layouts so that individuals are at least 6 feet apart in all directions to the greatest extent possible. Avoid activities that involve high levels of group interaction

Before conducting small sided games & set plays, acknowledge that these are not socially distanced. Players may come in contact with one another and should be vigilant about following the general hygiene code of conduct throughout the entire session to promote the safety of all those involved.

If a player does not feel comfortable participating, do not pressure the player to join. Allow the player to watch from a socially distanced vantage point where he or she can still learn from the training activity.

As much as possible, until the small-sided game begins, players should remain socially distanced. During any break in play, the players should again revert to socially distanced spacing.

Begin with short games i.e. with three minutes of play, followed by a rest & reset, repeating two more times. Increase the number of players, time and duration as conditioning improves.

Physical considerations:

Due to stay-at-home guidelines throughout the country, many players have been unable to train and have been less active while at home. Players may not be physically prepared to return to full intensity training and as a result are at greater risk for injury or illness should they be placed in a full-intensity training environment.

- a. Trainings are recommended to be no longer than 60 minutes.
- b. Coaches should carefully assess players' fitness levels to best plan for & manage early return-to-play trainings.
- c. Avoid greater risk of injury & illness by gradually reintroducing players to play in a safe & progressive manner.

Any player reporting or demonstrating symptoms of illness at any point should be removed from training and should seek guidance from their physician before attempting to return to training

C. Post-Session

Equipment

Sanitize balls, cones and other equipment.

Records

Submit a list of all session attendees to a club administrator if one is not in attendance. For privacy purposes, the list should be securely stored & not shared publicly. In the event that someone participating in an activity becomes ill, refer to this list for "tracking & tracing" to determine who may have been directly exposed to illness and advise them accordingly. (For minors, use parent/guardian contact information) Include:

- a. Date
- b. Venue
- c. Name
- d. Phone
- e. Email Address

- f. Specific training session i.e. time/field/coach etc.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

A. Session Preparation

Review the plan ahead of time from the coach outlining arrival/departure protocols & hygiene recommendations. Be thoroughly aware of all safety recommendations and ensure your family follows them.

Player Clearance

Medical Clearance:

1. For individuals with pre-existing medical conditions (including but not limited to chronic cardiac or respiratory conditions including hypertension or diabetes or having an immunocompromised state), written clearance from your physician for return to full participation in sport & activity is recommended.
2. For individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, written confirmation of COVID-19 negative status and clearance from your physician for return to full participation in sport & activity is recommended.
3. For individuals who have experienced known COVID-19 exposure in the past 14 days, the following is recommended: a) Home quarantine for 14 days b. Written confirmation of COVID-19 negative status by your physician to return to play.

Sign and submit the Communicable Disease Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement.

Health Hygiene

Check child's temperature before coming to any training session. If your child has a fever (>100.4), they should not attend training.

Children should not participate if they have any of the following symptoms:

- a. COVID-19 exposure in past 14 days
- b. Sore throat
- c. Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- d. Fever >100.4
- e. Chills
- f. Headache
- g. Sinus congestion
- h. Cough persistent or productive
- i. Joint aches and soreness
- j. Vomiting or diarrhea
- k. Rash

Child should refrain from participation if:

- The player has had any close contact with a sick individual or anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- The player has had a documented case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- The player is currently demonstrating or suffering from any ill symptoms.
- The player or a member of the player's household has travelled to a restricted state during the last 14 days.

Equipment

Supply child with individual sanitizer and plenty of water.

B. Session

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. Ideally, attendees will remain in cars. Parents & guardians are not encouraged to attend training. Individuals must adhere to social distancing guidelines including the use of face masks when 6 feet distance cannot be maintained.

C. Post-Session

Ensure that player washes pinny and training gear.
Notify club/coach immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason.

PLAYERS

A. Session Preparation

Review arrival/departure protocols & hygiene recommendations.

Get dressed as much as possible at home.

Wash hands thoroughly before coming to training.

Players should bring their own equipment (face mask, hand sanitizer, at least two water bottles clearly marked with name, pinny if one has been issued, towels, etc.) such that no equipment is shared between players.

Do not bring your own ball.

B. Session

Wear face masks & maintain social distancing while walking to the field.

Upon arrival, check in at the Check-in station, sanitize hands and have temperature taken.

Respect & practice social distancing when not engaged in an activity including wearing a mask when possible.

Players should avoid celebrations, handshakes, high-fives, etc

Masks are not mandatory for players when physically active.

Place personal items at your personal station and maintain a distance from others.

Do not share water, food or equipment.

For players who use mouthguards, once the mouthguard is place in mouth, it should never be taken out during practice to limit the transmission of virus.

C. Post Session

Wash hands thoroughly after training.

Clean & disinfect individual training gear after every session.

Updated: August 26, 2020