

PAL Soccer 2020 Game Day Protocols

September 5, 2020

The following protocols will be in-place for all PAL soccer games this fall. By following these protocols, we (players, coaches, parents, spectators, and the PAL Board of Directors) can collectively do our best to minimize the possibility of COVID-19 affecting the 2020 PAL season.

This is the second part of PAL Soccer's "COVID-19 Mitigation Plan" required by SAY Soccer. All PAL soccer participants are required to read and follow these protocols. By allowing their children to participate in PAL games, parents acknowledge that they understand and agree to follow these protocols. Please note that these protocols apply to the U6 through U19 divisions – separate protocols will be published for the Smart Start and VIP divisions.

Before coming to the game

1. Any player, coach, referee, spectator, etc., should not attend a PAL soccer game if they:
 - a. Have tested positive for COVID-19.
 - b. Have been in close contact (15+ minutes, within 6 feet) with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - c. Are experiencing any of established COVID-19 symptoms, including but not limited to mild-to-severe respiratory illness, fever of 100 degrees or more, cough, or shortness of breath/difficulty breathing.
 - d. Are a vulnerable individual (elderly individual and/or an individual with serious underlying health conditions).
2. Ensure players bring enough water and/or sports drinks to stay hydrated. No concessions will be available during the 2020 PAL season. Players should only bring food absolutely necessary to the game; please no food to share.
3. There will be no benches at the fields; bring a towel or blanket for players to sit on in the technical area if desired.

Pre-Game Protocols

4. Coaches should minimize the amount of time players arrive before game. Teams will only be allowed on their game field 15 minutes prior to kickoff. Any pre-game warm-ups will need to be held away from the game fields. PAL practice protocols should be followed during any pre-game warm-ups.
5. Coaches should ensure that teams from the previous game have cleared the field before taking to the field.
6. Players may wear masks or facial coverings before the game, if desired. No masks during warm-ups or games.
7. Check-ins with the referees will be held in the technical areas. Ensure player physical distancing during check-in.
8. The technical area will be expanded this season to be defined as the space on the team's side of the field from near the halfway line almost to the goal line, one yard away from the sideline. See the diagram at the end of these protocols. Coaches and players (including those about to substitute) must remain within their technical area. Lines may or may not be painted to define a portion of the technical areas. Regardless, coaches should lay out cones to define boundaries of their technical area.
9. Coaches, players and parents should NOT bring team water jugs or anything sharable among the team. This includes any food or snacks to be shared among the players before, during or after the game.

During the Game

10. Players are prohibited from wearing masks/facial coverings during the game (per SAY Soccer).
11. Players not in the game must remain in their technical area, keeping at least 3 feet distancing from other players. If tents are used, players should be spaced apart as much as possible (ideally 3 feet or more).
12. Coaches will call substitutions to the referees. Subs will enter and exit the fields from the team technical areas at the direction of the referees. Players should not wait at the centerline for substitutions.
13. Goalie pinnies/shirts cannot be shared between keepers. Each keeper must wear a separate pinnie/shirt. Likewise, goalie gloves also cannot be shared between keepers.
14. Game balls will be properly cleaned between games by PAL officials or referees.

Post-Game

15. Players will not do traditional "high-fives" after the game. Instead, teams will do an "air five" to each other from their technical area. Coaches will ensure their teams adequately congratulate each other after the game.
16. No post-game snacks for the entire team will be allowed for the 2020 season.
17. No post-game "tunnels" formed by spectators for players to run through. Roaring applause from the sidelines please!
18. Players will be dismissed by their coach and they are to find their respective adults on the spectator sideline. Parents and spectators may not approach the technical areas.
19. Any goalie pinnie or shirt worn by goalkeepers must be laundered after each game by coaches or parents.

Parents and Spectators

20. PAL is asking each family to limit spectators to a reasonable number this season. Because PAL typically has a lot more spectators at games versus practices, limiting the number of spectators will help ensure enough room for physical distancing between families on the sidelines.
21. Spectators are highly encouraged to wear masks to games or ensure they are physically distanced at least six (6) feet from other spectators.
22. Spectators are asked to wait on their sideline for their player to find them after being dismissed by their coach. At that time, everyone is asked to clear the sidelines and head to their vehicles as quickly as possible. Game start times will be staggered this season, but coming and going from the soccer complex as quickly as possible will help minimize large gatherings at entrances/exits.

By following these protocols, we will all be working together to help ensure a successful season for our 700+ players. Any questions concerning these practice protocols should be addressed to the PAL president at president@nicevillepalsoccer.org or the PAL Director of Coaching at pal.directorofcoaching@gmail.com.

These protocols and more information about the PAL 2020 season can be found at <http://www.nicevillepalsoccer.org>.

