



RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES (FAQS)

(VERSION AS OF JANUARY 14, 2021)

What soccer activity is permitted indoors?

Executive Order No. 204 (2020) paused indoor organized and team sports practices and competitions as of December 5, 2020. That pause sunset as of January 2, 2021, so that practices and competitions of organized, competitive, and/or group sports (regardless of the risk level defined elsewhere in this document) at any facility (e.g., school, indoor fitness facility, fieldhouse, sports complex) are permitted to resume subject to the requirements outlined in this document and other applicable orders. Pursuant to Executive Order No. 194 (2020), all interstate games and tournaments for indoor youth sports, up to and including high school, are prohibited until further notice. "Indoor interstate youth sports competition" includes any sports game, scrimmage, tournament, or similar competition that is conducted indoors with opposing teams or individuals from different states competing against each other and which would require an opposing team or individual to travel from a state outside of New Jersey. It also would prohibit out-of-state teams from hosting competitions in the state. Administrative Order No. 2020-25, issued December 31, 2020, clarified that the restrictions regarding interstate youth sports competitions also apply to youth sports competitions conducted outdoors. These restrictions on interstate competitions remain in effect. [Click here](#) to read more from the NJ Department of Health's "Guidance for Sports Activities."

What soccer activity is permitted outdoors?

Wedding ceremonies, funerals, memorial services, and religious and political activities are not subject to the outdoor gatherings limit. All other types of gatherings, such as soccer, will be limited to 25 individuals. Athletes, coaches, referees and other individuals necessary for a professional or collegiate sports competition are not counted towards the 25-person limit. For other adult and youth sports occurring outdoors, the number of individuals necessary for a game or practice can exceed the 25-person limit, but only if no individuals who are not necessary for the event, such as spectators, are present. Outdoor gatherings continue to be subject to strict social distancing restrictions, including the requirement to wear masks whenever it is not possible to social distance. [Click here](#) to read more from Executive Order No. 204.

Can teams and players covered under NJYS participate in "out of state" events?

[Click here](#) for travel advisory information from the NJ Department of Health. Note that this advisory "does not apply to individuals who are returning to New Jersey after traveling outside of the state for less than 24 hours or those traveling to New Jersey for less than 24 hours. Even where travel is less than 24 hours, however, individuals are still discouraged from engaging in non-essential travel to other states to the extent possible." Further, recognize that states may have more restrictive measures. Contact communications@njyouthsoccer.com with specific questions about "out of state" events.

What insurance coverage is provided?

NJYS membership (includes clubs, coaches, and players) are provided General Liability and Excess Accident Medical coverage while conducting sanctioned and approved NJYS activities. (e.g. practices, training, scrimmages, clinics, tryouts, games, and tournaments). Effective September 1, 2020, the current NJYS



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policy has an exclusion for pandemics including COVID. The NJYS Excess Accident Medical policy does not provide coverage for sickness or disease unless the proximate cause of the illness emanated from a covered accidental injury.

What are the differences between the state/local guidelines & NJYS guidelines?

At a minimum, the NJYS insurer has advised us that the state association and its member organizations need to adhere to state/local guidelines on resumption of sporting activities. Following these guidelines & directives will position us to operate in a reasonable and prudent manner from a risk management standpoint. NJYS can decide to be more restrictive than the state of New Jersey with respect to return to play but may not be less restrictive. It will be a priority to document the positive actions taken (e.g. at the state, league and club level) to demonstrate that reasonable and prudent steps were undertaken and completed to keep players, staff, and spectators as safe from infection as possible.

When there is an illness or suspected illness, what communication is required or recommended (e.g. to health officials, other players/parents)?

There is no obligation to report to the NJ Department of Health or Local Health Officials. If a person tests positive for COVID-19 in NJ, contact tracing is conducted by the NJ Department of Health. See <https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/symptoms-tests-and-treatment/what-is-contact-tracing-how-does-it-stop-the-spread-of-covid-19>. Neither NJYS nor any League, Club, Team, etc., has any obligation to report a positive case or suspected illness and, in fact, should not be, as it presents other issue (privacy, speculation, etc.). The concern should be reported to people who may have been exposed to the person having the virus (or exhibiting symptoms of the virus), but that notification should be done without identifying the person who was diagnosed with the virus or displayed symptoms consistent with the virus.

Can my local health department guidelines differ from those issued by the State Health Department?

State Health Department Communications can differ from those issued by County Health Departments and the respective local public officials. There are 94 different Health Departments throughout the 21 counties. The local public health officials cannot reduce the guidelines issued by the State Health Department, but their guidance could be more stringent. Clubs that obtain permits for field usage through the local Recreation Department or School District can check with their local public officials for specific guidance. To locate the contact for the local health department, [click here](#).

How does NJYS determine when a phase should be implemented?

NJYS monitors guidance from public health officials and the Governor's Office of New Jersey in determining how and when to implement various phases.

What advice is given about protective masks (coverings)?

From the NJ Department of Health, "Coaching staff and parents/guardians should wear cloth face coverings. Athletes should wear cloth or disposable face coverings when not engaging in vigorous activity,



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such as when sitting on the bench, when interacting with an athletic trainer, etc. Face coverings are not required when persons are engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities. Face coverings should not be worn when engaged in activities that may cause the cloth face covering to become wet, like when swimming, or when doing so may endanger the individual's health. When face coverings are not worn, efforts should be made to maintain at least 6 feet from others."

What is the direction to member clubs regarding administering temperature checks for participants?

The NJ Department of Health "Guidance for Sports Activities" requires screening athletes, coaches, staff and others participating in practice sessions, via temperature check and health questionnaire, at the beginning of each session. Member clubs can task parents with monitoring and checking temperatures prior to sending children to any team event. Clubs may also establish protocol beyond that, including conducting temperature checks at the events (e.g. practices and games).

If a player has a temp/fever but hasn't been confirmed for COVID is there a protocol for return to play number of days before return and/or doctors note necessary?

Clubs should refer to local health department guidelines and consider requiring clearance from a health care provider in such situations.

Does this question apply to families that have doctors and nurses that work in the family: Within the last 14 days, have you been exposed to, or come into contact with, anyone you know: (a) who has COVID-19, (b) who is/was being tested for COVID-19, (c) who had symptoms consistent with COVID-19, or (d) who was exposed to someone with COVID19?

It is reasonable for clubs not to consider protected health care workers as exposed.

Are clubs responsible for providing PPE's and disinfectant equipment?

Each club may choose to have requirements above the minimum guidelines set forth by NJYS.

What should we do with a player who does not attend practice with PPE, disinfectant?

Players should not be allowed to participate, and the parent should be contacted immediately.

Are there disinfectant and cleaning requirements or minimums?

NJYS recommends referring to the [CDC](#) guidelines on cleaning and disinfecting public spaces.

Are there contact tracing requirements or recommendations for clubs?

NJYS recommends maintaining an attendance list for each training session. There are now several apps and software solutions to assist with this effort.

What are the requirements or recommendations for the player equipment area?

NJYS recommends maintaining at least 6 feet physical distance between each player equipment area.



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What is the recommended procedure for attending to an injured player?

Remain calm. Stop the activity (training or game). Send players to their designated bag area and call their parents for pick up. Check the scene to make sure it is safe for you and the injured player. Coaches are advised to maintain 6' physical distancing guidelines while questioning the player about their injury. If that is not possible, the coach and anyone attending to the injured player should follow universal precautions and wear personal protective equipment (mask and gloves) before attending to the injured player. Check for bleeding-treat for shock; if you suspect a head or neck injury, do not move the individual call 9-1-1 and the players parents. Follow your emergency action plan.



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How should clubs address “higher risk” participants?

Remind parents to keep their participants at home if they are sick. Consider physical distancing strategies for those high at risk, such as modifying the sessions of those likely to be in very close contact, increasing space players, etc. A Club may need to adjust to meet unique needs of its participants and environmental conditions. Implementation should be guided by what is practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each community while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and other applicable laws and regulations.

Phase 3 Questions: While NJYS remains in its Phase 4, which permits game competition and contact on the field, we maintain these FAQs for reference:

What are the recommended field sizes for appropriate physical distancing of players and coaches? NJYS recommends allocating a 10x10 yard area (or larger) per player for training. Coaches on site should also adhere to physical distancing (at least 6 ft).

Do we limit drill time on contact drills?

During Phase 3, there is no player contact such as in games or activities where players come within the physical distancing requirements. Conducting drills in which players can share a ball is permitted.

Are throw-ins and heading allowed in Phase 3?

There are no games or scrimmages in phase 3 so throw-ins should not be part of the lesson plans. In Phase 3, a ball should not be tossed to any player (by the hands) to play the ball for heading or any other technique. Heading is not allowed during Phase 3 or when served by the feet.

How will social distancing and hand sanitizing affect GK and GK trainers during trainings and games?

During Phase 3 team training, the goalkeeper should train as a field player and not handle anyone else's ball. In the event of goalkeeper specific technical training, goalkeeper coach should bring his/her own soccer balls; assign one soccer ball per goalkeeper being trained and the balls should not be shared. Goalkeeper gloves should be disinfected and all equipment (e.g. balls, cones, goalkeeper gloves) should be disinfected prior to the start of the session.