



## **GUIDELINES FOR A SAFE RETURN TO PLAY**

GFR will initiate a phased approach for a safe return to play beginning on July 1st. It is intended that each phase will last for at least 2 weeks, with local guidelines regarding social distancing and group gatherings allowing for transition to the next phase sooner.

### **PHASE 1: TRAIN AT HOME**

### **PHASE 2: SMALL GROUP TRAINING**

This phase will begin on **July 1st** and will be focused on small Group Training. During this phase, there will be strict limits on the number of players allowed on the field, and all preventive measures (see p. 3) must be observed:

#### **For All Travel Age Groups (U9-U19):**

- Training sessions are limited to TWO ONE-HOUR sessions each week.
- There will be no more than 4 teams on the field for any training period.
- Each team will have a **maximum of 9 players** plus the coach during the training session.
- It is expected that the coach will have two back-to-back sessions of 9 players for a period of 2 hours.
- Players will practice social distancing at all times and may wear masks (if desired). Coaches will wear masks at all times.
- Activities should focus on individual technical drills and fitness work where each player has own ball or passing progressions with a partner or within the group.
- Goalkeepers should not use their hands and should train as field players.
- There is no competition or tournaments.

### **PHASE 3: LIMITED TEAM TRAINING**

This phase will begin on **July 13th**. During this phase, the number of players on the field will be increased while all preventive measures (see p. 3) continue to be observed:

#### **For All Travel Age Groups (U9-U19):**

- Training sessions are limited to TWO ONE-HOUR sessions each week.
- There will be no more than 4 teams on the field for any hour training period.
- Each team can have a **maximum of 12 players** plus the coach during each training session. Coaches will wear masks.

- It is expected that the coach will have two back-to-back sessions with an equal number of players for a period of 2 hours.
- For an age group pool, the numbers can be combined in a sensible way, so the coaches work together to train the players for a combined back to back 3-hour period.
- Activities should focus on individual technical drills and fitness work where each player has own ball or passing progressions with a partner or within the group. Tactical exercises may be introduced.
- Goalkeepers should not use their hands and should train as field players.
- There is no competition or tournaments.

#### **PHASE 4: FULL TEAM TRAINING to begin July 28th**

**Training facilities are open and there may be restrictions on the size of group gatherings and activities. This phase should last at least 2 weeks prior to any formal competition, even if current guidelines would otherwise accommodate competition at an earlier time.**

- Balls should be disinfected before and after use and can be used handled by goalkeepers and by players for throw-ins. Training vests (pinnies) can be shared between team members but should be washed after each use.

#### **PHASE 5: RETURN TO LOCAL COMPETITION - TBD**

**Training facilities are open and there maybe some restrictions on the size of group gatherings and activities.** Recommendations for returning to competition will be addressed separately in a later communication, and additional guidelines will be subsequently provided for planning for travel competitions.

#### **PREVENTIVE MEASURES FOR ALL PHASES**

During this phased approach, GFR expects that ALL basic PREVENTIVE MEASURES are applied and observed consistently and continuously:

- Prior to attending any training session, each player should check his/her own temperature at home, and refrain from participation if he or she has a fever greater than 100 degrees F.
- Any player with obvious signs of illness should be removed from training (or prohibited from training) and should seek guidance from a physician before attempting to return to training.
- During Phases 1, 2, and 3, players and coaches should maintain a social distance of at least 6 feet at all times and avoid ALL contact during training, on the sidelines, and in coming into and out of the training facility. This includes handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, etc. During Phase 4, occasional casual contact (that which normally takes

place during soccer competition) is permitted. Otherwise, players and coaches should continue social distancing and avoid handshakes, fist bumps, high-fives, etc.

- There is no sharing of water or equipment. Each player is to bring a ball, water, hand sanitizer, alternate color jersey, and towel (if needed). Hands should be sanitized just before the start of the session and then again after the session. Players should avoid touching benches, others' bags, etc. During Phases 1, 2, and 3 balls should only be touched with feet and should not be headed. During Phase 4, balls may be handled by the goalkeeper and for throw-ins. Balls should be sanitized after each training session.
- Any equipment such as cones, portable goals, etc should only be handled by the coach.
- Players should, as much as possible, avoid using public lavatories.
- Parents and spectators should remain away from the field (preferably in their cars) and should wear masks and maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from others if/when outside of cars.

For additional information, please refer to the CDC's [Considerations for Youth Sports](#).