



## RETURN TO COMPETITION GUIDELINES

Kentucky Youth Soccer is sharing the following return to competition guidelines for clubs to proceed with a safe and gradual plan while reducing infection risk with the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic. These guidelines do NOT supersede or replace any applicable local, state, regional or federal health guidelines or requirements which should be adhered to by all clubs.

The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content, including text and information, are provided for general informational purposes only. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, Kentucky Youth Soccer makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this information.

### Field Management & Facilities

#### Facility Safety Protocols

1. Maintain scheduled and routine cleaning.
  - a. Clean and disinfect your facilities according to CDC standards, paying particular care to high-traffic area such as restrooms.
2. Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations should be located around the facility and easily identifiable.
3. Restroom operations should be adjusted to allow for social distancing
  - a. If restroom is small, considering making it a single-occupant restroom or limiting the number of people inside. Individuals need to properly social distance while in the restroom.
  - b. Restrooms with multiple doors should be clearly marked entry and exit doors to control the flow of traffic. Floor markings can be used to encourage a one-way flow of traffic.
  - c. If porta-potties are used, place them so that doors are not adjacent to each other.
4. The use of locker rooms should be avoided.
5. Facility procedures, as it related to any COVID-19 mitigation measures, should be posted at the entrance. This should include clear signage indicating PPE should be worn.
6. Club or facility should have an individual responsible for encouragement of policies and procedures.

#### Field Layout

1. Survey your site and design a layout that will ensure teams, participants and spectators can appropriately socially distance in various stages of activities and play.
2. Align team benches so they are not within proximity to each other.
  - a. If fields are close together, considering adjusting team benches for adjacent fields to avoid four team benches in close proximity of each other.
3. Expand benches to allow for six feet of space between each player and coach during the match.
  - a. If you do not have team bench, create a line of cones 6 feet apart where can sit social distanced along the team sideline.
4. Plan for extra time between start times to accommodate arrivals, departures, and equipment cleanings.



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### Concession Management

1. Whole concession stands are not prohibited, they should be carefully adjusted to allow for social distancing and follow safety protocols that will help prevent the spread of the virus.
  - a) All food and drinks should be prepackaged. No food should be prepared on-site.
  - b) Staff should wear proper PPE including face coverings and gloves.
  - c) Plexiglass should be installed between staff members and lines.
  - d) Cash transactions should be avoided, if possible.
  - e) Hand sanitizer should be located by the point of sale for patrons to before or after making a purchase.
  - f) Ground Markings should be used in order for concession que to keep social distancing. These marks should be at least 6-feet apart.

### Equipment Management for Training & Competitions

#### Shared Equipment

1. On Field setup for warmups should aim to use minimal equipment.
2. All equipment (Flags, Balls, Team Benches and Cones) should be disinfected prior to the start of match activities. Allow for time between matches taking place in succession on the same field to ensure all equipment is cleaned properly.
3. No tents should be provided for teams or players to avoid congregating.
4. Players should not pickup field equipment, move goals or handle other equipment.
5. Goalkeepers should wear gloves when handling balls.
6. Shared "hydration stations" should be eliminated.

#### Individual Equipment

1. Players should arrive to the facility dressed to play.
2. Players and referees should bring their own equipment (hand sanitizer, water bottle, towels, etc.) that should not be shared between individuals.
3. All personal apparel should be cleaned and properly stored after training and competitions. This includes cleats, shin guards and headbands.
4. Place any personal equipment (bags, water bottles) in a designated area and do not place in a highly trafficked area.
5. Coaching tools or equipment (ex clipboards) should only be used by one coach and should not be shared amongst coaching staff.

### Competitions Considerations

#### Warmups

1. Warmups should not begin until previous teams have left the field and equipment and benches have been properly sanitized. Allow for extra time between matches to accommodate, as necessary.
2. Competition warmup recommendations:
  - a. Coaches should not be within six feet of any player
  - b. Progression between warm-up drills should be set up prior to the players arriving to the field. Players should not touch any equipment.
  - c. Maintain as much social distance as possible during warmup.



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3. Participants should avoid intentionally touching each other, this includes hugs, high fives or huddles.
4. If match balls are used during warmups, they should be re-sanitized before the match.

### Referee Considerations

1. Fields should be walked and inspected with the crew wearing masks.
2. Physical items (nets, goals, corner flags, etc) should be inspected visually.
3. If issues are identified, for example, a goal net needs to be repaired or an object needs to be removed from the field of play, the referee should sanitize his or her hands after managing.
4. Referees should maintain at least six
5. feet distance when communicating with referee crew, players and coaches. We suggest referees wear a mask before the game, during halftime and after the game.

### Pre-Game Activities

1. All tournament check should be conducted online.
2. The coin toss should be socially distanced.
  - a. Only one referee and one representative per team should be in involved in the coin toss
    - i. Only the owner of the coin should touch the coin.
    - b. All participants involved in the coin toss should wear a mask.
3. No pregame handshakes shall take place.
4. Uniform or jewelry checks should be visible checks only, maintaining social distance between the referee and players.
5. Team pre-game meetings should be kept brief.
  - a. All participants should be wearing masks and maintain social distances.
  - b. Huddles should be avoided.
6. Player pass cards or game day roster should never be handled by the referee crew. Referees should be shown game day roster before the game. Referees should track player substitutions with their own notes.
  - a. If possible, provide a copy of the game day rosters beforehand. If rosters cannot be provided in advance, the coach may place the roster and players cards in a designated area to minimize close contact.
7. International walkouts should not be held.

### Game Time

1. Players and coaches should wear masks while on the sideline. Coaches may remove their masks when they are actively coaching.
2. No handshakes, high fives, huddles, group celebrations, etc., should take place, including when goals are scored, or when substitutions are leaving or entering the field.
3. The following modifications to substitutions protocols are suggested:
  - a. When subbing into the game, players should social distance from the referees and other players who are subbing into the game.
  - b. If a player is subbed out of the game, the player should stand at least 6 feet away from the other individuals while recovering before putting on a mask.
4. When possible during breaks in play, consider sanitizing balls.
5. Avoid delays in the start of play so that players do not have pro-longed periods of standing in close proximity. For example, encourage all participants to conduct free kicks and set plays



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quickly so players do not have prolonged periods in shoulder to shoulder defensive walls.

### Halftime

1. During halftime, referees, players and coaches should maintain at least six feet distance between each other and wear mask.
  - a) If a player needs to recover before participating in halftime activities, the player should stand at least 6 feet away from the other individuals before putting on a mask.
2. Players should sanitize their hands.
3. Coaches should limit the amount of time the entire team is near the bench area at one time.
4. Referees should sanitize their own equipment.

### Considerations in the Case of Injuries

1. The Referee should maintain social distance from the injured player while determining if medical attention is necessary.
2. If needed, coach or medical professional from the injured players teams to enter the field and attend to the player while wearing a mask and gloves.
3. The referee should remind the other players to keep their distance from each other and the injured player, during the break in play. Players should not congregate.

### Post-Game

1. No post-game handshakes should take place. Consider other forms of sportsmanship or instituting new acknowledgement traditions such as clapping, etc.
2. Teams should pack up and immediately leave the field following the game.
  - a. Post-game meeting should be kept brief and all participants should wear mask.
  - b. Huddles should be avoided.
3. Do not have team snack that is shared among the team members.
4. Players should not take off any equipment until they have left the facility.
5. Teams should clean up team sideline so that it is clean of all trash.
6. All equipment, including benches, balls, flags should be sanitized.
7. Spectators are encouraged to maintain social distance following the game
8. Referees should leave the field immediately following the game and duties have been completed.
  - A. Referee debrief sessions should be conducted in a space where the referees can social distance
  - B. If referees are working later in the day, the referee should stay away from other individuals, may consider departing the facility or using their personal vehicle as a place to take a break in between games.
9. Scores should be provided to the tournament or league electronically by the referee or teams.
10. Any referee with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should notify any clubs involved in competitions worked by that individual within the last 14 days.
11. Any club notified of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a player or coach should notify any other organization involved in competition with that individual in the 14 days prior to the diagnosis of COVID-19.
12. Any yellow or red cards should be written down and sent to the league or tournament official electronically as soon as possible.
13. For any tournaments, avoid large groups congregating accepting awards or taking pictures.



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### **Inclement Weather**

- 1) Encourage all participants and spectators to return to their vehicles in the event of inclement weather. When possible, individuals in the car should be limited to members of the immediate family. If non-family members must be present in the vehicle, everyone in the vehicle should wear mask.
- 2) If inclement weather is forecasted, consider taking a conservative approach by communicating delays or cancellations well in advance of the start of the game.