



AMERICAN YOUTH SOCCER ORGANIZATION
19750 S. Vermont Ave., Suite 200
Torrance, CA 90502
(800) 872-2976 • www.ayso.org

AYSO/AYSO United Return-to-Play Notice 8/7/2020

This information does not constitute permission to return to play, therefore, please consult your local state and public health guidelines.

This document is intended to provide AYSO/AYSO United membership with information that will assist you in developing your Regional/Club Return-to-Play programming within the ongoing situation of COVID-19. **We understand that each Region and Club's access to resources varies greatly and as such, the information below is not regulatory but is intended to give you a starting point for thoughtful conversation and consideration amongst your Regional and Club Boards as you develop your local strategy.** The recommendations rely on a combination of rules and regulations set forth by public health authorities, as well as internal and external experts and other youth sports agencies. Please know that we recognize the implementation of these new guidelines will present challenges for all involved, and AYSO is here to assist our Regions and Clubs in putting these plans into action.

AYSO has created guidelines/booklets for Alternative Play Models and COVID-19 modified Coaching Activities (i.e.: grid work, technique in isolation, etc.) that can be [found here](#).

A graduated approach to re-opening is likely to be the case at the State, regional, county, or other municipal level, which will vary throughout the country. Some may have guidance on the return of youth sports, but many will not. We understand that this may make it difficult in planning your Return-to-Play strategies, so to that point, **our continued recommended course of action is that you follow your county and state executive orders and public health guidance with regards to community interactions and access to facilities. The information in this document is NOT a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment, it is for general information purposes only. As information changes daily with COVID-19, AYSO does not claim or assume responsibility for the entirety of this information.** If you have specific questions with regards to health and safety guidelines for your area, we advise that you consult your local public health officials. Please understand it is vitally important to follow the local orders in place.

We also encourage you to connect with your fellow youth sports leagues in the area to both coordinate efforts and messaging to your families. This coordination will help provide a sense of community and alleviate trepidation that may exist.

In conclusion, even though the young and healthy may experience a less severe case of COVID-19, every case is potentially life-altering or deadly, particularly in those with risk factors. Health consequences may be long-term, which is why until COVID-19 is either eradicated or a vaccine developed, there is no way of eliminating the risk of infection. This should always be at the forefront when designing and considering Return-to-Play programming and clearly communicated to all participants, including players, parents and volunteers. [Please find a waiver here that you can use in your Region/Club as part of our Return-to- Play plan.](#)



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We will continue to update you as we add new information to our [Ready! Set! PLAYSOCCKER! resource website.](#)

Thank you once again for your dedication and we hope you stay safe and well.

A Graduated Approach Based on Federal, State and Local Guidelines

[The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released guidelines for returning to youth sports.](#)

General Guidance

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) offers recommendations on how members of the public can limit the spread of the coronavirus. They currently include:

- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment (including balls).
- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from non-household members. *Note: research is ongoing on appropriate physical distance for bodies in motion.*
- Cover your mouth and nose with tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Stay at home if you are sick.

Overall – Standard Practice

- **Healthy Participants Only:** Any players, coaches, spectators who are sick will not be allowed at practices or games.
- Parents, and family members will abide by social distancing regulations and are strongly encouraged to remain inside their vehicles during practice.



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Immediate Recommendations Upon Return-to-Practice/Play

Region/Club:

- Identify strategies for working with public health officials to notify adult leaders, youth and their families if the organization becomes aware of a participant developing COVID-19 who came in contact with others during your activities. [Please click here for recommended reporting protocol.](#)
- Maintain participant confidentiality regarding health status.
- Sanction practices only when official parks and fields become available by local authority.
- Have an action plan in place, in case of notification of a positive test result.
- Provide coaches with a detailed explanation and training on these recommendations.
- Face masks recommended for coaches and volunteers.
- Schedule practices with ample space for physical distancing.
- Adhere to AYSO Safe Haven guidelines, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present.
- Support coaches with fitness and technique in isolation exercises, grid work and spatial awareness ([appropriate content can be found here](#)).
- Provide physical guides, such as signs and tape on playing fields, to help coaches and players remain at least 6 feet apart.
- **Keep the same groups. Organize and schedule groups of players, i.e., by age or teams, and keep them consistent to avoid transmission.**
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.
- Avoid group events, such as games, competitions, or social gatherings, where spacing of at least 6 feet between people cannot be maintained.
- Limit nonessential visitors, spectators, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible – especially with individuals not from the local geographic area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- Avoid activities and events such as off-site competitions or excursions.
- Communicate drop off, waiting and pick up protocols for parents to facilitate appropriate social distancing while providing for the safety of all participants.
- Create a communication plan for Region/Club to members and a communication pathway for parents to communicate their concerns or questions with Region/Club leadership (i.e.: BAND app).



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Coach*:

- Coaches will send pre-training communication to families ensuring that only healthy participants attend and reiterate expectations and guidelines.
- **Coaches should maintain physical distancing requirements from players and family members.**
- Wearing a face mask is recommended for the duration of the practice.
- Utilize technique in isolation exercises, grid work, fitness and spatial awareness to limit physical contact between players ([appropriate content can be found here](#)).
- Keep players together in small groups/cohorts with one coach and make sure that each group of players and coach avoid mixing with other groups as much as possible. Teams might consider having the same group of players stay with the same coach or having the same group of players rotate among coaches.
- Adhere to AYSO Safe Haven guidelines, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present.
- **Once regulations permit expanded numbers, consider staging inner-squad scrimmages instead of games with other teams to minimize exposure among players and teams.**
- Ensure all players have and handle their own labeled equipment (ball, water bottle, training disks, etc.).
- Coach should be the only person to handle coaching equipment (e.g.: cones, disks, etc.); do not let parents or attendees assist.
- Hand sanitizer or handwashing on arrival / mid-way and end of training session.
- No shared equipment in use (players will be provided with individual bibs/pinnies or can bring game jerseys as requested).
- No physical greeting of players (verbal acknowledgement is expected).
- Stay positive and create a fun environment in this new normal.
- **Serve as focal point, or designate the Team Parent/Manager/Safety Director/CVPA, for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.**
- Complete and submit [AYSO's Incident Report](#) Form to the Region Safety Director immediately, including team roster.

**A designated volunteer or team parent can be added to help assist coach in accordance with the same health and safety guidance designated for the coach.*



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Team Parent:

- Assist Coach, as requested, with communications to families (including safeguard reminders, i.e., only healthy participants attend activities).
- **As needed, serve as focal point for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Notify the Coach immediately.**
- **Maintain physical distancing requirements from coach, players and family members.**
- Wearing a face mask is recommended for the duration of the practice/games.
- Support identified guidelines for coaches.
- Assist with hand sanitizer or other safety precautions like handwashing on arrival / mid-way and end of training session in support of the coach.
- Help team/teams adhere to AYSO Safe Haven supervision guidelines.



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Officials:

At all times:

- Stay at least 6 feet from anyone as much as possible.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Spitting or rinsing the mouth with water is to be avoided.
- Cough into elbow.
- Stay home if not feeling well and communicate to the Referee Administrator.

Pre-game:

- Prior to arrival, wash hands with soap or alcohol-based solution for at least 20 seconds.
- Arrival in full uniform is recommended.
- **Maintain 6 feet distance from players, coaches, spectators and referee team for all administrative procedures.**
- Mask is recommended for pre-game duties.
- No handshakes with coaches, players, or spectators.
- Coin toss options:
 - a. Modified. One player from each team; center official; no handshakes; physical distancing.
 - b. No coin toss. Home team selects the half of the field. Away team will take kick-off.

During play:

- Masks **are not** required for referees during active play.
- Assistant referees are *recommended* to wear breathable face coverings unless wearing a mask causes breathing problems.
- **Referees are recommended to stay a minimum of 6 feet away from players, coaches, spectators, and the referee team during dynamic play and stationary play at all times.**
- Avoid spitting.
- Cough into your elbow.
- Do not share whistles or, if possible, any other referee equipment.
- If not feeling well during the game at any time, go home immediately.

Post-game:

- After the game, applaud the players and coaches, but handshakes are not permitted; fist bumps/elbow bumps are not recommended.
- If shared, wipe down the handles of flags with an alcohol-based rub or wash with soap and water.
- Upon completion of the match, wash hands with soap or alcohol-based solution for at least 20 seconds.



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Parents

- Ensure your child is healthy. Test child's temperature before departing for soccer practice (if above 100.4, do not attend).
- Drop off and pick up players with special care given to the presence of children coming to and from the activity and receive verbal acknowledgement from the coach each time.
- Please wait in your car and/or adhere to social distance requirements, based on state and local health requirements and as requested by your coach or AYSO officials.
- Limit the use of carpools or van pools, and limit passengers to household members.
- Face masks are recommended.
- Wash your child's clothing after every training/activity (recommendation).
- Sanitize all equipment (ball, cleats, shin guards, etc.) before and after every practice.
- Clearly label your child's water bottle and personal items.
- Ensure your child has hand sanitizing products with them at every session.
- Notify your team/club immediately if your child or family member becomes ill for any reason.
- Do not assist coach with equipment before or after training.
- Check Region and Coach communication regularly.

Players

- Inform parent if feeling unwell.
- Wash hands before and after training.
- Responsible for cleaning all required equipment after each training sessions (ball, cleats, shin guards, etc.).
- Bring and use your own labeled hand sanitizer at every session.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment.
- **Practice physical distancing, place bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart.**
- No sharing drinks or use of water fountains at facility (players should mark their own water bottles).
- No physical greetings with their teammates (verbal acknowledgement is expected, we are physical distancing not social).

PLEASE NOTE: This is a live document and is subject to change. As state and local restrictions and guidelines are adjusted in your area with regards to youth sports, AYSO will communicate how to progress. PLEASE continue to check our [microsite](#) for updates.



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Resources

RETURN-TO-PLAY 5 PHASES OVERVIEW



0 Phase 0: Stay and Shelter

Duration: Based on state and local regulations

- STAY AT HOME, BEND THE CURVE.
- No organized trainings or competitions
- Consider virtual options

1 Phase I: Individual and Small Group Training

Suggested Duration: 4-6 weeks

- State and/or local stay and shelter regulations lifted
- Recommend small group trainings with max of 9 players and 1 coach
- Maintain social distancing
- COVID-19 prevention protocols in place

2 Phase II: Full Team Training

Suggested Duration: 3-6 weeks

- Full team training allowed
- Continue to maintain social distancing
- COVID-19 prevention protocols in place
- Allow 3 weeks for COVID-19 tracking purposes

3 Phase III: Full Team Competitions

Duration: Indefinite

- Full team competitions can occur
- Continue COVID-19 mitigation strategies
- Consider only local and single-day competitions
- Large events guided by local/state public health authorities

4 Phase IV: No Restrictions

- COVID-19 is no longer a public health matter and there are no restrictions directed by federal, state and local authorities.
- Please refer to www.recognizetorecover.org for general health and safety recommendations from U.S. Soccer.

* Across the country, clubs in different regions will be operating under differing state & local regulations and may be in different phases.
All phases must be compliant with your region's regulations.

CORONAVIRUS, FLU, COLD?

As the number of coronavirus cases rise, some key differences set coronavirus apart from the seasonal flu and the common cold — mainly the intensity of the symptoms and the recovery period. A guide to identifying the differences in the three conditions. All three, however, are spread by air-borne respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces.

CORONAVIRUS	SEASONAL FLU	COMMON COLD
Onset: Sudden	Onset: Abrupt	Onset: Gradual
Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Dry cough • Muscle ache • Fatigue Less common symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headache • Coughing up blood (haemoptysis) • Diarrhoea 	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fever • Dry cough • Muscle aches • Fatigue • Headache • Sore throat • Runny or stuffy nose Less common symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diarrhoea • Vomiting 	Symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Runny or stuffy nose • Sneezing • Sore throat Less common symptoms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low grade fever • Muscle or body ache • Headache • Fatigue
Incubation: 1-14 days, may go up to 24 days	Incubation: 1-4 days	Incubation: 2-3 days
Complications: 5% cases (acute pneumonia, respiratory failure, septic shock, multiple organ failure)	Complications: 1% cases (including pneumonia)	Complications: Extremely rare
Recovery: 2 weeks (mild cases); 2-6 weeks (severe cases)	Recovery: 1 week (mild cases); 2 weeks (severe cases)	Recovery: 1 week for most cases; may last as long as 10 days
Treatment or vaccine No vaccines or anti-viral drugs available; only symptoms can be treated	Treatment/vaccine An annual seasonal flu vaccine is available	Treatment/vaccine No treatment, but doctors advise treating symptoms

WHAT THIS MEANS If you have a stuffy/runny nose or are sneezing, you likely DO NOT have coronavirus.

SEVEN KINDS OF CORONA

Seven strains of coronavirus (CoV) that infect humans have been identified. These cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV)

Harmless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serotype 229E • Serotype OC-42 • Serotype NL63 • Serotype HKU1 <p>These cause symptoms of the common cold, and rarely cause severe pneumonia</p>	Dangerous <p>These are known to cause more severe disease. There are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sars-CoV which causes severe acute respiratory syndrome (Sars) 2. Mers-CoV virus that causes Middle East respiratory syndrome (Mers) 3. Sars-CoV2 that causes coronavirus disease (Covid-19)
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The unknowns of Sars-CoV2

Sars-CoV2 is closely related (with 88% identity) to two bat-derived Sars-like coronaviruses (bat SL-CoV-ZC42 and bat SL-CoV-ZC42) collected in 2018 in Zhoushan, eastern China. It has 95% genetic affinity with Sars-CoV, 50% with Mers-CoV.

The Sars-CoV2 receptor-binding domain structure, which allows a virus to latch on to and enter a cell, is similar to Sars-CoV, despite amino acid variation at some key residues. Little is known about Sars-CoV2, studies on Sars-CoV provide clues to its behaviour and ability to infect.

On smooth surfaces such as tables, phones etc., Sars-CoV retains its viability for 5 days at 22-23°C and relative humidity of 40-50%, which is typical for air-conditioned rooms. Though this may vary for Sars-CoV2, experts say this is a good indicator for its behaviour.

- [How does Coronavirus spread?](#)
- [What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?](#)
- [What to do if you are sick or suspect that you may be infected](#)
- [Who is most vulnerable or susceptible to severe illness?](#)
- [Protect yourself and others](#)
- [Keeping Children Healthy?](#)
- [Find your local State and Territorial Health Departments here.](#)