



## **Twin Cities Soccer Leagues (TCSL) and Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) Return to Play Plan**

**The following is a phased plan in order to safely resume youth soccer.**

*\*Please note: updates are in blue.*

### **Phase Overview**

First and foremost, we will continue to abide by all guidelines and restrictions set forth by the government. These phases are designed to ease our way back into soccer, allowing children to resume some activities in a safe manner. We will determine which phase is appropriate based on guidance from governmental authorities.

- Phase 1 (Current): “Internet-only” soccer, where players do individual sessions at home guided by their club.
  - Typically teams begin training in early April with a majority of their season taking place between May-July. A month-and-a-half into this Phase, players are yearning for a gradual return to soccer.
- Phase 2: this phase allows for 10-person trainings, with specific protocols in place, to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Phase 3: This phase allows for the resumption of full team trainings, with specific protocols in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Phase 4: This phase allows for the resumption of League matches, with specific player and spectator protocols.
- Phase 5: This phase allows for resumption of youth soccer as we knew it prior to COVID-19. This includes tournaments.

*These Phases are fluid and will always follow government restrictions and guidelines as well as governing body guidance. The Phases are not linear as both the federal and state governments have indicated that varied levels of mitigation restrictions may be imposed to slow the*

*transmission of the virus. We welcome input from the medical authorities and are currently seeking their advice.*

## **Detailed Phases**

Objective: Allow children to safely resume training activities with their teammates.

- Phase 1 (Current)
  - “Internet-only” soccer where clubs engage players to execute a wide-range of skills.
  - Limited efficacy due to limited social interaction.
- Phase 2 (Socially Distanced/Modified Training Environment)
  - Use the Minnesota Department of Health’s Self-Screening tool before every session: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/is-it-covid/>
  - If a player/coach thinks they are sick, stay home! Specifically: symptoms of acute respiratory disease (i.e. cough, sore throat, shortness of breath), fever, sudden loss of smell or taste, OR been diagnosed with COVID-19 (which would follow state-mandated quarantine requirements). If a coach, administrator, or official has a concern about a player’s health, they have the ability to send the player home.

### **Social Distancing**

- Trainings will consist of no more than 25 people at the training (24 players and 1 coach or trainer, 23 players and 2 coaches or trainers).
- Trainings will have proper social distancing for each player and coach at all times.
- Trainings limited to non-contact activities i.e. individual skills, fitness, etc.
- No physical contact including huddles, handshakes, and high-fives.
- The number of allowed “pods” on various field sizes:
  - No more than 4 pods of 10 or 2 pods of 25 on an 11v11 field;
  - No more than 2 pods of 10 or 1 pod of 25 on a 9v9 field;
  - No more than 1 pod of 10 on a 7v7 field

### **People**

- Only players rostered on the specific team may train together. No scrimmages or guest players at team trainings.
- Parents and spectators must follow government social distancing guidelines, i.e. parents to remain in vehicle when comfortable. If parents wish to watch practice, they must maintain adequate social distance at all times and must be far enough away from the group, so they are not counted as part of the gathering.

### **Equipment**

- Equipment should be disinfected before and after trainings, equipment should be provided by the club. Where possible, communal equipment should only be handled by the coach.
- “Pinnies” shall be individually distributed to each player and used by that player for the season, and washed in between each team contact.
- Balls should not be handled with their hands, by any player, with the exception of the goalkeeper with gloves on.

Updated December 28, 2020

- Player's water and personal equipment should not be shared, and should be placed at least 6 feet apart to ensure breaks are also properly distanced.
- Hand sanitizer should be used by each player before, during, and after trainings, supplied by the player.
- [December 28, 2020 Update: Face coverings are REQUIRED for ALL individuals, including players actively playing.](#)

### **Training Schedule**

- Teams entering fields for trainings should wait until all players from previous practice have left.
  - Stagger trainings to allow ample time or in/out flow of traffic.
- Phase 3 (Full Training Environment)
    - All rules of Phase 1-2 apply except where changes have been made below.
    - "Normal" soccer contact may occur.
    - Practices cannot exceed pod sizes of more than 25.
    - Spectators are not are allowed; however, this does not prevent a parent, guardian, or support person from being present if necessary due to a participant's age, disability, or medical condition. See MDH guidance for more information.

[\\*December 16, 2020 Update: For trainings held at an indoor facility, Clubs must ensure that only 25% of the indoor capacity \(not to exceed 100\) is utilized at any one time. As Dome layouts vary, and may differ from an outdoor environment, allocation of training space must ensure that 25% of the indoor capacity is not exceeded.](#)

- Phase 4 (Matches/Games Begin)

*Matches would not resume until Phase 4 of this Return to Play plan. This phase builds on the previous three Phases and would allow matches between clubs to begin.*

Once matches do begin, the [Return to Competition Plan](#) references specific protocols regarding the resumption of club-to-club competition.

- Phase 5: Tournaments/Resumption of Normal Soccer Activities

### **Communication**

We will establish and communicate to our members a mitigation plan that addresses the primary components of the guidelines above, using agreed upon and aligned consistent language and protocols from the resources available through the established federal and state authorities.

We also understand that individual families within our organizations may have circumstances or views that compel them to refrain from participation and as leaders within our organizations, we understand this. No member should be penalized or otherwise pressured should they choose to not participate under these guidelines.

## **Cooperation & Responsibility**

Each stakeholder as outlined below has a responsibility to cooperate within the framework of this plan.

### **Club**

- Distribute and post Return to Play protocols
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that may be uncomfortable with returning to play
- Train and educate all state of Return to Play protocols
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing, as outlined in this document, as applicable to the various phases

### **Coach**

- Follow all Return to Play protocols
- Send athletes home if they are not feeling well
- Ensure all athletes have their own individual equipment (ball, water, shin guards, pinnie, etc.)
- Ensure activities provide adequate social distancing, as applicable
- Respect players, parents and families by accommodating those that may not yet be comfortable returning

### **Parent**

- If you are comfortable having your child return to play, **DON'T**
- Check child's temperature and utilize MN Symptom Screener tool prior to attending any activities
- Ensure child's clothing is washed after every activity
- Ensure all equipment (cleats, ball, shin guards, pinnie) is sanitized prior to any activity
- Notify Club/coach if your child becomes ill for any reasons
- Supply your child with individual sanitizer
- Adhere to all social distancing expectations
- Ensure your child has plenty of water

### **Player**

- If you are not comfortable with returning to play, **DON'T**
- Adhere to all Return to Play protocols
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after all activities
- Ensure all equipment (cleats, ball, shin guards, pinnie) is sanitized prior to any activity
- Do not share water, food, or equipment
- Respect and practice social distancing, as required in these guidelines
- Place equipment, bags, etc. at least 6 feet apart
- No high 5's, handshakes, knuckles, or group celebrations