



Oxford Flag Football  
FLAG FOOTBALL LEAGUE  
COVID-19 RETURN-TO-PLAY PROTOCOLS

**OVERVIEW- PARENTS AND FAMILIES**

As the country begins to recover from the pandemic, our state and local authorities have released guidance that allows youth sports leagues to resume activities. We are excited about the prospect of bringing youth sports back to our kids, families, and communities. However, we also firmly believe it's important to maintain incredibly high standards for safety and health during this tenuous time of reopening our society. As a league the most important consideration will be the health and safety of our players, coaches, officials and families. We believe that we can safely implement the Governor of Connecticut and local authorities restrictions and recommendations in such a way that it lowers the risk for all involved.

Lastly, we recognize that some families will face a difficult decision when it comes to returning to sports this fall season. Please respect each family's decision. For those that choose not to return this year, we fully support your decision to do the right thing for your family.

Thank you again for your support of the Oxford Football League. These are extraordinary times and we believe strongly that youth sports can help us in our recovery. However, it has to be done safely, with the utmost care for the health of our kids and our society. Let's bring flag football back to our communities together.

## **RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES AND OPERATIONAL CHANGES**

Many of the guidelines included in this document are requirements prescribed by the Governor's executive orders, which can be found here [Sector Rules](#) For Reopening The Oxford Flag Football League. [ReOpen Connecticut](#) guidance breaks down sports into three risk categories, Higher, Moderate and Low. Due to the unique nature of flag football as a non-contact sport, with players being in close proximity to one another, we will take a conservative approach and follow recommendations for higher risk activities. The main distinction between these categories is what activities are allowed. Due to the league activities not starting until after August 15th, the league will be within the Governor's restrictive measures that are in place until July 6th.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

While these rules provide a way for our league to reopen in as safe a manner as possible, risks to players, coaches, officials and families who choose to visit/participate in these activities during this time should be fully aware of potential risks. Individuals over the age of 65 or with other health conditions should not visit, but instead continue to stay home and stay safe.

**We urge players, coaches, officials and parents to stay vigilant and pay attention as to whether those around you are faithfully implementing these rules.**

## **OPERATIONAL CHANGES**

Program Administrator – We have assigned a program administrator who is accountable for implementing these rules. Coaches and officials will also be responsible for ensuring that their teams and families are following the protocols

outlined by the Oxford Football League.

Signage – There will be signage posted at the posted that reinforces new policies applicable during games/practices, which include:

- Social distancing protocols
- Cleaning and disinfecting protocols
- Personal protection protocols (face masks, gloves)
- Players, Parents, Coaches and Officials shall stay home if sick/experiencing symptoms.
- Players will be removed from the field of play (including practices) if they are experiencing symptoms

### **OPERATIONAL CHANGES- PLAYER**

Players must sanitize their hands before and after practice and games

- Players must bring their own water bottle to practice and games. Players shall not share water bottles. Parents of smaller children should hold onto their water bottles during games and practices.
- Players do not share personal equipment.
- Players will be kept in smaller groups to allow for physical distancing.
- Players will not huddle at any point during the game/practice.

Sportsmanship will continue in a touchless manner – no handshakes/slaps/fist bumps after games.

- Mouth guards must be kept in your mouth and players should not fiddle or play with their mouth guard once it is in their mouth. If a mouth guard is removed for any reason, the player should sanitize his hands before returning to the attended activity.
- Face covers – players are not required to wear face coverings. If a parent so chooses for their child to wear a face cover we offer more comfortable options through our league store.

## **OPERATIONAL CHANGES- PARENTS**

Check the child's temperature before coming to any practice or game.

- Ensure child's clothing is washed prior to coming to any practice or game.
- Ensure any personal equipment is sanitized before coming to any practice or game.
- Notify your child's coach immediately if your child becomes sick for any reason.
- Supply your child with individual sanitizer.
- Ensure your child has plenty of water. Parents of younger children should consider holding onto their water bottle during games and practices.
- No team meals or snacks.
- Adhere to social distancing requirements. Parent seating areas will be expanded to allow for this. Families and spectators are expected to wear masks when they feel that social distancing guidelines cannot be followed.

## **OPERATIONAL CHANGES- COACHES**

Ensure all equipment (balls, cones & flag belts) is sanitized before and after every practice and game.

- Notify league officials if any player becomes ill or demonstrates symptoms associated with COVID-19
- No huddles at any time. All plays will be called from the sideline. For younger divisions, this will be a challenge. Coaches and Division Directors will work through the best way to adhere to social distancing guidelines while maintaining the integrity of the game.
- Coaches shall bring their own water bottles. Water bottles shall not be shared.
- Discourage players from removing and re-inserting mouthguards. Mouthguards and hands need to be sanitized if a child's mouthguard falls out.
- Coaches will wear face coverings when necessary.

### **OPERATIONAL CHANGES- OFFICIALS**

Officials must sanitize their hands before and after every game.

- Game Officials must notify league officials if any player becomes ill or demonstrates symptoms associated with COVID-19
- Officials will use [electronic whistles](#) provided by the league to reduce hand-to-mouth activity.
- Officials must wear face coverings.

### **OPERATIONAL CHANGES- Practices and Games**

Coaches should keep players in small groups at practice to allow for physical distancing

- Practices & games will be scheduled to allow for enough time for participants to clear the area prior to the next team taking the field.
- Game balls are to be disinfected before and after every practice and game.
- Parent seating areas are expanded to the endzones to allow for more spacing. In the event that social distancing guidelines cannot be met, parents/spectators are required to wear a face cover.
- Parents/spectators shall not congregate in common areas or parking lots following games or practices.

### **RESOURCES**

- [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [Connecticut COVID-19 Response](#)
- [NFL Flag Organization](#)

# RETURN TO PLAY RESPONSIBILITIES

## PARENTS & COACHES

- \* Check child's temperature before coming to any practice or game
- \* Ensure child's clothing is washed before coming to any practice or game
- \* Ensure all equipment is sanitized before and after any practice or game
- \* Notify coach immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason
- \* Supply your child with individual sanitizer
- \* Adhere to all social distancing requirements
- \* Ensure your child has plenty of water



## PLAYERS

- \* Adhere to all Return-to-Play protocols
- \* Wash hands thoroughly before and after training
- \* Do not share water, food, or equipment
- \* Respect and practice social distancing
- \* Leave water bottles with parents
- \* No high fives, handshakes, fist bumps or group celebrations

