



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 green.*

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 outdoors 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 outdoor, 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

Outdoor Activities

Objective: Allow children to safely resume training activities outdoors 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 10 people at the training (9 players and 1 coach or trainer, 8 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” (groups of 10) on various field sizes:
 - 4 pods per 11v11 field
 - 2 pods per 9v9 field
 - 1 pod per 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.
- 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.
- Masks are required for coaches and/or trainers at the fields as long as they are still recommended by the State of Minnesota.

Training Schedule

- Teams entering fields for trainings should wait until all players from previous practice have left.
- Stagger trainings by 30 minutes to allow ample time or in/out flow of traffic.
- Phase 3 (Full Training Environment)
 - All rules of Phase 1-2 apply to except where changes have been made below.
 - Full roster (and up to 2 coaches or trainers) may be present on the same field during trainings, but only one team per field shall occupy that field.
- 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. The safety precautions indicated below will mitigate risks.

While we are hopeful that match play is able to resume momentarily, we acknowledge that match play may not be feasible in the immediate term. Therefore, the details below are “high-level” as safety guidelines are ever-changing and evolving.

That said, resumption of match play will fill a much needed social and physical need in the lives of players and families alike.

- Safety policies and precautions
 - 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.
 - During this phase, both League organizations will incorporate the above precautionary measures to manage the gameday environment. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Spectator social distancing protocols;
 - Scheduling of matches with in/out flow of traffic in mind;
 - Equipment and sanitization protocols;
 - Any other applicable measures to promote a safe and healthy environment.

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- Phase 5: Tournaments/Resumption of Normal Soccer Activities

Similar to Phase 4 above, and as the COVID-19 situation evolves, we will provide specific guidance related to the ability to host tournaments, which are larger gatherings in nature.

Once we are able to reach this phase, Phase 4 & Phase 5 will likely be similar in nature. When we reach Phase 5, we will resume soccer activities as we did prior to COVID-19.

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

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- 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