



NCASA 2021 RETURN TO PLAY COVID-19 PROTOCOL

Returning to play in a manner that maximizes the health and safety of our players and referees is of utmost concern. In coordination with US Soccer Federation “Play On” guidelines, the United States Adult Soccer Association, and NCASA, a detailed protocol with best practices for League Play has been created.

The protocol policies outlined have been developed in consultation with legal professionals, insurance agencies, our governing bodies and other adult soccer organizations so our players, families, referees, and coaches feel confident in returning to play.

These policies may be updated and are subject to change based on directives from the State of North Carolina, the NC Department of Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control, the local governing bodies and soccer’s state and national governing bodies.

There are increased responsibilities at every level to ensure everyone’s safety.

It is highly recommended that every player follow the health and safety protocols as conditions of participating.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to NCASA with any questions or assistance with implementation of protocol or online Self-Health Questionnaires and COVID-19 reporting forms.





RECOMMENDED COVID-19 SCREENING PROCESS

NCASA has designed a screening process that is recommended to use prior to play. It includes the completion of an online self-health questionnaire as a pre-game roll call roster check to assist with contact tracing. It is easily and quickly completed via a smart phone in seconds. It can be done at the field immediately before play or any time earlier. [NCASA will share a google docs Self-Health Screening Questionnaire with the leagues and assist with implementation as necessary and upon request.](#)

If implementing recommended practices, Captains should be responsible for ensuring that each player has completed a league level Covid-19 Liability Waiver for the registration season and a Self-Health Screening Questionnaire prior to each game, practice, or team meeting. If any player has not submitted the applicable COVID-19 liability waiver and the self-health questionnaire (including recommended temperature check) they should not be allowed to attend team functions.

The CDC considers a person to have a fever when he or she has a measured temperature of 100.4°F (38°C) or above with an oral thermometer. Maximum safe allowable temperature is 99.4°F when using a Non-Contact Forehead Thermometer (as opposed to 100.4°F) as it has been determined that "Non-Contact Forehead Thermometers" have on average a 1°F lower reading.





PRE-GAME RESPONSIBILITIES

It is recommended that leagues schedule matches so that there is enough time to allow for proper check-in and to minimize contact and field transition traffic between games. It is strongly advised that all teams should follow league established COVID-19 check-in process that have been developed in accordance with the health and safety recommendations contained in this document.

Establish a set number of minutes (example 30 minutes) that players should arrive head of match time. For those arriving earlier players should remain in their vehicles until the time threshold is reached. At the appropriate time, players will make their way (while wearing a mask) to the pitch. Designate a person to perform the league established COVID-19 team check-in process.

PLAYERS' RESPONSIBILITIES

DO NOT PLAY IF...

You are exhibiting **any** symptoms of the COVID-19 illness; fever or chills, cough, difficulty breathing, loss of taste or smell, sore throat, headaches, or other symptoms, mild to severe, identified by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) within 14 days of respective match.

- **Do not play if you have been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19.**
- **Do not play unless it has been at least 14 days since you last tested positive for COVID-19 and it has been at least 14 days since you last had COVID-19 symptoms.**
- **Do not play if in the past 14 days you have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 or with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last 14 days.**





KICK OFF

ALL PLAYERS MUST WEAR A MASK at ALL TIMES including during play AND maintain a 6 ft. social distance when on the sidelines and all other times when around others and not inside your personal vehicle.

This mandate is in accordance with Governor Roy Cooper's Executive Order No. 180

1. All persons must wear a mask at all times. From the time you exit your vehicle upon arrival to the time you return to your vehicle. Your mask **must cover your nose and mouth**.
2. All players / spectators / officials / coaches / medical staff / attendees / assessors are required to wear a mask **covering the nose and mouth** at all times. This will include but not limited to the wearing of masks WHILE playing.
3. Any player or spectator asked repeatedly to put on his/her mask (covering both nose and mouth) by an official (referee or league representative) should be suspended from play and/or spectating for the remainder of the match.
4. Any player or spectator refusing to wear a mask at all times should not be allowed to remain on the premises.

Do Not engage in the standard group celebration of goals.

Refrain from traditional pre-game & post-game handshakes or high-fives.

HALF-TIME

During half-time all players should be required to stay in their respective team area.

DISCIPLINARY CAUTION

Any player who intentionally spits or coughs on, or fights/touches another player or referee - should face disciplinary action as defined by the league and may also be subject to additional fines, sanctions, or other penalties by the League's Disciplinary Committee.





OFFICIALS

Under NO circumstances is any player or spectator allowed to be face to face or touch an official. ALL officials have been mandated to issue a straight RED CARD for any player that violates this rule. If this is a spectator violation the spectator should be expected to leave the area.

SPECTATORS

It is highly recommended that spectators keep the standard social distance of 6 ft or more from each other and players and at least 10 feet from the sideline. Spectators should view from the same side of the pitch as the team they are supporting while avoiding the center sideline area and players.

Players are advised to limit bringing spectators.

Everyone is required to wear a mask anytime they are not in their vehicle.

AFTER THE MATCH

When the final whistle is blown, players are advised to quickly collect their belongings, exit the pitch, and make their way immediately to the parking area. It is at their cars that players should change. This is recommended to ensure the next set of matches to be played can be set up (including league established sanitation procedures) and the players in the next match can access the pitch without large crowds while reducing cross traffic transition.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In case of delay due to inclement weather players are to return to their personal vehicle; multiple players sheltering in one vehicle is strongly discouraged. Do not gather collectively under a gazebo or any other structure.





NOTIFICATION OF COVID-19 ILLNESS

Communication is key to protecting the health of all those participating in league play as well as participants' families and communities.

THIS IS A VERY IMPORTANT STEP

If any player tests positive for COVID-19 or develops symptoms consistent with COVID-19 after participation in a team meeting, practice, or game, he or she is to notify their team captain and the League Administrator **immediately** if any of the following conditions apply to yourself or teammates.

Please report if any player or team captain:

- exhibits symptoms of COVID-19.
- has been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19.
- has been notified by a health department or health care provider to quarantine.

OR

- has had close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) in the last 14 days with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

Report within 24 hours of such knowledge.

NCASA has developed an online COVID-19 reporting form that can be shared with leagues for implementation upon request.

Note: Due to privacy issues and HIPAA laws, the identity of that person will and must remain anonymous. League Leadership shall notify the team, opponents, referees, and anyone else who may have been in contact with the player reporting the above conditions.





BEST PRACTICES

- Do the bulk of stretching prior to arriving.
- Stay in your car until 30 mins before your match time.
- Arrive wearing a mask. Consider having back-up masks due to sweat or weather conditions.
- Must bring your own water bottle. NO SHARING WATER BOTTLES OR WATER COOLERS. Bring personal hand sanitizer.
- It is strongly advised that opposing teams Do Not share a sideline. Designate a side for home and away teams, on opposite sides of the field. Players are advised to go to their designated side of the field and not stop to mingle with other individuals.
- It is mandatory that players and spectators wear masks covering the nose and mouth for the entire time when outside of their personal vehicle including WHILE playing.
- It is strongly recommended that Spectators maintain the standard social distance of 6ft or more from each other and players and at least 10 feet from the sidelines. Spectators should view from the same side of the pitch as the team they are supporting while avoiding the center sideline area and players.
- Players are asked to limit bringing spectators.
- Continue to practice 6 ft social distancing from teammates and other individuals.
- There will be no coin toss. Home team will decide “ball or side”.
- Teams and spectators continue to practice social distancing during half-time.
- Referees must not be approached at half-time or after the game for any reason. Comments to the referees should be made from a distance of at least 6 feet away.
- Confronting the referees during the match including getting in the referee’s face, approaching too close or physically touching an official will result in an immediate RED CARD.
- No shaking hands or high fives. Minimize group goal celebrations maintaining social distancing.
- Players should be responsible for their own equipment, jersey, warm-ups, and bibs.

