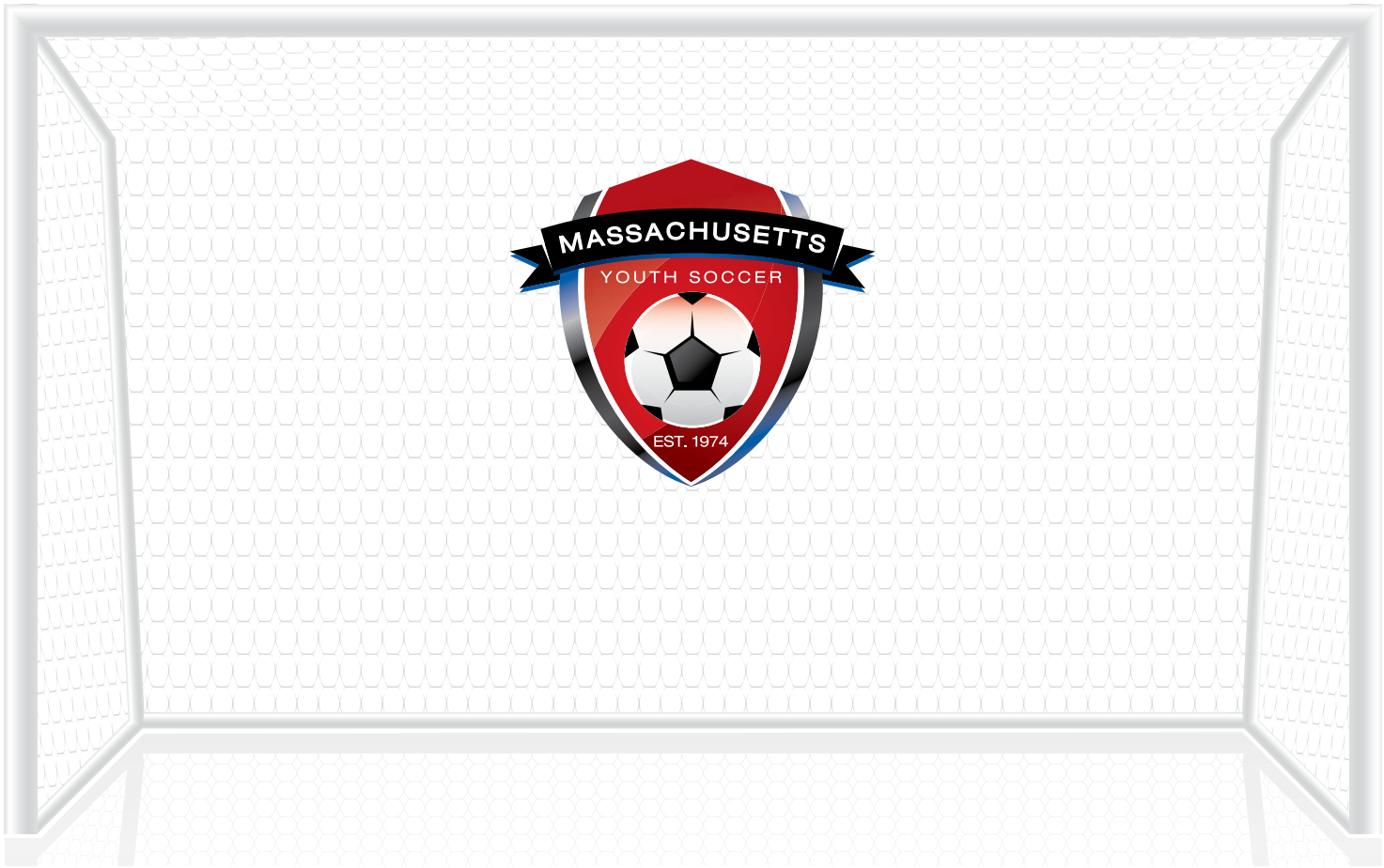
MASSACHUSETTS
YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION



Soccer Activities Protocols
Indoor Play

December 14, 2020

Commonwealth of Massachusetts Phase III, Step 1

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

INDOOR COMPETITION

The Information that follows below are minimum standards set by the EEA in the Phase III Step 1 guidelines. At a minimum the expectation is that Mass Youth Soccer affiliated members will follow these guidelines. Many indoor facilities are privately owned and may enforce guidelines that are stricter than those set by the Commonwealth of MA and MA Youth Soccer. If that is the case, members are asked to follow the guidelines set by the facility owners.

IMPORTANT: Mass Youth Soccer members entering teams or players into indoor competition (e.g. a Mass Youth Soccer Member Town/Club program entering MYSA registered players into an indoor league) must adhere to guidelines as provided on the Mass Youth Soccer Winter Indoor Coverage web page and all protocols in this document to ensure insurance coverage

Capacity Limits

- No more than 25 players on any surface/playing area for team/group sports.
- If an indoor facility has a chaperone or spectator viewing area which allows for at least six feet social distancing between spectators and the presence of spectators plus players, coaches, referees, and facility/activity workers does not cause the facility to exceed more than 40% of the maximum occupancy for the indoor facility, then spectators for players under 21 years old are allowed to attend. Spectators for indoor facilities (if allowed by the facility itself) are limited to 2 adults (parents/guardians or chaperones) and siblings of a participating player. Note: Mass Youth Soccer's policy of 1 (one) spectator per player is in force unless the facility has stricter limits.
- Spectators must wear facial coverings and maintain six feet of social distance at all times.

Multiple Playing Surface Capacity Limits

- For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces, courts, courses etc. the above capacity limitations for indoor competitions shall apply per playing field, surface, court, etc., provided that there is adequate spacing for at least six feet of social distancing for all individuals, including those at adjacent fields, surfaces, courts etc.
- Activity Organizers shall set competition schedules with a time buffer to prevent the overlap of competitions or overlap of players/spectators from adjacent fields/surfaces/courts at any one time and to allow for disinfecting of equipment and cleaning of commonly touched surfaces. Games should end in a draw if time expires.

- For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces courts, courses etc. Facility Operators and Activity Organizers should mark off designated areas for spectators for each field, surface, court, etc. to minimize the overlap of spectators from adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc.
- Spectators must wear facial coverings and maintain six feet of social distance at all times.

MODERATE RISK SPORTS & ACTIVITIES

On November 6, 2020 the EEA revised the definition of Moderate risk. Moderate risk is defined as a sport or activities that involve intermittent close proximity or limited, incidental, physical contact between participants. Sports in this category are permitted to participate in Level 1,2, and 3 training activities.

Level 1 activities are defined as individual or socially distanced group activities (no-contact workouts, aerobic conditioning, individual skill work and drills.)
Level 2 activities allow for Competitive Practices (Intra-team/group games, contact drills and scrimmages)
Level 3 Competitions (Inter-team games, meets, matches, races, etc.)

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has stated that the ability to participate in sports and recreational activities is determined by a combination of: (1) risk of transmission of COVID-19 inherent in the sport or recreational activity itself as traditionally played; (2) level of risk associated with the Type of Play" without modifications to play; and (3) whether a sport or activity can "Modify Play" to reduce risk.

Safety Standards for Play

- All Facility Operators and Activity organizers of activities must develop and implement safety standards to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among all members of the soccer community, especially for those soccer activities that will take place indoors and are expected to ensure compliance by all participants. Safety standards should be disseminated regularly. Some of the mitigation strategies that should be incorporated into safety standards include but are not limited to:
- Identify measures that can be implemented to increase physical distancing, where feasible.
- Conduct the activity or sport outdoors where possible as outdoor participation is generally safer than indoors and allows for greater distancing. This can be done safely with colder temperatures while following safety guidelines. http://www.recognizetorecover.org/environmental#cold-weather-guidelines for more information
- Shorten activities, practices and game play or perform the activity with fewer participants to the extent possible.

- Modify the activity or sport to reduce the sharing of equipment or to allow for cleaning of shared equipment between participants.
- Incorporate protective equipment in a safe manner to further reduce the spread of respiratory particles.
- Notwithstanding the above considerations, the below minimum standards must be met in order for Moderate risk sports to engage in Level 2 and 3 play.

LEVEL 3 PLAY - COMPETITION

For the purposes of these guidelines "Competition" is defined as multiple participants or teams, competing against one another in a single contest. A competition includes inter-team games (i.e. leagues), matches, shows, meets, and races. Teams are limited to competing against a single opposing team per day and can play multiple competitions in one day. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a team can play up to two games against two different opposing teams in a single day provided that the 1) games are played back-to-back, 2) the facility has multiple fields, courts, or surfaces that allow teams to distance between game transitions, 3) the facility has adequate transition space for all participants, including spectators, 4) no teams or individual players are required to wait for their second game other than for a limited break between one game to the second game.

Example:

Allowed

Game 1 - Team A vs. Team B, Team C vs. Team D
(5 -10-minute transition time)
Game 2 -Team A vs. Team C, Team D vs Team B

Not Allowed

Game 1 -Team A vs. Team B, Team C vs. Team D
Game 2 -Team A vs. Team E, Team B vs. Team F, Team C vs. Team G, Team D vs. Team H

No tournaments may be held during the duration of Phase III, Step 2.

A "Tournament" is defined by the Commonwealth as a formal contest that consists of multiple games or a series of games between multiple persons or teams, that might include multiple stages, played in a condensed period of time, such as over the course of a single day or multiple days in a row. For the avoidance of doubt, a series of games, "jamboree", "weekend series", "showcase", or tournament style play (one team playing multiple games vs. multiple opponents in as single day or over the course of a weekend) is still a tournament even if there is a lack of an overall prize, scores, eliminations, brackets or otherwise.

PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND FACIAL COVERINGS

Massachusetts Youth Soccer is requiring all players to wear a face covering in accordance with the EEA Safety standards for Youth and Adult Amateur Sports activities, Phase III, Step 2 effective November 7, 2020

Facial Coverings must be worn by all participants during active play except:

- **During swimming, water polo, water aerobics or other sports where individuals are in the water or,**
- **For individuals with a Documented medical condition or disability that makes them unable to wear a face covering.**

For the purpose of this guidance a facial covering means a face mask that completely covers the nose and mouth. Only face coverings that secure with loops around a player's ears are acceptable. Masks with exhalation valves or vents (including mesh masks) are not acceptable and should NOT be worn by anybody. Face coverings must be a separate accessory.

Participants can take mask breaks when they are out of proximity of other players (at least 6') using caution to avoid touching the front or inside of the face covering by using the ear loops to remove and replace.

Participants must wear facial covering while on the bench at all times and in any huddles.

Coaches, staff referees, umpires, and other officials are required to wear facial coverings and maintain a social distance of 6 feet from players, coaches, spectators and other persons at all times. Unless otherwise specified by the league or facility any CDC recommended facial covering may be worn.

If conditions are so severe as to warrant masks too dangerous to wear, the competition must be delayed, postponed or cancelled

TRANSPORTATION AND OUT-OF-STATE TRAVEL

Transportation

Facility owners, Activity Organizers, participants, staff, coaches, volunteers and guardians/parents must also comply with all relevant transportation safety requirements, including but not limited to, ensuring staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians are not transporting athletes that are not immediate family members. In the event that transportation of a non-family member becomes necessary, all parties in the vehicle must wear cloth face coverings or face masks and to the extent possible have external air circulating in the vehicle such as opening a window.

Out-of-State Travel

Out of state travel for recreational play, competitive training sessions, practices, competitions or any other type of sporting event, is strongly discouraged as traveling may increase the chances of exposing players, coaches and others to COVID-19 or unknowingly spreading it to others.

Moderate Risk and High-Risk Sports: Facility operators and Activity Organizers may only allow Massachusetts-based teams of moderate risk and high-risk sports to participate in Massachusetts-based Sport Events held at Massachusetts sports facilities. Any Facility Owner or Activity Organizer that hosts an out-of-state team at a Massachusetts facility may be ordered to close its facility or program.

The Commonwealth's Travel Order (COVID-19 Order No. 45) governs travel to or from Massachusetts for all teams, athletes, and coaches. Any Massachusetts-based athlete or coach who chooses to leave Massachusetts to participate in a Sport Event must comply with the Commonwealth's Travel Order (COVID-19 Order No. 45) upon returning to Massachusetts and before returning to sports activity, work, school or attending public events, and Massachusetts based teams must ensure that all team members and coaches comply with the Travel Order. Players and coaches coming to Massachusetts for athletics or any other reason are subject to the requirements of the Travel Order. Students who reside outside of Massachusetts but attend school within Massachusetts are exempt from the Commonwealth's Travel Order when commuting to Massachusetts for school and are therefore permitted to participate in school affiliated athletics, but the exemption is limited to students participating in school affiliated athletics. Any Massachusetts-based athlete that travels to another state and does not comply with the Travel Order and any Massachusetts based team that does not ensure compliance with the Travel Order by all of its members may risk suspension of team or league practices and/or games.

COOPERATION WITH HEALTH OFFICIALS

Facility operators and Activity Organizers as well as coaches, participants and others engaging in sports activities are required to cooperate with state health officials and local boards of health and their authorized agents.

Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must keep rosters of all participants with appropriate contact information and make that information available upon request by state officials, local boards of health and their authorized agents. Should a Facility Operator or Activity Organizer fail to comply completely and promptly with health officials, operators and organizers risk closure or suspension of a league's practices or games.

REQUIRED SAFETY PROTOCOLS

Facility Operator

- Facility operators and Activity Organizers must also ensure compliance with COVID-Order No. 53 which requires facilities and youth and adult amateur sports activities to close at 9:30pm and not reopen until 5:00am (mandatory closing period) Facility operators may permit employees to stay on premises during the mandatory closing period.
- For team and group sports, no more than 25 players or participants can be on a single playing surface/ area/court at one time. The number of coaches and staff should be limited. Larger playing areas and surfaces such as athletic fields, and facilities that have multiple courts or playing areas, may be used by more than one group of 25 at one time, provided that adequate social distancing and group separation can be maintained. To ensure group separation, groups must be spaced at least 14 feet apart while sharing a single playing surface, court or field.
- Indoor Facilities: If an indoor facility has a chaperone or spectator viewing area which allows for at least six feet social distancing between spectators and the presence of spectators plus players, coaches, referees, and facility/activity workers does not cause the facility to exceed more than 40% of the maximum occupancy for the indoor facility, then spectators for players under 21 years old are allowed to attend. Spectators for indoor facilities (if allowed by the facility itself) are limited to 2 adults (parents/guardians or chaperones) and siblings of a participating player. Note: Mass Youth Soccer's policy of 1 (one) spectator per player is in force unless the facility has stricter limits.
- Limit any nonessential visitors, spectators, staff, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible. Visitors, spectators, volunteers, and staff must wear face coverings.
- Facility should have hand washing or hand sanitizing stations at all entrances and throughout the facility.
- Facility should have regular cleaning intervals of all high touch areas around the facility (doors, etc.)

ACTIVITY ORGANIZER

- Facility operators and Activity Organizers must also ensure compliance with COVID-Order No. 53 which requires facilities and youth and adult amateur sports activities to close at 9:30pm and not reopen until 5:00am (mandatory closing period) Facility operators may permit employees to stay on premises during the mandatory closing period.
- For team and group sports, no more than 25 players or participants can be on a single playing surface/ area/court at one time. The number of coaches and staff should be limited. Larger playing areas and surfaces such as athletic fields, and facilities that have multiple courts or playing areas, may be used by more than one group of 25 at one time, provided that adequate social distancing and group separation can be maintained. To ensure group separation, groups must be spaced at least 14 feet apart while sharing a single playing surface, court or field.
- Sportsmanship should continue in a touchless manner- no handshakes/slaps/fist bumps.
- If social distancing is not possible in an athletic facility, chaperones/spectators may be asked to wait outside the facility until an activity is completed.
- If benches and bleachers cannot be removed, they are allowed to open ONLY if six feet of distance can be maintained between each participant at all times and they can be thoroughly cleaned using CDC recommended cleaning protocols between uses.

The following procedures should remain in place for all participants and spectators:

- No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and you have not been exposed to someone who has been ill in 14 days.
- Check for normal temperature before going to training - (temperature 100.4 or higher please stay home).
- Upon arrival to training, coaches or staff should ask each athlete if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 they should be sent home and instructed to contact their healthcare provider. They will not be allowed to return to training until they are cleared by a healthcare provider. A doctor's note must be provided.
- Participants, organizers, spectators, volunteers, and facility employees in high risk categories should not participate or attend organized sport activities. List of high risk categories can be found here.
- Be sure appropriate infection prevention supplies (e.g. hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings) are present in multiple targeted areas (outlined later in this document).
- Small group training should take place in an area where physical distancing (6' apart) can be maintained.
- All spectators must adhere to CDC and DPH assemblage and distance guidelines. Spectators, nonessential visitors, staff, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations should be limited as much as possible. Operators are encouraged to mark off spectator/chaperone viewing sites

- Spectators/Chaperones must practice social distancing including wearing face coverings.
- Participants should use their own equipment and be instructed to sanitize their equipment after every training session.
- Each participant will be required to have their own water bottle, towel, and personal hygiene products (hand sanitizer, facial tissues, face coverings). Players are required to wear face coverings during all soccer activities, Coaches and spectators will be required to wear face coverings and maintain a social distance of 6 feet at all times. Tissues, wipes, or disposable gloves must be properly disposed in the appropriate receptacles.
- Cleaning schedule/protocol of equipment (cones, goals etc.) with disinfectant before, during, and after training.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, face coverings/masks) must be worn as required per DPH guidelines.
- Wear a face covering, when not actively playing and when a player cannot abide by the physical/social distance requirements from coaches, other players, and parents.
- Soccer will be permitted to be played by the players under the rules/laws of the sport with modifications if noted.

TOWN ORGANIZATION/CLUB

- Assign a COVID-19 Safety Officer who will communicate policies organization-wide, to coaching staff, administrators, parents, and players. Regular updates and reminders should be provided.
- Assign each team a coordinator to oversee compliance at the team level (can be a team parent who must register as an Adult with Mass Youth Soccer).
- Train and educate all volunteers/staff on return to activities protocols.
- Develop a relationship and dialog with local Health Department officials (identify risk tolerance).
- Develop a plan to communicate with the local health department in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 within a team.
- If a team member or coach contracts COVID-19, or has come in close contact with somebody who has been diagnosed with the virus, all training and games sessions should be canceled for that team and any additional team associated with that coach for 14 days.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations. Develop plans for temporary closure of facilities to properly disinfect and ensure other adult leaders are not infected.
- Provide coaches and team coordinators with PPE (masks) and sanitizing products.
- For indoor activities consider larger facilities to allow for acceptable social and physical distancing.
- Schedule groups/teams with a minimum of 20 minutes in between the time one team concludes and the other arrives. Players must leave immediately after their session. Players should not arrive at their field earlier than 5 minutes prior to their scheduled arrival time.
- Ensure accurate attendance for all practice and game sessions. This is necessary for contact tracing if this should become necessary.
- Teams that wish to schedule warm-up time prior to their sessions must build that into their scheduled session/rental time. Warm-ups will not be permitted adjacent to the assigned field prior to the scheduled start time for a team.
- Do not allow congregating in the parking lot, common areas, entrances, and exits before and after practice. Tailgating and other social gatherings are strictly prohibited in common areas
- Provide adequate space at the field to allow for proper physical/social distancing (6').
- All parents, spectators, and players should have their own chair. Chairs should be placed to allow for proper physical and social distancing (6').
- All waste should be placed by the respective parent, player, coach, or spectator in the trash receptacle. Nothing should be picked up by anybody other than the originator of the waste.
- Require players to have their own water, sanitary products (hand sanitizer, facial tissues, PPE (optional for play), ball, GK Gloves (if necessary), dark and light shirt (in lieu of shared scrimmage vests)).

COACH

- Understand that there may be parents/guardians who may not be ready to have their child return to activities at this time.
- For the purpose of this guidance a facial covering means a face mask that completely covers the nose and mouth. Only face coverings that secure with loops around a player's ears are acceptable, so as not to cause injury if accidently tugged or pulled on. No around the head or neck face coverings (gaiters) will be permitted during contact play. No face coverings with air valves, or mesh masks will be allowed.
- Ensure the health and safety of all athletes.
- Ensure athletes arrive dressed for practice and leave immediately after practice. No recreational play, or loitering is allowed.
- Upon arrival, inquire how athletes are feeling, send them home if you believe they are acting or look ill.
- Take accurate attendance use of Apps such as TeamSnap or TeamApp is encouraged to assist with Contact Tracing if required
- No handshakes, fist or elbow bumps, or any other physical contact.
- Practice and encourage proper hygiene, washing hands frequently with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds at a time. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol). Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or sleeves, do not use your hands. Do not touch your face (eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands). Launder clothing after training session.
- Follow all state and local health protocols.
- Coach is to be the only one to handle cones, discs, goals etc.
- Ensure all athletes have their individual equipment. (Ball, water bottle, GK Gloves etc.)
- Ensure player's personal belongings (bags, coats, sweatshirts) remain in their personal space and are kept physically distanced from the belongings of others. Do not allow sharing of personal items.
- Ask players to bring their own personal practice vest (a.k.a. pinnie) or a dark and light shirt to eliminate the need of shared scrimmage vests.
- Do not allow shared team snacks. Participants and spectators should only drink from their own containers.
- Wear a face covering at all times and you must maintain social distancing of 6 feet from players, coaches, spectators, and other persons at all times. Only CDC recommended face coverings will be allowed, unless otherwise specified by league or facility.
- STAY POSITIVE – Players and parents will be looking to you to remain calm and supportive during this transition time.

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

PARENTS

- Ensure your child's health. Take temperature daily. The average normal body temperature is generally accepted as 98.6°F (37°C). Some studies have shown that the "normal" body temperature can have a wide range, from 97°F (36.1°C) to 99°F (37.2°C). A temperature over 100.4°F (38°C) most often means you have a fever caused by an infection or illness.
- If your child has any symptoms, even mild ones, do not send them to practice or a game. Public health urges you to stay home and isolate until:
  - You have had no fever for at least 72 hours (without the use of medicine) AND
  - Other symptoms (cough, shortness of breath) have improved AND
  - At least 7 days have passed since your symptoms first appeared.
  - Anyone in your household or that you have had close contact with (within six feet for approximately 15 minutes over a 24 hour period) should self-quarantine based on current CDC guidelines , The Commonwealth of MA and direction from your local Board of Health
  - Notify the club immediately if your child has become sick.
  - Notify the club immediately if your child has been identified as a close contact by a school or public health authority.
- Adhere to physical/social distance requirements posted by the organization. These are based on state and local requirements. When at training, wear a face covering if you are outside of your car.
- Ensure that your child has a water bottle, equipment (ball and GK Gloves if necessary), light and dark shirt (no shared scrimmage vests will be provided).
- Ensure your child's personal equipment, cleats, balls, shin guards etc. is clearly labeled and cleaned and sanitized before and after every training.
- Ensure your child's clothing is washed after every session.
- Do not assist the coach with equipment before or after a training session.
- No carpooling with other members of the team is recommended. In the event that transportation of a non-family member becomes necessary, all parties in the vehicle must wear cloth face coverings or face masks and to the extent possible have external air circulating in the vehicle such as opening a window.
- Be sure your child has necessary sanitizer with them at every session.
- Ensure athletes arrive dressed for practice and leave immediately after practice. No recreational play, or loitering is allowed.
- Facial Coverings must be worn by all participants during active play. See PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND FACIAL COVERINGS section for full description.

PLAYERS

- Take temperature daily (see information outlining this in the parent's section).
- Practice and encourage proper hygiene, washing hands frequently with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds at a time. Use alcohol based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol). Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or sleeves, do not use your hands. Do not touch your face (eyes, nose, mouth) with unwashed hands.
- Have your own hand sanitizer with you. Use hand sanitizer upon entrance and exit from the facility.
- Facial Coverings must be worn by all participants during active play. See PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND FACIAL COVERINGS section for full description.
- Only a face covering which attaches around the ears will be allowed, so as not to cause any injury if accidentally tugged or pulled on. No around the head or neck face coverings will be permitted during contact play. No masks with air valves or mesh masks will be allowed.
- Practice physical distancing on the sidelines. When sitting on the sidelines you should be 6' from the next player and wear a mask as much as possible. Your belongings should remain in your space when not in use.
- Bring your own equipment (Ball, GK Gloves (if required), shin guards, jacket etc.) Do not touch anyone else's equipment.
- Bring your own water bottle and snack. Do not touch anyone else's belongings as sharing will not be permitted.
- Water bottles should be clearly labeled. If using single use bottles they should be discarded immediately on site.
- Wash and sanitize your equipment before and after each training.
- No group celebrations, hugs, handshakes, fist bumps, etc.

TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS/EVENT STAFF (When allowed by the State)

- Tournament Directors should follow the guidelines set forth by Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, CDC, Federal, State, and local governments.
- Tournament Directors should ensure that participants are following the specific local and state restrictions from their home location counties or associations before allowing teams from other associations/areas into the tournament.
- Predetermine appropriate emergency contacts should anything arise during your event and provide the information to all tournament staff and participants.
- All communication leading up to the tournament should include information on COVID-19, preventive measures and all procedures that the host has established as requirements for participants and spectators, including:
- Information on physical distancing measures, personal protection equipment requirements, limits on spectators and what the plan of action will be for suspected cases.
- Instructions to stay home if the participant or a member of the participant's family is not feeling well.
- Instructions on what to do if they are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19. If a participant is exhibiting symptoms of Coronavirus the participants should not attend or participate in the event until such time as the participant has been tested and cleared. Doctor's note would be required as proof of testing results.
- All participants and spectators should have access to handwashing and hand sanitizer.
- Bleachers and team benches should not be used. All spectators and players should provide their own seating. They should allow for 6' of physical distance from others.
- A procedure should be developed for any possible cases at the event. This should include a designated area for those who present with symptoms and those they came in contact with to be isolated until an ambulance is called.
- Event staff are to wear appropriate personal protection equipment when they come in contact with spectators, participants, and coaches.
- It is the responsibility of the tournament host to supply any and all masks, gloves and hand sanitizer for their tournament staff. The tournament host is the organization running the tournament and not the facility at which the event is held.
- Team registration/check in area should be set up to allow for necessary physical distancing for both the staff and the team representatives. Markers should be placed on the ground to ensure 6 feet of physical distance for those waiting in line. Such markings should be at least 8 feet from field boundaries.
- When possible, organizations will need to coordinate team registration and roster check-in electronically prior to the event. If needed, paper materials may be exchanged on the day of the event

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

Disclaimer: Participants, parents, family and spectators taking part in soccer and soccer related activities do so with the knowledge of risk and potential exposure involved. In doing so they agree to accept any and all inherent risks to their personal health.

[US Soccer Play on Indoor Recommendations Guide]