



# Alaska State Youth Soccer Association

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS

Juneau Soccer Club

2020



US  
YOUTH  
SOCCER







# RETURN TO PLAY



Alaska Youth Soccer Association sanctioned youth soccer activities Return-To-Play operational guidelines are in place to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19. The FIVE phased approach will provide clear direction and understanding for coaches, players, and families to engage in within EACH DISTRICT including guidance from the State of Alaska and as recommended by the CDC. Sanctioned Affiliate Clubs approved for Return to Play may start programming when the appropriate Return-To-Play phase has been reached in their District.



## Phase I

SHELTER IN PLACE – NO GROUP TRAINING



## Phase II

RETURN TO ACTIVITY SMALL GROUP TRAININGS



## Phase III

INTRODUCTION OF PRACTICES AND SCRIMMAGES



## Phase IV

FULL TEAM COMPETITION “NEW NORMAL”



## Phase V

NO RESTRICTIONS

### Alaska Youth Soccer Affiliate Districts

Anchorage	Kenai Peninsula	Southeast
Interior	Mat-Su	

## US Youth Soccer Guidelines

The information in this document is NOT intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content, including text, graphics, images, and information, are provided for general informational purposes only. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, US Youth Soccer and Alaska Youth Soccer makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the completeness of this information. Further, you should seek advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials in your area if you have specific questions. These guidelines address only early phases of return-to-play and additional guidelines may, or may not, follow as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.

Although the young and healthy may be subject to less severe cases of COVID-19, every case of this disease is potentially life-altering or deadly, particularly in those with risk factors that may occur within our communities. Health consequences may be long-standing and only apparent weeks after initial infection and recovery. Until COVID-19 is either eradicated, a vaccine is developed, or a cure is found, there is no way of eliminating the risk of infection.

This should always be at the forefront when designing and considering return-to-activity programming.

The risks of participation should be clearly communicated to parents and participants in your respective programs.

USYS State Associations need to be aware and adhere to all Federal, State and Local guidelines and requirements.

# Alaska Youth Soccer Association

## Return to Play Protocols



# 2020

## Alaska Youth Soccer Guidelines

Alaska Youth Soccer's highest priority is to ensure we provide a healthy and safe environment for activity within our soccer programs and leagues. AYSA will refrain from making any decision without first considering all information available from our national governing bodies along with the Federal, State and Local guidelines and requirements. As the Alaska governing body of youth soccer, we do not take lightly how the decisions we make have a potential impact on our membership including our affiliate members.

As we start the process of Return to Play (RTP) Protocols we will as a state association adhere to all Federal, State and Local guidelines and requirements. Given the changing pandemic environment, these guidelines may change at any time and clubs/ leagues will need to ensure that they have plan in place to communicate with their members, staff and coaches should there be a temporary closure of programs statewide.

Reminder the RTP will adhere to State gathering restrictions by reducing the total number of participants in activities to no more than the number allowed by the State. Maintain a six (6) foot physical distance among participants where possible and between youth, coaches, and parents or spectators. Due to physical activity in sports, social distancing is increased to ten (10) feet.

**Affiliate Clubs and Leagues will need to ensure they are current in their membership and have the proper Certificates of Insurance (COI) in place prior to starting any sanctioned club or league activity. Given the changing pandemic environment, these guidelines may change at any time.**

07/15/2020





# Players, Parents, Guardians

## Return to Play Protocols

- Players should use own soccer ball,
- Players should set apart bag from others.
- Players should only use their equipment.
- Players should never share water bottles or snacks.
- Player should not do group celebrations, NO high 5's, hugs, handshakes.
- Players should use hand sanitizer before, during and after training; face mask if desired.
- Players should ALWAYS practice social distancing.
- Players should wear mask before and immediately after all training or activity.
- Do not assist with equipment set up or breakdown.
- Limit carpooling to only members of the same family
- Gear and equipment should be washed and sanitized before each training or activity.
- Have signed/submitted the Health Status Agreement (Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement)
- Parent/ Guardian to notify club/ league immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason.
- If you are sick or feel sick, or an at-risk individual please **STAY HOME**





## PLAYERS

- **Players to use own soccer ball, also to set apart bag/ equipment from others**
- **Arrive to and leave field fully dressed (uniform, shoes, guards, etc.)**
- **Limit carpooling to only members of the same family. Parents stay in car/ parking lot while adherence to social distancing.**
- **Hand sanitizer to use before, during and after training; face mask if desired**
- **Players gear and equipment to be washed/ sanitized before/ after training**
- **Wearing a mask to/from the field and when not physically active during the trainings/ games**
- **Avoid sharing equipment, practice vest, snacks, and water bottles -energy drinks/supplements**
- **Players must bring their own water. No sharing. Communal water coolers should not be utilized**
- **Recommended social distancing maintained before/ after activities; always on the sidelines**
- **Players should not pick up field equipment, move goals, or handle training equipment**
- **Equipment and soccer balls should sanitize before and after trainings/ games**
- **Players and teams should “Avoid Group Celebrations” as part of activity and consider socially distanced celebrations**
- **If you are sick or feel sick, or an at-risk individual STAY HOME**

## PARENTS/ SPECTATORS

- **Parents and guardians are not encouraged to attend. Should parents and guardians attend, they should carefully follow spectator policies and watch from areas specifically designated for viewing**
- **All participants attending should take temperature prior to and stay home if 100 degrees or higher; includes players**
- **If you are able, wearing the mask to/from the field and when not able to social distance**
- **Follow ALL Federal and Municipality Mandates, and Division of Public Health Guidelines for the appropriate number of people in one group, distancing six feet apart, and face covering guidelines**
- **You should not congregate together and must follow social distancing guidelines**
- **Create socially distance “FamilyZones” for same household members, leave at least six feet from for the next family’s zone**
- **Do not bring a team snack that is shared among the team members**
- **Parents and guardians should support the coach and organization in adhering to all safety recommendations.**



**US YOUTH  
SOCCER**





## AFILIATE CLUBS/ LEAGUES/ COACHES

- Clubs will ensure all players and coaches have access to hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes during club sessions
- Ask each player if they are experiencing signs/symptoms of COVID-19, if are, they must go home
- Ensure Health Status Agreements have been signed and collected for each athlete
- Comply with local and regional guidelines for the appropriate number of people in one group and the size of the group
- Minimize Social Distancing- entrances/ parking lots/ fields/ spectator areas
- Assign specific arrival times for all club-specific participants to limit congestion during warm up and accessing the field.
- Create “Team Pods” to limit CROSSOVER EXPOSURE (limit same coaches/ staff to only one team for trainings and games)
- Physical Contact only permitted within the rules of soccer during time of active play
- Continue to be vigilant in cleaning personal equipment and apparel before and after each training and game
- Implement protocol to track the number of participants and spectators in your space at a given time. Restrict additional people entering the facility or space after reaching “Maximum Capacity”
- Teams should leave the field as soon as reasonably possible after play
- Limited travel in-state to events that would require overnight stay
- Clubs, teams, and players will continue to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols and health and safety guidelines while maintaining vigilant regarding the promotion of safety of all those involved in the program
- Tactical discussions to be provided in digital format, if possible. Team meetings in closed environments should be avoided. Follow the AYSA Code of Conduct - Social Media Guidelines (Section 111)
- Clubs and Leagues should communicate their updated health & safety guidelines to all member participants

## REFEREES

- Masks required during pregame check and when leaving the field for Referees, AR's and optional to wear during a match
- 4th official required to wear mask during a match
- Only use own equipment (flags, etc.); if must share yours, sanitize before/after use by another
- Use sanitizer before/after each game, have a supply of sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, latex gloves and tissues, face mask if desired
- Should allow when possible to remain Ten (10) feet for social distancing prior, during and after the game
- No pre-game coin toss; Home team chooses direction and No pre or post game handshakes
- Role is not to enforce the protocols; role is to note and report instances of non-compliance to Alaska Youth Soccer



**US YOUTH  
SOCCER**

Effective Date 9/23/2020  
Juneau Soccer Club



# Phase II

## RETURN TO ACTIVITY WITH INDIVIDUAL / SMALL GROUP TRAINING

### Restrictions/ Recommendations

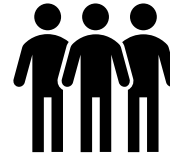
#### PARENTS/ PLAYERS

- Players to use own soccer ball, also to set apart bag/ equipment from others
- Limit carpooling to only members of the same family. Parents stay in car.
- Hand sanitizer to use before, during and after training; face mask if desired
- Players gear and equipment to be washed/sanitized before/after training
- If you are sick or feel sick, or an at-risk individual STAY HOME

#### AFFILIATE CLUBS/ LEAGUES/ COACHES

- Sanitizing options available onsite. including; hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes to be used to wipe down all equipment after each training session
- Participants include players, coaches, spectators. Limit players/ parents/ spectators with practice start/ end times to maximize social distancing
- Physical contact should be minimized during training sessions.
- Avoid training which creates opportunity for contact with another's equipment (including headers, throw-ins, etc.)
- No scrimmages, league games, camps, tournaments during this Phase.

## Alaska Youth Soccer Association



Trainings should comply with local and regional guidelines for the appropriate number of people in one group and the size of the group.

All participants (coaches, players, administrators) are to wear new or clean PPE upon arrival, departure and when not physically active during activities.

No contact e.g. hugs, high-fives, handshakes.

Small group training sessions in area where social distancing can be maintained.



Avoid activities that may require direct or indirect contact (e.g. bumping) between athletes.

No travel to activities outside of your district.

Avoid sharing equipment, practice vest, snacks, and water bottles.



Players should not pick up field equipment, move goals, or handle training equipment..

Participants to remain a minimum of 6 feet apart; includes between players and coaches.

Upon arrival coaches ask athletes if they are experiencing signs/symptoms of COVID-19.



\* Clubs, teams, and players will continue to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols and health and safety guidelines while maintaining vigilant regarding the promotion of safety of all those involved in the program.

**NOTE: CDC recommends six (6) feet for social distancing. Adhere to all Federal, State and Local guidelines and requirements.**

# Club/ League Guidelines

**Continue to Follow Protocols- Updated** requirements for safe participation in programs, publish protocols on website, social media and communication platforms with players, parents, coaches and staff.

- Have teams designate a “Field Marshal” for games, to ensure that social distancing behaviors occur during games.
- Establish a COVID-19 Safety Officer who will ensure that guidelines are communicated club-wide to coaching staff, parents, and players regularly.

**Maintain Protocols-** Establish a schedule and protocol for disinfection and cleaning of equipment (before, during, and after training). Protocol should ensure appropriate infection prevention supplies present in multiple targeted areas.

- Continue to train and educate staff and volunteers concurrent protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations and other necessary information.
- Provide masks for coaches/ volunteers who are in contact with players/ parents.
- Coaches should be the only person to handle equipment.
- Porta Potty Rentals must include sinks and/or you provide sanitation stations.
- Develop plans for temporary closure of programs due to changing environment.

**Establish Training Protocols-** Group training sessions should take place outside only in an area where social distancing can be maintained.

- Planned transition of time between trainings/ games should be followed.
- Continued social distancing practices maintained before and after trainings, and always on the sidelines.

**Acknowledge and Agree to Guidelines-** Ensure adult, youth and their families are aware and agree that they **MAY NOT** attend sanctioned program activity if either they or a household member has had onset of illness with symptoms compatible with suspected or lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the prior 14 days or are within 72 hours of exhibiting significant symptoms or a fever and/ or recovering from a case of COVID-19, are less than 14 days from onset or less than 72 hours since the end of significant symptoms or fever.

- Health Status Agreement (Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement) signed by the Parent/ Guardian.
- Coaches should continue to ask athletes prior to the start of activity if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 they should be sent home and instructed to contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 can include fever or feverishness, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills or shaking chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.
- Athletes should live in training location/ community for 14 days prior to beginning group training.
- Establish a plan for all athletes/ staff/ volunteers who maybe symptomatic, test positive or ill; follow the Alaska Youth Soccer COVID-19 REPORTING PROCEDURES. Maintain confidentiality of the individual.
- Clubs, teams, and players will continue to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols and health and safety guidelines while maintaining vigilant regarding the promotion of safety of all those involved in the program.



# Alaska Youth Soccer Return to Play Protocols





# ALASKA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION

## COVID-19 REPORTING PROCEDURES

For COVID-19 reporting and tracing purposes, all teams including but not limited to players, coaches, managers, trainers, and team personnel must remain diligent. Each club must follow AYSA COVID-19 Protocols and reporting process that conform to the State of Alaska DHSS and CDC guidelines.

The procedures are in accordance with the current COVID-19 Protocols to take place for a positive test result or exposure to someone who tested positive within the club program. A priority will be given to ensure that the COVID-19 positive person remains confidential according to federal/state guidelines. Clubs will ensure reporting information shared within their membership is accurate not rumor in the effort to eliminate fear or confusion as each situation (s) arises.

The appropriate guidelines are to take place when a **Club Administrator and/ or Club President** has been notified by a parent or guardian of a possible or confirmed positive for COVID-19. The chain of command outlined below ensures all federal and state guidelines along with maintaining the confidentiality of the individual (s). The club will designate **“One Point Of Contact”** to work directly with the family, State of Alaska DHSS, and Alaska Youth Soccer.

### Club COVID-19 Protocols

- 1) Club point of contact will be immediately made aware of the situation from parent, guardian, or coaching staff.
- 2) Club point of contact will communicate with the **Alaska Youth Soccer Office** directly. The point of contact will submit the report within **a 24-hour period** of awareness of the possible or confirmed positive for COVID-19.
- 3) Club point of contact will communicate with club board; without using individual name (s).
- 4) Club point of contact will email their team (s) with next steps/ clear direction excluding using individual name (s).
- 5) AYSA will communicate directly with the Club point of contact, the individual (s) family, DHSS, league administrator, and the State Referee Association.  
\*NOTE: The club point of contact and the club staff **will not duplicate communication** with the league, referee assigner, or other clubs and teams.
- 6) AYSA will **directly follow up** with the club and leagues regarding suspension of team activities including league games until DHSS is able to give **clear direction** regarding the next course of action, including additional contact tracing notifications, suspension of team activities, practices and/ or games. AYSA will continue to be updated on notifications to ensure the guidelines are followed by all parties.
- 7) All parties directly involved will be informed of the pertinent information in adherence with confidentiality laws as needed to protect our membership. If the contact tracing investigation shows that past club activities including league games are not at risk, those parties will not be contacted with additional information or public notices.
- 8) A copy of the **Covid-19 Health Screening Result Certificate** along with confirmation that **DHSS Finalized the Notification Procedure** for the current case must be sent to the registered Club point of contact and the Alaska Youth Soccer Office prior to the individual approval for return to club activity.



Alaska Youth Soccer remains steadfast in our commitment to the safety of our players, coaches, referees, families, and communities. It is imperative that everyone understands their role and demonstrate a commitment adhering to the AYSA Return-to-Play Protocols which have been created based on federal, state, and local directives and guidance with the intent of providing a safe environment to get back on the field. For the benefit of all AYSA clubs, leagues and players, we ask you strictly adhere to the regulations within your local municipality. Alaska Youth Soccer reserves the right to amend its decisions on sanctioned activities and timelines to best adapt to and reflect all new federal, state, and local directives and guidelines.

### **Reverting to Earlier Phases**



Regardless of which phase you are in you should be prepared to step back and revert to an earlier phase if any of the following occur. Always follow local public health official guidelines.

- Cluster of infections occur
- Inability to maintain COVID-19 prevention and response protocols
- Inability to track and/or isolate players or staff
- External factor exposes a COVID-19 risk to your team or club or league
- Changes to local public health official guidelines regarding group gatherings
- Alaska Youth Soccer places the affiliate as not a “Member in Good Standing”



**Alaska Youth Soccer  
Return to Play Protocols**







While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## Team Warm-Ups

1. **Warm-Ups-** Should not begin until previous teams have left the field and equipment has been sanitized. Allowing for extra time between matches to accommodate, as necessary.
    - a. Athletes will continue to wear mask to and from trainings and games.
  2. **Competition Warm-Ups-** Athletes should not touch field equipment, move goals, or handle training equipment.
    - a. Progressions between warm-up drills should be set up prior to players arriving to field.
    - b. Maintain as much social distance as possible during warm-up activities. Coaches should not be within six feet of any Athlete.
  3. **Gear and Equipment-** Athletes should be vigilant in cleaning personal equipment and apparel before and after each training and game
  4. **Match Soccer Balls-** If they are used during warm-up, they should be re-sanitized before the match.
  5. **Celebrations-** Athletes should avoid intentionally touching each other before/ after competitions; including hugs, high-fives, or huddles.
  6. **Team Bench-** Benches should not be utilized; coaches will designate side-line space between coaching staff and athletes.
  7. **Non-Playing Participants-** Should wear face covering if they cannot socially distance at trainings and games.
- \* Clubs, teams, and players will continue to follow COVID-19 prevention protocols and health and safety guidelines while maintaining vigilant regarding the promotion of safety of all those involved in the program.**



# Team Warm-Ups Return to Play Protocols





While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## Team Post-Game

1. **Handshakes-** No post-game handshakes should take place. Consider other forms of sportsmanship or instituting new acknowledgement traditions, such as clapping, etc.
2. **Signatures-** If a referee needs the coach's signature, place the paper down on the end of the bench and step away to have them sign it.
3. **Clear the Area-** Team and coaches should continue to "Clear the Area" as soon as reasonably possible after activity.
  - a. Teams should clean up bench area so that it is clean of ALL trash.
  - b. Post-game meetings and tactical discussions to be provided in digital format, if possible. Follow Code of Conduct Guidelines.
    - i. All participants should wear proper PPE and endeavor to maintain space between themselves and others. Prolonged proximity, even with masks should be avoided.
    - ii. Huddles should be avoided.
4. **Snacks-** Do not have a team snack that is shared among the team members.
5. **Gear and Equipment-** Athletes should not take off any equipment until they have left the facility.
6. **Car Pooling-** Keep "Ground Transportation" to household members only.
7. **Non-Playing Participants-** Should wear face covering if they cannot socially distance at trainings and games.
8. **Maintaining Social Distancing-** Spectators "Should Not Congregate" withing parking lots, sidelines, facility entrances and exits.



# Team Post-Game Return to Play Protocols







While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## **Athletes and Coaching Staff General Hygiene**

- 1. Avoid touching your eyes/mouth/nose as much as possible.**
- 2. Wash or sanitize your hands often and after close contacts.**
  - a. Use soap and water for a minimum of 20 seconds.
  - b. When soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer.
- 3. Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze.**
  - a. Follow with washing or sanitizing your hands.
  - b. Dispose of tissues in a sealed trash can.
- 4. Avoid spitting and coughing.**
  - a. Goalkeepers should not spit into their gloves.
- 5. Continue social distance measures between coaching staff and athletes during trainings and games.**



# **General Hygiene Return to Play Protocols**





While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## Nutrition Strategies to Support Activities & Immune Function

### 1. Consume enough calories to meet training and daily life needs.

- a. Show up for training and matches adequately fueled.
- b. If an Athlete brings a snack, he or she are not recommended to share.
  - i. If you must share, any food should be packaged individually.
  - ii. **Protein:** maintain adequate intake throughout the day (main meals and snacks).
  - iii. **Carbohydrate:** adjust intake to training duration/intensity and prevent low carbohydrate situations.

2. **After Strenuous Exercise-** Athletes enter a brief period in which they experience weakened immune resistance and may be more susceptible to viral and bacterial infections.

3. **Vitamin D-** One of the most important markers in immune health and Vitamin C has been found to support immune health during intense training periods. Daily consumption of food sources that are high in Vitamin C / D are encouraged to support immune health.

- a. Foods high in **Vitamin C** include kiwi fruit, bell peppers, strawberries, oranges, broccoli, tomatoes, kale.
- b. Foods high in **Vitamin D** include salmon, mackerel, eggs, mushrooms, cow's milk, yoghurt, fortified cereals and orange juice.



# Nutrition Strategies Return to Play Protocols







While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## Hydration and Heat Considerations

1. **Athletes should clearly label their water bottles with their own name.**
  - a. Single-use bottles should be discarded of immediately onsite. Athletes should not touch anyone else's bottle.
  - b. It is recommended that each athletes brings at least two drink bottles to training (e.g. 2 x 32oz bottles).
2. **Ensure appropriate hydration policies are in place with all participants having unlimited access to water.**
  - a. Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness and early management.
3. **During Training Sessions-** Fluid breaks are recommended at least once every 15 minutes but will largely be dictated by the duration and intensity of the session. Breaks should be planned and communicated to the athletes.
4. **Water Breaks-** Trainings and games should adhere to social distancing guidelines. When there is a water break, athletes should make their way to their personal station, and drink only from their own bottle. Coaches should move safely 10 feet away from other participants.
5. **Heat-Related Illnesses-** Heat exhaustion and exertional heat stroke (EHS), can be serious and potentially life-threatening conditions which can be brought on or intensified by physical activity.
  - a. Recognizing the signs/ symptoms as early as possible allows for treatment and rapid recovery with hydration and onsite immediate cooling down the individual.
  - b. Follow heat acclimatization guidelines during practices and conditioning. Acclimatization is the body's natural adaptation to exercising in the heat. Avoid the hottest part of the day for training sessions (11am-4pm) and matches when possible.



# Hydration and Heat Considerations Return to Play Protocols



07/14/2020



While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## Athletes Mental Wellness

1. **During this Unprecedented Time-** Our lives have been disrupted. Training, playing and even watching sports is different in our current landscape. It is important to be aware of the impact this can have on our health so we can help ourselves. Self-care and knowledge of resources that are available are helpful in times of crisis. You may be experiencing a range of emotions, including:

- a. Anxiety or Stress
- b. Sadness or Loneliness
- c. Worry or Fear
- d. Or other uncomfortable emotions

2. **Social Distancing-** Can feel like you must be socially isolated, but it's important to remember that this is not the case.

- a. You can still safely talk and interact with teammates and colleagues while following simple safety guidelines:
  - i. Staying 6ft apart where possible
  - ii. Maintaining good hygiene and/ also stay home when you are sick
  - iii. Avoid physical contact (ex: use Air-high fives as opposed to regular contact high fives)



# Mental Wellness Return to Play Protocols



07/14/2020



While trainings and the addition of competitions may continue to make things look more like a normal soccer season, we need to continue to remain steadfast in our adaptability in consideration of how COVID-19 is transmitted, it is vitally important that everyone involved in the process of return-to-play does so with extreme diligence and attention to the widely-agreed-upon standards and guidelines.. It is important to remain vigilant as we prepare for every eventuality. By prioritizing the safety of our statewide soccer programs to ensure we can provide a safe playing environment for our athletes, coaches, referees, families, and communities.

## **Gym and Strength Workouts**

**The use of gyms and confined indoor training spaces should be limited or should be excluded at this time.**

- a. Strength and conditioning work that may normally be carried out in a gym could be adapted and conducted on the outside field.
- b. To limit equipment use, body weight/ plyometric exercises are encouraged. Minimal equipment to be used whenever possible.

### **2. Equipment should be sanitized after every use.**

- a. A 10 to 15-minute break between indoor gym work-out sessions is recommended to allow time for cleaning equipment/ room.

**If indoor gym workouts must take place, all participants should follow social distancing guidelines.**

- a. Participants should wear PPE throughout indoor training, except in moments of significant exertion whereby a face covering might increase respiratory challenges, obscure vision or increase other injury risk.
- b. If utilizing a public facility, maintain social distancing with other patrons and disinfecting guidelines.

### **4. Evaluate the available space to determine maximum number of participants capable of utilizing facility at one time in advance.**

- a. Maintain consistency of partners or members of small group during facility use including spotting.

### **5. Accessible hand sanitizer should be available in the gym for use.**



# **Gym and Strength Workouts Return to Play Protocols**





# Referee Guidelines

Alaska Youth Soccer's highest priority is to ensure we provide a safe environment within our soccer programs and leagues. Alaska Youth Soccer has taken several precautions as we continue to implement guidelines for a safe environment for our participants, coaches, and referee officials. As we start the process of Return to Play (RTP) Protocols we will as a state association adhere to all Federal, State and Local guidelines and requirements. Given the changing pandemic environment, these guidelines may change at any time and referees will need to ensure that they are prepared to adjust as required to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.

**Note:** U.S. Soccer programming that is suspended through June 30 does not by itself impact the applicability of U.S. Soccer's general liability policy. If the games are U.S. Soccer, Alaska Youth Soccer sanctioned and the referee is certified, then the general liability policy would apply. However, please note that the policy would not cover illness due to COVID-19. Please note that coverage is determined on a case-by case-basis by the insurer, and U.S. Soccer cannot guarantee coverage in any specific circumstance.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR REFEREES

- **Should be educated on protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC and US Soccer recommendations.**
- **Health Status Agreement signed by the Referee and Parent.**
- **Should evaluate if experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 if you are, notify the assignor immediately, and voluntarily remove yourself from all assignments. Contact a healthcare provider and do not accept assignments until properly cleared.**
- **Continued COVID-19 prevention and response protocols to be followed.**
- **Should use hand sanitizer before/ after each game, have a personal supply of sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, latex gloves and tissues, face mask if desired.**
- **Should wash/ sanitize (jersey/equipment) regularly; set bag apart from others**
- **Should allow when possible to remain Ten (10) feet for social distancing prior, during and after the game.**
- **Rosters should be paperless and provided by team manager electronically.**
- **Discouraged to blow the whistle, within Ten (10) feet of participants.**
- **Should discourage group celebrations, high 5's, hugs, and handshakes.**
- **Should leave the field as soon as reasonably possible after play.**



**Referees**  
**Alaska Youth Soccer**



## Return to Play (RTP) Protocols and Compliance for Sanctioned Leagues

### LEAGUE

- 1) **Guidelines-** Follow the Municipality Division of Public Health Guidelines for the appropriate number of people in one group and the size of the group.
- 2) **Permits-** Have active facility permits to hold league games. Review **Emergency Operations** for facility locations.
- 3) **Certificates of Insurance (COI)-** Secure proper COI in place prior to starting any sanctioned league activity.
- 4) **Policies-** Ensure all AYSA policies, guidelines, and COVID-19 Return to Play Protocols are being followed.
- 5) **Transition-** Ensure time between the end of one game/ the beginning of the second game. Times should be staggered to minimize large group gathering.
- 6) **Game Rosters-** Establish rosters for teams will be paperless and be available to team managers electronically.

### FACILITY

- 1) **Spectators-** Limit spectator attendance and establish guidelines; limiting attendance based on current recommendations from local and state officials.
- 2) **Face Covering-** All non-playing participants should wear “Face Covering” if they cannot socially distance six feet apart at trainings and games.
- 3) **Congregating-** Establish designated entry and exit for facility, parking lots, fields, drop off zones, spectator sidelines, and high traffic areas. Spectators should create “**FamilyZones**” for same household members to watch trainings/ games. Leave at least **six feet** for the next family’s zone

### CLUB

- 1) **Guidelines-** Ensure teams are current on state/ city mandates, protocols including league and AYSA guidelines.
- 2) **Field Marshal-** Teams should designate a “Field Marshal” for each game, to ensure that social distancing behaviors occur during games.
- 3) **Sanitation-** Ensure all teams have supplies including hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes on hand for each game.
- 4) **Hydration-** Players must bring their own water. No sharing. Communal water coolers should not be utilized.
- 5) **Game Ball-** Teams will use disinfectant on the game ball between each game if the same ball is used.
- 6) **Warmups-** Minimal equipment to limit transmission of virus. Players should not pick up field equipment, move goals, or handle training equipment.
- 7) **Technical Area-** Social distance between coaching staff / athletes; ensuring each team has only 4 or less technical area staff on the sideline at any time.
- 8) **Athletic Trainers-** Team/ Club Trainers: Establish a protocol for safeguard measures between trainers and athletes.
- 9) **Health Status -** Ensure participants (adult, youth, and their families) are aware that they MAY NOT attend if either are ill or lab-confirmed COVID-19.

### FIELD

- 1) **Sideline-** Establish designated and visual indicators for side-line space for teams and referees. Teams “**Should Not Use a Bench**” coaches will use appropriate spacing between coaching staff and athletes.
- 2) **Referees-** Establish social distance for teams from referees spacing in appropriate areas, including at check-in and along sidelines.
- 3) **Clear Area-** Team and coaches should leave the field as soon as reasonably possible after play.

## Return to Play

At a bare minimum, the state association and its member organizations, need to adhere to their state/local guidelines on resumption of sporting activities. Follow their guidelines & directives closely and you will be operating in a reasonable and prudent manner from a risk management standpoint. The state association can decide to be more restrictive than their state/local mandates as respects to return to play, just not any less restrictive. Documentation will be very important. By documenting positive actions taken by the association/club, you will be able to demonstrate that reasonable and prudent steps were undertaken and completed to keep players, staff, and spectators as safe from infection as possible.

## Health Status Agreement (Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement)

State associations should consider implementing a communicable disease waiver (release of liability) because it does document you advised the persons there is a risk of acquiring a communicable disease in a group sport setting. As part of your duty of care to persons, the state association has a duty to warn persons of potential hazards. Failure to warn of a hazard can be used against you in a civil suit.

## Facemasks (Players)

Players should be allowed to wear a cloth, surgical, or similar face covering while playing soccer but do not mandate players wear one (leave it to the parent's discretion) unless your state mandates face coverings need to be worn while playing athletic activities.

- **Dan Pullen** | **K&K Insurance Group, Inc.**

[US Youth Soccer Return to Activity Notice  
Version 1.0, 5/13/20](#)

[U.S. Soccer PLAY ON initiative](#)

[Soccer Recommendation Guide 05/27/20](#)

[Phase III Grassroots Recommendations Guide](#)

[Reopen Alaska Responsibly Plan](#)

[CDC Recreational Guidance](#)

[CSC Resources for Large Community Events](#)

[EPA list of COVID-19 Effective Disinfectants](#)

[Move United](#)

[Special Olympics](#)

[Special Olympics Infographic](#)

[Federation for Children with Special Needs](#)

[Autism; Wearing a Mask Social Story](#)

[CDC Mass Gatherings](#)

[CDC Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)

[CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#)



# Alaska Youth Soccer RESOURCES





# Alaska Youth Soccer Association

Linda Burke

Executive Director

(907) 887-6550

[alaskayouthsoccer@gmail.com](mailto:alaskayouthsoccer@gmail.com)



Member of the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA)



Member of the US Soccer



Alaska Youth Soccer Association

200 W. 34th Ave # 21

Anchorage, AK 99503



Board of Directors  
Alaska Youth Soccer

[www.alaskayouthsoccer.org/Staff](http://www.alaskayouthsoccer.org/Staff)

[www.alaskayouthsoccer.org](http://www.alaskayouthsoccer.org)