



## **Twin Cities Soccer Leagues (TCSL) and Minnesota Youth Soccer Association (MYSA) Return to Play Plan**

**This plan has been modified in accordance with the latest guidelines announced by Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) on Friday, June 19, 2020.**

\*Please see the addition of Phase 3 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, 25-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 contact) as well as scrimmages/matches, with specific protocols in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- Phase 4: This phase represents soccer as we knew it prior to COVID-19.\*\*

*\*Originally 10-person trainings were permitted, not 25.*

*\*\*There may be additional preventative measures in play dependent on counsel from MDH.*

*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.*

## **Detailed Phases**

### **Outdoor Activities**

Objective: Allow children to safely resume training activities outdoors with their teammates.

- **Phase 1**
  - “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 25 people at the training (24 players and 1 coach or trainer, 23 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” on various field sizes:
  - No more than 4 pods of 10 or 2 pods of 25 on an 11v11 field;
  - No more than 2 pods of 10- or 1 pod of 25 on a 9v9 field;
  - No more than 1 pod of 10 on a 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 & Scrimmages/Matches)**

- All rules of Phase 2 apply except as noted below.

### **Training Schedule**

- Contact is allowed within the training environment.
- Clubs/teams should still keep pod sizes to 25 and intermixing between pods should be kept to a minimum.

### **Scrimmages/Matches**

- Starting on June 24, scrimmages/matches may resume. Please note that the pod/gathering size requirement only applies to trainings/practices, *not* scrimmages/matches.
- Adhere to social distancing recommendations when participants are not playing (on the bench, sideline, etc.).

- MDH recommends the following phasing:
  - Starting on June 24, begin with inter-team scrimmages as part of practice.
  - Two weeks later, focus on playing teams in your local community, local club, or local organization.
  - After another two weeks, consider expanding to teams beyond your local community, but consider COVID-19 case activity level and risk in those communities when making travel decisions.
  - We encourage everyone to follow this phased-in approach, to not only comply with MDH’s guidelines, but also to prevent injuries as players haven’t played soccer with contact for some time.
- MDH recommends the following behavior modifications for scrimmage/match play:
  - Teams and referees are not to engage in traditional sportsmanship gestures, such as post-match handshakes. Teams are encouraged to find new ways to show sportsmanship, for example give a wave or “air-five”.
  - If spectators do attend, they should limit the retrieval of soccer balls should they go out of play and let the players retrieve the ball.

### **People**

- Minimize crowding at games and practices as best as possible.
  - Spectators should follow social distancing recommendations including the wearing of masks as well as maintaining at least 6 feet of physical distance from each other.
  - Athletes, volunteers, and coaches must follow facility requirements regarding wearing cloth face coverings or facemasks. Even if not required by the facility, athletes, volunteers, and coaches are expected to wear cloth face coverings or facemasks as much as possible when not participating in games.
  - For scrimmages/matches, try to have staggered starts and ensure that there is the possibility for social distancing amongst all spectators if they are present.
  - If scrimmages/matches are to have referees, contact your assignor. The Minnesota SRC has [released guidelines for referees](#) should matches have officials during this Phase.
- Follow the guidelines outlined by the hosting facility in terms of capacity and other social distancing measures.

### **Tournaments/Out-of-State Travel**

- While not prohibited, it is recommended to play regionally to reduce the risk of geographic spread.

- **Phase 4**

- This phase represents soccer as we knew it prior to COVID-19.
- There may be additional phasing and/or preventative measures in play dependent on counsel from MDH dependent on what the future holds.

## **Frequently Asked Questions (June 22, 2020)**

**Q.** Can my team travel to out-of-state tournaments/events if play is allowed in those cities/states?

**A.** MDH has suggested that teams tread carefully and evaluate risk-reward as well as what the current status of virus transmission is in the destination city/state. Long trips with hotel stays, while not prohibited, are not advised.

**Q.** What does the phasing as outlined in Phase 3 mean for the ability for clubs to hold tryouts?

**A.** As much as possible, MDH has advised to use the “pod of 25” concept when conducting tryouts. Further, preventative measures as outlined throughout our Return to Play Plan should be implemented. If match competition is a part of tryouts, that is allowed as outlined in Phase 3.

**Q.** Are spectators allowed to attend scrimmages/matches as part of Phase 3?

**A.** Yes, but MDH has indicated that spectators should be limited as much as possible. If spectators do attend, it is important to ensure that social distancing amongst spectators is possible and preventative measures (i.e. staggered starts and face masks) take place. Facilities may have their own set of guidelines related to gathering sizes that may dictate what is possible at this stage.

## **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
- 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