



NASA Return to Play Safety Action Plan

Fall 2021

Overview: Covid-19 Action Plan

The purpose of this return-to-play action plan is to ensure full understanding of the ongoing safety and hygiene protocols necessary to participate in group activities during the pandemic, and to minimize potential risks for disease spread while playing soccer.

NASA is committed to returning our players to the fields safely. **NASA's current policy is that anyone attending the match who is not an on-the-field participant (spectators, players on the sidelines, coaches) should wear masks at all times. Players on the field are not required to wear masks, but are strongly encouraged to do so.**

NASA strongly encourages everyone who is eligible for a Covid-19 vaccine to get one. Vaccines are free and easy to get, and they are the best way to protect yourself from the worst effects of the virus. For information on obtaining a vaccine, go to <https://www.austintexas.gov/covid19-vaccines>. The Little Walnut Creek Library offers a walk-up vaccination site right here in the NASA neighborhood.

Our safety protocols are guided by: the Centers for Disease Control, State of Texas/City of Austin policies, STYSA/CAYSA and US Youth Soccer and other local club responses for best guidelines on safely resuming play.

Due to the unprecedented nature of this epidemic, our protective protocols & procedures will need to continue to be adapted throughout the progression of this evolving situation to continue to provide a safe environment for soccer.

Executive Overview

NASA's Executive Director, Lee Nichols is also our acting Covid-19 Safety Officer. He will help to implement and enforce safety protocols and standards.

Executive Oversight & Responsibilities:

- Continuously monitor and adhere to current safety guidelines
- Directly monitor and respond to ALL reported safety concerns
- Continue to assess and adapt our policies accordingly
- Train all volunteers on best practices, and provide ongoing support and resources for adapting into safer routines.

We all play a role in keeping each other safe. NASA asks that ALL participants (including players, parents, coaches, volunteers, referees and staff) do their due diligence to maintain a safe and healthy environment while participating in our program. Stay home when you aren't feeling well. Practice best measures with good hygiene by washing hands with soap, often and for at least 20 seconds. Wear a mask in public, practice distancing when possible, and disinfect common touch areas in your home.

Covid-19 Awareness & Prevention

For as long as Covid-19 spread remains problematic to our health, each family needs to self-assess before attending every soccer event.

PLEASE STAY HOME if your child or anyone in your household is not feeling well or experiencing any possible symptoms of Covid-19

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fever of 100.4 degrees or higher
- Fatigue
- Muscle Pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Skin rash
- Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
- Headache
- Known close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case

COVID-19 symptoms can appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus, and can present with a range of illness symptoms and severity.

The CDC states that those over age 65 and anyone with pre-existing health conditions are at a higher risk of Covid-19 complications and should take extra consideration when assessing associated risks. While such individuals may choose to attend NASA events, they are solely responsible for considering whether attendance is in the best interest of their family's health.

Phases to a Progressive Return to Play

Following guidance from STYSA & US Youth Soccer, NASA will implement a progressive return plan that allows our response to adapt to changing needs:

Phase 0	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
<p>PLAY SUSPENDED</p> <p>No in-person training or competitions</p>	<p>PRACTICE ONLY</p> <p>Individual skill training and physical conditioning</p>	<p>PRACTICE & SCRIMMAGE</p> <p>Slow return to defensive pressure and contact</p>	<p>PRACTICE & LOCAL GAMES</p> <p>No restrictions on training activities for players</p>	<p>No restrictions on training, games, or travel for players, coaches or spectators</p>
<p>Virtual Training Only</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zoom meetups • Skorra or Topya apps • Resource Website/Contest • Challenger at-home content 	<p>(slowly re-acclimate players)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One ball per player • Maintain distances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3v1/4v2/5v2 • Rondos • 3v3 to small goals • 3v3+3 • Games to targets/endzone 	<p>Teams can return to scrimmaging and playing games with other clubs following recommended guidelines.</p>	<p>Covid-19 recommendations no longer apply.</p>
	<p>Small Group Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing patterns • No contact • Avoid lines • Use space markers • No use of bare hands • Technical skills 	<p>Small-sided Games (ex.5v5) Intrasquad within cohorts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goalie Wars • Boom - 3v3 • Soccer Tennis • Pick-Up Days 		

General Covid-19 Guidelines

General Club Protocols:

- Do NOT attend soccer if you or anyone in your house is not feeling well or you don't feel safe
- Continually communicate our action plans club-wide
- Encourage at-risk individuals to stay at home
- Precaution signs to remind participants of safety protocols
- Disinfect equipment before/after each use

Physical Distancing:

- Maintain 6 feet physical distance at all times if not in play
- Avoid unnecessary group contact (ex. lines, huddles)
- Remind players of distancing on breaks
- Parents should remain socially distant at practices

Hygiene Protocols:

- Participants should always have a mask & personal hand sanitizer with them at every soccer event
- Coaches & staff must wear masks at all times
- Unvaccinated players wear a mask at times while Austin is at Stages 4 and 5. NASA will revisit this policy when Austin drops below Stage 4.
- Every child should bring their own ball, water, gloves and any other equipment they may need.
- No sharing of drinks, gear, or hygiene products is allowed. Bring what you need
- Only coaches should handle equipment

Other notices for parents:

- Until the COVID-19 crisis passes, NASA families are strongly discouraged from organizing social team outings beyond games and practices
- Carpooling is discouraged. If necessary to travel together, members of different households should wear a mask when in an enclosed space or vehicle, and any time social distancing is not possible.

Remember: Mask Up, Maintain Space, and Clean Your Hands Often!

Safe Practices

It is expected that you follow all CURRENT NASA/STYSA Phase mandates & practice procedures.

- Pre-practice ✓list: masks on, confirm health screening, and brought water and sanitizer
- Unvaccinated players are not required to wear a mask during practices and games, *but are strongly encouraged to do so.*
- All adults - coaches, parents and staff - will wear masks and practice physical distancing
- Enforce distancing during breaks. Upon arrival, use cones as 6-foot markers for gear.
- Bring all needed essentials. Sharing of water jugs, jerseys etc will NOT be allowed
- Shared equipment (cones, pinnies, ect.) need to be disinfected prior to reuse
- Avoid unnecessary contact. No lines, huddles, high-fives or hugs
- Parents remain in their cars or mask up and stay distanced away from practice fields.
- A cohort is defined as a group that plays together. Avoid mixing cohorts. Do not scrimmage with other teams that share your field.
- Players must bring their own soccer ball, gloves and any other gear needed

More detailed practice guidance can be found in the Return to Play Phase chart.

Practice Schedule considerations:

- Event times are scheduled with a 30 minute buffer to allow teams time to transfer
- Players should remain in their car until set meeting start time
- At practice endtime ensure you are in the parking lot to pick up your player/s and leave promptly

Facility & Spectator Expectations

All NASA facility visitors are expected to follow the league mandates and our club's safety rules.

- Anyone who shows symptoms of Covid-19 should not attend soccer events
- At-risk individuals are discouraged from attending NASA events for their own safety.

All participants & spectators should:

- No mask = No entry. All participants must arrive/depart wearing a mask/face covering.
- Spectators are required to wear masks at all times on the sidelines.
- Bring your own gear, no sharing of hand sanitizer, water bottles, chairs, etc.
- We request that there be only 1 spectator per player, but we will make exceptions as necessary, depending on conditions
- Spectators will sit on the same side of the field as their team.
- Boxes 6 feet or more apart will be marked for spectator families. Families should remain in their box for the duration of the game and not mingle with other spectators.

Please communicate to your families: *Anyone who does not follow our guidelines will be told to leave the game.* If they do not comply, the match will be halted. If a referee is forced to abandon a game because of the actions of a spectator, your team/coach could face punishment by the referee, and sanctioned with fines from both NASA and CAYSA league officials.

RETURN TO GAMES: SCHEDULING, PRE/POST AND IN-GAME PROTOCOLS

To ensure unified safety measures at soccer associations across South Texas, STYSA/CAYSA determine the current Return to Play Phase level that clubs are allowed to operate under. Phase 3 or above is necessary for games to occur. NASA reserves the right to implement requirements that differ from STYSA/CAYSA if deemed necessary.

U11+ D3/D2 Game Scheduling considerations:

- CAYSA league scheduling is done with other team coaches/managers
- Flexibility for late cancellations and reschedules is to be expected

Pregame Precautions:

- Do not arrive at the field until 30 minutes or less prior to your game
- On field warm-ups will be limited to 20 minutes or less
- Before every event, team officials verbally confirm with opponents that all participants have had daily health assessments completed (by parents).
- Game cards should be handled only by the manager/coach before handing to the referee.

Postgame:

- Distanced applause lines replace post-game celebrations. No high fives, hugs, or handshakes
- Players, coaches and spectators should leave promptly after soccer events

IN-GAME PROTOCOLS:

- Bring 3 match quality balls. If a ball comes into contact with a non-player, please disinfect before returning it to play.
- Physical distancing and masking should be followed for check-in and coin toss
- Create a sideline plan for physical distancing of subs, water breaks, and team talks. Multiple chairs or tents may be necessary
- Substitutes need to wear masks when not actively warming up or hydrating
- Coaches should plan ahead on how to communicate key information from safe distances

Covid-19 Reporting Policy - When, where, and how to report, suspected and confirmed cases

CONTACT TRACING IS KEY: Obtain phone numbers/email address for each player and spectator at every soccer event. NASA will provide forms.

The Safety Officer will monitor and respond to reports urgently and continue to provide updates and reminders to club members!

COVID-19 REPORTING POLICY Affected Individual → Coach → Covid-19 Safety Officer → CAYSA/STYSA

Continually monitor the health of your child, and housemates. If any member of your household shows possible symptoms of COVID-19, or if your child becomes ill after attending soccer,, notify your coach or NASA’s Safety Officer (**Lee Nichols, 512-796-9877 or Lee@northaustinsoccer.org**).

<u>SUSPECTED CASE</u>	<u>CONFIRMED CASE</u>
Any suspected case or suspected contact with a person with Covid should be reported to the coach and/or NASA Executive Director Lee Nichols.	A participant with a CONFIRMED COVID-19 Case MUST notify their coach and the Safety Officer. In-person activity needs to pause until cleared.
All soccer activity for that team should be immediately paused. Team activity should not resume unless Covid is ruled out for all players (test!).	The Safety Officer will notify any other team and participants that could have had contact with them in the 14 days prior
Once notified of a Suspected Case, NASA will notify other teams and participants that could have had contact with them in the 14 days prior.	All clubs MUST notify the CAYSA Director and STYSA Office immediately. STYSA Office Reporting Form for CONFIRMED Cases Only is found at WWW.STXSOCCEr.ORG .
Any referee suspected of being sick should notify the CAYSA Director and their Referee Assignor. The referee shall refrain from participation in any games until they have recovered or 10 days after confirmed diagnosis.	3+ CONFIRMED cases in a cohort is considered an Outbreak. All soccer activities will pause and the group will complete a self-quarantine period before resuming.

When to Return to Play After Exposure

Example: Player feels sick or may have been exposed to a possible case.

1. Inform your coach and do not attend any soccer events. Get tested and report results back to NASA.
2. Coach then notifies the cohort of the possibility of infection. Quarantine period may be necessary for affected player/s, however group activity may be allowed to proceed if exposure risks are deemed minimal.

Example: Team has a confirmed case.

1. Inform coach and refrain from all soccer until 10 days after diagnosis.
2. Notify team of confirmed case. Notify the Safety Officer (identity is kept confidential).
3. Team members must cease activity pending confirmation of negative Covid-19 status or 10 days have elapsed since first confirmed result. Team must receive confirmation from NASA to restart in-person team activity.

The Safety Officer will put the team's schedule on hold and notify CAYSA/STYSA and any external coaches who have participated in games with the affected team within the past 14 days

Returning to play after a confirmed/suspected COVID-19 infection: Check with your healthcare provider for their medical advice.

A player, coach, official or staff member with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection cannot attend soccer events until:

1. At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first started
 2. At least 3 days since all symptoms have passed.
- OR
3. Negative results from a SARS-CoV-2 test from at least 2 consecutive samples collected at least 24 hours apart.
 4. At least 14 days since any known exposure with no symptoms. The viral incubation period can occur between 2-14 days after exposure.

Quarantine is used to keep a person who may have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others. Quarantine helps prevent spread of disease that can occur before a person knows they are sick or if they are infected with the virus without feeling symptoms. NASA recommends that all members keep up to date with the CDC Covid-19 Guidelines on best measures for quarantine or isolation periods.

References & Resource Pages

***Guidelines and information in this document are subject to change along with any new updates to government guidelines and league mandates. NASA will update and distribute a new version should any significant changes become applicable. Version 2.0 - Jan. 2021*

<https://www.stxsoccer.org/info/covid-19-resources>

<https://www.usyouthsoccer.org/resources/return-to-activity-resources/>

<https://www.ussoccer.com/playon>

<https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/return-to-play>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/playing-sports.html>

<https://www.northaustinsoccer.org/>

<https://sites.google.com/view/teamscoreboard/>

CAYSA GAMEDAY MANDATES

- **No Mask – No Entry:** Players must wear masks to and from their cars and on the sidelines at all times.
- **No Mask – No Entry:** Coaches must wear masks to and from their cars and on the sidelines at all times unless providing instructions to their players.
- **No Mask – No Entry:** Parents and spectators (over the age of ten) must wear masks to and from their cars and on the sidelines at all times
- **Spectators and parents are required to wear a mask and are under the authority of the coach, team manager, and referee (competition officials).** Individuals in noncompliance will be counseled by the Team Manager or Coach to correct. **If an individual persists, the individual and their player will be asked to leave the facility or comply by putting on a mask.** Upon further refusal, the referee will stop the game to allow the coach another opportunity to correct the situation. **Upon further noncompliance, the referee will abandon the game. A fee will be assessed, which will be communicated by the CAYSA Director's Council.**
 - Anyone unable to wear a mask due to a medical condition(s) is deemed “at-risk” and should not attend games per CDC guidelines. If attending, “at-risk” spectators MUST social distance at a minimum of 10 feet behind everyone else on the spectator sidelines.
 - **Spectators will occupy the same side of the field as their players** unless not feasible for smaller field/closer sideline configurations. Spectators will occupy the space between the top of the penalty area and 10 feet from the halfway line on their designated half of the field, and players will occupy the technical area on the other half of the field.
 - **Health assessments must be completed before every game** for players (completed by their parents), staff, and referees. A representative from each team (head coach or team manager) should verbally confirm with the opposing team that all participants have performed a daily health assessment.
 - **All teams must adhere to South Texas Reporting Protocols.**
 - **No Physical Player cards:** Teams must use virtual player cards generated from GotSoccer with each player's current photo electronically attached.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- One (1) person/spectator per player where possible
- Specialized field marking to identify seating areas for coaches, teams, and spectators, etc...
- One person on the team identified to tend to injured players during games must wear PPE and gloves while tending to a player.
- Each team should come to the game with no less than three (3) match-quality balls.
- Maintain a distance of six (6) feet between you and others, even when wearing a facial covering/mask.
- Teams should not enter the competition facility until thirty (30) minutes or less till your game start time.
- Teams should have an arrival and exit strategy AS A TEAM. Meeting in the parking lot and walking to the sidelines (still social distancing) together.
- All players, coaches, officials, and spectators should leave the facility immediately after their game.
- The only contact between teams other than players on the field should be the team managers to check gamecards and verbally confirm health assessments have been completed.
- Socially distanced applause lines should replace handshakes. No high fives, hugs, etc.
- Parents should bring hand sanitizer for their player to be used BEFORE and AFTER the game.
- Players should not share items such as water bottles, sunscreen, hand sanitizer, bug spray, or clothing such as training bibs, warm-ups, jerseys, etc.
- Keep attendance logs of all participants and spectators for each game and maintain this information for a minimum of thirty (30) days.

Unlike in previous seasons, we will have teams on opposite sides of the field. Each team's parents will remain on the same side of the field as their team.

