



**PHASE III SOCCER
RECOMMENDATIONS GUIDE**

New Hampshire Soccer League Phase III Soccer Recommendations Guide

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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 information purposes only. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are ever-changing and, as such, NHSL and NHSA make no representation and assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of this information. Further, you should seek advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials if you have specific questions about your return to training and competition.

I. Letter from Ryan Joy, New Hampshire Soccer League Director

Dear Soccer Players, Coaches, Parents, Referees and Administrators,

It is with great pleasure that I can say we will be able to enjoy youth soccer in the state of New Hampshire this fall. These are truly unprecedented times. When we look back at these times in the future, I would like us to be able to say that we not only were able to make it through the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020, but we were able to do so safely.

We have a great responsibility to ourselves and each other. I am grateful that we are in a state where we can enjoy playing the sport we love, and share that time together. This is not the case everywhere, and we must be diligent in ensuring we will be able to continue heading in a positive direction. Now is not the time for us to become complacent. In fact – it's quite the opposite. Now is the time for us to work together to take all necessary steps to make sure that we protect everyone in our soccer community.

Below you will find extensive guidelines that cover many of the little details that will help us be aware, be safe, and become one community working together to overcome these times. The material in this document stems from US Soccer guidelines, customized to fit protocols established in our State.

Each day is a new challenge, and things change quickly. This is meant to be a resource for clubs to have the information needed to navigate these times. While this was originated by professionals, if there is no other message delivered, our state's default is to abide by the guidelines and recommendations set forth by medical professionals. This is not a full proof plan, but in that same breath, let this be a guide to help answer any questions that you might have, set an example of club protocols, and steer you in a direction that will ultimately help keep everyone safe.

In the end, as always, we please ask – more now than ever – to be courteous, respectful, and ultimately empathetic to all you interact with. We do not know each person's story, level of comfort, or even what they are going through. There is no better time than now for us to stand together and set a positive example for our youth players.

In the end, this is all about the kids. I wish everyone the best of luck in your fall seasons, and as always, I am only a phone call or email away. If you ever need anything, feel free to reach out.

Yours in soccer,

Ryan

II. Medical Considerations

Medical Clearance to Participate In Trainings or Matches

1. As Phase III includes increased activities and exposure risks, any individuals with a pre-existing medical condition is recommended to provide UPDATED written clearance from a physician to participate.
2. For individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19, provide written confirmation of COVID-19 negative status and/or clearance from your physician following the most up-to-date CDC guidelines to participate and return to activities.
3. For individuals (including players, coaches, referees, volunteers and administrators) who have experienced known COVID-19 exposure in the past 14 days, the following is recommended:
 - a. Home quarantine for 14 days
 - b. Written confirmation of COVID-19 clearance from your physician following the most up-to-date CDC guidelines
4. For individuals who experienced any illness during shelter-in-place, written clearance from your physician that you are COVID-free and fit to participate in trainings and competitions is recommended.
5. Be prepared to report the onset of any new symptoms immediately. Contact your physician and follow the recommendations above for return to play.
6. Individuals who may be at increased risk of COVID-19 (including but not limited to age >65y/o, chronic cardiac or respiratory conditions including hypertension or diabetes, or have an immunocompromised state) should seek guidance by their physician as to their participation.

Daily Medical Considerations to Participate In Trainings or Matches

1. The participant (including players, coaches, referees, volunteers and administrators) should conduct a daily temperature check for low grade fever (>100.4.) at home before training. If you have a fever, do not go to training.
2. If thermometers are not available, conduct a daily health questionnaire online with the "Coronavirus Self-Checker," made available by the CDC.
3. Do not participate in activities if you have any of the symptoms listed below.
 - a. COVID-19 exposure in past 14 days
 - b. Sore throat
 - c. Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - d. Fever >100.4 F
 - e. Chills
 - f. Headache
 - g. Sinus congestion
 - h. Cough persistent and/or productive
 - i. Joint aches and soreness
 - j. Vomiting or diarrhoea
 - k. Rash

4. Do not go to training/competition facilities or fields with any of the above symptoms.
5. Remotely communicate your health status to coaches, instructors, team administrators, or medical staff within 24 hours of your training session or competition.
6. Parents (and not the minor player) should communicate with the club or coach. Speak to a physician and follow CDC guidelines on self- quarantine.
7. Should a member of your household be experiencing the symptoms above, the family member should consult a physician. Follow the recommendations listed for medical clearance outlined in this document. Maintain all recommended hygiene habits outlined by the CDC.

Additional Health & Safety Protocol for Referees

1. Be conscious when accepting game assignments.
 - a. Do not accept a game if you are experiencing any symptoms.
 - i. As an independent contractor you are not required to accept a game. It is your choice and you should take into consideration your health and comfort level.
 - b. If you decline a game, be respectful to the assignor and notify them as soon as possible to allow time for a replacement.
2. If you start to exhibit symptoms after accepting a game, communicate immediately with your assignor and cancel your assignment. Do not participate in any matches if you are feeling unwell or exhibiting the symptoms outlined.
 - a. Assignors should consider having regular "back-ups" available in case a referee needs to cancel an assignment due to health reasons.
3. Before leaving for the field, referees should answer the following questions for their assignor. If the referee answers yes to any of these questions, they should notify their assignor and refrain from officiating the game.
 - a. Have you knowingly come into contact with anyone who has, is being tested for, or is exhibiting signs of coronavirus? (Yes or No)
 - b. Are you exhibiting any of the following symptoms? (Yes or No)
 - i. COVID-19 exposure in past 14 days
 - ii. Sore throat
 - iii. Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - iv. Fever >100.4 F
 - v. Chills
 - vi. Headache
 - vii. Sinus congestion
 - viii. Cough persistent and/or productive
 - ix. Joint aches and soreness
 - x. Vomiting or diarrhea
 - xi. Rash

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE, Masks, Face Covers) Recommendations

1. All participants (coaches, players, referees, instructors, administrators) are recommended to wear new or clean PPE upon arrival, departure and when not physically active for any training or match.
 - a. For the duration of the match, coaches and substitute players should wear masks on the sidelines.
 - b. Referees are reminded to wear PPE for arrival and pre-game field inspection.
 - i. If a fourth official is present, he or she should wear PPE while at the fourth official's table or designated area.
2. PPE should cover the nose and mouth, be breathable, consist of cotton or wick-type material and follow CDC guidelines.
3. PPE should be new or clean for each training session or match and disposed or thoroughly cleaned after each training session or match.
4. Provided all screening, hygiene and social distancing measures are followed, masks are not mandatory for players/coaches/referees/instructors/participants during exertional moments of training or competition (i.e. when physically active at training or during game play).
 - a. PPE may obscure vision, increase respiratory challenges, or increase other injury risk while being physically active.
5. For players, referees or staff who choose to wear PPE while physically exerting themselves, the following should be considered:
 - a. Discuss with your primary care physician if any medical conditions pre-dispose you to avoid the use of a face cover while participating in physical activity.
 - b. PPE should be breathable and not prevent or disrupt ventilation.
 - c. PPE should not obscure the individual's vision.
 - d. PPE should not pose a risk to another participant.
 - e. PPE should be in good maintenance, at the responsibility of the individual.
6. Spectators should wear PPE.
 - a. Heat and humidity may lead to increased discomfort or respiratory challenges wearing masks throughout the day. Coaches, referees and spectators are recommended to take "PPE breaks" throughout training or game day.
 - i. To take a PPE break, simply ensure you are more than 10 feet away from another participant and remove your mask.
7. Should another participant move within 10 feet, return your mask to covering your nose and mouth.
 - a. Consider having a replacement mask available if your PPE becomes wet due to sweat or environmental conditions.
8. Sanitize your hands following the removal of a used mask and replacement of clean mask.
9. Recommendations may change based on evolving medical and health information, as well as local, state or federal guidelines.

III. Preparing for Trainings Or Competitions

Considerations for All Trainings & Competitions

1. Adhere to all state/local regulations.
2. Only outdoor trainings and competitions should be considered in Phase III.
3. Consider creating "team pods" to limit crossover exposure risk that may come from increased interactions in Phase III.
 - a. Per team, maintain the same coaches, administrators, instructors and staff for all team activities.
 - b. If possible, limit coaches, administrators, instructors and staff to only one team.
4. Limit coaches, referees, administrators, instructors and staff attendance at training and competitions to allow for social distancing.
5. Survey your space. If possible, carefully consider what "maximum capacity" would ensure social distancing remains possible through all activities.
 - a. Consider implementing 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."
6. Communicate your UPDATED health & safety guidelines to all participants, including players, coaches, referees, administrators, parents and opposing teams.
 - a. For matches, the home team is responsible for communicating and maintaining health and safety protocols.
 - i. Visiting team should thoroughly review and follow all health & safety guidelines outlined by the home team or hosting organization.

Contact Tracing: Exposure Tracking & Alerting

1. For contact tracing purposes, maintain a list of all facility users, participants and attendees at trainings or matches.
2. For privacy purposes, the list should be securely stored and not shared publicly.
3. In the event that someone participating in your activities becomes ill, refer to this list for "tracking or tracing" to determine who may have been directly exposed to illness, and alert them immediately.
4. It is recommended that lists should be available for a minimum of 21 days to account for the period of time of COVID-19 presentation of symptoms and illness.
5. Include the items below in your contact tracing list. For minors, use a parent's contact information.
 - a. Date
 - b. Venue
 - c. Name
 - d. Phone
 - e. Email Address of participants

Getting Ready For Training or Competitions

1. All participants, including players, coaches and referees, should prepare and pack individual water bottles.
 - a. Pack at least two bottles of water for training or matches, to limit the need for refills. You should not share water bottles and should avoid public water fountains if possible.
 - b. Clearly mark your name on your water bottle.
2. Get dressed at home in your gear so that you can arrive to the training/match site ready to play, coach or ref, without needing to use locker rooms or changing areas.
3. Coaches should confirm uniforms with their players in advance of competitions, so players can avoid changing on site.
4. Referees are recommended to wear gold referee uniforms to avoid clashing with most team uniforms. Consider communicating with the coaches or competition organizers in advance to determine appropriate colors and avoid changing on site. If necessary, bring spare colors to prepare for conflicts.
5. Participants are recommended to pack and bring to personal sanitizing supplies to training and competitions, including hand sanitizers. Sanitizing materials should be clearly marked and not shared.
6. Avoid bringing any unnecessary belongings to the training or competition.
7. Follow PPE (face mask) procedures outlined.
8. Wash your hands before departing for training or competitions.
9. Conduct a daily temperature check for low grade fever (>100.4.) at home before training or competitions. If you have a fever or feel ill, do not go to training. Consult your physician.

Travel to Trainings or Competitions

1. Travel to trainings and competitions with as few people as possible. It is recommended to only travel with members of your immediate family or household.
2. Should carpooling or ride sharing be necessary, consider the following:
 - a. Only rideshare with a family or individual who has practiced appropriate distancing and sheltering requirements established by their local government or public health officials.
 - b. Rideshare with the same individuals for each training or competition.
 - c. Ensure that all passengers have passed both the preliminary and daily clearance requirements outlined in this recommendations guide.
 - d. Maintain safe distancing during loading and unloading, and while in transit if possible.
 - e. Limit the number of stops between departure site and training destination.
 - f. Wear PPE in the vehicle.
3. In accordance with the Safe Soccer Framework and the U.S. Center for SafeSport policies and guidance, a minor and an adult who is not the minor player's parent/legal guardian may not be alone in the vehicle together.

Arrival and Check-In Protocols for Trainings & Events

1. Carefully consider and design your arrival and check-in protocols for trainings and matches to fit your facility layout, the size of your site and the activities taking place.
2. Consider the following recommendations for all participants. Participants includes players, coaches, referees and volunteers actively involved in training or game play (such as ball kids).
 - a. If the facility has a minimal number of fields, consider having a single-entry access and check-in point for all participants at trainings or competitions.
 - i. Participants should move through check in one-at-a-time to maintain social distance.
 - ii. Ground markings should be used in order for the queue to keep social distancing. These marks should be at least 6-feet apart.
 - iii. Hand sanitizer or a hand washing station should be available at the location.
 - iv. Upon arrival, all participants should be asked a series of health screening questions, aligned with the CDC's "Coronavirus Self-Checker", to affirm medical clearance to participate.
 - v. If available, Clubs may consider using a no-touch thermometer to quickly confirm temperatures or participants. (Reminder that extreme heat can impact a body temperature reading.)
 - vi. The coach, a staff member or a designated "Safety Officer" can be responsible for asking health screening questions.
 - vii. Confirm all participants have brought adequate hydration from home.
 - viii. Collect all information needed for contact tracing requirements (details outlined above in Section III of this document).
3. Consider the following recommendations for spectators and non-participants at competitions.
 - a. Establish a separate entrance for all spectators and non-participants.
 - i. All non-participants should be educated on competition safety guidelines and the important of only attending the competition if they have no COVID-19 symptoms. Spectators follow PPE recommendations by wearing PPE at all times.
 - b. If possible, the names and information of all spectators and non-participants should still be recorded to follow contact-tracing recommendations outlined above in Section III.
 - c. Spectators should immediately proceed to the designated spectator area / socially distanced "Family Zones" outlined below in Section IV.
 - d. Spectators should socially distance at all times and avoid congregating.
 - e. As a reminder, as with Phase II, spectators are not encouraged to attend trainings. It is recommended that only the participant departs the vehicle upon arrival to training. The driver is recommended to either leave the training facility or stay in the parking lot, remaining in the vehicle and observing all social distancing guidelines to avoid unnecessary exposure to participants.
4. If facility has many fields, the facility can consider:
 - a. Organizing multiple check-in points following the procedures above
 - b. Establishing a virtual check-in process for participants and spectators
 - c. (In the case of competitions) Having each participating team conduct health

- screening questions to confirm no one is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and provide contact tracing information for all participants and attendees upon arrival.
5. Clubs are encouraged to assign specific arrival times for all event-specific participants (ex: for event staff, per team, for referees) to limit congestion during check-in and accessing the field.
 - a. Participants should wait in their cars until their specific time to enter the facility or field.

Recommendations for Parents and Guardians

1. Parents and guardians should be thoroughly aware of all safety recommendations for both their home club and as visitors in organized competitions. At all times, parents should ensure their family follows safety recommendations, including for PPE.
2. Parents and guardians should support the coach and organization in adhering to all safety recommendations.
3. Parents and guardians are not encouraged to attend trainings.
 - a. Should parents and guardians attend a competition, they should carefully follow spectator check-in policies and watch from areas specifically designated for viewing.
4. Parents should not congregate together and should follow social distancing guidelines.
5. Parents or guardians watching the match should never enter the team bench area.
6. Parents or guardians should have the contact information of relevant staff.

IV. Site Management & Facilities

Facility Sanitation & Safety Protocols

1. Maintain your schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection that had previously been established in Phase I and Phase II.
 - a. Clean and disinfect your facilities according to CDC hygiene standards, paying particular care to high-traffic areas, such as restrooms.
2. Implement conscientious cleaning plans around competitions to prepare for and manage increased traffic. It's important for cleaning staff to have a visible presence around the facility.
 - a. Facilities should be completely disinfected and cleaned before and after each competition day.
 - b. Facilities should be constantly cleaned and sanitized throughout competition days with focus on high-touch areas such as restrooms and bleachers.
3. Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations should be located around the facility and very easily identifiable.
4. If there are gates or doors around the facility, consider permanently propping them open during competition days to decrease the chance of virus spread.
5. Restroom operations should be adjusted to allow for social distancing and prevent the spread of the virus.
 - a. If restroom is small, consider making it a single-occupant restroom or limiting the number of people inside. Individuals need to properly social distance while in the restroom.

- i. Ground markings should be used to indicate socially distanced queuing. These marks should be at least 6-foot apart.
 - b. Restrooms with multiple doors should have clearly marked entry and exit doors in order to control the flow of traffic.
 - i. Floor markings can be used to encourage a one-way flow of traffic.
 - c. If porta-potties are used, place them so that doors are not adjacent to each other.
 - i. Ground markings should be used to indicate socially distanced queuing.
 - ii. Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations should be located outside of the porta-potties.
 - d. Consider adding a porta-potty for each field for use by players only.
- 6. Meeting rooms should not be used. Consider holding any meetings outside to allow for proper social distancing.
- 7. The use of locker rooms can be considered in Phase III if necessary, but if possible, should be avoided.
 - a. Locker rooms must be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized after each use.
 - b. A limited number of people should be able to access the locker room at a single time in order to maintain social distancing.
 - c. Signage should be considered to encourage social distancing inside the locker room.
 - i. The locker room should remain locked when not in use.

Access to Water or Water Fountains

1. Ensure appropriate hydration policies are in place with all participants and spectators having unlimited access to water for trainings and matches, especially in warm climates.
 - a. Participants are first and foremost encouraged to bring a minimum of two personally labeled bottles to training and competitions. Participants should not share their personal water bottles.
2. As alternatives when a participant or spectator does not have their own water bottles, the Club should carefully consider and plan how it can safely make water available.
 - a. Water fountains should be cleaned and sanitized constantly, especially during the summer months when use is more frequent.
 - i. Consider only allowing water bottles to be filled up at water fountains to eliminate possible contact between patrons and the spout.
 - ii. Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations should be located next to each water fountain for use after filling or drinking from the fountain.
 - b. As able, consider pre-poured individual disposal cups, or disposable water bottles, arranged by an adult wearing gloves. Set up the cups or bottles on a table or at individual prep stations. Avoid passing the cups or bottles by hand.

Signage

1. Facility policies and procedures, as it related to any COVID-19 mitigation measures, should be posted at each entrance and/or at the arrival/check-in location.
 - a. This should include clear signage indicating PPE should be worn.
2. General social distancing signage should be posted around the facility including field areas.
3. To manage inclement weather:

- a. If forecasted, consider posting specific protocols at entrances to the facility.
 - b. Post occupancy limits for any rooms that could be used for shelter in place protocols.
4. Restrooms should have the following signage:
 - a. [CDC recommended](#) hand washing procedures above each sink.
 - b. Signage limiting the number of people in each restroom.
 - c. Floor markings to encourage a one-way flow of traffic.
 - d. External ground markings to indicate restroom queuing that maintains social distancing. These marks should be at least 6-feet apart.
 5. Concession stands should have the following signage:
 - a. Ground markings to indicate concession queuing that maintains social distancing. These marks should be at least 6-feet apart.
 - b. Signage for cashless transactions, as needed.
 6. Locker rooms should have the following signage:
 - a. Signage limiting the number of people in each locker room.
 - b. General signage encouraging social distancing.

Field Layout (Including Benches)

1. Survey your site and carefully design a customized layout that will ensure teams, participants and spectators can appropriately socially distance in various stages of activities and play.
2. Designate clearly marked "entry" and "exit" points to your facilities and fields, coordinating with check-in locations for arrivals. Foot traffic should flow IN the entry and OUT the exit at all times.
3. For arrival to both trainings and matches, create "personal prep stations" – individual areas for players, coaches and referees.
 - a. Set up a line of cones 6-feet apart in an area to the side of the field of play.
 - b. Arrange one cone per participant (player, coach, referee)
 - c. When a participant arrives, designate a cone as their "personal prep station" for the duration of the training session or pre-game activities. The individual should place their bags, water bottles, towels, etc. at this cone.
4. Align team benches so they are not within close proximity to each other.
 - a. If fields are close together, move team benches for adjacent fields to opposite sides of the field to eliminate four team benches on one sideline in close proximity.
5. Expand benches to allow for six feet of space between each player and coach during the match.
 - a. If inventory does not allow for extended benches, similar to "personal prep stations," create a line of cones 6-feet apart (or use paint or other markings to clearly delineate) where players can sit socially distanced along the bench-side sideline.
6. Use signage, paint or other markings to delineate team areas and spectator areas.
7. Designate a spectator area with socially distance "Family Zones" for members of the same household to watch a match or training.
 - a. Clearly mark and space these zones at least six feet from the next family's zone.
 - b. Where possible, the zones should be 10 feet from the field of play and assistant referees on the sidelines.

- c. Spectator areas or family zones should be positioned on the side of the field opposite the benches.
- 8. In cases where adjacent fields mean benches are located on both sidelines, spectator areas may be relocated to the end lines.
 - a. If fields have a compact layout, consider creating one-way walking paths to the fields.
- 9. Paths should be created for both team benches and spectator areas.
- 10. If necessary, consider training and match-day schedules that avoid the use of adjacent fields at the same time.
- 11. Plan for extra time between matches and trainings to accommodate arrivals, departures, and equipment cleaning.

Concessions Management

1. While concession stands are not prohibited, they should be carefully adjusted to allow for social distancing and follow safety protocols that will help prevent the spread of the virus.
 - a. All food and drinks should be pre-packaged. No food should be prepared on-site.
 - b. Staff should wear proper PPE including face coverings and gloves.
 - c. Plexiglass walls should be installed between staff member and line.
 - d. The counter should be wiped down after each customer.
 - e. Cash transactions should be avoided, if possible.
 - f. Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations should be located by the point of sale for patrons to use either before or after making a purchase.
 - g. Ground markings should be used in order for concession queue to keep social distancing. These marks should be at least 6-feet apart.

V. Equipment Management for Trainings & Competitions

Shared Equipment

1. Field set-up for trainings or match warm-ups should aim to use minimal equipment to limit exposure and transmission of COVID-19.
2. Be vigilant about sterilization procedures. All equipment (e.g. flags, balls and cones) should be disinfected prior to the start of the session or match activities with anti-bacterial of at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.
 - a. Allow extra time between matches taking place in succession on the same field to ensure that all equipment is cleaned and sanitized between competitions. This includes equipment such as corner flags, goals, and balls, as well as benches.
3. Participants should not pick-up field equipment, move goals or handle other equipment.
4. Where able, clubs are recommended to provide soccer balls for training. As usual, the hosting team or organization should provide match balls for competition.
 - a. The club or coach should ensure that the balls are sanitized before and after each training and competition.

- b. Players are not recommended to bring their own balls. Should the training be structured whereby players bring their own balls, a parent or adult should ensure it is sanitized before and after training.
- 5. Players are not required to have an individual designated ball for training.
- 6. Goalkeepers should wear gloves when handling balls.
- 7. Where possible, general team bibs should not be used for training or matches.
 - a. Opposing teams should agree on uniform colors in advance of the match so that players can be notified accordingly and avoid the unnecessary need for bibs.
 - b. The coach/instructor is recommended to make a plan in advance of training and as necessary suggest a specific training gear color for players to arrive in.
 - i. Alternatively, clubs/organizers could temporarily issue team bibs to players. Participants would be responsible for bringing these bibs to training or matches and washing them after training or matches. Issued bibs should be clearly labeled and not shared or rotated amongst participants during training.
 - c. If team bibs are used, they should only be used by one participant and not shared or rotated amongst participants.
 - d. If team bibs are used, they should be placed at personal station ahead of participant arrivals, instead of handed out by coaches/staff.
 - e. Any team bibs used should be washed by the club/organizers afterwards in order to decrease the transmission of COVID-19.
- 8. It is not recommended to use shared or team cold tubs for recovery sessions. Players should consider using bathtubs at home for cold tub soak.

Individual Equipment

- 1. All individual training gear should be cleaned and disinfected after every session.
- 2. Where possible, players are not recommended to bring their own balls.
 - a. If balls are brought by the individual player, a parent or adult should ensure it is sanitized before and after training.
- 3. All participants should arrive in their gear.
 - a. All personal apparel should be cleaned, disinfected and properly stored after every training or competition. This includes cleats, shin guards and headbands (if reusable).
- 4. For players who use mouthguards, once the mouthguard is placed in mouth, it should never be taken out during practice to limit the transmission of virus.
 - a. If for some reason the mouth guard has been in contact with hands or the floor/ground, the mouthguard should not be re-used until it has been washed thoroughly. Wash your hands thoroughly after washing the mouthguard.
- 5. Coaching tools or equipment (ex. clipboards) should only be used by one coach and should not be shared amongst coaching staff.
- 6. Referee tools or equipment (ex. whistles, cards) should only be used by one referee and should not be shared.

IV. Competitions Considerations

Participating in Competitions & Tournaments

1. Teams are recommended to only participate in local or regional single-day, outdoor events to avoid travel and especially overnight stays during Phase III.
2. If travel is required to non-local competition or tournament, Phase III travel recommendations (outlined in Section III) should be followed.

Warm-Ups

1. Warm-ups should not begin until previous teams have left the field and equipment and benches have been cleaned and sanitized. Allow for extra time between matches to accommodate as necessary.
2. Competition warm-up recommendations follow Phase III training recommendations outlined below in this Section VI.
 - a. Coaches should not be within six feet of any player
 - b. Progressions between warm-up drills should be set up prior to players arriving to field. The players should not touch any equipment.
 - c. In general, maintain as much social distance as possible during warm-up activities.
3. Participants should avoid intentionally touching each other before or after competitions. This includes hugs, high-fives, or huddles.
4. If match balls are used during warm-up, they should be re-sanitized before the match.

Referee Considerations

1. Fields should still be walked.
2. Physical items (nets, goals, corner flags etc.) should be inspected visually.
3. If issues are identified – for example a goal net needs to be repaired or an object needs to be removed from the field of play – the referees should sanitize his or hands after managing.
4. Referees should maintain at least six feet distance when communicating with their referee crew, players and coaches.
 - a. If a fourth official is present, they should maintain six feet distance when communicating with coaches, players or their fellow referees.
 - b. If a fourth official's table is provided, the referee should check that it is six feet away from either bench or coaching area.
 - c. The fourth official should wear a mask for the duration of the match.

Pre-Game Activities

1. The coin toss should be socially distanced.
 - a. Only one referee and one representative per team should take part in the coin toss.
 - i. Only the owner of the coin should touch the coin.

- b. All participants involved in the coin toss should wear a mask, following recommendations that masks should be worn at all times excepting moments of physical exertion.
2. No pre-game handshakes shall take place.
3. Uniform or jewelry checks should be visible checks only, maintaining 6-ft between the referee and player.
4. Multiple rosters should be printed out to be able to show one to the referees. Player cards are to be shown to the referees by the coaches checking the team in.
 - a. Have player cards ready, in order listed on the roster.
 - b. Show each card to the referee as each name is called out.
 - c. Coaches are to keep player cards after check in.
 - d. Ejected players will be notified to the league director.
5. Team pre-game meetings should be kept brief.
 - a. All participants should wear proper PPE and endeavor to maintain space between themselves and others. Prolonged proximity, even with masks should be avoided.
 - b. Huddles should be avoided.

Game Time

1. Players and coaches at the bench, as well as referees at the fourth official's table, are reminded to wear PPE for the duration of the match.
2. No handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, chest bumps, huddles, group celebrations, etc., should take place, including when goals are scored, or when substitutions are leaving or entering the field.
3. The following modifications to substitutions protocols are suggested:
 - a. When subbing into the game, players should maintain distance from the referees and other players who are also subbing into the game.
 - b. If a player is subbed out of the game, the player should stand at least 6-feet away from other individuals while recovering before, putting on facemask.
4. For throw ins, active players are recommended to collect the balls.
 - a. Clean and sanitized balls may be readily available for use, in the case of the ball not being easily retrievable. It is the responsibility of the home team or competition organizer to supply all sanitized balls.
5. When possible during breaks in play, consider making sanitized balls available to replace used balls.
6. Avoid delays in start of play, so that players do not have pro-longed periods of standing in close proximity. For example, encourage all participants to conduct free kicks and set plays with efficiency so players do not have prolonged periods in shoulder-to-shoulder defense walls.

Hydration / Cool-Down / Sanitation Breaks

1. Competition organizers are strongly encouraged to consider and follow the necessary steps for approval to incorporate hydration / cool-down / or "sanitation" breaks during matches.
2. Consideration should be taken to incorporating these at the mid-way point of any half lasting thirty minutes or longer.

3. During this break:
 - a. Players should hydrate while socially distanced. This will also provide the brief opportunity for cooling down, which may not happen throughout the match while efficiency is enforced in game activities.
 - b. Players should sanitize their hands.
 - c. The hosting competition can sanitize game balls for use during the match.

Halftime

1. During halftime, referees, players and coaches should maintain at least six feet distance between each other.
2. All players and coaches should be wearing proper PPE.
 - a. If a player needs to recover before participating in halftime activities, player should stand 12 ft away from other individuals while recovering before putting on their face covering or mask.
3. Players should sanitize their hands.
4. Coaches should limit the amount of time the entire team is near the bench area at one time.
5. Referees should sanitize their own equipment (whistle, flags, etc.).

Considerations In The Case Of Injuries

1. As able, the Referee should keep a six-foot distance from the injured player while determining if medical attention is necessary
2. If needed, allow a coach or medical professional from the injured player's team to enter the field and attend to the player. The coach or medical professional should wear PPE and gloves while attending the player.
3. The Referee should remind other players to keep their distance from each other, and the injured player, during the break in play. Players should not congregate.

Post-Game

1. No post-game handshakes should take place. Consider other forms of sportsmanship or instituting new acknowledgement traditions, such as clapping, etc.
2. If a referee needs the coach's signature for a roster, place the paper down on the end of the bench and step away to have them sign it.
3. Teams should pack-up and immediately leave the field following the game, exiting at the designated exit point.
 - a. Post-game meetings should be kept brief, if any meeting is held at all.
 - 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. Do not have a team snack that is shared among the team members.
5. Players should not take off any equipment until they have left the facility.
6. Teams should clean up bench area so that it is clean of ALL trash.

7. Competition hosts should ensure all equipment, including benches, balls, flags, etc. are sanitized.
8. Spectators are encouraged to maintain social distancing following the game while waiting for their child.
 - a. Dependent on field layout, spectators may need to wait further away from the field.
9. Referees should leave field immediately following the game and referee duties have been completed assuming they have no other games to officiate.
 - a. Referee debrief sessions should be a conducted in a space where the referees can social distance but still in view of the game field.
 - b. If referees are working later in the day, the referee should stay away from other individuals, may consider departing the facility or using their personal vehicle as a place to take a break in between games.

Inclement Weather

1. Facilities should have a plan in place in the event of inclement weather.
 - a. As this plan may be different from pre-COVID-19 protocols, it should be adjusted and then communicated with all teams in advance of competitions.
 - b. If inclement weather is forecasted, consider posting protocols at all entrances and arrival/check-in locations.
2. Social distancing must be observed during any shelter-in-place or evacuation protocols.
 - a. PPE should be worn throughout the delay.
 - b. Participants should not take off their equipment during the delay.
3. Encourage all participants and spectators to return to their vehicles in the event of inclement weather.
 - a. When possible, individuals in the car should be limited to members of the immediate family. If non-family members must be present in the vehicle, everyone in the vehicle should wear PPE.
 - b. If possible, have a back-up option for those who were dropped off or do not have a vehicle on-site. This location should only be used as a last resort.
 - i. The number of people in these locations should be pre-determined and posted on the wall.
 - ii. In accordance with the Safe Soccer Framework and the U.S. Center for SafeSport policies and guidance, a minor and an adult who is not the minor player's parent/legal guardian may not be alone in a room together.
4. If inclement weather is forecasted, depending on the size of the field complex, the competition hosts may consider taking a conservative approach by communicating game delays or cancellations well in advance of match time.

Reverting to an Earlier Phase

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. Follow local public health official guidelines at all times.

- 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
- Changes to local public health official guidelines regarding group gatherings

Additional Resources

- [USOPC Coronavirus Resources](#)
- [USOPC – Coping with the Impact of Coronavirus for Athletes](#)
- [CDC Coronavirus Updates](#)
- [CDC Advice – How to Protect Yourself and Others](#)
- [CDC – Consideration for Youth Sports](#)
- [CDC – Workplace Decision Tree](#)
- [CDC – Camp Decision Tree](#)
- [CDC – Deciding to Go Out](#)
- [CDC – Community Mitigation Strategies](#)
- [FIFA COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [WHO Hand Washing Steps \(Video\)](#)
- [WHO Mass Gathering Guidelines Worksheet](#)
- [WHO Advice for Public](#)
- [US Center for Safe Sport Digital Safety](#)
- [US Soccer Recognize to Recover – COVID-19 and Mental Health](#)