



NORTH PUGET SOUND LEAGUE COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL 3/24/2021

Club Responsibilities:

- By registering your team to the league, the club and their teams, coaches, players, and parents agree to follow all league protocols, policies, and responsibilities.
- Create and distribute field maps on your website that have entrance and exits clearly marked, and home and away sidelines. Send to opponents.
- Provide opponents with any rules that are specific to your fields to be shared with visiting teams.
- Club will create diagram of field set up with regard to location of spectators and players, as field and locations vary, each field setup needs to follow social distancing guidelines.
- Post signs at your field(s) that clearly mark the entrances and exits (if a multi-field complex)
- All clubs are responsible for providing their coaching staff/managers hand sanitizer.
- Home clubs are responsible for field set-up and sanitization of all equipment at the beginning of the day, and in between games.
- All clubs are responsible for keeping attendance for which players are at every game.
- Have an effective communication plan in place. Identify strategies for working with public health to notify adult leaders, youth and their families if your organization learns a participant or adult leader has developed COVID-19 and may have been infectious to others while at a youth activity, while maintaining confidentiality as per law.
- Have an action plan in place, in case of a positive test.
- Train and educate all staff as to protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations and other necessary information.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations. Develop plans for temporary closure of outdoor activities to allow for contact tracing procedures and quarantine as needed.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.
- It is expected that clubs publish all relevant materials including this League Protocol on their website.
- Clubs will forward by email to coaches, players and parents NPSL league protocols, policies, and expectations around game day.
- Clubs will email their referee group about all league protocols, policies, and expectations around game day.
- Clubs will communicate any cancelations or shutdowns as quickly as possible to all team administrators and club leadership.
- Clubs will designate a COVID-19 contact person for any positive case to communicate with opposing teams should a case arise around a game weekend.
- Clubs should communicate with coaches, players and parents that COVID-19 protocols will follow local public health and CDC guidelines.
- Clubs will communicate with opponents if their field location has additional restrictions, especially spectator limits.



Coach Responsibilities:

- **No coach that is sick or has signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should attend.**
- Always wear a face mask, and maintain physical distance requirements from players (>6 feet) based on state and local health requirements.
- Use hand sanitizer before and after interacting with your team.
- Make sure that your team has left the field within 5 minutes of the game ending.
- Make sure the home team provides 3 balls per half that have been sanitized. Game balls from 1st half can be sanitized by the home team at half time.
- **Clustering of players should be avoided. There should be no gathering and socializing before or after the game by players. Coaches should not assemble their teams closely together for instruction; players should be spaced at least 6 feet apart for team meetings or instruction.**
- **No handshakes or fist bumps during or after the game.**
- Read out player names and numbers off the gameday/roster for game check-in to the referee.
- Leave game day paperwork for referee pickup, no hand off allowed.

Player Responsibilities:

- **Mask should be worn at all times, at check-in, while on the bench and during halftime. Under Washington State Phase 2 rule masks must be worn during games. Under Phase 3 rules masks may be remove during the game while on the pitch unless local rules mandate masks at all times.**
- **No player that is sick or has signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should attend.**
- Teams cannot enter the field area until previous teams have left the field. Entry and Exit points will be marked for multi-field complexes.
- Masks should be worn by players to and from the field.
- Soccer bags should be placed at least 6 feet apart from one another.
- Use hand sanitizer before and after the game.
- Clustering of players should be avoided. There should be no gathering and socializing before or after the game by players. Coaches should not assemble their teams closely together for instruction; players should be spaced at least 6 feet apart for team meetings or instruction.
- **No handshakes or fist bumps during or after the game.**

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:

- Under Washington State Phase 2 guidelines, there will be a maximum of 200 people allowed on the field including players, coaches, referees, club official and spectators. For multi field complexes, each field is limited to 75 people. Under Washington State Phase 3 guidelines, there will be a maximum of 200 people allowed on single field complexes as above but multifield complexes are allowed 150 people per field. **Local Club, County, City or School District policies for field access may be more strict and may further limit spectators. Those policies take precedence.**
- **Spectators must wear masks at all times.**



- **Spectators are allowed under WA Dept of Health guidelines, however they must remain a minimum of 10 feet from the field, sidelines, referees and team areas. All spectators are to remain socially distanced to allow 6 feet between individuals.**
- Drop player off no earlier than 30 minutes prior to kickoff.
- Do not loiter around field. Avoid gatherings of people.
- **No parent/guardian/caregiver or player that is sick or has signs or symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 should attend.**
- Spectators should not touch any game day equipment, including balls, cones, goals, etc.

Scheduling:

- Clubs should try to schedule games with time buffers in between to minimize contact between games.
 - 3 or more fields – Stagger games on 20 minute intervals .
 - 2 fields – Stagger games on 30 minute intervals.
- If the scheduled home team does not have field availability, they should work with the away team to host the match on the scheduled day.
- Should both teams not be able to make the scheduled game day work, but there is an open date acceptable to both teams that can be scheduled, teams may do so.
- Reschedules to other weekends are allowed to get the league in.
- No forfeiture fees for last minute cancellations due to COVID-19.
- Clubs should work with their field providers to assess whether there will be charges imposed for last minute cancellations.

Club Player Pass:

- The NPSL Player Pass policy as listed on the NPSL web site remains in place with the exception that for any game, a team may only use a maximum of **3 player** passes regardless of roster #s.
- All player passes must be approved by Yousef Habash- NPSL Competition Director.
- All player passes must be monitored and recorded by the club for contact tracing purposes.
- It is imperative that clubs track rosters so that contact tracing can happen in the event of a COVID exposure.

Player Injury Procedures:

- In case of an emergency, call 911.
- A First Aid Kit / Medical Bag should be kept on the sideline at all times.
- Coaches must wear a mask if tending to an injured player.
- Other players should not approach the injured player to avoid a crowd and keep distance.
- For minor injuries, coach approaches player and asks from a distance if they are able to walk off the field unassisted.
- If a head injury has occurred and is emergent, call 911. If a non-emergent head injury and player can walk off the field, allow them to do so. Follow all concussion protocols.
- If an injury takes place that prevents a player from walking off the field under their own power, coach should put gloves on from the medical bag, provide the player with a mask, and assist the player off the field. Parent should then be called and allowed to tend to the player.



Field Setup:

- Teams will take opposite sides of the field in order to prevent any additional contact. *See field map at the end of the document.* Home team will dictate which side of the field teams take. Club will create diagram of field set up with regard to location of spectators and team, as field and location vary, each field setup needs to follow social distancing guidelines.
- No closed tents. If benches are used on the sideline, players should be separated by at least two empty seats. Alternatively, individual chairs can be used for substitutes, but each team is responsible for providing their own. Players should wear masks when not playing.
- **Spectators are allowed under WA Dept of Health guidelines, however they must remain a minimum of 10 feet from the field and remain socially distanced to allow 6 feet between individuals. All spectators must wear a mask.**
- Clubs/teams must follow the rules of the field they are playing on.
- There should be adequate distance between adjoining fields to allow social distancing on the sidelines.

League Communication Plan:

- League will publish all relevant materials around this League Protocol on the NPSL website.
- NPSL's operations committee will be happy to work with Club leadership to answer questions and help facilitate league play under this safety protocol.

Case of Infection:

It is expected that all Clubs participating in NPSL have a published COVID-19 protocol and designated club leadership to address COVID issues, and will rapidly communicate with NPSL if a COVID-19 diagnosis that fits the below criteria occurs.

When an athlete is diagnosed with COVID-19:

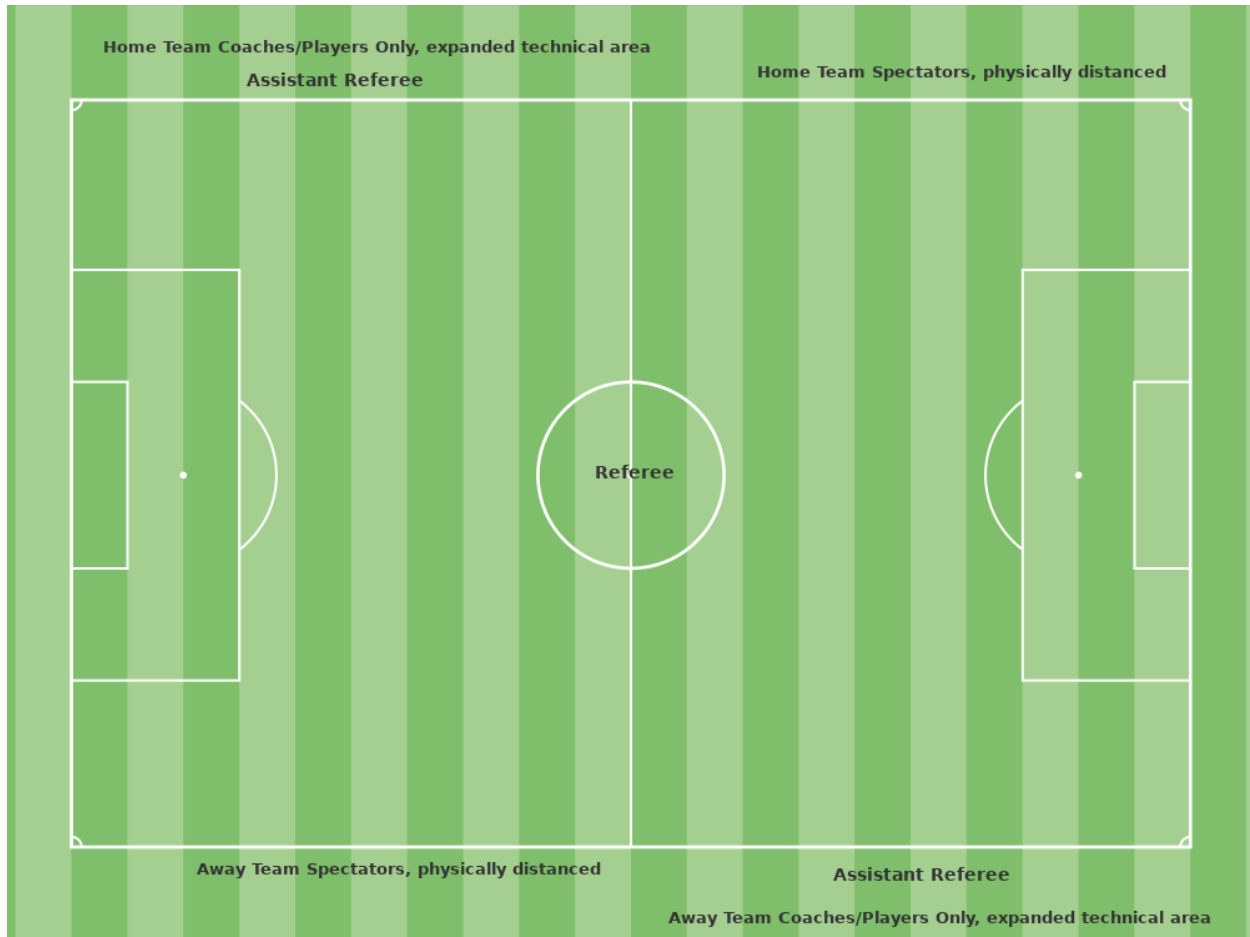
- Have the player stay home
- If the infected player was in contact with their team within 48 hours of diagnosis, have the team quarantine – contact each of the parents/guardians that “someone” on the team has tested positive for the virus (do not reveal name of infected individual). It is recommended each of these players should also be tested for COVID-19.
- If the infected player played in a game with their team within 48 hours of diagnosis, Club COVID Contact must notify the opposing team immediately and NPSL – have opposing team quarantine (COVID test recommended).
- Infected player cannot return to practice or games until they have written medical clearance from their physician.
- Disinfectant all equipment.

When a coach has come in contact with or is infected with COVID-19:

- Get tested and stay home.
- Contact your club immediately.
- Inform the team – if you have maintained social distance from all your players your players do not necessarily need to get tested but may choose to.
- Disinfect all equipment.



Proposed Field Set Up



Referee Responsibilities:

Prior to the Game:

- Before leaving for the field, Referees should ask themselves the following questions:
 - Have you knowingly come into contact with anyone who has, is being tested for, or is exhibiting signs of coronavirus? (Yes or No)
 - Are you exhibiting any of the following symptoms which are not caused by any other condition? (Yes or No)
 - Fever or chills
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell



- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea
- If the referee answers yes to any of these questions, they should notify their assignor and refrain from officiating the game.

Pre-Game:

- Personal Stations for referees
 - The referee crew should set up their belongings in an area away from all others while maintaining 6-ft/2-yd space from each other.
 - Referees should not bring any unnecessary belongings to the field.
 - Referees are expected to arrive to the field fully dressed.
 - Gold referee jersey is the recommended color to avoid clashing.
 - If case of a conflict with the teams, alternate color jerseys should be on hand.
 - Assistant referees are expected to bring their own flags to the field. The flags don't need to match each other.
 - Referee equipment should not be shared, but if shared, it should be sanitized before and after the match.
 - Masks must be worn at all times, during pre-game/game/half-time and after the match.
 - Referees should carry hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes for their own personal use.
 - Referees may use a regular whistle or an electronic whistle.
- During the referee crew pregame discussion, continue to maintain 6-ft/2-yd space and insure all COVID-19 protocols are discussed.
- Field and Equipment Inspection:
 - Field should still be walked. Visual inspection only of the goals, nets and flags.
 - If an item needs to be fixed or removed from the field, notify the home team as soon as possible-
 - Game balls –
 - The referee should inspect all game balls, but without handling them. For better efficiency, it is recommended there be more than one game ball.
- Player Check-In:
 - Rosters
 - Have the coach place the roster at the end of the bench or on the ground to minimize close contact.
 - Have the coach read the player passes.
 - Uniform/Jewelry checks – should be visual check only maintaining proper physical distance between referee and players.
- Coin Toss:
 - No coin toss.
 - While maintaining 6-ft space, the Home team picks direction to attack. Away team gets kick-off.



- No player walkouts or handshakes prior to the game.

During the Game:

- Technical Area (bench) and all others, COVID-19 protocol expects all players, team officials, and spectators to maintain at least a 6 - 10 ft. distance from the touchline, dependent on the facility.
 - This is NOT the referee crew's responsibility to maintain.
 - Communicate with the coaches if anyone is not maintaining the proper distance from the touchline.
 - If the problem persists, have a conversation with the full crew and both coaches to try to resolve the issue.
 - If at any time the referee crew does not feel safe during a match because proper distancing by spectators from the crew is not being followed, you can end the match due to safety concerns.
- Try to maintain recommended distancing during the match.
- Drop Ball – no referee handling, ensure all except one player maintain a 4.5 yd. distance from the ball and restart with a whistle.
- Penalty kicks – do not handle the ball. Place the ball on the mark, the player can then adjust.
- Medical Situations –
 - Remain 6 ft. away from the injured player while determining if medical attention is needed.
 - If so, the team trainer or a coach from the player's team should attend to the injured player.

Halftime:

- Masks should be worn during halftime.
 - Referees should maintain proper distancing during the halftime conversation.
- It is recommended referees use hand sanitizer and sanitize all referee equipment again during halftime.

After the Game:

- No handshakes, fist bumps, or high fives after the game. This can be replaced with a wave.
- If a coach's signature is required on the match report, lay the report on the bench or ground and back up, allowing for the coach to sign.
 - If you are required to leave a match report for the team(s), leave at the end of the team bench.
- When debriefing with the referee crew, find a space where everyone can be seen and heard, while allowing for proper distancing.
- If working multiple games, wipe down and sanitize your equipment between your matches.
- Once the game is over and the crew has debriefed, leave the field. Do not congregate around the field.
- Should you encounter any difficulty implementing these protocols, please complete a supplemental report and notify your assignor.
 - Assignors, please notify the proper club administrators if a referee crew should encounter any problems implementing the protocols.



- For contact tracing purposes, if a referee is to test positive for COVID after a match, they need to notify the assignor immediately. The assignor will be responsible for notifying the appropriate club official.