

RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOLS FOR SOCCER IN ARKANSAS



JUNE 3 – JUNE 30 **

Arkansas Soccer Association (ASA) is dedicated to protecting the health and safety of all people. The purpose of this document is to provide athletes, parents, coaches, and member soccer organizations with information they can use to assist them in developing their return to training programs within the context of COVID-19. As guidelines meant to be used by athletes and member organizations with vastly different resources, this document cannot be prescriptive; rather, it should spark thoughtful deliberation among athletes, coaches, and staff, who will use the information to create their own unique return to training plan that is specific to their situation. Many of the recommendations rely upon rules and regulations set forth by public health authorities, which will be different across the state. There will be other logistical challenges of returning to training.

The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content, including any 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, ASA 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 if you have specific questions about your return to training and competition.

Member organizations considering resuming training on or after May 18th should have an operational plan in place to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19. On May 21, Governor Hutchinson issued a directive for Community and School Sponsored Team Sports. Under that directive, team practices and competitions are prohibited. **Team practice would include: scrimmages, simulated competition, or drills that require personal contact within 12 feet.** This directive is until further notice but certainly applies until at least June 30. Individual practices are permitted. Training is permitted, provided social distancing is increased to 12 feet during vigorous training. Additional requirements are set forth on Page 3 of this document. A link to the May 21 directive is below under "Resources." Given the changing pandemic environment, these guidelines are subject to change. Most, if not all, cities and counties have a phased approach to reopening businesses and the easing of social distancing requirements which will vary across the state. Youth and team sports may not be a high priority for some local officials, and this may pose significant challenges for some member organizations. Member organizations must be aware of and adhere to all Federal, State, and Local guidelines and requirements.

Finally, every case of this disease is potentially life-altering or deadly, particularly for those with risk factors that may occur within our communities. 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 in the forefront when designing and considering your return to training program. The risks of participation must be clearly communicated with parents and participants in your respective programs. No one should ever be required to participate and no one should be penalized because they chose not to participate.

Member organizations are encouraged to make plans available to staff, parents, and the youth they serve. Requirements for safe participation in the activities should also be posted on the organization's website and at the facility, if possible. **Plans should include the following elements based on guidance from the State of Arkansas and as recommended by CDC.**

Resources:

- CDC recreational guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/index.html>
- EPA list of COVID-19 effective disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
- Caring for Our Children (CFOC) standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting educational facilities for children: <https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/3.3>
- Governor Hutchinson's May 21 Directive: https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/pdf/directive_team_sports_.pdf

****Dates are estimated targets with consideration to the Governor's Directives.
If there are changes to the orders, then updates will be made to this document.**

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Member organizations should use the following protocols as they prepare to offer activities on or after June 3

Club Responsibilities:

- Create and distribute protocols to its members.
- Have an effective communication plan in place; identify strategies for working with public health to notify adult leaders, players, and their families if the organization learns a participant or adult leader has developed COVID-19, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that many be uncomfortable with returning to play.
- Train and educate all staff on protocols, 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 facilities; cancel trainings or camps to properly disinfect; ensure others are not infected.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.
- Provide hand sanitizing or hand washing stations and waste receptacles at fields.

Coach Responsibilities:

- Make health and safety of the athletes a priority.
- Inquire how the athletes are feeling, send them home should you believe they act or look ill.
- Follow all club, local, state, and federal health protocols.
- Coach is the only person to handle cones, disk, etc.
- Ensure social distancing per state or local health guidelines. Social distancing of 12 feet between all players and coaches is required during vigorous activities.
- Have fun, stay positive – players and parents are looking to you to stay calm, supportive, and caring during this time.
- The use of scrimmage vest or bibs is not recommended at this time.

Player Responsibilities:

- Wash hands thoroughly before and after training.
- Bring and use hand sanitizer at every training.
- Encouraged to wear mask before and immediately after all training. Players do not need to wear face masks during training.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's water, snack, or bag.
- **Players should use their own equipment, but this would not preclude passing between teammates, provided 12 feet social distancing is maintained at all times.**
- Practice social distancing and place bags and personal equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- Wash and sanitize all equipment before and after every training.
- No group celebrations, no high 5's, huddles, hugs, handshakes, fist bumping, chest bumping, etc.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Check your child's temperature prior to any training session. If your child is not feeling well or if a temperature is detected, do NOT go to practice.
- Notify club immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason.
- Limited or no carpooling.
- Maintain proper social distancing from non-family members.
- Wash training attire after every training session.
- Ensure all equipment, cleats, ball, shin guards, etc. are sanitized before and after every training.
- Do not assist coach with training equipment.
- Be sure your child has necessary sanitizer with them at every training.
- Always remind your child of their responsibilities before every training session.

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Details pertaining to Gov. Hutchinson's modified May 21 Directive regarding Community and School Sponsored Team Sports

General Requirements:

- Maintain minimum physical distancing of six (6) feet between participants at all times, except when actively participating in the sports activity.
- Athletes, Coaches, and All Staff must be screened prior to any activity by asking the following questions and excluded if the answer is yes.
 - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the last 2 days
 - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, sore throat, or loss of taste or smell
 - Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days
- Coaches and All Staff must have temperature checked by digital thermometer prior to entry, and those whose temperature is greater than 100.4°F must be excluded.
- Face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth are **strongly encouraged** for everyone 10 years of age or older **for outdoor sports**. **Face coverings are required for indoor sports**.
 - Athletes
 - Face coverings are **strongly encouraged when not actively participating in an outdoor sports activity**
 - Face coverings or masks must be worn during **indoor sports** where a face covering is not inhibitory.
 - Coaches and Staff
 - Face coverings must be worn at **all times for indoor sports and are strongly encouraged for outdoor sports**
- Use of communal spas, showers, saunas or other similar equipment are prohibited. Locker rooms may only be used for storage of personal items. Social

distancing of 6 feet must be maintained in the locker room.

- An alcohol-based hand sanitizer or adequate handwashing facilities must be provided for use by all attendees.
- Sports equipment, restrooms, lockers, water fountains and other high touch surfaces must be sanitized frequently during each event.
- For games, competitions, tournaments, meets, and other athletic events held in a facility, the facility hosting the event must follow the current Directive for Large Indoor or Large Outdoor Venues. Spectators are covered under these Directives. This means no more than 50 attendees.

Close Contact Team Sports (including soccer):

- Team practice and/or competition is prohibited due to the close personal contact that is required or anticipated. Individual practice is permitted.
 - **Team practice would include: scrimmages, simulated competition, or drills that require personal contact within 12 feet**
- Conditioning and training may occur if the following conditions are implemented, in addition to the General Requirements:
 - Group size must be sufficiently limited to maintain 6 feet between each person, including staff, whenever in an indoor or outdoor enclosed space.
 - When using weight rooms, practicing calisthenics, running, or other conditioning training where vigorous exercise occurs, must maintain proper spacing from others by working out with 12 feet between each person. This may require closing or moving some equipment.
- Individual practice participants should use their own equipment. **This would not preclude activities such as passing a ball back and forth between players, provided 12 feet of social distancing is maintained.**