

Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer - COVID-19 Returning to Play Recommendations

Return to Play Protocols

These guidelines will provide direction for the immediate re-opening stages upon a county turning Green. This is a local, club-based restart. Due to the restrictions of no contact, no other sanctioned soccer activity such as tryouts, scrimmages or other competition is yet to be approved.

The guidance from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on the Green Phase still engages in mitigation strategies for COVID-19. It is a cautious and gradual re-opening. Most businesses and programs will operate at limited capacity upon entering the Green Phase. We will be no different. As the Governor and Department of Health provide additional information and guidance beyond the initial opening, we too will expand the opportunities for soccer.

These guidelines were created in consultation with those developed by US Soccer, USASA, the CDC and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and is a collection of best practices for carefully moving forward in the COVID-19 world. We encourage you to follow all aspects set forward in our guidelines, but to also implement additional strategies based on the input of these other agencies.

The conditions during this pandemic have continually evolved and changed weekly, sometimes daily. We know additional information and new guidelines are forthcoming. They will change at any time, so we must be flexible. These guidelines will be updated as necessary.

This information does not replace the advice or direction of medical professionals. The risks of infection still exist. Until a vaccine or cure is developed for COVID-19, we must proceed cautiously and continue to monitor and comply with the Governor's office, PA Department of Health, CDC and any other federal or local regulations.

Please recognize that many families and individuals will have reservations about re-opening and reintegrating. We must be respectful, sensitive and flexible as we restart. If anyone is not comfortable returning to play, they should not.

Returning to Play

Yellow Phase

- No organized training
- No organized playing

Green Phase – *remember that “green” does not mean full steam. A gradual build up to normal activity is still highly recommended to monitor the health of the participants.*

Clubs

- Activity may begin within your club only. Activity should be kept local, within your community.
- No contact training. No games. No interaction with other organizations.
- After a 2-3 week safety check, with no roll-backs (County or State) full games with contact may begin.
- Individuals must comply with restrictions of their home county.
- Engage with management of your practice facilities to learn and comply with their policies and procedures.
- Fields must be legally open. No training on a space/field without insurance certificate issued (standard regardless of COVID-19) and permission from the facility.
- Create an action plan
- Actions to take upon notification of a positive test result for a club/team member.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations if necessary.
- Develop a plan for social distancing and adequate field space.
- Minimize interactions among teams.
- Consider field/training area lay out, entrance and exit from fields, managing training schedules.
- Social distancing required in all areas, including but not limited to sidelines, bench areas, clubhouse, parking lot.
- Spectators are not essential to training and not recommended to attend.
- Green Phase will be further determined with additional guidelines from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Coaches/Players

- Comply with Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Eastern Pennsylvania Soccer and any additional club directives or requirements.
- Reinforce directives, policies and protocols as necessary with players.
- As players arrive, inquire how they're feeling. If they are ill or appear to be ill, send them home.
- Supply your medical kit or bag with gloves, extra masks, sanitizer, and facial tissues.
- Implement social distancing at all times. Each player and their equipment at least six (6) feet from the next player.
- Coaches wear masks at all times.
- Players may wear masks during training at their discretion. Must wear when not engaged in soccer activity.
- Only coaches should touch or move equipment.
- No bodily contact in training.
- After a 2-3 week safety check, with no roll-backs (County or State) full games with contact may begin.
- Sanitize all equipment after training.
- Scrimmage vests are not recommended.
- Minimize interaction with other teams that train before or after you.
- Keep attendance records for future reference (i.e. contact tracing)
- Monitor health and fitness levels of returning players