



LENOIR YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION RETURN-TO-PLAY PLAN

North Carolina Youth Soccer Association (NCYSA) has announced that the spring NCYSA competitive seasons have been cancelled due to the continuing Corona Virus pandemic.

Member associations have been cleared to resume training activities beginning on June 1st, in accordance with NCYSA guidelines.

This document is intended to provide parents and players with information about how LYSA programs will operate, as well as the steps being taken to allow our players back on the field in a safe and healthy environment.

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 informational purposes only. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, LYSA 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 in your area if you have specific questions. These guidelines address only early phases of return-to-play and additional guidelines may, or may not, follow as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.

Although the young and healthy may be subject to less severe cases of COVID-19, every case of this disease is potentially life-altering or deadly, particularly in those with risk factors that may occur within our communities. Health consequences may be long-standing and only apparent weeks after initial infection and recovery. 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.

Our approach to return to play is divided into several phases, representing the different stages of progress required to achieve the ultimate goal of playing with no restrictions or recommendations related to COVID-19.

This document represents our “Phase 1,” and is a comprehensive model to allow soccer to operate under key safety plans and considerations. We will provide additional information to follow. These guides include a detailed approach to social distancing, screening, training, and interactions to ensure consistent and best practices are followed to promote the health and safety of all participants and fans.



Health Measures Being Undertaken

When we return to play, various new health and safety measures, some temporary and some permanent, will be employed to protect players, coaches and families. These are meant to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19.

- No players or personnel with signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days or have known exposure to someone that has been ill within 14 days will be allowed to participate until a 14-day quarantine period has passed.
 - Symptoms include:
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
 - Fever >100.4 F
 - Chills
 - Headache
 - Sinus congestion
 - Cough persistent and or productive
 - Joint aches and soreness
 - Vomiting or diarrhea
 - Rash
- Players and personnel will have not travelled for 14 days prior to beginning training.
- Players and personnel will have no above normal temperature readings. Temperature checks will not be conducted by staff but by players and their families prior to attending training.
- Upon arrival to training, coaches or staff will inquire with each athlete if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they will be sent home and instructed to contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- Training sessions will take place outside in an area where social distancing can be maintained. Current NC guidelines are groups of no more than 25, including players and coach(es).
- As a guideline, two groups of 25 may train on a full-size field, one at each end. Actual group size and younger age appropriate fields may require adjustments.
- Participants will use their own equipment and properly sanitize the equipment after every training session.
- Participants should use their own water bottle, towel and any other personal hygiene products.
- Any activities that may require direct or indirect contact (e.g. bumping) between athletes will be avoided.
- A cleaning schedule/protocol for equipment with the proper use of disinfectant before, during, and after training will be utilized
- While coaching can occur onsite, coaches must maintain social distancing from all participants.



LYSA Player and Parent Return-to-Play Protocols

Player Responsibilities:

- With parent direction, take your temperature daily and especially before activities with others.
- **Wash hands** thoroughly before and after training. Avoid touching your face.
- Bring your own, and use, **hand sanitizer** with you at every training.
- **Wear mask** before and immediately after all training. Bandana or a shirt over face also is acceptable
- **Do not touch or share** anyone else's equipment (ex. gloves, shoes, uniforms, water, food)
- Practice **social distancing**, including placing bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- Wash and sanitize all equipment before and after every training.
- No group celebrations, high-5s, hugs, handshakes, fist-bumps, etc.
- Follow all CDC guidelines as well those of your local health authorities. • Stay in shape and work on your skills at home

Parent Responsibilities:

- **Parents must sign acknowledgement of Return-to-Play form before players may attend training.**
- **If your child is sick, with any illness, the child should remain home**
- Notify your club immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason.
- Ensure your child is healthy and symptom-free and check your child's temperature before activities with others.
- Ensure your child's medical waiver includes any high risks (ex. asthma, diabetes, immunocompromised conditions)
- Consider not carpooling or extremely limited carpooling.
- **Stay in car or adhere to social distance** requirements, based on state and local health requirements
- When at training, **wear a mask** if outside your car.
- Ensure child's clothing is washed after every training.
- Ensure all **equipment** (cleats, ball, shin guards etc.) are **sanitized** before and after every training.
- Do not assist your coach with equipment before or after training.
- Be sure your child has necessary sanitizing products with them at every training



Protocols for Reporting and Communication of COVID-19 Exposure

- Staff members, including coaches, are required to report if they test positive for COVID-19, are suspected of being positive for COVID-19, or have been directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- Any player who has tested positive for COVID-19, is suspected of being positive for COVID-19 or who has been directly exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 is required to report this to the LYSA President, Heath Swanson.
- If a case of COVID-19 is reported, all staff and players who came into contact with that person will be notified. Due to privacy issues and HIPPA laws, the identity of that person will remain anonymous.
- Once notified that an individual who has tested positive with COVID-19 has been in close proximity (within 6 feet) with any staff member or player, those staff members and players must adhere to the following protocol.
 - Notify their primary physician.
 - Staff members and players should begin in-home isolation for a 14-day period.
 - Staff members and players may discontinue in-home isolation if they undergo testing and the test result is negative
- Before a staff member or player who has tested positive for COVID-19 can return to training or games, the following conditions must be met:
 - A minimum of 7 seven days must pass since the initial onset of symptoms.
 - A minimum of 72 hours must pass without symptoms, and without the aid of fever-reducing medications.
 - The staff member and player must attain a negative COVID-19 test result.



Equipment Management

Team Equipment

1. Field set-up will aim to use minimal equipment to limit transmission of virus.
Players may not pick-up field equipment, move goals or handle other necessary training equipment.
2. Where able, clubs are recommended to provide soccer balls for training.
 - a. The club or coach should ensure that the balls are sanitized before and after each training.
 - 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 must ensure it is sanitized before and after training.
3. Players are not required to have an individual designated ball for training.
 - a. The use of shared balls between players is allowed in foot drills with avoidance of the use of hands.
 - b. Field players will not handle soccer balls with their hands unless wearing gloves.
 - c. A notable exception to this recommendation is for goalkeepers. For goalkeeper training, soccer balls should not be shared. Plan for one soccer ball per goalkeeper.
If the goalkeeper is involved in an activity with field players and using his or her hands, use the goalkeeper's designated ball(s).
4. All field equipment (e.g. balls and cones) will be disinfected prior to the start of the session with anti-bacterial of at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol.
5. Where possible, general team bibs will not be used.
 - a. The coach is recommended to make a plan in advance of training and as necessary suggest a specific training gear color for players to arrive in.
 - b. If team bibs are used, they will only be used by one player and not shared or rotated amongst players.
 - i. If team bibs are used, they should be placed at personal station ahead of player arrival, instead of handed out by coaches/staff.
 - ii. Any team bibs used should be washed by the club afterwards in order to decrease the transmission of the virus.

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.
If balls are brought by the individual player, the player should ensure it is sanitized before and after training.
3. All participants should arrive in their training gear.



4. All personal equipment should be cleaned, disinfected and properly stored after every session. This includes cleats, shin guards and headbands (if re-usable).
5. 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. 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.
6. Upon arrival home, players should immediately wash hands, bathe including washing hair, and launder/clean items used.

Mental Wellness

- During this unprecedented time, our lives have been disrupted. Training, playing and even watching sports is different in our current landscape. This crisis can cause negative impacts on our mental and emotional wellbeing. It is important to be aware of the impact this can have on our health so we can help ourselves. Self-care and knowledge of resources that are available are helpful in times of crisis. You may be experiencing a range of emotions, including:
 - a. Anxiety
 - b. Stress
 - c. Sadness
 - d. Worry or fear
 - e. Loneliness
 - f. Or other uncomfortable emotions
- Social distancing can feel like you have to be socially isolated, but it's important to remember that this is not the case. You can still safely talk and interact with teammates and colleagues while following simple safety guidelines:
 - i. Staying 6ft apart where possible
 - ii. Maintaining good hygiene
 - iii. Avoid physical contact (ex: use Air-high fives as opposed to regular contact high fives)
 - iv. Stay home when you are sick

You can find additional resources for mental health during COVID 19 at [U.S. Soccer's Recognize to Recover web page](#).



Acknowledgement of Return-to-Play Protocol

On the next page is a copy of the *Parent and Player COVID-19 Return-to-Play Agreement and Consent Form* and *Assumption of Risk Statement*. Every family must acknowledge that they have read this form, understand its contents and agree to abide by the protocols set forth therein.

Everyone will acknowledge and sign this form electronically through each player's registration for tryouts.

Players will not be allowed to participate in any LYSA sanctioned activities without the completion of this form and acknowledgement statement.

The final page of this document is a sample safety checklist to be completed by coaches at each training session.



NCYSA AND LYSA COMMUNICABLE DISEASE RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT

In consideration of being allowed to participate in any way in any North Carolina Youth Soccer Association, Inc. (“NCYSA”) and Lenoir Youth Soccer Association (LYSA) related events and activities, I, the undersigned participant and/or parent (or legal guardian) acknowledge, appreciate, and agree that:

By participating in NCYSA/LYSA related events and activities, there are certain risks to me arising from or related to possible exposure to communicable diseases including, but not limited to, the virus “severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, which is responsible for the Coronavirus Disease (also known as COVID-19) and/or any mutation or variation thereof (collectively referred to as “Communicable Diseases”). I am fully aware of the hazards associated with such Communicable Diseases and knowingly and voluntarily assume full responsibility for any and all risk of personal injury, illness or other loss that I may sustain in connection with such Communicable Diseases.

I, for myself and for my minor child(ren) or ward(s), and on behalf of my/our heirs, assigns, beneficiaries, executors, administrators, personal representatives, and next of kin, **HEREBY EXPRESSLY RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS, AND FOREVER DISCHARGE BOTH LENOIR YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION and NORTH CAROLINA YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION, INC.** and their officers, directors, officials, agents, representatives, employees, other participants, sponsors, advertisers, and, if applicable, owners and lessors of premises upon which NCYSA/LYSA related events and activities take place (the “Released Parties”), from any and all claims, demands, suits, causes of action, losses, and liability of any kind whatsoever, whether in law or equity, arising out of or related to any **ILLNESS, INJURY, DISABILITY, DEATH, OR OTHER DAMAGES** incurred due to or in connection with any Communicable Diseases, **WHETHER ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASED PARTIES OR OTHERWISE**, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

I agree that this Agreement is intended to be as broad and inclusive as is permitted by the laws of the State of North Carolina, and if any portion hereof is held invalid, it is agreed that the remainder shall continue in full legal force and effect.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

X _____

Participant’s Signature Name Age Date

FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS OF PARTICIPANT OF MINOR AGE (UNDER AGE 18 AT TIME OF REGISTRATION)

I certify that I am the legal parent/guardian with responsibility for the above participant, and that I have read this Agreement and do consent and agree to his/her release of all the Released Parties as provided above. I further agree that, for myself, my heirs, assigns, beneficiaries, executors, administrators, personal representatives, and next of kin, I expressly release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Released Parties from any and all liability incident to the above Participant’s involvement or participation in NCYSA related events or activities as provided herein, **EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES**, to the fullest extent permitted by law.

X _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Emergency Phone Number(s): _____



Date:				
Players at training:				
Medical waiver checked for players at higher risk, e.g. asthma				
Player health inquiries made. Specifically : Sore throat, Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, Fever >100.4 F, Chills, Headache, Sinus congestion, Cough, Joint aches and soreness, Vomiting or diarrhea, Rash				
All athletes have their own individual equipment (ball, water, bag etc.)				
Coach is the only person to handle equipment (e.g. cones, disk etc.); do not enlist parental or attendee assistance.				
All training conducted outdoors and compliant with social distancing per state or local health guidelines.				
Coach always wears a face mask				
Coaches maintain social distance requirements from players and parents based on state and local health requirements. Avoid huddles, parent conferences, etc. if social distancing is difficult. Pinnies/Scrimmage vests are not used.				
Have fun, stay positive – players and parents are looking to you for leadership.				

