

# Harmar Soccer Club

## Return to Play Protocol



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The Harmar Soccer Club (HSC) Covid-19 Return to Play protocol is based upon requirements and guidance from PA West (which includes the guidance of US Soccer, USYS, USASA, CDC, PA Advisories, and directives from local government), the PA Governor's Office, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society (PRPS), and Allegheny County. All Harmar Soccer Club members are required to read the Return to Play document and asked to adhere to the plan described herein.

These guidelines are only applicable when an area has been designated "Green" by the Commonwealth of PA. Areas designated "Yellow" and "Red" are not cleared for organized sports activity. We must also follow requirements set forth by Allegheny County, and Harmar Township. Clubs may be more restrictive but cannot loosen the requirements set forth by the convening health authorities. Note that this plan will be updated as necessary to reflect changes mandated by PA West, the PA Governor's Office, the CDC, and Allegheny County. At a minimum, the plan will be reviewed prior to the start of each sponsored activity. All changes to this plan will be communicated to HSC members and posted to the HSC website.

Pennsylvania Department of Health's "Green" designation requires following the CDC Guidelines for COVID-19. CDC Guidelines offer four areas for action in youth sports: Promote Behaviors to Reduce Spread, Creating a Healthy Environment, Utilizing Healthy Operations, and Preparing for Illness.

### **CDC Guidance #1 - BEHAVIORS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD**

- Wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer frequently.
- Do not attend practice or game if not feeling well.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- Coaches, spectators, players on bench must wear masks. Players must wear masks to and from practices and games.
- Avoid touching your face.
- HSC will provide adequate supplies of hand sanitizer.
- Disinfect non-washable equipment like cleats, ball, guards, gloves.
- Promptly leave after practices and matches
- Players should bring their own water bottle, do not share
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating game time snacks.
- Coaches will setup and tear down equipment such as cones and move/place goals as needed. Players will not assist in order to avoid contact with the equipment.
- Players playing in the goalie position shall wear gloves when practicing and playing games in the goalie position. Goalies shall own and bring their own gloves and shall not share with other players.

- Communal pennies SHOULD NOT BE USED. If coaches have their own pinnie supply, coaches must:
  - NOT have players switch pinnies during practice due to risk of spread
  - Collect pennies in a garbage or shopping bag after player use, and take home to immediately wash.

## **CDC Guidance #2 - CREATE A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT**

- A Participation Waiver is required prior to participation in any HSC activity by every coach, player and referee acknowledging the risks of possible exposure to illness from infectious diseases including COVID-19. This waiver form was incorporated into the HSC Fall 2020 registration form.
- No sharing of water bottles, snacks, or equipment.
- Coaches, spectators, players on bench must wear masks. Players must wear masks to and from practices and games.
- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet should be observed by players when possible and by all others at all times.
- Strict adherence to schedule. Prompt start, finish as scheduled and prompt departure should occur for trainings and games.
- Team huddles should observe social distancing. No handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, etc. Incorporate other methods: gestures, “air high-fives”, dance, etc. (coach and player responsibility).
- Organize “stations” for each player at or around the bench area that are 6 feet apart in which players keep belongings. They shall be required to return to their “station” during breaks.
- Parents should remain in their cars during training and games.
- No half-time or post-game snacks.
- There will be no post-game handshake or team huddles. Players should clean up their gear and join their parents in their cars promptly.
- Pre-game and half-time huddles should observe social distancing, no handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps or hugs. Use alternative gestures to celebrate.
- HSC should make handwashing facilities should be available when possible.
- Hand sanitizer station on every bench. All coaches and referees will be provided hand sanitizer. It is recommended that each player carry his/her own hand sanitizer as well.
- Restrooms should be cleaned regularly using disinfecting cleaners.
- Organize “stations” for each player at or around the bench area that are 6 feet apart in which players keep belongings. They shall be required to return to their “station” during breaks.
- Beginning Fall 2020, HSC will mandate the use of TeamManager App (or similar) for attendance tracking. Confirming participation for each event will create a list of players in attendance at every practice and game in the event of a potential COVID-19 exposure and contact tracing needed by the public health authorities.

- Discourage the use of carpool and ride shares.
- If more than one team is using a field for training at the same time, training areas should be at least 20 yards apart.
- Spectators are permitted at games. Those from the same homes may sit together. Those from different homes must sit 6 feet apart. They should remain in their cars until shortly before kick-off and return to their cars following the final whistle.
- Concession stand-is closed for the Fall 2020 season.

### **CDC Guidance #3 - UTILIZE HEALTHY OPERATIONS**

- Before any and all activity (trainings and games) a coach and player health assessment must be made incorporating the following elements:
  1. Must ask- “Have you been in contact with a person positive with COVID-19?”
  2. Must ask- “Have you had a cough, fever, or loss of taste or smell?”
  3. Players who have fever of 100.4<sup>0</sup> (38.0°C) or above should not attend practice. If a player does have a fever they should not participate in trainings or games until 24 hours fever free (<100.4 degrees F) without use of fever-reducing medicines and no symptoms.
  4. Beginning Fall 2020, HSC will mandate the use of TeamManager App for attendance tracking. Confirming participation incorporates the health assessment.

<https://www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Travelers.aspx#:~:text=If%20you%20have%20traveled%2C%20or,days%20upon%20return%20to%20Pennsylvania> Reference on travel PA DOH

- Staggered start times will be implemented when multiple teams are using the same training site on the same day, this applies to game days as well.
- Parents/spectators should remain on the opposite side of the team benches. No parents/spectators are permitted on the player side of the field.
- Home club will clean the technical areas with a disinfectant cleaner (follow manufacturers usage instructions) prior to the teams from the next game arriving.
- Before a club or team may begin to return to play, it must publish a notice to all players, parents, and soccer families outlining the risks of returning and detailing how the club intends to minimize or eradicate those risks. HSC will maintain a record of parental/coach acknowledgement of risk.
- All return to play activities must be published as being voluntary. HSC will accommodate and be sensitive to players and parents who may be uncomfortable with returning to play at this time.
- HSC will provide hand sanitizer at each bench area for all activities.

- Club policy on protective gear for coaches, referees, spectators and players. Masks must be worn at all times by coaches, parents and spectators. Players must arrive in masks and leave in masks. Referees must arrive in masks and may remove for games, but must immediately put mask on leaving game.
- Plan for player areas to be disinfected following every game and training session. Training for those who are performing the disinfecting the player areas should follow the directions on the cleaning label.
- Only coaches are permitted to touch equipment including training discs and cones, do not enlist help from players or parents.

## **CDC Guidance #4 - PREPARE FOR ILLNESS**

- Have an action plan in place in case of a notification of positive test result (See below).
- Communication plan in place:
  - HSC will notify coaches and families is the organization becomes aware of a participant or coach/administrator who has developed COVID-19 and may have been infectious to others while at a youth or adult activity.
  - HSC will maintain confidentiality of participant involved.
- Train and educate all coaches on protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations and other necessary information.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations.

### **Actions for HSC of possible COVID-19 infection:**

- In the event of a suspected or positive case of COVID-19, the affected family is required to notify the HSC board at [jmcalt@gmail.com](mailto:jmcalt@gmail.com). Individuals who have been in close contact with the affected family will be notified and quarantine requirements will be reviewed. Confidentiality will be maintained.
- If a player is being tested for COVID 19, the player may not return to practice - even if asymptomatic - until medically cleared. HSC Board will need proof of medical clearance.
- Any exposed or ill player or parent must follow the CDC self-isolation instruction and to contact their physician.
- Allegheny County Health Department will be notified of the exposure or illness and confirm necessary steps. Harmar Soccer Club will take Allegheny County Health Department's direction on notification of all individuals with possible exposure.
- Facilities cannot be used for 24 hours of exposure, then strict cleaning can take place. Redouble disinfecting measures at affected facilities and equipment.
- Institute adjustments to training schedules.
- Respect individual's confidentiality.

## **RETURN TO PLAY PHASES**

The following details the PA West return to play phases. Currently PA West is in Phase IV of Return to Play (as of August 6, 2020). Note that if there is a COVID case within the club, we will suspend all activity 24 hours after exposure so strict cleaning can take place.

**Pre-Phase:** Individual and virtual training. This phase includes individual fitness and technical work for players at home and with family members or with teammates via virtual solutions.

**Phase One:** Intra-club activity...training and small-sided in-house activities. This phase includes small-group training within teams and small-sided games within teams.

**Phase Two:** Intra-club activity...small-sided games between teams within the clubs may be introduced in addition to training and SSG within teams.

**Phase Three:** Inter-club and Intra-club activity...training, small-sided in-house games, and small-sided inter-club games (within same county)

**Phase Four:** Activity opens to include full size matches and travel beyond county limits.

*Movement from each phase to the next is dependent on a team/club to remain COVID-free. Should a case of COVID occur within a team/club then movement to the prior phase should be made.*

## **RESOURCES**

<https://www.pawest-soccer.org/news/covid-19-info-center/>

[www.health.pa.gov](http://www.health.pa.gov)

[www.pa.gov](http://www.pa.gov)

[www.governor.pa.gov/process-to-reopen-pennsylvania/](http://www.governor.pa.gov/process-to-reopen-pennsylvania/)

[www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019)

[https://www.pawest-soccer.org/assets/66/6/cdc\\_cleandisinfect.pdf](https://www.pawest-soccer.org/assets/66/6/cdc_cleandisinfect.pdf)

<https://www.alleghenycounty.us/Health-Department/Resources/COVID-19/COVID-19.aspx>

[https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny\\_Home/Health\\_Department/Resources/COVID-19/Docs/0723%20Isolation-Quarantine%20Basic%20Guidance.pdf](https://www.alleghenycounty.us/uploadedFiles/Allegheny_Home/Health_Department/Resources/COVID-19/Docs/0723%20Isolation-Quarantine%20Basic%20Guidance.pdf)

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/guidance-for-childcare.html#ScreenChildren>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/steps-when-sick.html#discontinue-isolation>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-recommendations.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>