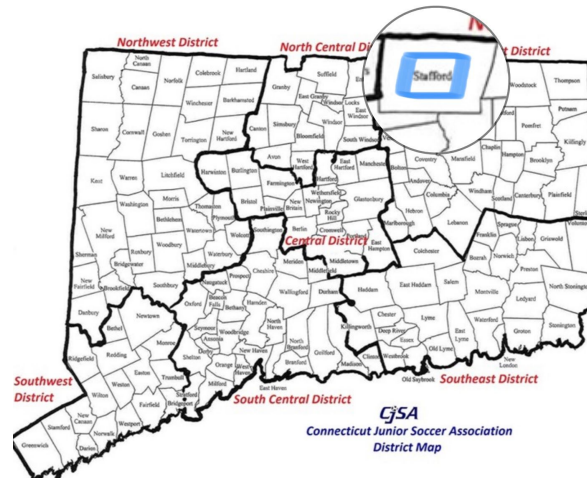


Re-Opening Youth Soccer in Stafford Springs, CT & CJSA NorthEast District



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Chapter 0

Open letter to SSSC membership

Greetings! There is a lot to read here, but I ask that you take the time to do so. Return To Play (RTP) for youth soccer is taking shape. A cautious approach is being taken to protect players, coaches, spectators and officials. The RTP guard rails have been developed according to guidance from the US CDC, US Youth Soccer, Connecticut Junior Soccer Association (CJSA), and the state of CT phases, and reviewed by our local public health office and Selectman's office. This represents a "new normal", introduces a phased approach and comes with several considerations.

1. As we progress through the phases, we must be prepared to revert to an earlier phase if public health conditions warrant;
2. If you don't feel comfortable or well, stay home. Just because you CAN play doesn't mean you MUST.
3. It is important to follow the guidelines if you want to keep playing. Fields will be closed and our insurance invalidated if we don't comply.
4. We expect changes and clarifications. Updates will be shared when available. In an effort for full transparency, it is prudent to publish this now.

The guidelines documented below cover all the well known mitigations including hand washing, face coverings, social distancing, and contact tracing that need to be followed in the context of youth soccer. There are sections focusing on each stakeholder from parents, players, coaches and administration. Communication is more important than ever and will be critical for this to work. Please review the documents. A Zoom call will be available to ask and answer questions. Once you have had the chance to absorb all this, I am seeking your feedback on whether your child will participate or not. I want to know if you would be willing to assist with any of the tasks associated with the mitigations. We do need a few coaches as several mainstays of our staff are taking a necessary sabbatical this fall. Lastly, we are open to suggestions, feedback, comments about what is working or not working.

I'd like to thank Patti Kula for volunteering to be the COVID-19 director, which is a new role mandated by CJSA, for SSSC. Patti is responsible to liaison with the CJSA office and our group / team COVID coordinators, and has already had a positive influence on this material. She brings an expertise that will insure we get these kids playing safely and keep them playing.

The club will be using its new website (SportsConnect, formerly known as Blue Sombrero) for online registration for the fall season. We will be using a Waitlist feature for your registration. This permits you to register for the program you are interested in but delay payment until we are sure the program is going to be viable.

We are looking at a rough timetable of introducing the travel teams (ages 8-14) to the early phases in August and to be prepared to play district competition starting the weekend of Sept 12. Our rough timetable for the Recreational programs will start on or about August 31. This is all dependent on all going well with our transition to the new normal and with the state of the virus transmission in CT.

For those that want to read more, the CJSA home page is carrying a reference set of links to phase RTP (phases 1 and 2 as of July 4) and coaching / activity suggestions at <https://www.cjsa.org/>

This document includes the guidelines we need to follow from CJSA (and insurance charter) in Chapter 1, SSSC's implementation plan for travel soccer including summaries for each of parents, players, coaches and administrators in Chapter 2, and can be found on the new SSSC website (look for SSSC Return To Play) <https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/Default.aspx?tabid=754488> . There will be some additional guidance coming for the recreation programs (intramural, minikicker and Microkickers) but expect most of those in the travel plan to apply.

Thanks,
Dave Bachiochi

Chapter 1

CJSA Return To Play COVID 19 - Club Self Certification

Phase 1

06/26/2020

Note: Stafford Springs Soccer Club certified for Phase 1 with CJSA on June 26. COVID 19 Director appointed is Patti Kula

CJSA Return to Play Covid19 - Club Self Certification

The Board and staff of the Connecticut Junior Soccer Association, like many of you, are anxious to return to normal activities. Return to play will begin June 20, 2020, and will follow a phased-in approach as recommended by the US Soccer Federation and US Youth Soccer. Only those activities specifically permitted for each phase will be sanctioned by CJSA, regardless of what stage the state of Connecticut is in. Prior to entering a phase, a club must certify, using this form, to the Vice President of the District the Club operates in, that the Club has implemented and will strictly maintain the Return to Activities Minimum Requirements for that phase.

A Club may choose to begin Phase 1 activities, which are limited to small group practices, on or after June 20, 2020, and may move to Phase 2, which permits full team practices, after operating under the Phase 1 requirements for a minimum of two weeks, and CJSA gives the “go ahead” for phase 2. The Club must certify compliance with Phase 1 for the 2 week period and that it will comply with all Phase 2 requirements. Clubs may move to Phase 3, which permits playing games, after operating under the Phase 2 requirements for a minimum of two weeks and certifying that it has operated in compliance with the required procedures for that period, and CJSA gives the “go ahead” for phase 3.

CJSA has adopted this phased approach and associated requirements to help protect players, families, and coaches from increased risk of contracting COVID-19. All phases require strict adherence to safety protocols. As noted above, activities which are not permitted in a phase, are not sanctioned by CJSA, which means, for example, that CJSA insurance will not apply. Please note, Certificate of Insurance is limited to CJSA sanctioned activities.

These protocols are likely to change as CDC and government requirements evolve. Also, each Club must operate with state and local government requirements. It is important to check with local authorities and obtain any permits or other authorizations before beginning activities. Clubs should be prepared to revert to an earlier phase if health conditions warrant.

As we begin a return to play, it is important that you prepare to implement the following, minimum, return to play requirements for Phase 1. Further information on best practices is provided in the resources linked below.

Below you will find the minimum requirements that a club must certify to implement and strictly adhere to.

No Participation if Experiencing COVID-19 Symptoms

-Any coach, player, parent, referee or spectator who is sick, has a persistent cough, is running a temperature or is displaying any symptoms suggesting that the individual may be ill, (from any contagious malady, including cold, flu, or suspected coronavirus) will be prohibited from attending training or games.

-Coaches and players (assisted by parents/guardians) must self-assess their condition and attest when arriving at the location that they are not experiencing these symptoms. A self-assessment tool is attached which you can provide for players and coaches to assess their symptoms. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/covid-19-self-assessment-tool>

-Any adult attendee who displays any of these symptoms will be required to leave. A minor who is displaying any of these symptoms should be safely isolated until an adult responsible for the minor can remove the minor.

COVID-19 Director

-All clubs must have a COVID-19 Director. The COVID-19 Director is responsible for identifying and implementing the practices required to comply with CJSA, state, and local return to play activities requirements and is the point of contact with CJSA.

Obtain Waiver

-A signed CJSA COVID-19 Waiver must be provided by a player before engaging in any return to play activities.

Minimize physical touching between players and coaches

-Coaches shall ensure and all players and coaches avoid "high fives," handshakes, or other types of physical touching. We understand that this may be difficult as players enjoy celebrating with their teammates, but we need to be diligent at enforcing this protocol for the health and safety of our players and their families.

Coaches, players, and spectators to wear masks during training sessions

-Coaches are required to wear appropriate face coverings during training sessions. Players must wear masks when in the playing environment and not playing. Players will also be allowed to wear masks while training, but this will be a personal choice of the player's parent or guardian. Any other individuals attending the training session are required to wear appropriate face coverings and follow all social distancing guidelines.

Hand Sanitizing

-Make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap, and water, or similar disinfectant readily available during practice. Players should bring hand sanitizer for personal use.

Equipment

-Do not share equipment. Players should have their own alternate color training top or pinnie. Players should have their own ball, water bottle, towel, and hand sanitizer.

- Reduce players touching practice equipment, the handling of all training items, such as cones, flags, goals, etc. should be limited to coaches.
- Sanitize all equipment after each session, including benches and bleachers.

Increased signage throughout facilities

- Clubs should post reminder signage throughout facilities wherever possible to remind all players, coaches, and spectators to maintain social distancing.

Social Distancing Oversight

- During Phase 1, social distancing (minimum 6 feet) must be maintained by coaches, players, and spectators at all times.
- Clubs should assign people to be physically present to monitor fields and facilities to politely but firmly ask any groups of parents or players to disperse and maintain appropriate distancing and that failure to do so risks the sanctioning and protection (including insurance) for the players and the club.

Communication Requirement

- Make the CJSA Return to Soccer Activities COVID-19 Guidelines available to all your members. This can be accomplished by, Emailing, Prominently posting on Website, pointing to the most recent version on the CJSA Website.

If a team member or coach contracts COVID-19, all training sessions will be canceled for that team and any additional team associated with that coach for 14 days.

If a player or coach is sent home with symptoms, they can return when they have no fever and symptoms have improved, or they receive two negative test results in a row, at least 24 hours apart (CDC Guidelines).

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Chapter 2

Social Distancing & return to play measures for youth soccer

What Stafford is implementing

07/08/2020

The following is intended to describe a new normal for youth travel soccer. (The new normal for more recreational in house play will be enhanced as an addendum at a future time.) The document is to help portray the precautions and mitigations to be taken for all stakeholders -- authorities, players, spectators, parents and activity administrators -- to feel right and safe to participate in youth sports. My intent is two fold. One is to collectively paint a picture for authorities to agree and understand that the guidelines outlined are consistent with overall state and local jurisdiction expectations. <now complete> Two is to describe the expectations of all

participants so we can prepare the facilities as well as the people to start whenever the time is deemed right.

There is a recognition that all medical and scientific guidance favors smaller groups over bigger groups, and outdoors rather than indoors. These mitigations apply to either. So start small sided, follow these guidelines. Grow to full sided, follow these guidelines. Play in town only or travel to another town, follow these guidelines. There are two preliminary phases described below that precede the return to normal play, within the constructs of the new normal. The dates noted are subject to any changes in CT re-opening guidelines / orders, and SSSC's ability to get started and comply.

PHASED RE-OPENING Following the best practice used by the state of CT to re-open slowly, youth soccer will open in phases. Start with small groups of kids in cohorts and minimal physical contact in the first phase, then expand group sizes and nature of physical contact in subsequent phases. Use US Soccer recommended activities for early phases that keeps kids and coaches socially distanced, minimizes personal contact and allows kids to work on their conditioning. This period provides the opportunity to develop individualized skills in small groups. Subsequent phases would introduce more physical contact that is normal for soccer within team practice / training. The last phase would introduce competition against other towns. Note that each of the guidelines listed apply in these phases at a minimum.

Just to get started, CJSA has developed the following checklist that we used to assemble the SSSC plan

CHECKLIST FOR RESTARTING SOCCER ACTIVITIES

1. Establish gathering size guidelines consistent with state of CT and youth soccer limitations.
2. Hand sanitizer at fields
3. Facility cleansing protocols in place
4. Social Distancing guidelines developed, all players bring their own gear
5. Signage for spectators to maintain social distance
6. Develop and communicate staggered event times to minimize overlap
7. Local Government & Public Health Department approval
8. Masks policy is clear; Not needed but allowed during active play but necessary elsewhere Necessary for all non players.
9. Registration Waivers as Risk Notification mechanism
10. Temperature check at home; Symptom check at home
11. Communication protocol when symptoms exist
12. Take attendance at every event, including spectators to support contact tracing.
13. Communication plan for all registrants to inform all of the mitigations in place.
14. Assign a social distancing ambassador or Safety Officer to oversee compliance and relevant documentation.
15. Vulnerable individuals allowed but urged to refrain from attending events in person

Phase 1 is for in person individualized skills and conditioning, and is generally void of physical contact between players. Phase 1 must last for at least 2 weeks, longer if needed to implement the mitigations. SSSC will stage our phased approaches into three separate groups of kids, HS (15-19), Travel (8-14), Recreational (3-7) and three separate time periods.

Estimated Time Periods for Phase 1

HS aged Summer League: 7/6-7/19

SSSC Travel: 8/3-8/16

SSSC Recreational: 8/31-9/11

Phase 2 is for introducing team skills to prepare for the playing season. Physical contact increases but remains limited. The coach is permitted to not wear a face covering when providing active instruction during active play. Small sided scrimmage activity is permitted. Phase 2 duration is a minimum of 2 weeks preferably longer. This will very much depend on when any such season will start.

Estimated Time Periods for Phase 2

HS aged Summer League: 7/20-8/2

SSSC Travel: 8/17-9/11

SSSC Recreational Intramural: 9/12-9/25

SSSC Recreational MK, Micro: activities will be phase specific

Phase 3: Return to New Normal regular season:

Estimated Time Periods for Phase 3

HS Aged Summer League: 8/3-8/31

SSSC Travel: 9/12-11/7

SSSC Recreational: IM games 9/26-11/7 (no jamboree)

SSSC Minikickers: 9/12-10/31 (jamboree unlikely)

SSSC Microkickers (age 3): 9/12-10/31

Guidelines

Responsibilities for each stakeholder group

PLAYERS

1. Every player must follow the state of CT travel advisory regarding 14 day quarantine requirements in force at the time, before participating in SSSC activities.
2. It is recommended that you "live local" and be symptom free and have had no contact with any known or suspected case of Covid-19 for the 14 days prior to the start of training.
3. Bring own water bottle, soccer ball, shin guards and duffle bag or backpack. Once distributed by the club, bring your own reversible practice pinnie. Keep your personal belongings separated from those of the other kids.
4. Bring alcohol based (at least 60%) hand sanitizer with you.

5. Practice good hygiene, physical distancing, wear your face covering when not actively playing, and do not share equipment.
6. Bring a face covering. Wear it during close quarters on bench and during period breaks. Wear it coming to the field and leaving the field. Not necessary or intended to be worn during active play. However, it is not prohibited either if an individual wants to wear a face covering safely during active play. A neck gaiter would be safer than a mask that attaches behind the ears for active play.
7. No hand shaking or slapping, fist pumping or high fives in player greeting line post game or pre game, or during in game celebrations. Just verbal "good game" or salute.
8. No handshakes for coin toss.
9. Feel sick, stay home. Check for fever, dry cough, other Covid-19 symptoms regularly and just prior to practice or game. Should a healthcare provider rule out Covid-19, a doctor's note will be required to return to play.
10. Anyone diagnosed with Covid-19 with a positive test must test negative twice, with the 2 tests at least 24 hours apart to return to play. Contact the club through your COVID coordinator or director if you have a positive test.
11. Anyone who has had a known exposure to a Covid-19 case will quarantine for 14 days.

PARENTS

1. First and foremost, if you don't feel comfortable having your child participate, then don't. Period. Just because you can doesn't mean you must.
2. Second and very important. Conduct health check prior to and immediately after every session, practice or game. This includes temperature check and checklist for COVID symptoms. All families should follow the simple self assessment tool from the Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/covid-19-self-assessment-tool> Check in with Team Covid Coordinator or Coach upon arrival to certify symptom check was completed. The club is looking to automate this checkin process, so stay tuned for changes here.
3. **Note that we are considering a temperature check process at the field possibly for the high school age players, so stay tuned.**
4. Every player (and spectator) must follow the state of CT travel advisory regarding 14 day quarantine requirements in force at the time, before participating in SSSC activities.
5. It is also recommended that you "live local" and be symptom free and have had no contact with any known or suspected case of Covid-19 for the 14 days prior to the start of training.
6. Ensure that your child has all their own equipment with them, as equipment will not be shared. Clean and sanitize their equipment after every training.
7. Observe (spectator / parent / player) 14 day quarantine after known exposure to anyone with Covid-19. Anyone diagnosed with Covid-19 with a positive test must test negative twice, with the 2 tests at least 24 hours apart to return to play.
8. Notify the club immediately if your child has become sick.
9. If you don't already, start keeping a diary of people with whom your family members come in contact. This will support contact tracing efforts if ever needed. It would be a public health official conducting contact tracing, not the club or other parent or coach.

10. Bring a face covering. Wear it if you need to sit or stand near someone as you spectate. Areas near the playing fields will be designated as Spectator Zones and will require wearing of face coverings. Follow the face covering practices set by the governor.
11. Consider video chat video recording or Facebook live for vulnerable spectators.
12. Be prompt for kid drop off and pick up. Do not drop player off more than 5 minutes before assigned time and leave immediately after session ends.
13. CJSA recommends no carpooling. This means to minimize ride sharing with people you don't normally associate with.

COACHES

1. Wear a face covering. Get used to talking through a facemask. Phase 2 guidelines allow for face covering removal during active play. Phase 1 requires coaches to have face coverings at all times.
2. Have an assistant or two. Feel sick, stay home. Expect it to happen and prepare for it.
3. Delegate a single assistant coach or coordinator to handle setup of all practice peripherals such as cones or flags.
4. Delegate an assistant coach or coordinator to keep an attendance log of every player or coach / volunteer at each event. The purpose is to supplement any contact tracing that may be required in the event a positive COVID 19 test occurs.
5. Ask each player how they are feeling when they arrive and when they leave. Only track reports of sickness.
6. Operate groups in consistent cohorts to minimize chance for virus spread. Groups are no larger than 10 participants including coaches. If more spread out into additional groups. Leverage the recommended training activities from the CJSA website.
<http://www.cjsa.org/home.php?layout=14640545>
7. In the event of a positive case, the entire team must quarantine for 14 days potentially leading to the postponement of scheduled matches.
8. Feel sick, stay home. Check for fever, dry cough, other Covid-19 symptoms regularly and just prior to practice or game. Should a healthcare provider rule out Covid-19, a doctor's note will be required to return to play.
9. Anyone diagnosed with Covid-19 with a positive test must test negative twice, with the 2 tests at least 24 hours apart to return to play. Contact the club through your COVID coordinator or director if you have a positive test.
10. Anyone who has had a known exposure to a Covid-19 case will quarantine for 14 days.

LOCALE PREP

1. Eliminate use of bleachers unless social distancing can be easily practiced.
2. Provide markings to help keep 6 foot distances.
3. Identify exits separate from entrances where possible, to help with the flow of people. Scheduling events far enough apart from each other may minimize the need for this.
4. Appoint social distancing ambassadors and assign to training sessions and each home match once we get to phase 3 to provide gentle guidance to people so they know the distancing rules. Euphemistically known as the enforcement squad! A second duty of

the ambassador can be to collect feedback from the activities, what would work better, why we do what we do, etc. Provide armbands to easily identify the social distancing ambassadors and spare face masks for spectators who didn't bring one.

5. For all phase 1 and phase 2 practice sessions, keep 15-30 minutes between sessions at the same venue to maximize social distancing at departure / arrival.
6. For phase 3, schedule games to have 45 minutes between end of one event and start of next event to allow all participants and spectators to exit before the next group arrives. Plan 15 minutes after for people to exit then 30 minutes prior to next kickoff for warm ups.
7. Have other hand sanitizer readily available at venue entrances. Individually wrapped wipes are preferred to minimize contact. Include trash receptacles with contactless sanitation disposal.
8. Increase signage to clearly mark distancing expectations and publicize other COVID-19 behavior reminders.

REFEREES

1. Generally business as usual.
2. Respect the COVID mitigations and restrictions of the local jurisdiction.
3. Insure any face covering that a player chooses to wear during active play is SAFELY secured.
4. Consider electronic handling of player passes and rosters.

ADMINISTRATORS

1. Assume there will be fewer players than usual. Communicate with families and other administrators about this to help inform how our organization can react.
2. The district scheduling meeting will no longer be held in person. The district will publish the league schedule in advance of deadlines to facilitate field scheduling.
3. Consider one or more zoom video chats for messages to coaches, questions and other surprises.
4. Procure practice pinnies that are reversible for every player in the club travel programs to eliminate one form of equipment sharing.
5. Procure PPE (masks, gloves) and sanitizing material (individually wrapped alcohol wipes, Lysol spray).
6. Train coaches / volunteers in appropriate sanitizing procedures for equipment.
7. Enable coaches to keep an attendance log to supplement contact tracing. SportsConnect should help with this. Contact tracing for all spectators may also be required. Definitely need an app for this.
8. Set up registration with a tryout or waitlist to delay registration fee payment while still collecting player info.
9. Add language to the waiver to include clear additional parent responsibilities. Indicate that risk management & effective protection requires diligence following all guideline.
10. Create a team mom/dad role. Create a team social distancing ambassador role.
11. Procure appropriate signage for whatever the Town Parks Dept doesn't provide.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

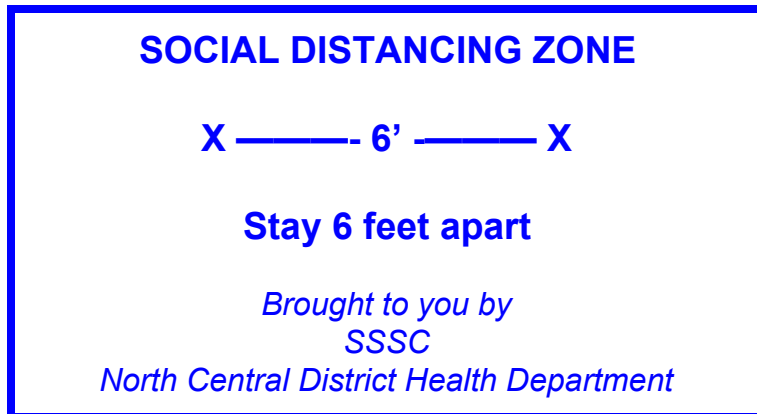
The mitigations are all targeted for the behaviors around the game. The game itself is allowed to be played as it has always meant to be once we get to phase 3.

Protect those most vulnerable. Anyone 65 or older, or with other risk factors, should stay isolated from players for up to 14 days after their last group soccer event. This goes for our coaching staffs as well. Players, coaches, parents who don't feel well or have symptoms must stay home. Anyone exposed to a known COVID-19 positive individual must self quarantine for 14 days.

Over-communicate. We want to provide multiple forms of information disbursement. This will include memos, emails, website posts, social media and Zoom video chat. We want to provide the ability for two way communication, via email, Zoom video chat, and event social ambassador (look for arm band). Expect updates as the guidance is updated.

Signage (also see SSSC RTP Chapter 4)

Sign #1



Sign #2





Face Coverings Matter

Need one, ask an Ambassador

Brought to you by SSSC & CJSA

Sign #3

SANITIZATION STATION

Have you washed your hands today?

*Brought to you by
North Central District Health Department*