

Nebraska State Soccer COVID Procedures

While from a distance it may appear normal, NSS emphasizes that this is NOT “normal soccer” as we have always known it. There are several new procedures and changes expected for all participants to keep each other safe. Failure to comply could result in continued outbreaks and risk lives.

Everyone is responsible to do your part to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by minimizing exposure risks

KEEP YOUR GUARD UP- COVID-19 is still around and if a resurgence happens, we could be without soccer again with very little warning (no one wants that!).

Above all, local and state government and health department requirements override these guidelines if there is a conflict.

Everyone- Before attending & Best Practices:

- Anyone in attendance should check for symptoms before leaving the house including temperature check.
- Any individual with symptoms, or a temp over 100.4 degrees even if no other symptoms exist, should not attend.
- Symptoms that should prevent attendance include: cough, shortness of breath, fever, chills, headache, sinus congestion, sore throat, and vomiting/diarrhea.
- Any person with direct contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should refrain from attending games or training until they can be confirmed negative for COVID-19 or have quarantined for at least 14 days.
- Refrain from carpools/traveling with other participants not in your immediate household. If carpool is necessary, masks should be worn by those in the car.
- Person Protective Equipment (PPE), including facial masks, should be worn while attending a soccer activity (when not physically exerting yourself). Parents and coaches should model this behavior for the players by wearing masks at all times on the sidelines and pre/post game.

League/Tournament Admin practices:

- Game start times will be scheduled spread out as much as possible.
- There should be a minimum 30 minutes between the end of a game and the beginning of the next.
- Avoid scheduling games on fields located back-to-back (especially fields with spectators next to each other in a way that makes social distancing difficult).
- Certify facility sanitation regularly (buildings, restrooms, concessions)
- Should a sanctioned NSS event be notified of a possible exposure during their event, tournament hosts/clubs should notify NSS and include NSS on notification emails to teams who may have been exposed.
- Sanctioned events are responsible for providing registered teams with COVID-19 related changes to game procedures

Clubs:

- Clubs are encouraged to have clear requirements/expectations for their members as they see fit in addition to this list.
- Club activities should include specific procedures and clubs should maintain attendance keeping for all activities, and reiterate to team admins the importance of doing so in case there is a need to trace exposures through the club.
- Clubs should communicate to their members that anyone who tests positive for COVID-19 should notify their club immediately. Clubs can notify other members who are most at risk (team members, other players who attended training or other club activity). Note: Clubs should not identify the name of the member who has tested positive in any communication.
- Follow local health department advice for dealing with potential exposures.

Coaches:

- Coaches and bench personnel should wear PPE including masks throughout the game especially while in technical area.
- Confirm with players as they arrive that they have no symptoms, no temp, etc.
- Bench personnel (coaches or other team admins) should be limited whenever possible, if multiple bench personnel are present, they should keep social distance of 6ft during participation (before, during and after the game).
- Have cleaning products (wipes for equipment, hand sanitizer, etc.) for use for you team and to sanitize bench area and equipment.
- One coach or a designated team official should handle player passes- Show passes to referees when needed, do not hand them back and forth. Referees will instruct coaches during check-in how to proceed.
- In case of sudden bad weather, coaches should direct their team that ALL participants and spectators should go to their cars, NOT the facility/bathrooms, etc.
- In case of a player injury, one coach or team admin can enter the field to attend to the player, wearing PPE, to attend to the player and provide first aid as needed. Minimize exposure by keeping distance and preventing direct contact with the player when possible.
- No post game huddles/chats should be held on the field or in the technical area, find an area away from others where players can spread out and remain socially distanced.

Spectators

- Spectators should be limited in numbers – now is not the time for friends, neighbors, extended family to come watch games! Spectators should be limited to household members only. One or two spectators per player is a good guide.
- Spectators should wear PPE including masks whenever possible.
- Spectators should maintain social distance with other spectators not from their immediate household members before, during and after the game (6 feet or more).

- Bleachers and benches should not be used- spectators should bring their own chairs/seating.
- Spectators should sit or stand no closer than 6-10 ft to the field sideline. Maintain distance between players and referees throughout the game.
- Wait for previous game spectators to completely clear out before approaching the field.
- In case of bad weather ALL participants and spectators should go to their cars, NOT the facility/building/bathrooms, etc. to wait for play to resume.

Teams/Players Game Day procedure:

- Do not arrive to fields more than 20-30 minutes before game time.
- Warmups away from other crowds, players should use their own equipment and use other best practices during warmups (no contact with other players, social distance whenever possible, no huddles, etc.).
- Pregame meeting/coin toss should be done with one captain per team only and captains should remain 6 ft apart.
- Pre-game and halftime talks should be done while wearing PPE and maintaining distance between coaches/players. No close huddles.
- When arriving at the field, players should spread their personal belongings along the entire sideline to keep proper social distance from each other. Do not bring unnecessary belongings or equipment and come dressed and ready to play.
- While on the bench, or not actively participating, players should wear PPE including masks. All players should have their own masks available during games, masks should never be shared.
- Players are encouraged to have their own hand sanitizer available to them during activities and games.
- Players should not share any personal items including water bottles, pinnies, towels, etc.
- Wait for previous games teams to completely leave the technical area before approaching. Ideally the previous game will be done and teams will have cleared before the next team arrives.
- Teams and coaches in technical area should stay distanced- stay away from the line (keeping distance from AR), center flag and other bench personnel and players.
- Overall, minimize time spent in high-risk exposure areas (subs should not stand right next to opponent subs, coaches not come in contact, no high fives/handshakes/huddles. Sanitize game balls at before the game, at half and immediately after the game.
- Teams and spectators should leave the field immediately following the game.
- No handshakes/high fives pre- or post-game Consider clapping or waving post game to show sportsmanship instead of the typical handshake lines.
- Any benches used should be sanitized thoroughly before the next game.

Referees:

- Bring own equipment whenever possible OR have disinfecting wipes or spray to use on any shared equipment.
- Any symptoms- do not work, if you test positive for COVID-19 within 14 days of working a game, notify your assignor immediately.
- Referees should wear PPE including masks pre-game including check ins and immediately following the game. Referees may elect to wear a mask during the game if the mask does not hinder their breathing in a dangerous manner or their ability to perform referee duties (this is a personal decision).
- Referees are encouraged to have hand sanitizer available.
- No handshakes, fist bumps, high fives pre- or post-game.
- Coin toss/captains meeting should be with a maximum of 1 player from each team and maintain social distance.
- Keep distance whenever possible- minimize time spent in high-risk exposure situations. Be aware of distance during throw-ins, corner kicks, substitutions, etc.
- Leave immediately following the last scheduled game. If possible, do all game reports at home or in the car (do not stay near the field).

Contact tracing procedure:

- **A predetermined team admin (coach, team manager or other designated person) should take and keep accurate attendance for players, coaches and spectators at each game! If there is a positive case reported, teams should be able to provide a list of those who attended games where exposure may have happened.**
- After a league or NSS event game, if any person in attendance has a positive test for COVID-19, team admins should report to the NSS (through the COVID-19 case reporting form on NSS and NYSL website) or an event contact (tournament director or league director) that a possible exposure exists, providing any game date(s) and time(s) when the person was in attendance within 14 days of the positive test, to the appropriate NSS contact as well as the local health department. Opposing teams and referees will be notified immediately of possible exposure. Anyone with possible exposure will be encouraged to quarantine and evaluate for symptoms or get tested if possible.
- Teams with high-risk exposure should work with the league to reschedule upcoming games within a 14-day window to allow players to quarantine and/or get tested before the team can continue participating.
- If any individual has received the COVID-19 vaccination they will not be required to quarantine as long as they are asymptomatic.
- When needed, NSS will defer to local health departments to determine the best course of action including team or individual quarantine time periods and assist with all contact tracing.