

Return to Play Guidelines

for

AYSO Cedar Rapids, Marion and surrounding areas Region 1112



The intent of these Return to Play Guidelines is to implement reasonable measures to ensure reasonable social distancing, increased hygiene practices, and other public health measures to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 consistent with guidance issued by the Iowa Department of Public Health. These guidelines have been put together with guidance and recommendations from the Iowa Department of Public Health, the Linn County Public Health Department, the CDC, AYSO National, Iowa Soccer and US Soccer.

OUR PROGRAM

- We are an all-volunteer organization that provides a soccer program for boys and girls between 4 and 19 years of age from Cedar Rapids, Marion and surrounding areas including Mount Vernon, Vinton and Anamosa. At this time, we have 1,300 kids registered for our upcoming fall season, which is 28% (= 500 kids) less than we had last season around this time. We're expecting that we'll have over 1,350 registered players at the start of the fall season.
- All staff, referees and coaches in our program are volunteers. Practices for age groups 6-14 are normally during the week, while the 4 and 5 year olds practice on game days prior to their games. Kids in high school ages don't have practices at all. Coaches normally determine when, where (usually a local park or school), how often and how long practices are. After the August 10 derecho, coaches might have a challenge finding a practice location for the first couple of weeks of our fall season due to either debris on the fields or closed school grounds. Most coaches are coaching one team, but we have some coaches who are coaching two or even three teams.
- All games are played at the Tuma Soccer Complex (3239 C Avenue Ext, Marion, IA 52302). This is a huge soccer complex with 38 soccer fields and a large parking lot. Although the complex has a pavilion with bathrooms, we normally order four Port-o-Jonny units that are placed on strategic locations in the complex.
- A soccer ball is the only shared equipment. The soccer ball is played only with the feet in the younger age groups (4-7), where in the older age groups, goalkeepers occasionally will touch the ball with their hands (approx. 10 times per game). When the ball goes out of bounds, the players in the younger age groups (4-7) will use their feet to get the ball back in play by either dribbling or kicking the ball into the field of play. Normally, ages 8 and up do throw-ins to get the ball back in play (both hands on the ball, throwing it from behind their heads into the field of play). However, for this fall season, all age groups will do kick-ins rather than throw-ins.
- All parents and volunteers (coaches, referees and board members) who registered after June 18, 2020 have signed the "**COVID-19 Assumption of Risk, Waiver and Release of Liability Agreement**" as part of the registration process for the Fall 2020/Spring 2021 season. All parents and volunteers who registered before June 18, 2020 will be required to logon back to their account and re-sign their player and/or volunteer application.
- All practices and games are on OUTDOOR fields only.
- Our league is an "intra-club" league: all games are played at the Tuma Soccer Complex. Our teams don't travel to other cities to play games, and no teams from outside our AYSO region come play in our league.
- Scheduled games will be more spread out over the day than in the past to have less people at the Tuma Soccer Complex at the same time.
- There will be no in-person class room training for coaches and referees. Training will be done via online self-paced computer based training at www.aysou.org and/or web conference training using Webex, Zoom, Google Meet or Microsoft Teams. Field portions of the 10U, 12U and 14U coach training will be offered as a web conference training and/or outdoor field session where social distancing policies will apply.

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth (further referred to as “masks” in these guidelines) in public settings. Masks should not be worn by children younger than 2 years old.
- Stay at least 6 feet away from non-household members.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your elbow, not your hands.
- Stay at home if you are sick!
- **Healthy Participants Only:** All players, coaches and spectators should conduct a health self-screening prior to attending practice/game and ask the following questions. Parents should conduct the health screening with their child.
 - Are you experiencing the following: fever (100.4° and above), cough, shortness of breath, chills, muscle aches, headaches not related to caffeine, diet, hunger, migraines, or tension?
 - Have you been in close contact with anyone that has tested positive for COVID-19 or has symptoms of COVID-19?
 - If the answer is “**yes**” to any of the above questions, participant will not be allowed to participate.

PLAYERS

- Regularly monitor/take temperature & stay home if feel sick or have a fever (100.4° or above).
- If you have a known exposure to COVID-19, or show any signs/symptoms, DO NOT return to practices or games for 14 days.
- Bring your own labeled hand sanitizer to all practices and games, and use often.
- Bring both your jerseys to every game.
- Bring your pinny to every practice and to every game (only applies to 10U and up).
- Bring your goalkeeper gloves to every game (only applies to 10U and up).
- Wear mask when arriving to and leaving field (not to be worn during activity).
- **Masks are not recommended during practices and games, but are allowed.** When actively engaged in play during practices and games, players are not required to wear masks, but may wear masks if they or their parents feel more comfortable doing so.
- Social distancing: place your bag, water bottle, soccer ball, and pinny at least 6 feet apart from other players' equipment.
- No handshakes, hugs, high fives, fist bumps, elbow bumps, or any other deliberate contact.
- No sharing of water bottles or any equipment like pinnies, goalkeeper gloves, goalkeeper jerseys, soccer balls, etc.

PARENTS

- **Ensure your child is healthy:** Monitor your child for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, including regular temperature checks prior to each practice and each game. If above 100.4°, do not attend.
- Keep child away from training environment for 14 days if has known exposure to COVID-19 or displays signs/symptoms such as fever.
- Notify your child's coach immediately if your child or family member becomes ill for any reason.
- Clearly label your child's water bottle, hand sanitizer, soccer ball, pinny, bag and other personal items.
- Players in divisions 10U and up will receive an individual pinny. Players must bring their pinny to every practice and every game. Jerseys and pinnies should NOT be shared.
- Ensure your child has hand sanitizing products with them at every practice and game.

- Wash pinny after each practice.
- Wash jerseys after each game.
- Do not assist coach with equipment before or after practice.
- Parents should not attend practices unless absolutely necessary (if requested by coach, if required for parental supervision, or if needed for younger ages). Parents should typically only approach the practice field if they're picking up or dropping off their child. Masks should be worn by the parent in all instances and they should keep 6-foot distance from the players, coach and other parents present at the practice.
- Parents stay in their cars during practices (drop off at the practice site is ok but parents must return to their cars immediately after drop off). This does not apply to 5U and 6U, as these age groups have combined practice/game sessions on game day at the Tuma Soccer Complex. Game guidelines (see below) apply for the 5U and 6U combined practice/game sessions on game day.
- If you need to talk with the coach, please call them or text them, do not interact at the field.

COACHES

- Maintain 6 feet physical distance from players and family members.
- Wear mask for the duration of the practice and game.
- Coach should be the only person to handle coaching equipment (e.g.: cones, disks, etc.); DON'T allow players, parents or attendees to assist.
- Use hand sanitizer or wash hands on arrival, mid-way and end of practice session.
- Equipment must be sanitized between practices.
- No sharing of water bottles or any equipment like pinnies, goalkeeper gloves, goalkeeper jerseys, etc.
- Players in divisions 10U and up will receive an individual pinny. Players must bring their pinny to every practice and game. Pinnies should NOT be shared.
- Reinforce behavior: NO handshakes, high fives, sharing water bottles, etc.
- Avoid huddles during practices and games.
- Avoid lines during practices. When lines are inevitable, encourage players to leave 6 feet between teammates.
- Limit full contact between players to game days (avoid during practice).
- Keep an attendance log for each practice and each game.
- AYSO Safe Haven guidelines still apply, i.e., 1:8 adult to child ratio; minimum of 2 adults present; no adult alone with children other than their own. Whenever possible, adult of same gender as players should be present. If it's okay for this adult to stay in their car.
- Serve as focal point, or designate the Team Parent/Manager, for notification from team families if a family member becomes ill with COVID-19, tests positive for COVID-19, or comes in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Immediately complete and submit AYSO's Incident Report Form to our Region's Safety Director, Mike Plagge at safetydirector@ayso-cr.org, including team roster.

REFEREES

- Referees are not required to wear masks during active play, but may wear masks if they feel more comfortable doing so.
- Stay at least 6 feet from anyone as much as possible, before/after as well as during the game.
- Wear mask when arriving to and leaving field.
- Wear mask during pre-game duties.
- Use hand sanitizer or wash hands before and after game.
- Assistant referees should bring their own individual flag to games.

- Rather than sharing flags, club linesmen should be instructed to indicate ball out of play with a stretched out arm. If a referee chooses to share flags, then after use wipe down the handles of flags with an alcohol-based rub or wash with soap and water.

SPECTATORS AT GAMES

- **Spectators will wear masks at all times.** This includes walking to and from the field as well as when watching games from the sideline.
- Spectators not from the same household should sit 6 feet away from each other.
- Spectators from the same household should sit together.
- Siblings of players must stay with their parents and shall not play off to the side.
- A spectator group should have only members of the same household. Spectator groups shall not exceed 6 individuals, and each group shall remain 6 feet from other groups or people.
- Groups of 3-6 family members should put their seats in two rows (with minimum space between the two rows).
- Due to the social distancing requirements, space for spectators is limited. We are **strongly encouraging** to limit the number of spectators to one spectator per household.
- Spectators should be at least 10 feet away from the sideline.
- A second row of spectators may be created if there is not enough room for all spectators on the first row. This second row should be at least 6 feet behind the first row.
- Spectators attending games should be strictly immediate family, so no relatives or grandparents.
- No out of town visitors shall be at any game.
- Spectators should not touch the soccer ball with their hands.
- Anyone not practicing proper social distancing and mask etiquette will be asked to leave the area. The game may be suspended or ended upon failure to comply.

GAMES

- **Social distancing:** Players place bag, water bottle, soccer ball, and pinny at least 6 feet apart from other players' equipment.
- **No Team Benches.** Players may bring their own chair. This chair must not be shared with other players.
- **Masks:** Spectators and coaches wear masks at all times. Players and referees wear masks to and from the field. Masks are not required for players and referees on the field.
- **No handshakes,** hugs, high fives, fist bumps, elbow bumps, or any other deliberate contact.
- **Do not touch soccer ball with hands:** Besides the goalkeepers, nobody should touch the soccer ball with their hands. When the ball goes out of bounds, the ball should be dribbled/kicked to move it to the location where it went out of bounds. Exception to this rule is when the ball is on the parking lot or in a ditch with standing water.
- **Kick-ins:** When the ball goes out of bounds, 10U and up will do kick-ins rather than throw-ins. (8U and below already were doing kick-ins/dribble-ins.)
- **No Team Snacks:** The traditional post-game team snacks are not permitted. Players are allowed to have a personal snack at half-time and/or at the end of the game, but only if it is provided by their parent/guardian.

Pre-game Ceremony

- No coin toss. Home team will defend the north or east goal and will get the kick-off to start the game.
- Teams will lineup at each side of the halfway line, 8 feet from the halfway line, to allow enough social distance space for the referee to move between the two teams. Teammates distanced 6 feet apart. Players are not required to wear masks during the pre-game ceremony.

- Referee will conduct an equipment check.
- Referee will remind players of no handshakes, hugs, high fives, fist bumps, elbow bumps.
- Referee will remind players to not touch the soccer ball with their hands when collecting the ball after it goes out of bounds.
- Referee will remind players of kick-ins instead of throw-ins. (Only applies to 10U, as 8U and below already were doing kick-ins/dribble-ins.)

Post-game Ceremony

- No high five lines and no parent tunnels.
- Teams line up on opposing sides of the halfway line. Teammates distanced 6 feet apart. Clap for opposing team. Players then go over to the spectator sideline and clap for the spectators, while the spectators clap for the players.

Kids Zone

There will be NO Kids Zone Awareness Days. However, Kids Zone still applies. All parents and spectators should make themselves familiar with their role in our Kids Zone. The game is for the kids! Parents agree to cheer, leaving the coaching to the coaches. Parents must respect the referee and his/her decisions at all times. No arguing of calls and no negative comments about or to the referee. The role of parents/spectators can be summarized in one word: **CHEER!**