



Today, the office of Governor Jay Inslee announced a new set of protocols for Washington State regarding outdoor recreation, including youth soccer. These new guidelines allow for full team training sessions and league games to be played in counties according to the COVID-19 metrics listed in the Governor's release if stringent health and safety protocols are followed. It should also be noted that while these are released by the state, they are not laws; it is up to the discretion of individual county officials and field operators to allow clubs to play. The full release from the Governor's office is below.

This announcement comes after months of hard work by Washington Youth Soccer, with the support of our members and other youth organizations across the state, to push for the opportunity to allow our kids to play soccer across the state when medical experts deemed it safe. WYS Board President Felipe Mendez said that "as the largest youth organization in the State of Washington, we are excited to continue to work together with all the education and health agencies to get back to play safely. Our focus on the physical and mental health of our soccer athletes and families is a top priority."

We understand the mental toll it has taken on our athletes and their families, and our goal since the pandemic began has been to find a responsible way to return to play as soon as possible. "Thanks to everyone for the hard work and diligence that it took to put an RTP process in place that gives our kids and families the best-possible pathway to get back on the playing fields," said WYS CEO Terry Fisher.

Much of the credit goes to our Return to Play committee for their incredible diligence in formulating potential protocols and guidelines for our members throughout the process. The committee had this to say about today's announcement, "The Return to Play committee would like to thank everyone that was involved in the progress on getting teams back to playing games. We would like to thank all the clubs, coaches, referees, administrators, parents, and especially the players for their patience and co-operation during this time. As we move forward, please continue to follow local government and CDC best practice guidelines, as well as individual league protocols."

We also want to thank our medical expert, Dr. Jonathan Drezner, for the countless hours he has put into this process. This would have been a much longer and more difficult journey without his expertise, assistance, and research. "The health and safety of our players always comes first. The guidelines released by the Governor's office provide thoughtful benchmarks in which to advance youth sports. As a community, we must remain diligent with safety practices both on and off the field," said Dr. Drezner.

Washington Youth Soccer will also be releasing suggested guidelines for clubs and leagues that are returning to play based on today's news, along with concise versions of graphics useful for sharing on social media.

As we excitedly move forward with today's announcement in mind, don't forget that protocols regarding safety and proper hygiene are of the utmost importance. From CEO Terry Fisher: "Stay diligent and stay focused, as this is not the time to become cavalier. COVID-19 is still in the marketplace and until we have a distributed vaccine, the risks are still very real. Stay disciplined and exercise proven hygiene practices. Have fun, mask up, and be safe."

If you have any questions about this document or anything else regarding return to play in Washington, contact Terry Fisher at terry@washingtonyouthsoccer.org.

Thank you and stay safe,
Washington Youth Soccer

Professional Sports & Other Sporting Activities COVID-19 Requirements

Summary of October 6 changes:

Youth team sports and adult team sport guidance greatly expanded:

- Youth team sports now includes both school and non-school sports, both indoor and outdoor
- Adult recreational sports now includes both indoor and outdoor
- Sport are now divided into risk categories
- Counties are now categorized by COVID activity level measured by new cases per 100K residents in the previous two weeks and the percentage of positive tests
- Whether or not a sport is allowed, and to what degree it is allowed depends on a combination of the risk category for the sport and the COVID risk category for the county in which the sport is to take place
- Tournaments and spectators are prohibited in any county that is not in the low risk COVID category
- Additional detailed public health guidance is added

Included Here:

- Professional sporting activities indoor and outdoor
- School and non-school youth team sports indoor and outdoor, and adult recreational team sports indoor and outdoor

All professional sporting activities, indoor and outdoor, outdoor youth team sports, and outdoor adult recreational team sports operating during the Safe Start Washington phased reopening must adopt a written procedure for employee safety and customer interaction that is at least as strict as this procedure and that complies with the safety and health requirements below, including recreation-specific guidance.

No business may operate until it can meet and maintain all the requirements in this document, including providing materials, schedules and equipment required to comply. Additional considerations may be adopted, as appropriate.

Professional Sporting Activities, Indoor and Outdoor

RESTART COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

All professional sporting activities, including back office operations of up to 50 people, unless a county's then-current phase permits a greater number of people, full team practices, and spectator-less games and competitions, can resume on June 5, 2020, regardless of phase, if all of the following conditions are met:

- The organization follows both the league-wide and team-specific "return to play" safety plans.
- The league-wide plan is approved by the player's association or union representing players of the team.
- The team must report in advance to its respective county health department the dates when full team practices and spectator-less pre-season games will occur.

- For horse racing, instead of the above requirements, a horse racing safety plan safety plan must be developed and followed and, along with specific guidance to horse racing, which can be found [here](#).

School and Non-school Youth Team Sports Indoor and Outdoor and Adult Recreational Team Sports Indoor and Outdoor

The risk of transmitting the SARS CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19 depends on multiple factors including: 1) Number of people in a location, 2) Type of location, 3) Distance between people, 4) Length of time at location, 5) Level of protective equipment used (e.g. face coverings). As general guidance, smaller groups are safer than larger ones; outdoor locations are safer than indoor; sports that can ensure distance of six (6) feet or more are safer than closer contact; and shorter duration is safer than longer.

Sport Risk Category guidance

For the purposes of this document, sports are defined using the following risk categories (The list below is not all-encompassing. Some sports are covered in other guidance documents, and if so those guidance documents govern those activities. If a sport does not appear on this list that does not necessarily mean it is prohibited at this time.):

Low risk sports: tennis, swimming, pickleball, golf, cross country, track and field, sideline/no-contact cheer and dance, disc golf.

Moderate risk sports: softball, baseball, t-ball, soccer, futsal, volleyball, lacrosse, flag football, ultimate frisbee, ice hockey, cricket, gymnastics, crew, field hockey, school bowling competitions.

High risk sports: football, rugby, wrestling, cheerleading with contact, dance with contact, basketball, water polo, martial arts competitions, roller derby.

Guidance applicable to ALL sporting activities at ALL county risk levels

Indoor facilities will still need to adhere to overall capacity limits detailed in the [Indoor Fitness and Training Guidelines](#) (“For a facility that is larger than 12,000 sq. feet, the occupancy of the facility may not exceed 25 percent of the fire code occupancy rating.”)

Stay home when sick or if a close contact of someone with COVID-19

Athletes, coaches, umpires/referees, spectators and any other paid or volunteer staff should be required to stay home if they feel unwell, show any signs of COVID-19, or have been exposed to a confirmed case or close contact. All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening should consider [symptoms listed by the CDC](#). Any person with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is a close contact of someone with confirmed COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.

Those who are excluded from training or contests due to [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or because they are [close contacts](#) must follow DOH and local public health isolation and quarantine guidance before returning to training or contests.

People with underlying health conditions should consult with their medical provider regarding participation in athletic activities.

Masks

Masks required for athletes/participants directly before and directly after sporting activities and strongly encouraged whenever not engaged in strenuous activity. Any spectators must wear facial coverings per the Department of Health facial covering order. Coaches, referees/umpires, trainers, managers, spotters, and any other paid or volunteer staff must wear face coverings at all times, with an exception for referees that need to run in the field of play.

Physical Distance

Physical distance of 6 feet must be maintained between staff, volunteers, and any spectators at all times with exceptions for training and medical personnel and volunteers performing their medical duties. Six feet of distance must be maintained among athletes when not engaged in sporting activities, huddles and team meetings must be physically distanced.

Hygiene

Require athletes, coaches, umpires/referees and any other paid or volunteer staff to practice good hygiene including washing their hands frequently and covering their sneezes and coughs. Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after practice, especially after touching shared objects or blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains 60-95% alcohol content. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they are dry. Athletes should not share water bottles, uniforms, towels, or snacks and should not spit (saliva, sunflower seeds, etc.).

Provide handwashing or hand sanitizing stations at training and contest locations.

Limit the use of locker rooms to handwashing and restroom use only. Showers should not be used due to potential spread of aerosolized droplets. If use of locker rooms for changing is necessary, maximize ventilation and use tape, spots, or cones to signal 6 feet of distance for athletes who need to change. If locker rooms are used cleaning protocols must be included in the sporting activity safety plan. Stagger entry to the changing area and use of these facilities as appropriate with members of the same team or training cohort only. Limit occupancy of the locker rooms to avoid crowding.

Cleaning

Clean high touch surfaces and disinfect shared equipment before and after each use. Ensure restrooms are cleaned and disinfected regularly. Current CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfection for COVID-19 states that disinfectants should be registered by the EPA for use against the COVID-19. Find the current list here: [List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2 \(COVID-19\)](#). Disinfectants based on hydrogen peroxide or alcohol are safer than harsher chemicals. The University of Washington has a [handout with options for safer cleaning and disinfecting products that work well against COVID-19](#).

Ventilation

Ventilation is important to have good indoor air quality. Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly. Increase air circulation and ventilation as much as possible by opening windows and doors. Offer more outside time, open windows often and adjust mechanical ventilation systems to bring in as much outside air as possible. Increase filters to MERV 13 if the HVAC can accommodate. Use of fans for cooling is

acceptable. In indoor spaces, fans should only be used when windows or doors are open to the outdoors in order to circulate indoor and outdoor air. They should blow away from people.

Outdoors locations are preferred to indoors locations, and should be utilized to the greatest extent possible to allow for maximum fresh air circulation and social distancing. Outdoor temporary structures may be used. An outdoor temporary structure is defined as having no more than two walls to provide appropriate ventilation.

Transportation

Limit exposure to those outside the household unit during travel. Encourage only those in the same household to travel together, and if not in the same household, travel in separate vehicles if possible.

For travel groups, (groups that include more than one household in the same vehicle whether in a carpool or on a bus) all members of the travel group, including the driver, must wear a face covering and spread out as much as possible within the vehicle. Limit travel groups to those who have been in regular contact (e.g. team members). Encourage family members to sit together. Maximize ventilation in the vehicle by opening windows.

Buses should install safety barriers (such as plexiglass shields) between the driver and passengers or close (block off/leave empty) the seats nearest the driver to ensure 6 feet of distance between the driver and passengers. Passengers should board from the rear door when possible. Buses should improve air filtration where possible. Buses should be cleaned and disinfected daily after use with attention to frequently touched services (doors, rails, seat backs).

Records and Contact Tracing

Keep a roster of every athlete, staff and volunteer present at each practice, training session, and contest to assist with contact tracing in the event of a possible exposure. Similarly keep a roster and seating chart for each travel group. Attendance rosters and seating charts must be kept on file for 28 days after the practice, contest, or trip.

Employees

Employers must specifically ensure operations follow the main Labor & Industries COVID-19 requirements to protect workers. COVID-19 workplace and safety requirements can be found [here](#).

County COVID-19 Activity Level guidance

The risk of COVID-19 spread linked to sporting activities depends on the level of COVID-19 spread in the community. The following COVID-19 activity level classifications are based on the Department of Health's school reopening decision tree recommendations, which classify counties based on their current COVID-19 activity level.

To better understand this policy here is a link to the current infection rate trends in every county (scroll down and click on "Summary Data Tables" for county-by-county info): <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/what-you-need-know/covid-19-risk-assessment-dashboard>

HIGH LEVEL COUNTY COVID ACTIVITY >75 cases/100K/14 days OR >5% positivity

Team practices and/or training can resume for low, medium, and high risk sports if players are limited to groups of six in separate parts of the field/court, separated by a buffer zone. Brief close contact (ex: 3 on

3 drills) is permitted. It is preferable for the groups of six to be stable over time. Attendance rosters should include group contact information. Each league, organization, or club must publish and follow a “return to play” safety plan. Any practice or training activities that can be done outdoors should be done outdoors.

Scrimmage, intra-team competitions, and league games or competition allowed for low risk sports, but are discouraged if school is not conducting in person learning.

No tournaments allowed.

No spectators allowed except for one parent/guardian/caregiver for each minor-aged participant allowed. Spectators must maintain physical distance of at least six (6) feet between each person. No spectators allowed for participants 18 and older.

MODERATE LEVEL COUNTY COVID ACTIVITY >25-75 cases/100K/14 days AND <5% positivity

Attendance rosters should include group contact information. Each league, organization, or club must publish and follow a “return to play” safety plan. Any practice or training activities that can be done outdoors should be done outdoors.

Scrimmage, intra-team competitions, and league games allowed for both low and moderate risk sports. Scrimmage, intra-team competitions, but no competitions of any kind against other teams, allowed for high risk sports.

No tournaments allowed.

No spectators allowed except for one adult parent/guardian/caregiver for each minor-aged participant allowed. Spectators must maintain physical distance of at least six (6) feet between each person. No spectators allowed for participants 18 and older.

LOW LEVEL COUNTY COVID ACTIVITY <25 cases/100K/14 days AND <5% positivity

Attendance rosters should include group contact information. Each league, organization, or club must publish and follow a “return to play” safety plan. Any practice or training activities that can be done outdoors should be done outdoors.

Scrimmage, intra-team competitions, and league games allowed for low, moderate, and high risk sports.

Tournaments allowed. All teams and individuals participating in tournaments must reside in low level COVID activity counties.

Spectators to follow current gathering size limit in the Safe Start Plan.

A prohibition on tournaments for sporting activities does not include postseason, playoff, state or regional championship competitions sanctioned by a statewide interscholastic activities administrative and rule-making body that oversees competition in all counties in the state.