

# NMYFL Competition Protocols

## *Commitment to safely resuming competition*

### PURPOSE

This Return to Competition document is meant to cover protocols in detail in order to safely have North Metro Youth Football League (NMYFL) competition this season.

These recommendations **do not supersede or replace any applicable local, state, regional or federal health guidelines or requirements**, which should be adhered to by all associations. These guidelines are subject to change based on changes to the trajectory of COVID-19 and teams should monitor these guidelines consistently and often.

Given the timing of a return to play in the fall season, associations have already implemented successfully a gradual return-to-training. This plan takes into account the need to return to play in an appropriate, methodical manner. Our organizations have implemented a plan that accounts for, while not fully eliminating, the risk of COVID-19 resurgence as well as risk of injury if returning to competition too quickly.

This plan has taken into account recommendations by the Minnesota Department of Health and appropriate health authorities as of August 15, 2020. In addition, Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission (MASC) staff have consulted on this document.

### GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

General recommendations to **stop the spread of infection**, as outlined by [Minnesota Department of Health](#):

- Stay at least 6 feet from other people.
- Stay home if you feel sick and contact your health care provider.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw used tissues in the trash and wash your hands afterwards.
- MDH recommends wearing a cloth face at all times in public settings whether indoor or outdoor. The current Minnesota Executive Order must be followed, which indicates that masks are required in the outdoor setting if social distancing (> 6 feet of distance) cannot be maintained (see "Spectators" on following pages).
- Clean and disinfect things that people touch a lot: counters and other surfaces; telephones, remote controls and other devices; doorknobs, stairway railings and other objects.
- Avoid contact with other individuals (shaking hands, for example).

### ASSOCIATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Each member association should develop and distribute to their members a specific written plan that documents practices to reduce risk of transmission of COVID-19. **Please note that it is the responsibility of the association members (coaches, players and parents) to adhere to the plan.**

This plan must include:

Specific guidelines and procedures that will be in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission among club members, including but not limited to players, staff, spectators as applicable, etc. These guidelines should be in accordance with Minnesota Department of Health then-current recommendations as well as guidelines contained with this Return to Competition Plan.

The following details should be included in the Association Plan:

- The individual at the association responsible for matters relating to COVID-19, in terms of case reporting, dissemination of information, event planning, match and training protocols, etc.
- Symptom monitoring amongst Club participants and staff. As stated in the Return to Play Plan, the Minnesota Symptom Screener should be used prior to every match/session/club engagement: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/is-it-covid/>

- Methods and frequency by which information is disseminated to Club participants, to include information regarding proper hygiene expectations, social distancing, and disinfection practices.
- Methods by which case reporting is to occur to club membership, staff and local health authorities.
  - If a case of COVID-19 is reported to you and is a part of your organization, report the case to the Minnesota Department of Health at [health.sports.covid19@state.mn.us](mailto:health.sports.covid19@state.mn.us)

Associations should share this Plan on their website. Associations should also consider frequent reminders about proper hygiene and social distancing on their website and social media channels.

## **LEAGUE PROTOCOLS**

This Return to Competition Plan will be posted on our website and social media channels (consistently and often).

Given the protocols in each of the Appendices and the possibility of players and/or staff needing to quarantine, our League will provide flexibility to reschedule games throughout the season.

NMYFL are available to help the state of Minnesota with any contact tracing efforts.

## **PRIOR TO ARRIVING**

It is recommended that players from different households do not drive/carpool together.

All participants should use the Minnesota Symptom Screener: <https://mn.gov/covid19/for-minnesotans/if-sick/is-it-covid/> each player, coach, and referee should check his/her temperature at home, and refrain from participation if he or she has a fever ( $\geq 100.4$  degrees F).

All coaches, players, referees and others (i.e. spectators) should be monitoring their symptoms at home to ensure that:

- He/she is not currently demonstrating or suffering from any ill symptoms (see Appendix A)
- He/she has not had a suspected or documented case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days (see Appendix B);
- He/she has not had any close contact with a sick individual or anyone with a confirmed case of COVID-19 (see Appendix C);
- Any individual who is unable to confirm the above criteria should not participate and contact both their Club and healthcare provider.

## **AT THE FIELD BEFORE THE GAME**

- Any player that does not meet the above gating criteria should be restricted from participation and sent home.
- It is not the responsibility of the referee to enforce these criteria or aspects of the team's plan. The coaches, players and parents are responsible for assessing their criteria and restricting their participation.
- Team warmups should be conducted as far as possible away from the game field area.
- Teams and spectators will be directed into their bench area when the previous teams and spectators have vacated the area.

## **DURING THE GAME**

Football may be conducted "as usual" with the following exceptions:

- Handshakes or contact in substitutions should be avoided. Celebrations should not contain physical contact.
- Social distancing should occur between players and coaches on the sideline both during play and during any individual or group discussions during the game.
- No player, coach, or spectator should violate social distancing guidelines with a referee at any time.
- Players on the sideline/bench should remain socially distanced (6 feet minimum) at all times.

- Players do not need to be masked, but staff and players on the sideline (whom are not currently playing) can have a face covering if they desire.
- Any team pre- and post-game handshakes should not occur including team tunnels with spectators

## **AFTER THE GAME**

- All attendees should maintain social distancing guidelines after the game is completed.
- All teams and spectators need to clean up their game area and depart the competition area immediately.
- All team meetings need to be done away from the game field and using social distancing.
- Team post game snacks and gatherings are discouraged, but if they do occur make sure all items are prepackaged and touchless so only the people involved touch them.

## **EQUIPMENT**

- Players and referees should bring their own equipment (hand sanitizer, water bottle, towels, etc.) that should not be shared between individuals.
- Equipment should be disinfected before and after practices and games, equipment should be provided by the team.
- Where possible, communal equipment should only be handled by the coach.
- Footballs should be disinfected before and after activity as much as possible.
- Shared “hydration stations” should be eliminated to the extent possible and players and staff should bring their own water or other hydration.

## **SPECTATORS**

- It is strongly recommended that players have a minimal number of supporters on site whenever possible. Capacity limits are to follow MN Stay Safe Guidance.
- Everyone is expected to cover their mouth when coughing or sneezing (into the nape of the elbow).
- Anyone feeling sick should leave the facility immediately, go home and if needed, seek medical guidance from a healthcare provider.
- Avoid touching their eyes, nose and mouth with their hands whenever possible.
- Tents, tarps or large group structures will not be permitted in the spectator areas of the sidelines.
- It is strongly recommended that people over the age of 65 and/or people with pre-existing conditions do not attend.
- MDH recommends wearing a cloth face at all times in public settings whether indoor or outdoor. The current Minnesota Executive Order must be followed, which indicates that masks are required in the outdoor setting if social distancing (> 6 feet of distance) cannot be maintained.

## **REPORTING OF POSITIVE COVID-19 INFECTION:**

- Any individual with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should notify their respective clubs immediately.
- Any referee with a confirmed case of COVID-19 should notify their respective assignor/Club who assigned the match immediately.
- Any association notified of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in a player, staff member, or referee should notify any other organization involved in competition with that individual in the 2 days prior to symptom onset or 2 days prior to the individual being tested for COVID-19.
- Associations should report any cases of players/staff/referees to Minnesota Department of Health at [health.sports.covid19@state.mn.us](mailto:health.sports.covid19@state.mn.us).
- Regarding the need to quarantine, review Appendices B & C about suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection.

## **APPENDIX A - SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19 INFECTION:**

Individuals with COVID-19 can exhibit symptoms ranging from the following:

The most common symptoms associated with infection include:

- Fever (  $\geq 100.4$  degrees F)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Less common symptoms that may still be evidence of COVID-19 infection include:

- Sore throat
- Congestion
- Nausea and vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- Muscle / joint pain
- Sudden loss of taste or smell
- Chills

*Note: Some people do not have symptoms, or have very mild symptoms. Persons with COVID-19 may be infectious two days prior to symptom onset.*

### **What to do if you are waiting for COVID-19 test results**

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/waiting.pdf>

## **Appendix B - Return to Play Following Confirmed COVID-19 Infection**

*These recommendations are intended to provide an outline for decision-making as it relates to protocols for navigating a confirmed case of COVID-19.*

Persons with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19 should quarantine immediately, and can leave isolation and return to normal activities 10 days after symptom onset so as long as:

- The individual has not had a fever in the past 24 hours.
- Symptoms are resolving.
- Athletes may want to contact their health care provider prior to a return to football.

## **Appendix C - Exposure to a Suspected or Diagnosed Case of COVID-19:**

*These recommendations are intended to provide an outline for decision-making as it relates to protocols for navigating a possible exposure to a suspected or diagnosed case of COVID-19.*

Any player or staff who has been **exposed** to a COVID-19 case shall self-quarantine for 14 days from the last contact with the case.

In this case, **exposure** means any one of the following:

- Caring for a sick person with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection. OR
- Living in the same household as an individual with a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection. OR
- Individual who has had close contact (> 6 feet) for greater than or equal to 15 minutes with known or suspected COVID-19 or possible COVID-19 infection.\*

In the cases of the first two bullets above, Associations should consider these quarantine criteria “automatic”. In the case of the third bullet above, this determination of close contact can either be made by the association or by contact tracers at MDH.

\*If you are absolutely sure an individual had 15+ minutes of close (< 6 feet) contact with a lab-confirmed case of COVID-19, please ensure that individual self isolates for 14 days from last contact with the aforementioned case.

If you have questions about whether an individual needs to self-isolate, follow the below steps:

1. Have that individual self-isolate (No on-site/in-person team activities)
2. Email [health.Sports.Covid19@state.mn.us](mailto:health.Sports.Covid19@state.mn.us) and explain your exposure story. It's ok to reach out to your local health officials instead, if you prefer.
3. Don't allow that individual return to team activities until you've received a recommendation from a state or local health official.
4. Follow their recommendation.

#### **CDC Public Health Guidance for Community-Related Exposure (Definition Above):**

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

1. Stay home until 14 days after last exposure and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) at all times
2. Self-monitor for symptoms
3. Check temperature twice a day
4. Watch for fever\*, cough, or shortness of breath, or other [symptoms](#) of COVID-19
5. Avoid contact with [people at higher risk for severe illness](#) from COVID-19
6. Follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms develop

#### **Sources**

Reviewed with documents from [Minnesota Department of Health](#)

8/15/2020