

 USA FOOTBALL

RETURN TO YOUTH FOOTBALL 2020

FAQs



Q What do we do if an athlete/coach/volunteer tests positive?

A A responsible return to youth football is truly a team effort and this situation helps underscore that. First, before conducting any football activities, make sure you have reviewed our **Return To Youth Football 2020 guidelines** and understand what CDC Phase your community is in. That will dictate what football activities and precautionary measures that correspond to that phase.

A critical first step to your return in any phase is creating an environment where your coaches, parents, athletes, and volunteers are (1) informed of your activities and procedures and (2) comfortable being honest about their health and any symptoms they are experiencing.

If you become aware that someone has participated in activities while unwell (knowingly or unknowingly) and it results in a known COVID-19 exposure/illness/positive test your first step is to, without publicizing the individual's name, immediately notify everyone across your league that you had a player, coach, official and/or other category of individual tested positive for COVID-19. Then, immediately contact your local public health authorities to allow them to begin the process of contact tracing and other possible actions/steps. During this conversation your local public health authorities should be able to help you determine, based on all of the relevant facts related to your activities and other local factors, who qualifies as having had "close contact" with the positive individual for purposes of needing to self-isolate. You should follow their recommendation for self-isolation and recovery for anyone who subsequently tests positive including modifying your schedule and/or activities to accommodate the recommendations.

Q How often should footballs be sanitized?

A It depends on which Phase your program is in.

During **Phase 1**, all equipment, including footballs, should be sanitized after each use and prior to the next workout.

Once you enter **Phase 2**, all equipment, including footballs, should be sanitized intermittently during practices.

During **Phase 3**, equipment should be sanitized between each use and helmets, pads, and associated equipment should be worn by only one individual and not shared.

If/when you progress to gameplay, we encourage you to sanitize footballs at a minimum between each series.

Q What are the liability issues if participants contract COVID-19 and the initial exposure is traced back to league activities?

A You should always consult with your local attorney on matters related to liability and related risk mitigation before proceeding with activities. In preparation for such a conversation, our **Return to Youth Football 2020 guidelines** can help you as it introduces some risk concepts and links to some external documents related to risk considerations that have been compiled across sports.

Some items you may want to discuss with your attorney during a conversation on potential liability include:

- The steps your program is taking to responsibly return to football activities;
- The current local orders, rules, regulations, and guidance applicable to your activities;
- How you are informing parents of the steps you are taking within your program to allow them to make an informed decision about participation;
- If/how a COVID-19-specific waiver of liability might be used to help limit liability; and
- In consultation with your insurance broker and/or carrier, if/how your insurance may respond to potential claims arising from COVID-19 exposure including understanding any applicable communicable disease exclusions your insurance policy may contain.

Q If a school district does not open, how can we expect that organization to field teams?

A We encourage you to monitor and understand what your local school systems are doing as that knowledge will help you in planning your activities. Every league is different in how it sources players for its teams. If some or all of your teams use a scholastic model to source players, monitor the decisions of state and local school officials to best understand the impact on their ability to field a team for the coming season. Your league and teams should act in accordance with the rules, regulations, and orders of your state and local departments of public health at all times.

Q Why are flag and 7-on-7 allowed in Phase 3 but not traditional tackle football?

A Flag and 7-on-7 are permitted in Phase 3 because they are free of the sustained contact of traditional tackle football. “Sustained contact” is the body-to-body contact with opposing players while going to the ground with one another at close proximity. This level of contact is not seen in flag or 7-on-7 and explains why they are placed in a different phase.

Q What are the guidelines of my state?

A Consult with your local department of health, whether it be on the state, county or city level. Review the website of your “most local” department of health among the three categories mentioned above or call them by phone. Not all states use the same criteria and what is allowable during specific phases will vary from **state-to-state**, or even within a state.

Q Does USA Football have thoughts on COVID-19 related after-market products?

A While USA Football works with partners to offer certain equipment to our youth football family, we do not function to certify its efficacy. As with any product, you will want to evaluate it and any manufacturer claims for yourself, including potentially consulting local public health and medical professionals. If, after a thorough evaluation, you decide that you want to utilize any after-market products on your equipment, related to COVID-19 or otherwise, check the terms of any applicable equipment warranties to make sure that your use of an after-market product will not cause any warranties to become invalid.

Depending on your existing policies or rules, you may also need to amend or publish a temporary exemption to those to allow the use of certain after-market equipment, like a full-face shield, if it would otherwise be prohibited.

Q How should I handle a league that is not living up to the standards that I'd like to see?

A While USA Football does not operate youth football leagues, we released our **Return to Youth Football 2020 guidelines** to help youth leagues around the country plan a responsible return to activity based on their location and operations. We created our guidelines based on the CDC's recommendations and worked with football and medical experts to tailor them to our sport. Our guidelines are free of cost for coaches and leagues to use.

If your league is not yet aware of these resources, you may want to share usafootball.com/return with them directly.

On that page, you'll also find several resources to help parents with a return to league activities, or if that isn't something your family is ready for yet or youth sports are postponed or cancelled in your area, we also have information about ways to continue to enjoy football at home with your athlete including the **60 Ways to Play guide**. We suggest giving it a look.

Q What is my state high school athletic association doing in regard to COVID-19?

A The situation with respect to high school athletic associations is constantly changing. Our friends at the National Federation of State High School Associations offered **Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities** to help them with their decisions and you may find this helpful, too.

We also suggest that you consult with your state high school athletic association directly to learn more about its specific plans. Reviewing its website is a great place to start or you may try calling them by phone. Not all state athletic associations are using the same approach, so things will vary from state-to-state.



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