

# **Tri County Youth Football League**

## **PROGRAM PREPARATION PLAN**



## **COVID-19 ACTION PLAN**

**July 20, 2020**

*Under Executive Order No. 168, on July 20, 2020 “High Risk Sports” that involve close, sustained contact between participants (Football & Group Cheer) may begin outdoor practices. “WHEREAS, because of our continued progress, we can now allow High Risk sports to resume contact practices and competitions, but such practices and competitions should take place in outdoor settings only, to reduce the risk of transmission; and WHEREAS, the indefinite prohibition of contact practices and competitions would be highly disruptive to individuals’ athletic careers”*

*This updates Executive Order No. 149, which allowed outdoor practices that do not involve person-to-person contact or routinely entail athletes interacting within six (6) feet of one another to begin on June 22, 2020. Before youth athletic organizations can return to play and practices may begin, each organization must develop a Program Preparation Plan.*

*“We are all ready to “open”, get back to “normal”, and get TCYFL back on the Football Field and Cheer Mats. Nothing is more important to us than the health and wellbeing of our youth athletes. Using guidance from the New Jersey Governor’s office, New Jersey Department of Health, and the CDC, TCYFL has developed a plan so we can do our best to keep everyone healthy while we return to play the sport we love.”*

## 1. Preparation for Return to Play

- a. A written COVID-19 Program Preparation Plan (PPP) will be in place that ensures the following:
  - i. Coaches and board members are identified to implement and oversee the PPP.
  - ii. Fields are properly maintained and new COVID-19 standards are adhered to.
  - iii. Quarantine/Self-Isolation protocols are established to protect coaches, volunteers and athletes.
  - iv. Board Members, coaches, volunteers and athletes are educated on COVID-19 health and safety protocols, including:
    1. Revised practice rules and regulations in place for COVID-19.
    2. Revised game and pre game regulations in place for COVID-19.
    3. The importance of staying home when experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.
    4. Proper social distancing protocols, face covering requirements, and good hygiene practices (e.g., hand hygiene, covering coughs).
    5. How to identify symptoms of COVID-19.
    6. Protocol for handling someone exhibiting signs of COVID, has previously tested positive for COVID-19, or had a “close contact” with a person tested positive, or showing sign of symptoms of, COVID-19.
  - v. Face covering, social distancing and proper hygiene etiquette is followed.
  - vi. Modified workout/practice rules are established that promote less physical contact.
  - vii. Minimal, if any, sharing and proper sanitization of personal apparel items and equipment.
- b. A COVID-19 Program Preparation Plan Committee has been created and responsible for establishing, implementing and overseeing the adherence of the TCYFL PPP.
  - i. COVID-19 PPP Committee – Sean Walsh, Rick Meier, Pete Isoldi
- c. The Head of Organization, for each town, must review the Program Preparation Plan and agree to the stipulations in the plan, to begin the 2020 Season.
  - i. BBYC – Sean Walsh
  - ii. Franklin Lakes – Rick Meier
  - iii. Glen Rock – Pete Isoldi
  - iv. Kinnelon – Dustin Grande
  - v. Lincoln Park – Jack McLaughlin
  - vi. Little Falls – Mike Pocius
  - vii. Pequannock – Joe Lynch
  - viii. PLR – Michael Riga
  - ix. Wanaque – Gregg DePhillips

- d. TCYFL PPP, after approval from league membership, will be communicated to parents and posted to the TCYFL webpage for easy access and availability to the public.
- e. TCYFL Waiver and Questionnaire must be completed and submitted in order for players to participate in ANY TCYFL game (***see attached TCYFL Waiver and Health Questionnaire***). This waiver will become part of the TCYFL weigh-in and team roster requirements.

## **2. Preparing Practice Facility and Fields**

- a. The fields and facilities are not maintained by, nor the responsibility of, TCYFL membership organizations. However, TCYFL will monitor that each facility and field used will adhere to the following:
  - i. Compliance with the gathering's limitations outlined in Executive Order No. 152, outdoor gatherings should be no more than 500 people, or the Order in effect at the time of competition.
  - ii. Highly visible signage with reminders regarding social distancing protocols, face covering requirements, and good hygiene practices.
  - iii. Reduced crowding and proper social distancing around high-traffic areas.
  - iv. Limited occupancy in restrooms.
  - v. Availability of hand sanitizers, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or other sanitizing materials are readily available at areas prone to gatherings or high traffic.
  - vi. For Snack Stand guidelines, see below.
- b. Fields will be clearly marked to ensure teams and groupings, as well as squads (i.e. Juniors, Seniors...), including cheer, remain separated at all times.

## **3. Conducting Athletic Practices/Competitive Games**

### **a. Pre-Screening**

- i. Coaches, volunteers, athletes and spectators will be required to abide by the gathering's limitations outlined in Executive Order No. 152 (2020), or the most current Order in effect.
- ii. Pre-Practice and Game screening will be administered by, where possible, a volunteer (ie Team Parent) not participating in the day's practice/game.
- iii. Each coach, volunteer, game official and athlete participating in practice sessions or games must be scanned, via temperature check and health questionnaire (verbal questionnaire), at the beginning of each session.
- iv. Anyone showing a temperature of **100.40** or higher, or displaying other symptoms of COVID-19, shall not be permitted to participate and will be sent home. A record will be kept with the Membership Town's Secretary. **See below for further TCYFL COVID-19 Quarantine/Self-Isolation protocols.**

- v. All athletes, game officials and coaches must sanitize their hands before, during, and after each practice/game.

**b. Practices**

- i. Full Contact Practices can resume starting on July 20<sup>th</sup>.
- ii. If an athlete exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 during the activity, the athlete will promptly be removed from the activity, return home and follow Quarantine/Self-Isolation Protocol (see below).
- iii. On Field Access to practices and games will be limited to athletes, coaches, game officials, and volunteers.
- iv. Practice areas will be clearly marked off to ensure proper distancing and segregation of groupings. Same for Game Day warmup areas where possible.
- v. Practice and Game times will be staggered to the extent possible.
- vi. A designated volunteer should assist during practice to monitor social distancing and maintaining proper face coverings for athletes and spectators.
- vii. For cheerleaders, pom-poms will not be used during workouts/practices/ or games.

**c. Face Coverings**

- i. Coaches, volunteers, game officials and spectators are required to wear face coverings.
- ii. Athletes are encouraged to wear face coverings when **NOT** engaged in vigorous activity.
- iii. Face coverings should **NOT BE WORN** by coaches or athletes when engaging in vigorous activity.

**d. Groupings/Social Distancing**

- i. To the extent possible, no more than ten (10) athletes will be grouped together in a single area.
- ii. Social distancing of at least six (6) feet shall be maintained between athletes and coaches when possible, including within the ten (10) athlete groupings.
- iii. For Practices, more than one group of athletes can be in a single area, provided there is twelve (12) to eighteen (18) feet between each group of athletes.
- iv. Once groupings are determined, athletes and coaches, will keep to the same grouping, whenever possible.
- v. Efforts will be made to keep the Groupings consistent throughout the entirety of the preseason.
- vi. Practice schedules are to be used indicating both small and larger group(team) activities.

- vii. Squads (i.e. Junior, Seniors) will have separate, designated areas for practice.
- viii. There shall not be celebratory contact, e.g., fist bumps, high-fives, hugs, etc.

**e. Sports Equipment and Apparel**

- i. Equipment and apparel sharing will be minimized.
- ii. Each athlete shall bring individual water bottles to each practice/game for his/her own personal consumption. Athletes will not share food, beverages, water bottles, towels, pom-poms, pinnies, gloves, helmets or any other equipment or materials that is involved in direct bodily contact.
- iii. Water bottles are to be kept separate based on groupings.
- iv. Footballs will be disinfected as often as possible during workouts/practices/games.
- v. Equipment pads such as tackling pads, sleds, shields will be disinfected between each group use when possible.
- vi. All sports equipment and touchpoints (e.g., benches, agility cones, ladders, clipboards, etc.) must be cleaned and disinfected after each workout with EPA approved cleaners and disinfectants against COVID-19.

**f. Hygiene**

- i. Athletes, game officials and coaches will make every effort to sanitize their hands as often as possible, including before, during and after the workout/practice/game.
- ii. Cheerleaders will sanitize their hands after each performance, including stunting. Football players will sanitize after drills, whenever practicable.
- iii. Hand sanitizer and/or disinfectant wipes shall be accessible at all times.

**4. Quarantine/Self Isolation Protocols**

- i. Anyone showing a fever of 100.4 or higher, will not return to practice until seventy-two hours (72) after showing no symptoms. And, must submit a Return to Play Waiver.
- ii. Anyone showing a fever of 100.4 or higher, seventy-two hours (72) prior to a game, is not eligible to play in that scheduled game.
- iii. Anyone showing a fever of 100.4 will not be allowed to participate in that day's game/contest.
- iv. Anyone testing positive for COVID-19, will not return to practice until seventy-two (72) hours after showing no symptoms AND fourteen (14) days since symptoms first began AND must provide a Doctor's note indicating that they are healthy to return to playing sports AND, must submit a Return to Play Waiver (*see attached Return to Play Waiver*).
- v. Anyone who comes into close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes) with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 is required to stay home for 14 days after your last contact with the person who has

tested positive for COVID-19. Before returning to practice, athlete/coach must be symptom free for seventy-two (72) hours and submit a Return to Play Waiver.

- vi. Any squad that played a game, up to one week prior, against any opposing player testing positive for COVID-19 must adhere to the close contact and quarantine regulation. Therefore, any opposing squad players that come into close contact, must quarantine and stay home for 14 days after your last contact. Before returning to practice, the athlete must be symptom free for seventy-two (72) hours and submit a Return to Play Waiver.
- vii. TCYFL will form a committee to review whom on the opposing squad met the definition of close contact. The decision of committee is final. There are no appeals.
- viii. Any positive COVID 19 tests need to be reported to the TCYFL. Names can be omitted but specific squad and whether it was a player, coach or volunteer need to be included in the notification.
- ix. Any positive COVID 19 tests need to be reported to the local health department.

NOTE: **If** Testing becomes free and accessible to ALL membership towns the following language **may** be added to PPP: *Players from opposing teams required to quarantine may submit two (2) consecutive negative COVID-19 tests results, be symptom free for seventy-two (72) hours from contact, provide a Doctor's note indicating that they are healthy to return to playing sports, and submit a Return to Play Waiver, may be released from quarantine.*

## 5. Games and Tournaments

### a. Field, Facilities, Games

- i. Follow protocols listed above under section 3 "Conducting Athletic Practices/Competitive Games".
- ii. Games and competitions, based on the dates indicated above, coaches, visitors and athletes will be required to abide by the gathering's limitations outlined in Executive Order No. 152 (2020), or the Order in effect at the time of competition. As of July 3<sup>rd</sup>, the limit is five hundred (500) people.
- iii. On Field Access to games is limited to athletes, coaches, game officials, and volunteers.
- iv. Athletes, coaches, and game officials will make every effort to sanitize their hands as often as possible, including before, during and after the game.
- v. Coaches and Game Officials need to wear face coverings during games.
- vi. Warm up areas, whenever possible, will be clearly marked off to ensure proper distancing and segregation of groupings.
- vii. Players will practice social distancing on sidelines when not in the game.
- viii. There will be a minimum of six (6) feet from the spectators and team bench/sideline area.

- ix. Team time-outs will be taken on the sideline distanced from players on sideline.
- x. Coaches will be allowed on the field for Flex and Pee Wee games, per TCYFL rules. On Field Coaches must remain 10 yards from the line of scrimmage at all times.
- xi. Game Balls will be disinfected between each change of possession.
- xii. There shall not be celebratory contact, e.g., fist bumps, high-fives, hugs, etc.
- xiii. No player handshakes at coin toss or after games.
- xiv. Locker rooms or closed space facilities will not be used by athletes and sparingly by coaches and board members
- xv. Half-time snacks will be prohibited for athletes and coaches.

**b. Announcers Booth**

- i. In order to maintain social distancing, only three persons are allowed in the booth at one time; announcer, clock official and videographer. No other persons will be allowed inside the Announcer's Booth.
- ii. Only the announcer will be permitted to remove his mask while announcing the game.
- iii. Team rosters must be submitted before each game outside of the Announcer's Booth. Outside personnel are not permitted inside the Announcer's Booth.
- iv. All music must be provided in an electronic fashion by email or text.
- v. A public service announcement, reminding of COVID-19 preventative actions (i.e. wear face masks, social distancing...), will be played before each home game.

**c. Snack Stand**

- a. The Snack Stand must meet the requirements for outdoor dining outlined in Executive Order No. 150 (2020) and Department of Health Executive Directive No. 20-014.

**6. New Jersey Travel Advisory**

Under the 14-day quarantine travel advisory announced by the Governors of New Jersey, New York and Connecticut, individuals traveling to or returning to New Jersey from states with increasing rates of COVID-19 are advised to self-quarantine for 14 days. This includes travel by train, bus, car, plane and any other method of transportation.

The 14-day quarantine travel advisory applies to travel from certain states identified as those that have a positive COVID-19 test rate higher than 10 per 100,000 residents or have a 10% or higher positivity rate over a seven-day rolling average ("impacted states.")

Please note, TCYFL is a youth sports organization and cannot monitor each athlete's whereabouts, or properly enforce a self-quarantine.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### ***Why does this guidance differ from the guidelines issued by High School Football and Cheer programs?***

The high school programs are governed by the New Jersey Athletic Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA) The NJSIAA has set a timeline for High School Sports that they feel best meets the wellbeing of HS Athletes. They face different challenges than youth athletes such as bus travel, locker rooms, games immediately after the school day, and school openings.

TCYFL is a youth organization and as such we are following the NJ Governor Office Executive Order 168, which allows full contact practices and competition for Risk 3 Sports (football, cheer) as of July 20, 2020. As part of the executive order, youth organizations must follow the guidance from the New Jersey Department of Health. This Program Preparation Plan is part of and follows the Guidance of the NJDOH and CDC.

### ***What steps is TCYFL taking to ensure my child or guardian is not unnecessarily exposed to COVID-19?***

TCYFL is taking the threat of COVID-19 very seriously. TCYFL has modified all practice, game and meeting protocols to conform with New Jersey Department of Health guidelines. In addition, TCYFL has incorporated further safeguards and precautions as recommended by the CDC, which is part of the NJDOH guidance. We have freely adopted additional safety measures to improve the health quality of our events and mitigate the risk of your children contracting COVID-19. TCYFL is dedicating time to educate their Members, Athletes, Game Officials and Coaches to ensure their understanding of the new protocols

### ***What supplies will TCYFL use?***

- Thermometer for temperature screenings
- Hand sanitizer
- EPA approved cleaners and disinfectants against COVID-19
- Face coverings
- Disposable gloves

### ***If someone in my family tested positive for COVID-19, what should I do?***

If a close contact (being within 6 feet of a person for longer than 15 minutes) of a TCYFL player has tested positive with COVID-19, you must notify the head coach of your child/guardian's squad and/or a TCYFL Board Member. The athlete should stay home for 14 days after the last contact with the person who has COVID-19. Before returning to practice, the athlete must be symptom free for seventy-two (72) hours and submit a Return to Play Waiver.

### ***What if my child or guardian displays symptoms of COVID-19?***

First and foremost, please keep them home. The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough and shortness of breath. Other symptoms *may* include a runny nose, sore throat, gastrointestinal symptoms or generally feeling unwell. If your child or guardian has these symptoms you should isolate at home and not go to workouts/practice/game, and likely school. The athlete will remain absent from workouts/practice for seventy-two (72) hours after showing

no symptoms without the use of fever-reducing medications and your other symptoms have improved. In addition, a doctor's note and a Return to Play Waiver must be submitted.

***If my child or guardian tests positive for COVID-19, when can they return to workouts/practice?***

If your child/guardian tests positive for COVID-19 and are not hospitalized or are discharged before all symptoms have resolved, the athlete will not return to workouts/practice until seventy-two (72) hours after showing no symptoms without the use of fever-reducing medications AND fourteen (14) days since symptoms first began AND must provide a Doctor's note indicating that they are healthy to return to playing sports AND, must submit a Return to Play Waiver.

***Why must I provide a Doctor's note despite my child or guardian self-isolating and not displaying symptoms for longer fourteen (14) days?***

COVID-19 attacks the respiratory system and can cause damage to lung tissue. The complications of COVID-19 may take longer than fourteen (14) days to recede. On the outside your child or guardian may appear symptom free and back to normal. However, on the inside, their lungs or other soft tissue may need further time to heal. TCYFL feels only a trained medical expert would have the ability to examine and assess proper lung function and, ultimately, determine if a child that has tested positive for COVID-19 is healthy enough to return to the physical stresses of anaerobic activities.

***What if my child or guardian tested negative, but still feels sick?***

If you test negative for COVID-19 but still have symptoms, it is likely you may have another respiratory virus. You should continue to follow similar guidance to isolate yourself from others, practice good hand hygiene and clean and disinfect surfaces in the home. In this situation, your child or guardian would still be placed in COVID-19 protocol and should not return to workouts/practice until 72 hours after their fever has ended without the use of fever-reducing medications and your other symptoms have improved. In addition, a doctor's note and a Return to Play Waiver must be submitted. Although your child or guardian has tested negative, false positives are not uncommon and, in today's COVID-19 environment, we must err on the side of caution.

***What is MIS-C and how is it associated with COVID-19?***

In May, 2020 the New Jersey Department of Health began receiving reports of a multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C) that may possibly be associated with COVID-19. Most patients who have presented with this syndrome have tested positive for COVID-19 or corresponding antibodies. Similar cases of MIS-C also been reported in other states and countries. These cases have been found in children and young adults who had no other infectious cause identified. Healthcare providers have noted that this inflammatory syndrome has features that are similar to Kawasaki disease and toxic shock syndrome, but are not quite the same. There is limited information currently available about the clinical presentation but children with this syndrome may require intensive care in a hospital. MIS-C is a rare condition. However, because it is life-threatening, it is important that parents know the signs and symptoms so they can get help right away.

***What are the signs and symptoms of MIS-C?***

Most children have a fever (a temperature of 100.4°F or 38°C or greater) lasting several days, along with other symptoms. Other common symptoms may include:

- Irritability or sluggishness
- Abdominal pain without another explanation
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rash
- Conjunctivitis, or red or pink eyes
- Enlarged lymph node (“gland”) on one side of the neck
- Red cracked lips or red tongue that looks like a strawberry
- Swollen hands and feet, which might also be red

#### ***Is MIS-C contagious?***

MIS-C is not contagious. However, it is possible that your child has another underlying infection that may be contagious. Until more is known about this condition, hospitals that are treating children with MIS-C are taking the same precautions they take for patients with COVID-19.

#### ***When should I call my child’s doctor or seek emergency care?***

You should call your child’s doctor immediately if your child becomes ill and has had continued fever. Your doctor will ask about any signs or symptoms your child has and use that information to recommend next steps. If your child is severely ill, you should go to the nearest emergency room or call 911 immediately.