

August 30, 2021

Updated TSSA Protocols for Youth Soccer in Tennessee

Tennessee State Soccer Association (TSSA) and its member clubs restarted play during COVID on May 16th, 2020. Prior to that date, member clubs and High School sports were asked to observe the guidelines outlined within the [Tennessee Pledge](#). The Tennessee Pledge gave member clubs the ability to train under certain protocols but limited them on travel and games. Eventually restrictions were lifted, and play resumed.

As we enter the 2021-22 season, there have been an increased number of COVID-19 cases due to the Delta variant. This has even affected the kids that we coach daily. The virus has had a profound effect on the lives of our players, their families, and the communities that we serve. Many are fearful, angry, hurt, sad, and lonely. How we handle the virus and its effect on our communities and clubs is up to us.

Currently there are no mandates, such as the Tennessee Pledge, to guide or direct youth sports clubs as there was previously. However, TSSA is encouraging our youth soccer clubs to make their own recommendations, guidelines, or plans available to staff, parents, and the youth they serve. By doing so, we hope to limit the spread of the virus and allow teams to continue play. Below are some simple recommendations put together over the past year that we at TSSA feel can continue to be implemented by our member clubs.

Member Club Recommendations:

The CDC defines [close contact](#) as being within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period. To reduce close contact, the following are suggested:

- Establish protocols to maintain the six (6) foot physical distance among participants, where possible, and between youth, adult leaders and coaches, and parents or other spectators
- Limit carpooling to practices, camps, etc. Only members of the same family should be in a vehicle together
- Prevent youth from sharing cups, water bottles or other items

Consider protocols to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 among adult leaders, youth, and their families.

- Organizations should acknowledge and support decisions to not participate among youth, parents, and adult leaders who are uncomfortable participating for any reason
- Consider use of cloth facial covering or masks for adult leaders and youth where possible
- Instruct youth and adult leaders to avoid physical contact with one another, e.g., hugs, high-fives, etc.
- Remind adult leaders, youth and their families that they may not train or play games if either they or a household member has had onset of illness with symptoms compatible with suspected or lab-confirmed COVID-19 in the prior 14 days. (Symptoms of COVID-19 can include: fever (>100.4) or feverishness, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills or shaking chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and new loss of taste or smell.)

Consider plans to provide adequate hand hygiene and sanitation for training, games and events.

- Identify how the organization might provide for disinfection of meeting spaces and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

- Have youth and adults wash hands or use hand sanitizer before allowing participation, directly after participation, and frequently during the youth activity, including before food preparation and eating, and after touching shared surfaces or items. (e.g. shared sports equipment)
- Avoid sharing equipment where possible. (wash bibs each day and don't allow them to be shared)
- Frequently disinfect items touched by more than one person, between groups of youths and at the end of the day.

The CDC recommends the following regarding quarantine or isolation:

- Quarantine is typically done when you have been exposed to the virus and are not allowed to be around your team or friends outside of your family.
- Isolation is typically done when you have been infected and are trying to separate from those who are not infected. People who are in isolation should stay home until it's safe for them to be around others. At home, anyone sick or infected should separate from others, stay in a specific "sick room" or area, and use a separate bathroom (if available).
- The club maintains confidentiality of the COVID-19 infected person, but should notify the team that a player/participant has contacted the club affirming a positive infection
- Consult the local health district for guidance as some state counties are independent of State Health Department and may have their own mandates or guidelines
- People who are fully vaccinated do NOT need to quarantine after contact with someone who had COVID-19 unless they have [symptoms](#). However, fully vaccinated people SHOULD get tested 3-5 days after their exposure, even if they don't have symptoms and wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until their test result is negative. Remember that currently 12 and older can be vaccinated.
- People who are NOT fully vaccinated need to stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19. Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19. If possible, stay away from people you live with, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19.

After quarantine:

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your local public health authority or healthcare provider.

You may be able to shorten your quarantine:

- Your local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last, based on local conditions and needs. Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if you need to quarantine. Options they will consider include stopping quarantine
 - After day 10 without testing
 - After day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later)

What do we do regarding our teams and exposure?

- Remember how the CDC defines close contact and exposure.
- If exposed, and a player is age 12 and older and vaccinated, then they can certainly continue to allow them to train but still have them observe for signs and symptoms. They are recommended to get tested 3-5 days after exposure. Understand that your decision as a club/coach may be different if coming back from a tournament where kids rode in the same cars or hung out in the same rooms and exposure was greater due to close contact and over 15 minutes of likely exposure.
- If exposed, and a player is 11 years of age or younger thus NOT vaccinated, it is then recommended that these players quarantine for 14 days. They may return after 7 days with a negative test result or 10 days symptom free without testing. Again, exposure in the younger age groups after a tournament where kids rode in the same cars or hung out in the same rooms may lead a club/coach to shut down the entire team.

- Remember that each Organizational Member has exclusive jurisdiction over its own programs and activities per TSSA Bylaws.

Resources:

- CDC guidance:
(https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fif-you-are-sick%2Fquarantine.html)
- EPA list of COVID-19 effective disinfectants:
(<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-ndisinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>)
- Caring for Our Children(CFOC) standards for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting educational facilities for children:
(<https://nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/3.3v>)
- World Health Organization:
<https://www.who.int/>