

UNION THUNDER YOUTH HOCKEY
COVID-19 Return to Play Guidelines
2020-2021 Season
(REVISED December 7, 2020)

Dear Thunder Families:

As the 2020-2021 season progresses, we are committed to maintaining the health, safety, and well-being of our players and families, first and foremost. Due to the unprecedented nature of these times, we want to ensure that you understand and comply with all of the health and safety policies/procedures that are outlined in our COVID-19 Return to Play Guidelines.

The coaches and staff at Union Thunder are working hard and responsibly to operate within current guidelines for youth sports – and hockey specifically. We want all of our players and families to not only BE safe at the rink; we want them to FEEL safe. Therefore, it is crucial that every member of our youth hockey community takes every precaution possible to prevent the spread of COVID-19 regardless of their own risk factors and personal beliefs.

We will continue to follow the regulations and recommendations put in place by federal, state, and local governments and governing bodies, including the New Jersey Department of Health and the Center for Disease Control. In accordance with the recommendations made by the US Rink Association, USA Hockey, and US Figure Skating, Union Sports Arena has developed its own protocols and policies for facility cleaning, staff training, supplies, equipment, signage, technology, mask usage, social distancing markers, and restroom and locker room usage.

The guidelines in this document highlight our club policies and procedures, and will remain the “new normal” until further notice. As the situation continues to evolve, we will frequently revisit and revise these guidelines.

Please keep in mind that Return to Play is sanctioned by USA Hockey and the Atlantic Amateur Hockey Association (AAHA) ONLY IF we follow federal, state, and local regulations. If we do not follow the regulations, then our activities will not be sanctioned by these organizations.

Although this season may look different, we will continue to support the individual growth, on and off the ice, of each and every participant in our program – the same way that we have since 2011. As always, our goal is to provide an outstanding educational and athletic environment for players to learn, grow, and have fun playing the sport they love.

If you have any questions, please contact directors Matt Anderson or Caitlin Anderson. Hockey is back! Let's enjoy the game we all love safely.

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IMPORTANT UPDATES

On November, 30, 2020, Governor Murphy signed [EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 204](#) pausing indoor practices and competitions for youth sports effective December 5, 2020 through January 2, 2021. In maintaining club operations safely during this period, we will continue to adhere to guidelines set forth by the State of New Jersey as well as the Atlantic Amateur Hockey Association (AAHA) and the New Jersey Youth Hockey League (NJYHL).

RISK MITIGATION POLICIES

In an effort to keep everyone in our Thunder family safe and compliant, we ask that all staff members, volunteers, and parents/guardians help remind players about the risk mitigation policies listed below.

Controlled Arrival & Exit:

1. Players should arrive no more than 15 minutes before the scheduled activity (25 minutes for goalies) and must leave the facility within 15 minutes of the end of their on-ice session.
2. Players must be fully dressed in their equipment upon entering the facility – except for skates, helmet, gloves, stick, and goalie pads – which they can put on inside. NO HOCKEY/EQUIPMENT BAGS ARE ALLOWED INSIDE THE BUILDING (with an exception for goalies only). Small duffle bags or backpacks are acceptable.
3. Players will sit on marked benches in an open, well-ventilated area at least 6 feet from others in order to put on and take off skates. Locker rooms will not be in use. Players must stay in their designated changing area and remain in their seats until the ice is ready.
4. No parents/guardians or other non-skating customers (other than staff) are allowed in the facility. If a player needs help tying skates, skates should be put on before entering the building and can be protected using hard guards.

Screening:

1. Forehead temperature check and screening questions upon arrival is required for all players and staff. Anyone with an elevated temperature (over 100.4 degrees) or with COVID-19 symptoms (based on screening questions) will be directed to return home.
2. Player attendance to be recorded and retained in case it is needed for contact tracing.

Personal Hygiene:

1. All players and staff must use hand sanitizer upon entering the facility.
2. Players should arrive with their water bottles pre-filled as they are not allowed to fill them up at the facility.
3. Players cannot share equipment (e.g., gear, water bottles, towels, etc.). All equipment should be marked clearly so that it can be easily identified.
4. We ask that all personal equipment, including face masks, be cleaned/sanitized before players return to the rink.

Social Distancing:

1. Players and staff must follow all signage within the facility – with particular attention to signage intended to direct flow of people – while following social distancing guidelines.
2. On-ice sessions to focus on “skills and drills” activities with limited contact. Team benches will not be used unless social distancing can be maintained.
3. Group discussions will be limited so that players are not in close proximity for extended periods of time.
4. Unnecessary physical contact – such as high fives, handshakes, and fist bumps – will be discouraged.
5. Upon completion of the on-ice session, players will be excused from the ice one at a time so as to maintain appropriate social distancing.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Per USA Hockey - With regard to helmets, a full, clear polycarbonate shield or clear shield cage combination may provide a higher level of protection. For more information, click [here](#).

1. All players and staff are required to wear face masks/coverings (over the nose and chin) at all times within the facility – except for players when on the ice.
2. Face masks should be labeled with the player's first and last name and players should have a baggie to hold the mask in.

Cleaning/Disinfecting Practices:

1. All hard surfaces and frequently touched surfaces will be cleaned and disinfected throughout the day, before and after use, and at the end of each day.
2. Staff to perform enhanced cleaning of all changing areas used by players after one group leaves and before the next group is allowed into the facility.

Reduced Amenities:

1. The xHockeyProducts Pro Shop hours are 2:00 PM - 9:00 PM, Monday through Friday and 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM on Saturday and Sunday. All customers must complete forehead temperature check and screening questions in the rink lobby before entering the store. No more than four customers may be allowed in the store at any given time, and all customers must remain in the store until their shopping is complete (no re-entry). The xHockeyProducts Pro Shop can be reached at 908-258-0670.
2. The snack bar will remain closed for the time being. Video games and snack vending machines have been temporarily removed from the facility.

COVID-19 PROACTIVE RESPONSE PROCEDURES

Matt Anderson is the official point of contact who is responsible for notifying members in the event that there is a diagnosed positive outbreak within the club, a specific team, or the surrounding community.

Scenario #1: COVID-19 symptoms presented at home

If your child is showing COVID-19 symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) OR if your child has been in *close contact with a person who tested positive for COVID-19, you must keep your child home. They must be isolated for a minimum of 7 days after symptoms onset, and 72 hours after their fever resolves without fever-reducing medicines (e.g., if symptoms and fever resolve on day 7, the person can return on day 10). For most, this will be 14 days after the household contact with COVID-19. In order for your child to resume activity at Union Sports Arena, we must receive a valid *Doctor's note clearing him/her for return to play. Please send this note electronically to Matt Anderson (photos will be accepted).

In the scenario above, the affected team may continue to hold on-ice sessions, but that team will be on high alert. If another child on the team experiences symptoms, we will contact our local health department and follow their guidance on whether our entire facility must shut down.

Scenario #2: COVID-19 symptoms presented at Union Sports Arena

We have designated a space for players and staff who exhibit symptoms to be safely and gently separated. Upon discovering COVID-19 symptoms in a child, (e.g., fever of 100.4 or higher, cough, shortness of breath, etc.) the child's parent/guardian will be called and he or she must be picked up within 20 minutes of receiving this phone call. We understand that it is very common during winter months for children to exhibit some of these symptoms and we will strive to be as discerning as possible. However, in light of the current health crisis, we feel we cannot be too cautious. The safety and well-being of your children is our utmost concern. If a child is sent home as a potential COVID-19 case, we must receive a valid *Doctor's note clearing him/her for return to play. Please send this note electronically to Matt Anderson (photos will be accepted).

In the scenario above, the affected team may continue to hold on-ice sessions, but that team will be on high alert. If another child on the team experiences symptoms, we will contact our local health department and follow their guidance on whether our entire facility must shut down.

Scenario #3: Potential COVID-19 risks at home

We ask that all parents/guardians and staff let us know of any potential exposure immediately. A potential exposure means being a household contact or having close contact within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes. The timeframe for having contact with an individual includes the period of 48 hours before the individual became symptomatic. In this scenario, the person exposed should quarantine for 14 days after exposure. However, the CDC now recommends two additional options for how long quarantine should last. Based on local availability of viral testing, for people without symptoms quarantine can end on day 10 without testing or on day 7 after receiving a negative test result. After stopping quarantine, people should watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure, and if they have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact their local public health authority or healthcare provider.

Scenario #4: A positive COVID-19 present in Union Sports Arena

If a positive COVID-19 case is present on your child's team, all children and staff on that team should quarantine for 14 days and watch for symptoms during this period. However, as mentioned in the scenario above, for people without symptoms quarantine can end on day 10 without testing or on day 7 after receiving a negative test result. If your child's team must quarantine, we will offer guided at-home instruction. We will notify the families within that team

as soon as we are made aware of this. If there is a positive COVID-19 case present in the rink, but not on your child's team, you will be notified. Union Sports Arena may be required to report any positive COVID cases directly to our local health department. However, in accordance with HIPAA laws, no child's identity will be divulged. Union Sports Arena will contact the local health department for direction in the incident of a positive COVID case at our facility. We will follow their guidance on whether our entire facility must shut down to help mitigate the spread of the virus.

Scenario #5: Out-of-State Travel

The State of New Jersey has updated its [incoming travel advisory](#). The advisory is no longer specific to certain states. Because of the rising number of case counts across all states, there is an increased risk of spread of COVID-19 upon return from any travel.

If your child has traveled to any U.S. state or territory beyond the immediate region (New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware), they must quarantine in accordance with the guidance set forth by the State of New Jersey before returning to Thunder activities:

- If travel is unavoidable, travelers should consider getting tested with a viral test (not an antibody test) 1-3 days before the trip and again 3-5 days after the trip.
- If travelers test positive, they should self-isolate for at least 10 days and should postpone travel during that time.
- If travelers test negative, they should quarantine for a full 7 days after travel.
- If testing is not available (or if the results are delayed), travelers should quarantine for 10 days after travel.

Definitions

Close contact - exposure within 6 feet of an individual with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes

Doctor's note - an official note from a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) or a Doctor of Medicine (MD) who has treated the player as a patient

Please see the links below for additional reference:

[CDC – When to Quarantine](#)

[State of NJ COVID-19 Dashboard](#)

[USA Hockey Player Safety & Health](#)

[AAHA COVID Mitigation – Requirements, Enforcement, & Penalties - November 19](#)

[NJYHL Supplemental Season Guidelines - October 25](#)

[Important Memo For AAHA Clubs, Parents, Coaches, & Officials - October 23](#)

[AAHA Return to Participation Guidelines - October 14, 2020](#)

[The Aspen Institute Project Play – COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool](#)

[CDC – Considerations for Youth Sports](#)