



August 6, 2020

To: Member Association Presidents
Executive Directors/CEOs
Additional Association Officers
Directors of Coaching

Risk Management/SafeSport Liaisons
Recreation and Competitive Liaisons
Registrars
Field Coordinators

Subject: Five weeks, intra-squad scrimmages, and other updates

Governor Cooper announced today that *restrictions would continue* in NC at Phase 2 extended levels for five more weeks, and he noted new case numbers are stable but at a high level. “Stable is good, shrinking is better.” He asked us to remain vigilant on avoiding transmission of the coronavirus. No specific recommendations or mandates on youth sports were suggested.

As we have passed through a long, hot summer, numerous reports and studies from around the world have praised the mental health advantages of youth sports and documented soccer’s advantages of outdoor play, large spaces, and controllable environment around the game. Still, the virus remains and case numbers vary greatly in the communities across our nation and state. Soccer governing bodies as well as state and local health organizations have issued guidelines and recommendations, but the final decisions must be left to associations and ultimately parents.

We will republish our guidelines in the coming days, revising them with good practices we are all learning from other states and sports, for example: health checks; sanitation; eliminating benches; celebrations and huddles; necessary spectator behaviors; and procedures for suspected or test-positive incidents.

All sports and activities have risks of injury, viruses, and illnesses. We can mitigate risk to players and their families and still get the benefits of soccer. We have had training and practicing guidelines for groups of 25 or less since June 2nd. (ncsoccer.org/covid). We will plan for starting sanctioned competition between clubs as a first step after the Governor’s next checkpoint the second week of September.

Several IMPORTANT guidelines:

- Where local conditions allow, intra-squad scrimmaging would now be appropriate which makes practices more meaningful and fun. Coaches should monitor and help to minimize contact.
- So far, positive cases have not been reported as transmitted by soccer activities. Please continue to report any cases to NCYSA, notify teammates and/or parents who may be in contact while maintaining confidentiality, and quarantine as appropriate.
- Enforcement lies with the clubs, but let NCYSA know of any challenges or help needed to educate participants. As always, if NC government recommendations or mandates are issued, we must pay attention.
- Parents have the final say on their kids’ participation. No repercussions should result from a parent’s cautious decision.
- Travel to other states is not recommended yet. Some states don’t allow it without quarantines, and we have kept our guideline to quarantine on return from travel out-of-state.

Stay safe.

NCYSA Executive Board