



April 29, 2021

To: Member Associations

Presidents, CEOs/Executive Directors, Recreation/Challenge/Classic Liaisons, Directors of Coaching, Head Registrars, Risk Management Liaisons

Good Morning All,

Thanks for all of you who stuck with soccer during our three month pause, our gradual return to play in the summer/fall, and our five month mask mandate experience. And thanks for those who are vaccinated. Together, we have all contributed to the progress the governor reported - and made easing restrictions possible.

It is our hope the responses to some of the questions we have received following the NCYSA update yesterday will be helpful:

Q. Your NCYSA note discusses players no longer needing masks. What about coaches, referees and spectators?

The governor and NC DHHS relaxed the requirements for face covering outdoors for everyone. The Executive Order #209 still encourages everyone to wear masks in closed spaces, continue social distancing, and report positive tests. The executive order is [online](#).

So to be clear, in NC Youth Soccer events, face coverings are optional for athletes, coaches, referees and spectators as of April 30th, 2021.

Q. Some folks want to continue wearing masks and asking their athletes to wear them. Why make masks optional?

We are following the mandates for NC. For those of your members who are still concerned about mask-less play, the tradeoff is the challenges of masks during high exertion, rain, or hot weather. The NCDHHS also received studies and data on outdoor sports without prolonged contact, and the mental and physical health advantages of returning to normal play.

Q. What if the club or the field owners don't agree?

To be clear, in NC Youth Soccer events, face coverings are optional for spectators, athletes, and coaches as of 5pm April 30th, 2021. Clubs and field owners may follow this change or develop their own guidelines. **The NCYSA guidelines for minimizing gatherings, huddles, and crowded benches are still recommended. The outdoor face coverings mandate has moved to a recommendation from the Governor, and parents, players, coaches, referees and teams may choose whether to wear them.**

Q. Why didn't we abandon the mask mandate earlier?

The mandate was the law, supported by the NC health departments, through April 30th, 2021, at 5pm.

All the very best!

NCYSA Executive Board