



To: ASA Club Presidents, Executive Directors, and Directors of Coaching  
 From: Rick Kelsey, Chief Executive Officer  
 CC: Board of Directors  
 Date: August 17, 2020

**Subject: Arizona Soccer Association (ASA) – Return-to-Play Update**

The Arizona Soccer Association (ASA) and its members have continued to demonstrate their commitment to the community and returning to play in a methodical manner. Effective August 17, 2020 ASA will move into Phase IV of our Return-to-Play guidelines. Phase IV is defined by the following activities and restrictions:

Restrictions	Activities Permitted
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendee capacity (coach, player, spectator, team official) at each field not to exceed what has been defined by state, county, municipal, or facility requirements.</li> <li>• Adherence to the ASA defined three-step Return-to-Competition guidelines</li> <li>• Regular training sessions can be held.</li> <li>• Games may be played in ASA sanctioned leagues or tournaments. Recommend that teams not player more than one game per day.</li> <li>• No sharing of water or equipment.</li> <li>• Masks required for coaches at all times</li> <li>• Masks required for players transit to/from the field and while not participating in play</li> <li>• Limitations on participants per field to be in accordance with municipality proclamations/requirement.</li> <li>• Practice times should be set to maximize social distancing.               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommend a minimum of 30 minutes between end time of one session and the start time of the next.</li> <li>• If youth need supervision while waiting for pickup, adults should be at least six (6) feet apart.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in ASA sanctioned leagues, games, and tournament</li> <li>• Inter-Club scrimmage/practice games.</li> </ul>
	<b>Activities NOT Permitted</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A three-step Return-to-Competition guideline has been developed to support games and game day operations. These <u>must</u> be adhered to.</li> </ul>

Moving into Phase IV comes with great responsibility and is a decision that is not being made lightly. ASA has continued to monitor the developments in Arizona and have sought input from various organizations at the state, county, and municipal levels, as well as with other state associations nationally who have returned to play. We are confident that moving to Phase IV is appropriate based on the downward trends in COVID cases, the fact that Arizona has seen the R Naught score continue to decline and lead the country, and the commitment of the ASA membership to adhere to defined guidelines and protocols.

Along with the review of data and results ASA has also been in contact with the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS). We reached out DCS to gain additional perspectives on overall child safety, as not all the 45,000+ children who register with ASA have the same situations at home. After reviewing the ASA Return-to-Play guidelines and the three-step Return-to-Competition guidelines, DCS gave their endorsement that it would be in many children’s best interest to return to playing. Mike Faust, Director Arizona Department of Child Safety shared that *“with kids currently unable to attend in-person school it is important that they be able to participate in structured organizations that promote social, emotional, and physical development and security. ASA is a recognized community organization that requires all members complete and pass a background check, as well as complete SafeSport certification, which provides training to coaches and volunteers in identifying and reporting signs of physical and sexual abuse. Keeping kids in the public view is critical in helping to keep them safe.”*

Although in Phase IV, we must continue to respect and recognize that there are statewide Executive Orders, as well as county and municipal directives and proclamations that must be adhered to. ASA developed a three-



step Return-to-Competition guidelines which will be implemented for all ASA managed leagues and sanctioned tournaments. They are:

	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3
<b>Attendance (Includes players, coaches/team officials, referees, and staff)</b>	<p><b>NO Spectators.</b></p> <p>Total number of attendees (players, coaches/team officials, referees, and staff) will not exceed state, county, municipal or facility requirements.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> As of 8/13/2020, the Governor's Executive Order does not allow for more than 50 people per event. An event would be considered a full size soccer field.</p>	<p>Spectators allowed. <b>All spectators must wear a mask at all times and maintain social distance</b></p> <p>Total number of attendees (players, coaches/team officials, referees, and staff) will not exceed state, county, municipal, or facility requirements.</p> <p><b>NOTE:</b> As of 8/13/2020, the Governor's Executive Order does not allow for more than 50 people per event. An event would be considered a full size soccer field.</p>	No restrictions
<b>Coaches/Team Officials</b>	<p>Required to wear mask at all times.</p> <p><b>Responsible for ensuring adherence to all requirements</b></p>	<p>Required to wear mask at all times.</p> <p><b>Responsible for ensuring adherence to all requirements</b></p>	No restrictions
<b>Players</b>	<p>Required to wear mask to/from the field and when not playing.</p>	<p>Required to wear mask to/from the field and when not playing.</p>	No restrictions
<b>Team and Parent/Spectator Seating</b>	<p>Teams will sit on opposite sides of the field from each other, behind the Assistant Referee.</p> <p>Or as defined by league or tournament requirements.</p>	<p>Teams will sit on opposite sides of the field from each other, behind the Assistant Referee.</p> <p>Spectators will sit on the same side of the field as their team but the opposite half of the field away from the Assistant Referee.</p>	No restrictions
<b>Referees</b>	<p>If not feeling well - <b>STAY HOME</b></p> <p>Maintain 6 feet from other officials when game is not being played</p> <p>Required to wear mask to/from the field</p> <p>If a player is injured do not get within 6 feet; call coach/team official on to address players injury</p> <p>No pre/post game handshakes</p>	<p>If not feeling well - <b>STAY HOME</b></p> <p>Maintain 6 feet from other officials when game is not being played</p> <p>Required to wear mask to/from the field</p> <p>If a player is injured do not get within 6 feet; call coach/team official on to address players injury</p> <p>No pre/post game handshakes</p>	No restrictions
<b>Game Schedules</b>	<p>Games will be scheduled with greater time between end and start time to minimize unnecessary contact.</p>	<p>Games will be scheduled with greater time between end and start time to minimize unnecessary contact.</p>	No restrictions
<b>Game Day Operations</b>	<p>ASA staff, when present, to wear masks at all times.</p> <p>Gloves to be worn by staff when picking up trash or sanitizing equipment</p> <p>No pre-game coin toss; Home team chooses direction</p> <p>No benches</p> <p>No pre/post game handshakes</p> <p>Pop-up tents may be used. Recommend teams have multiple pop-up tents in order to maximize social distancing</p> <p>Sanitization plans to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Game balls</li> <li>- Game day signage</li> <li>- Goalposts, corner flags</li> </ul>	<p>ASA staff, when present, to wear masks at all times.</p> <p>Gloves to be worn by staff when picking up trash or sanitizing equipment</p> <p>No pre-game coin toss; Home team chooses direction</p> <p>No benches</p> <p>No pre/post game handshakes</p> <p>Pop-up tents may be used. Recommend teams have multiple pop-up tents in order to maximize social distancing</p> <p>Sanitation plans to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Game balls</li> <li>- Game day signage</li> <li>- Goalposts, corner flags</li> </ul>	No restrictions
<b>Out-of-State Travel</b>	<p>Out-of-state travel is not recommended.</p>	<p>Out-of-state travel is not recommended.</p>	No restrictions

It is recommended that all leagues statewide use the three-step Return-to-Competition guidelines however, we recognize that some counties or municipalities may provide additional guidance. Every league must meet the minimum requirements of their local directives.



ASA realizes that not having spectators is not optimal. However, this is what will be required to begin the season. We have been advised by many of our facilities that they will enforce the current Executive Order that does not allow for more than 50 people at a single event. In our discussions with various facilities they have defined a full-size soccer field as an event, therefore we can not have more than 50 people at any full-size soccer field. ASA has discussed this with our member clubs and their leadership and there is an understanding that this is the right direction at this time, considering that any single game will have between 37 – 50 people based on only players, coaches/team officials, and referees:

- Two teams with 15 players per team = 30 people (**NOTE: Rosters max at 18 players**)
- Two coaches/team officials per team = 4 people (**Note: League rules allow for up to 4 coaches/team officials per team**)
- Three referees = 3 people
- **TOTAL = 37 people (Note: if all maximums were met it would be 47 people)**
- This does not account for any ASA or Club staff that may be present to support the schedule games/events.
- Small sided games are also being addressed as it is expected to have two games (four teams) on a single full-size field.

Movement from Step 1 to Step 2 to Step 3 will be determined based on the continued evolution of the pandemic as well as any changes to state, county, and local directives.

Along with the three-step Return-to-Competition, ASA has developed the protocols and communications for if an individual is exposed, has symptoms, or receives a positive result. These protocols and communications have been developed with guidance from the CDC, Arizona Department of Health Services, and best practices from around the country where competitions have already returned and will be available on the ASA website.

It is imperative that we do not lose our discipline and continue our diligence in wearing masks, remaining socially distant, and practicing good hygiene by washing our hands. Even with that the following remains true:

- **If you are sick or feel sick, STAY HOME**
- **At risk individuals, youth or adult, STAY HOME**
- **Assign a “station” for each player to place their equipment, and that they should return to during breaks**
- **Masks are a requirement:**
  - **Player – Wear mask to/from the field and when on the bench/not playing**
  - **Referee – Wear mask to/from the field and when not officiating the match.**
  - **Coach/Team Official – Wear mask at all times.**
  - **Spectator – Wear mask at all times**
- **No high 5's, handshakes, knuckles, group celebrations, or exchanges that involve person-to-person contact.**
- **Each player must have their own ball and equipment; all equipment should be disinfected after every game**
- **No one is to share water, towels, or any equipment. This includes, but not limited to:**
  - **GK Gloves; GK's should only use water on their gloves, never saliva.**
  - **Shoes, Socks, or Shin Guards**
  - **Jersey/Uniform**
  - **Only coaches should place and pick-up cones**
  - **Practice Vest/Pinnies; At minimum these must be washed after each use.**
- **No centralized hydration or refreshment stations**
- **Recommend having sanitizing options available. This may include:**
  - **Hand sanitizer**
  - **Disinfectant wipes to be used to wipe down all equipment**
- **Respect for each individual's choices must be the top priority. If a participant wishes to wear a face mask this should be allowed, and accommodations made if needed**



Ultimately, if you are not comfortable with returning to play – **DON'T**. There is no single answer or decision that will be supported by all. But, it is our intention to continue to demonstrate a commitment to adhering to the defined guidelines and develop confidence in the community that playing soccer and returning to competition will be done as safely as possible and that ASA and its membership are doing everything we can to be thoughtful in our decisions with player, coach, family and community safety being our top priority.

***ASA, its staff, and our member Clubs and Leagues are absolutely focused on the safety and well-being of everyone involved in our great game but it will be the responsibility of EVERYONE to work together to adhere to these guidelines.*** We are in a tremendous position to be able to get kids throughout Arizona back on the field and playing the game they love. Now that we are in that position ***EVERYONE***, especially the adults must demonstrate the appropriate commitment and discipline to adhering to the defined guidelines. Let us all work together to show all of Arizona that the soccer community will do whatever it takes to allow our kids to play this great game.