



July 15, 2020 revised

In light of the recent announcement from the NM Governor and subsequent clarification of the Public Health Emergency Order 7-13-20/ Executive Order 2020-054, **New Mexico Youth Soccer Association is suspending all sanctioned activity until further notice.** This suspension does include the 5-1 player/coach ratios for small group trainings. The Public Health Emergency Order runs through July 30, 2020 so we are hopeful that we will be able to resume soccer activity thereafter. We will continue to post updates on our website at www.nmysa.net. Thank you for your patience in this matter! We will play soccer again when deemed safe to do so by the Governor. Please follow all Health and Executive orders available at <https://cv.nmhealth.org/public-health-orders-and-executive-orders/>. Below is an update to the last series of communications with the Governor's office.

July 15, 2020 Q & A – (Questions in black, Governor's office response in red)

1. The announcement indicated that Fall contact sports, (Football and Soccer), would be cancelled/postponed for NM High Schools and for club sports. We seek your assistance for clarification on what is meant by "Fall"? s

For NMYSA, soccer is a year-round sport, typically beginning in August and not slowing down until summer. We can however, postpone, modify the format of games, (3v3, 5v5, 7v7, 9v9), reduce the number of games in the season and/or eliminate spectators in order to still have a fall season and keep soccer sustainable. (The reality for so many of our affiliates is that if we don't have a fall season, some will not be sustainable).

2. May we continue to train in the small groups specified for Summer Programs, 5-1 player/coach ratios following the COVID Safe Practices and now require players/kids to wear masks? Is there any consideration to increasing the training pool numbers?

3. Our national governing body, the United States Soccer Federation, has published a program called "Play On" which is a 0-4 phase program for a safe return to play. This program of course is implemented/guided by local and state recommendations for opening as every state is different. I am attaching the documents for your review and hopefully approval/modification as I don't believe there currently CSP in New Mexico for youth sports, specifically soccer.



July 15, 2020 revised

You had indicated at one point that you would be putting together a committee to begin reviewing sport specific practices. New Mexico Youth Soccer Association is the largest youth sports organization in the state of New Mexico, and I believe we would, along with other sports organization, be able to contribute and provide meaningful feedback in those discussion. All youth sports organizations we work with understand the seriousness of COVID-- yet know how important sports are to children's lives and want to be part of a safe, thoughtful return to activity.

The Public Health Order (PHO) does not reference the duration of time that contact sports are suspended however the intent was to not allow contact sports for the fall school semester. This allows schools to modify their athletic schools so that they can move these sports to occur later in the school year. As per the PHO, contact sports are suspended which also includes practices. This decision was extremely difficult because we know how critical sports are for children's physical, social and emotional well being. Unfortunately there have been issues with compliance across the state regarding the PHO and following the COVID Safe Practices (CSPs) which has impacted this decision. With the significant increase in COVID cases, we needed to take steps to ensure we can get a handle on things so that kids can return to school in the fall.

We have not convened a task force for sports programs as we have utilized the information developed by the Public Education Department school reentry task force as well as the New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA). The NMAA has developed comprehensive CSPs for youth sports. It would be great if you reviewed what they have developed and provide me with your feedback.

I truly appreciate your collaboration on this issue. We need your continued assistance to ensure that the information is getting out and that people are complying. Please let me know if you have any more questions. I appreciate staying in regular communication with you so please continue to reach out and I will do the same when we have new guidance.

Thank You Mariana! Please know that we are completely supportive of your efforts and will do everything we can to help mitigate the spread of COVID 19. I reached out to Sally Marquez at NMAA so hopefully we can start a dialogue to get all of NM youth sports on the same page. The NMYSA Board of Directors has only approved sanctioning of the 5-1 player/coach training ratios as previously permitted under the health order. Are our affiliates allowed to continue the 5-1



July 15, 2020 revised

trainings/camps or should we cease that under the new PHO? Either way, we will need to formalize that with our Board of Directors and get it communicated to membership. As of Friday, we have withdrawn our sanctioning of all August/September tournaments, (4 events-Rio Rapids Power Ford Fall Cup, NM Elite Blast, NM Rush SC Fall Cup and the Gallup Thunderbird Cup). Cancellation of these events will definitely hurt Albuquerque clubs that rely/budget for that income. To be frank, most of our affiliates will struggle or need to shut down temporarily without a fall season. Others will be OK if they can play in the winter months and/or if they have a robust spring season. We are hosting a roundtable discussion on Friday with the technical leads/Presidents of our member affiliates to get an idea of their statuses. I will keep you posted with that outcome.

Please let me know about the 5-1 trainings.

Thank you for following up. The Public Health Order does apply to formal practices at this time. As I mentioned in the earlier email we are trying to get a handle on our cases and hope to see improvements on compliance. We do have concerns about where we are as a state and the potential impact on school reentry. Please let me know if you have any more questions.

June 26, 2020 Q & A – (Questions in black, Governor's office response in red)

1. Youth Sports activities, (especially outdoor field sports), are somewhat different than "Summer Youth Programs" so the applicable CSP are not necessarily relevant to the activities for outdoor youth sports and in many cases indoor youth sports. Are their plans to produce a different set of guidelines for HS or youth sports programs?

We are in the process of forming a task force to work with us on developing guidance for middle and high school sports. It would be good to get your thoughts about potential participants.

2. We have approximately 100 coach that have been COVID tested, (primarily in the Albuquerque area) in order to participate, (all negative results). We however typically have over 2400 volunteer coaches across the state that participate in our community programs. The testing requirement is of concern for many of those communities as they will not have the same access to free/testing sites. Further,



July 15, 2020 revised

there are no current guidelines on retesting so many have questioned the necessity of the test in the first place. Also, there is some information from large insurance companies indicating that they may start charging for testing of individuals that do not have symptoms/exposure. Youth state soccer organizations in the Southwest region, (TX, AZ, CO, CA, HI, NV, UT, ID, AK, WY), do not require pre-participation COVID testing. In short, the questions posed is, could consideration be given to forgo pre-participation testing going forward?

Free testing is available for all New Mexicans at Department of Health Public Health Offices located in every region of the state. You can find the contact information here <https://www.nmhealth.org/location/public>. There are not changes to the testing requirement. We agree that conducting surveillance testing is the best method for catching positives however because summer programs occur over a shorter duration of time, we just require the one test. Our plans for school re-entry will include ongoing surveillance testing as well as repaid response testing (follow up testing when there is a positive case). Our Governor has been very proactive with expanding testing which has really helped New Mexico keep our positive cases lower than most other states.

3. The current 5-1 player/coach ratios are the lowest in the region. We know every state is different but do believe we are at a point where the training pools can be increased with little/no negative consequences. In AK, WY, ID, UT, TX, there are no restriction on playing games, (some limit or require spectators to social distancing but not players in games). In AZ groups of 50 or less, CA, groups of 12 or less, (up to 30 beginning 7/1), HI groups of 10 with plans to go to no more than 100 in July. It would be great if the number of participants could increase, (10-20) soon, and for there to be a plan for the next phase, (beyond July) so that youth sports organizations can plan for the late summer early fall games. Do you know what the intentions are for July, August and beyond? We understand that gating criteria will be the basis but if we know for example what the phases for social gathering are, i.e., no more than 100 in the next phase, we can plan accordingly.

We are currently evaluating our Phase 2 reopening which would include a possible increase in our mass gathering number. We would modify our CSPs for youth programs in accordance with this change. I would just ask that you let coaches know that any changes would be announced by the Governor in the coming weeks.



July 15, 2020 revised

May 29, 2020 Q & A - (Question in black, Governor's office answers in red)

1. Coaches were instructed to get COVID tested within 72 hours of participating. Every coach that participated did get tested, (with negative results), but in many situations, test results were not received within 72 hrs. As such, clubs are concerned that they may not be compliant because they begin their small group trainings a few days after testing, but as soon as possible from receiving tests results. In some cases, coaches received results late last week, but due to the long weekend, did not start training until Tuesday, (outside of the 72hrs. window). It seems that the 72 hrs. timeframe is not realistic, in some cases, when put to the test. We are asking clubs to do their best to adhere to that window, but I am wondering from the State's prospective if there is some leeway?

I think your guidance that they do their best to adhere to the 72 hours is appropriate.

2. We have situations where coaches have gone to be tested but were turned away because they are considered non-essential. Are there specific testing sites where non-essential volunteers or employees can be tested for "Return to Activity"?

Coaches should contact their regional department of Health Public Health Office (PHO) regarding testing. Tests conducted by the state are billed to the individual's insurance however there aren't any out of pocket for the individuals. If they don't have insurance the test should be free. The PHO can provide additional information on this. Private entities that are conducting testing do charge.

3. We had a coach that went for testing at the Nextcare site on Menaul but was turned away because he does not have insurance. Are there test sites that have free testing for coaches without insurance?

Directing people to the PHOs is the best way to resolve this. PHOs do not turn away people who want to be tested.

4. Groups that did begin training were able to observe social distancing with the training activities they ran, (5-1) ratios. Many coaches communicated thoughts that they could safely increase numbers, (10-1 ratio or higher) and still observe CSP and wanted this put forth for consideration by the State's committee.



July 15, 2020 revised

As the public health order changes and allows for group sizes to increase, the group sizes could be modified accordingly.

5. Many coaches expressed concerns about players wearing masks. Not many players were able to tolerate the masks while running/training. There is growing concern that it may be more dangerous for players to wear masks during training. Can consideration be made to allow players to forego wearing mask during training only, so long as they can adhere to the 6ft or more distancing?

We have revised guidance for masks. I will send the full document once it is formatted however a brief summary is listed below. I would say that coaches should wear masks and kids should wear them when they aren't exercising.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, masks are required of adults in public settings and recommended for children three and older, with exceptions for eating, drinking, exercising and medical requirements. The general principle is that masks are used to limit potential harm to others by helping reduce their risk of infection (and they may have a secondary benefit to the wearer as well).

6. We have some coaches that have taken the antibody test and are asking if they can forgo the COVID test if they have tested positive to the COVID antibody test?

Research indicates that antibody tests are not reliable enough to be used for this kind of determination, especially since our prevalence of disease is still quite low in N.M.

Another question asked was answered on the State's posted Q & A. What is the definition of local geographic area? A. **Participants and staff should avoid traveling great distances to attend a program. Individuals may travel outside of their county of residence if they live in within 50 miles of the program location.**

May 19, 2020 Q & A - (Questions in black, Governor's office answers in red)

The CSP indicates, "Temperatures of children and staff should be taken daily with a touches **[this should be "touchless" if done at the facility]** thermometer". It does not say who needs to take the daily temperatures though. In our draft "Return to Activity" protocols, we have parents taking kids temperatures and coaches taking



July 15, 2020 revised

their own on a daily basis before training. Is this acceptable/compliant to include in our policy? **[yes]**

2. The CSP says, "Staff and students/campers should wear masks." Our "Return to Activity" policy says coaches must wear masks and youth players are to wear mask before and after training but not during. The Governor mentioned that it was OK not to wear a mask during exercise, so we want to make sure it is OK to publish that in our protocols? **[given the combination of kids being superspreaders and being together in a group, suggest everyone wearing masks.]**

3. We understand that for now, all coaches need to be COVID tested, (with negative results), before they can participate/begin the small group trainings, (5-1) ratio. As such, will make sure that is included in the NMYSA's protocols.

1. Another question came up concerning frequency of tests as well as how long before the activity begins should a test be taken? **[I would suggest within 72 hours and if they have ANY symptoms they should not show up.]** We have a coach that was tested May 4, 2020, with a negative result. Should they be tested again before training this week? **[Probably]**

2. Also, there was a question about coaches that have teams of 15 that would be training 5 at a time but each group back to back, is that acceptable? **[Sure. Have different groups avoid each other. Back to back suggests contact between groups, which we do not want.]** Potentially, we could have coaches with two teams, so that could be 15 on Monday in groups of 5 in three different time slots, then maybe the next team on Tuesday in groups of 5 in three different time slots. **{OK}**

The updated NMYSA Return to Activity protocols are attached! It is imperative that Leagues/Clubs understand that **"just because you can, doesn't mean you should"**. Parents have an option whether their child participates, and leagues/clubs may have other consideration before they choose to open. Before opening, please make sure you comply with the NMSYA protocols, CSP and CDC recommendation. trainings.