

**SOUTHWESTERN YOUTH ASSOCIATION (SYA) SOCCER
COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY GUIDANCE FOR MATCH OFFICIALS**

Updated: 4 September 2020

<p>General Guidance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National, state, and local guidance is continually evolving as we learn more about COVID-19. This document will be updated as needed and incorporates guidance from U.S. Soccer, the Virginia Youth Soccer Association, Metro DC-Virginia State Referee Program, and SYA – Officials must follow evolving protocols and best practices to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Avoid close contact and practice physical distancing—<i>SYA and Virginia soccer authorities recommend at least 10 feet from other people</i> ➤ Wear a mask ➤ Wash your hands often with soap and water—use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available ➤ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and face ➤ Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow when coughing or sneezing ➤ Clean and disinfect clothing and frequently touched surfaces ➤ Monitor your health daily and be alert for COVID-19 symptoms ➤ Know what to do if you or a close contact (e.g. family member, roommate, co-worker) are or may be sick 				
<p>Before Accepting an Assignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Officiating is a personal choice. No one will be pressured or penalized for not officiating – Officials who accept games acknowledge they understand the risks associated with COVID-19 and that SYA cannot control or prevent exposure to COVID-19 – Officials who are uncomfortable returning to play must inform their assignor and block themselves as unavailable – Officials who may be at increased risk of COVID-19 should seek guidance from their healthcare provider before officiating 				
<p>Before Officiating a Game</p>	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p>COVID-19 symptoms must be checked before EVERY game</p> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Before working their assigned games EVERY official MUST attest to the SYA referee assignor that they are COVID-free – Officials may not officiate any game and must inform their assignor immediately if they display any of the following symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$) <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Nausea or vomiting <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Chills <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Diarrhea <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Cough <li style="width: 50%;">Emergency warning signs—seek immediate medical care: <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Fatigue <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Muscle or body aches <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Persistent chest pain or pressure <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Headache <li style="width: 50%;">➤ New confusion <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Sore throat <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Inability to wake or stay awake <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Congestion or runny nose <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Bluish lips or face <li style="width: 50%;">➤ New loss of taste or smell </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 25%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p>Known COVID-19 contact or exposure must be reported</p> </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Officials will not officiate any game and must inform their assignor immediately if they had COVID-19 exposure in past 14 days – Exposure includes contact with anyone who is sick, suspected of being sick, or has a confirmed case of COVID-19 – Officials shall not return to officiating until they have been tested and provided proof of a negative result to their assignor – Officials should consult their physician before returning to officiating after COVID-19 exposure. Documentation from your healthcare provider may be required to resume officiating for SYA </td> </tr> </table>	<p>COVID-19 symptoms must be checked before EVERY game</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Before working their assigned games EVERY official MUST attest to the SYA referee assignor that they are COVID-free – Officials may not officiate any game and must inform their assignor immediately if they display any of the following symptoms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Fever ($\geq 100.4^{\circ}\text{F}$) <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Nausea or vomiting <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Chills <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Diarrhea <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Cough <li style="width: 50%;">Emergency warning signs—seek immediate medical care: <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Fatigue <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Muscle or body aches <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Persistent chest pain or pressure <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Headache <li style="width: 50%;">➤ New confusion <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Sore throat <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Inability to wake or stay awake <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Congestion or runny nose <li style="width: 50%;">➤ Bluish lips or face <li style="width: 50%;">➤ New loss of taste or smell 	<p>Known COVID-19 contact or exposure must be reported</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Officials will not officiate any game and must inform their assignor immediately if they had COVID-19 exposure in past 14 days – Exposure includes contact with anyone who is sick, suspected of being sick, or has a confirmed case of COVID-19 – Officials shall not return to officiating until they have been tested and provided proof of a negative result to their assignor – Officials should consult their physician before returning to officiating after COVID-19 exposure. Documentation from your healthcare provider may be required to resume officiating for SYA
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Game Day Equipment for COVID-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In addition to your officiating gear, officials should bring the following items to a game: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Face masks ➤ Hand sanitizer ➤ Disinfecting wipes or spray (e.g. Lysol) ➤ Disposable gloves—mandatory if you share equipment (bring your own flags to avoid having to share) ➤ Water or hydrating fluids and food—consider labeling your own drinks and food and do not share with anyone 	
Traveling to and from a Game	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Avoid carpools, public transportation, or ridesharing (e.g. Uber). Contact your assignor immediately if do not have a safe way to get to a game – Family members or close contacts not exposed to or infected with COVID-19 can give you a ride but they should consider remaining in their vehicle during the game – To maintain physical distancing, officials should consider staying in their vehicle while waiting for previous games to conclude and participants to depart a field 	
Before a Game—Masks must ALWAYS be worn	Entering and exiting the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arrive fully dressed in your official uniform. Officials should attempt to coordinate jersey colors in advance to avoid changing at the field – Wear a mask from the time you exit your vehicle and for all pre-game activities – Put your referee bag, chair, etc. in a location that maintains physical distancing from your fellow officials, as well as teams, spectators, and any other people at the field – Maintain physical distancing when talking to players, coaches, team officials, medical personnel, or any other people at the field – No handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, or physical contact with anyone—including other officials
	Field and match ball inspection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Stay off the field during field set-up, team warmups, or sanitization activities – Fields must be walked and inspected before a game can begin. <i>Always ensure goals are safe and properly anchored</i> – Team benches, technical areas, and spectator areas should be checked for proper 10-foot physical distancing from field boundary lines and all match officials. If needed, ask coaches for help relocating benches, medical personnel, or spectators – Match balls should be checked for proper pressure using disposable gloves. Officials should refrain from touching match balls once checked and returned to a team official
	Player inspection and check-in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Officials should remind coaches, team officials, and players to practice physical distancing before, during, and after a game—particularly during stoppages in play (e.g. free kicks, after goals, hydration/cooling breaks, injury assessments, disciplinary actions) – Players should be inspected visually for safety and proper equipment—officials should not line up players in proximity for inspection – If required by the competition authority, conduct roster or player ID checks using disposable gloves
	Coin toss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Only the referee will conduct a coin toss. Only the referee will handle the coin. Officials should not share coins

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Before a Game— Masks must ALWAYS be worn (cont.)	Pregame warmup and discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Maintain physical distancing from fellow officials while warming up and conducting your pregame discussion – Officials should avoid sharing equipment (e.g. flags, electronic communications)—flags do not have to match – If unavoidable, all shared equipment must be sanitized before and after use—officials who use shared equipment accept the risks of doing so – Assistant referees should wear disposable gloves if using shared flags. Gloves should be properly disposed after each use – Officials may wear a face mask and the referee may use an electronic whistle during a game but are not required to do so. If masks are worn, officials should discuss during their pregame how they are going to communicate during a game
During a Game	Maintain physical distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Officials should maintain physical distancing from players and other match officials as much as possible during a game—this will be challenging and there are going to be times when proper distancing will be violated – Officials have no reason in the normal course of their officiating duties to touch a player, coach, or team official in any manner – Keep any explanations of your decisions short and simple to minimize players lingering in proximity—keep the game moving – Non-verbal communication can be an effective way to render or reinforce your decisions. Excessive verbal communication invites discussion and close contact and should be minimized
	Stopping and restarting play	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Avoid restart delays (e.g. free kicks, throw-ins, dropped balls) so that players do not have prolonged periods of standing in proximity – Evaluate possible injuries, show cards, and have any needed discussions with players or team officials as quickly and concisely as possible – Officials should avoid touching soccer balls with their hands as much as possible (dropped balls are unavoidable). Let players, coaches, or team officials retrieve balls that go out of play. Discourage spectators from touching balls that go out of play
	Substitutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Substitutes should maintain physical distancing from each other and match officials while waiting to enter a game – Conduct substitutions per local competition rules (e.g. directly from the bench instead of at the halfway line, not collecting player passes)
	Confrontations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Do not allow players or coaches to violate physical distancing to dissent or question your decisions. If necessary, discourage such behavior by using your hand/arm to show a ‘stop sign’, or show a yellow card – Be especially mindful of flash points that could lead to mass confrontation or players being too close to each other – If a fight occurs, do not touch or get between participants—beckon coaches onto the field to intervene. Record player numbers that are involved. Administer the proper cards and re-start the game
	Halftime, overtime, and kicks from the penalty mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Wear your mask during halftime or extended breaks between periods if you cannot maintain physical distancing – Sanitize your hands and equipment as needed (e.g. flags, whistle) – Stay off the field as necessary to allow sanitization activities to occur – Reinspect the field after any sanitization activities—<i>recheck goals for safety and proper anchoring</i> – For overtime and kicks to decide a winner, only the referee will handle the coin and conduct the coin toss—wearing a mask

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After a Game— Masks must ALWAYS be worn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– No handshakes, high fives, fist/forearm bumps, etc. at the end of a game. Instead, smile, wave, applaud, say ‘great game’, etc.– Leave the field immediately following the game after all referee duties have been completed– If the referee needs a coach’s signature on the game report/roster, place the paper in a suitable location (e.g. bench, table) and step away so it can be signed. Wear disposable gloves when handling the game report/roster– If you have no other games to officiate, put on your mask, gather your gear, and depart the field– If you need to have a post-game discussion with your fellow officials (or a mentor or assessor), do so away from the field while physically distanced from others– Keep your mask on until you are back in your vehicle– If you have games later in the day at the same field or complex, consider departing the facility or staying in your vehicle during your break to maintain physical distancing– Properly dispose of any sanitizing materials (e.g. wipes) or protective equipment (e.g. gloves)
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