
COVID ANNOUNCEMENT

Abstract Plan

With the cancellation of spring sports and lack of activities throughout the summer, it's become more clear that extracurricular activities and youth sports are a privilege and not a right. With everything going on in the last six months, it's the goal of Lenox Youth Football Club to be able to offer some semblance of normalcy in the lives of our soccer families while also being as mindful of all federal, state, and local guidelines and best safety practices as possible.

Specifically, in regards to COVID-19 we will use all precautions available to provide the safest environment possible on and off the soccer pitch. We will continuously monitor all guidelines from the CDC, Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Massachusetts Youth Soccer Association, as well as local health guidelines and adjust all COVID regulations where necessary. We will additionally remain cognizant of the weekly state and town COVID data reported by the state. Our main goal is to provide structured soccer activity for our teams in a closed practice setting. Dependent upon the previously mentioned guidelines, this may stay as only a practice only sessions or may grow into a model that would potentially include games against other local teams.

Detailed Reference Links

Mass Executive Office of Energy and Environment Affairs, Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Activities Phase III, Step 1: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/safety-standards-for-youth-and-adult-amateur-sports-activities-phase-iii-step-1/download>

MassGov COVID-19 Case Data: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-response-reporting>

Mass Youth Soccer Association Return to Soccer Activities: <https://www.mayouthsoccer.org/return-to-soccer-activities/>

Mass Youth Soccer Association Specific Guidelines:

<https://www.mayouthsoccer.org/returntosocceractivitiespdf/>

Rule Highlights

Below are the highlights of some of the new rules we will start to enforce to help encourage everyone's safety. LYFC is planning to start in a practice-only model, for all teams. After we have firmly established teams and a set rhythm, the board, taking in coach and player-family inputs, will discuss the potential of conducting games. Dependent upon each specific team's interest and comfort level, it is possible some teams may stay in a practice-only model for the entire Fall, while others may play games against other teams in BCYSL.

General Procedures

- If you are feeling ill in any way shape or form let your coach, an LYFC Board Member, or the LYFC COVID Officer know immediately, prior to coming to practice or into contact with anyone else.
Symptoms of COVID19 to be especially cognizant of are:
 - Fever or chills
 - Cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea.
- When getting dropped off and walking to the field, and while putting on your gear, masks must be worn. This includes parents/guardians that need to pick up their offspring and do not stay in their vehicle.
- When practice ends, masks must be worn as you exit the field
- When getting ready or taking a water break, you should do your best to stand 6 feet apart from your teammates.
- When sitting on the bench, a mask must be worn.
- You cannot share snacks, water bottles, or masks, etc.
- Please go out of your way to make sure that every single day you are fully prepared for practice. If you do not have your own equipment, mask and water, you will not be allowed to practice.
- There will be no hands-in cheer, before or after a game.
- No spitting on the field, or any playing surface.
- Please remind yourself no hugs, high fives, or other celebratory closeness/touching after a teammate scores a goal. It will have to be from afar.

Practice Procedures

- Attendance will be kept every day to maintain contact tracing
- A mask must be on your person at all times during practice, and covering face and nose whenever possible and you are not breathing hard and someone is around you
- Masks must be worn as much as humanely possible. If the athlete needs to remove the mask to breathe or catch their breath, it's highly encouraged and will be enforced for them to find socially distance space to do so.
- We will avoid using our hands to pick up the soccer balls and all other equipment as much as possible. If someone uses their hands to pick up the soccer ball, it must be sanitized before being put back into general team use.

- When doing drills that have you standing in lines, please be aware of your space, and social distance whenever possible (coaches will assist with spreading out these lines)
- Deliberate close contact must be eliminated, this includes but not limited to collisions, body checking, tackling, blocking, and racing/riding in packs.
- Pinnies (or “scrimmage vests”) will be single-use and not shared, and washed between every individual use.

Game Procedures (*to be followed for league play, scrimmages, and friendlies*)

- The number of fans will be limited at games, and social distancing observed.
- Contact tracing will be kept for all fans at games.
- Fans must wear masks, at all times, while at the playing arena: sidelines, grounds and parking lot.
- Coaches will wear masks at all times.
- No shoulder-to-shoulder contact is allowed (results in an indirect free kick, if in a game).
- No heading of the ball, for any age (results in an indirect free kick, if in a game).
- No slide tackling (results in an indirect free kick, if in a game).
- No picking up of the ball, at any point in time, even after the ball goes out of bounds or in the goal. (If someone uses their hands to pick up the soccer ball, it must be sanitized before being put back into general team use.)
- No throw-ins: players will kick the ball into play.
- Corner kicks may not be kicked into the opponent’s penalty area.
- For all restarts, all players must comply with the 6-foot distancing rule, from both teammates and opponents. Opponents must remain at 10 yds (8 yards for small-field). Use of a defensive wall is suspended.

COVID Case Reporting

- In addition to all affiliated youth organizations, LYFC will remain in close consultation with the Lenox Board of Health, the Tri-Town Health Department, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health should word of anyone with symptoms arise.
- The LYFC COVID Safety Officer, along with the LYFC Board, will notify all teams and affected organizations, that came in contact or could have potentially come in contact with each other, should someone identify with COVID-19 symptoms.
- All COVID contract tracing data collected from games and practices will be held by LYFC for a minimum of three weeks.