NorCal Return to Play Competition Policies/FAQ

EDITS added 3/3
EDIT 3/9
New - **CDPH Youth Sports Q&A** 3/16
EDIT 4/6 CA Update

The purpose of this document is to convey the contents of the February 19, **CA Department of Public Health** guidance as best we understand it, and the subsequent NorCal Competition Policies for the remainder of the 2020/21 season. This is in order to provide a safe environment for clubs and teams playing in the NorCal Premier League *Return to Play* Competitions. It is in the best interest of all involved that clubs read and understand all state and county guidance before participating in competitions.

Policies you will need to be aware of and follow in hosting games:

1. **NorCal Premier Policies** - covered in this document
2. **State of California Policies** - covered in this document
3. **County Policies** - not covered in this document
4. **Facility Provider Policies** - not covered in this document

In the case of County or Facility Policies being stricter than NorCal or State policies, then the stricter policies will take precedence in holding competitions. Clubs should communicate directly with their county public health departments to be sure that they are complying with requirements in their area.

NorCal Premier is committed to supporting our membership in navigating these complicated dynamics. If you have questions or need some support in applying these protocols, please reach out to our staff and we're happy to help you.

Section A - OVERVIEW

1. Clubs must abide by the CA Department of Public Health guidance**.**
2. Clubs must additionally adhere to county-specific rules.
3. Normal game-day procedures, found in our Handbook, still apply. In the case that one of the guidelines in this document contradicts a Handbook guideline, the policies in this document will take precedence.
4. If you observe that a club has deliberately disregarded state mandates, you may report these concerns to the local health department.

5. If you observe that a club has deliberately disregarded NorCal Premier requirements or rules, please have your club DOC or President complete the form to file a PAD complaint.

Failure of a club to make best efforts to follow the NorCal Return to Play Competition Policies may result in the removal of the club's teams from NorCal Premier Soccer competitions.

If you are trying your best but still need help, please contact NorCal staff and let us help you.

[1] = from the State of California *[2] = from NorCal Premier*

SECTION B - GAME DAY

1. Clubs are strongly encouraged to screen all those attending a match on each game day (players, coaches, spectators) according to the CDC Screening Tool to help ensure that no individual with infection or exposure is in attendance.[2]
2. Face Coverings/Masks
    a. Face coverings to be worn by players when not participating (e.g. on the sidelines).[1]
    b. Face coverings to be worn by participants during practice, conditioning and competition, even during heavy exertion as tolerated.[1]
    c. Face coverings to be worn by coaches, support staff, and observers at all times, and in compliance with the CDPH Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings.[1]
    d. Clubs may be subject to stricter county or facility provider requirements regarding face coverings.[2]
3. For all youth and adult outdoor sports, spectators and observers are permitted pursuant to Outdoor Seated Live Events and Performances.[1]
4. Observers maintain at least 6 feet from non-household members.[1]
5. No sharing of drink bottles and other personal items and equipment.[1]
6. Mixing with other households prior to and post any competition must strictly adhere to current gathering guidance.[1]
7. When equipment is shared during an activity, participants perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before play, during breaks, at half time, and after the conclusion of the activity.[1]
    a. Balls or other objects or equipment can be touched by multiple individuals during practice and play if the above hand hygiene practices are followed.[1]
8. There will be no team benches - players must bring their own chair and remain six feet apart on the sideline.[2]
9. No pre-game or post-game handshakes.[2]
10. Referee Assignors should document the game referees for each game for possible contact tracing.[2]

SECTION C - OTHER GUIDANCE

1. Informed Consent
    a. Clubs must acquire a signature from all participants (guardians) and maintain a record of these signatures.[1]
    b. TEMPLATE - English, TEMPLATE - Spanish
2. Teams must not participate in out-of-state games and tournaments.[1]
3. All individuals are required to follow CDPH Travel Advisory regarding out-of-state travel, including a 10-day self-quarantine period. As such, individuals who travel out of state would not be able to attend NorCal events during this 10-day period.[2]
4. Teams adhere to current CDPH Travel Advisory recommendations when determining travel for competition in neighboring counties.[1]
5. No tournaments or events that involve more than two teams to occur.[1]
6. Only two teams should be present at a single game field at the same time.[2]
7. Only one competition, per team, per day maximum to be played.[1]
8. As per the CDPH's February 19 guidance, clubs should limit participation by athletes and coaches during practice and competition to one team, and refrain from participating with more than one team over the same season or time period, to the greatest extent possible.[1]
9. Inter-team competitions, meets, races, or similar events are permitted to occur only with other teams within the state.[1] This replaces the former guidance below:
   ~~Games are permitted to occur only if (a) both teams are located in the same county, or (b) teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties.~~ [1]

SECTION D - INFECTION/EXPOSURE

1. No one with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is in isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 is permitted to attend competitions.[1]
2. Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should consult their physician for testing and notify their club/coach of their symptoms and test results. Please refer to the Return to Sports Guidance for youth athletes as well as the CDC Quarantine Guidelines. [1]
3. Report post-match positive cases of players, coaches, referees, and spectators HERE. NorCal will inform opponents.[2]

SECTION E - FAQs

1. How do I know when my club can play?

A - Each Tuesday, the State posts the metrics for each county - including the "adjusted case rate" which is a calculation of cases and testing. Teams may play/practice with contact when the "adjusted case rate" in their county meets the 14 per 100k threshold. It is not dependent upon tiers. We are keeping track of eligibility based on the numbers on this **MAP.**

Remember that counties can inflict stricter guidance that may limit your club's ability to play.

2. What are the timelines for competition? How do I apply for events?
Application and Details

3. What is Informed Consent? And is my club required to get it from each player?
A - Informed consent is permission granted in the knowledge of the possible consequences of a given activity. The CA Department of Public Health has asked that minors participating in "high-contact" sports have each parent sign an informed consent indicating their understanding and acknowledgment of risks.
Template - English
Template - Spanish

4. What do we do if we can't get fields? Or fields aren't lined or don't have the right size goals or are otherwise not maintained to normal standards due to having been shut down?
If your club cannot get fields or provide appropriate game-day standards, you may reach out to your opponent to see if they are able to host. We will try to balance a club's schedule so that they don't have too many games scheduled on one day. There will be more flexibility for clubs on the normal field and game day standards as ultimately the primary goal is simply to play games again.

5. What about getting fields in other communities or ones we haven't used in the past in order to host games?
Use of fields in other communities should first be communicated with the clubs already operating there. Your use of fields in other communities can not negatively impact another NorCal club's operations.

6. Can NorCal host games at central sites?
NorCal can assist clubs or look into hosting games at a central site as long as both teams are from the same county and within the local and state guidelines.

7. We don't have uniforms yet as we didn't order them for the past cycle. What should we do for NorCal competitions starting sooner than we'll be able to get them?
NorCal will be allowing more flexibility for these Return to Play events. Teams may wear the same color shirt and do whatever necessary to put numbers on them.

8. How many referees will be required for Return to Play events?
Due to the anticipated shortage of referees in the Spring, all U8-U16 games will only require one referee. Clubs should still try to have three referees for U17-U19 games but a game can be official with just one. If no referees show up, please still play the match as a friendly.

9. Can we use Competition Credits from Spring 2020 to pay for Return to Play?
Yes. When applying, please select the "Pay by Check" option and **COMPLETE THIS FORM** for your club as a whole. Teams will be marked PAID and a deduction of the total will be taken from your club's credit.

10. What if my team decides to travel out-of-state for a competition? Will our club/teams be removed from competitions?
CDPH's February 19 guidance states that teams may not travel out of state. Accordingly and in the best interests of all involved, teams who travel out of state are expected to observe the 10-day self-quarantine as prescribed in the CDPH Travel Advisory, and not participate in NorCal competitions during that time. Failure to do so may result in sanctions from NorCal.