

Monday, June 8, 2020 – On May 15, Vermont Soccer Association (VSA) announced suspension of all sanctioned activities until May 22, 2020. This decision was made in alignment with the Executive Order “Be Smart, Stay Healthy” announced by Governor Scott. Accordingly, VSA developed Return-to-Play Guidelines that were implemented over four phases which began with Phase 1 on May 23, 2020. We are now in Phase 2, moving toward Phase 3 beginning June 15, 2020.

It should be noted that ALL PARTICIPANTS should be prepared to shut down and cease all trainings, activities, and/or games should the State of Vermont change its guidelines to require stoppage.

While many are going to be excited to return to play, there are others who may be apprehensive. If a player, parent, or family are not comfortable returning to play – **DON'T**. We must demonstrate respect and courtesy for everyone’s feelings during this time and ensure that we provide a safe environment as we return to play.

Implementing the VSA Return-to-Play Guidelines will require a cooperative relationship between Club, Coach, Parent, and Player. All participants must agree to arrive, play, leave. No congregating before, during, or after training or game.

While the Club and Coach must create a safe environment, the PARENT must make the decision for their child to return to play. As a parent, if you are not comfortable in your child returning to play – **DON'T**. And finally, PLAYERS must be responsible to adhere to, and respect the social distancing requirements and contact guidelines that have been established.

The roles/responsibilities for each include:

CLUB	COACH	PARENT	PLAYER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Distribute and post Return to Play protocols ▪ Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that may be uncomfortable with returning to play ▪ Train and educate all staff on Return to Play protocols ▪ Provide adequate field space for social distancing ▪ Ensure appropriate waste receptacles at fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow all Return to Play protocols ▪ Inquire how athletes are feeling. If they are not feeling well, send them home. ▪ Ensure all athletes have their individual equipment (ball, water, shin guards, etc.) ▪ Coach is the ONLY person to place/pick up/touch cones, discs, or training equipment ▪ Ensure drills/exercises provide for adequate social distancing ▪ Ensure that training vests/pinnies are disinfected after each use. ▪ Respect players, parents, and families by accommodating those that may not yet be comfortable returning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you are not comfortable with returning to play, DON'T. ▪ Check your child’s temperature before coming to ANY training session. ▪ Ensure child’s clothing is washed after EVERY training session. ▪ Ensure all equipment (cleats, ball, shin guards, etc.) are sanitized before and after EVERY training. ▪ Notify club immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason ▪ Supply your child with individual sanitizer. ▪ Adhere to social distancing requirements; Stay in Car ▪ Ensure your child has plenty of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If you are not comfortable with returning to play, DON'T ▪ Adhere to all Return to Play protocols ▪ Wash hands thoroughly before and after training. ▪ Wash and sanitize training equipment (shoes, shin guards, clothing) after EVERY training. ▪ Do not share water, food, or equipment ▪ Respect and practice social distancing. ▪ Place equipment, bags, etc. at least 6 feet apart from teammates equipment. ▪ No high 5’s, handshakes, knuckles, or group celebrations.

The Foundation for the four phases of the VSA Return-to-Play Guidelines are:

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3	PHASE 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Contact ▪ Focus on return to activity with individual training, no group drills ▪ Groups not to exceed 10 participants per field ▪ No sharing of equipment or water ▪ Participants must remain a minimum of six feet apart ▪ Practice times should be set/staggered to maximize social distancing ▪ Players shall be provided specific location for personal belongings ▪ Face mask use before and after activity in accordance with local guidelines ▪ Hand sanitizer should be made available during all training sessions in case a player does not have their own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No Contact is allowed ▪ Focus on individual training, skills, strength, and conditioning. No group drills ▪ Groups not to exceed 25 participants per field ▪ No sharing of equipment, pinnies, or water. ▪ No fist bumps or high fives ▪ Participants and coaches must remain a minimum of six feet apart ▪ Practice times should be set to maximize social distancing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phase 1 and 2 plus the following: ▪ Group size in accordance with current state guidelines, currently 25 ▪ Introduction of controlled, small sided scrimmages/practice games. ▪ Physical contact to be minimized ▪ Modify game rules to accommodate physical distance requirements where able. (i.e. kick-in instead of throw-in) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Phase 1, 2, 3, plus ▪ Return to play Games within the state of Vermont with Vermont teams ONLY ▪ No restriction on training session ▪ No Sharing of water ▪ Recommend social distancing practices still be maintained by all. ▪ Pre-game team meetings should be designed to accommodate social distancing ▪ Face mask use by players and coaches shall be in accordance with local guidelines. Recommended before and after activity.

As the evolution through each of the four phases occurs, the following should always be adhered to:

- If you are sick or feel sick, **STAY HOME**
- At Risk individuals, youth or adult, **STAY HOME**
- Each player **MUST** have their own ball and equipment
- Assign a “station” for each player to place their equipment, and that they should return to during breaks
- No one is to share water, towels, or any equipment. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - Balls; no activities should include picking up, or making contact with one’s hand, with a ball (Phase 1 at minimum)
 - Shoes, socks, or shin guards
 - Jersey/Uniform
 - **ONLY** coaches should place and pick up cones
 - Recommended each player is issued their individual practice vest/pinnie
 - **AVOID SPITTING**
- No centralized hydration or refreshment stations (Phases 1 and 2 at minimum)
- No Spectators until the Governor has determined a group gathering size conducive to maintaining social distancing, as defined by the CDC along sidelines

- Recommend having sanitizing stations available. This may include:
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Disinfectant wipes to be used to wipe down all equipment
 - Trash Bags for removing wipes, tissues, etc. from premises
- 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.
- In the event of an injury, staff may assess and facilitate management of the injured player using proper first aid measures. Family members may participate as necessary. Other players must maintain proper social distance.

Phase 1 will be defined by the following Restrictions and Activities:

RESTRICTIONS	ACTIVITIES PERMITTED	ACTIVITIES NOT PERMITTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NO Physical contact. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drills that involve players or coaches within 6 feet of each other ▪ No high fives ▪ No knuckles ▪ No more than 10 participants per field. This includes players, coaches, and spectators ▪ No use of scrimmage vests/pinnies ▪ Practice times should be set to maximize social distancing and limit the number of people in a single area to 10 or less. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommend a minimum of 30 minutes between end time of one session and the start time of the next. ▪ If youth need supervision while waiting for pickup, adults should be at least six (6) feet apart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual training and technical activities ONLY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any drill or exercise that would/could involve participants getting closer than 6 feet apart, or physical contact ▪ Activities that would create engagement by two or more players ▪ Activities that may create opportunity for an individual to come in contact with another's equipment. This would include headers, throw-ins, etc. ▪ NO GAMES OR TOURNAMENTS

Phase 2 will be defined by the following Restrictions and Activities in an expanded group:

RESTRICTIONS	ACTIVITIES PERMITTED	ACTIVITIES NOT PERMITTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ NO Physical contact. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Drills that involve players or coaches within 6 feet of each other ▪ No high fives ▪ No knuckles ▪ No more than 25 participants per field. This includes players, coaches, and spectators ▪ No sharing of scrimmage vests/pinnies ▪ Practice times should be set to maximize social distancing and limit the number of people in a single area to 25 or less. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Recommend a minimum of 30 minutes between end time of one session and the start time of the next. ▪ If youth need supervision while waiting for pickup, adults should be at least six (6) feet apart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual training and technical activities ONLY 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Any drill or exercise that would/could involve participants getting closer than 6 feet apart, or physical contact ▪ Activities that would create engagement by two or more players ▪ Activities that may create opportunity for an individual to come in contact with another's equipment. This would include headers, throw-ins, etc. ▪ NO GAMES OR TOURNAMENTS

Phase 3 will begin lifting restrictions

RESTRICTIONS	ACTIVITIES PERMITTED	ACTIVITIES NOT PERMITTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Introduction of controlled, small sided scrimmages/practice games ▪ Physical contact to be minimized ▪ No sharing of water ▪ Groups not to exceed 25 participants or in accordance with Governor's orders for group gatherings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual training and technical activities ▪ Small sided scrimmages ▪ Activities that would create engagement by two or more players, time in this activity should be limited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activities that may create opportunity for an individual to come in contact with another's equipment. This would include headers, throw-ins, etc. ▪ NO GAMES OR TOURNAMENTS

Phase 4 RETURN TO GAMES

RESTRICTIONS	ACTIVITIES PERMITTED	ACTIVITIES NOT PERMITTED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Physical contact allowed but should be minimized▪ No sharing of water▪ Groups not to exceed 25 participants or in accordance with Governor's orders for group gatherings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Individual training and technical activities▪ In State league games and scrimmages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ No Tournaments or festivals▪ No playing of out of state teams

VSA remains steadfast in our commitment to the safety of our players, coaches, referees, families, and communities. It is imperative that everyone understand their role and demonstrate a commitment adhering to the VSA Return-to-Play Guidelines which have been created based on federal, state, and local directives and guidance with the intent of providing a safe environment to get back on the field. If there is hesitation in returning to play - **DON'T**; *just because you can does not mean you MUST.*