



Return to Play – Match Officials

(as of Oct. 7, 2020)

Summary of Protocols:

Referees, you are responsible for **only your behavior** and should expect cooperation from all others.

The Assignment:

- You are not required to accept any game.
- Do not accept a game if you are experiencing any symptoms.
- Let the assignor know as soon as possible, especially if you accept, then need to decline (turnback)

Prior to the Game:

- Before leaving for the field, check yourself (see details below)

Pre-Game:

- Always maintain COVID-19 protocols (Distance, touching, masks)
- Arrive fully dressed
- ARs, bring your own flags if you have them
- Bring your own hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes
- Masks must be worn before, during half-time and after the match
- The field & equipment (including game balls) must be inspected per the notes below
- Rosters will be checked per the notes below
- No Coin Toss
- No “walkouts” or handshakes

During the Game:

- Everyone, except players on the field, are 6 - 10 ft. from the touchline
 - This is the responsibility of the coaches
 - The referee can end the match if they do not feel safe
- Try to maintain protocol distancing during the match.
- Drop Ball & Penalty Kick – no referee handling
- Medical Situations – maintain distance

Halftime:

- Always maintain COVID-19 protocols (Distance, touching, masks)
- Use hand sanitizer and sanitize all referee equipment again

After the Game:

- Always maintain COVID-19 protocols (Distance, touching, masks)
- No handshakes, fist bumps, or high fives after the game
- If a coach's signature is required on the match report, maintain COVID-19 protocols, same if you need to leave a match report
- When debriefing with the referee crew, maintain COVID-19 protocols
- If working multiple games, wipe down and sanitize your equipment between your matches.
- After the game is over and the crew has debriefed, leave the field
- If you encounter any difficulty implementing these protocols, complete a supplemental report and notify your assignor.

Detailed Protocols:

The Assignment:

- As an independent contractor you are not required to accept a game. It is your choice and you should take into consideration your comfort level.
- Be conscious when accepting game assignments and do not accept a game if you are experiencing any symptoms.
- If you decline a game, be respectful to the assignor and notify them as soon as possible to allow time for a replacement.
- If you start to exhibit symptoms after accepting a game, be in communication with your assignor and consider if you should decline the game at that time.
- If you are the assignor, please be understanding if a referee declines a game due to health concerns.

Prior to the Game:

- Before leaving for the field, Referees should ask themselves the following questions:
 - Have you knowingly come into contact with anyone who has, is being tested for, or is exhibiting signs of coronavirus? (Yes or No)
 - Are you exhibiting any of the following symptoms which are not caused by any other condition? (Yes or No)
 - Fever or chills
 - Shortness of breath
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - If the referee answers yes to any of these questions, they should notify their assignor and refrain from officiating the game.

Pre-Game:

- Personal Stations for referees
 - The referee crew should set up their belongings in an area away from all others while maintaining 6-ft/2-yd space from each other
 - Referees should not bring any unnecessary belongings to the field.
 - Referees are expected to arrive to the field fully dressed
 - Gold referee jersey is the recommended color to avoid clashing.
 - If case of a conflict with the teams, alternate color jerseys should be on hand.
 - Assistant referees are expected to bring their own flags to the field. The flags don't need to match each other.
 - Referee equipment should not be shared, but if shared, it should be sanitized before and after the match.
 - Masks must be worn before, during half-time and after the match.
 - Referees should carry hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes for their own personal use.
 - Referees may use a regular whistle or an electronic whistle.
- During the referee crew pregame discussion, continue to maintain 6-ft/2-yd space and insure all COVID-19 protocols are discussed
- Field and Equipment Inspection:
 - Field should still be walked. Visual inspection only of the goals, nets and flags.
 - If an item needs to be fixed or removed from the field, notify the home team as soon as possible
 - Game balls –
 - The referee should inspect all game balls, but without handling them. For better efficiency, it is recommended there be more than one game ball.
- Player Check-In:
 - Rosters
 - If possible, try to receive the roster or match report electronically ahead of time.
 - If not, have the coach place the roster at the end of the bench to minimize close contact.
 - Leagues that require player passes, are pictures printed on the rosters? Then no need for player passes. If not, have the coach read the player passes.
 - Uniform/Jewelry checks – should be visual check only maintaining proper physical distance between referee and players.
- Coin Toss:
 - No coin toss.
 - While maintaining 6-ft space, the Home team picks direction to attack. Away team gets kick-off.
- No player walkouts or handshakes prior to the game.

During the Game:

- Technical Area (bench) and all others, COVID-19 protocol expects all players, team officials, and spectators to maintain at least a 6 - 10 ft. distance from the touchline, dependent on the facility.
 - This is NOT the referee crew's responsibility to maintain.

- Communicate with the coaches if anyone is not maintaining the proper distance from the touchline.
- If the problem persists, have a conversation with the full crew and both coaches to try to resolve the issue.
- If at any time the referee crew does not feel safe during a match because proper distancing by spectators from the crew is not being followed, you can end the match due to safety concerns.
- Try to maintain recommended distancing during the match.
- Drop Ball – no referee handling, ensure all except one player maintain a 4.5 yd. distance from the ball and restart with a whistle.
- Penalty kicks – do not handle the ball. Place the ball on the mark, the player can then adjust.
- Medical Situations –
 - Remain 6 ft. away from the injured player while determining if medical attention is needed.
 - If so, the team trainer or a coach from the player's team should attend to the injured player.

Halftime:

- Masks should be worn during halftime.
 - Referees should maintain proper distancing during the halftime conversation.
- It is recommended referees use hand sanitizer and sanitize all referee equipment again during halftime.

After the Game:

- No handshakes, fist bumps, or high fives after the game. This can be replaced with a wave.
- If a coach's signature is required on the match report, lay the report on the bench and back up, allowing for the coach to sign.
 - If you are required to leave a match report for the team(s), leave at the end of the team bench.
- When debriefing with the referee crew, find a space where everyone can be seen and heard, while allowing for proper distancing.
- If working multiple games, wipe down and sanitize your equipment between your matches.
- Once the game is over and the crew has debriefed, leave the field. Do not congregate around the field.
- Should you encounter any difficulty implementing these protocols, please complete a supplemental report and notify your assignor.
 - Assignors, please notify the proper club administrators if a referee crew should encounter any problems implementing the protocols.
- For contact tracing purposes, if a referee is to test positive for COVID after a match, they need to notify the assignor immediately. The assignor will be responsible for notifying the appropriate club official.