

**Mass Youth Soccer Extends Suspension of all Soccer activities
through and including Sunday, May 3, 2020**

Massachusetts Youth Soccer's vision statement partially reads that we are dedicated to the ongoing development of youth soccer players, coaches, referees, clubs and leagues in an inclusive, **safe**, affordable and fun environment.

Never did we imagine the word SAFE would take on a totally new meaning. We have traditionally considered this to be a function of on-field activities. Now, because of the escalating COVID-19 crisis, this word extends to staying off the fields and following the guidance of public health professionals and government agencies to help fight against the further spread of the virus.

We hope this communication finds you, your family and friends healthy and staying safe. Within the past week our sincere thanks and best wishes go out to our medical heroes who are on the front line fighting COVID-19, many of whom are from our extended soccer family.

Based on the very latest information we've received from numerous sources, including medical professionals, effective immediately, Mass Youth Soccer is extending the suspension of all affiliated and sanctioned soccer activities statewide through and including Sunday, May 3, 2020. For our member organizations (towns, clubs and leagues), this suspension continues to include, but is not limited to: all games (of all types), practices, clinics, training, tournaments, in-person meetings and Coaching Education Courses.

Assuming that circumstances do not warrant or require a further extension, commencing Monday, May 4, the suspension will be lifted on all soccer activities as noted above, except for league games (intown, travel and club) and tournaments, which may commence starting on Saturday, May 9, 2020.

All Mass Youth Soccer affiliated League Presidents, with their concern being the ultimate health and well-being of our entire soccer community, are in unanimous agreement with this decision.

Our primary focus has been, and remains the safety and welfare of our players, coaches and referees. As importantly, we are concerned for the safety and well-being of our communities and seek to comply with medical directives on how best to stem the further spread of the virus. This is not just a soccer decision, but a public health decision.

We continue to closely monitor the situation via the federal, state and local public health agencies. We remain in contact with US Soccer, US Youth Soccer and other State Associations, who also have made significant cancellations and postponements, as well as the other major sport organizations and events throughout the country. Membership can expect regular updates as this situation continues to evolve with the next update planned on/about April 8th.

NOTE TO MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS - We are aware that some member organizations (town and club programs) have preliminarily discussed the prospect of cancelling their "Spring Season". Specifically, these organizations are referring to their existing schedules of games.

Mass Youth Soccer understands the impulse but feels that it may be premature to take such actions since regular season and/or alternative season play remain an option. Please keep in mind that If an organization decides to cancel their schedule it is still possible for other soccer activities to take place during the remaining season. These activities may include tryouts, training, clinics, skills competitions, intratown/club friendly games, friendlies against other towns/clubs.

Mass Youth Soccer is considering extending the Spring 2020 season into July or even August. This will permit our member organizations to conduct those activities noted above beyond the typical June season end. Our desire, when it is safe to do so, is to have our members provide opportunities for children to return to the fields in the best interests for their health and wellness. There are so many physical and mental benefits to youth sports and we would like to be able to contribute to this phase of recovery through soccer. More information on a potential season extension will be provided in future communications.



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