



To the NCSL Community:

The past few weeks have brought unprecedented disruption to our daily lives, with “social distancing” requirements now the norm and potential calls for “sheltering-in-place” looming. The youth soccer community, including NCSL and all of the other travel leagues in our area, have responded by delaying the start of the season, urging members to follow public health recommendations to discontinue all in-person group activities, carefully monitoring the very latest guidance, and communicating openly with our clubs, teams, coaches, and referees.

The NCSL Executive Committee met this weekend to review the latest guidance and to discuss various contingency plans that we may implement going forward. Although we worked hard to identify and discuss all available options, the stark reality is that nobody knows when it will be safe to return to play.

Indeed, the CDC has warned that “[m]ore cases of COVID-19 are likely to be identified in the United States in the coming days, including more instances of community spread. CDC expects that widespread transmission of COVID-19 in the United States will occur. In the coming months, most of the U.S. population will be exposed to this virus.”

Given these warnings, and the evolving responses we are seeing at all levels of government, we believe at this point that it is unlikely that anyone will be allowed to resume normal soccer practice and play schedules before, at the very least, May. Hopefully, that prediction turns out to be unnecessarily pessimistic, but we are preparing for it just in case.

At the same time, we continue to field a large volume of requests to reschedule games, both through the flex rescheduling process and otherwise. It seems to us to be counterproductive to adjust schedules at this time for games that we do not know will be played, but we also recognize that having the schedules open for public view is creating angst for some.

### **Removing Game Schedules**

Accordingly, we have now taken down our game schedules from public view. We should stress that we are not announcing further postponements at this time, but rather, are merely preparing for the possibility in the future. We also are acknowledging that when we are finally able to return to play, we will likely have to make significant changes to the current schedule, such that having it available for view now will not be helpful to anyone.

### **Potential Contingency Plans**

Now, as I mentioned above, the Executive Committee is exploring various potential contingency plans for our safe return to play. Although there is not enough health information available yet on virus containment to even begin to construct a timeline for kicking off the league again, we have identified

and are considering three scenarios that we currently are considering. The first would have us reschedule as many games as possible within the current period of Spring 2020 NCSL play and finish the shortened season on the current rain date of June 14. The second would be to extend the Spring 2020 season into the summer, perhaps as late as the end of June, for those teams that would be available and interested in playing. The third would be to complete whatever portion of the Spring 2020 season we can, and then roll-over registrations into a small-sided, 7v7 summer league during June and July for those teams that are available and interested.

Under any scenario, our hope would be to continue to the best of our ability to provide safe, fun, and appropriate league programming for our clubs, their teams, and the children who love the game of soccer.

I am confident that we will get through this emergency together. We must all do our part, however, and that includes making difficult decisions about shutting down leagues and practices. Thank you to all of our clubs for working hard to protect your staffs and families. We are impressed with the leadership you have shown within your communities. We look forward to seeing you back out on the pitch as soon as possible.

Richard Smith  
President, National Capital Soccer League