

# **GEORGIA STUDENT HOCKEY LEAGUE**



## **COVID-19 RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

**October 28, 2020**

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## INTRODUCTION

To assist GSHL Member teams with their planning and decision making, the GSHL has issued the following Protocol for Member teams to follow. It is recognized and understood that individual cities, counties, states, and other jurisdictions may impose requirements, restrictions, limitations, or other mandates which govern return to play.

This Protocol should be viewed as a minimum standard. Member teams must address jurisdictional requirements, and in addition, may impose additional protocols governing return to play.

The GSHL Protocol reflects guidance and direction from a variety of sources. Management of the issues may be subject to changes and/or conflicting viewpoints as additional data, research or medical viewpoints emerge.

The GSHL will monitor any new regulations and directives introduced by the CDC, USA Hockey, and other sports organizations and, if applicable, they will be incorporated into the GSHL Return to Play Protocol.

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	2
<b>1. COVID-19 WAIVERS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
League Waiver .....	5
Team and Facility Waivers .....	5
Eligibility for Participation .....	5
Certificate of Compliance Verification .....	5
<b>2. TEAM PROTOCOL MANAGER.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. TESTING.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>4. TESTING AND SYMPTOM BASED STRATEGY .....</b>	<b>8</b>
4.1. Mild to Moderate Symptoms.....	8
4.2. Severe Symptoms: .....	8
4.3. Close Contact.....	9
<b>5. COVID-19 SYMPTOMS, NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE TEST .....</b>	<b>10</b>
5.1. COVID-19 Symptoms .....	10
5.2. Covid-19 Negative .....	10
5.3. Covid-19 Positive.....	10
<b>6. DAILY CHECK, DENIAL VERIFICATION AND BEST PRACTICES .....</b>	<b>12</b>
6.1. Daily Check.....	12
6.2. Daily Best Practice .....	13
<b>7. INITIAL TESTING PRIOR TO PLAY.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>8. HOME ARENA.....</b>	<b>15</b>
8.1. Facility Guidelines.....	15
8.2. Team Locker Rooms .....	15
8.3. Benches .....	16
8.4. Equipment.....	16
8.5. Off-Ice Training Areas.....	17
8.6. Training Rooms .....	17
8.7. On Ice .....	17
8.8. Isolation Room .....	17
<b>9. STAFF PROTOCOLS.....</b>	<b>18</b>
9.1. Coaching Staff.....	18
9.2. Medical, Trainers & Equipment Staff.....	18
9.3. Office Staff.....	18
9.4. Game Night Staff.....	18
<b>10. OFFICIALS .....</b>	<b>19</b>
10.1. Waiver .....	19
10.2. GSHL Strategy .....	19

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

10.3.	Daily Check & Best Practices.....	19
10.4.	Assignments and Scheduling .....	19
10.5.	Arena-Rink Facilities .....	19
10.6.	In Game Policy.....	20
11.	BENCH STAFF AND OFFICIALS .....	21
11.1.	Minimum # of essential bench staff required for a game .....	21
11.2.	Minimum # of players a Member Club can dress to play in a game .....	21
11.3.	Minimum number of On-Ice Officials required to play a game .....	21
11.4.	Minimum number of essential Off-Ice Officials required to play a game.....	21
12.	COVID-19 CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE .....	22
13.	FAQ's.....	23

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 1. COVID-19 WAIVERS

### League Waiver

- Players, staff, and officials will be required to sign League Waiver of Liability, Release, Assumption of Risk & Indemnity Agreement Relating to Covid-19 Novel Coronavirus/Covid-19 (herein after “League Waiver”) at the beginning of the 2020-2021 season. The Waiver shall be valid for the 2020-2021 applies to all preseason, regular and post season games. The League Waiver must be executed prior to participation in any preseason, regular season, or postseason practices, on or off ice activities or games.

### Team and Facility Waivers

- Players, staff, and officials may be required to sign Team and Facility Waivers.

### Eligibility for Participation

- Individuals required to sign waivers must do so to be eligible to participate in any preseason, regular season, postseason practices, on or off ice activities or games.

### Certificate of Compliance Verification

- Players, and staff, are to review and verify the Compliance Certification prior to initial report, move in and returning from break (See Protocol 14).

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 2. TEAM PROTOCOL MANAGER

Team Protocol Manager: Each team will create a primary point of contact called the Team Protocol Manager. The Team Protocol Manager should be well versed in the league, team, local and jurisdictional requirements, and the CDC guidelines.

## GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

### 3. TESTING

- **Testing Guidelines.** CDC testing guidelines, in conjunction with medical advice, will be followed to determine when a test is needed. Testing may or may not be required throughout the season at different times and for different reasons as determined by a physician and/or local/state governance.
- **Team Responsibility.** Teams will be responsible in identifying a local testing center that provides access to testing for all individuals.
- **Player Responsibility.** Players will be responsible for the cost of testing.
- **Staff, and Officials Responsibility.** Staff, and officials will be responsible for the cost of testing.
- **Eligibility for Participation.** Individuals that are required to take a Covid-19 test by local or state authorities must do so to be become or to remain eligible to participate.

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 4. TESTING AND SYMPTOM BASED STRATEGY

A Testing-Based strategy and a Symptom-Based strategy will be used. Both strategies are used by the CDC.

The Testing-Based strategy allows for testing to be primarily considered based on CDC recommendations and the local team physician. Individuals will be required to produce a negative test upon arrival to a team.

The Symptom-Based strategy is modeled from the CDC return to work/duty for health care worker guidelines. Except for rare situations, a Test-Based strategy is no longer recommended by the CDC to determine when to allow personnel to return to work/duty (7/17/2020) because in the majority of cases, it results in excluding from work or other activity individuals who continue to shed detectable Covid-19 virus RNA but are no longer infectious. Therefore, Self-Isolation (see 4.1 below) is primarily the first step of the Symptom-Based strategy.

**Self-Isolation.** [Self-isolation](#) is recommended for people with probable or confirmed COVID-19 who have mild illness and can recover at home. The CDC defines isolation as separating a sick person with a contagious disease from people who are not sick. If self-isolation is not possible, then the use of masks (along as the individual is not adversely affected using the mask), frequent hand washing and distancing by caregivers must/should be implemented.

The following Symptom-Based Strategy should be followed once in Self-Isolation:

**Symptom Based Return Strategy.** Are for individuals with confirmed Covid-19 infection, or individuals with suspected Covid-19 infection (e.g., developed symptoms of Covid-19) but were never tested for Covid-19.

### 4.1. Mild to Moderate Symptoms

Individuals with [mild to moderate illness](#) with Covid-19 primary symptoms may return to play if:

- At least 14 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared and
- At least 72 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and
- Symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath) are not present

### 4.2. Severe Symptoms:

Individuals with severe illness with Covid-19 primary symptoms or who are severely immunocompromised (as determined by physician) shall not be eligible to return without written physician approval.

## GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

### 4.3. Close Contact

The CDC considers defines “close contact” as an unprotected individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 continuous minutes starting two days before the illness onset (or, for asymptomatic individuals, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the individual is isolated.

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 5. COVID-19 SYMPTOMS, NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE TEST

### 5.1. COVID-19 Symptoms

An individual with primary Covid-19 symptoms, including but not limited to, a cough, fever/chills, or shortness of breath, or change in loss of taste or smell must adhere to the following protocol:

- A. Notify the Team Protocol Manager immediately.
- B. The individual must Self-Isolate (see Protocol 4.1 above).
- C. The CDC defines isolation as separating a sick person with a contagious disease from people who are not sick.
- D. If self-isolation is not possible, then the use of masks (if the individual is not adversely affected using the mask), frequent hand washing and distancing by caregivers should be implemented.
- E. An individual with mild or moderate Covid-19 primary symptoms will remain in isolation until either the CDC Symptom-Based Strategy (See Protocol 4.1 above) are met, OR a negative test result is received under the direction of a physician.
- F. An individual with severe Covid-19 primary symptoms must be referred to the team physician for recommended care.

### 5.2. Covid-19 Negative

If an individual has a test, and the test result is negative, but non-Covid-19 flu like symptoms continue, the individual will remain in Self-Isolation until 24-48 hours after their symptoms have resolved and/or after obtaining written approval by the team physician to return to play.

### 5.3. Covid-19 Positive

If an individual is tested and tests positive for Covid-19, they must adhere to the following protocol:

- A. Upon receiving a positive Covid-19 test result the individual must notify the Team Protocol Manager immediately.
- B. The Team Protocol Manager must notify the GSHL Office immediately.

## **GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

---

- C. Anyone that would be considered “Close Contact” by the CDC (see Protocol 4.3 above) shall be notified immediately.
- Close Contact Definition: Someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic individuals, 2 days prior to specimen collection) until the time the individual is isolated.
  - An individual that is determined to be a Close Contact (see Protocol 4.3 above) shall Self-Isolate (see Protocol 4.1 above) and follow the CDC Symptom-Based Strategy (see Protocol 4.2 above).
- D. The individual that tested positive must Self-Isolate (See Protocol 4.1 above) and follow CDC Symptom-Based Strategy (See Protocol 4.2 above).
- E. The Team will cooperate with health authorities and follow CDC Close Contact (see Protocol 4.3 above) Protocol (for individuals who have been in close contact with the infected in the 48 hours prior to when the symptoms started).
- F. The Team will follow any other additional prevention and control measures as required by the local health authority.
- G. The Team and Facility will ensure all areas of the facility, where the infected individual has been, are disinfected in accordance with the procedures and protocols provided CDC.
- H. The individual will remain in Self-Isolation (see Protocol 4.1 above) for a period of 14 days or until such time he is approved for return to play by the team physician and satisfies the CDC Symptom-Based Strategy (see Protocol 4.2 above).

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 6. DAILY CHECK, DENIAL VERIFICATION AND BEST PRACTICES

Each member team will require individuals to participate in a Daily Check and denial verification of the primary symptoms of Covid-19 (cough, fever/chills, shortness of breath, change in taste or smell). This process must be performed before entering rink, bus, or team function. This will include temperature checks, answering questions about potential Covid-19 symptoms and verifying if they have not had any symptoms since the last Daily Check.

Masks must/should always be worn when social distancing cannot be maintained. The CDC defines social distancing as keeping a safe space between yourself and other people who are not from your household. To practice social distancing, stay at least 6 feet from other people who are not from your household in both indoor and outdoor spaces.

### 6.1. Daily Check

Individuals shall participate in the Daily Check prior to participating in any team function.

#### A. Temperature Checks

- I. Surface Temperatures may be used, but can be erroneous especially after exercise, or immediate exposure to outside temperatures. The temperature should be repeated orally or after 10 minutes of an abnormal result in those cases.
- II. Players, coaches, and staffs with a 100.4 or above temperature will not be able to participate on that day and after confirming Temperature elevation, should immediately Self-Isolate (See Protocol 4.1 above), and use mask protection until assessed.

If no other primary Covid-19 symptoms are present, and temperature abates without fever reducing medications, the individual may return to play after 24-72 hours of having no temperature or after clearance by the team physician.

#### B. Primary Covid-19 Symptom Verification.

- I. Verify that you do not have a cough, fever/chills, shortness of breath or change in loss of taste or smell.
- II. Individuals should notify the Team Protocol Manager and Self-Isolate (see Protocol 4.1 above) if they have primary symptoms of Covid-19 and will not be

## GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

allowed to participate until CDC Symptom-Based Strategy (see Protocol 4.2 above) is met.

- C. Secondary Covid-19 Symptom Verification (less specific and overlap with other illness):
  - I. Verify that you do not have any sickness related muscle aches, severe fatigue, or other cold/flu like symptoms (runny nose, sore throat)
  - II. Individuals should notify the Team Protocol Manager and possibly Self-Isolate (see Protocol 4.1 above) if they experience secondary illness symptoms (not including cough, fever/chills, shortness of breath, change in taste or smell). Individual that only experience secondary symptoms and do not have any primary symptoms of Covid-19, may return to play after 24-48 hours after their symptoms have resolved and after obtaining written physician approval.

### 6.2. Daily Best Practice

The CDC has recommended the 3'W's in their guidelines which are the following:

- WASH your hands regularly, use hand sanitizer frequently.
- WATCH your distance (6 feet for less than 15 minutes).
- WEAR a mask except when on ice or exercising and consider protective eyewear if you are vulnerable (>65, medical issues).

## **GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

---

### **7. INITIAL TESTING PRIOR TO PLAY**

Each Member team shall test individuals before prior to playing and adopt the following minimum protocol:

- A. Individuals shall be tested 7-10 days prior to arrival and be able to provide negative test result.
- B. Individuals will make their best effort to Self-Isolate after taking a test.
- C. Individuals shall perform a Self-Assessment (see Protocol 6 above) and certify (see Protocol 12 below) that they have not had any symptoms since they received the test.

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 8. HOME ARENA

### 8.1. Facility Guidelines

Each GSHL facility must provide guidelines that include but are not limited to the following:

- Facilities must have Covid-19 guidelines that include necessary precautions and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting as outlined by the local, state, and federal health authorities including the CDC.
- Facilities must implement measures to ensure members of the public attending the facility can maintain local, state, and federal requirements for social distancing and capacity limits.
- Each facility must establish a plan for how to minimize physical contact, promote social distancing and the risk of Covid-19 transmission between members of the public.
- Teams/Facility should post signs indicating social distancing guideline.
- Hand sanitizer should be made available at all entrances and high-contact areas such as lobby, check-in desk, dressing room and high traffic areas.
- Members of the public should be reminded to stay home if they are feeling unwell, even if their symptoms are mild.
- Members of the public at higher risk of serious illness should be reminded to consider waiting to return to these facilities.
- All necessary public health authority guidelines and facility Covid-19 distancing protocols should be strictly followed.

### 8.2. Team Locker Rooms

- It is recommended that close contact to be limited to less than 15 minutes or be greater than 6 feet apart.
- Players should wear a mask if within six feet apart while getting dressed.
- Teams may rotate player's times to get dressed if six feet of spacing is not possible.

## **GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

---

- Each GSHL Locker Room should be cleaned and sanitized (all surfaces and fitness equipment)
- after each use. The use of commercial CDC approved fogging and or UVC may be used.
  
- Individuals should not share equipment of any kind (sticks, apparel, water bottles, towels, etc.) Individuals should not share clothing, soap, shampoo, or other personal items such as razors and towels. Hand sanitizer or disinfectant wipes are to be available as individuals enter and leave the locker room.
  
- Disinfectant spray or wipes should be available for participants to disinfect high contact surfaces before and after use.
  
- Enhanced and frequent cleaning and disinfection of locker rooms should be conducted.
  
- Media interviews should be conducted outside the dressing room in a dedicated area with proper social-distancing procedures.
  
- Access to the dressing room should be strictly monitored. Only players, team personnel, on-ice officials, medical staff, and essential facility staff should be permitted.
  
- Jerseys/Socks/clothing should be washed after each training/practice session.

### **8.3. Benches**

- The bench and bench area should be wiped down and disinfected after each session.
  
- Bench capacity shall be limited to the rostered players and staff.
  
- Mask should be worn by all staff while on the bench.

### **8.4. Equipment**

- Individuals should have their own personal towel if showering.
  
- Individuals should use their own water bottles and clean them after each use.
  
- Towels, jersey's socks, and equipment must be cleaned after each use.

## **GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

---

### **8.5. Off-Ice Training Areas**

- Social distancing should be used to determine the number of players permitted in the weight room or workout area at one time.
- Players are to warm-up for training/practice sessions individually as opposed to in groups.
- Equipment must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes after each use.
- Hand sanitizer and or disinfectant wipes should be made available as players enter and leave the training areas

### **8.6. Training Rooms**

- Protective masks should be worn, and social distancing should be used to determine number of players in the training room at one time.
- Hand sanitizer and or disinfectant wipes should be made available as players enter and leave the training rooms.
- Training room should be cleaned and disinfected daily and between each use.

### **8.7. On Ice**

- Team huddles, if necessary, should be limited to less than 15 minutes. B. Handshakes, hugs, high fives, etc. should be discouraged.
- Players should not spit on the ice, bench, or penalty box area.
- Individuals must use their own water bottles and clean them after each use.

### **8.8. Isolation Room**

- Facilities must be able to provide a Self-Isolation (see Protocol 4.1 above) area for individuals that display Covid-19 symptoms or are Covid-19 positive. This area is to be used for an individual to Self-Isolate during a game or to be evaluated.

# GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

## 9. STAFF PROTOCOLS

### 9.1. Coaching Staff

- Members of the coaching staff must maintain social distancing with players whenever possible and should wear masks when social distancing is not possible.
- Team meetings should only be held in a controlled environment with social distancing.
- Mask must always be worn when social distancing cannot occur except when on the ice or exercising.

### 9.2. Medical, Trainers & Equipment Staff

- Hands must be washed, or hand sanitized between handling player/team equipment.
- Hands must be washed, or hand sanitized between each player contact.
- Mask should be worn in all situation where social distancing cannot occur.

### 9.3. Office Staff

- Members of the office staff should maintain social distancing with players whenever possible.
- Mask should be worn in all situation where social distancing cannot occur.

### 9.4. Game Night Staff

- Hands must be washed, or hand sanitized between handling team equipment.
- Hands must be washed, or hand sanitized frequently.
- Mask must be worn in all situation where social distancing cannot occur.

## **GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

---

### **10. OFFICIALS**

The section pertains to Official interactions with GSHL Member teams. Officials should refer to the USA Hockey Return to Play Guidelines for Officials for the complete version of the protocol.

#### **10.1. Waiver**

Officials will be required to sign an GSHL Covid-19 waiver prior to participating.

#### **10.2. GSHL Strategy**

Officials may follow GSHL Strategy (see Protocol 4 above) in managing symptoms, isolation, and testing.

#### **10.3. Daily Check & Best Practices.**

Officials must follow the Daily Check, Self-Verification, and the Best Practices (see Protocol 6 above).

#### **10.4. Assignments and Scheduling**

Scheduling for the 2020-2021 season will attempt to reduce traveling for officials and teams should expect officials to work back to back games with the same crew.

#### **10.5. Arena-Rink Facilities**

- Upon entering the arena, and always except when on the ice, mask should be worn in all situations where social distancing cannot be maintained.
- The facility will make its best effort to provide officiating dressing rooms large enough or additional dressing rooms to accommodate 4 officials with social distancing guidelines in mind.
- The facility will make its best effort to have the official's dressing room vacant and cleaned no less than 2 hours prior to the scheduled start time of the game. Once the room has been cleaned, only the assigned officiating staff should be allowed access to the room.
- Teams should designate one off-ice official who should be responsible for communicating with the game officials prior-to, during and after the game for all purposes (distribute line-ups, sign game sheet). All communications with the designated off-ice official will be conducted in a specified location while making all attempts to socially distance.

## GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

- Teams must provide unopened bottles of water or sports-drink along and hand-sanitizer.
- Post-game showers are optional for officials. If they choose, officials may enter and exit the arenas while wearing black track suits.

### **10.6. In Game Policy.**

- Masks must always be worn except when on the ice or exercising.
- The team shall provide hand sanitizer at the scorer's table for the official's use during the game.
- The game puck should be changed out approximately every 5 minutes and sanitized prior to being placed back into use.
- When reporting a penalty, officials should be encouraged to talk to the scorer at a distance and no longer speak through the small hole in the glass. Headsets and communication devices should be sanitized between each use.
- Officials will no longer shake hands with team personnel or players. Rather, pre-game, officials should skate to the benches and verbally acknowledge a team's Head Coach.
- Communication with players during a game will be limited this season. Officials should be encouraged to only speak with a team's Captain or Alternate while at a safe distance. When communicating with a team's bench or coaches, the officials should do so from a safe distance and coaches are expected to refrain from yelling. If a bench becomes a "hostile area" with multiple players or coaches yelling, officials should disengage and no longer communicate with that team.

## **GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

---

### **11. BENCH STAFF AND OFFICIALS**

#### **11.1. Minimum # of essential bench staff required for a game**

- Teams shall have at least two level 3 certified coaches on staff.
- If necessary, teams can play a game with one coach behind the bench if the opposing team has a level 4 certified coach

#### **11.2. Minimum # of players a Member Club can dress to play in a game**

- If necessary, teams must dress a minimum of ten (10) players for a game, two (2) of which must be goaltenders

#### **11.3. Minimum number of On-Ice Officials required to play a game**

- If necessary, games may be played with two (2) On-Ice Officials - (1 referee and 1 linesman)
- Ideally games should be played with three (3) On-Ice officials – (2 referees and 1 linesman)

#### **11.4. Minimum number of essential Off-Ice Officials required to play a game**

- If necessary, Teams may play a game with, at a minimum, a scorekeeper, and an adult representative from each team serving as a penalty box attendant for each penalty box.

## GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

### 12. COVID-19 CERTIFICATION OF COMPLIANCE

I certify that I have not experienced or displayed any of the following COVID-19 symptoms in the last 14 days:

- Fever ( $\geq 100.4$ ) or chills
- Sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, or other respiratory symptoms
- Muscle aches, severe fatigue, or chills
- Changes in taste or smell

I certify that I have not had close contact (within 6 feet for 15 minutes or more) with anyone over the last 14 days who is confirmed to have COVID-19

I certify that I have received a negative test result for COVID-19 on a specimen taken within 10 days prior to my arrival (attach copy to this document).

I agree to fully comply with league, team and facility Return to Play Guidelines.

I have read and understand this entire Certificate of Compliance and verify the certifications made above are accurate.

Player: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent (if minor) and/or Accompanied By: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## GSHL RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

---

### 13. FAQ's

- How often are players tested?
  - *Players are tested prior to initially reporting and reporting when returning from break. Additional testing based on CDC recommendations and local team physician recommendations may be necessary.*
- Are there daily verification protocols?
  - *Yes, individuals will partake in a daily self-check which includes taking temperatures and denial verification of Covid-19 symptoms.*
- What happens in an individual has Covid-19 or Covid-19 symptoms?
  - *Individuals will be required to Self-Isolate and follow CDC and team physician recommendations.*
- What happens if an individual is in close contact with someone who has Covid-19 symptoms?
  - *If the individuals Covid-19 symptoms are fever, cough, and shortness of breath then anyone considered a close contact (unprotected and having been withing 6 feet for 15 minutes) must self-isolate and follow CDC and team physician recommendations.*
- What happens if an individual test positive for Covid-19 or has symptoms of Covid-19 on a road trip?
  - *Individuals will be required to Self-Isolate and follow CDC and team physician recommendations. Teams may secure additional hotel rooms or vehicles depending on the situation.*
- When does an individual with Covid-19 symptoms get tested?
  - *Individuals will follow Protocol 4 and 5, and CDC and team physician recommendations.*