



GREATER DAVIESS COUNTY YOUTH  
GRIDIRON LEAGUE, INC.

## KIDS FOOTBALL LEAGUE

www.kidsfootballleague.com

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# RETURN TO PLAY GUIDELINES

## 2020 Youth Football Season

[Revised 8/27/2020]

### INTRODUCTION

Greater Daviess County Youth Gridiron League, Inc., d/b/a Kids Football League (“KFL”), is a youth football league based in Owensboro, Kentucky, and serves approximately 500-600 youth (between the ages of 5 and 12 years old) in Daviess, Hancock and McLean counties, through our football and cheerleading programs. KFL is affiliated with USA Football and NFL Flag.

KFL consists of five (5) separate divisions as follows:

KFL Cheerleading Division:

Provides children between the ages of 5 and 12 with the opportunity to be active and learn basic to intermediate level skills in cheerleading.

Flag Football Division:

Introduces children between the ages of 5 and 7 to the game of football. KFL Flag consists of reduced-sized teams (7 on 7) playing on a reduced-sized field (55 yards by 40 yards).

Rookie Tackle Division:

Transitions kids in first and second grades from flag football to tackle football. KFL Rookie consists of reduced-sized teams (8 on 8) playing on a reduced-sized field (55 yards by 40 yards).

3rd/4th Grade Tackle Division:

Continues the transition from the introductory nature of the flag and rookie divisions, while at the same time, affords third and fourth grade kids the opportunity to play traditional football on regulation-sized teams (11 on 11) on a regulation-sized field.

5th/6th Grade Tackle Division:

Culminates the youth football experience with the aim of preparing fifth and sixth grade kids to participate on their middle school football team.

KFL is unique in the state of Kentucky in that we utilize the local high school and middle school football facilities for all of our activities. This relationship with the local schools, along with close ties to both our city and county parks departments, affords KFL with a tremendous amount of external support rarely available to youth sports programs. For instance, all facilities utilized by KFL are the home to a high school team subject to the control of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association (KHSAA). Our activities are overseen by the host school’s athletic director and football staff to ensure full compliance with KHSAA and other relevant



rules and regulations. In addition, the host school operates all concession stands during KFL activities.<sup>1</sup> The importance of this oversight and involvement cannot be overstated, particularly during the current pandemic.

On behalf of the youth we serve, the KFL board of directors seeks a responsible return to play. Based upon guidance released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)<sup>2</sup>, the Kentucky Department for Public Health<sup>3</sup>, the PLAY Sports Coalition/National Council of Youth Sports<sup>4</sup>, the National Federation of State High School Associations<sup>5</sup> and USA Football<sup>6</sup>, and upon the recommendations of our local parks departments and high school and middle school athletic programs, we believe an objective and flexible phased-approach is the only safe and viable manner of returning to youth football at this time. This document reflects what the KFL board of directors believes to be an appropriate phased-approach to return to play; however, it is critical that parents and guardians make an informed decision based upon the best interests of the youth we serve. All content is provided for general informational purposes only. Parents and guardians should seek advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials if they have specific questions regarding a return to practice and competition.

### **GENERAL CRITERIA FOR RETURN TO PLAY**

- Individuals must show no signs or symptoms of COVID-19<sup>7</sup> in the past fourteen (14) days nor been exposed to someone that has been ill in fourteen (14) days. Since the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 can be fairly non-specific and not just respiratory symptoms, it is recommended that participants should not be in close sustained contact with anyone who is sick for 14 days prior to activity. This reduces the risk of introducing COVID-19 into the group by someone who may have COVID-19 but is not experiencing any symptoms yet.
- Individuals must live in the community for fourteen (14) days prior to participating in any activities.
- All individuals must have their temperature taken by an adult prior to going to training.

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<sup>1</sup> Facilities with concession stands must adhere to Team Kentucky; Healthy at Work: Requirements for Restaurants [<https://govsite-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/TdYXqclsTjGOgl4XOBf8Healthy%20at%20Work%20Reqs%20-%20Restarants%20-%20Final%20Version%201.0.pdf>].

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Considerations for Youth Sports [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>].

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Team Kentucky; Healthy at Work: Guidance for Youth Sports and Athletic Activities [[https://govsite-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/GGiyf7ZGR4in6hlmogS\\_Healthy%20at%20Work%20Reqs%20-%20Youth%20Sports%20-%20Final%20Verion%201.0%20D%20PH%20KHSAA.pdf](https://govsite-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/GGiyf7ZGR4in6hlmogS_Healthy%20at%20Work%20Reqs%20-%20Youth%20Sports%20-%20Final%20Verion%201.0%20D%20PH%20KHSAA.pdf)].

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., PLAY Sports Coalition/National Council of Youth Sports [<https://playsportscoalition.org/returntoplay/>].

<sup>5</sup> See, e.g., National Federation of State High School Associations; Sports Medicine Advisory Committee: [[https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15\\_2020-final.pdf](https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf)].

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., USA Football: Return to Youth Football 2020 [<https://guides.usafootball.com/5593/35440/index.html>].

<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Symptoms of Coronavirus [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>].



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- Upon arrival to practices or games, coaches or staff should ask each athlete if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19. If the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, he or she should be sent home immediately and instructed to contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- Make sure appropriate infection prevention supplies are present in multiple targeted areas (*e.g.*, hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, etc.).
- Participants should properly sanitize their equipment before and after every practice session. Participants must be educated on the difference between “sanitizing” or “disinfecting” and general “cleaning”.<sup>8</sup> Instruct parents to keep helmet, pads, gloves and uniforms in a plastic bag during the ride home and until they can follow cleaning and/or sanitizing instructions. Encourage parents to immediately wash all items upon returning home and to use sanitizing products and to wipe down any equipment that cannot be washed in a washing machine.
- Participants must always use their own water bottle and personal equipment. All players must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles cannot be shared. Hydration stations (*e.g.*, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized. Each participant should clearly label his or her water bottle, towel, and other personal equipment to help promote the prevention of the sharing of personal items.
- Cleaning schedule/protocol of equipment with disinfectant before, during, and after practice.
- Wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (gloves, face mask, etc.) as required by local guidelines.

### INTRODUCTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

#### **League Responsibilities**

- Create and distribute protocols to its participants, including, without limitation, KFL’s volunteers, coaches, parents, players and spectators.
- Require that each team have a contact person responsible for dealing with all things COVID-19.
- Post signage<sup>9</sup> in highly visible locations (*e.g.*, at entrances and exits, and in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs such as by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering.

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<sup>8</sup> See, *e.g.*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>].

<sup>9</sup> See, *e.g.*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Print Resources [<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>]. See, *also* Team Kentucky; Healthy at Work: Resources [<https://govstatus.egov.com/ky-healthy-at-work>].



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- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on the field surface at least daily, or between uses as much as possible.
- Use of shared objects and equipment should be limited and, in all instances, sanitized between uses.
- Maintain a complete list of coaches, players and league officials present at each event to include the date, beginning and ending time of the event, name, address and phone contact to be made available upon the request from the local health department.
- Have an effective communication plan in place, identify strategies for working with public health to notify adult leaders, players and their families if KFL learns a player or coach has contracted COVID-19 and may have been infectious to others during a league activity, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that may be uncomfortable with returning to play too soon or, conversely, a delay in returning to play.
- Train and educate all volunteers, coaches and league officials to protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations and other necessary information.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations.
- Develop plans for temporary closure and cancellation of outdoor activities to properly disinfect and ensure other adult leaders or youth are not infected.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.
- Provide hand sanitizing stations and waste receptacles at fields.
- Develop a relationship and a dialog with health local officials to identify risk tolerance.

### **Coach Responsibilities**

- Ensure the health and safety of all players.
- Conduct CDC daily symptom assessment.
- Inquire how players are feeling, send them home should you believe they act or look ill.
- Follow all state and local health protocols.
- Ensure all players have their individual equipment (*e.g.*, football equipment, gloves, mouth guards, water bottles, etc.).
- Coach is the only person permitted to handle practice equipment (*e.g.*, balls, pads, blocking



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dummies, cones, etc.).

- Coach shall sanitize/clean all practice equipment before, during and after each session (*e.g.*, balls, pads, blocking dummies, cones, etc.)
- The use of scrimmage vests is not recommended.
- All activities shall be outdoors and ensure social distancing per state or local health guidelines.
- Always wear a face mask, when coaching, maintain social distance requirements from players based on state and local health requirements.
- Always wear face mask and gloves when attending to an injured player.
- Any team with a player or coach who tests positive for COVID-19 should contact the KFL Commissioner for the team's division immediately to ensure all teams they have played within the last fourteen (14) days are notified within twenty-four (24) hours.
- Have fun, stay positive – players and parents are looking to you to stay calm, supportive and caring during this time.

#### **Parent Responsibilities**

- Conduct CDC daily symptom assessment even on days when your child does not have practice or a game.
- Ensure your child is healthy and check your child's temperature daily.
- Travel to practices and games with as few people as possible.
  - It is recommended to only travel with members of your immediate family.
  - If carpooling is necessary, rideshare with the same individuals.
- During your child's practices, either remain in your vehicle or maintain proper social distance (based on state and local health requirements) and wear a face mask if outside your vehicle.
- Ensure your child's jersey(s) and pants are washed after each practice and game.
- Ensure your child's helmet, shoulder pads, cleats, gloves, and other personal equipment (including flag belts for flag football players and pom poms for cheerleaders) are sanitized before and after each practice and game.
- Notify your child's coach immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason.



- Do not handle any team equipment before, during or after any practice or game.
- Be sure your child has a cloth face mask (to be worn anytime your child is not actively participating) and hand sanitizer with him or her at all times.

### **Player Responsibilities**

- Conduct CDC daily symptom assessment even on days when there is no practice or game.
- Take your temperature daily.
- Wear a cloth face mask when going to or leaving the field and at all times you are not actively participating in practice or a game.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after each practice and game.
- Bring hand sanitizer with you to every practice.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment or water.
- Practice social distancing and remain at least six (6) apart from other team members at all times you are not actively participating in practice or a game.
- Avoid group celebrations, hugs, handshakes, "high fives", etc.
- Arrive at the field no more than five (5) minutes before practice is scheduled to begin.
- Arrive at the field no more than forty-five (45) minutes before a game is scheduled to begin.

### **Spectator Responsibilities**

- Conduct CDC daily symptom assessment.
- Request that all individuals who are sixty-five (65) and above or have any underlying health condition to stay home.
- Spectators should wear a cloth face mask when making their way to the designated spectator seating. Spectators are not required to wear face mask when sitting in the designated spectator seating if they are sitting a minimum of six (6) feet from another household.
- Only family members living in the same home should sit closer than the required social distance protocol when attending practices or games.
- If spectators are interacting with other families at the field, they are required to wear a cloth face mask and maintain the minimum social distance.
- Spectators should not arrive more than five (5) minutes prior to practices and games.



**PHASES TO RETURN TO PLAY**

**Overview**

- Phase 1 – Stay Home: KFL will provide guidance and online training for players that can be done individually at home.
- Phase 2 – Small Group Practice Sessions: This phase allows for outdoor training to resume with specific protocols in place.
- Phase 3 – Larger Group/Team Practice Sessions: This phase allows for the resumption of full team practices with specific protocols in place.
- Phase 4.1 – Full Team Practices: This phase allows for the resumption of full team, full contact<sup>10</sup> practices with specific protocols in place.
- Phase 4.2 – Return to Competition: This phase allows for the resumption of inter-team games with specific protocols in place.

**Phase 1 – Stay at Home**

**Prior to July 27, 2020**

- No in-person football-related activities permitted.
- Online training is acceptable.

**Phase 2 – Small Group Training Sessions**

**July 27, 2020 – August 9, 2020**

- Player-to-coach ratio per practice group of no more than ten (10) players and one (1) coach. Players shall not congregate in a common location. Players must report directly to their assigned group or pod.
- No more than two (2) groups per 100-yard football field at the same time.
- Practices limited to non-contact individual activities while following social distancing protocols (*e.g.*, individual skills, conditioning, heat acclimation, etc.).
- No use of shared equipment or footballs.
- Staggered start times for practice sessions to minimize players arriving and leaving at the same time.
- No group activities permitted during this phase.

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<sup>10</sup> Level of contact shall be appropriate for the level of play. For example, with the exception of incidental bumping, contact never is appropriate in the flag football division.



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- Games or scrimmages are NOT permitted in this phase.
- Parents must follow social distancing guidelines and remain in their vehicles if possible.

### Phase 3 – Larger Group/Team Sessions August 10, 2020 – September 6, 2020

- Player-to-coach ratio per practice group of no more than ten (10) players and one (1) coach. Players shall not congregate in a common location. Players must report directly to their assigned group or pod.
- Multiple groups may practice simultaneously but must follow social distance protocols.
- Group activities (*e.g.*, offensive hand-off and passing drills, offensive and defensive position drills, etc.) with up to ten (10) players are permitted in this phase provided the activities adhere to social distancing protocol and equipment is sanitized between each use.
- Limited physical contact is acceptable in accordance with the “low touch”<sup>11</sup>, “medium sharing”<sup>12</sup> guidelines promulgated by the Governor’s office.
- It is recommended that teams utilize a stations-based practice concept, keeping small groups consistent (*i.e.*, players remain in the same small group or pod). Passing, tossing, kicking, punting and shotgun snaps are all acceptable means of exchanging the football but hand-offs and direct snaps would violate physical distancing requirements.
- Games or scrimmages are NOT permitted in this phase.
- Staggered start times for practice sessions to minimize players arriving and leaving at the same time.
- Parents must follow social distancing guidelines and remain in their vehicles if possible.

### Phase 4.1 – Full Team Practices September 7, 2020 and After

- Allows full teams to practice, including tackling (if appropriate for age division) with safety precautions.
- Physical contact is only permitted within the rules of the game during practices.

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<sup>11</sup> “Low touch” means only minimal, necessary contact between youth athletes is permitted. *See, e.g.*, Team Kentucky; Healthy at Work: Guidance for Youth Sports and Athletic Activities [[https://govsite-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/GGiyf7ZGR4in6hlmgogS\\_Healthy%20at%20Work%20Reqs%20-%20Youth%20Sports%20-%20Final%20Verion%201.0%20PH%20KHSAA.pdf](https://govsite-assets.s3.amazonaws.com/GGiyf7ZGR4in6hlmgogS_Healthy%20at%20Work%20Reqs%20-%20Youth%20Sports%20-%20Final%20Verion%201.0%20PH%20KHSAA.pdf)].

<sup>12</sup> “Medium sharing” means moderate levels of sharing of youth sports and athletic activity equipment between youth athletes (*e.g.* limiting shared items to groups of fifty (50) or fewer). Shared equipment must be sanitized between uses to the greatest extent practicable. *Id.*





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- Players and coaches should avoid physical contact and maintain appropriate social distancing when not actively participating in an activity.
- Continue to encourage the use of stations-based practice concepts as outlined in Football Phase 3 above.
- Encourage the use of small-sided games, drills and activities, such as 3-on-3 or 4-on-4 situations.
- Begin to gradually introduce player-to-player contact, including blocking and tackling.
- Gradually introduce progressive live contact drills (*e.g.*, 1 vs. 1, 2 vs. 2, 3 vs. 3, 4 vs. 4, 5 vs. 5) while remaining in smaller pods. The concept of using pods of a small number of players for contact drills should be utilized for all contact drills. This ensures limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Slowly begin to increase the intensity and levels of contact over a period of consecutive practices.
- Games or scrimmages are NOT permitted in this phase although teams may engage in intra-team scrimmages during practices.
- Staggered start times for practice sessions to minimize players arriving and leaving at the same time.
- Parents must follow social distancing guidelines and remain in their vehicles if possible.

### Phase 4.2 – Return to Competition

September 26, 2020 and After

- League games can resume with spectator restrictions.
- No practice restrictions other than adherence to federal, state and local recommendations.
- During this phase, full inter-team competitions may take place on the strict condition that mitigation strategies and processes for COVID-19 are implemented and followed. All events shall adhere to federal, state and local recommendations.
- The KFL Mitigation/Monitoring System shall be implemented during this phase. The Mitigation/Monitoring System consists of the following:
  - Entrance Monitors (RED Hat or Vest)
    - Designate a single point of entry to the facility and a separate point for people to exit the facility.
    - Inquire whether entrants have experienced signs/symptoms of COVID-19



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within the past fourteen (14) days.

- Monitor entrants for any reasonably visible evidence of COVID-19 signs/symptoms.
- Have hand sanitizer available on tables for everyone that enters the facility and periodically throughout the facility.
- Remind people that enter to follow physical distancing to limit their contact with shared services to the extent safely possible (considering the need for guardrail usage and other general safety elements).

→ Stands/Spectator Monitors (WHITE Hat or Vest)

- Monitor individuals in stands for any reasonably visible evidence of COVID-19 signs/symptoms.
- Ensure restrooms are sanitized on an increased basis, at least pregame, prior to halftime, and post-game. Make sure restrooms are stocked with antibacterial soap.

→ Field Monitors (BLUE Hat or Vest)

- Ensure players keep at least six (6) feet between one another on the sidelines.
- Make sure coaches, officials, on-field/sideline staff wear masks during practices and games.
- Monitor players, coaches, officials and on-field/sideline staff for reasonably visible evidence of COVID-19 signs/symptoms.
- Spray players' gloves with disinfectant spray between each series. Provide hand sanitizer to players not wearing gloves between each series.
- Sanitize field equipment and footballs before and after practice and games.
- Sanitize footballs between each series during games and between each drill during practices.
- Fill up players water bottles from cooler if needed so only one person is touching the cooler. Such individual should wear a mask and gloves during activity.
- Ensure athletic trainers can attend to injured players if needed and other players and coaches are kept at safe distance.



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- Spectators should wear a cloth face mask when making their way to the designated spectator seating.
  - Spectators are not required to wear face mask when sitting in the designated spectator seating if they are sitting a minimum of six (6) feet from another household.
  - Only family members living in the same home should sit closer than the required social distance protocol when attending practices or games.
- If spectators are interacting with other families at the field, they are required to wear a cloth face mask and maintain the minimum social distance.
- Spectators must leave the stadium immediately following the conclusion of any game.
- Time shall be allotted between games to allow teams to exit field prior to new teams arriving and to enable KFL officials and volunteers to sanitize the facilities.
- Any participant (including volunteers, coaches, parents, players and spectators) who refuses or fails to follow any KFL rule or procedure or any duly adopted federal, state or local protocol in place shall be subject to the KFL Code of Conduct.