



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Executives
Club Presidents
General Managers
Head Coaches
Head Team Physicians
Head Athletic Trainers
Club Infection Control Officers
Club Counsel

From: NFL Management Council
NFL Football Operations
NFL Player Health and Safety

Date: June 16, 2021

Subject: NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols for the 2021 Training Camp and Preseason

The NFL and NFL Players Association, in consultation with our joint and respective medical and scientific experts, have updated the NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols for the 2021 Training Camp and Preseason. The updated Protocols are attached. These updates reflect last season's experience the recent development and adoption of COVID vaccines and updated guidance from the CDC. These updated protocols will be effective on the Training Camp rookie reporting date for each club. In the interim, once a club's Mandatory Veteran Minicamp closes, clubs may apply the Post-Elimination Protocols to govern player access to its facility, so long as there are fewer than 20 players in your facility at one time. Even under the Post-Elimination Protocols, fully vaccinated individuals will only be required to test in accordance with the testing requirements set forth below and will not be required to wear masks at the club facility.

We have attached the updated Protocols to this memo. We have also attached a redline that highlights all changes from the Protocols in effect at the end of the 2020 regular season for reference. Some of the more significant changes are highlighted below.

We understand that many of you will have questions about the updates to the Protocols. We will hold an all-club Zoom call on **Thursday evening, June 17 at 8:00 PM Eastern** for anyone who wishes to join from your club. The Zoom invitation will be sent to each club's ICO for distribution within the club. Please submit any questions in advance to Molly Delaney [REDACTED].

Facility Protocol

- **Tiered Staff:** To be eligible for Tier 1 or Tier 2 status, staff must be fully vaccinated (received their final shot of the vaccine more than 14 days earlier) or have been granted a medical or religious exemption to this requirement by his or her club. Any staff member who is not vaccinated and does not have an approved religious or medical exemption will not be

permitted to have Tier 1 or Tier 2 status and therefore will not be permitted in-person access to Restricted Areas of the facility or to players.

- **Tier List Maximums:** The Tier list daily maximums from the 2020 season will remain in place: 60 Tier 1; 40 Tier 2; and 45 Tier 3. However, if a club reaches 95% vaccination (as confirmed by the NFL via the IQVIA vaccination dashboard) in any of those groups, the daily maximum will increase by 20 fully vaccinated individuals for that group. For example, if 95% of a club's Tier 1 staff members are vaccinated, then the Tier 1 daily maximum will increase to 80, provided that the additional 20 staff members are fully vaccinated (no individuals with exemptions may be included in the additional 20). Likewise, if 95% of a club's Tier 2 staff members are vaccinated, the Tier 2 daily maximum will increase to 60 (provided that the additional 20 are all fully vaccinated). And, if 95% of a club's Tier 3 staff members are vaccinated, the Tier 3 daily maximum will increase to 65 (provided that the additional 20 are fully vaccinated). The maximum daily limit for Tier 2M individuals will be 25, all of whom must be fully vaccinated, and who must wear masks at all times.
- **Masks and Physical Distancing:** Players and Tiered staff who are not fully vaccinated (i.e., have an exemption) must wear masks and practice physical distancing at the club facility. Players who are not fully vaccinated may enter locker rooms, meeting rooms, weight rooms, the athletic training room and the cafeteria, but must maintain physical distancing while in those locations. Unvaccinated Tiered Staff may not enter these areas while players are present, even with masks. Clubs may elect to reconfigure facilities to permit groups of vaccinated individuals to gather more closely but must also maintain areas that accommodate the physical distancing requirement for unvaccinated players. This includes meetings, locker rooms and cafeteria space.

As a reminder, Tier 1 and Tier 2 individuals who are not vaccinated but have an approved religious or medical exemption may not participate in meetings (staff-only or with players) in person, may not enter the weight room, locker room (player or coach), athletic training room, meal room (other than to grab-and-go) while players or other Tiered Staff are present, and may not travel with the team. These restrictions will not be eliminated regardless of a club's overall staff/player vaccination rate. Failure to adhere to these restrictions will subject the individual exempted staff member and club to league discipline.

- **Weight Rooms:** For groups that include players who are not fully vaccinated, the weight room will be limited to 15 players at one time. Clubs will not be permitted to divide the weight room to increase this capacity. If workout groups include only players who are fully vaccinated, the 15-player capacity limit will be eliminated (i.e., there is no maximum capacity).

- **Saunas/Steam Rooms**: Fully vaccinated players will be permitted to use the saunas and steam rooms at the club facility. Players who are not fully vaccinated will not be permitted to use these facilities.
- **Fans at Training Camp**: Clubs will be permitted to host fans at Training Camp this season, provided that fans are kept more than 20 feet away from Tier 1 staff and players at all times. This includes players' and Tiered staffs' families. Fans and families will not be permitted to interact with players at any time (i.e., no autographs or photos). Fan and family ingress and egress must be separate from ingress and egress for players. Any club wishing to invite fans to Training Camp must update its IDER Plan and include its plans for ingress and egress for fans/families to ensure there is no contact between fans/families with players/Tiered staff.
- **Air Flow and Filtration in the club facility**: Clubs must maximize air filtration to the highest capabilities of their existing HVAC systems, including by upgrading MERV filters to the maximum extent consistent with system design. Clubs will be asked to demonstrate compliance with the foregoing in their IDER Plans and may also be subject to inspection.
- **Group Activity Outside of the club facility**: Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 individuals (including players) who are fully vaccinated are permitted to gather with other fully vaccinated Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 individuals (including players) outside the club facility. Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 individuals (including players) who are not fully vaccinated are prohibited from gathering outside of the club facility or team travel. They will also be subject to the social activity restrictions that were in effect last season. Unvaccinated Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 staff and players are prohibited from engaging in meetings, practices or training activities outside of club facilities unless approved by the NFL and NFLPA.

Team Travel Protocol

- **Training Camp Team Hotel**: Consistent with the 2020 season, clubs may not require players to stay in a team hotel in their home city during Training Camp. Clubs may offer rooms at the team hotel for use by players and staff. Each player staying at the club hotel must have his own room. Clubs may require players to stay at a team hotel the night prior to a preseason game.
- **Away Training Camp**: As previously indicated, any club wishing to conduct its Training Camp at a location other than its club facility or home stadium must prepare and submit an IDER Plan to Meghan Carroll by June 22. The club's proposed IDER Plan will be subject to review and approval by ICS, the NFL and the NFLPA.
- **Joint Practices**: Any club traveling to participate in a joint practice must submit an IDER Plan to Meghan Carroll at least seven (7) days prior to the joint practice, which must demonstrate how the club will comply with the Protocols while traveling and during the

conduct of the practice, including hotels, transportation and additional support staff involved. The IDER Plan will be subject to review and approved by ICS, the NFL and the NFLPA. In addition, as noted in the Management Council's June 3 memorandum (MC21-70), any club hosting a joint practice must have a physician who specializes in the treatment of concussions and a Certified Booth ATC Spotter in attendance. Please contact Robb Rehburg [REDACTED] for assistance in arranging to have a Booth ATC Spotter at a Joint Practice.

- **Team Traveling Party**: For the 2021 season, the Team Traveling Party will be limited to a maximum of **85 people** (in addition to players), all of whom must have Tier 1 or Tier 2 status and must be fully vaccinated. Any Tier 1 or Tier 2 individual who has an approved religious or medical exemption may travel to away games but must travel separately from the team (this includes on team buses while in the away game city). BioReference lab staff (all of whom will be fully vaccinated) will not count toward the Traveling Party maximum.

Screening and Testing Protocol

- **Testing for Fully Vaccinated Individuals**: Tiered Individuals who are fully vaccinated will be required to undergo COVID testing **once every 14 days**, via the BRL PCR test. The club may choose whichever day of the week it would like to administer such testing.
- **Testing for Individuals who are not fully vaccinated**: Tier 1 and Tier 2 Individuals (including players) who are not fully vaccinated will be required to undergo **COVID testing every day**. This includes **days off, including the end of Training Camp "bye-week."** Any Tier 1 or Tier 2 Individual who misses a daily test must undergo "re-entry" testing as set forth below prior to rejoining the club and re-entering the club facility. Tier 3 staff who are not fully vaccinated will undergo COVID testing once per week, via the BRL PCR test, and must have at least one negative Mesa Test taken prior to entering the club facility for the first time during Training Camp, on the date of entry.
- **Testing Cadence**: Testing cadence for players and Tier 1 and Tier 2 staff who are not fully vaccinated is as follows:

Start of Training Camp/Creation of "Established Team Environment": All Tier 1 and Tier 2 Individuals (including players) who are not fully vaccinated must undergo the following "Pre-Entry" testing:

Day 1: Mesa Test and BRL PCR (may not enter club facility until negative Mesa Test results return)

Day 2: Mesa Test (may not enter club facility until negative results return)

Day 3: Mesa Test (may not enter club facility until negative results return)

Day 4: Mesa Test and BRL PCR Test (may enter club facility while Mesa Test results are pending, but may not engage in any group activities, and may not remove masks to eat or shower until results return)

Day 5 and Thereafter: BRL PCR Test; may enter the facility on a given

day while the results of the prior day's specimen collection are pending, but they may not engage in any group activity and must wear a mask and maintain physical distancing until results have been received by the club. If an intervening "Act of God" results in the prior day's specimen results being delayed, the Tiered staff and players from that club will only be permitted to engage in group activities while results are pending with prior approval by the NFL Chief Medical Officer.

Once "Established Team Environment" Created: After the Team Environment is established, Tier 1 and Tier 2 individuals (including players) who are not fully vaccinated must test **every day**.

Entry to "Established Team Environment": Once a club's Team Environment has been established, if any Tier 1 or Tier 2 Individual (including players) who is not fully vaccinated breaks the daily testing cadence (e.g., misses a daily test) or seeks to enter a club's Established Team Environment for the first time (including free agent and tryout players who are not fully vaccinated), that individual must undergo the following testing:

Day 1: Mesa Test and BRL PCR Test: No entry to Club facility;
Day 2: BRL PCR Test: No entry to Club facility;
Day 3: BRL PCR Test: No entry to Club facility;
Day 4: BRL PCR Test: No entry to Club facility;
Day 5: Mesa Test and BRL PCR Test: May enter Club facility once Day 4 BRL PCR Test result and Day 5 Mesa Test results return negative.

- **Positive Mesa Test Results:** If an individual tests positive for COVID for the first time on a Mesa Test, the individual should immediately be given a second Mesa Test and a BRL PCR test, and then sent home to isolate pending the results of both tests. *See Addendum A to the Screening and Testing Protocol for additional information.*
- **Positive Tests for Fully Vaccinated Individuals.** Fully vaccinated individuals should be tested via the BRL PCR tests only. If a fully vaccinated individual tests positive, he or she should immediately be given another BRL PCR test and sent home to isolate while that test is pending. If the individual remains completely asymptomatic, he or she may return to the club facility once two (2) consecutive PCR tests are negative over a 24 hours period (the second of which should be a Mesa Test prior to entry). *See Addendum D to the Screening and Testing Protocol for additional details.*

We have attached a Testing Cadence summary chart for ease of reference.

Treatment Response Protocol

- **Contact with a COVID-Positive Individual:** Consistent with the 2020 season, individuals designated as a “High Risk Close Contact” to a COVID-positive individual (either in the club facility or outside of the club) will be required to quarantine for a period of at least five (5) days after his or her last contact with the COVID-positive individual. Fully vaccinated individuals (who are asymptomatic) are not subject to being designated a High Risk Close Contact and the resulting quarantine, but will be required to be tested for COVID and participate in contact tracing conducted by the government, club and/or league to assist in the identification of other possible close contacts.
- **Cardiac Screening for Players who test positive for COVID:** Players who test positive for COVID but remain asymptomatic will not be required to undergo additional cardiac screening; however, additional testing or screening may be performed as clinically indicated and at the discretion of the Team Physician. It is recommended that players are seven (7) days from their diagnosis before beginning an exercise progression.
- **Kinexon Devices:** Kinexon devices are required for all Tiered staff and players, regardless of vaccination status.

Game Day Protocol

- **Game Day Personnel:** All Game Day Personnel will be required to be fully vaccinated, with the exception of those who are members of a labor union and Tier 1 or Tier 2 Individuals who have an approved religious or medical exemption. Any Game Day Personnel who are not fully vaccinated for one of these reasons must wear a mask at all times and practice physical distancing whenever possible.
- **Bench Area Access:** Bench Area Access will be limited to certain defined groups of individuals, as set forth in the Game Day Protocol. All of these individuals must be fully vaccinated unless they are members of a labor union or they are Tier 1 or Tier 2 Individuals with an approved religious or medical exemption. Any Tier 1 or Tier 2 Individual with an approved religious or medical exemption must wear a mask at all times while on the field. NFL Football Operations will publish Bench Area Access maximum capacities. We will separately publish a summary testing cadence document for those individuals with Bench Area Access who are not fully vaccinated.
- **Field Access:** Field Access on game day will be limited to certain categories of individuals set forth in the Game Day Protocol. All individuals with Field Access (and not Bench Area Access) must be fully vaccinated unless they are represented by a labor union that prohibits such a requirement. Any individual with Field Access who is not fully vaccinated must wear a mask at all times while on the field. We will separately publish a summary testing cadence document for those individuals with Field Access who are not fully vaccinated.

- **Pregame Guests.** Clubs may invite fully vaccinated guests to the field level for the purposes of sponsorship agreements or as a special experience, but such guests must remain within a designated roped-off area at least ten (10) feet away from any players. Clubs are responsible for confirming the vaccination status of such guests and ensuring that no physical interaction between guests and players occurs. Pregame guests must leave the field no later than the conclusion of pregame warmups.
- **Pregame Working Staff.** Any essential pregame on-field personnel, who have been approved by the league, are fully vaccinated and have appropriate credentials, must conduct their job, to the extent possible, no later than the conclusion of pregame warmups.
- **Pregame and Halftime Entertainment:** Fully vaccinated National Anthem and Halftime talent are permitted to perform on the field, provided they access the field from a tunnel that is separate from players.
- **Post-Game Media Access to Locker Room:** Fully vaccinated Club media, NFL Films and Network (limited to 2 individuals from each of NFL Films and the Network) personnel will be permitted limited access to the Locker Room post-game. All other media will be prohibited from accessing the Locker Room.

Media Protocol

- **Media Access to club facilities:** Media access to club facilities will be limited to those media members who are fully vaccinated. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Tier 2M individuals must wear masks in the club facility.
- **In-Person Interviews:** In-person interviews with players and Tiered staff conducted by fully vaccinated Tier 2M Individuals are permitted, provided that the Tier 2M Individuals maintain physical distance from players and staff at all times.
- **Gameday Media Access:** Media access to the press box, field and sidelines, locker room and postgame interview room will be available only to those members of the media who are fully vaccinated, and subject to the limitations of the Game Day Protocol.
- **Post-Game Media Access:** Player and Tier 1 and Tier 2 Interviews may be conducted in person, provided that physical distancing must be maintained and that media members are fully vaccinated.

IDER Plans: Each club must update its approved 2020 IDER Plan to reflect changes made to comply with the 2021 Protocols, including specifically to address the air flow and filtration requirements in the Club Facility Protocol. Any changes to the Club's 2020 IDER Plan should be highlighted. Each Club must submit its revised IDER Plan to Meghan Carroll by **July 9**. IDER Plans will be subject to review and approval by ICS, the NFL and the NFLPA.

Discipline for Protocol Violations

- Failure to adhere to these requirements (and the other restricted activities set forth in Protocol Discipline) will result in league discipline which will be assessed against individuals and, where appropriate, clubs. A club, and its senior management, will be subject to discipline if it is found that the club did not take appropriate measures to enforce these Protocols. As we did last season, the league will be taking measures to ensure Protocol compliance.
- Players that commit the following violations will be subject to the following fines for first offenses, which may be assessed either by the Club or *directly by the league*. Clubs are also permitted to forward evidence of Protocol violations committed by players to the league for the league to take action.

Discipline for Violation of NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols

1. The NFL may impose discipline upon a player who refuses to cooperate or knowingly provides misleading or incomplete information during a contact tracing interview conducted by the NFL, NFL Club and/or IQVIA pursuant to the NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols. The maximum fine amount for such discipline shall be equal to one (1) week's game check up to \$50,000 for a first offense and discipline thereafter may rise to the level of Conduct Detrimental for any subsequent offense.
 - a. Player and/or the NFLPA may challenge such discipline pursuant to Article 43, based upon (i) the absence of just cause, (ii) whether or not the player was engaged in such conduct, (iii) whether the discipline imposed by the NFL was warranted for the conduct, and/or (iv) any other allowable bases for opposing discipline consistent with all applicable principles and standards that apply pursuant to Article 43.
 - b. For purposes of clarity, information disclosed during contract tracing may only be used for contact tracing. The only time that it may be used in a disciplinary matter is if it has been alleged that the player knowingly and intentionally failed to disclose information or provided false information during the contact tracing process. In other words, admissions made during the contact tracing process may not be used as the basis of discipline for other COVID-19 Protocol violations (e.g., if a player admits during the contact tracing interview that he was in a bar with more than 10 individuals, that statement is not admissible to prove that he was in a bar with more than 10 individuals). Information shared during contract tracing interviews shall be used for identifying potential contact exposures only. No personal data will be recorded and data protection guidelines shall be observed. If the NFL or an NFL Club disciplines a player for any violation of the NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols, the NFL and/or NFL Club must demonstrate that it obtained evidence of such violation outside of contact tracing interviews. The only time that statements made in the course of contact tracing may be admitted into a disciplinary proceeding is if that

proceeding is to determine whether player knowingly and intentionally failed to disclose information or provided false information during the contact tracing process

2. Discipline Schedule for Other COVID-19 Protocol Violations

- a. The NFL and/or a Club may impose discipline on any player who engages in the conduct listed below, for a first offense, up to the maximum amount specified for each type of conduct (provided that the NFL and/or Club also applies comparable discipline to Tier 1 and Tier 2 non-player employees who engage in such conduct).
- b. For any player:
 - i. Failing or refusing to fully cooperate with an investigation led by the NFL Management Council and/or NFLPA regarding compliance with the NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocols. -- One week's Paragraph 5 or Paragraph 4 (as applicable) salary up to \$50,000.
- c. For any player who is not fully vaccinated:
 - i. Gathering outside of the Club facility or team travel in groups of more than three (3) players, Tier 1, Tier 2, and/or Tier 3 Individuals. -- \$14,650
 - ii. Engaging in in-person meetings, practices and/or training activities outside of Club facilities with other players and/or Tier 1 staff. -- \$14,650
 - iii. Gathering in any number for any reason with other players and/or members of the Club's Tiered staff at a time when the Club is "shut down" due to a COVID-19 outbreak. -- \$50,000
 - iv. Attending an indoor night club (unless player is wearing PPE and there are no more than 10 people in the club). -- \$14,650
 - v. Attending an indoor bar (other than to pick up food, or unless player is wearing PPE and there are no more than 10 people in the bar). -- \$14,650
 - a. For clarity, a "bar" does not include an establishment that offers food service and which a player attends primarily for food service even if the establishment also includes a full-service bar.

- vi. House gatherings of more than fifteen (15) people without the player and all guests wearing masks or PPE or where social distancing for the more than fifteen people is impossible. -- \$14,650
- vii. Attending an indoor music concert/entertainment event. -- \$14,650
- viii. Attending a professional sporting event (other than applicable NFL games or events, or unless the player is seated in a separated seating section, such as a suite or owner's box, is wearing PPE, and there are no more than 10 people in that separate seating section). -- \$14,650
- ix. Attending an event that is prohibited by state and/or local regulation, executive order or law implemented due to COVID-19. -- \$14,650
- x. Refusal to submit to required virus testing under the Screening and Testing Protocol. -- \$50,000
- xi. Refusal to: (i) wear a mask or PPE; (ii) wear the Kinexon Proximity Recording tracking device; and/or (iii) maintain physical distancing in club facilities or during travel. -- \$14,650

Repeated violations will subject the offender to increased discipline, including for conduct detrimental. Players will be permitted to appeal any such discipline via the Non-Injury Grievance process in the 2020 CBA.

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As always, we appreciate your assistance as we prepare for 2021 Training Camp and Preseason.