



Protocol for football training during the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020

Introduction

This protocol outlines the requirements Norway's top clubs will need to follow to ensure the prevention of infection during training.

The purpose of the protocol is to prevent infection within the team itself and furthermore to prevent the spread of the infection in the wider population.

Football is a contact sport, and in order to training safely there is a requirement for particularly strict guidelines in relation to prevention of infection. In addition to the implementation of these strict guidelines before, during and after training, each team is required to act as an isolated group (cohort) with minimal outside contact. This will significantly reduce the risk of any infection spreading to, or from, the group.

The protocol is aimed solely at the top divisions in Norway because these clubs are best positioned to control the environments surrounding training and the participating groups of people. In doing so, it will be possible to undertake any necessary adjustments required to prevent the spread of infection.

During a press conference on May 7th 2020, the Norwegian Government approved a "pilot-scheme" for the top divisions, allowing the Clubs to start training within the guidelines provided in the protocol. The pilot-scheme is divided into three separate phases:

Phase 1: Eliteserien, with start of training on May 11th at the earliest

Phase 2: Toppserien and OBOS-ligaen, with start of training on June 8th at the earliest

The start of any further leagues (Phase 3) will be dependent on there being no further need for the stringent protocols and guidelines to prevent infection outlined in phases 1 and 2.

All Clubs holding training sessions during the Covid-19 outbreak during the spring of 2020 must confirm that the Club is prepared for and will abide by the requirements in the protocol (attachment 2). Any breaches of the requirements outlined in this protocol can be punishable to a similar degree as the security and tournament regulations.

Players with natural and valid reasons for not adhering to the requirements in this protocol will not have to comply. In these instances, the player and the Club should agree on alternative methods of

training that comply with the general Corona-guidelines that are relevant for all other aspects of football.

The ongoing development of the Coronavirus outbreak could create the need to adjust this protocol. Implementation of training could also uncover the need for adjustments for practical reasons. The increased test capacity in Norway (increases week-by-week) is an example of such a development that might lead to an adjustment to the protocol. Any new versions of the requirements and guidelines will replace this first edition of the protocol.

Each individual Club is responsible for ensuring that any activity is conducted in compliance with this protocol. The Clubs are themselves responsible for following the requirements in the protocol and must remain loyal to any actions implemented in relation to prevention of infection by the Football Association of Norway or the Ministry of Health.

Actions to prevent the spread of infection

The three main pillars/actions to reduce and prevent infection are:

- If sick, do not attend any training sessions
- Implementation of good hygiene during training
- Reduce contact within the group and the groups contact with the wider population

The measures described in this protocol are requirements that must be in place to ensure the prevention of infection during trainings sessions.

Before any training sessions can take place, the CEO and Head of Medical at each Club must confirm that the Club can, and will, comply with the requirements outlined in this protocol. This confirmation must be sent to The Football Association of Norway (see attachment 2).

If sick, do not attend any training sessions

Who can participate in training sessions?

- Players and all members of the coaching staff must be screened for infection (see attachment 3) before they can participate in any activity.
- Any players or members of the coaching staff that belong to a risk-group shall not participate in any training sessions.
- Any players or members of the coaching staff with any indication of respiratory infection must be isolated and screened before they can rejoin any activity.
- Any players or members of the coaching staff with any indication of acute respiratory infection (even with light symptoms, such as fever), must be isolated and stay in isolation for a minimum of 24 hours after being symptom free. A screening for infection must also take place before rejoining any training sessions.



- If any member of a player or coaching staff's household experiences acute respiratory infection (even without confirmation of it being Covid-19), the player or member of coaching staff must not participate in any activity. The player or member of coaching staff must self-isolate and stay in isolation for a minimum of 24 hours after the member of their household is symptom free. A screening for infection must also take place before rejoining any training sessions.
- Typical symptoms for pollen-allergy (running nose and running or itching eyes) are not to be considered as symptoms for respiratory infection in this context. This also includes any cases where young children have a runny nose, but do not have any other symptoms relating to respiratory infection.
- If the Head of Medical at the Club suspects instances of Covid-19 infections among players and/or members of the coaching staff, they are required to immediately contact the local health authorities to see if there are grounds for further testing.
- Any player or member of staff with confirmed Covid-19 infection must be isolated and followed up by the local health authorities. The local health authorities decide who needs to be isolated based on recommendations given by Folkehelseinstituttet (FHI), the Public Health Institute. The Club and NFF must be informed of any confirmed cases of Covid-19 infection. The Club must also inform all other players and members of coaching staff of any confirmed cases of infection.
- Any player or member of staff that has been in contact with any persons with a confirmed case of Covid-19 infection must follow the recommendations from Folkehelseinstituttet regarding quarantine outside of training, but can still participate in training subject to being free of any symptoms.
- If there is a case of multiple confirmed cases of Covid-19 infections within one Club, the Club and the local health authorities must jointly review the situation and decide if it is reasonable to continue with training sessions. The Club must abide by the requirements implemented by the local health authorities.

The Clubs shall monitor all player's health

- All Clubs must designate a doctor as Head of Medical.
- The Head of Medical is responsible for actively monitoring the health of all players and members of the coaching staff for any symptoms of respiratory infection. The Head of Medical can delegate responsibility for the day-to-day monitoring to authorized medical staff (for example a physical therapist). The monitoring must include a check of body temperature and other symptoms before each individual training session.
- All players and members of the coaching staff must inform the Head of Medical of their own health situation, and of any symptoms of respiratory infection amongst members of their household. This must be done twice daily, every morning and evening.
- The result of such monitoring (including self-reporting from players and members of the coaching staff) must be documented by the Head of Medical.
- All players and coaching staff that participate in training sessions must be encouraged by the Club to download and install the "Smittestopp"-app developed by the Norwegian Health Authorities.

Measures to secure good hygiene practices

Good hygiene

- Anyone participating in any activity must use disinfectant on their hands on a regular basis. This should be done before arrival at the training facility, during breaks in training and upon leaving the training facility. The Club is required to provide access to an appropriate amount of disinfectant at all relevant areas of the facility. Despite there being other physical contact during a training session, players and members of the coaching staff should be particularly prudent when it comes to hand-hygiene and avoid contact between hands and face until after being able to wash or otherwise disinfect hands.
- Anyone participating in any activity must bring their own individually marked water bottle. As an alternative, the Club can distribute clean and individually marked water bottles to each participant during the training session.
- Food can only be served in individually wrapped portions.
- All players must use clean and newly washed training gear.
- Spitting is totally forbidden at the training facility.

Good cleanliness

- The ball and other training equipment are possible sources of infection and must be cleaned with soap after use.
- There must be access to toilets during training, but the use of these should be limited as much as possible. All toilets in use must be cleaned in a proper fashion before and after training sessions. Soap or other means of disinfectant must always be available for use before and after the use of the toilets. Drying of the hands should be done by using disposable paper that can be discarded in a closed container/bin.

Measures to reduce contact

Measures to reduce contact within the group/team

- Responsibility for handling equipment (for instance cones) during training should be shared in a way that as few people as possible physically interact with the equipment.
- It is not permitted to use the normal changing rooms and the players must change into their training gear before arriving at the training facility. The main rule is for all players and members of the coaching staff to shower at their individual homes. For players with a long distance to travel to and from training the Head of Medical can give individual dispensation to shower at the training facility in order to prevent illness. In such instances, the Club is responsible to provide good cleanliness in the relevant areas.
- There are no limitations to the level of contact between players during practice sessions.
- The group disperses quickly at the end of each training sessions and travel individually.



Measures to reduce contact with the wider population

For each team to be a closed group (cohort) with minimal contact with others, the players participating in the activities must, in addition to following general measures and guidelines, also follow the requirements from Folkehelseinstituttet regarding quarantine:

- Players are not allowed to attend school or work outside of the time used together with the team training or playing competitive matches.
- Persons living together can socialize as normal
- Players are not allowed to undertake long domestic journeys (except for traveling to and from competitive matches) or travelling abroad.
- Players are not allowed to use public transport except for traveling to and from competitive matches
- Players should avoid areas where social distancing would be difficult to uphold.
- Players should, generally, avoid public places such as shops and coffeeshops. Where no other options are available, a player can go to the grocery store or a pharmacy to make necessary purchases but be mindful of social distancing (keep 1-2 meters apart from others) and specifically avoid areas with queues.
- Players can go for walks outside but must always keep minimum of 1 meter (ideally at least 2 meters) apart from others.
- Be aware of your own symptoms. If fever or symptoms of respiratory infection occur, self-isolate immediately.

Information and education regarding measures to ensure prevention of infection

Anyone participating in activity must be provided with appropriate information regarding Covid-19 infection and symptoms, and the measures the Club is implementing to ensure the prevention of infection. It is important that anyone participating in activity are familiar and comply with the general recommendations regarding prevention of infection provided by from the Norwegian Health Authorities (see attachment 1).

The Club must provide documentation regarding how the information has been distributed and which steps have been taken to ensure that it is understood and will be complied to.

The Club must ensure that it always keeps itself up to date in relation to guidelines and recommendations from the Norwegian Health Authorities. Updated information regarding Covid-19 infection and symptoms can be found at helsenorge.no and fhi.no.

Reporting

The Head of Medical is responsible for providing NFF with weekly status reports in relation to the Club's ability to comply with the recommendations surrounding the prevention of infection.

Attachments

Attachment 1

General recommendations in order to prevent infection

Symptoms of Covid-19 infection can be mild and difficult to distinguish from other respiratory infections. Covid-19 mainly spreads via droplet infection and physical contact. It is mainly people with symptoms that are contagious and they are most contagious at the time when the symptoms occur.

The most described symptoms of Covid-19 are initially sore throat, flu and light cough, in addition to fever, headaches, muscle pains and a general sense of being unwell. Abdominal pains might also occur. Approximately 8 out of 10 adults experience only mild symptoms. For some people infected with Covid-19 the symptoms develop after about one week into cough, fever and a shortness of breath, and a very low number of people it develops into a more serious infection that requires treatment in hospital.

Any sign of respiratory infection or fever requires self-isolation, including abandoning a training session and following the recommendations from the Norwegian Health Authorities. This includes contacting your regular doctor - general practitioner (fastlege) and following their advice. It is important that everyone follows the general recommendations from the Norwegian Health Authorities in relation to the prevention of infection:

- Avoid coughing or sneezing directly at others.
- Keep a minimum of 1 meter's distance to others.
- Cough into a disposable paper towel, of which you then dispose of in a proper manner. Remember to wash your hands afterwards.
- If a disposable paper towel is not available, cough into the hook of your elbow to avoid spreading droplets into the air.
- Wash your hands often and thoroughly with soap and warm water, especially if you have been out in public.
- You can also use a disinfectant that includes alcohol if soap and water is not available.
- Find alternatives to shaking hands and hugging others.

Everyone should download and install the "Smittestopp"-app developed by the Norwegian Health Authorities.

Attachment 2

Attachment 3

Recommended examination during screening for Covid-19

By screening for Covid-19 one hopes to discover anyone with symptoms that are indicators for Covid-19. The symptoms can be vague and the person in question might not be aware that it is related to Covid-19 infection. That is why the questions that are asked are almost as important as the examination itself.

Background questions:

- Have you been in contact with anyone that has been sick in the past 14 days?
- Have you had a fever during the past 14 days?
- Have you during the past 14 days had any of the following symptoms:
 - Exhaustion
 - Headaches
 - Sore throat
 - Shortness of breath
 - Cough
 - Soreness of muscles or the body in general
 - Loss of the sense of smell or taste
 - Diarrhea
 - Abdominal pains

Examination:

- Temperature
- Examination of the mouth and throat
- Palpation of the lymph nodes
- Lungs auscultation