



UEFA COVID RECOMMENDATIONS

Best Practice Hygiene and Operational Measures

Background and this best practice guide

With the evolution of the COVID-19 situation around Europe, and the ending of almost all measures from local / national authorities, in January 2023 it was decided that it was the appropriate moment to discontinue the application of the UEFA Return to Play Protocol (the Protocol), which since the outbreak of the pandemic has provided medical and operational rules and guidelines to be applied at UEFA competition matches.

However, although the Protocol will no longer be enforced at UEFA matches, COVID-19 has not disappeared, and the potential impact of COVID-19 infections should not just be forgotten. For this reason we have published this best practice guide with some reminders about measures that may be considered and applied in staging football & futsal competition matches. This guide is not intended to impose new obligations in the place of the Protocol, it is intended to provide some suggestions and guidelines that can be taken into account in the preparation of matches.

Some of these suggested measures may depend on the particular infrastructure of the relevant match venue, and therefore it is the responsibility of the match organiser (host club / host NA) to make an assessment of the specificities of the match venue and to decide what measures (if any) may be required. In case certain measures are deemed to be appropriate and applicable in a particular venue for any reason, this should be discussed as early as possible between the match organiser and the relevant UEFA match officer(s) and/or venue teams.

Finally, given the rapid changes that can arise as a result of changes in the pandemic situation, all match organisers are reminded that they are responsible for knowing the situation with regard to any mandatory measures imposed by the relevant competent authorities at the match venue, and must immediately inform their opponent(s) and UEFA if there are any mandatory measures that come into effect in advance of a competition match.

Testing requirements

There are no longer testing obligations or requirements for participating in a UEFA match. However, please keep in mind that a COVID infection can be quickly spread in close environments, and therefore out of respect for your fellow members of the football family, we strongly recommend that if any person involved in a match feels any of the symptoms linked to a COVID-19 infection that they take a self-test. Any person testing positive is requested to think about the potential impact of spreading their infection further, and as such we strongly recommend persons who have returned a positive test do not participate in the match in question.

Basic hygiene measures

The use of masks is no longer a mandatory requirement imposed by UEFA in any area of the venue. However, match organisers may still decide that this is an appropriate requirement in some areas of the venue, based on either the venue configuration, or the particular local epidemiological situation. Any use of masks by the teams is to be discussed between the teams in question (the use of masks cannot be unilaterally imposed on the visiting team only), while if there is any indication that masks should be used by other stakeholders (e.g. by media in press conferences, mixed zones etc) then this must be first

discussed with the relevant UEFA match officers and/or venue teams, to give a clearer idea of why such a measure is to be imposed from the match organiser.

Social distancing is still one of the most effective ways of preventing a spread of infections so any person displaying any illness symptoms, even if testing negative, should try to maintain minimum distancing during the course of the match preparation. Furthermore, use of an FFP-2 or higher quality mask will further help to reduce the potential spread of any infection to others, as will regular use of hand sanitiser.

For this reason, and out of respect for everyone else involved in the match, any persons feeling unwell - in particular if displaying any of the symptoms of cold, flu or COVID-19 - are strongly recommended to wear an FFP-2 mask at all times, and to try to maintain social distancing as much as possible, to reduce the possibility of transmission of any illness.

Match organisers are therefore still recommended to keep a supply of FFP-2 or higher quality face masks available at the venue, as well as maintaining hand sanitiser points around the venue.

Finally, we use the opportunity to remind everyone that there are some persons who may be more at risk from a COVID-19 infection, and you do not know everyone's personal circumstances, so please be understanding and respectful of those who may still choose to wear a mask or take other appropriate hygiene measures while onsite.

Other operational measures

We use the opportunity to clarify here the situation now with regard to certain specific operations that were implemented under the Protocol. This is because it is important to recognise that there are some operational measures that were introduced under the Protocol provisions that were certainly beneficial to general match operations and organisation, and we highlight here some of the operational areas where these new procedures since the COVID pandemic may, or will, be still considered as relevant going forward.

Team travel and accommodation

The use of charter flights or specific hotel recommendations will no longer be mandated, however teams are recommended to take appropriate measures to ensure a safe and secure travel and stay onsite.

Zone 1 access

Keeping a tighter control of the number of people permitted to enter the "red" Zone 1 area has meant a much cleaner and better organised working area, and so we suggest that all teams continue to control the number of accreditations they request. From UEFA side we will also continue to keep control of the number of persons accessing this key area from our stakeholders and suppliers, to ensure only those with a specific working need are requesting access.

Matchday organisational meeting

The transition to a hybrid attendance of this meeting (key persons from both teams and UEFA match officers in physical attendance and others attending by video conference) has in general been successfully implemented, and we will continue to implement this going forward.

Broadcast and media activities

With the removal of the Protocol, all broadcast and media operations can in principle return to normal. However, in line with the approach mentioned above, match organisers must inform UEFA in advance if

any specific measures are in place that may impact the operational implementation of broadcast and media operations (e.g. distancing measures imposed in mixed zones, limits on numbers of persons permitted in press conference rooms etc).

Sponsor activities

Like the broadcast and media activities, all relevant applicable sponsor activities can in principle also return to the pre-COVID operations. However match organisers must highlight in advance any local measures that are in place which may have an impact on the operational implementation of these activities.



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