



COLORADO SOCCER

UPDATE: COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

Dear Colorado Soccer Families, Friends, Coaches, Referees, and Players,

Colorado Soccer Association (CSA) has been the governing body of soccer in Colorado since 1978. As a non-profit organization overseeing the 60+ non-profit member youth soccer clubs in Colorado, the CSA mission continues to be one of education, service, honor, infrastructure, sportsmanship, and safety.

By now, everyone should be aware that all organized Colorado soccer operations have been suspended until at least March 28th. **In consideration of Governor Polis' closure of schools until April 17th, the earliest start date for spring soccer has been moved to April 18th. This is the first date that any teams of a CSA sanctioned organization may gather and take the field.** CSA and its member clubs will review this date no later than April 3rd and will extend the current spring season start date again if necessary.

Some of you receiving this may be 'first timers' in the Colorado Soccer community. We welcome you into our family. We hope you soon find out why soccer is considered to be "The World's Sport", achieving more internationally than any other sport.

You may wonder why we don't cancel the spring season now. We can appreciate these sentiments, but the answer is not so simple. Locally, we've made it through hard times as friends, teams, clubs, and as a community. For many who grew up playing the sport, whether locally or nationally, we often reflect on the immense benefits sports has had on our lives. The physical, mental, and social well-being provided by soccer

got many of us through hard times and made us better individuals. CSA and all Colorado Soccer clubs believe that continuing to provide these benefits and fulfilling these needs has to be our goal. We can't and we won't just give up on the opportunity to emerge from this devastation so as to again serve our community.

Taking into consideration the diversity of the soccer community we serve, our decision to strive for stability and survival runs deep. Whether this is your child's first venture into organized sport, or your child lives and breathes soccer, the survival of youth soccer is vital to the continuation of:

- Soccer as the best form of exercise a child may get on a weekly basis.
- Soccer as the most welcome or possibly only non-school social time kids may have on a weekly basis.
- The immense benefit of the coach-player mentorship relationship.
- The stability in the life of a child that comes from being part of a team.
- Soccer is the only main outlet in life for some kids.

While not each of these may apply to your child, some or all of these benefits apply to children everywhere in the greater Colorado Soccer community.

CSA is working to be creative with our member clubs to create a season of soccer even with a delayed start date. Without spring soccer, the sport as we know it, the infrastructure that has taken decades to build, the continuity and livelihood of many coaches, and field access will be crippled. Without a spring season, we are concerned many of our member clubs as we know them today will not survive in their current form. Some of our member clubs may be forced to lay off employees, coaches, downsize field access, or even close their doors. All CSA member clubs are non-profits, and few of them carry the extensive financial reserves necessary for them to make it intact through the events we are currently facing.

The economic impact of these potential outcomes weighs heavy as well, as the greater Colorado Soccer landscape provides hundreds of millions to the local economy annually.

In light of ongoing efforts, it is the recommendation of the CSA Board of Directors to its members that Colorado soccer clubs not provide Spring refunds, but rather be creative with future opportunities to offset the lost services this Spring. Doing so would allow clubs to have soccer accessible to your child immediately as soon as we are able to return to play as well as being able to ultimately provide the services that were postponed due to the pandemic.

We believe now, more than ever, we need to focus on the future and pulling through this together so that our children will have a sense of normalcy as our community emerges from this devastation.

Many of you will receive communication from your member clubs tomorrow. Our wish, as you read through their individual messages, is that you understand any decisions made are decisions not made lightly, but rather are made in consideration of the years they've been working with Colorado's youth soccer community and the continuation of a thriving youth soccer environment.

Nate Shotts, *CEO, Colorado Soccer*

Jeff Ruebel, *President, Colorado Soccer*