



Effective Date: January 27, 2021

## **2021 NWSL Media Guidelines**

Included below are the media operations guidelines for the NWSL 2021 season. While recognizing the critically important role that the media plays for sport and society, all guidelines have been developed with health and safety as the number one priority. These guidelines have been created using best-practices developed internationally and domestically, and are subject to change.

Team training sessions will be open to media on a case-by-case basis pending approval from the club and league's medical director and the NWSL Communications staff.

The media operations guidelines are in addition to facility protocols, which include but are not limited to required face coverings, social distancing requirements, assigned arrival/departure times, media-specific entrances/exits and assigned seating/photo positions and/or locations.

In order to minimize risk of exposure to COVID-19 for Personnel, *these rules must be abided by and adhered to.*

### **I. STAFFING**

- A. In the attempt to limit exposure, the league is requesting all teams to develop two separate staffing groups:
  - 1. **Essential Communications Staff:** Essential communications staff may interact with players and coaches for all media availabilities and must always maintain a safe social distance from all non-essential communications staff. This includes media and broadcast personnel. At least one essential communications staff member must be under the team testing protocol.
  - 2. **Non-essential Communications Staff:** Non-essential communications staff will manage all outside media and broadcast personnel. Tasks may include but are not limited to managing press box duties. Non-essential staff members must always maintain a safe social distance from all player, coaches and essential communications staff.

### **II. DEDICATED ENTRANCE/EXIT**

- A. Each club must establish a dedicated entrance and exit for media personnel at their facilities and should be separate from entrances and exits used by others, but most importantly by team personnel.
- B. All credentialed media personnel must enter and exit from the designated areas at specified times on training and match days and will be escorted to the assigned media space by non-essential staff members.

### **III. MEDIA CREDENTIALING/PHOTOGRAPHER & ENG CREW POSITIONS**

- A. Clubs will credential a limited number of non-rights media personnel based off the following:



- a. **Training:** A maximum of 10 media personnel will be permitted on training days but must remain in an assigned area at least 20 feet from the field boards. An outdoor mixed zone is permitted but media must remain at least six feet from players and team personnel at all times, and subjects must wear proper PPE. **Clubs must submit their media position plans for training to NWSL Communications for approval prior to your first training.**
- b. **Match Day:** Availability of media positions in the press box and media work rooms at each stadium while maintaining proper social distancing measures. **Clubs must submit their media position plans for matches to NWSL Communications for approval prior to your first match.**
- c. Compliance with guidelines set forth in the NWSL Medical Protocols and other local and state health ordinances.
- B.** Approved photographers and ENG crews will be permitted to shoot a match from assigned positions only. Field access will only be permitted in facilities where personnel can be positioned at least 20 feet from the field boards. If field level access is not possible, clubs must station positions in the seating bowl area complying by all social distance requirements (e.g., in the first row of seats). These plans must be communicated to NWSL Communications prior to your first match. It is recommended that photographers remain in these positions for the run of play.
- C.** Photographers and ENG crews may shoot from off-field photo locations throughout the stadium, with club approval only. These cameras must stay clear of all broadcast cameras.
- D.** Photographers may set up cameras behind the goals after first consulting with club staff, but these cameras must be installed when essential club personnel are not on the field and must stay clear of all broadcast cameras.
- E.** Credentialed photographers and ENG crews must wear bibs provided by the club if granted field access. All bibs must be washed following every match day.
- F.** All media personnel must always remain socially distanced from others. At no point should media, photographers or ENG crews enter the playing field, locker rooms or other areas occupied by players and coaches, unless specifically permitted by the club. Media personnel on field level should not touch any soccer balls unless under the testing protocol.

#### **IV. HEALTH & SAFETY**

- A.** All media personnel and staff will undergo temperature checks at the designated media entrance on each training and match day prior to entering the stadium.
- B.** All credentialed media must follow all NWSL and club protocols, government regulations and other precautionary measures, including social distancing, PPE (as outlined in the NWSL Guidance on PPE Usage) in all media areas including, but not limited to, press box/media seating, media work rooms, and photographer positions. Failure to comply will result in loss of access to the stadium. The minimum health and safety practices must include:
  - a.** Proper face masks at all times which media should bring on their own, but clubs will provide additional if necessary.
  - b.** Media must remain in their designated work area and practice proper social distancing from others at all times.



- c. If clubs provide food services, all food must be packaged individually, and media personnel should wash and disinfect their hands frequently.

## **V. PRESS BOX & WORKROOMS**

- A. For the 2021 NWSL season each club's press box and workrooms must be arranged to provide optimal spacing between seats for accredited media, adhering to a safe social distance of at least six feet apart.
- B. If additional space is needed to ensure seating for all credentialed media, clubs are required to designate an area outside of the press box with a similar working environment (table, power, wi-fi, etc.).
- C. Photographers will be assigned specific seating locations in photo workrooms at a safe social distance apart. If applicable, workrooms should be positioned as close to media designated areas as possible.
- D. The league will continue to virtually distribute all game notes and injury reports prior to matches but teams will be required to distribute all match day (in-game and post-game) media resources to media personnel electronically.

## **VI. MEDIA INTERVIEWS, POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCES**

- A. All training and match day media interviews during the NWSL season are recommended to be conducted via a fully remote video conference. If you plan to host live mixed zones please send your plans to the NWSL Director of Communications for approval.
- B. For training day press conferences, select players and coaches **MUST** be made available to all general media. It is recommended that these are recorded and shared on your platforms and/or to your media distribution list after every training session.
- C. For post-game press conferences, select players and coaches from both the home and away clubs **MUST** be made available to all general media via a video teleconference platform and will begin approximately 10 minutes from the final whistle of each match.
- D. Post-match press conferences must be conducted in a pre-determined location at the stadium, preferably a press conference room. All press conference areas must be disinfected between each interview consistent with the guidelines set in the NWSL's Standards for Cleaning, Disinfection and Sanitization, and all social distancing and PPE guidelines must be adhered to.
- E. Subject to approval from the league, limited pre-game, post-game, and flash interviews will be permitted that the following requirements are met:
  - a. All media personnel are required to wear face masks while conducting interviews.
  - b. Players and coaches will be required to wear face masks for all interviews; with the exception of certain on-field league broadcast interviews.
  - c. All media personnel are prohibited from entering all locker rooms.
  - d. The club establishes a designated area that allows for at least six feet between the media and the players/coaches (e.g., interviewer in the first available rows of stands with the player/coach on field).



- e. Exceptions may be permitted for club essential communications staff members.

## **VII. PRO POOL REPORTER**

- A. A pool reporter must be identified and communicated to PRO through a club staff member no later than 30 minutes prior to kick off. This pool reporter will email questions to a club communication staff member who will respond after fielding answers provided by a PRO representative.

## **VIII. STAND UPS AND LIVE HITS**

- A. Clubs will control the location of TV news crews to film standups and live hits inside and outside of the stadium. There will be no access to the field or tunnel areas. Crews must follow proper health and safety guidelines and PPE protocols.
- B. These locations must also be shared with NWSL broadcast and must remain separate, and not in the way of, locations needed for game broadcast elements.

## **IX. BROADCAST PERSONNEL**

- A. Clubs may credential broadcast personnel as non-essential individuals subject to the health and safety guidelines set forth above in **Exhibits III/IV**.
- B. On-field broadcast personnel are required to wear bibs provided by the home club. All bibs must be collected and washed by the home club following each match day.
- C. Only home or network primary “host” broadcasters are permitted to call matches from the stadium, and booths must be situated in a manner that allows broadcast personnel and/or talent to be socially distant (minimum of six feet) from each other. Away broadcasters shall call matches at an away facility.
- D. Broadcast personnel are permitted to film player arrivals, maintaining 10 feet of social distance from any players/coaches at all times, in an area designated by the club near the arrival or drop-off point.
- E. For National broadcast partners, limited pre-game, post-game and flash interviews of players/coaches will be permitted (and required) subject to the following:
  - a. All broadcast personnel are required to wear face masks while conducting interviews unless an approved social distanced set up can be predetermined and arranged.
  - b. Players and coaches will be required to wear face masks for all interviews.
  - c. All broadcast personnel are prohibited from entering all locker rooms for filming.
  - d. The club establishes a designated area that allows for at least six feet between the broadcast personnel and the players/coaches (e.g., interviewer in the first available rows of stands with the player/coach on field).
- F. Post-game press conferences will be conducted under the guidelines set forth in **Exhibit VI**.

## **X. COMPLIANCE**



- A.** The NWSL will strictly enforce compliance with the guidelines outlined above. Club personnel are required to promptly report to the Team Medical Director and the NWSL Communications Director any information regarding a potential violation of these protocols.
- B.** The NWSL reserves the right to conduct unannounced inspections of these protocols.