

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **YOUTH SPORTS TO RALLY FOR A RETURN TO PLAY**

*San Diego Soccer / Youth Sports Community to call on Governor and elected officials to return gaming activities to youth athletes.*

**SAN DIEGO, CA (October 7, 2020)** - Families, youth athletes, coaches and organization management within the Southern California soccer community will rally on October 10, at 10 am at the County Administration Building in downtown San Diego to ask the Governor of the State of California to open up gaming competition in California.

In addition to the soccer community, organized by the Presidio Soccer League, all youth sports organizations and athletes will be invited to attend. The participating organizations and leagues have waited patiently since June for the state to consider moving forward from individual training exercises within the states reopening. Efforts made to seek conversation with state officials have gone unanswered.

The governing body of Presidio Soccer League, the California State Soccer Association - South (Cal South), has submitted a letter to Governor Newsom requesting attention to the needs of its membership. This organization services an area from San Luis Obispo to San Diego with 300+ Affiliate Member Leagues for 170,000 soccer players and 34,000 coaches, referees and administrators.

Within the San Diego soccer community, hundreds of thousands of athletes have engaged in training without a single record of transmission related to soccer activity. Studies such as the [Surf Cup Sports White Paper](#) and [University of Wisconsin COVID-19 in Youth Soccer Study](#) find that the incidence of COVID-19 related to soccer competition is much lower than other businesses that are reopening for economic reasons. The youth soccer industry and its families are ready to return to the field and the science supports it.

“In addition to helping young children maintain healthy lifestyles and learn important life skills, athletic competitions keep youth off the streets and engaged in positive activities with coaches, mentors, and positive role models,” states Bob Turner, the Executive Director of the Presidio Soccer League and President of the Cal South Board of Directors. “Amid a global pandemic, an economic depression, and a reported increase in mental health issues within youth; it has never been more important to make programs available that support the health and well-being of our youth, families and communities.” In addition, athletic competition provides pathways for a college education and the development of leadership skills for high school athletes, sometimes being the only pathway to college for some.

California remains one of a handful of states in the US that has not moved into gaming activity. The surrounding states of Arizona, Nevada, Utah and Oregon are all open to competition. Each weekend, tens of thousands of California families are traveling to these states to play in games and competitions. The question for our state officials is how is pushing our families to other states safer, and in the economic interest of our families and state, than taking a quick ride to our local park for a competition?

Youth sports is ready to implement safety protocols to ensure the safety of its competitions. Youth sports is ready to consider various levels of risk related to various sports as has been addressed by almost every other

state in the nation. Youth sports is ready to address this need to play with thoughtful protocols and without political motivation.

California youth sports organizations, most of which are 501c3s, and their athletes and families are low priority within the state's reopening plan. This rally will ask why? Why are our youth so low on the list of interest of our state officials? What about us?

**Rally Specifics:**

DATE: October 10  
TIME: 10 am  
LOCATION: County Administration Center (West Plaza)  
1600 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92101

**Program inclusion:**

The program will be brief with speakers including youth athletes, parents and youth sports community representatives.

This event is open to all families and players from all sports. Players are encouraged to wear their team jerseys, bring club banners, and make and bring signs. Masks and social distancing is required.

**About Presidio Soccer League**

Presidio Soccer League is San Diego's Premier Competitive Youth Soccer Gaming League, serving the Southern California area consisting of two separate gaming leagues, Presidio Soccer League and San Diego Developmental Academy.

We are a member run organization and currently serve over 50 youth soccer leagues.

**About Cal South**

The California State Soccer Association – South (Cal South) is a 501c(3) California public benefit corporation and is the official youth and adult state soccer association of the United States Soccer Federation, US Youth Soccer, and the United States Adult Soccer Association. The organization, with a service area that extends from San Luis Obispo to San Diego, provides rewarding recreational and competitive opportunities for players of all ages, genders and skill levels. Our member leagues and clubs provide recreational, athletic, and development programming that helps to ensure physical and mental health, and emotional well-being of people across all socio-economic backgrounds. Our membership includes:

- 300+ Affiliate Member Leagues and Clubs across Southern California
- 12,000+ Youth and Adult Soccer Teams
- 115,000+ Active Family Households
- 170,000+ Youth and Adult Soccer Players
- 34,000+ Coaches, Referees, Volunteers and Administrators

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**Resources:**

[Surf Cup Sports White Paper](#)

[University of Wisconsin COVID-19 in Youth Soccer Study](#)

Cal South Letter to Governor Newsom (attached)

<https://calsouth.com/coronavirus/>

[US Youth Soccer Return to Play Resources](#)

October 5, 2020

Governor Gavin Newsom  
The State of California  
1303 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

The California State Soccer Association – South (Cal South) is a 501c(3) California public benefit corporation and is the official youth and adult state soccer association of the United States Soccer Federation, US Youth Soccer, and the United States Adult Soccer Association. The organization, with a service area that extends from San Luis Obispo to San Diego, provides rewarding recreational and competitive opportunities for players of all ages, genders and skill levels. Our member leagues and clubs provide recreational, athletic, and development programming that helps to ensure physical and mental health, and emotional well-being of people across all socio-economic backgrounds. Our membership includes:

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We are writing on behalf of our member leagues, clubs and families to ask that the State of California and constituent counties move forward to release outdoor sporting activities from quarantine restrictions. Following establishment of the quarantine, Cal South suspended all activities in observance of your order and in compliance with Federal, State and Local directives including associated County Public Health Orders. Amid a global pandemic, an economic depression, and a reported increase in cases of mental health issues, it has never been more important to make programs available to families that support the health and well-being of our communities.

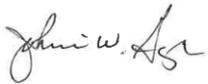
The health and safety of our participants is of upmost concern. As the State established guidelines for approved activities, “Day Camps” and “Youth Sports” we have established Return to Play policies and protocols for associated Cal South sanctioned events to reduce the risk of spread of COVID. Since that time, our member leagues and clubs have conducted hundreds of thousands of drills which focused on individual skills, conditioning and best practice for training. To date, we have not received any reports of individual infection or outbreak as a direct result of soccer or sport related activities.

Other states are advancing reopening sports to include conducting scrimmaging and gaming activities under guidelines designed to continue to manage the risk of COVID. We recognize that the California Department of Public Health guidelines and the State’s tiered process for reopening provides a framework for permissible activities based on the statistics associated with COVID issues by county and although California has recently supported opening of parks and playgrounds, allowance for extended sporting activities has not been addressed. As reported by US Youth Soccer (USYS) and numerous other states, these activities have been successfully reopened and have not directly resulted in an increase in infection or outbreak (i.e. Arizona, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Utah & Washington). Some states, such

as New York, recognize the difference in the types of activities whereby they allow reopening for those sports which involve outdoor activity, low exposure and/or minimal contact.

We urge you to provide a clear pathway and a timeline for return to play that would allow sports to provide this vital service. Allow scrimmages and gaming to take place under appropriate restrictive guidelines which we can provide. By doing so, organizations can once again offer families the essential programming that has been largely absent for the last seven months. Moreover, youth sports represent a multi-billion-dollar industry nationwide. If you or someone from your office wishes to discuss this further, we are ready to offer any, and all support.

Sincerely,



Johnnie W Garza  
Chief Executive Officer  
Cal South

Cc: Cal South Board of Directors