



NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

MEMORANDUM

To: Chief Executives
Club Presidents
General Managers
Head Team Physicians
Head Athletic Trainers
Club Infection Control Officers
Club Counsel

From: NFL Management Council
Football Operations
Player Health & Safety

Date: December 16, 2021

Subject: NFL-NFLPA COVID-19 Protocol Updates

Throughout the pandemic, we have continued to evaluate our Protocols as the scientific evidence evolves and based on the advice of our medical experts and public health guidance. Given the recent increase in positive cases across the country and in our club environments and the emergence of a new and seemingly more contagious variant, we have agreed with the NFL Players Association to the following updates to the COVID Protocols. These changes will take effect **immediately and will remain in effect through the conclusion of Week 15 games, as we continue to discuss modifications with the NFLPA:**

Meetings

In-person meetings for Tier 1 and Tier 2 Individuals (including coaches and players) are prohibited, unless they are held outdoors or in the practice bubble, with all individuals physically distanced. All other meetings must be conducted virtually.

Indoor Masking

All players and staff must wear masks when indoors at the club facility, including in the weight room, regardless of vaccination status. Masks will not be required outdoors or during practices and/or walk-throughs conducted in the practice bubble.

Weight Rooms

No more than fifteen (15) players may work out in a single weight room at one time, regardless of vaccination status.

Meal Rooms

Staff and players will not be permitted to eat together, regardless of vaccination status. Meals must be grab-and-go, or tables must be arranged such that individuals do not sit within ten (10) feet of one another while consuming food and drink. Clubs must limit access to the meal room or stagger mealtimes to permit physical distancing.

Team Travel

All Tiered staff and players will be prohibited from receiving visitors at the team hotel or going out to dinner or for entertainments in the away city, regardless of vaccination status.

Activities Outside of the Club Facility

Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 staff and players will be subject to the following restrictions on activity outside of the club facility through the conclusion of Week 15 games:

- Public player and coaches' appearances and/or charity events (scheduled by the club or by the player) will be prohibited.
- Groups of more than three (3) Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 Individuals, including players, are prohibited from gathering outside of the club facility or team travel, regardless of their vaccination status.
- All Tier 1 and Tier 2 staff and players (regardless of vaccination status) will be prohibited from engaging in the following "High Risk COVID Conduct" outlined in Appendix A (pp. 98-99) of the November 9, 2021 COVID Protocols:
 - Attending an indoor night club (unless the individual is wearing PPE and there are no more than 10 people in the club);
 - Attending an indoor bar (other than to pick up food, or unless the individual is wearing PPE and there are no more than 10 people in the bar (a "bar" does not include an establishment that offers food service and which an individual attends primarily for food service even if the establishment also includes a full-service bar);
 - House gatherings of more than fifteen (15) people without the player or Tiered staff member and all guests wearing masks or PPE or where social distancing for the more than 15 people is impossible;
 - Attending an indoor music concert/entertainment event;
 - Attending a professional sporting event (other than applicable NFL games or events, unless the player or Tiered staff member is seated in a separated seating section, such as a suite or owner's box, is wearing PPE, and there are no more than 10 people in that separate seating section);
 - Attending an event that is prohibited by state and/or local regulation, executive order or law implemented due to COVID-19.

“Testing Out” of Quarantine for Fully Vaccinated Players, Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 Staff

After evaluating our testing data, we have updated Addendum D to the Screening and Testing Protocol and the testing required for a fully vaccinated player, Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 staff member to “test out” of quarantine following a confirmed positive test. Effective immediately, any such fully vaccinated individual should be tested **every day** after the confirmed positive test. Any such fully vaccinated individual shall be released from quarantine, provided they are asymptomatic for at least 24 hours by one of the following options:

- **Option 1:** S/he receives two (2) BRL PCR Test Results (taken on the day after the positive swab is taken (Day 1) or thereafter) (which may be taken concurrently) which are either negative or produce Cycle Threshold (CT) values of 35 or greater (all CT target levels (T1 and T2) must be 35 or greater); OR
- **Option 2:** S/he receives one (1) BRL PCR Test Result (taken on the day after the positive swab was taken (Day 1) or thereafter) which is either negative or produces CT values of 35 or greater (all CT target levels (T1 and T2) must be 35 or greater) AND a negative Mesa Test result from a test taken within 24 hours of the BRL PCR Test (i.e., both may be taken at the same time or less than 24 hours apart); OR
- **Option 3:** S/he receives two (2) negative Mesa Test results (which may be taken concurrently but must be two (2) separate swabs) on Day 1 (the day after the positive swab was taken) or thereafter (**maximum limit of 3 tests may be taken per day**).

Appendices illustrating these options are attached for reference.

In each of the scenarios outlined above, for a player to be eligible to participate on game day, his club must activate him prior to the deadline for transactions for such game. In cases where the activation deadline occurs on the day prior to the game (e.g., Saturday by 4:00 PM E.T. prior to a Sunday game), the club may need to activate the player prior to his clearance to play. In no event may a player be activated after the applicable transaction deadline for the game. If the club elects to elevate a player prior to his clearance to play (e.g., Saturday by 4:00 PM E.T. prior to a Sunday game), and he receives a positive test result and therefore is not eligible to play, the club must deactivate the player and will **not** be permitted to elevate another player using the Contagious Disease Addendum for that game.

Any individual who does not receive the required number of negative tests to “test out” prior to the expiration of his/her 10-day quarantine period will be eligible to return to the club facility and to interact with players and Tiered Individuals consistent with the standard quarantine periods set forth in the Treatment Response Protocol. Any individual who receives a confirmed positive test and then “tests out” or returns to the club facility after the standard quarantine period will then be eligible for the 90-day testing holiday beginning with the date that the sample giving rise to the individual’s first positive test was taken.

Additional Protocol Modifications

In addition to the Protocol modifications listed above in effect through Week 15 games, clubs should be prepared for additional modifications to the Protocols, which will likely include a reduction in the Tier limits similar to the limitations that were imposed toward the end of the 2020 regular season and modifications to the Testing Protocol. For purposes of clarity, until further notice, clubs must continue weekly testing for fully vaccinated individuals, daily testing for unvaccinated individuals, and any other testing as directed by the NFL Chief Medical Officer for clubs in the Enhanced Mitigation Protocol. We will communicate any such changes in the near term.

* * * *

As always, thank you for your cooperation and flexibility as we continue to work to safely complete the 2021 season. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the Management Council, Health & Safety or Football Operations staff.

Appendix: “Test Out” Options for Fully Vaccinated Players, Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 Staff

OPTION 1:

1. S/he is asymptomatic for at least 24 hours (no symptoms other than loss of taste or smell, including no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication); AND
2. S/he receives two (2) BRL PCR Test Results taken on Day 1 or thereafter (which may be taken concurrently) which are either negative or produce Cycle Threshold (CT) values of 35 or greater (all CT target values (T1 and T2) must be 35 or greater); AND
3. Return has been approved by the Team Physician, the NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS.

This may occur on any day after Day 1, as set forth below.

For example:

Swab Taken (Monday)	Day 1 (Tuesday)	Day 2 (Wednesday) <i>First day individual’s PCR Results May Test Them Out If 35 or Greater</i>	Day 3 (Thursday)	Day 4 (Friday)	Day 5 (Saturday)	Day 6 (Sunday)
Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; Second Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; BRL PCR Test Administered; Individual Sent Home	BRL PCR Positive Test Result received from Initial BRL PCR Test; Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 1 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 2 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 3 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 4 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	If BRL PCR Test Results received from Day 5 Tests are negative or are positive with CT levels of 35 or greater → individual may enter Club facility if asymptomatic for 24 hours and after clearance from Team Physician, NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS

For such an individual to clear and participate on game day, the BRL PCR Test samples must be collected as follows:

Game Day	BRL Test Samples Collected
Thursday	Wednesday
Saturday	Friday
Sunday	Saturday
Monday	Sunday

A BRL PCR sample collected on game day will **not** be considered to clear a player for that game, even if the specimen returns a negative result before the transaction deadline for the game.

OPTION 2:

1. S/he is asymptomatic for at least 24 hours (no symptoms other than loss of taste or smell, including no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication); AND
2. S/he receives one (1) BRL PCR Test Result (taken on Day 1 or thereafter) which is either negative or produces CT values of 35 or greater (all CT target levels (T1 and T2) must be 35 or greater); AND
3. S/he receives a negative Mesa Test result taken within 24 hours of the BRL PCR test (i.e., at the same time or on the same day) referenced above; AND
4. Return has been approved by the Team Physician, the NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS.

This may occur on any day after Day 1, as set forth below.

For example:

Swab Taken (Monday)	Day 1 (Tuesday)	Day 2 (Wednesday)	Day 3 (Thursday)	Day 4 (Friday)	Day 5 (Saturday)	Day 6 (Sunday)
		<i>First day individual's PCR Results May Test Them Out If 35 or Greater</i>				
Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; Second Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive;	BRL PCR Positive Test Result received from Initial BRL PCR Test Mesa Test collected and results Positive;	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 1 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 2 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 3 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive;	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 4 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive;	If one of the BRL PCR Test Results from Day 5 Tests is negative or is positive but one of the tests has CT levels that are 35 or greater → administer Mesa Test (taken within 24 hours

BRL PCR Test Administered; Individual Sent Home	Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests and Mesa Test administered; Individual sent home	results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	of BRL PCR from Day 5); if Mesa Test is negative → individual may enter Club facility if asymptomatic for 24 hours and after clearance from Team Physician, NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS
--	---	--	--	---	---	---

OR

Swab Taken (Monday)	Day 1 (Tuesday)	Day 2 (Wednesday) <i>First day individual's PCR Results May Test Them Out If 35 or Greater</i>	Day 3 (Thursday)	Day 4 (Friday)	Day 5 (Saturday)	Day 6 (Sunday)
Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; Second Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; BRL PCR Test Administered; Individual Sent Home	BRL PCR Positive Test Result received from Initial BRL PCR Test Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests and Mesa Test administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 1 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 2 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 3 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Positive; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	BRL PCR Positive Test Results received from Day 4 BRL PCR Tests (CT Levels Below 35); Mesa Test collected and results Negative ; Follow-On Two BRL PCR Tests administered; Individual sent home	If the Day 5 Mesa Test is negative , and one of the BRL PCR Test Results from Day 5 is negative or is positive but one of the tests has CT levels that are 35 or greater → individual may enter Club facility if asymptomatic for 24 hours and after clearance from Team Physician, NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS

For such an individual to clear and participate on game day, the BRL PCR Test and Mesa Test samples must be collected at the latest as follows:

Game Day	BRL Test Samples Collected	Negative Mesa Test Sample Collected
Thursday	Wednesday	Thursday
Saturday	Friday	Saturday
Sunday	Saturday	Sunday
Monday	Sunday	Monday

A BRL PCR sample collected on game day will **not** be considered to clear a player for that game, even if the specimen returns a negative result before the transaction deadline for the game.

OPTION 3:

1. S/he is asymptomatic for at least 24 hours (no symptoms other than loss of taste or smell, including no fever without the use of fever-reducing medication); AND
2. S/he receives two (2) negative Mesa Test results (which may be taken concurrently, but must be two (2) separate swabs) taken on Day 1 or thereafter (**maximum limit of 3 tests may be taken**); AND
3. Return has been approved by the Team Physician, the NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS.

This may occur on any day after the individual initially tests positive.

For example:

Swab Taken (Monday)	Day 1 (Tuesday)	Day 2 (Wednesday)	Day 3 (Thursday)	Day 4 (Friday)	Day 5 (Saturday)	Day 6 (Sunday)
Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; Second Mesa Test Administered and Results Positive; BRL PCR Test Administered;	BRL PCR Positive Test Result received from Initial BRL PCR Test Mesa Test Administered → Results Positive ; Additional two (2) BRL PCR Test Samples Collected;	BRL PCR Positive Test Results (CT levels below 35) received from Day 1 BRL PCR Tests Mesa Test Administered → Results Positive ; Additional two (2) BRL PCR	BRL PCR Positive Test Results (CT levels below 35) received from Day 2 BRL PCR Tests Mesa Test Administered → Results Positive ; Additional two (2) BRL PCR	BRL PCR Positive Test Results (CT levels below 35) received from Day 3 BRL PCR Tests Mesa Test Administered → Results Positive ; Additional two (2) BRL PCR	BRL PCR Positive Test Results (CT levels below 35) received from Day 4 BRL PCR Tests Mesa Test Administered → Results Positive ; Additional two (2) BRL PCR	BRL PCR Positive Test Results (CT levels below 35) received from Day 5 BRL PCR Tests Mesa Test Administered → Results Negative ; AND Second Mesa Test Administered

Individual Sent Home	Individual Sent Home	Test Samples Collected; Individual Sent Home	Test Samples Collected; Individual Sent Home	Test Samples Collected; Individual Sent Home	Test Samples Collected; Individual Sent Home	Results Negative → individual may enter Club facility if asymptomatic for 24 hours and after clearance from Team Physician, NFL Chief Medical Officer and ICS
----------------------	----------------------	---	---	---	---	--

An individual in this scenario **may clear and participate on game day** with Mesa Tests administered on game day.