



Atlantic Sports Health

ATLANTIC HEALTH SYSTEM

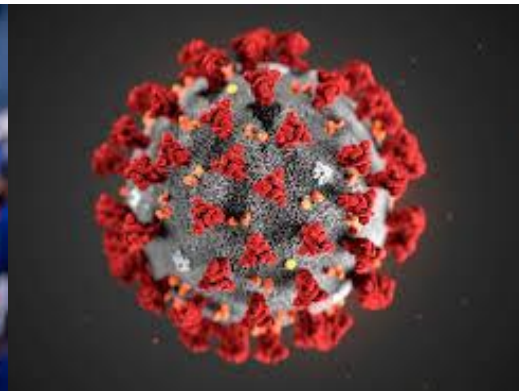
Policy and Procedures: Managing Athletes in the NFL During COVID-19

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DISCLOSURES

No relevant financial relationships to disclose

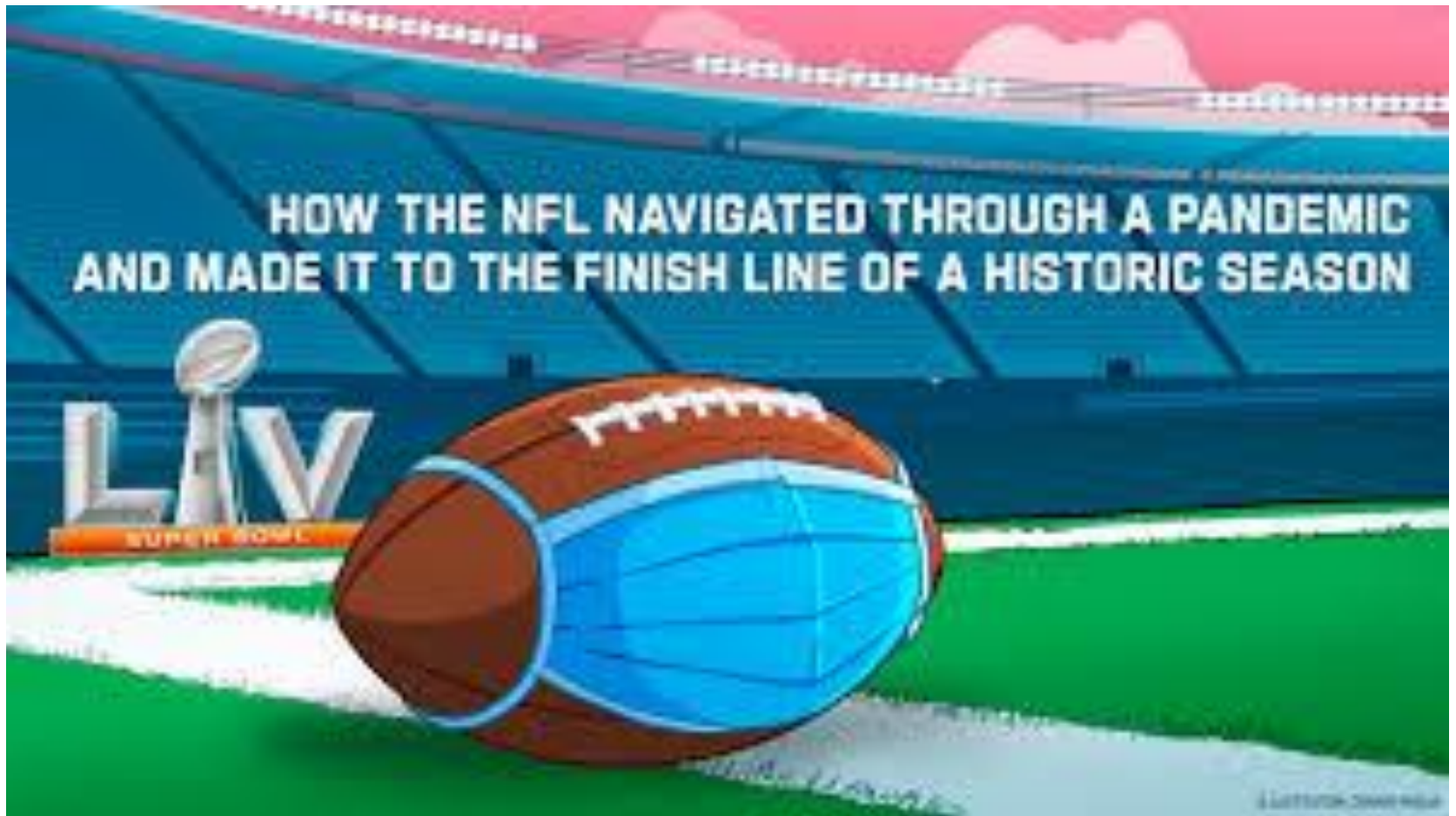


OBJECTIVES

- Understand COVID 19 screening and testing in the NFL
- Describe the mitigation strategies implemented by the NFL and the CDC to decrease the spread of COVID 19
- Review high risk behaviors that were identified during the NFL season that could lead to COVID 19 spread



A season like no other before...



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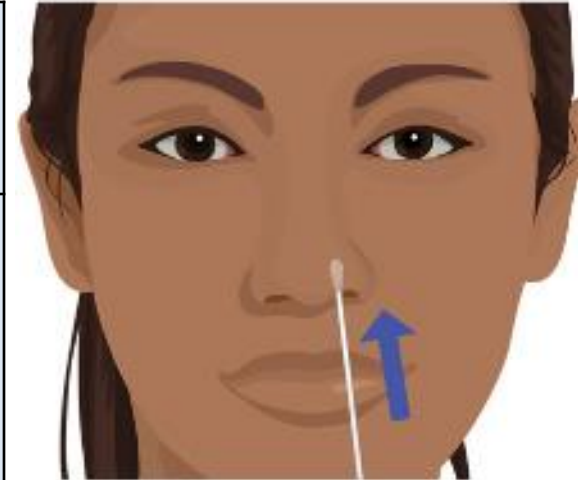
TESTING STRATEGY

LAB USED	BioReference® Laboratories
TESTS USED	Roche Cobas® Hologic Panther® Thermo Fisher QuantStudio®
RESULTS	Provided <24-hour turnaround nucleic acid amplification testing



TESTING STRATEGY

TEST	Anterior nasal swabs
WHO	Staff with access to players > 10 min at a time OR Anyone with regular close proximity to players 2/3 of staff
HOW OFTEN?	6 days/week



TESTING FACTS

August 1, 2020 – February 6, 2020

- # of TESTS ADMINISTERED
- -**959,860** tests during the season
- **CONFIRMED POSITIVE CASES: 726**
 - **262** players
 - **464** other personnel

<https://www.nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety/resources/press-releases/nfl-and-nflpa-COVID-19-monitoring-testing-results-jan-31-feb-6>



QUESTIONNAIRES & TEMPERATURES

- Players and staff members completed a symptom and exposure questionnaire
- Temperature screening at entry of facility



PROXIMITY TRACKING DEVICES

Kinexon Devices



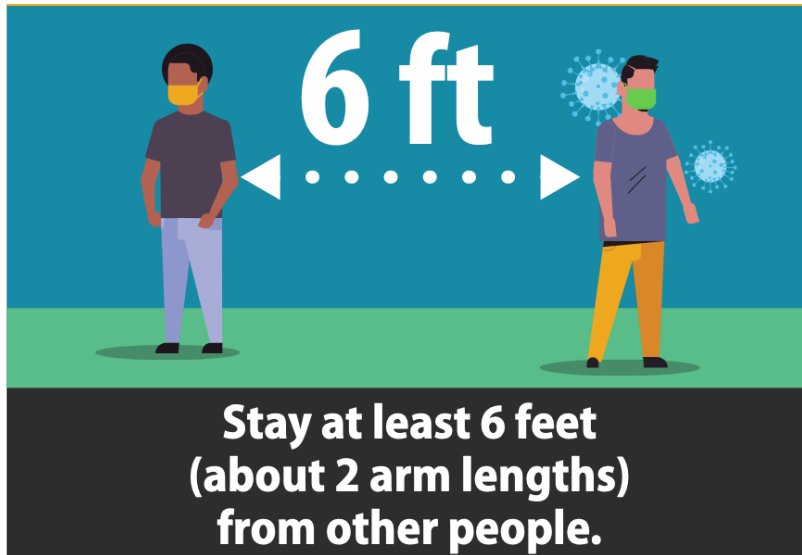
Devices captured consecutive and cumulative minutes/seconds of interactions among persons within 1.8 meters (6 feet) of one another



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**Stay home when you are sick,
except to get medical care.**



**Wash your hands often with soap
and water for at least 20 seconds.**



[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)



TRAVEL CHANGED



TREATMENT: BY APPOINTMENT ONLY



STANDARD PROTOCOL



Most meetings held virtually; if not, held outdoors with physical distancing

Max weight room capacity of 15 players; no limit on staff

Groups of more than 3 prohibited from gathering outside of facility or team travel

Meal room access limited

Locker rooms reconfigured to allow for distancing and /or plexiglass dividers; time and number of players in locker rooms limited



Staff members wear masks during practice; players wear masks on practice field when feasible

Players encouraged but not required to wear masks in weight room

Players encouraged to wear surgical masks during medical treatment / rehab



Negative RT-PCR test result from the previous day required to enter facility



INTENSIVE PROTOCOL

All meetings held **virtually**

Max weight room **capacity** of 10 players and 5 staff members

No in-person gatherings outside of facility or team travel

No seating in cafeteria or meal area; **grab-and-go meals** only

Locker room use strongly discouraged and strictly limited to small groups for short periods of time

All players and staff wear **masks or face shields** throughout practice

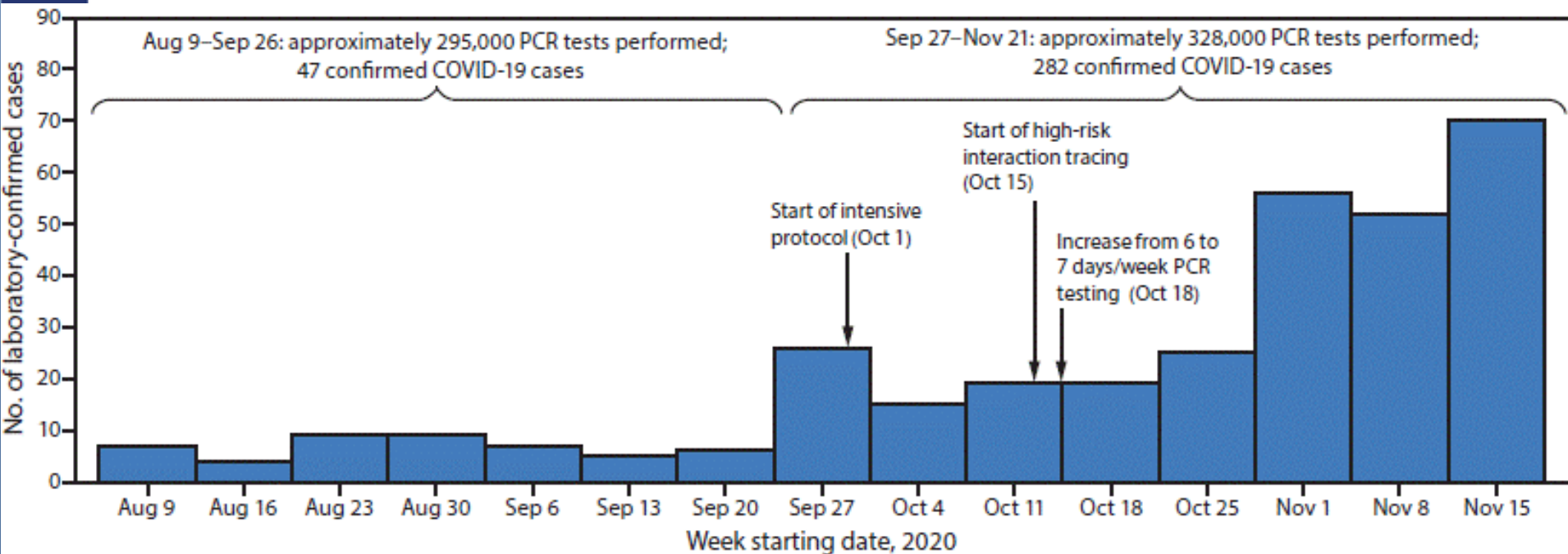
Players and staff **always wear masks**, including in weight room

Players **required to wear surgical masks during medical treatment** / rehab; face shields also encouraged

All RT-PCR test results received before any player or staff member enters the facility



FIGURE. Laboratory-confirmed* COVID-19 cases (N = 329) and mitigation strategies† implemented National Football League, United States, August 9–November 21, 2020



MITIGATION FOR CLOSE CONTACTS?



PROXIMITY TRACKING DEVICES

Kinexon Devices



Devices captured consecutive and cumulative minutes/seconds of interactions among persons within 1.8 meters (6 feet) of one another



IQVIA & CONTACT TRACING

- Contact tracing conducted by IQVIA
- IQVIA will identify employees and players who had close contact with a positive individual
- They will then follow the COVID return to play protocols



DETAILED INTERVIEWS

- Conducted by trained staff once someone tested positive for COVID 19
- Identify contacts
 - At facility
 - Outside facility



PROCEDURE FOR “HIGH RISK” CLOSE CONTACT

- Remain on the COVID 19/Reserve List for 5 days
- All Nasal PCR tests must be negative
- Can resume football activities on Day 6
 - Shorter than that recommended in CDC guidance this was deemed acceptable because daily RT-PCR testing with <24-hour turnaround was available



HIGH RISK" CLOSE CONTACT IN NEW NJ

Low Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk	Very High Risk
<i>14 days is always preferred as the best way to prevent COVID-19 transmission.</i>			
<p>10 days without testing</p> <p>OR</p> <p>7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days</p>	<p>10 days without testing</p> <p>OR</p> <p>7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days</p>	<p>14 days for group settings and organized activities</p> <p>14 days for individuals unless it causes <u>significant</u> economic or other hardship</p> <p>ONLY IF 14 days is <u>not feasible</u>, follow</p> <p>10 days without testing</p> <p>OR</p> <p>7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days</p>	<p>14 days for group settings and organized activities</p> <p>14 days for individuals unless it causes <u>significant</u> economic or other hardship</p> <p>ONLY IF 14 days is <u>not feasible</u>, follow</p> <p>10 days without testing</p> <p>OR</p> <p>7 days with negative test results collected at 5-7 days</p>

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OBSERVATIONS

Midseason, transmission was observed in persons who had cumulative interactions of <15 minutes duration



<https://www.nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety/health-and-wellness/COVID-19/q-a-dr-allen-sills-on-cdc-scientific-paper-jointly-authored-with-the-nfl-on-covi>



Implementation and Evolution of Mitigation Measures, Testing, and Contact Tracing in the National Football League, August 9–November 21, 2020

Weekly / January 29, 2021 / 70(4);130–135

Dawn Aponte, National Football League; Michele Best, University of Maryland Capital Region Health; Paul Blalock, National Football League; Meghan C. Carroll, National Football League; M. Anthony Casolaro, Washington Football Team; Molly Delaney, National Football League; Daniel Eichner, Sports Medicine Research and Testing Laboratory; Larry Ferazani, National Football League; Jacob Frank, National Football League; Christopher J. Hostler, Department of Medicine, Duke Center for Antimicrobial Stewardship and Infection Prevention; Tiffany Koch, IQVIA Real-World Solutions; John Lynch, Department of Medicine, University of Washington; Jimmie Mancell, Department of Medicine, University of Tennessee Health Science Center; **Damion Martins, Atlantic Sports Health, Morristown Medical Center;** John Mellody, National Football League; Jeff Miller, National Football League; Navdeep Singh, Eden Medical Center; Eric Sugarman, Minnesota Vikings; Leah Triola, National Football League; Patti Walton, Williamson Medical Center.



HIGH RISK ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH TRANSMISSION

- Poor mask compliance
- Congregating at meal time
- Partial or unmasked indoor workout sessions
- In-person meetings in small rooms
- Ride-sharing

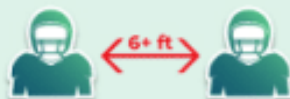




During the 2020 NFL season, safety protocols helped limit spread of COVID-19

Expanded contact definition to consider

DISTANCE



TIME



MASK USE



VENTILATION/
AIR FLOW



Implemented strict protocols after any exposure

✓ Quarantine for high-risk contacts



✓ Closure of eating areas



✓ Strict mask requirements



✗ 189 players and staff quarantined after contact*

✗ 20 tested positive

✗ No additional spread occurred

* During Oct. 15-Nov. 21

CDC.GOV

bit.ly/MMWR12521

MMWR

<https://www.nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety/health-and-wellness/COVID-19/q-a-dr-allen-sills-on-cdc-scientific-paper-jointly-authored-with-the-nfl-on-covi>



- Intensive Protocol decreased close contacts by 60% from October 1 – November 21,
- No high-risk contacts identified for 71% of traced cases at clubs

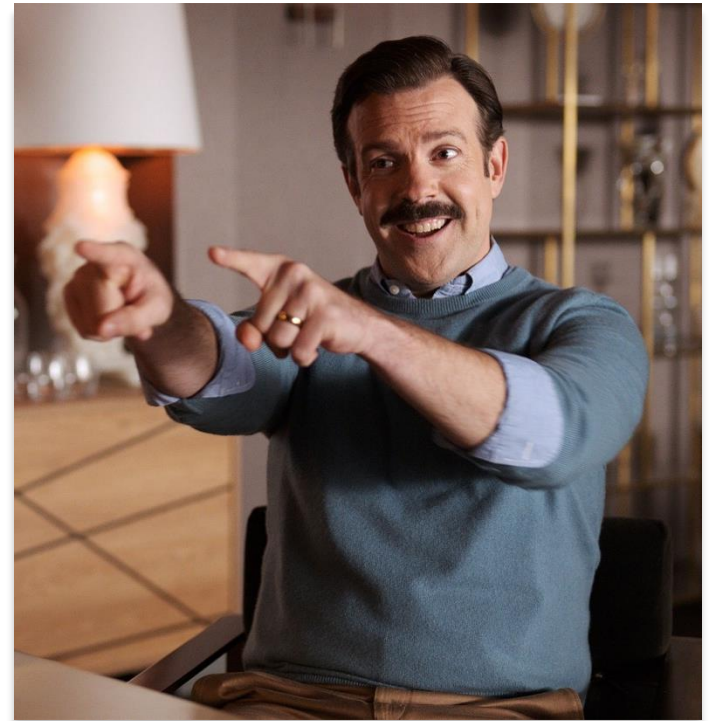
<https://www.nfl.com/playerhealthandsafety/resources/press-releases/cdc-publishes-scientific-paper-jointly-authored-with-the-nfl-on-covid-19-lessons>

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7004e2.htm?s_cid=mm7004e2_w



TAKEAWAYS...

- The NFL utilized an intensive testing and tracking strategy
- CDC guidelines + intensive protocol developed to mitigate COVID spread
- Due to this testing/tracking strategy, several high risk behaviors were identified



Thanks!

