

# Return To Play In Football: Strategies, Guidelines, and Success Stories

See [www.njyouthsoccer.com](http://www.njyouthsoccer.com) for complete NJYS Return to Play guidelines. Updated as of JUNE 9th and subject to change as new information becomes available.

## NEW JERSEY YOUTH SOCCER'S RETURN TO PLAY



### PHASE 1 & 2

- >> Individual Training Sessions at Home
- >> Virtual Coaching Only

### PHASE 3

- >> Small Group Training Introduced - Should Not Exceed 25 Participants
- >> Maintain Physical Distancing (at least 6 feet)
- >> NO Sharing of Water/Equipment (Ball Permitted)
- >> Use of PPE for Coaches (Optional for Players)
- >> Stagger Practice Times

### PHASE 4

- >> Limit physical contact and number of participants
- >> NO Sharing of Water/Equipment (Ball Permitted)
- >> Spectators/Players Remain 6 feet Apart Off the Field

### PHASE 5

- >> Full Return To Play/NO Training Restrictions
- >> NO Sharing of Water/Equipment (Ball Permitted)
- >> Spectators/Players Remain at Least 6 feet Off the Field

**IF YOU ARE NOT COMFORTABLE WITH RETURNING TO PLAY, DON'T**

### Club Responsibilities

- >> Distribute and post return to play protocol to all members
- >> Be understanding to parents/players that may delay returning to play
- >> Provide adequate field space for physical distancing (minimum of 6 feet)
- >> Have an effective communication plan



### Coach Responsibilities

- >> Follow all return to play protocols
- >> Send home players if they are not feeling well
- >> Provide adequate physical distancing at all times
- >> Ensure all players are not sharing water/equipment (ball permitted)
- >> Wear a face mask when coaching
- >> Only Coach handles equipment
- >> Be understanding to parents/players that may delay returning to play

### Parent Responsibilities

- >> Check your child's temperature before any team related event
- >> Notify your club immediately if your child becomes ill
- >> Ensure your child has sanitizing products and plenty of water
- >> Stay in car or adhere to social distance requirements
- >> Ensure washing (e.g. hands) takes place before and after every training
- >> Ensure clothes and equipment are sanitized before and after every training

### Player Responsibilities

- >> Bring and use hand sanitizer
- >> Be open and transparent with coach
- >> Place bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart
- >> Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment, water, food, or bags
- >> No group celebrations, high-fives, hugs, handshakes, fist bumps, etc.
- >> Respect and practice physical distancing
- >> Wear mask before and immediately after events
- >> Wash hands thoroughly and immediately after events
- >> Wash and sanitize all equipment before and after events

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Football is a sport loved by millions around the world. With its fast-paced action, physicality, and competitive nature, football carries a certain exhilaration that few other sports can match. However, like any high-impact sport, injuries are an inherent part of the game and can often sideline players for significant periods.

## The Road to Recovery

When a football player gets injured, the primary focus becomes their rehabilitation and eventual return to play. This process is multi-faceted and involves various strategies, guidelines, and decision-making. In this article, we will explore the journey that an injured football player undertakes to regain their physical fitness, as well as the mental strength required for their triumphant return to the pitch.



### Return to Play in Football: An Evidence-based Approach

by John Vogel (1st ed. 2018 Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 26742 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 2058 pages



## Understanding the Injury

The first step towards returning to play in football is understanding the nature and extent of the injury. Accurate diagnosis and assessment play a crucial role in designing an effective recovery plan. Modern medical imaging techniques, such as MRI, have revolutionized the ability to identify and evaluate football-related injuries. Utilizing these techniques, medical professionals can determine the severity of the injury and devise an individualized treatment strategy.

## Rehabilitation and Physical Therapy

Rehabilitation and physical therapy are pivotal components in the return-to-play process. Under the guidance of experienced therapists, injured players undergo a

structured program that aims to restore their strength, flexibility, and functional abilities. The program often encompasses a combination of exercises, injury-specific drills, and specialized equipment to accelerate the healing process.

Additionally, physiotherapists employ techniques like massage, hydrotherapy, and electrical stimulation to alleviate pain, reduce inflammation, and promote tissue repair. These interventions, when coupled with diligent adherence to a rehabilitation plan, facilitate a quicker recovery and enhance the chances of returning to the football field.

## **Monitoring Progress and Gradual Return**

Returning too soon from an injury can lead to setbacks or even re-injury. Therefore, closely monitoring the progress and gradual re to football-related activities are essential components of a successful return-to-play strategy.

Fitness trainers work hand in hand with medical professionals to formulate a structured plan that involves gradually increasing the intensity and duration of training sessions. Regular assessments are conducted to evaluate the player's physical capabilities and address any warning signs that may suggest potential setbacks.

## **Mental Rehabilitation**

An often overlooked aspect of the return-to-play process is mental rehabilitation. The psychological impact of a serious injury can be overwhelming for players, leading to anxiety, self-doubt, and fear of re-injury. Attending to the mental well-being of injured players is crucial for their successful return.

Sports psychologists provide support and guidance throughout the journey, helping players overcome mental barriers and building resilience. Utilizing

techniques such as visualization, goal setting, and cognitive-behavioral therapy, they aid the players in regaining confidence, focus, and motivation.

## **Success Stories**

Return-to-play success stories serve as inspiration for players who are going through the recovery process. Numerous footballers have triumphed over challenging injuries to make remarkable comebacks, fueling hope and determination within the football community.

One such inspirational story is that of Alex Smith, the quarterback of the Washington Football Team. Smith suffered a devastating leg injury in 2018 which required multiple surgeries and extensive rehabilitation. Against all odds, Smith made a remarkable return to the field in 2020, defying expectations and inspiring millions worldwide.

Similarly, the story of Zlatan Ibrahimović, the Swedish football icon, serves as a testament to the power of determination. Ibrahimović ruptured his anterior cruciate ligament in 2017 but made an astonishing return, showcasing his talent and resilience on the pitch once again.

Returning to play in football after an injury is a challenging and arduous process. It requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the physical, mental, and emotional aspects of recovery. By implementing effective strategies, following guidelines, and drawing inspiration from success stories, footballers can overcome adversity and reclaim their rightful place on the field - ready to embrace the thrill, camaraderie, and passion that defines the beautiful game.

### **Return to Play in Football: An Evidence-based**

**Approach** by John Vogel (1st ed. 2018 Edition, Kindle Edition)

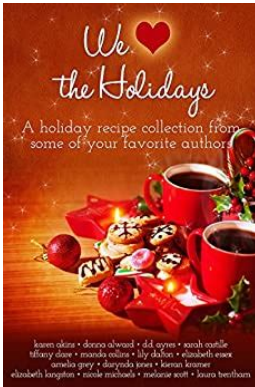
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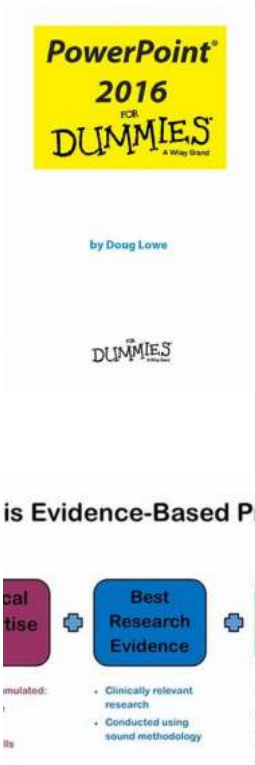


In this book, leading experts employ an evidence-based approach to provide clear practical guidance on the important question of when and how to facilitate return to play after some of the most common injuries encountered in football. Detailed attention is paid to biomechanics, the female athlete, risk factors, injury prevention, current strategies and criteria for safe return to play, and future developments. Specific topics discussed in depth include concussion, anterior cruciate ligament and other knee injuries, back pathology, rotator cuff tears, shoulder instability, hip arthroscopy, and foot and ankle injuries. The chapter authors include renowned clinicians and scientists from across the world who work in the field of orthopaedics and sports medicine. Furthermore, experiences from team physicians involved in the Olympics, National Football League (NFL), Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) are shared with the reader. All who are involved in the care of injured footballers will find this book, published in cooperation with ESSKA, to be an invaluable, comprehensive, and up-to-date reference that casts light on a range of controversial issues.



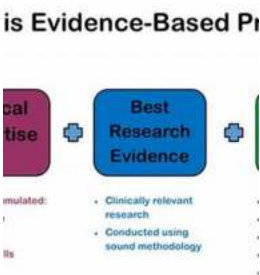
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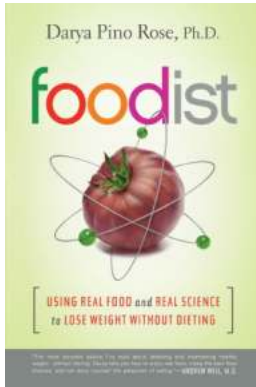
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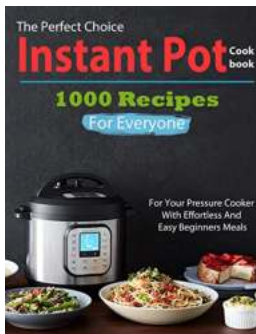
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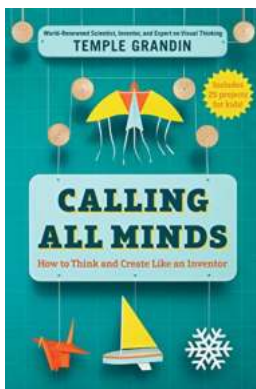
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