

YOUTH SPORTS GUIDELINES

These guidelines are effective June 29, 2020 in St. Louis County. In accordance with DPH's Amended Business and Individual Guidelines for Social Distancing and Re-Opening Order, dated May 29, 2020, effective June 1, 2020, and as may be further amended. These guidelines may be replaced or modified by DPH based on new scientific information and local information including the trajectory of influenza-like illnesses, cases of COVID-19, and any other information deemed relevant to protect public health in St. Louis County.

Guiding principles

Playing sports with or against other individuals during this time holds an inherent risk that someone may become infected and, in turn, spread the virus to others in their household or community. Please consider this risk when allowing your child to participate in organized sports.

The information regarding SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing the COVID-19 illness, is changing rapidly. As a result, guidance given nationally and in St. Louis County is subject to change. The guidelines provided in this document will be reviewed and updated based on new scientific information and local circumstances, and therefore, may change periodically.

The risks associated with playing sports with or against other individuals depends on the type of play, the number of individuals participating, and the number of spectators present. For further information, consult the [CDC guidance on youth sports at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html).

The risk of COVID-19 spread increases in youth sports settings as follows:

- **Lowest risk:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family members
- **Increasing risk:** Team-based practice
- **More risk:** Within-team competition
- **Even more risk:** Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area
- **Highest risk:** Full competition between teams from different geographic areas.

Tournaments are in the CDC's highest risk category and cannot be played at this time. Traveling outside of the local community may increase the chances of exposing players, coaches, and spectators to COVID-19. Youth sports teams must compete only against teams in the St. Louis area.

Requirements

At this time youth sports activities are allowed if those activities can be played with social distancing and minimal physical contact. Required safety measures include:

- Athletes, coaches, officials, referees, and umpires shall undergo a health screening and temperature check prior to starting any sports activity.

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- Spectators will be allowed so long as family groups can maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other family groups. Spectators must wear face coverings and may not mingle with players other family groups.
- Players must wear a face covering when not actively involved in practice, training, or competitive play.
- Screening times and practice or competition start times must be spaced out to limit the number of athletes and spectators in the area.
- While competitive play within local sport leagues will be allowed, no travel or tournament play with teams from outside the St. Louis area is permitted.
- Limit the number of players sitting in confined areas (e.g., dugouts) to allow for social distancing.
- Hand hygiene is essential. Organizations and facilities shall promote frequent and effective hand hygiene by supplying ample hand sanitizer dispensers and hand-washing stations.
- The use of locker rooms is not recommended. If they must be used, proper social distancing must apply within the locker room. Proper area for equipment storage and cleaning is required.
- No unnecessary individuals (managers, extra coaches, non-participating athletes, etc.) shall be present at events. Spectators are allowed in family groups with social distancing and should not mingle with players or other family groups.
- Parents and other spectators shall remain in a separate area and not be allowed onto the field or other areas where the athletes congregate. No congregating shall be allowed in the parking lot or fields. A drop-off line for practices is recommended to avoid unnecessary exposure.
- Do not share water bottles. An individual athlete may use their own water bottle, which should be clearly marked with their name. Cups used for water should be single-use and disposable.
- Coolers must be properly sanitized after each use, and each team or group shall have its own cooler.
- Follow CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting coolers.
- Avoid whirlpools or cold/hot tubs. If they are required in an emergency, follow best practices. Have a cold-water immersion tub on-site or within 5 minutes of the field.
- Have ice towels ready on the field for cooling during breaks and for covering the head in the event that an athlete has an exertional heatstroke and needs to be immersed. CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting should be followed. Ice towels shall be used only once, then discarded or washed properly.
- Do not allow team huddles, handshakes, fist bumps, or other unnecessary physical contact.
- Coaches, officials, referees, and umpires must wear face coverings. Players, when not playing or training, must wear face coverings.
- Any shared equipment must be disinfected with EPA certified products. Each team should provide their own equipment. Equipment should be disinfected, if possible, after each use, or after each inning or play period.
- Any jerseys used during these workouts must be washed daily and not shared among players.

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Special considerations for those with health conditions

Individual players on the team may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as children who have asthma, diabetes, or other health problems. Parents and coaches should give special consideration to protecting these players.

Athletes, coaches, and parents should consider delaying their participation in sports and athletic activities if they have any of the following conditions:

- Diabetes
- Chronic lung disease, including asthma
- Severe obesity (BMI>40)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Heart conditions
- Pregnancy
- Immunocompromised (e.g. any transplant recipient, those who take immunosuppressant medications like steroids or biologics, patients receiving chemotherapy, etc.)
- Age greater than 60 years

Screening

Every coach and athlete must be screened when they enter the campus or facility where the sporting activity will occur. They should wear a face mask for the duration of the health screening if possible.

Designate a consistent person to provide healthcare screenings. This person must wear a face mask and gloves when screening others.

- Ask each individual if they have experienced any of the following symptoms within the past 24 hours:
 - Fever (temperature greater than 100.4)
 - New or worsening cough
 - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
 - Sore throat, different than your seasonal allergies
 - New loss of smell and/or taste
 - Diarrhea or vomiting
- Ask if they have a close contact who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks.
- Check each person for fever (100.4 F or higher) using a thermometer.

If an athlete, coach, or official reports affirmative to any of the above COVID-19 screening questions or has a fever they shall be sent home immediately.

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If a child's parent(s) is not present, escort them to a designated isolation room or area away from others and have them wear a mask. The athlete, coach, or official shall not be allowed back until they are symptom-free.

After the athlete, coach, or official is screened, they should receive an indicator that signifies that they have been screened (i.e. colored wrist band, sticker that changes daily, mark on hand) with the current date and initials of the screener. Athletes do not need to wear masks during play.

If the individual has health-related questions, they shall consult with their health care provider.

Individuals returning to sports after a COVID-19 diagnosis must consult with their medical provider and the Department of Public Health.

Permitted activities

Sports with low contact frequency are permitted at this time.

- These include diving, extreme sports, rodeo, water skiing, adventure racing, bicycling, canoeing or kayaking, field events (high jump, pole vault, javelin, shot-put), golf, horseback riding, skating (ice, in-line, roller), skateboarding, weight lifting, windsurfing, badminton, golf, orienteering, fishing, riflery, rope jumping, running, sailing, scuba diving, swimming, table tennis, tennis, and track.

At this time *some* high-contact sports activities are also permitted. Tournaments and travel for these sports are still prohibited.

- These include baseball, outdoor basketball, outdoor volleyball, bodybuilding, bowling, cheerleading, crew/rowing, dance team, fencing, outdoor floor hockey, field hockey, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, rugby, soccer, softball, and ultimate frisbee.

Other high-contact sports are not permitted for youth at this time.

- These include indoor basketball, tackle/flag/touch football, indoor floor hockey, martial arts, boxing, racquetball, handball, indoor volleyball, water polo and wrestling.

While these high-contact sports activities are not permitted at this time, socially distanced skill development or practices related to these sports is permitted if:

- There are a limited number of individuals, including coaches, in a single space, allowing social distancing of at least 6 feet.
- Equipment must not be touched by more than one player unless the equipment is sanitized after each player's use or after each inning or play period.

Contact tracing

In order to comply with the requirement to provide the necessary information for DPH to conduct contact investigations in the event that a player, coach, or any other participant, tests positive for COVID-19, a record must be maintained of all participants at each practice or competition, including coaches, umpires and players.

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References

- CDC Considerations for Youth Sports. Last reviewed June 17, 2020.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
- CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Tool. Last reviewed May 7, 2020.
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/pdf/ReOpening_America_Cleaning_Disinfection_Decision_Tool.pdf
- CDC Handwashing Guidelines. Last reviewed April 2, 2020.
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 (Interim Guidance). Last reviewed April 30, 2020.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/return-to-work.html>
- Guidelines for Opening Up America Again. Published April 16, 2020.
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-Opening-Up-America-Again.pdf>
- State of Missouri Novel Coronavirus Analytics. Published May 5, 2020.
<https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/pdf/analytics-update.pdf>
- The resurgence of sport in the wake of COVID-19: cardiac considerations in competitive athletes.
<https://blogs.bmj.com/bjasm/2020/04/24/the-resurgence-of-sport-in-the-wake-of-covid-19-cardiac-considerations> Published April 24, 2020.

Adapted from Resocialization of Sports in the St. Louis Region

For general questions or concerns call **877-435-8411**. Get text message alerts by texting **STLOUISCOALERT** to **67283**. To keep up with the local response and testing sites visit **stlcorona.com** or call **314-615-2660**.

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