

COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for VAA Traveling Basketball

Valley Athletic Association (“VAA”) is committed to providing a safe and healthy atmosphere for all our players, coaches, and family members. To ensure we have a safe and healthy season, VAA Traveling Basketball has developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Coaches and players are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our gyms and communities, and that requires full cooperation among our players, coaches, and families. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of all persons in our community.

With regard to VAA Traveling Basketball activities, the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan is administered by Matt Becker, who maintains the overall authority and responsibility for VAA Traveling Basketball. However, VAA Traveling Basketball board members, the commissioner, players, coaches, and families are equally responsible for supporting, implementing, complying with and providing recommendations to further improve all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The VAA Traveling Basketball Board, the commissioner and coaches have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this plan.

In addition to the VAA Traveling Basketball COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, board members, the commissioner, players and coaches are also expected to understand and comply with the VAA COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, which applies to all VAA programs and is administered by VAA President Jason M. Hill.

Important risk considerations

- The more physical or close contact that occurs the greater risk there is in spreading illness.
- A sport or training that takes place indoors is riskier than if the activity is done outdoors.
- Know before you play there may be an increased risk of COVID-19 when participating in sports, and COVID-19 activity may be different in different regions of the state, also contributing to a possible increase in risk.
- Traveling out of state or to different regions of the state to participate in sports activities is strongly discouraged. However, if individuals or teams are considering traveling to other regions or states to participate in sports, they should be aware of COVID-19 activity in that area to inform their decision.
- Additionally, the Governor’s Executive Order recommends individuals quarantine upon return from out of state travel.

Screening policies for participants, their family members and spectators

- Players/Coaches have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess the health status of VAA Traveling Basketball’s participants, their families, spectators and volunteers and to require participants, their families and our volunteers to report when they are sick or experiencing symptoms. Successful completion of the traveling basketball season is dependent upon adherence to the plan and to all applicable guidance to prevent the transmission of the disease.

- VAA Traveling Basketball will follow MYBA/MYAS Return to Participation Manual and Decision Tree and the VAA COVID-19 Preparedness Plan on players staying home from practice and quarantining in the event of a positive test or if they have been deemed to be a close contact. (refer to the COVID decision tree, a copy of which is attached, for more explanation on when players should stay home)
- Parents must report any positive test or close contact exposure for their child to Matt Becker.
- Coaches must report any positive test or close contact exposure for themselves to Matt Becker.
- Please email Matt Becker at mbecker0410@yahoo.com as soon as you know of a positive case or close contact exposure. Matt will provide information to the VAA President to follow VAA and MYBA protocols.
- In the event of a positive COVID-19 test, VAA will notify MDH and ISD 196. MDH will also be available to answer questions you have and can provide guidance.
- MDH/LPH will interview the case or parent/guardian, determine the dates when the case was infectious, identify anyone that may have been exposed, and collect contact information for those individuals.
- A player or coach who tests positive cannot return to activities until (1) the player/coach feels better for a minimum of 24 hours, (2) it has been 10 days since the person first felt sick or tested positive, (3) the person has had no fever for at least 24 hours, without using medication that lowers fevers, and (4) receipt of a physician's note that the participant is clear to return to play.
- With regard to practices, "close contact" will be defined as all team players and coaches who were in attendance at the practice. The window for determining close contacts begins (1) 48 hours prior to the player/coach began developing symptoms or (2) if the player/coach was asymptomatic, 48 hours prior to the positive test.
- With regard to games, "close contact" will be defined as all players on both teams while coaches would only be a close contact for their own team. The window for determining close contacts for games is the same as for practices.
- VAA coaches will keep rosters of who was at practices and, when allowed, games each day so we can do contact tracing quickly. For more information on contact tracing, see Contact Tracing COVID-19 (www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/tracing.html).
- Any person determined to be a close contact will be prohibited from activities for 14 days, with the 14-day period starting after the last contact with the person who tested positive. As a result, a positive test for a player or coach will effectively shut down a team for 14 days, starting the day of last contact with the person who tested positive.

Requirements for holding practices (effective Jan. 4, 2021)

- Only practices are allowed from Jan. 4 through 13. No games or scrimmages with other teams are allowed.
- Games and scrimmages with other teams will be allowed starting Jan. 14.
- Guidance on competition and gameplay with other teams is forthcoming.
- Spectators are not allowed at practices.
- Attendance will be kept at every practice/game to ensure proper contact tracing can occur. Attendance must be sent weekly to mbecker0410@yahoo.com by the coaches
- Participants who need assistance to participate due to age, medical condition, or disability, are each allowed to have one parent, guardian, or adult support person present to support them.

- Parents, guardians, and support persons must maintain social distancing of at least six feet from persons in other households
- Practices must be small in size. For VAA Traveling Basketball practices, we will create pods, which cannot exceed 25 people per pod.
 - o A “pod” is a group of individuals that only practice or play with members of their own pod, which limits the potential for transmission in the event of an exposure or outbreak. Teams are responsible for ensuring that members of different pods do not practice together, interact, or otherwise come into close contact while activities are occurring.
 - o Pods must either practice in physically separate rooms, facilities, or areas, or steps must be taken to ensure that pods are kept separated by a distance of no less than 12 feet at all times.
 - o Teams must also avoid reassigning athletes to different pods to the maximum extent possible.
 - o The smaller the pod size, the more the team can minimize broader transmission of COVID-19 among teammates, so teams are strongly encouraged to create pods that are smaller than the maximum of 25.
- Additional practice recommendations
 - o Start with skill development practices that allow participants to maintain social distance from members of other households for the first week or two of practice.
 - o This may help slow initial disease transmission on the team and ease participants back into practice for those who have not had much physical activity during the pause.
- Carpooling is discouraged as much as possible.
- Coaches should consider whether contact can be modified. For example, can contact be reduced among players during practice in order to limit close contact?
- Minimize sharing of objects.
 - o Do not share individual water bottles, community snacks, or towels.
 - o Encourage use of dedicated personal equipment, such as basketballs.

Follow face covering requirements

- Face coverings must be worn indoors by all persons at all times, including practices and, when allowed, games with only the following exceptions.
- Face coverings must be worn while transitioning to and from the basketball court.
- Players must wear face coverings while on the bench.
- Types of face coverings can include a cloth mask, a neck gaiter, a scarf, a bandanna, or a religious face covering.
- CDC recommends using two layers of fabric when making a cloth face covering. Face coverings that are made of thinner single-layer fabric such as certain types of masks, scarves, neck gaiters, or bandannas may not be as effective for blocking droplets that come out when speaking, coughing, or sneezing and should not be used unless there are no alternatives.
- A face covering must cover the nose and mouth completely. The covering should not be overly tight or restrictive and should feel comfortable to wear.
- Any masks that incorporate a valve that is designed to facilitate easy exhaling, mesh masks, or masks with openings, holes, visible gaps in the design or material, or vents are not sufficient face coverings because they allow droplets to be released from the mask.

- People are not permitted to remove their face coverings during activities that involve a high level of exertion.

COVID Guidelines Subject to Change

- We will continue to follow MDH guidelines and update this document as new information comes available.
- We will have more guidelines on competitions once we hear more from the MDH.
- If you have questions about the policies or specific cases to your family situation, please reach out to Matt Becker at mbecker0410@yahoo.com.