

## YOUTH SPORTS GUIDELINES

### SUMMARY

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These Youth Sports Guidelines (“guidelines”) are based in part, on recommendations made by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) and include:

- Restrictions based on the type of sport and the frequency of contact the players have with one another while practicing or playing the sport;
- The benefits to limiting spectators at practices and sporting events to avoid gatherings, and
- Requiring teams from outside St. Louis County to comply with St. Louis County restrictions while playing in St. Louis County.

Incorporating these recommendations, these guidelines:

- Classify sports based on frequency of contact with other players in accordance with the CDC’s determination that the spread of COVID-19 can differ depending on the sport or activity. The sports classifications are defined as high-frequency of contact, moderate frequency of contact and low frequency of contact;
- Recognize that gatherings of individuals increase the risk of transmission and, therefore, limit spectators;
- Require every team playing in St. Louis County to follow the guidelines;
- Recognize that moderate and low frequency of contact sports present less risk for transmission and, therefore, allow competitions with fewer restrictions.

**These guidelines are updated and effective February 17, 2021 In accordance with the St. Louis County Department of Public Health’s (“DPH”)Third Amended Safer At Home Order effective February 11, 2021, 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.**

The information regarding SARS-CoV-2, the virus causing the COVID-19 illness, is changing rapidly. As a result, guidance given nationally and in Saint 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.

Saint Louis County continues to balance the importance of activity for children with the reality of the continued community spread of COVID-19 in St. Louis County. These guidelines are necessary to attempt to limit the transmission of COVID-19 as students engage in sporting activities so as not to impede the progress that has been made to return students to the classroom. These Guidelines are based on engagement with external stakeholders, including school athletic directors, pediatricians, and other sport’s advocates. This partnership’s goal is to outline best practices by all who sponsor and support youth sports in Saint Louis County.

## 1. TYPES OF ACTIVITIES

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According to the CDC, the risk of COVID-19 spread increases in youth sports settings is 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.

These guidelines incorporate this CDC risk assessment.

## 2. TYPES OF SPORTS

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In accordance with the CDC's risk assessments in youth sports setting, sports are classified based on the level of contact between players, as low frequency of contact, moderate frequency of contact or high frequency of contact.

- **High frequency of contact sports** include basketball, boxing, ice hockey tackle/flag/touch football, martial arts, rugby, water polo, and wrestling.
- **Moderate frequency of contact sports** include baseball, cheerleading, crew/rowing, dance team, fencing, floor hockey, field hockey, lacrosse, racquetball, soccer, softball, team handball, ultimate frisbee, and volleyball.
- **Low frequency of contact sports** include diving, extreme sports, gymnastics, rodeo, water skiing, adventure racing, bicycling, canoeing/kayaking, field events (high jump, pole vault, javelin, shot-put), golf, handball, horseback riding, skating (ice, in-line, roller), skateboarding, weight lifting, windsurfing, badminton, bodybuilding, bowling, orienteering, fishing, riflery, rope jumping, running, sailing, scuba diving, swimming, table tennis, tennis, and track.

For sports or activities not included in the above categories that are similar in nature to such other sports or activities, please apply the category most closely associated with the sport or activity. If there is any question regarding the categorization of an activity, please contact the DPH to determine which category applies.

## 3. APPLICATION AND DEFINITIONS

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The restrictions and requirements of these guidelines apply to all individuals age 18 or younger.

The restrictions and requirements of these guidelines apply to school sponsored and affiliated sports teams and leagues as well as non-school sponsored and affiliated sports teams.

Competitions are not limited to the St. Louis area/region as long as any team from outside of St. Louis County that plays in St. Louis County follows these guidelines..

“Spectators” include parents, guardians, other family members, and anyone else not participating, coaching or officiating in a practice or sporting event.

## 4. SPECTATOR RESTRICTIONS

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Due to ongoing widespread community transmission of COVID-19, it is recommended that persons who are not essential for athletic activity operations including Spectators, volunteers, parents/guardians, or non-essential visitors, not be allowed. At most, each athlete shall be allowed two Spectators to observe gameplay; however, they must comply with St. Louis County's face covering and social/physical distancing requirements. The athletic leaders are responsible for limiting and controlling the number of Spectators to enforce the social distancing restrictions.

- It is strongly recommended that NO Spectators attend indoor sporting events. If Spectators are allowed, they should be limited to two Spectators per athlete, or less, if the space does not allow for that number of Spectators to comply with social distancing requirements.
- In NO event shall the number of Spectators exceed the capacity percentage limitation of the space. If the maximum capacity limitation does not allow 6 feet of distance between every set of Spectators throughout the event, the athletic directors and facility management are responsible for further limiting the crowd to reach compliance with social distancing.
- In calculating capacity limitations, limited by the percentage allowed by the DPH Order, all coaches, officials, participants, Spectators and any other person in attendance shall be included.
- An athletic director, school, club, team, or sporting venue (fields, courts or other sport facility) is allowed to further limit the number of or prohibit Spectators if enforcing these restrictions is not practicable.
- For any event in which the capacity of the venue does not allow the full number of limited Spectators (2 per participant) the athletic leaders are responsible for identifying a reasonable accommodation in order to meet the capacity restrictions and to provide parent communication in the event of an injury or emergency if parents are not present.

## 5. RESTRICTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

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### Guidelines for high frequency of contact sports:

- A. **For players 14 years of age and older who are in high school OR players 14-18 years of age who are not in high school:**
- Full team practices are allowed, with no limit on the number of participants.
  - Each school sponsored or non-school sponsored and affiliated sports teams **MUST** submit a proposed plan to DPH for approval in order to play in games and competitions with other teams from the St. Louis Area Region.
  - **See Section 6 below for Restrictions on Tournaments.**
  - If possible, plans should be submitted by school district and not by individual schools.
  - If possible, plans should be submitted at the club or league level and not by individual teams.
  - Players and officials **MUST** wear a face covering, including during, games, practices and while training if done indoors. If the practice or game is outdoors, the player is not required to wear a face covering while engaging in vigorous physical activity.
  - Coaches **MUST** remain in mask/face coverings at all times.

- Plans **MUST** include the same screening, quarantine and isolation requirements required for all youth sports activities.
- Plans **MUST** include the safety measures to be instituted in accordance with Section 6 of these guidelines.
- Plans **MUST** include acknowledgment that they will comply with DPH for contact tracing, including the method by which lists of all players, Spectators and others attending any practice or event will be maintained.
- Plans **MUST** include how Spectators will be managed and limited and should follow the restrictions included for all other youth sports activities.
- Failure to comply with an approved plan, including controlling capacity and Spectator limitations, that are reported by members of the public, may result in DPH's revoking the approval of the plan.

**B. For players younger than 14 years of age or in middle school:**

- Full team practices are allowed, with no limit on the number of participants, but a limit of 2 coaches.
- Games and competitions with other teams are allowed. If a team is from outside St. Louis County, that team must agree to comply and comply with these guidelines to play in St. Louis County.
- **See Section 6 below for Restrictions on Tournaments.**
- Social distancing **MUST** be maintained as much as reasonably possible during practice and games.
- Players and officials **MUST** wear a face covering, including during, games, practices and while training if done indoors. If the practice or game is outdoors, the player is not required to wear a face covering while engaging in vigorous physical activity.
- Coaches **MUST** remain in mask/face coverings at all times.
- Players and coaches **MUST** sanitize hands and equipment regularly.
- Every individual participating in a practice or game, including coaches, must be screened every day that an individual participates in youth sports.
- All equipment (such as bats, sticks, helmets, sleds, etc.) must be disinfected between individual uses.

**Guidelines for moderate frequency of contact sports for players of all ages:**

- Full team practices are allowed, with no limit on the number of participants, but a limit of 2 coaches.
- Games and competitions with other teams are allowed. If a team is from outside St. Louis County, that team must agree to comply and comply with these guidelines to play in St. Louis County.
- **See Section 6 below for Restrictions on Tournaments.**
- Stunting is allowed for cheerleaders..
- Chanting is allowed for cheerleaders as long as 6 feet of distance is maintained between each cheerleader; they are in a single line and they are wearing facial coverings.
- Social distancing **MUST** be maintained as much as possible during practice and games.
- Players and officials **MUST** wear a face covering, including during, games, practices and while training if done indoors. If the practice or game is outside, the player is not required to wear a face covering while engaging in vigorous physical activity.

- Coaches **MUST** wear mask/face coverings at all times.
- Players and coaches **MUST** sanitize their hands and equipment regularly. Wearing masks before, during and immediately following activities is required, including prior to screening, except as specifically excluded during the individual athlete's or official's engagement in vigorous physical activity.
- Every individual, including coaches, **MUST** be screened every day that such individual participates in youth sports.
- All equipment (such as bats, sticks, helmets, sleds, etc.) must be disinfected between individual uses.

#### **Guidelines for low frequency of contact sports for players of all ages:**

- Full team practices are permitted with restrictions.
- Games and competitions with other teams are allowed. If a team is from outside St. Louis County, that team must agree to comply and comply with these guidelines to play in St. Louis County.
- **See Section 6 below for Restrictions on Tournaments.**
- Tournament style competitions that involve sports activities played outdoors, such as golf, where individual players can socially distance throughout the competition, are allowed.
- Social distancing **MUST** be maintained as much as possible during practice and games.
- Players and officials **MUST** wear a face covering, including during, games, practices and while training if done indoors. If the practice or game is outside, the player is not required to wear a face covering while engaging in vigorous physical activity.
- Coaches **MUST** wear mask/face coverings at all times.
- Players and coaches **MUST** sanitize their hands and equipment regularly.
- Wearing masks before, during and immediately following activities is required, including prior to screening, except as specifically excluded during the individual athlete's engagement in vigorous physical activity.
- Every individual, including coaches and officials, **MUST** be screened every day that an individual participates in youth sports.
- All equipment (such as bats, sticks, helmets, sleds, etc.) **MUST** be disinfected between individual uses.

## **6. REQUIREMENTS FOR TOURNAMENTS**

Tournaments, performances, competitions, meets, invitationals and showcases are permitted as long as they are conducted as if they are a single competition, including:

- Allow only the two competing teams to be on the field of play, court, rink, gym or other warm up area, at a time.
- Only allow the next two competing teams on the field of play, court, rink, gym or other warm up area, after the other teams have left.
- Schedule games so there is a time period allowed between each game for each team to arrive and exit without encountering the teams playing before and after.
- Do not allow congregating of teams or Spectators before or after the games.

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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- Do not allow Spectators around the fields, in the stands or inside gymnasiums until 15 minutes before scheduled games and require them to leave within 15 minutes or immediately following the completion of the game.
- Teams from outside St. Louis County are allowed to play as long as the sponsors, coaches, players and Spectators agree to abide by these guidelines.
- Spectators must be socially distanced and wear Face Coverings.
- For outdoor activities, the number of Spectators must not exceed a number that can socially distance.
- For indoor activities, the number of Spectators must not exceed the capacity percentage allowed by DPH Order or of the number of Spectators that can be accommodated while socially distanced, **WHICHEVER IS LESS.**
- For outdoor activities, such as track and field or cross-country, no congregating in tents, that are not serving a medical purpose, is allowed and Spectators must be limited and spread out to allow for social distancing

## **7. ALL PERMITTED ACTIVITIES ARE SUBJECT TO AND CONDITIONED UPON COMPLIANCE WITH THE FOLLOWING SAFETY MEASURES:**

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- Athletes, coaches, and officials shall **MUST** undergo a standardized health screening and temperature check on a daily basis prior to engaging in any sports activity allowed by these guidelines.
- All Spectators **MUST** wear a face covering at all times and maintain social distance.
- All Spectators may be subject to screening and temperature checks.
- Players and officials **MUST** wear a face covering, including during, games, practices and while training if done indoors. If the practice or game is outside, the player is not required to wear a face covering while engaging in vigorous physical activity.
- Coaches **MUST** wear a face covering at all times.
- Screening times and practice start times **MUST** be spaced out to limit the number of athletes and others in the area.
- The number of players sitting in confined areas (e.g., dugouts) **MUST** be limited to allow for social distancing.
- Hand hygiene is essential. Organizations and facilities **MUST** 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, social distancing and mask requirements apply at all times while present within the locker room. Cleaning is required and equipment must be stored in a designated area.
- To the extent people are present, including Spectators, their identity and contact information should be known for contact tracing purposes.
- Spectators, including parents, guardians, and others **MUST NOT** congregate. This includes formal and informal congregations of Spectators at the fields, parking lots or outside of their respective, individual modes of transportation.
- A drop-off and pick-up line for practices is recommended to avoid unnecessary exposure.

- Water bottles **MUST** not be shared. An individual athlete may use his or her own water bottle, which should be clearly marked with his or her name. Cups used for water should be for single-use and disposable.
- Coolers must be properly sanitized after each use, and each team or group shall have its own cooler.
- CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting coolers, equipment, locker rooms and all other items and/or areas referenced in these guidelines **MUST** be followed.
- Whirlpools or cold/hot tubs should be avoided. If they are required for use in an emergency, follow best practices. Have a cold-water immersion tub on-site or within 5 minutes of the field.
- If ice towels are available, CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting **MUST** be followed. Ice towels shall be used only once, then discarded or washed properly.
- Team huddles, handshakes, fist bumps, and other unnecessary physical contact are not allowed.
- Any shared equipment **MUST** be disinfected with EPA certified products. 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.

## 8. SCREENING

Every coach, athlete and official **MUST** be screened on a daily basis before they enter the field, campus or facility where the sporting activity is designated to occur. They must wear a face mask for the duration of the health screening unless masking is not possible due to a medical condition.

Spectators may also be subject to screening and temperature checks.

A consistent person should be designated to provide healthcare screenings. This person must wear a face mask and gloves when screening others.

The **screening process** is as follows:

- Ask each individual if they have experienced any of the following new or worsening symptoms within the past 24 hours:
  - Fever (temperature greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit)
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or trouble breathing
  - Sore throat, different than your seasonal allergies
  - Loss of smell and/or taste
  - Diarrhea or vomiting
  - Abdominal pain
- Ask if they have a close contact who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 2 weeks.

**Positive Screening** – If an athlete, coach, official or Spectator answers “yes” to any of the screening questions, he or she should stay home and, in any event, **MUST** not enter the field, campus or facility where the sporting activity is designated to occur and will be sent home immediately and told to notify his or her health care provider. If an athlete’s parents, guardians, or other transportation provider are not present, the athlete must be escorted to a designated isolation room or an area away from others, and the athlete **MUST** wear a mask or face covering at all times.

Individuals who have had a significant exposure (defined as direct contact or prolonged exposure within 6 feet) to a positive COVID-19 individual **MUST** quarantine for a minimum of 14 days from the last date of exposure to the positive COVID-19 individual. **If the exposed individual has a negative SARS-Cov 2 test, they still must quarantine for 14 days.** If the exposed individual develops symptoms during these 14 days, testing for SARS Cov-2 should occur.

The school, coach, or other official, as applicable, is required to contact the St. Louis County Department of Public Health to notify the Department of the positive screening or knowledge of an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is a close contact of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19. The notifying individual must provide information regarding all known contacts of the positive-screened individual. To aid in this contact tracing, all schools, coaches, and other officials conducting the practice or competition must keep a detailed account of all the participants at each practice or competition.

If the individual has health-related questions, the individual must consult with the individual's own health care provider.

Individuals returning to sports after a positive COVID-19 diagnosis **MUST** consult with both their own health care provider and the Department of Public Health of the county in which they reside. Only the St. Louis County Department of Public Health can release a St. Louis County resident from quarantine or isolation, unless an emergency policy is in place allowing others to do so.

## **9. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR THOSE WITH HEALTH CONDITIONS**

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Certain individual athletes on a team may be at higher risk for severe illness than other athletes, such as athletes who have asthma, diabetes, or other health problems. Those individuals with underlying conditions may be more likely to have severe COVID-19 illness. Parents, guardians, and coaches should give special consideration to protecting these athletes.

Athletes, coaches, parents, and guardians should consider delaying the athlete's participation in sports and athletic activities if the athlete has any of the following conditions:

- Chronic lung disease, including moderate or severe asthma,
- Type 2 diabetes,
- Chronic kidney disease,
- Sickle Cell disease,
- Serious Heart or Cardiovascular conditions (such as coronary artery disease, cardiomyopathies, pulmonary hypertension; or
- Immunocompromised (e.g., any transplant recipient needing immunosuppressant medications – steroids, biologics, etc., and patients receiving chemotherapy) – if you think your child is immunocompromised, please check with your child's healthcare provider.

Parents or guardians who have children with these risk factors should consider consulting with their children's healthcare provider about their children's participation in sports since limited data exist and, in many cases (well-controlled diabetic or asthmatic) an increased risk is likely not present. Coaches should exercise caution in attending youth sport activities if they have any of the above-identified conditions.

## **10. ENFORCEMENT**

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Organizations, teams, and coaches must understand the importance of enforcing these restrictions and requirements to enable children to continue to participate in sporting activities. Under DPH Orders, Saint Louis County can require an organization or team to cease otherwise permitted activities if the restrictions

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and requirements are not being followed. In addition to the expectation that organizations, teams, and coaches will enforce the requirements set forth in these guidelines, all other enforcement actions, including Department of Public Health ordered closure, civil action, and criminal action, remain available to enforce these guidelines.

It is imperative that parents and guardians, as well as those who are organizing and coaching the children/athletes, emphasize the need to follow these guidelines in order to reduce community transmission of the virus and allow additional permitted activities in the future, including competitive play. This means that ancillary gatherings and meetings of parents and athletes should not be sanctioned or sponsored.

Organizations, teams, coaches, and parents **MUST**, in accordance with DPH orders, cooperate and assist in contact tracing, including maintaining a list of players, Spectators and others attending practices and events.

## 11. REFERENCES

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- Saint Louis County Department of Public Health COVID-19-Related Orders and Guidelines at [www.stlcorona.com](http://www.stlcorona.com).
- [CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#). Last reviewed September 10, 2020.
- [CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Tool](#). Last reviewed May 7, 2020.
- [CDC Handwashing Guidelines](#). Last reviewed April 2, 2020.
- [Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 \(Interim Guidance\)](#). Last reviewed April 30, 2020.
- [Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#). Published April 16, 2020.
- [State of Missouri Novel Coronavirus Analytics](#). Published May 5, 2020.
- [The resurgence of sport in the wake of COVID-19: cardiac considerations in competitive athletes](#).
- Resocialization of Sports in the Saint Louis Region. Last Reviewed September 10, 2020.
- The Path to Zero and Schools: Achieving Pandemic Resilient Teaching and Learning Spaces. Last Reviewed September 3, 2020
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/playing-sports.html> Last updated August 7, 2020