

PLAY SAFELY

Public Health Guidance and Suggested Guidelines for Returning to Youth Sports Safely During COVID-19

Over the last several months, Delawareans have helped flatten the COVID-19 curve by staying home, avoiding close social contact, wearing face coverings, and taking other basic public health precautions to protect ourselves, our families, and our neighbors. It has been a difficult time, for sure. But we've worked together to successfully limit the community spread and the toll of COVID-19 in Delaware.

As Delaware reopens and we come together more often in public places, let's not jeopardize that hard-fought progress.

It's important to remember that COVID-19 is still active in our state. Spending time around others outside your household will increase your risk of COVID-19 infection. Our most vulnerable — including the elderly and Delawareans with serious health conditions — have a higher risk of becoming seriously ill.

If you are an organizer of a youth sports team or league, you must review and adhere to the following guidance issued on Friday, June 19, by the Division of Public Health (DPH) before beginning practices or hosting a competition or tournament. Youth sports organizers and facilities who intend to host tournaments in the State of Delaware must draft and submit a plan for protecting children and their families during COVID-19.

On the following pages you will find DPH guidance and additional recommendations — listed by sport — to help youth organizers as they prepare to host youth sports competitions and tournaments. We know they may seem unusual, but resuming sports increases the level of contact, and therefore risk, between children, coaches, staff and spectators. The ongoing risk for spreading COVID-19 is very real, especially to our most vulnerable family members and neighbors.

Our goal is to keep Delaware children and families healthy as we safely return to youth sports during COVID-19. Thank you for your partnership in that effort.

Dr. Karyl Rattay

Public Health Director, State of Delaware



For the latest on COVID-19 in Delaware and for a list of COVID-19 testing sites, visit de.gov/coronavirus.

Division of Public Health Guidance on Youth Sports

GENERAL GUIDANCE

- All youth sports must follow all applicable guidance and restrictions for operation below. For the purposes of this guidance, risk is based on risk for spreading COVID-19. All youth sports may resume competition on June 15, 2020, and may resume tournaments on June 20, 2020, according to this guidance, with the exception of football, wrestling, rugby, and hockey (ice and roller). These sports are considered high-risk. Basketball may be played outside, but not inside.
- Tournaments are not permitted until plans for the tournaments are approved by the Division of Public Health. Tournament organizers should submit plans to HSPcontact@delaware.gov for review. Plans must include a method to collect contact information for all players, staff, coaches, officials and spectators, as well as team rosters and game schedules to assist with contact tracing in the event of a COVID-19 infection.
- All sports must adhere closely to CDC Guidance:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
- Sports practices, competitions and tournaments must address the following, at a minimum:
 - » **FACE COVERINGS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING**
 - ◆ Each sport participant (players/staff/volunteers/parents/spectators) must comply with face covering consistent with the [State of Emergency](#) order. This is especially important when social distancing cannot be maintained.
 - ◆ Each sport must comply with social distancing guidelines of 6 feet or more for all players, staff, coaches, officials and spectators to the greatest extent possible.
 - ◆ Individual skill building is preferred when social distancing is difficult.
 - ◆ Scrimmages within teams are preferred over competitions with other teams.
 - ◆ Limit the time players spend close to others by conducting full contact play only in game-time situations.
 - ◆ Organize/stagger player arrival and departure procedures to reduce mixing of teams and close contact.
 - ◆ Have players and spectators wait in cars before practice or between games.
 - ◆ DPH strongly recommends that practice, competition and tournament groups/teams be limited to 15 players plus staff. During competitions and tournaments, groups/teams should remain stable from one day to the next, meaning the same players and staff should make up one group/team. Players and staff should not switch between groups/teams, and interaction between groups/teams should be restricted as much as possible to reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19 between teams. Consider staggered scheduling by group/team.
 - ◆ Ensure adequate space between the water and personal equipment of each player so that physical distancing of at least 6 feet can be maintained during breaks.
 - ◆ Players should not gather in enclosed spaces, such as dugouts, unless they can maintain a distance of six feet apart.
 - ◆ Ensure social distancing during non-playing time: arrange alternate seating so that youth are not clustered together on bleachers.
 - ◆ Discourage unnecessary contact like high fives, hugs and post-game line-ups and handshakes with opposing team and officials.

Updated: 6/19/20



Division of Public Health Guidance on Youth Sports

- ◆ Stagger use of communal spaces like locker rooms.
- ◆ Any spectators must adhere to the gathering restrictions set forth in the State of Emergency Orders.

» HYGIENE

- ◆ Players, staff, coaches, officials and all participants in youth sports should be encouraged to wash hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before and after practice and games.
- ◆ Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations must be readily available for all players, staff, coaches, officials, spectators and all participants throughout the business location, including at each entry and exit at a minimum. Hand sanitizer must be composed of at least sixty percent (60%) ethanol or seventy percent (70%) isopropanol.
- ◆ Encourage all players, staff, coaches, officials and all participants to cover their coughs or sneezes.
- ◆ Spitting is strongly discouraged.

» DISINFECTION PROCEDURES AND FREQUENCY

- ◆ Use an EPA List 6 approved disinfectant for frequently touched surfaces.
- ◆ Facilities must be cleaned at least once per day.
- ◆ High contact surfaces, including but not limited to doorknobs, light switches, and railings, must be cleaned every fifteen (15) minutes to two (2) hours.
- ◆ Use of shared water fountains is discouraged, but if they are open, they must be cleaned every fifteen (15) minutes to two (2) hours.

» EQUIPMENT MANAGEMENT

- ◆ Players, staff, coaches, officials and all participants should bring their own drinks, towels and clothing.
- ◆ Water bottle refill stations can be used but must be cleaned regularly by staff. Use of shared water fountains is discouraged.
- ◆ Discourage the shared use of materials such as golf clubs, or baseball gloves. If sharing is unavoidable, materials must be cleaned after each use.
- ◆ Shared equipment, such as gymnastics equipment, must be cleaned between users.
- ◆ Instead of a traditional whistle, consider using an artificial noisemaker.

» COMPETITIONS AND TOURNAMENTS

- ◆ Competitions between two (2) teams are permitted.
- ◆ Tournaments, or a series of games, matches or other activities where individual teams have more than one game with more than one team, are permitted.
- ◆ Out-of-state competitions and tournaments should be avoided. If a team chooses to travel to an out-of-state competition or tournaments, the team should follow social distancing and hygiene requirements in this document along with any applicable requirements set out by the state to which they are traveling.
- ◆ Hosting competitions or tournaments with out-of-state participants is discouraged at this time. If the organization chooses to host one, out-of-state participants must adhere to the guidelines in this document.

Updated: 6/19/20



Division of Public Health Guidance on Youth Sports

» SCREENING FOR AND ADDRESSING ILLNESS, INCLUDING COVID-19

- ◆ [DPH Essential Services Screening Guidance](#) should be followed for athletes, staff, coaches and officials for practices, competitions and tournaments.
- ◆ Those that are feeling sick, coughing, or sneezing should stay home.
- ◆ Those who have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 or who have tested positive for COVID-19 should not attend athletic activities until cleared by DPH.
- ◆ Individuals who become ill with COVID-19 symptoms should be immediately isolated from others until they are able to leave the premises.

» VENTILATION

- ◆ Outdoors practice and play is safer than indoors.
- ◆ If playing indoors, increase ventilation by using fans or by opening windows or doors (if safe).

» COMMUNICATION

- ◆ Youth sports organizations must post extensive signage instructing participants and spectators about required face coverings, maintaining 6 feet distance, hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes and to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Printable signs that will help you comply with signage requirements are available at de.gov/playsafelysign.
 - ◆ Identify a safety and hygiene manager who is responsible for COVID-19 screening and concerns. All coaches, staff, officials and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
 - ◆ Coaches, staff, officials, parents and players must be informed and routinely reminded of team infection control measures.
 - ◆ Coaches, staff, officials, parents and players must be informed about the expectation to stay home when sick and are encouraged to contact the team safety and hygiene manager if they test positive for COVID-19 and to inform DPH about possible exposures.
- Each organization and facility must comply with all other state, county and local requirements.
 - Athletes and staff/coaches considered vulnerable populations should continue to stay at home and are encouraged to obtain medical clearance for participation.
 - Note that older players might be better able to follow directions for social distancing and take other protective actions compared to younger players.

Updated: 6/19/20



Suggested Guidelines for Returning to Youth Sports Safely During COVID-19



BASEBALL

- If it is not feasible for a home plate umpire to be 6 feet behind the catcher, the home plate umpire can stand behind pitcher's mound (socially distanced from pitcher) in order to call balls and strikes.
- Implement procedures to minimize a catcher's exposure, such as:
 - » Moving batter's box up 18".
 - » Have the catcher wear a face covering or shield over catcher's mask.
- Players may not take a lead from first base, to prevent a first baseman from holding the runner on first.
- The ball should be rotated out as frequently as possible or should be disinfected between innings.
- Players should wash or sanitize hands between innings.
- Base coaches should distance themselves from baserunners, players, and umpires in field of play.
- Remind players that spitting or chewing gum or sunflower seeds could increase the spread of COVID-19.



SOCCER

- Headers, body checking and intentional direct contact with other players increases the risk of COVID-19. Consider disallowing them.
- Time spent in defensive walls should be minimized.
- No player other than the goalkeeper may be in the 6-yard box. Fields without one may define a "goalkeeper only" area.
- When the ball goes out of play, it should be kicked in.
- No player or coach should pick up the ball (especially during a dead-ball period). Rather than a drop ball, players may use their feet/legs to move the ball.
- The ball must be sanitized after each game.
- Goalkeepers should wear gloves and disinfect them between games.
- All players and officials should sanitize their hands before and after games.



Suggested Guidelines for Returning to Youth Sports Safely During COVID-19



BOY'S LACROSSE

• Alternate Faceoff Procedures

- 1.1 Coin Toss:** Before the start of play, the "official" will call one player from each team and conduct a coin toss. The winner of the coin toss will start the competition with possession of the ball at the center spot. The loser of the coin toss will have the first alternating possession.
- 1.2 Positioning of Players and Starting Play:** The team that wins the coin toss will start with the ball in their offensive half of the field, near the center spot, with a free clear. All other players should be at least five yards from the player with the ball.
- 1.3 Post-Goal:** The goalkeeper or official removes the ball from the goal, and the team that was scored on will start with possession in the crease or along the goal line extended. No restart will take place if any player is within 5 yards of the ball carrier. When the whistle is blown by the official, play will resume.
- 1.4 Starting a New Quarter/Half:** The team that loses the coin toss at the start of the game will have possession to start the second half. No player should be within 5 yards of the ball carrier.

- **Loose-Ball Play:** When a loose ball is on the ground and cannot be quickly picked up because a group of players are tied up in a scrum, the official can end play early at their discretion (typically four or more seconds) and award the ball via alternate possession rule.
- **Procedures for Loose-Ball Technical Fouls:** When a loose-ball violation has been committed, the offended team can receive a quick play-on when an official visually and verbally signals "play-on." If the offended team cannot quickly gain possession of the loose ball, the play-on must be ended immediately. In general, if it is unclear whether the offended team will quickly gain possession of the ball, play should be stopped, and the ball awarded to the team entitled to possession.

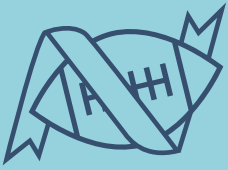
GIRL'S LACROSSE



- **The Draw:** Coin toss to determine possession at start of game. Goalkeeper ball after a goal is scored, whistle start.
- **Ground Balls:** No more than two players contest a ground ball (current 10 and under rule).
- **8-Meter Positioning:** Only one player per hash on 8-meter setup; existing rule that allows the defense to occupy adjacent hashes remains in force.



Suggested Guidelines for Returning to Youth Sports Safely During COVID-19



FLAG FOOTBALL

- There should be no line play — no offensive or defensive line, QB takes snap himself.
- Teams should be limited to six individuals per side.
- Players should be instructed to only remove flags — no wrapping up ball carrier.
- Fumbles result in an automatic turnover to opposing team.
- Team huddles should be kept to 30 seconds or less.



FIELD HOCKEY

- When a “Penalty Corner” occurs, all attackers and defenders should socially distance before the ball is inserted.
 - » No castle or battery at the top of the circle (this is when players at the top of the circle set up in close proximity to each other).
 - » Once the ball is inserted, players may move freely.
- The defensive team will not be permitted to congregate in a huddle for defensive strategy. (Receiving signals from the sideline is acceptable.)
 - » No supporting a defender running out with a foot or starting block.
 - » No more than the goalkeeper and one player in the goal.
- The attack team will not be permitted to congregate in a huddle for attacking strategy. (Receiving signals from the sideline is acceptable.)
- Players should not pick up the ball with their hands but use their sticks to move the ball (e.g., they can bring in a ball to restart play after a ball goes out of bounds).



BASKETBALL

- Outside games only are allowed at this time.
- Teams on defense can only play zone defense. Three players must always stay out of the paint.
- Teams on offense must always keep three players above the 3-point line.



VOLLEYBALL

- Team size should be limited to six people per side.
- Players should stay within their designated zone on the court to ensure social distancing.

