

Return to Youth Sports After COVID-19 Shutdown: Guidelines for Coaches

This document is intended to summarize and simplify [recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) and [other youth sports guidance](#) for coaches as they prepare for upcoming seasons during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please note that, while preparation can lower the risk for an outbreak within a team or a league, it is not possible to eliminate transmission entirely. Adherence to these recommendations, however, can help to manage transmission risk and ensure that teams and their athletes return to sports as safely as possible.

PREPARATION FOR THE SEASON

-  Clear with your supporting organization and regional and national governing body, if applicable, that legal concerns, including insurance coverage, are addressed and facility supports, such as equipment, bathroom and portable toilet sanitation, are properly in place.
-  Establish a club or school policy for restarting, and develop signs, handouts, and email communications sharing strict expectations for players and families regarding symptom monitoring and adhering to established sick policies. Have athletes and parents sign the “Return to Youth Sports COVID-19 Compact.” Athletes with high-risk conditions should consult with their doctor prior to returning to play.
-  Establish a monitoring system (e.g., daily sign-in sheet, app- or web-based survey) to confirm that coaches and athletes, or someone in their family, haven’t had close-contact or exposure to someone with the virus.
-  Designate a team COVID Coordinator who will serve as the point of contact for athletes reporting COVID-19 symptoms or exposure. This may be an athletic trainer, volunteer parent team manager, or volunteer assistant or head coach from a community or club team.
-  Limit equipment sharing and disinfect equipment between player use whenever possible (at a minimum, between drills, at timeouts/innings/quarters/etc.), at the start and end of the day and during breaks.
-  Establish a plan to clean facilities and ensure adequate supplies including hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, masks or face shields, and cleaning materials for all sports equipment. You may need to limit access to athletic training rooms and locker rooms/changing areas.
-  Establish protocols to protect coaching staff from exposure to athletes who may be pre-symptomatic or asymptomatic with COVID-19 infection; protocols should include masking, social distancing on fields, sidelines or in gyms, and frequent hand hygiene.
-  Establish protocols that limit spectators and establish safe parameters when allowed, including mask wearing, maintaining at least 6 feet between individuals, and cleaning of stadiums prior to and after events.
-  Establish protocols for return to practice and play for any coach or player who has symptoms of or exposure to COVID-19, including a required 10-day quarantine with no fever or respiratory symptoms for 3 days prior to return to sports.
-  Establish a plan for the COVID Coordinator to communicate with other teams, as well as local health authorities, for guidance and contact tracing if a player or coach becomes infected with the coronavirus. This should include gathering email addresses, phone numbers, and website contacts that are also available to players and families.
-  Establish policy for immediate exclusion if ill with any COVID-19 symptoms or illness symptoms in general so that the athlete can seek medical attention.

SCALING UP YOUTH SPORTS ACTIVITIES BASED ON LEVEL OF COVID-19 COMMUNITY TRANSMISSION

- ✓ Scale activities up and down based on the disease burden, or amount of circulating COVID-19 cases, in your community. The *pyramid to the right* shows an easy way to adjust activities during periods of high (red) and low (green) circulating infections in a community, as reported by local and state health departments.
- ✓ Follow local guidelines for types of permissible activities by level of community virus transmission, as determined by local and state public health departments.
- ✓ Limit spectators and parent/family attendance whenever possible and always institute social distancing principles when spectators are present. Coaches and spectators should wear masks.
- ✓ Allow athletes to start training by conditioning in small, distanced groups, rather than immediately jumping to scrimmages, full-team workouts and games, both for injury prevention and to permit COVID-19 transmission to decrease to a point when full-team training is permitted.
- ✓ Set up practices to encourage social distancing—for example, avoid team huddles and designate specific coaches to train in regular groups (e.g., by position, offensive/defensive subunits) rather than exposing all coaches to all players.



GAME PLAY

- ✓ When your community has decreased transmission to moderate or low levels and competition in sports may begin, plan to schedule games within your local region first.
- ✓ Expand to regional competition only as regional infections decline to very low levels, as reported by your local and state health departments.
- ✓ Competition among low-risk sports (e.g., tennis, track and field, golf, swimming) may occur in communities with moderate levels of COVID-19 transmission. Competition in higher-risk sports (e.g. football, ice hockey, lacrosse, indoor basketball, wrestling, rugby) should not begin until communities have achieved lower rates of transmission. Be aware that many regions will be in the phase of moderate levels of virus transmission for a period of time.



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✉ CONTACT US:

Matthew Grady, MD
Christina Master, MD
Katherine Easby, ATC
sportsmed@email.chop.edu