

## **Informed Consent for Athletic Participation and Reopening Guidelines**

February 2021

*Due to the nature and risk of COVID-19 transmission while participating in Outdoor High-Contact and Moderate-Contact sports, this information regarding risk and safety protocols is provided to all parents/guardians and athletes participating in such sports, and we require each parent and student athlete to sign an informed consent indicating their understanding and acknowledgement of the risks indicated herein.*

Parents and Athletes,

We are excited to announce that the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) has presented [return-to-competition guidelines for outdoor sports](#), based on each county's Adjusted Case Rate for COVID-19 per 100,000 people. The threshold for outdoor sports to begin competition is 14 cases per 100,000 people, as of Friday, February 26, 2021. To ensure our athletes, coaches and support personnel are safe, the following guidelines and protocols will be in place. Please read all of the information below to fully understand the protocols that will be in place. Once you have read the following, a parent and/or guardian and student athlete signature will be required in order to allow your son/daughter to participate.

COVID-19 continues to pose a severe risk to communities and requires all people in California to follow recommended precautions. This guidance provides direction on outdoor and indoor youth and recreational adult sports activities to support a safe environment for these sports. The guidance applies to all organized youth sports and recreation— including school and community sponsored programs, and privately-organized clubs and leagues — and adult recreational sports (hereafter youth and adult sports).

Inter-team competitions (i.e., between two teams) in a limited capacity, resumed in California beginning January 25, 2021. **The guidelines outlined in this document shall take effect on February 26, 2021**

**The status of return-to-competition is subject to change at any time given the level of COVID-19 transmission in California.**

### **COVID-19 Facts**

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are steps we can take to reduce the risks to athletes, coaches, staff, and their families significantly. For further information regarding COVID-19 please refer to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

## Factors Affecting the Risk of Transmission

- Risk increases when face coverings are not worn, and physical distancing is not maintained.
- Risk increases with increasing levels of contact between participants; closer contact (particularly face-to-face contact), and the frequency and total duration of close contact, increases the risk that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.
- Risk increases with greater exertion levels; greater exertion increases the rate of breathing and the quantity of air that is inhaled and exhaled with every breath.
- Risk increases with mixing of cohorts and groups, particularly when from different communities (during or outside of sports play); mixing with more people increases the risk that an infectious person will be present.

## Sports Risk Profiles

In general, the more people from outside their household with whom a person interacts, the closer the physical interaction is, the greater the physical exertion is, and the longer the interaction lasts, the higher the risk that a person with COVID-19 infection may spread it to others.

Youth and adult sports include varied activities that have different levels of risk for transmission of COVID-19. Outdoor activities present significantly lower risk of transmission relative to comparative indoor activities, based on current scientific evidence. Competition between different teams also increases mixing across groups and outside of communities, which also contributes to the potential for spread of COVID-19 disease.

Youth and adult sports are classified below by their level of contact and transmission risk. This classification applies to competition or training/practice with others. It does not apply to individual conditioning or exercise.

**The categories below are not exhaustive, but provide examples of sports with different levels of contact so that the level of risk can be assessed for other sports.**

### Low-Contact Sports

Individual or small group sports where contact within six feet of other participants can be avoided. Some of these sports have relatively low exertion rates that allow for consistent wearing of face coverings when within six feet of other people. (Within IUSD: cross country, swimming, singles tennis, golf, track and field)

### Moderate-Contact Sports

Team sports that can be played with only incidental or intermittent close contact between participants. (Within IUSD: baseball, softball, doubles tennis, competitive cheerleading and girls lacrosse)

## High-Contact Sports

Team sports with frequent or sustained close contact (and in many cases, face-to-face contact) between participants and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. (Within IUSD: football, soccer, boys lacrosse and water polo)

## Other Indoor Sports

Some team sports that are generally played indoors will require further guidance and/or movement to the Orange or Yellow Tiers before competition can commence. (Within IUSD: basketball, volleyball, wrestling, competitive cheerleading)

# General Guidance for Youth and Adult Sports Participants, Coaches, and Support Staff

## Requirements for All Sports:

Irrespective of setting (outdoor or indoor) case rate or sport played, the following general guidance requirements must be adhered to at all times:

- Face coverings to be worn when not participating in the activity (e.g., on the sidelines).
- Face coverings to be worn by coaches, support staff and **observers** at all times, and in compliance with the CDPH [Guidance for the Use of Face Coverings](#).
- Face coverings worn by participants during practice, conditioning and during competition, even during heavy exertion as tolerated. See the [American Academy of Pediatrics Interim Guidance on Return to Sports \[1\]](#) for specific exceptions where the face covering may become a hazard.
- Observers maintain at least 6 feet from non-household members.
- No sharing of drink bottles and other personal items and equipment.
- Mixing with other households prior to and post any practice or competition must strictly adhere to current gathering guidance.
- Limit indoor sports activities (practice, conditioning) to comply with capacity limits (which shall include all athletes, coaches, and observers) indicated in current CDPH [Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity](#).
- Associated indoor activities for the team (e.g., dinners, film study) are prohibited if engaged in competition given evidence that transmission is more likely to occur in these indoor higher risk settings.
- Teams must not participate in out-of-state games and tournaments; several multistate outbreaks have been reported around the nation, including California residents.
- Maintain at least six feet of distance between sport participants and others to the maximum extent possible, including when on the sidelines.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of distance between coaches and participants and facilitate physical distancing between participants to the maximum extent possible (e.g., staggered starts instead of mass starts for races).

- Prior to arriving for practices or competitions, athletes and staff **will complete a self-assessment for COVID-19 symptoms**. Temperatures will be taken upon arrival.

### **Limitations on Observers**

- Depending on further guidance from Orange County Health Care Agency (OCHCA), along with district and league decisions, we are required to, at a minimum, limit observation of youth sports (age 18 years and under) to immediate household members, and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision. This includes observation of practice and competition. The number of observers will be limited to ensure physical distance can be maintained, reduce potential crowding, maintain indoor and outdoor capacity limits, and meet OCHCA and CDPH guidelines.
- Video streaming of games will be provided as available

### **Limitations for Inter-Team Competitions and Tournaments**

- Inter-team competitions, meets, races, or similar events are permitted to occur only if (a) both teams are located in the same county and the sport is authorized in the categories below; or (b) teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties.
- Teams adhere to current [CDPH Travel Advisory](#) recommendations when determining travel for competition in neighboring counties.
- No tournaments or events that involve more than two teams to occur. Exceptions may be made, with authorization from the local health department where the event is being held and each of the local health departments where teams originate from, for sports where individual competitors from multiple teams are routine such as: track and field; cross-country; golf; skiing/snowboarding; tennis; swimming/diving/surfing; biking and equestrian events.
- Only one competition, per team, per day maximum to be played.

### **Practice and Training Guidelines**

- Physical conditioning, practice, skill-building, and training that can be conducted outdoors, with 6 feet of physical distancing, and within stable cohorts are authorized regardless of case rate or sport. Such activities may be conducted indoors consistent with restrictions by Tier in the [Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity](#).

### **General Guidance**

Below are other general guidance that are strongly encouraged as part of any participation in sport. Depending on risk level (high or moderate) and county case rates, the general guidance may be **required** for play of outdoor sports in less restrictive tiers, as specified below.

## Testing

- Regular and postseason antigen or PCR testing of sports participants and coaches weekly while participating in Outdoor High-Contact sports is required when competition starts before the scheduled tier assignment (e.g. football and water polo). Other sports may require testing at a later date.
- Weekly saliva PCR testing will be made available at each site. Parents must provide approvals through an electronic system weekly. Test results must be made available within 24 hours of play in order for an athlete to compete.
- Daily self-assessment of symptoms is also required for the safety of all participants.

## Hygiene and Equipment Sanitation

- When equipment is shared during an activity, participants perform hand hygiene (wash hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) before play, during breaks, at half time, and after the conclusion of the activity.
- Balls or other objects or equipment can be touched by multiple players during practice and play if the above hand hygiene practices are followed.

## Limitations on Mixing by Participants

- To the greatest extent possible, limit mixing by establishing stable smaller training groups.
- Review practice or game footage virtually, to the greatest extent possible. If not feasible, then it should be conducted outdoors, with all participants wearing face coverings and following appropriate physical distancing measures.

## Indoor Venue Capacity Limitations

- Activities may be conducted indoors consistent with restrictions by Tier in the [Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity](#).
- Ventilation in indoor venues (gyms or other fitness centers) should be increased to the maximum extent possible.

## Travel Considerations

- Bus/van travel for members of a team may pose a greater risk. To mitigate COVID-19 transmission risk during bus/van travel, employ universal masking, physical distancing and windows to remain open the full duration of the trip unless not feasible.
- Plan for proper communication of all travel rules, protocols and expectations to everyone in the travel party. When feasible, teams should aim to travel and play the same day to avoid overnight stays.
- Travel by private car is limited to only those within the immediate household and the athlete has required permission in place.

## **Returning to Sports After Infection**

- No one with symptoms of COVID-19 or who is in isolation or quarantine for COVID-19 is permitted to attend practices or competitions.
- Anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 should consult their physician for testing and notify their coach, athletic trainer and/or school administrator of their symptoms and test results.
- Youth recovering from COVID-19 will have different paths to return to sports based on the severity of their illness. See the [American Academy of Pediatrics Interim Guidance on Return to Sports \[1\]](#) for additional guidance for more serious infections.
- Athletes will be required to follow **IUSD COVID Return to Play guidelines**, as found at this [link](#).

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**Click [here](#) for IUSD Permission/Release and Waiver of Liability.**

**Please print out the waiver and return a hard copy to the NHS attendance window.**

**Admin office hours during the week are from 7:30 am - 4:00 pm. You may also drop off the form after school hours in the NHS mailbox (located next to the attendance window).**

**\*Please note that the NHS campus will be closed on Saturday, February 27 to accommodate our Cross Country meet.**