

## **YOUTH SPORTS POSITION STATEMENT (School & Non-School Sports)**

### **Introduction**

Participation in youth sports is an important part of the growth and development of children and provides both physical and mental health benefits. By their nature, youth sports bring together children and adults from different neighborhoods and communities. This can lead to increased risk of COVID-19 spread and introduction or reintroduction of the virus into new areas. While COVID-19 is circulating in the United States, measures need to be taken in order to ensure that activities are conducted in a way that minimizes risk. Youth sports can be high-risk and are leading to a number of exposures and quarantines.

**The following are Central District Health's (CDH) recommendations for youth sports activities based on the level of community spread and the school categories in our counties.**

*Until the time that gatherings of unlimited size are allowed, tournaments and other large events with more than two teams present should not be held.*

### **During Every Category**

- Refer to local health orders and advisories for information on gathering sizes and limitations on spectators. Central District Health-issued health [advisories](#) can be found the [CDH website](#). Adhere to any local public health orders in effect.
- All athletes should wear cloth face coverings for all indoor sports, at all times for group training and competition with the exception of swimming, diving or other water sports, gymnastics while on any apparatus, competitive cheerleading (tumbling, stunting, flying), and during wrestling contact. Consider face coverings for outdoor sports when physical distancing may not be able to be maintained.
- Athletes should always wear a cloth face covering when between practice drills, while not on the playing field, on the sidelines, arriving at or departing from the playing facility, in a locker room, and during shared transportation to/from an event (although carpooling is discouraged).
- Cloth face coverings should be worn by coaches, officials, spectators, and volunteers at all times.
- Monitor athletes and coaches/staff for signs and symptoms of COVID and require ill persons to stay home.
  - *Maintain a plan for if an individual develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID.*

- Require athletes who have a known exposure in the last 14 days to stay home for a minimum of 10 days from last known exposure.
- Encourage physical distancing.
- Routinely clean and disinfect equipment and surfaces.
- Discourage sharing of water bottles and cups.
- Provide and encourage frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Encourage athletes to participate in individual drills and activities.
- Encourage participants to use their own equipment, when possible.
- Share protocols and procedures with spectators (i.e. Do not attend if ill, mask requirements, etc.)
- Follow American Academy of Pediatrics Return to Play Guidelines
  - For children who have asymptomatic disease or a mild form of the disease ( $\leq 4$  days of fever  $> 100.4^{\circ}$  F, short duration of myalgia, chills, and lethargy) need to be screened by their primary care providers before returning to play.
    - A graduated return-to-play protocol can begin once an athlete has been cleared by a physician and should be performed over the course of a 7-day minimum.
  - For children who have experienced a moderate form of the disease ( $\geq 4$  of fever  $> 100.4^{\circ}$  F, myalgia, chills, or lethargy or those who had a non-ICU hospital stay and no evidence of MIS-C), and ECG and cardiology consult is currently recommended after symptom resolution.
    - A graduated return-to-play protocol can begin once an athlete has been cleared by a physician and should be performed over the course of a 7-day minimum.
  - For children with severe COVID-19 symptoms (ICU stay and / or intubation) or multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-c), it is recommended they be restricted from exercise for a minimum of 3-6 months and require cardiology clearance prior to resuming training or competition.

*American Academy of Pediatrics. COVID-19 Interim Guidance: Return to Sports (Dec 17, 2020). <https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/clinical-guidance/covid-19-interim-guidance-return-to-sports/>*

### **Category 3 (Red) of School Operations**

During Category 3, CDH recommends that youth sports be assessed based on whether the activity can be done with physical distancing and face coverings at all times.

For those youth sports where physical distancing and face coverings are either not practical or cannot be enforced, the activity **should be paused until in Category 2 (Yellow)**. CDH believes this is the best way to reduce risk of transmission among kids and anyone associated with the sport.

- Group/team practices may occur, provided that appropriate physical distancing occurs and cloth face coverings are worn. Plan and facilitate individual/small group drills; discourage scrimmaging and games.
- No inter-organization youth sports recommended
- Teams traveling in or out of area for competition is not recommended.

### **Category 2 (Yellow) of School Operations (CDC Categories Yellow and Orange)**

- Group/team practices, scrimmages, and games may occur but no more than two teams or groups should be present. Total number of spectators should be limited to what is allowable based on local public health orders for max capacity of gathering sizes.
- If a team is traveling from another county or state, cancel or postpone the event if the team is traveling from an area designated Category 3 (or equivalent) by their local public health department.
- Inter-state activities are not recommended when there is still community spread.

### **Category 1 (Green) of School Operations**

- Scrimmages, games, and no more than two leagues, schools, or groups should be present at the venue or field at the same time. Total number of spectators should be limited to what is allowable based on local public health orders for max capacity of gathering sizes. If no max capacity size is indicated in a public health order, then organizations (including schools) should allow only the number of spectators where physical distancing of at least six feet can be maintained between members of different households.
- If a team is traveling from another county or state, cancel or postpone the event if the team is traveling from an area designated Category 3 (or equivalent) by their local public health department.

**Table for Schools: Level of Community Spread Categories**

Level of Contact	Examples from IHSAA	Category 1	Category 2	Category 3 Parameters: See below
High	Wrestling, football, performance and competitive cheer and dance/drill that involves stunting	Multi-team/group games	Two team/group games <u>within your school district or club</u> . No tournaments.	CDH Recommends <u>pausing high-contact activities</u> until in Category 2 (Yellow).
Medium-High	Basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer	Multi-team/group games	Two team/group games <u>within your school district or club</u> . No tournaments.	CDH Recommends <u>pausing medium-high contact activities</u> until in Category 2 (Yellow).
Medium	Gymnastics, tennis, swimming relays, pole vault, high jump, long jump, bowling, and 7 on 7 football	Multi-team/group games	Multi-team/group games <u>within your conference</u> . Small tournaments with extreme caution.	Pause activities that do not allow for face coverings and physical distancing. Two team/group games <u>within your school district</u> . No tournaments.
Low	Individual running events, throwing events (javelin, shot put, discus), individual swimming, golf, weightlifting, performance and non-competitive dance/drill with no stunting, and cross country running (with staggered starts)	Multi-team/group games. Large tournaments/events may be considered with caution and strict adherence to public health orders and safety protocols.	Multi-team/group games. Small tournaments/events may be considered with caution and strict adherence to public health orders and safety protocols.	Pause activities that do not allow for face coverings and physical distancing. Multi-team/group games, <u>within your conference</u> , limit number of teams or stagger activities to ensure gatherings remain small in number, but physical space can be considered.
Spectators		Where physical distancing can be maintained, follow any local public health gathering size limits; masks must be worn by all spectators regardless of distancing.		

*IHSAA is the Idaho High School Activities Association*