

COVID-19: Guidance for Youth Sports from the Wyoming Department of Health

August 1, 2020

Background

Public health orders continue and are modified periodically. All orders are designed to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Key definitions and order provisions are contained in each order. Questions regarding enforcement and interpretation of orders should be directed to your County Public Health Offices. This document provides guidance from the Wyoming Department of Health on how youth sports activities can occur while keeping individuals and families safe, and while continuing to mitigate the spread of COVID-19.

A copy of the current statewide orders can be found at: <https://covid19.wyo.gov/>.

General Guidance

This guidance is in alignment with the Wyoming High School Activities Association (WHSAA) [Smart Start Guidance](#) and extends recommendations beyond high school settings.

The Wyoming Department of Health recommends the following guidelines for youth sporting activities that take place during the COVID-19 outbreak:

1. **Confined Spaces – Players and Coaches.** No more than 50 people (players, coaches, parents) can be in a confined space, whether indoors or outdoors. In general, a single playing area (e.g., baseball field, basketball court, tennis court, pool, etc.) is considered a confined space. However, if steps are taken to ensure no mixing between groups of 50 people in a single playing area, then larger sporting events may take place. For example, certain areas of a field could be blocked off or arranged to create multiple confined spaces.

The WDH encourages organizers to keep participant groups as small as possible.

Indoor confined spaces are determined by the presence of some form of barrier to separate and define different spaces. An indoor basketball court, for example, would be considered a confined space.

2. **Spectators.** The statewide public health orders allow up to 250 spectators during indoor or outdoor events, so long as household groups can maintain a distance of six feet from other household groups. It is the responsibility of the event organizer/staff to ensure that spectators practice social distancing, as outlined in the public health orders. If the event organizer/staff cannot ensure social distancing occurs, then spectators should not be allowed.

Spectators may view outdoor events from stands, surrounding field areas, parking lots, or other areas so long as social distancing can be maintained.

WDH recommends that spectators of youth sporting events be limited by the organizer to parents or immediate family members of participants to limit crowds and ensure that appropriate social distancing can be maintained.

3. **Concessions.** Concessions may operate according to the requirements for restaurants and other food service establishments in the Statewide Public Health Order #1. It is the responsibility of the event organizer/staff to



ensure that people do not congregate with each other – and that they maintain adequate social distancing – while in line for concessions.

4. **Close-contact sports.** In Statewide Public Health Order #1, close contact sports are prohibited inside gymnasiums and fitness centers. A close contact sport is one in which frequent contact between multiple participants occurs, and would include, for example, basketball, football, rugby, wrestling, and hockey. Practices and drills that do not involve close contact between participants can occur.
5. **Rosters and contact tracing.** The WDH recommends that sporting events and teams maintain updated rosters of all players, coaches, and volunteers to help facilitate and enable contact tracing in the event that COVID-19 is detected in a participant.
6. **Symptom screening.** Athletes, participants, coaches, and officials should be screened for symptoms of respiratory illness to the greatest extent possible, and not allowed to participate if symptoms or exposure to COVID-19 are present. Please see the WDH screening guidance [here](#). The WHSAA [guidance](#) also contains a screening tool that may be used for allowable school-sanctioned sports. This tool can be used to meet the necessary documentation for contact tracing as well. School-sanctioned sports screening should include a temperature check.
7. **Face coverings.** Cloth face coverings should be worn by coaches, staff, officials, parents, and spectators whenever 6 feet of separation cannot be maintained. Players and participants should refrain from wearing face coverings during strenuous activities.
8. **Equipment and other contact.** Efforts should be made to limit unnecessary physical contact between players and coaches (high-fives, hugs, etc.). Use of shared equipment (towels, clothing, shoes, sports-specific equipment, etc.) should be minimized; when this is not possible, equipment should be sanitized between each use.

Participants should not share water bottles. Water-filling stations may be utilized but should be sanitized after every practice or event.

Schedules should be staggered as much as possible so that there is sufficient time for participants of one event to leave the playing area or facility before the next group arrives or enters the playing area.

9. **Cohorts.** Workouts or practices should be conducted using cohorts of youth, with the same youth always working out or practicing together. This will limit exposure if someone develops an infection.
10. **Travel.** While there is no statewide order prohibiting team travel, there is a risk for COVID-19 transmission during transport (if players are carpooling or traveling on a bus, for example). Furthermore, participants might be at increased risk of getting COVID-19 if traveling to an area with a higher number of COVID-19 cases. Travel over long distances to participate in youth sporting events is not recommended by WDH.
 - a. If transport occurs, it is recommended that the organizing entity maintain a record of children and adults transported and which vehicle they were in for contact tracing purposes, if necessary.
 - b. Social distancing is recommended during transport, to the extent practicable. If six feet distance cannot be maintained, face coverings should be worn.

11. **Notification.** WDH recommends that organizers/staff or coaches inform parents and players of social distancing and other expectations for preventing transmission of COVID-19 before conducting practices, games, and other events.
12. **Health Officer Collaboration.** For school-sanctioned sports, schools should notify their county health department regarding any suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among event athletes, coaches, event staff, media, spectators, and vendors.

The CDC has provided considerations, recommendations, and resources for youth sporting activities, which can be accessed [here](#).

For more information about the COVID-19 outbreak please visit: health.wyo.gov or cdc.gov