



## **Interim Guidance for Administrators and Participants of Youth and Amateur Sports Programs (August 6, 2021)**

### **Guidelines for Conducting Business:**

Any scenario in which people who are not fully vaccinated gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All organizations and programs that gather groups of people should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission. The guidance below will help youth and amateur sports administrators and participants to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, we strongly encourage all administrators to direct employees and players to information at [Find Your Spot](#), [Take Your Shot](#) and encourage them to get vaccinated. For guidance once fully vaccinated, please refer to our [Interim Guidance for Individuals Who Have Been Vaccinated Against COVID-19](#).

### **Determining Risk:**

When assessing the risk of viral spread in their sporting activities, administrators of youth and amateur sports programs should consider the following criteria. For sports that are higher risk, administrators should consider to what extent and how they can modify their sports to minimize risk of transmission.

1. Physical Proximity and Prolonged Closeness of Players
  - Sports that require players to be within close proximity (within 6 feet) of each other present a higher risk of viral transmission, particularly if close contact is prolonged. See tables below for examples. If keeping physical distance is difficult with players in competition or group practices, consider relying on individual skill work and drills.
2. Setting
  - Indoor sporting activities present a higher risk than outdoor sporting activities. If it is necessary to be inside, ensure the facility has proper [ventilation and filtration](#) systems and open windows to increase airflow throughout the space.
3. Intensity of Activity
  - Activities that are high in intensity or require a high level of exertion (such as full competition) present a higher level of risk of getting and spreading COVID-19 than lower intensity activities (such as discussing strategy and rules, walking through plays), particularly when indoors. Higher intensity activities are safer when done outdoors.
4. Team Size
  - Sports with larger teams present a higher risk of viral spread than sports with smaller teams. For sports that require larger teams, such as football, consider creating smaller cohorts that do not mix and/or only scrimmaging within the team.

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### 5. Age and Behavior of the Player(s)

- It may be more difficult for younger players to follow directions regarding social distancing and other protective actions, such as avoiding shared equipment and mask-wearing. If continuing with youth sports, administrators should consider designating a coach/parent to help younger players follow directions.

Administrators of youth and amateur sports programs should also consider the following general criteria for assessing risk regardless of the specific sport:

#### 1. Level of Community Spread

- High or increasing levels of COVID-19 cases in the local community increase the risk of infection and spread among youth athletes, coaches, and families. Administrators should refer to NCDHHS' County Alert System and COVID-19 Dashboard to assess community spread.

#### 2. Vaccination Status of Participants

- Teams in which all players and staff are fully vaccinated can play indoors and be in most indoor and outdoor settings without wearing a face covering or staying 6 feet apart. However, it is recommended that everyone, regardless of vaccine status, continue to wear a face covering and practice social distancing in large crowded indoor venues (e.g. arenas, stadiums) and in indoor settings with a large number of children or child-focused activities. As a reminder, children under age 12 are currently ineligible to be vaccinated.

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**Sports in which participants can maintain social distancing or close contact is limited and brief:**

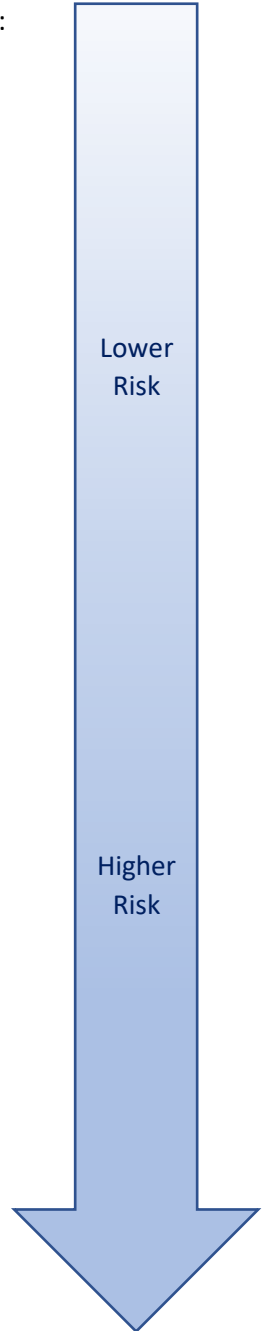
Golf	Swimming
Cycling	Diving
Disc Golf	Dance
Track and Field	Tennis Singles Match
Curling	Horseback Riding
Pickleball	Figure Skating
Badminton	Running
Individual Gymnastics	Weightlifting
Individual Sailing/Kayaking	Outdoor/Sand/Beach Volleyball

**Sports in which close contact may occur but is not prolonged:**

Soccer	Volleyball
Baseball	Softball
Crew	Swimming Relays/Group Swimming
Tennis Doubles Match	Field Hockey
Lacrosse	Flag Football
Ultimate	

**Sports in which participants cannot maintain social distancing and close contact is frequent and/or prolonged:**

Football	Competitive Cheer
Rugby	Basketball
Group Dance	Wrestling
Pairs Figure Skating	Hockey
	Boxing



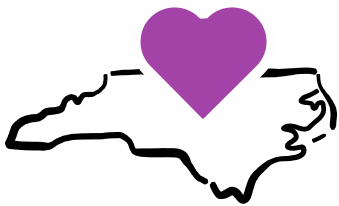
**Regardless of the type of sport being played, all administrators of sports programs in other settings are strongly recommended to:**

- Have all coaches, athletes, spectators, and other participants wear a face covering **indoors** if they are in a county of high or substantial levels of transmissions as [defined by the CDC](#), unless they state that an exception applies.

## Other Recommended Actions For Settings Where Not All Players and Staff are Fully Vaccinated

### It is recommended that administrators of sports programs:

- Designate and arrange specific equipment for use that is properly spaced at 6 feet apart. Group classes or activities should be spaced out six feet apart.
- Consider workouts in groups/pods of individuals with the same group always working out together, including weight training, to limit exposure should someone become sick.
- Remind individuals not to shake hands, give high fives, or fist pumps before, during, or after the game or practice.
- Coaches, officials, and others should modify communication and avoid up close face to face communication.
- Schedule games to include adequate buffer times between games to allow athletes, coaches and staff to enter and exit the facility with limited interaction.
- Personal training services and fitness coaching should practice social distancing to the extent possible. When these services require physical contact between coach and athlete, wash hands immediately prior to and following the contact and face to face contact should be minimal.
- Limit sharing of equipment and assign individual equipment (e.g., batting gloves, catcher's equipment, discs, racquets, balls) to avoid sharing between participants.
- Disinfect all shared fitness and sports equipment (if provided) between users, with [EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2](#) with adequate contact time allowed for disinfectant as stated by manufacturer. If equipment is to be cleaned by the individual, instructions on how to properly disinfect and appropriate contact time for disinfectant must be provided.
- Remind individuals to bring their own water bottles, and that those water bottles are not shared.
- Limit use of hydration stations (water cows, water troughs, water fountains) and provide disposable cups or labeled water bottles for individuals when using any water fountains.
- If water or food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee and provide labeled water bottles or disposable cups, instead of a buffet or family-style meal and shared water coolers/fountains.



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**Staying apart brings us together.  
Protect your family and neighbors.**

**Learn more at [nc.gov/covid19](https://nc.gov/covid19).**



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