

Tri-County Health Department Recommendations for Participation in Team Sports

Participating in team sports throughout the year is crucial to our physical and mental health. Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) recognizes the benefits of athletics regardless of age. At this time, sports are able to occur under the personal recreation guidance put forth by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. In an effort to guide our partners and communities to provide safe and healthy athletics, TCHD has provided the following Frequently Asked Questions and additional recommendations to conduct these activities.

Links and guidance referenced in this document:

- [Public Health Order 20-28](#)
- [Personal Recreation Guidance for Organized Sports](#)
- [Indoor Event Guidance](#)
- [Outdoor Event Guidance](#)
- [Colorado Mask Order](#)
- [TCHD Mask Order](#)

Frequently Asked Questions

Should I play sports in which I will have greater contact with other individuals? TCHD does not recommend playing sports in which the athletes will be within 6 feet of each other due to the risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19. Consider holding individual skills-training camps rather than competition. If competition continues, consider measures that reduce the degree of direct person-to-person contact while participating. This may include things like reducing team size (5 vs. 5 rather than 11 vs. 11) or change game play to reduce contact (flag football vs. tackle). All athletes over the age of 10 must wear masks, indoors and outdoors, if 6-foot distancing cannot or will not be maintained.

Can I travel to another community to play a sport? TCHD discourages traveling to other communities for athletics at this time. Our current recommendation if traveling for athletics is for individual skills-training camps rather than competition with other communities. If traveling to another community, please adhere to all local COVID-19 guidelines and restrictions.

Can I host a tournament? Tournaments are not prohibited under Public Health Order 20-28, but large scale tournaments that encourage travel and/or playing a large number of different teams are discouraged. All game/match play must follow the guidance for “organized recreational sports”, while the operation of the tournament must follow all “outdoor event” or “indoor event” guidance. All players, coaches, and spectators are counted in the “capacity” for the event. Referees, umpires, and staff that are responsible for enforcing the public health order are not counted in the “capacity” for the event. Spectators are strongly discouraged. Reduce number of games that each team plays to reduce contact and viral spread. Monitor movement and social distancing carefully. Consider prohibiting participation from athletes traveling from high spread areas.

Do I need to wear a mask when playing sports? Masks must be worn by athletes as much as possible and for any sport where 6 feet distancing cannot be maintained. All sport events must require masks for participants unless they have a medical exemption or other exemption as set out by the Colorado mask order. Per the TCHD mask order this includes outdoor sports. Masks must be worn by all coaches, referees, umpires, spectators, or anyone else at the game/match/tournament.

Can I have spectators at my game/match/tournament? TCHD recommends few to no spectators at youth sports, and no spectators at adult sports. For youth sports, consider a policy limiting the number of adults and outlining expectations for attendance; consider rotating spectators that attend and providing a virtual streaming option. Space spectators out around the field or court to adhere to social distancing. Consider closing bleachers and ask spectators to bring their own chairs.

Thinking About Hosting a Practice, Game or Tournament?

Consider these questions to help with decision-making and ensure you are following personal recreation guidance from the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.

- The age of the players
 - Will they understand any new rules? (e.g. no high fives, hugs, handshakes, etc.)
- Facility
 - Is it indoors or outdoors? Indoor activity could pose greater risk of exposure or spread
- Community spread
 - What is the level of community spread of COVID-19? Are there other restrictions on mass gatherings to be aware of?
- Closeness of athletes and time they are together
 - Will players be within 6 feet of each other to participate in this activity?
 - How long will they be in close contact with others on their team or opposing teams?
- Closeness of athletes when they are not actively engaging in the activity
 - Will athletes be able to space 6 feet apart in the dugout, on the sidelines, in the parking lot, etc.?
- Sharing of equipment
 - Will athletes need to share equipment? (e.g. Balls, gloves, gear, etc.)
- High-risk athletes
 - Do you have athletes who are in a high-risk category making accommodations necessary to allow them to participate with their team?
- Your organization's capacity
 - Can you gather contact information for all participants including spectators?
 - Can you control movement and mask wearing of all people that will be attending and continuously monitor?
 - Can you supply hand washing facilities and/or hand sanitizer to all participants?
 - Do you have the ability to thoroughly communicate with all participants?
 - Are you able to symptom screen all players prior to participation?

If concerned about the risk of any of these considerations, TCHD recommends offering alternatives to competitive play. This may include individual skills camps, in-team only scrimmages, changing the type of play (i.e. flag football vs. tackle), reducing team competition size (i.e. 5 vs. 5 instead of 11 vs. 11), etc.

Please see additional [Considerations for Youth Sports](#) from the Centers for Disease Control.

Please contact covidbusinessrecovery@tchd.org for additional questions.