



Wayne County Public Health

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Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Wayne County, NY



OFFICIAL PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LYONS, NY (WAYNE COUNTY) -

Wayne County Public Health is providing the following information for schools, businesses, coaching staff, athletes, parents of student-athletes, and youth and adult amateur sports leagues in Wayne County. The Covid-19 pandemic has placed a heightened responsibility on youth and adult sports organizations, coaches, families, and athletes to reduce transmission and to foster a safe environment for children and adults to participate in high-risk sporting activities. On Friday, January 22, 2021 Governor Cuomo announced he would allow higher risk sports to commence in New York schools effective February 1, 2021 subject to local health department approval. Wayne County Public Health has decided to allow high-risk sports to commence on February 1, 2021.

Revisions to the New York State Interim Guidelines for Sports and Recreation were announced by Governor Cuomo late Friday, January 22. These changes allow local health departments to authorize non-professional and non-collegiate sports, such as wrestling, ice hockey, basketball, contact lacrosse, and volleyball, to proceed with individual and group training, competitions, and tournaments, effective February 1.

Updates were also made to low- and moderate-risk sports and recreation activities. All responsible parties (schools, businesses, leagues, organizations) must follow the New York State Department of Health's [INTERIM GUIDANCE FOR SPORTS AND RECREATION DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY](#) and applicable Executive Orders for the conduct of their sports and recreation activities.

Per current State guidance, indoor facilities must limit their capacity to no more than 50 percent occupancy and a maximum of two spectators per player. In addition, protocols to ensure social distancing, use of face coverings, and enhanced disinfection protocols must be implemented. For moderate and higher risk sports, if an athlete, coach or referee receives a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, all in-person team or group activities for that sport (e.g. practices, scrimmages, games, meetings) may result in a 10-day suspension to lessen the spread of infection and allow for Wayne County Public Health to provide the case investigation and resulting contact tracing efforts. Situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Additional to the Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation, during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency, Wayne County Public Health is requiring that all school and

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community-organized team athletes playing high-risk sports must wear acceptable face coverings for the following physical activities:

- At all times during practice;
- At all times on the sidelines during practice and at competitive games (ie. Scrimmages, Competitions, Tournaments, etc);
- During play; athlete may lower the face covering temporarily when physical activity has intensified and the athlete need to recover;
- At all times while traveling on a bus or while carpooling with other players;
- All face coverings must cover the nose and the mouth at all times;
- However, as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, and as recognized by Wayne County Public Health, athletes participating in wrestling can opt out of wearing a mask, during match play, due to the potential risk of injury, as individually decided upon by the athlete, coach, or parent/guardian. Immediately at the conclusion of the match, athletes must reapply their masks.

It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director and/or Coach of high-risk sport teams to ensure that the proper face covering requirements, as stated above, are adhered to.

Participating in higher-risk sports presents significant risks. There continues to be significant risks that you should consider when making the decision for higher-risk sports to resume. However, all sports, as is with any group activity during a pandemic, have risks that need to be considered. Weighing the risk versus benefit of returning to sports is specific by each high-risk sport and setting, local disease activity, and individual circumstances; including underlying health conditions that may place the athlete or household contacts at increased risk of severe disease should they contract COVID-19. To allow continuation of higher risk sport and recreational activities, local health authorities will continue to consider many factors, including but not limited to the following:

- Whether there is a more transmissible variant of COVID-19 identified in the area
- Local rates of COVID-19 transmission or rate of positivity, and
- Local ability to monitor and enforce compliance.

If these circumstances change, Wayne County Public Health may modify this guidance accordingly. Additionally, each individual school district has the authority to include additional, more restrictive guidelines, should they feel they are so necessary based on their individual situations.

Contact sports bring people close together and increase the risk of transmission. If persons choose to return to high-risk sports, they must follow guidelines to reduce the spread of COVID19. In addition, athletes, to the greatest extent possible, should restrict their activities and behaviors outside of sports, minimizing their own risks and reducing community spread. We must work together during these stressful times to ensure that our community members have

the opportunity to participate in athletics safely. To ensure a safe, successful, and full sports season, the adherence to these guidelines can safeguard the re-starting and maintaining of participation in high-risk sports if everyone involved follow the recommendations closely and diligently.

The New York State summary guidelines are posted on the NYForward website. All responsible parties (schools, businesses, leagues, organizations) must read and affirm the State's detailed guidelines and develop a safety plan.

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationMasterGuidance.pdf>

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/SportsAndRecreationSummaryGuidance.pdf>

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf

Stop the spread of COVID-19: Wear a mask; maintain a social distance of 6 feet; wash your hands often.