Arkansas Department of Health

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Governor Asa Hutchinson
José R. Romero, MD, Secretary of Health

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Amended July 23, 2020
Amended August 10, 2020
Amended August 21, 2020

Directive for Community and School Sponsored Team Sports

The Secretary of Health, in consultation with the Governor, has sole authority over all instances of quarantine, isolation, and restrictions on commerce and travel throughout Arkansas, as necessary and appropriate to control disease in the state of Arkansas as authorized by Ark. Code Ann. §20-7-109--110. Based on available scientific evidence, it is necessary and appropriate to take further action to ensure that COVID-19 remains controlled and that residents and visitors in Arkansas remain safe.

On March 26, 2020, the Secretary of Health in consultation with the Governor placed limitations on public gatherings. This directive provides requirements for lifting limitations to community-based and school-sponsored team sports through a phased approach for both adult and youth athletes. Each phase has a set of General Requirements that apply across all team sports with specific requirements applied based on the nature of the contact required by the rules or conditions of the sport.

This directive does not include intercollegiate athletic team sports nor apply to bands, orchestras, or choirs. The directive governing bands, orchestras and choirs can be found here.

General Requirements

- Maintain minimum physical distancing of six (6) feet between participants at all times, except when actively participating in the sports activity.
- Athletes, coaches, officials, and all staff must be screened prior to any activity by asking the following questions and excluded if the response is affirmative.
    - Have had a fever of 100.4°F or greater in the last 2 days?
    - Have a cough, difficulty breathing, chills, muscle aches (myalgias), sore throat, headache, recent loss of taste or smell, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea?
    - Had contact with a person known to be infected with COVID-19 within the previous 14 days?
    - Had a positive COVID-19 test in last 10 days?

- Waiting on the results of a test for COVID-19?

- Coaches, officials, and all staff (includes all workers in any capacity) must, in addition to the above screening process, have temperature checked by digital thermometer prior to entry, and those whose temperature is 100.4ºF or greater must be excluded. It is recommended those with temperature of 100.4^{0}F or greater seek evaluation by a medical professional to be tested for SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The wearing of face coverings must comply with Executive Order 20-37 and the Face Coverings Directive. This directive requires face coverings at all times, except for persons actively participating in athletic activities when a six (6) feet distance is not achievable and when a face covering is inhibitory to the activity or active exercise. Face coverings that completely cover the nose and mouth are required for everyone 10 years of age or older for indoor and outdoor sports while not actively participating. Children between ages of 2 years and 9 years are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering.
    - Athletes
        - For outdoor sports, face coverings must be worn when not actively participating in an outdoor sports activity and there is not ample space to maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet between persons. Face coverings must be worn while actively participating, if the face covering is not inhibitory to the activity
        - For indoor sports, face coverings must be worn at all times, except when a face covering is inhibitory while actively participating.
    - Coaches and Staff
        - Face coverings must be worn at all times for indoor and outdoor sports, except for a brief time when coach or staff member has physically distanced at least 12 feet from athletes and other staff.

- Physical distancing of six (6) feet must be maintained in the locker room. Face coverings should be used in locker rooms; it is acceptable to remove face coverings temporarily for washing or bathing.
- Participation is allowed for participants of any age. However, we recommend that participants should refrain if:
    - They are 65 years of age or older.
    - They have underlying health conditions including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma or weakened immunity.
- An alcohol-based hand sanitizer or adequate handwashing facilities must be provided for use by all attendees.
- Sports equipment, restrooms, lockers, water fountains and other high touch surfaces must be sanitized frequently during each event. For a list of cleaning products that will eliminate the Covid-19 virus, visit https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2.
- Avoid non-sport-related personal contact at all times. This includes, but is not limited to, huddles, high-fives, hand shaking, fist bumping, and chest bumping.
- For games, competitions, tournaments, meets, and other athletic events held in a facility, the facility hosting the event must follow the current Directive for Large Indoor or Large Outdoor Venues. Spectators are covered under these Directives.

- For training and conditioning held in an athletic facility, the facility must follow the current Directive for Gym, Fitness Center, Athletic Club and Weight Rooms.
- Concession Stands may operate but must follow all applicable sections of the Directive for Resuming Restaurant Dine-In Operations.
- Admission and gate ticket sales should be taken online, when possible.

Close-Contact Team Sports

Examples: Basketball, Wrestling, Football, Flag Football, Cheerleading, Dance, Volleyball, Soccer, Martial Arts

- Team practice is now permitted. This includes intra-squad scrimmages (within the same team), simulated competition, and drills that require physical or close contact between team members. Inter-squad competition between two (2) different teams is allowed as of 8/17/2020. However, competitions involving more than two teams (such as jamborees, tournaments, etc.) for close-contact sports is currently prohibited due to the risk of spreading COVID-19 to multiple communities at once.
- Other practice, conditioning, and training requirements to follow, in addition to the General Requirements:
    - Group size must be sufficiently limited to maintain six (6) feet between each person while not actively participating in activity, including staff, whenever in an indoor or outdoor enclosed space. Even when not in an enclosed area, those not actively participating should maintain six (6) feet distance between each person.
    - When using weight rooms, practicing calisthenics, running, or other training where vigorous exercise occurs and close contact is not necessary, participants should maintain proper spacing from others by working out with 12 feet between each person. This may require closing or moving some equipment.
    - Spotters are allowed on the outside of weight bars on each side for safety reasons. Physical distancing must be maintained when not actively performing spotting duties.

- When appropriate, participants should provide their own equipment. If shared equipment is used, disinfection is required frequently during each event or between each use when possible. This would not preclude activities such as playing catch where a ball is tossed back and forth between players.

Limited-Contact Team Sports

Examples: Baseball, Softball, Golf, Track and Field, Cross Country, Bowling, Tennis, Gymnastics, Shooting Sports, Swimming, Individual Dance Competitions

- Practice for all ages may be permitted if the following conditions are implemented:
    - Player group size must be sufficiently limited to maintain 6 feet between each person, including staff, whenever possible.

    - When using weight rooms, calisthenics, or other conditioning training must maintain proper spacing from others by working out with 12 feet between each person. (This may require closing or moving some equipment).
    - Spotters are allowed in weight rooms on the outside of weight bars on each side, for safety reasons. Spotters are also allowed for gymnastics and cheerleading for safety reasons. Physical distancing must be maintained when not actively performing spotting duties.
- When appropriate, participants should provide their own equipment. If shared equipment is used, disinfection is required frequently during each event or between each use.
- Running events (marathons, 5 or 10Ks, and endurance races) are permitted. However, event starts must be staggered and starting places marked to maintain a physical distance of six (6) feet between participants at the start of the event.
- Competition is allowed for limited-contact sports, including multi-team meets or competitions, as long as strict adherence to the above requirements regarding physical distancing, face coverings, and other safety measures is observed.

ADH will continue to closely monitor the evolving novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Resources

- https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html
- https://uamshealth.com/coronavirus/kb/expert-recommendations-and-considerations-for-high-school-athletics/
- https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2