



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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TO: All Media Sources
FROM: Theresa K. Moore, Supervising Public Health Educator/Public Information Officer
RE: Moderate and Higher-Risk Sports and Recreation Can Proceed in Allegany County
DATE: January 28, 2021

News Release: Moderate and Higher-Risk Sports and Recreation Can Proceed in Allegany County

The Allegany County Department of Health would like schools, businesses, coaching staff, athletes, parents of student-athletes, and youth and adult amateur sports leagues in Allegany County to know the following information about moderate and higher-risk sports and recreation. After extended internal consultation and discussion among Western New York County Health Officials, it has been determined that higher-risk and moderate risk sports may proceed in WNY according to, and in compliance with, New York State guidelines.

New York State Interim Guidelines for Sports and Recreation were announced by Governor Cuomo late Friday, January 22. These revisions allow local health departments to authorize high risk sports, such as wrestling, ice hockey, basketball, contact lacrosse, and volleyball, to proceed with individual and group training, competitions, and tournaments, effective February 1, 2021. 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 (e.g. practices, scrimmages, games, meetings) may result in a 10-day suspension to mitigate the spread of infection. Situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Participating in higher-risk sports presents significant risks. The level of risk presented by a return to sports is driven by the 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. Individual schools and businesses, student and adult athletes, and parents/guardians must carefully consider a variety of factors before making an individual decision to participate.

To allow continuation of higher risk sports and recreational activities, the Allegany County Department of Health 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.

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 COVID-19. Athletes should be mindful of their activity outside of sports to minimize risk and reduce community spread. We must work together during these stressful times to ensure that our youth and adults have the opportunity to participate in athletics safely.

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.

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