

Noncontact Sports

The “Tennessee Pledge” is a plan to help Tennesseans get back to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state’s economy.



Noncontact Sports

These guidelines are intended for youth and adult noncontact sports. “Noncontact sporting events and activities” mean sports that can be conducted while substantially maintaining appropriate social distancing, and that involve at most only close contact or proximity between participants that is incidental to the activity. **Such sports include, but are not limited to, baseball, softball, volleyball, golf, disc golf, tennis and other racket sports, cycling, track and field and running events, cricket, and equestrian.**

For the time being, contact sporting events and activities are prohibited. “Contact sporting events and activities” are sports for which there is a requirement or substantial likelihood of routine, sustained close proximity or physical contact between participants. For example, some sports, such as wrestling are scored by impacting an opponent, while others, including football or rugby, require tackling of players. Others like basketball, soccer, lacrosse, competitive cheer, rugby, ice and field hockey, rowing, mixed martial arts, wrestling, boxing, and other combat sports involve participants being in close, sustained proximity and likelihood of physical contact. “Contact sporting events and activities” does not include training or otherwise engaging in elements or aspects of such sports or activities in a manner that do not involve close contact with other persons. Collegiate and professional sporting events and activities may be conducted if permitted by, and pursuant to, the rules or guidelines of their respective governing bodies.

Despite potentially hosting a larger number of people on-site at any one time, sports venues should operate in a manner such that persons from different households or small groups are able to substantially maintain 6 feet of separation from other persons or small groups outside their own group during the activity or while spectating. *Executive orders from the governor and/or local orders in six counties with a locally-run county health department (Davidson, Hamilton, Knox, Madison, Shelby, and Sullivan) continue to limit group sizes for participation in social and recreational gatherings and require persons or groups of certain sizes to maintain separation from other persons or groups outside their own group. Venues, teams and leagues should be mindful of applicable orders and ensure that their activities facilitate compliance with them.*

Notice to parents or guardians of youth participating in group sporting activities: Parents should not permit children to participate in sporting activities if the child has a confirmed case of COVID-19 or exhibits any symptom of COVID-19. If after recent participation in sporting activities the child develops symptoms or is confirmed as positive for COVID-19, you should consult their healthcare provider and report such occurrence to the coach or other administrator. Parents are encouraged to make efforts to limit potential COVID-19

exposure by any vulnerable persons (identified by the CDC as those who are over age 65 or have severe underlying medical conditions) who are members of the same household or come into frequent, close contact with individuals who participate in youth sports.

Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to adherence with CDC guidelines, all facilities, organizers, staff, coaches, athletes, and spectators associated with youth or adult noncontact sports should implement these guidelines to assist with safely resuming sporting events and activities due to COVID-19. These guidelines are subject to change. Venue operators should evaluate the profile of the relevant activities at such venue to make appropriate adaptations as necessary, even if not specifically described below. Additional protocols from a sport's governing association may be applicable, and additional measures may be applicable depending on the circumstances.

Event Organizers, Facility Managers/Staff, Vendor, and Volunteer Protection

- **Screen all staff and volunteers reporting to work/event for COVID-19 symptoms** with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days? (Note: This does not apply to medical personnel, first responders, or other individuals who encounter COVID-19 as part of their professional or caregiving duties while wearing appropriate PPE.)
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening staff and volunteers:**
 - Best practice: employers or organizer to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work/event
 - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- **Direct any staff who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers "yes" to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and [CDC guidelines](#). Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information
- **All staff should stay home if feeling ill**, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee's



household. Staff who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or severe underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to refrain from participating

- **Staff should wear face coverings** (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC
- **Provide training for staff on personal protective equipment** based on CDC guidelines
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible—**“Further is safer”**
- **Stagger shifts, breaks and meals**, in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations, to maintain social distancing
- **Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas** and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing minimum of 6 feet whenever possible
- **Staff should increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms
- **Prepare for absence of critical staff** by developing a roster of qualified individuals who can fill in if staff members are absent due to illness or family circumstances
- **Post extensive signage on health policies**, including the following documents, to help educate on COVID-19 best practices:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Coach, Athlete, Official, and Spectator Protection

- **Screen coaches, athletes, officials, and spectators for illness** upon arrival to facility each day with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the past 14 days? (Note: This does not apply to medical personnel, first responders, or other individuals who encounter COVID-19 as part of their professional or caregiving duties while wearing appropriate PPE.)
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?



- Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature checks are a best practice.** Those with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premises
- **Direct coaches, athletes, officials, and spectators who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers “yes” to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and [CDC guidelines](#). Maintain the confidentiality of health information
- **All coaches, athletes, officials, and spectators should stay home if feeling ill,** report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee’s household. Staff who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or severe underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to refrain from participating
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible
 - **Limit group sizes and mixing.** Keep groups small and, to the extent possible, avoid mixing between groups
 - **Athletes/Coaches:**
 - Should maintain at least 6 feet of separation from others when not on the field of play or otherwise engaged in play/activity, where feasible
 - Consider physical markings in the dug out, benches, or other shared or athlete staging areas to help remind athletes and coaches of appropriate social distancing. Consider alternate seating locations or larger staging areas for athletes or staff to increase social distancing
 - Athletes and coaches should refrain from high fives, handshake lines, and other physical contact with teammates, opposing teams, coaches, umpires, and fans. Coaches should regularly review social distancing rules with athletes
 - **Spectators** should maintain at least 6 feet of separation from others not from the same household, including in seating areas or bleachers, and refrain from entering athlete areas
 - **Umpires and Officials** should maintain 6 feet of separation from others and when interacting with athletes, coaches, and spectators off the field of play. Avoid exchanging documents or equipment with athletes, coaches, or spectators as much as possible
- **Encourage those who can to wear cloth face coverings.** Wearing a cloth face covering may not be possible while actively participating in an athletic activity, but an effort should be made to wear a face covering between games, when in dug outs, and when not actively engaged in physical activity
 - Coaches, umpires, and officials should wear face coverings if in close proximity to others and if using a projected voice within 15 feet of others
 - Athletes should wear face coverings when not actively participating



- Spectators should wear cloth face coverings when maintaining appropriate distance from other spectators is not possible and if using a projected voice within 15 feet of others
- **Locker rooms should not be utilized** for the time being due to it being a confined area; athletes and coaches should dress in uniforms at home
- **Require that all athletes, coaches, and officials wash or sanitize their hands** upon arriving and leaving each day, and encourage spectators to do the same. Athletes and coaches should regularly wash their hands or use hand sanitizer between activity while on-site
- **Coaches and athletes should increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing. Limit spitting
- **Recommend that persons more vulnerable or at-risk** for COVID-19 as identified by the [CDC](#) (e.g. due to age or severe underlying medical conditions) take extra precaution or refrain from attending or participating for the time being. Where possible, it is recommended that athletes travel to the venue alone or with a member of their immediate household
- **Drinks and snacks (Note: see concession sales section for concessions guidance):**
 - Athletes, managers/coaches, and umpires/officials should bring their own personal beverages to all athletic activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person's name. If a parent or coach provides beverages for the team, utilize single-person containers and label for each athlete
 - Individuals should take their drink containers home each day for cleaning or use single-use bottles
 - Avoid shared or team beverages
 - Athletes should bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed. Avoid unpackaged shared team food
 - Avoid eating and spitting seeds, gum, other similar products

Facility- or Administrative-Related Process Adaptations

- **Arrange any seating areas, tables, chairs, etc. (indoors and out)** at least 6 feet from each other. If safe distances are not achievable, barricade or remove seating areas. Install barriers and protective shields where needed to safely distance staff and visitors
- **Post signs encouraging social distancing** (visible to athletes and spectators). Use signs or ground markings to indicate proper social distancing at ticket booths, concession areas, bathrooms, or anywhere else a line is anticipated to form.



If necessary for the venue, consider establishing a “guest flow” plan, including managing queues and making walkways or stairways one-way or clearly divided for bi-directional travel, with appropriate directional signs/markers. Address high-traffic pedestrian intersections to maximize physical distance between persons

- **Staff or volunteers should conduct regular disinfecting of high-touch surfaces,** equipment and common areas of the facility using disinfectant cleaning supplies according to [CDC guidelines](#). An increased number of volunteers or staff may be necessary
- **Hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations** with soap and running water should be readily accessible
- **Limit the number of people** present in bathroom facilities at any one time to reduce potential exposure within those confined spaces, and ensure that sanitization is occurring at increased intervals
- **Temporarily close water fountains** and encourage athletes and spectators to bring their own water
- **Refer to and implement applicable provisions** of the [Tennessee Pledge restaurant guidelines](#) for concession operations
- **Individuals should not congregate** in common areas following the event or practice and should depart the premises as soon as is reasonably possible
- **Where available, use electronic or online solutions** for reservations, waivers or payment
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- **Communicate expectations and new protocols to participants and families** in advance of the season or event
- **Positive COVID-19 case management:** Organizer should maintain a complete list of coaches, athletes, and staff present at each event and be prepared to cooperate with the local health department in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 by a participant. An effort should be made to maintain a log of spectators, to the extent possible

Sport-Related Process Adaptations

- **Limit long-distance team travel for the time being and minimize transporting teams/athletes/groups together where possible.** When group transport is required, everyone in the vehicle should be encouraged to wear a cloth face covering and practice social distancing in the vehicle as much as possible (e.g., spaced out seating on bus)
- **Encourage supporters to observe activities virtually,** rather than in-person, where possible
- **Virtual team meetings** should be considered where possible



- **Handling of sporting equipment:**
 - Whenever possible, equipment and personal items should not be shared. If equipment must be shared, all shared items and equipment should be properly cleaned and disinfected between each use, according to CDC guidelines on sanitization (e.g., track and field relay batons and field implements).
 - To the extent possible, avoid sharing equipment or balls between teams. For applicable sports, should be rotated on a regular basis to limit contact by multiple users, unless sanitized. Umpires should limit their contact with the ball, and catchers should retrieve foul balls and passed balls where possible. Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should be isolated from a shared ball container
- **Identify alternate styles or rules of play** to make resumption of sport events safer due to COVID-19, as may be recommended by a league or sport governing body or association. Running events with larger groups of people may consider utilizing small heats or waves.
- **Administrators and coaches are encouraged to check for resources** from their respective national governing bodies (e.g., [USA Gymnastics](#), [USA Track and Field](#), [USA Softball](#), [USA Football](#), etc.)

Additional Resources

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports: www.cdc.gov

Little League® Best Practice: www.littleleague.org