



## SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDANCE FOR ATHLETICS AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

As of November 23, 2020

### Purpose

This guidance for athletics at higher education institutions during the COVID-19 public health emergency is issued to supplement the New York State Department of Health's (DOH) "[Interim Guidance for Higher Education during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)," issued pursuant to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo's [Executive Order 202.45](#), which authorized the resumption of higher education activities and operations. All higher education institutions in New York State are subject to the State's reopening guidance, including DOH's "[Supplemental Guidance for COVID-19 Containment at Higher Education Institutions during the Public Health Emergency](#)."

Higher education institutions that opt to conduct collegiate athletics – either intramural/club sports or intercollegiate sports sanctioned by athletic associations/governing bodies – are required to comply with the provisions of this supplemental guidance in order to conduct such athletic activities – including training, practices, and competitions – during the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

This guidance reflects minimum requirements only and each institution is free to provide additional precautions or increased restrictions. These guidelines are based on the best-known public health practices at the time of issuance, and the documentation upon which these guidelines are based can and does change frequently.

### Background

Under Governor Cuomo's leadership, New York successfully reduced the transmission of COVID-19 to one of the lowest rates of any state in the country. Through strict adherence to data-driven, evidence-based public health protocols, including appropriate social distancing, required face coverings, and enhanced cleaning and disinfection, New Yorkers helped limit community spread of COVID-19 throughout the reopening of the economy.

While New York continues this trajectory and addresses specific, localized spread through the State's [cluster action initiative](#), other states and countries have taken a more haphazard, less cautious approach, and are now experiencing significant increases in the rate of community transmission of this deadly virus. Given the risk posed by a resurgence of COVID-19 spread, higher education institutions in New York must maintain the public health measures and safeguards set forth by DOH to prevent, mitigate, and address any spread of this virus among students, faculty, and staff.

### Guidance for Intramural and Club Sports

Intramural and club sports must follow DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" for the conduct of such athletics that are affiliated with, or hosted by, a higher education institution.

Specifically, lower- and moderate-risk sports (e.g., tennis, soccer, cross country, field hockey, and swimming) may practice and play. However, travel for practice or play is prohibited outside of the

institution's region or contiguous regions/counties. Travel for practice or play to, or from, any area within New York that has been designated as a red or orange zone may only be permitted following consultation with the respective state or local health departments. Travel for practice or play to, or from, any area within New York that has been designated as a yellow zone is permitted so long as it adheres to all DOH issued guidance for such activities. Interstate travel for practice or play must adhere to the State's travel advisory as set forth in DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York State Following Out of State Travel](#)," which requires quarantine for a period of 14 days for individuals who arrive in, or return to, New York following travel within non-contiguous states or countries designated as a [Level 2 or 3 health advisory](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or alternatively, a quarantine period of at least four days in New York where an individual presents both a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test that was taken within 72 hours before arrival in New York, and another COVID-19 diagnostic test with negative result on, or after, the fourth day of quarantine in order to leave such quarantine.

Higher-risk sports (e.g., football, wrestling, rugby, hockey, volleyball, basketball) may practice, but not play until authorized at a later date; and, in accordance with the State-issued guidance, such practices are limited to individual or group, no- to low-contact training (e.g., skills development) whereby contact between players may only be incidental and any activities that are specifically designed to promote close physical contact are prohibited.

If an institution is closed for in-person education during the academic year due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, intramural and club sports must be suspended until in-person education is resumed; provided, however, that this restriction does not apply to institutions that are conducting only remote instruction. Further, institutions hosting competitive play of the allowed "lower" and "moderate" risk intramural and/or club sports must follow the DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" for the conduct of such allowable sport competitions, including but not limited to, where required, implementing and enforcing rules for appropriate social distancing, face coverings, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as reducing the capacity of any sports facility to the lesser of two spectators per player or 50% of the maximum occupancy of any indoor area/space required such that all spectators can maintain six feet of separation in any outdoor area.

### **Guidance for Intercollegiate Sports Sanctioned by Athletic Associations and Governing Bodies**

Intercollegiate sports sanctioned by athletic associations or governing bodies must follow DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Professional Sports Training Facilities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" and "[Interim Guidance for Professional Sports Competitions with No Fans During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)," respectively, for the conduct of such athletics that are affiliated with, or hosted by, a higher education institution.

Specifically, intercollegiate sports that are sanctioned by athletic associations or governing bodies (e.g., National Collegiate Athletic Association) may practice and play, as determined by the sport's respective association, conference, and higher education institution. However, higher education institutions must notify and coordinate with their respective local health department on the resumption of intercollegiate sports, including but not limited to, the sharing of any applicable health and safety plans, protocols, or procedures. Additionally, no spectators, fans, or audience are authorized to attend an intercollegiate sport competition or training program until further notice. Higher education institutions, in consultation with local health or safety authorities, must have sufficient security personnel to ensure only participants and personnel essential to the intercollegiate play (e.g., athletes, coaches, trainers, regulators, timekeepers, judges, referees, media, medical personnel, venue staff) are permitted access to the facilities/grounds and implement a security plan to disperse any individuals that gather outside the premises.

Travel for practice or play to, or from, any area within New York that has been designated as a red or orange zone may only be permitted following consultation with the respective state or local health departments. Travel for practice or play to, or from, any area within New York that has been designated as a yellow zone is permitted so long as it adheres to all DOH issued guidance for such activities. Interstate travel for practice or play must adhere to the State's travel advisory as set forth in DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Quarantine Restrictions on Travelers Arriving in New York State Following Out of State Travel](#)," which requires quarantine or significant health precautions for a period of 14 days for individuals who arrive in, or return to, New York following travel within non-contiguous states or countries designated as a [Level 2 or 3 health advisory](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), or alternatively, a quarantine period of at least four days in New York where an individual presents both a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test that was taken within 72 hours before arrival in New York, and another COVID-19 diagnostic test with negative result on, or after, the fourth day of quarantine in order to leave such quarantine.. Intercollegiate sports may follow DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Professional Sports Teams Traveling Between States with Significant Community Spread of COVID-19 and New York State](#);" provided, however, that all student athletes from New York who participate in travel to states subject to the advisory must cease in-person instruction (i.e., receive only remote/virtual instruction) for 14 days following such travel, or alternatively, present a negative COVID-19 diagnostic test result from a test that is conducted on or after the fourth day of their return to New York.

## Resources

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

National Collegiate Athletic Association Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website  
<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/covid-19-coronavirus>