



Area Youth Sports (AYS) Return to Play Plan/Protocols

Phase II – Beginning June 1st: In keeping with the State of Maine protocols as published, group outdoor training with 50 or less individuals present, based on State and Local Health requirements),

The following is a phased plan in order to safely resume youth sports.

Criteria for participation (includes athletes, coaches and staff)

- No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days and have not been exposed to someone that has been ill in 14 days.
- Take temperature before going to training.
- Upon arrival to training, coaches or staff should ask each athlete if they are experiencing any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 if the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should be sent home and instructed to contact their healthcare provider as soon as possible.
- Make sure appropriate infection prevention supplies are present in multiple targeted areas (e.g., hand sanitizer, facial tissues, facial coverings, disinfecting wipes etc.)
- Sporting Activities should take place outside in an area where social distancing can be maintained.
- Participants should use their own equipment and properly sanitize the equipment after every training session. In cases of shared equipment, said equipment will be disinfected between each use.
- Any parent outside of their vehicle will be counted toward the group total regardless of the distance from them to the players/coaches.
- No shared beverages or food/snacks.
- Cleaning schedule/protocol of equipment with disinfectant before, during, and after training.
- Wearing appropriate personal protective equipment if in a public location setting that mandates in that particular public space when social distancing cannot be achieved, (i.e. face mask.)

On Field Guidance

Practices:

Athletes & Coaches: Engage in 6ft social distancing while not actively engaged in play (e.g., during practice, on the bench, or in the dugout). During times when players are not actively participating in practice, attention should be given to maintaining [social distancing](#) by increasing space between players on the sideline, dugout, or bench. Training activities will be altered to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Scrimmages/Game Play:

Limit physical closeness of players during game play and reduce the length of time that players are close to each other or to staff.

Dugouts:

The dugout will be extended to behind the dugout to the backstop. This is to allow rostered players and up to *three coaches* to practice social distancing. No more than 3-5 individuals are permitted in the dugout at any given time (this is dependent on the size of the dugout). Players, coaches or any combination must maintain all social distancing guidelines. All other team personnel must practice social distancing in the extended area of the dugout, as referenced above.

Players are to stay at their assigned spots when on the bench or while waiting their turn to bat.

Face Coverings:

While face coverings are recommended to reduce the risk of viral transmission between individuals in public areas, face coverings are not compatible with many sports and inhibit respiration during exercise. Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during practice or competition. Face coverings are recommended for spectators. (Per Restarting Maine Economy- COVID-19 Prevention checklist Phase 2: Community Sports)

Player Equipment:

Players should have their own individual batter's helmet, glove, bat, and catcher's equipment if possible.

Measures should be enacted to avoid, or minimize, equipment sharing when feasible. Some critical equipment may not be able to be obtained by every individual. When it is necessary to share critical or limited equipment, all surfaces of each piece of shared equipment must be disinfected. Disinfection will be done between all participants.

Baseballs, Softballs and/or Teeballs:

Baseballs and softballs should be rotated through on a regular basis to limit individual contact.

Balls used in infield/outfield warm-up should be isolated from a shared ball container.

Foul balls landing outside the field of play should be retrieved by participating players, and coaches, No spectators should retrieve the ball.

Drinks and Snacks:

Athletes, managers/coaches, and volunteers should bring their own personal drinks to all team activities. Drinks should be labeled with the person's name.

Individuals should take their own drink containers home each night for cleaning and sanitation or use single-use bottles.

There should be no use of shared beverages, ie coolers etc.

Teams should not share any snacks or food. Players should bring individual, pre-packaged food, if needed.

No Handshakes/Personal Contact Celebrations:

Players and coaches should take measures to prevent all but the essential contact. This should include refraining from handshakes, high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, group celebrations, etc.

Spitting, Sunflower Seeds, etc.:

Sunflower seeds should not be allowed in dugouts or on the playing field.

All players and coaches are to refrain from spitting at all times, including in dugout areas and on the playing field.

Spread Out Scheduling of Practices and Games:

Schedule sufficient time between practices and games to facilitate the complete evacuation of individuals from a previous practice or game from the premises before the next group enters. Limiting the amount of people on the field is important.

Limiting Spectator Attendance & Spectator social distancing:

All spectators should follow best social distancing practices — stay six feet away from individuals outside their household; wear a cloth face covering at all times when social distancing cannot be achieved; avoid direct hand or other contact with players/managers/coaches during play.

Spectators should bring their own seating or portable chairs when possible.

Spectators will not be allowed around the area of the backstop or dugouts. Only players, up to three coaches per team are allowed on the field of play. Spectators are only permitted to view practices/scrimmages/games from the outfield. This means the game may be viewed along the foul lines starting at 1st/3rd base extending to the outfield and in the outfield area.

AYS may choose to minimize the exposure risk to spectators by limiting attendance to only essential volunteers and limited family members based on numbers of players.

Clean and Disinfect Shared Equipment and Surfaces:

Clean AND disinfect frequently touched surfaces daily and in between all facility uses, including practices and games. This includes dugouts, portable toilets, water fountain etc.

Public Restrooms:

A “one-in-one-out” policy, where only one individual is permitted within the restroom at one time, should be implemented to ensure adequate distancing.

Prior to and after any activity, restrooms should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Restrooms should be disinfected on a regular basis.

Safety policies and precautions

If a player/coach thinks they are sick, stay home! Specifically: symptoms of acute respiratory disease (i.e. cough, sore throat, shortness of breath), fever, sudden loss of smell or taste. If a coach, administrator, or official has a concern about a player's health, they have the ability to send the player home.

A spectator with any of the following conditions should not attend a practice or game until evaluated by a medical provider and given clearance to do so:

- Active COVID-19 infection
- Known direct contact with an individual testing positive for COVID-19
- Fever and/or Cough

Those at higher risk for severe disease should consider consultation with their medical provider before attending a game or practice and should ensure the strictest adherence to guidelines regarding face coverings, distancing, and handwashing. Such groups include:

Those with a serious underlying medical condition, including heart disease, morbid obesity, diabetes, lung disease, immune-compromise, chronic kidney disease, and chronic lung disease.

Cooperation and Responsibilities

Club Responsibilities:

- Create and distribute protocols to its members. This must be done prior to beginning any sport activities.
- Have an effective communication plan in place, identify strategies to notify adult leaders, youth and their families if the organization learns a participant or adult leader has developed COVID-19 and may have been infectious to others while at a youth activity, while maintaining confidentiality.
- Be sensitive and accommodating to parents that many be uncomfortable with returning to play too quickly.
- Ensure sure that practices and games follow all local and state directives regarding the number of people allowed to gather in one place.
- Train and educate all staff to protocols and requirements, including state and local regulations, CDC recommendations and other necessary information. It is the Club's responsibility to see that all coaches, and other staff adhere to these protocols and requirements.
- Provide adequate field space for social distancing.

- Provide hand sanitizer and waste receptacles at fields. Regarding hand sanitizer, this would be only used if a player or other individual does not bring their own.
- Be prepared to shut down and stop operations if the State of Maine changes its guidelines to require stoppage.

Coach Responsibilities:

- Ensure the health and safety of the athletes.
- Inquire how the athletes are feeling, send them home should you believe they act or look ill.
- Follow all state and local health protocols.
- Ensure all athletes have their individual equipment. In case of shared equipment, ensure disinfection between equipment usages.
- Coach is the only person to handle group equipment, equipment bags, cones, tees, buckets etc.
- All training outdoors and ensure social distancing per state or local health guidelines.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment if training in a public location setting as mandated by that particular public space where social distancing cannot be maintained, (i.e. face mask.)
- Have fun, stay positive – players and parents are looking to you to stay calm, supportive and caring during this time.

Parent Responsibilities:

- Ensure child is healthy, check your child's temperature before attending a training session.
- Limited or no carpooling.
- Stay in car or adhere to social distance requirements, based on state and local health requirements.
- Ensure child's clothing is washed after every training session.
- Ensure all equipment, are sanitized before and after every training.
- Notify club immediately if your child becomes ill for any reason. This is a requirement.
- Do not assist coach with equipment before or after training.
- Be sure your child has necessary sanitizer with them at every training. This is a requirement.

Player Responsibilities:

- Take temperature before attending training session, if you have a temperature of 100° or higher, do not attend training session or activity.
- Wash hands thoroughly before and after training.
- Bring and use, hand sanitizer with you to every training.
- Do not touch or share anyone else's equipment, water, snack or bag.
- Practice social distancing, place bags and equipment at least 6 feet apart.
- Wash and sanitize all equipment before and after every training.
- No group celebrations, no high 5's, hugs, handshakes etc.