



RETURN TO PLAY

US LACROSSE

STAGE 5

**RETURN-TO-PLAY
RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR LACROSSE**

July 1, 2020



Final US Lacrosse Return To Play Updates for Stages 4 & 5

Lacrosse Return to Play

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends physical distancing of six-feet between people and the wearing of personal protective masks, as well as safe hygiene practices like hand washing, as fundamental interventions that prevent the spread of COVID-19. These interventions have become widely adopted, and US Lacrosse believes that lacrosse programs and events should adopt these interventions to the extent practicable.

COVID-19 has the potential to cause serious illness and death in people of all ages and genders in all communities. Those who are immunocompromised, have co-morbid medical conditions and/or are over the age of 65 are at greatest risk. At the present time, testing and contact tracing are not widely available, effective treatments have not been developed, and a vaccine is not expected to be widely available for the foreseeable future. Additionally, while children appear to be at a lower risk to contract the virus, there is growing concern that they can be asymptomatic carriers who can expose their family members and extended family members to infection.

Unfortunately, there is no way to eliminate the risk of infection in this pandemic. Therefore, the goals of a safe return to play must focus on mitigating the risk of COVID-19 transmission, quickly identifying and removing participants who may have contracted or been exposed to COVID-19 (and managing appropriately), notifying public health officials to initiate contact tracing when appropriate, and protecting vulnerable and at-risk populations. Once the risks of participation are understood and a return to play plan is established to mitigate those risks, the organization should effectively communicate the plan and ensure plan compliance.

Essential to the development and successful implementation of a return to play plan is the need to evolve and innovate the lacrosse experience to assure that infection risks are mitigated while embracing the opportunity to evolve the traditional youth lacrosse experience. The risks of athletic participation and differences among low-to-high-risk sports is unclear. However, COVID-19 infection risk associated with occasional close quarters and incidental contact in a fast-paced outdoor athletic activity could be less than the "grouping" activities that have always been part of structured practice sessions. Young players huddled together for instruction or groups of nonparticipating players socializing on the sidelines could represent greater infection risks and are examples of traditional practice plans that must be eliminated.

Until a vaccine or effective treatments are found, exposure time within a group setting must be limited to reduce infection risk. The goal for programs and coaches is to provide a safer environment based on best public health practices, come to that environment prepared, train and compete efficiently in group activities, get out of the group environment as quickly as reasonable, and stay connected with your team in a variety of low-risk ways in between games.

There is a growing urgency for the return of sport in America, some of which is fueled by parental expectations, player aspirations, the financial pressures of youth sports organizations and businesses. Despite these circumstances, young athletes must be provided with a supportive program focused on their health and welfare...not just their value to others. Kids play sports because they are fun. Let's help them find that again in the safest manner possible.

These recommendations are designed to create and promote innovative, athlete-centered, developmentally appropriate and graduated lacrosse programming and activities that allow for a staged return to play based on federal, state and local public health guidelines and best practices. Lacrosse players and coaches are eager to return to the field as soon as possible. In order to achieve that goal, programs need to adapt the lacrosse experience in order to assure that the health and safety of all participants remain the highest priority.

These guidelines consist of a "staged" return to play that is based on staged or phased return of activities established by most states and local public health departments. **Factors such as new infections of COVID-19, the rate of hospitalizations due to COVID-19, and the availability of healthcare**



resources in each community, county or state can help determine the stage or phase of activity allowed. The return to play “stages” in this document will broadly describe the activities that are recommended, based on the level of risk that is associated with that activity, during that stage.

Please refer to the CDC and your State Departments of Health to determine the current recovery stage of your community, county or state.
<https://www.usa.gov/state-health>

Please refer to this link for daily state-by-state updates on openings
<https://www.npr.org/2020/03/12/815200313/what-governors-are-doing-to-tackle-spreading-coronavirus>.

It is important to note that these stages are not intended to be followed in a linear manner, as it may become necessary to return to prior staged guidance and activities, based on the ever-changing status of COVID-19 exposure in the community, county or state that you are conducting lacrosse activities in. It is possible, if not likely, that there will be local and regional outbreaks and surges of COVID-19 for some time to come.

Younger children (under the age of 8) may not be best suited for any organized, modified group lacrosse activity conducted in Stages 2 or 3, as younger children will have more difficulty maintaining social distancing and practicing recommended risk mitigation with their personal belongings and equipment.

Research has shown that introduction to full competition activity after a long span of deconditioning increases risk for significant musculoskeletal injury. Every effort should be made to have a gradual return to activity starting with drills and conditioning regardless of the community phase. At this time, as we have found no current medical evidence that would suggest that a return to play that includes full-field, full-roster sized teams, competing in full-length games or tournaments could occur without significant risk to participants.

Stage 4: Medium group (less than 50) Local competition/ practices from teams within same locale, with limited closeness and contact at outdoor or indoor facility (moderate-to-high risk) no multiteam events Modified competitive play: Local, small-sided or full field competition, no multiteam events. Aligned with state/local public health guidelines that allow for up to 50 people/ allow no more than two local teams to compete; to gather indoors or outdoors. ***Follow all guidance provided for hygiene/ distancing, facility/event and training/prevention as referenced in Stage 2 and 3.**

US Lacrosse Officials – Return to Play Best Practices
<https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/safety/rtp-officials-best-practices.pdf>

Stage 5: Larger group gatherings (more than 50) and full competition resumption with multiple teams from varied geographic areas. (Highest risk). New Normal. Traditional Play and Venues Aligned with state/local public health guidelines that allow for groups larger than 50. Participation in a multi-team event, at a single multi-field outdoor venue. ***Follow guidance provided referenced in Stage 2-4, unless any new recommendations are outlined below:**

- Screening is important and testing is not always available for everyone at an event.
- Any planning needs to be in compliance with all local, state government and public health guidance and regarding social distancing, protective face coverings and gathering sizes.
- According to the CDC, there are certain segments of the population that are at an increased risk of being infected by COVID-19. Individuals who are 65-years of age or older, and people of any age with underlying or pre-existing health conditions are at greatest risk of developing more serious complications from COVID-19 illness and it is recommended that they should not participate in or attend events with a large number of participants.



- While all event operators are encouraged to follow these Return-Play recommendations for large-scale lacrosse events, US Lacrosse does not have the ability to cancel or postpone events due to public health concerns that they do not own and operate, including US Lacrosse Sanctioned Tournaments.
- US Lacrosse Sanctioned Tournaments and US Lacrosse owned and operated events will be required to implement the COVID-19 mitigation guidance provided in Stage 5, in addition to other Sanctioned Event requirements.
- Families, Officials, Clubs, Coach and event operators should review the status of new infections of COVID-19, the rate of hospitalizations due to COVID-19, and the availability of healthcare resources in each community, county or state where any tournament or event is taking place, and before any team or event staff travels out of their region to compete in any event. These public health considerations should be reviewed daily, leading up to any event – and data acquired will provide critical information to all spectators, participants and operators when making decisions about withdrawing a player or team from an event or cancelling an event all together.
- At any point in time, US Lacrosse may determine it necessary to make a public statement and/or remove the US Lacrosse sanctioned status of any US Lacrosse Sanctioned event or cancel any US Lacrosse owned and operated event, due to concerns related to participant safety or public health, based on WHO guidance advising that large, organized gatherings should be limited or scaled back in size if COVID-19 positivity rate exceed manageable levels, in a given community. A reliable resource to monitor Daily State-by-State COVID-19 Testing Trends can be found here: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states>
 - All activities should follow guidelines listed in this document.

STAGE 5 - HYGIENE/ DISTANCING

- All event staff must wear cloth face coverings that covers nose and mouth and regularly sanitize their hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- All coaches and team personnel must wear cloth face coverings, that covers nose and mouth, at all times.
- During games, officials should do their best to maintain 6 feet of distance from coaches, player, staff and spectators as well as other officials and if they choose, they may wear cloth face masks that covers nose and mouth. When off of the field, officials should wear cloth face masks and continue to maintain 6 feet of distance from others.
- During games, athletes should do their best to maintain 6 feet of distance from other players, coaches and officials and if they choose, they may wear a face mask that covers nose and mouth, during lacrosse games and activity. When interacting with other people in a public setting, off the field, all athletes should wear cloth face coverings and maintain appropriate social distancing. (*see Athlete and Parent Responsibilities in USL RTP Guide*).
- All spectators and family members must wear cloth face masks that covers nose and mouth in public settings and maintain 6 feet of distance from one another.
- For helmet wearers, face shields are not endorsed or recommended by US Lacrosse – but they may be worn, if the manufacturer of the shield has received approval by the helmet manufacturer that the shield is being worn in. This is to ensure proper fit and stability. Manufacturers of helmets may design, develop and test face shields within the parameters of all applicable rulebooks and standards for use in their brand of helmets.
- According to the CDC, it is not known if face shields provide any benefit as source control to protect others from the spray of respiratory particles. CDC does not recommend use of face shields for



normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings. Some people may choose to use a face shield when sustained close contact with other people is expected. If face shields are used without a mask, they should wrap around the sides of the wearer's face and extend to below the chin. Disposable face shields should only be worn for a single use. Reusable face shields should be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- Event staff and volunteers should participate in daily health screenings, (ie: a temperature check and symptom reporting.) Any staff or volunteers experiencing symptoms will be directed to local health resources and will not work their scheduled shift.
- Confirmation of screenings should be completed by event staff for all participants and spectators upon entrance to the facility parking lots. For admittance to the event facility, a successful screening must be completed.
- Event staff should maintain contact list for all players, coaches and officials as well as a record of games played for contact tracing purposes.
- Table staff should maintain distance from each other.
- Coaches on side-lines should make sure no contact is occurring between athletes, coaches or officials off-field – whether during pre-game, mid-game, or post game (no huddles handshakes, high-fives, fist bumps, etc).
- Event staff should ensure that there is adequate time provided to teams and officials for hydration, sanitation and recovery between games. Staggered entry and exit times for teams should be implemented to minimize interaction and exposure time between groups.
- Mouthguards should be kept in athletes' mouths at all times during practices and games. When removed, mouthguards should be kept in protective case, and cleaned before future use. Hands used to touch a removed mouthguard should be sanitized before touching anything or anyone.
- No spitting should be permitted anywhere at event.
- Outside food and drink may be necessary, if teams and staff are on site at an all-day event. Ensure that there are no tables or areas where shared food and drink are displayed.
- Modifications to game play should be considered to minimize contact and extended closeness. US Lacrosse has provided some suggestions for game-play modifications.
 - Women's Game: <https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/rules/rtp-womens-game-modifications.pdf>
 - Men's Game: <https://www.uslacrosse.org/sites/default/files/public/documents/rules/rtp-mens-game-modifications.pdf>

STAGE 5 - FACILITY/ VENUE

- When determining a date to conduct or participate in a large-scale lacrosse event, the state and/or local government jurisdiction for the property must be within a re-opening phase that permits opening of private sports facilities, athletic fields or outdoor recreation; and/or gatherings of an appropriate size. Any ambiguity in these guidelines should be clarified with the government entity prior to proceeding.
- Before event occurs, event operators and venue should assess the local virus transmission/ positivity rates **within the locale that the event is occurring in** and determine the risk of hosting or cancelling event if/or when the positivity rate in that locale has increased beyond manageable levels.



- Before event occurs, event operators and venue should assess the **local virus transmission/ positivity rates in the regions where visiting teams, officials are traveling in from**, and determine the risk of hosting or cancelling event or asking teams to stay home, if or when the positivity rates in locales where teams are coming from has increased beyond manageable levels.
- The venue should share its detailed re-opening protocols and event schedules with the appropriate state and local government.
- All Event Operators should have a COVID Action Plan and amend their EAP to include risk mitigation steps for communicable diseases. The CAP should be communicated to all event participants prior to the event and posted on the event website, as well as on-site
- It is recommended that event operators limit spectators attending events, to include only one parent or guardian per participant.
- Unsupervised participants (siblings and pets) should not be permitted at event.
- It is recommended that if there are food and drink vendors on site, they must also adhere to all COVID-19 hygiene related practices and crowd management must be in place to ensure lines do not allow groups to congregate.
- Signage at event should include, but not be limited to, facility policies and procedures, COVID-19 symptom awareness, expected behavior and assumption of risk, social distancing markers for restroom and concession lines, handwashing guidelines in restrooms, closures of areas (ie: playgrounds, umpire's dressing room)
- Field layout should provide room for teams to spread out along sidelines and spectators to spread out in spectator areas, and in between fields there should be no gathering areas for teams or spectators.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of all equipment on field in-between games (ie: scorer's table, clocks used in games) and other used common areas at event (bathrooms, sanitizing station, event info table) should occur on a more frequent basis throughout the event.
- Where possible, modifications should be made to the facilities to minimize guest contact with surfaces and to facilitate social distancing, including doors/entrances should be kept open and/or foot-operated door openers will be installed. Water fountains should be disabled, shuttle services suspended and playground areas closed. Within restrooms, every other restroom sink and toilet/urinal should be closed to facilitate distancing and automatic hand dryers should be replaced with paper towels. Event staff should direct traffic flow and capacities in closed areas
- Frequently-touched areas at venue, such as bleachers, picnic tables, trash receptacle lids should be removed or closed to public.
- Sanitation areas (with alcohol-based hand sanitizers and wipes) should be places near each field, by officials staging area, by every restroom, at the info table and each scorers table and at entrance and exit of facility.
- No score update board should be posted on site. All scores and game schedule updates should be posted electronically.
- A separate area such as a first aid office/tent or EMT office/tent should be established to take potentially sick patients to be evaluated. Adequate supply of PPE should be available at this tent/area.
- Exhibitors/vendors should be limited and required to submit their safety protocol plan prior to the event for review and approval.
- Team and coach check-ins should be done virtually, and not on-site or in person.



- Team tailgates or tented large group gatherings for spectators/families and team participants between games should not be allowed at events.

STAGE 5 - TRAINING/ INJURY PREVENTION CONSIDERATIONS

- Incidence of non-contact related injuries are higher following a period of inactivity.
- Risk of non-contact injuries is higher if training workloads and/or recovery strategies are not adjusted accordingly.
- It is recommended that athletes participate in at least 6 weeks of practice, strength training and conditioning before returning to games or tournament play, in order to minimize the potential risk of injury.
- Event Operators should consider limiting length of games (no full-length games), and should consider limiting the number of games played in a single day to result in no more than 2 hours of play, per day, per team. (ie: 3, 40 minute games or 2, 50 minute games).
- Event Operators should consider eliminating any championship or elimination format from their schedules.
- All protective lacrosse equipment required for or allowed for use by participants should be cleaned by wearer before use, and should be worn as intended during all lacrosse activities. No one else should be handling any individual's equipment. (<https://www.uslacrosse.org/safety/equipment>)
- Before participating in any practice, game or multi-game event, participants should hydrate effectively, eat healthy foods that nourish and sustain the body for high intensity activity.
- Participants should bring own water/hydration and food supply to event to replenish body in between games. Food and water sharing amongst participants is not recommended.
- Sunscreen should be worn by all participants and re-applied throughout the day, to minimize the potential for burns and skin damage.

GUIDANCE FOR WHEN SOMEONE GETS SICK/ TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 – AT OR AFTER EVENT (From CDC) HAVE THIS PLAN POSTED ON EVENT SITE, AND BE READY TO IMPLEMENT WHEN LEARNING AN EVENT PARTICIPANT HAS TESTED POSITIVE FROM COVID-19

- Advise Sick Individuals of Home Isolation Criteria
- Sick coaches, staff members, umpires/officials, or players should not return to event until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.
- Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick
- Make sure that coaches, staff, officials, players, and families know that sick individuals should not attend the youth sports event, and that they should notify youth sports officials (e.g., the COVID-19 point of contact) if they (staff) or their child (families) become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed or suspected case.



- Immediately separate coaches, staff, officials, and players with COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., fever, cough, shortness of breath) at any youth sports activity. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick. Individuals who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms should be separated and sent home as well, and follow CDC guidance for community-related exposure (see “Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts” below). If symptoms develop, individuals and families should follow CDC guidance for caring for oneself and others who are sick.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, try to call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.
- Clean and Disinfect all equipment and surfaces.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable). Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfection products, including storing them securely away from children.
- Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts
- In accordance with state and local privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, youth sports organizations should notify local health officials, youth sports program staff, umpires/officials, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) external icon and other applicable laws and regulations.
- Work with local health officials to develop a reporting system (e.g., letter) youth sports organizations can use to notify health officials and close contacts of cases of COVID-19.
- Advise those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home and self-monitor for symptoms, to follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop, and consider contacting their healthcare provider

RETURN TO PLAY GUIDANCE

- [US Olympic & Paralympic Committee guidance on Return to Training \[PDF\]](#)
- [US Olympic & Paralympic Committee guidance on Sports & Events \[PDF\]](#)
- [National Recreation and Parks Association on Slowing the Spread](#)
- [Project Play Return to Play Guidelines](#)
- [Daily State- by-State Testing Trends https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states](https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/testing/individual-states)



LACROSSE RESOURCES

US Lacrosse Youth Rules <https://www.uslacrosse.org/rules>

Lacrosse Athlete Resources <https://www.uslacrosse.org/athlete-development>

Lacrosse Coaching Resources <https://www.uslacrosse.org/coaches>

US Lacrosse Sanctioned Events <https://www.uslacrosse.org/events/sanctioned-tournaments>

Lacrosse Officiating Resources <https://www.uslacrosse.org/officials>

<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/topics/covid-19-and-mental-health>

Lacrosse COVID-19 Insurance Guidance <https://www.uslacrosse.org/safe-return-to-play>

CDC GUIDANCE ON YOUTH SPORTS EVENTS AND TRAVEL DURING PANDEMIC

CDC Guidance on Face Masks and Face Shields https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM31977

CDC FAQ on Youth Sports Programs https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports-faq.html?deliveryName=USCDC_2067-DM31413

CDC Considerations for Youth Sports <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>

CDC Guidance on Coronavirus and Travel in the US: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

CDC Guidance for Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>

CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Community Facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019ncov/community/organizations/cleaningdisinfection.html>

CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-buildingfacility.html>

CDC Guidance for Large Community Events and Mass Gatherings: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

