

State guidance released on youth, adult sports in Massachusetts

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New state guidance set to take effect Monday outlines what youth and adult amateur sports activities will be allowed to take place – and with what safety precautions – during the current phase of the state’s reopening plan.

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs said its guidance “applies to K-12 school and other youth sports activities,” and the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association said in a statement posted to Twitter that it is awaiting “accompanying guidelines from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.” The document categorizes sports into three levels of COVID-19 transmission risk, based on the amount of close contact required or expected, with different limitations for each.

Lower-risk activities, like tennis, golf, gymnastics and cross country, can hold individual or socially distanced group activities, competitive practices, competitions and outdoor tournaments. For the other two risk levels, competitive practices and competitions are only allowed with modifications in place. They can participate in individual or distanced activities like non-contact workouts, aerobic conditioning and drills the way the sport is traditionally played. Sports including baseball and softball, team swimming, volleyball and field hockey are deemed moderate risk. The higher-risk category includes football, basketball, competitive cheer, ice hockey and ultimate Frisbee.