General Guidance & FAQs for COVID-19 Exposures and Case Investigations Involving Sports
(Ver 4.0 September 21, 2021)

1. **What is the current contact tracing recommendation for sports?**
   a. All sports, including hockey, require routine contact tracing (i.e., identifying individual close contacts).  

2. **What is the close contact definition used for sports?**
   a. Being within 6ft of a case for a cumulative total of ≥ 15 minutes within a 24-hour period while indoors and at any point during the case’s infectious period.
   b. BOHs may use their discretion.

3. **If only indoor exposures count, how do we contact trace for outdoor sports?**
   a. There may be additional activities among athletes surrounding a specific outdoor event. Be sure to ask about carpooling, locker room usage, direct contact with respiratory secretions/fluids such as sharing drinks, social activities, and any other scenarios in which indoor contact or contact with respiratory secretions/fluids may have occurred.
   b. BOHs may use their discretion. If a BOH would like to take a more conservative approach to contact tracing, they may choose to do so.

4. **Which types of close contacts can be exempt from quarantine?**
   a. Please note that individuals who had COVID-19 in the last 90 days (from day of symptom onset or day of first positive test if asymptomatic), AND individuals who have received either two doses of the Moderna or Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines or a single dose of the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine, at least 14 days ago are not required to quarantine following an exposure.
   b. For more information see the quarantine guidance.

5. **Do all athletes need to quarantine if an infectious hockey player is on the ice with their team?**
   a. No, we recommend that people who are within 6ft ≥ 15 min within a 24-hour period should be identified as a close contact. Unvaccinated close contacts must quarantine and those who have not recently recovered (<3 months) must quarantine.
   b. As always, BOHs can use their discretion to quarantine others.

6. **What should be done if a fully vaccinated, exposed individual is exempt from quarantine but develops symptoms compatible with COVID-19?**
   a. Symptomatic individuals should contact their primary care provider, seek testing, and stay home while results are pending.
      i. If test is negative, have the individual stay at home until they feel better. Other etiologies should be considered and ruled out.
      ii. **If test is positive, this person is now a case and needs to isolate.**
         iii. If testing is not sought and the symptoms MEET the clinical case definition, this is a probable case, and the individual should isolate for 10 days.
         iv. If testing is not sought and the symptoms do NOT meet the clinical case definition, the individual should remain at home until they feel better.

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1 MDPH is monitoring trends among different sporting activities and will use this data to inform any changes to quarantine recommendations in a specific sport setting as applicable.
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7. A player tested positive for COVID-19, but they have a close friend who isn’t on the team that also tested positive. Should I create a cluster in MAVEN? 
   a. No, a cluster should only be created if both cases are from different households and attended an event with 5 or more people. You can link these two individual cases together directly as contacts if there was an appropriately timed exposure between the two of them.

8. Do all sports require participants to wear masks?
   a. Club sports: there are no masking recommendations specific to sports. Please follow the general MA Mask advisory.
   b. DESE sports requirement (K-12): students and coaches of indoor sports are required to wear a mask. For students and coaches participating in outdoor sports, masks are recommended but not required.
      i. DESE has extended their mask requirement when indoors through at least November 1, 2021. Be sure to check DESE’s Webpage guidance for further updates or extensions on their Masking Guidance.
      ii. MIAA is following the DESE guidance for masking.

9. What about mask guidance for spectators?
   a. Follow the MA Mask advisory.

10. What if my town has stricter and more specific guidance when it comes to mask wearing or other COVID-19 regulations? 
    a. Guidance enacted by LBOHs must also be followed.

11. A teammate for a school-based sports team tests positive. Can close contacts exposed on the school team continue to participate in school activities? 
    a. Yes, if these exposed contacts are not already exempt from quarantine (due to recent COVID-19 diagnosis or being fully vaccinated), they may qualify to participate in the DESE “Test and Stay” program. For participating K-12 schools, close contacts of a school related exposure who have opted in to the “test and stay” can participate in school related athletics. If a school does not have a Test and Stay program in place, students would be subject to routine quarantine options and may not attend school or activities during their designated strict quarantine period.
    b. If an athletic event is on a weekend, exposed children participating in the Test and Stay program must test negative on the day of the event or they will be unable to participate. Schools and school athletic programs should anticipate this scenario and establish a process for weekend testing if they are participating in the Test and Stay program.
    c. See the DESE FAQ for the policy’s language.

12. A teammate for a school-based sports team tests positive. Can close contacts of the school team participate in non-school-based activities such as club sports, social events, Girl and Boy Scouts etc.? 
    a. No. Students should quarantine when not at school or a school activity and therefore should not participate in any activities outside of school-sponsored teams and events.
    b. See the DESE FAQ for additional information.
13. Two school sports teams played each other. A case was identified and infectious during the event. Is the DESE “Test and Stay” applicable?
   a. Yes, DESE Test and Stay is an option for school related sports exposures for those who are enrolled in the program.

14. For K-12 sports, do we use a <3ft rule, 3ft-6ft rule, or the <6ft rule for identifying close contacts to a confirmed case.
   a. We recommend using the <6ft rule (<6ft for ≥ 15 minutes over a 24hour period) for identifying close contacts and quarantine recommendations during athletic activity because this is an extracurricular activity outside the classroom.
   b. Bus rides to a school based (K-12) athletic event require the students to be masked and the windows be down. If these conditions are not met, standard close contact definition will apply, and the students will not be exempt from quarantine.
   c. Physical education classes count as exposures in the classroom and therefore follows the DESE guidance.

15. Do collegiate sports teams need to follow MDPH quarantine and isolation guidance?
   a. Yes, they still need to follow quarantine and isolation guidance as recommended by MDPH and their BOH.
   b. NCAA has also released guidance and recommendations for college sports.

16. Do K-12 aged players need to get written clearance from their physician and school to return to play?
   a. Please see the MIIA guidance + AAP guidance and direct the student and their family speak to their provider and school.

17. What if a league/team/player/venue is not complying with your public health investigation?
   a. Please let DPH know. The BOH can consult their legal team for additional actions as well.
      i. Link to enforcement of isolation and quarantine

18. Is transmission primarily occurring on the field of play or is it occurring off the field?
   a. It is challenging to identify when and where someone becomes infected with the virus that causes COVID-19. Transmission is more likely to occur in indoor spaces. For indoor sports, the risk of transmission would be highest in indoor spaces where there is close contact, which may be the on field or off field. For outdoor sports, transmission is more likely to occur off the field in indoor spaces where individuals are gathered and in close contact. Off field indoor spaces may include locker rooms, trainer’s rooms, team meeting rooms, and shared transport spaces like carpools or team buses.
19. What if a referee tests positive for COVID-19?
   a. For all sports, conduct contact tracing (identify a positive case’s individual close contacts).

20. Are all out-of-state sport teams restricted from playing in MA facilities?
   a. No, all out-of-state sport teams are permitted to play in MA facilities at this time.
   b. There are currently no interstate sports bans.

21. I have a MA resident who plays on a NH-based hockey team. Can they play with that team in NH?
   a. Yes, the interstate hockey ban has been lifted. We encourage athletes and teams to follow state travel advisory and to contact their BOH for more information.