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HUMBOLDT COUNTY YOUTH SPORTS MASKING REQUIREMENTS

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The following are requirements addressing youth sports and masking and in Humboldt County. Per CDPH, local public health jurisdictions are considered well-recognized health authorities pertaining to school-based extracurricular activities. **As such, Humboldt County Public Health (HCPH) is permitting individuals in high intensity indoor youth athletic programs (basketball and volleyball), to remove masks during active game play if it poses a health and safety risk to the individual. Individuals must wear masks when not in active game play.**

Wearing a mask continues to be one of the most protective measures schools and youth sports officials can employ to protect athletes, staff, and spectators. Masks decrease risks of transmission indoors. There continues to be many cases of COVID-19 among youth sports teams locally. Reducing the use of face coverings in additional sports teams, such as basketball, increases that risk of transmission to players, staff, and spectators that may be high risk for COVID-19. School administrators and league officials should be aware of that increased risk and the associated school absences and increased demand on required contact tracing that may result from players and officials being unmasked and in close contact.

To mitigate this increased risk and identify COVID-19 cases quickly, twice weekly testing with either PCR or antigen testing of all players, staff and coaches where masks are removed during play or competition, regardless of vaccination status, is required. In addition, tracking of individuals tested including type of test (PCR or antigen), testing dates and result is required and will be provided to Public Health upon request for contact tracing efforts.

The following are additional recommendations to increase safety and decrease risk of transmission of COVID-19 to athletes and spectators:

- HCPH recommends that officials also engage in testing if they are removing their mask during game play for health or safety reasons, and for schools to provide access to testing for officials as well.
- HCPH recommends a rapid antigen test the day before game play, and a PCR test done weekly on Fridays so that results are generally in the beginning of the week to reduce potential in-class exposure by student athletes.
- COVID-19 vaccination is strongly recommended for all participants who are eligible for vaccination, as well as coaches, staff and volunteers. Districts, schools, leagues, clubs, teams, organizations and tournaments/events can require that all participants and personnel be fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Having all athletes and staff in a league fully vaccinated greatly



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decreases the risk of transmission among teammates and between teams, and will provide excellent protection against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. It will also decrease disruption in team activities, since fully vaccinated individuals are not required to quarantine if they are close contacts to a case of COVID-19.

- Health screening of players, coaches, staff and spectators prior to or upon arriving at the event to identify those with symptoms will decrease risk to all attending by excluding individuals that are symptomatic.
- Schools and leagues may continue with requiring masking during play of high intensity indoor sports (basketball and volleyball). This may be useful for schools with limited testing capacity and experiencing difficulties with case investigations.

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