



SUGGESTED GUIDANCE FOR GAME PLAY

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Last Updated: 01/09/2022

GENERAL GUIDELINES

This document provides suggested general guidance and procedures to reduce the risk of exposure to coronavirus during game play at designated competition venues during the Athletes Unlimited (AU) Season. This guidance has been prepared for AU to ensure facilities used by athletes and staff have in place appropriate controls.

Note: All decisions about implementing these considerations should be made according to state and local guidelines as they are updated and issued. AU officials can determine, in collaboration with state and local health officials if and how to implement these considerations while adjusting them to meet the unique needs and circumstances of AU and the local jurisdiction. Their implementation should also be informed by what is feasible, practical, and acceptable.

- Any activities that can be conducted outdoors and with appropriate physical distancing are preferred over indoor activities and those that require close contact.
- Athletes should keep equipment clean by wiping down surfaces or using hand sanitizer, particularly when sharing equipment with others.
- Players and AU staff should wear masks at all times.
- During practice, games, or events, no spitting or consuming seeds with shells, such as sunflower seeds or peanuts.
- Avoid yelling to other players; yelling and singing are known to be high risk activities because they aerosolize virus.
- Use of indoor spaces should be limited to tested and health-screened AU athletes and staff.
- AU should ensure that any trainers are health-screened before treating players. Trainers, even if health-screened, should wear a face covering when working closely with athletes.
- Any emergency medical staff must wear a KN95 or N95 respirator and face shield while treating athletes.

- ❑ If athletes must be seen by medical personnel or a physical therapist, the athlete must wear a face covering during treatment, and the medical staff must wear a KN95 or N95 respirator and face shield.
- ❑ Any other individuals that are not health-screened must remain at least 6 feet from athletes and staff and wear a face covering at all times. Athletes should also be wearing a face covering while interacting with the non health-screened individuals.
- ❑ Athletes should not be in areas of the facility where individuals that are not health-screened may be located, such as the press box, stadium seating, or concessions. Press boxes must be organized to maintain physical distancing and masks must be worn, when possible.

GAME PLAY

- ❑ Any events taking place at the venue, including combine events, should only be conducted after athletes and staff have undergone testing and health-screening after arrival in-market. During the first days in-market, no physical activity can be done until physicals have been completed and a second COVID-19 screening test has been carried out.
- ❑ Any athletic equipment brought into the venue or training facilities, such as foam rollers, weights, or mats must be used only by tested and health-screened athletes or staff.
- ❑ Athletes should bring their own water bottles and must avoid shared water supplies. Avoid drinking directly from water fountains in locker rooms or in the venue. Fill out water bottle instead.
- ❑ Benches and dugouts should be cleaned and disinfected between games. Athletes should ensure to wear a mask while off the court or field.
- ❑ All equipment and facilities should be routinely cleaned and disinfected by facilities management.
- ❑ Cleaning and disinfection at the end of each day should also be conducted on all sports equipment.
- ❑ Player entrances to the venue must allow for social distancing, especially from anyone that has not been health screened. This is important on game days, particularly if other events are taking place in the area. Staggered timing should



be used to ensure choke points (such as entrances) are not crowded while players, coaches, venue staff, etc. attempt to enter and exit the stadium. Face coverings must be worn during entrances and exits by all personnel.

- ❑ Entrances and exits for media and staff must also allow for physical distancing and health-screens to take place. Staggered timing and physical spacing should be used to avoid crowds while health-screens are being conducted. Entrances and exits should differ to those used by athletes and staff.
- ❑ The amount of time spent in locker rooms should be minimized. Only tested and health-screened players and staff should be allowed in the locker rooms. Face coverings must be worn indoors at all times. Physical distancing should be maintained in locker rooms.
- ❑ All umpires and referees must wear well-fitted face coverings in addition to their traditional protective equipment when calling games. Umpires and referees may need to wear a microphone to allow for players to hear the game calls.
- ❑ Hand sanitizer should be made available by benches and in dugouts and should be used by players before and after game play and practices.
- ❑ Athletes and staff should wear face coverings in areas whenever there is potential exposure to an individual that has not been tested and health-screened.
- ❑ Avoid high-fives if possible – opt for low or no contact celebrations, such as elbow bumps and foot taps. Avoid yelling, whistling, and singing, as much as possible.

FACILITIES AND OPERATIONS

AU should coordinate with venue staff to ensure the following facilities related recommendations are in place for areas that will be used by AU athletes and staff.

VENTILATION

- ❑ Fresh air and ventilation are important for reducing the risk of SARS-CoV-2 transmission.
- ❑ Restrooms and locker room areas should be well ventilated. Strategies to improve ventilation include opening windows, propping open doors (where appropriate), and having exhaust fans venting outdoors and operating to create negative pressure.
- ❑ For locker rooms consider use of a portable high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filtration unit sized appropriately to the space.
- ❑ For all indoor areas scheduled for use by AU athletes and staff, increase ventilation:



- ❑ Naturally by keeping windows open if weather permits, or
- ❑ Mechanically, by running heating, ventilating, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems, bathroom exhaust fans, etc.;
- ❑ During occupied periods for areas with mechanical ventilation, optimize outdoor air ventilation by operating HVAC systems at increased outdoor air rates (i.e., increase the percentage of outdoor air). The percentage of outdoor air delivered will be limited to the cooling capacity of the HVAC system and its ability to provide an appropriate discharge air temperature while also controlling for humidity.

RESTROOMS/SHOWERS/LOCKER ROOMS

- ❑ Athletes should limit their time spent in the locker room as much as possible. Athletes may shower at the facility, but should do so taking the least amount time possible.
- ❑ Venue staff, AU athletes, and AU staff should be encouraged to practice good hand washing and hand hygiene.
- ❑ Post signage in the locker rooms and restrooms informing athletes and staff that hand washing or sanitizing is required for all individuals before and after practices, games, or workouts, as well as before and after the use of restrooms and/or locker rooms.
- ❑ Sufficient supplies must be provided and replaced regularly throughout the day. These include soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, and tissues.
- ❑ Make trash cans readily available. Trash cans should be a type that does not require touching by the user. A no-touch trash can should be placed by all doors with pull handles, to ensure the doors can be opened using a clean paper towel and then discarded.
- ❑ Toilet lids, if available, should be closed when flushed. Notices educating users should be placed in stalls.
- ❑ Restrooms and locker rooms should be cleaned and disinfected multiple times per day, particularly between games.

COMMON AREAS

- ❑ Remove or reconfigure seats, furniture, and entry ways as needed to preserve physical distancing.
- ❑ Discourage lingering and socializing between AU athletes and staff with facilities staff outside of the tested and screened AU athlete and staff “household,” before and after practices, games, or events.



- ❑ Regulate the use of common areas with clear signage, including maximum occupancy and physical distancing requirements.

POSTERS/SIGNAGE

- ❑ Prepare and place relevant posters and signage incorporating guidance from the state, CDC, World Health Organization (WHO), and/or other health-based organizations in appropriate places where intended audiences can be reached.

Examples include:

- ❑ [COVID-19 information](#)
- ❑ [Handwashing](#)
- ❑ [Cough etiquette](#)
- ❑ [Symptoms associated with COVID-19](#)
- ❑ [Practices to stop the spread of the virus](#)
- ❑ [Physical distancing](#) markings should be displayed on the floor, in dugouts, locker rooms etc. to designate physical distancing

COVID-19 PROBABLE OR SUSPECTED CASE

- ❑ If an employee does not show [COVID-19 symptoms](#) but notifies the facility that they have been in close contact with a person who has a confirmed case of COVID-19, direct the individual to monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for COVID-19. Inform the individual that they should follow [CDC guidance](#) if symptoms appear.
- ❑ If an employee shows [COVID-19 symptoms](#) or is confirmed as having COVID-19, follow the procedures below:
 - ❑ Immediately separate the person with COVID-19 symptoms from others. Common symptoms include, for example, fever, cough, or shortness of breath. Ensure the person with symptoms is wearing a mask, preferably an N95 or KN95 if available.
 - ❑ Immediately notify local health authorities, staff, and patrons of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with applicable regulations.
 - ❑ Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare provider, as appropriate. The safest transport options include an ambulance if healthcare attention is needed, or having the person with symptoms drive themselves, if it is safe for them to do so. If two people must travel together, car travel can be made safer by having



both the driver and passenger wear N95s; put all the windows down, and have the passenger as far away from the driver as possible.

- ❑ Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use areas until after cleaning and disinfection.
- ❑ Ensure safe and correct use and storage of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ([EPA\)-approved List N disinfectants](#), including storing products securely away from children; follow manufacturer's instructions.
- ❑ Ask that the venue notify AU if the individual was in close contact with any AU athlete or staff member so they may follow procedures for close contacts of confirmed cases (e.g. quarantine and testing).

- ❑ Commence contact tracing and quarantining and testing of close contacts

COMMUNICATION

- ❑ Outdoor sports facilities must post signage at the entrance reminding visitors of face covering, physical distancing, and any capacity limitations. Post print material in critical areas where physical distancing should be encouraged: group exercise rooms, common exercise areas, locker rooms, dugouts, etc.
- ❑ Post [print material from the CDC](#) in or near locker rooms/bathrooms to remind individuals when and how to wash hands. Use electronic resources to provide regularly updated information and reminders for good safety and hygiene practices, whenever possible.
- ❑ Screen, distribute, and incorporate [this CDC video resource](#) on proper handwashing into training programs for staff.
- ❑ Provide information regarding activities that are being undertaken to create a healthy venue experience and to prevent transmission of disease. This should include education on good hand washing hygiene, distancing measures, and cleaning practices, at a minimum.
- ❑ Information should also be provided on the activities that are closed, such as concession stands, etc.
- ❑ Educate staff on infection prevention practices.
 - Staff must not visit the venue if exhibiting any symptoms, including cough, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, and new loss of taste or smell or altered taste or smell.
 - ❑ Physical distancing requires staff to remain more than 6 feet apart.
 - ❑ Staff should wear a face covering.



- ❑ Staff should wash or use sanitizer on hands often, including upon entering the facility, upon entering and leaving locker rooms, after using restrooms, and after coughing, sneezing, or blowing their nose.
- ❑ Staff should be encouraged to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or by coughing into their elbow.
- ❑ Policies should be put in place to allow staff to refuse access to anyone appearing to show symptoms or anyone not following hygiene and physical distancing guidelines.
- ❑ Develop a plan for how to address a case of COVID-19 among staff, including how to communicate with staff and AU if a case has been identified having visited the facility and how to identify close contacts among venue staff, athletes, trainers, etc.

STAFF

- ❑ Ensure that there are sick leave policies in place that encourage staff to stay home when sick and quarantine for 5 days if they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19 for people who are unvaccinated or are more than six months out from their second mRNA dose (or more than 2 months after the J&J vaccine) and not yet boosted.¹ They must also receive a negative antigen test before returning to work
- ❑ Determine how and when staff can return to work after being diagnosed with COVID-19. Follow CDC's [criteria to discontinue home isolation](#).
- ❑ Assign a staff member to address COVID-19 concerns from staff or members. Instruct staff to refer all concerns to the designated COVID-19 staff person.
- ❑ If possible, adapt duties to allow for protection of high-risk staff. This could include telework, altering schedules to avoid crowded commutes, or changes in schedules, or adjusting job tasks to reduce potential exposures.
- ❑ Monitor absenteeism of staff and create a roster of trained back-up staff.
- ❑ Limit the number of staff present at the same time by staggering or rotating shifts. Monitor staff schedules and ensure there is a list of available trained staff.
- ❑ Train personnel on physical distancing guidelines and ways to communicate them to visitors.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2021/s1227-isolation-quarantine-guidance.html>



- ❑ Train staff on all safety protocols and COVID-19 guidelines. Consider training virtually or ensuring that physical distancing is maintained and masks are worn during in-person training.
- ❑ Ask staff to conduct daily health checks of temperature and symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, muscle pain, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell) of staff before each shift.
- ❑ Consider using examples of screening methods in CDC's [General Business FAQs](#). Remember that recording names and temperatures has Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) implications, so take all necessary steps to ensure compliance as you develop a protocol. Also be sure to communicate the requirements clearly, frequently, and empathetically to all affected individuals.
- ❑ If an employee is sick or undergoes testing, results should be reported to the employer so that a plan for returning to work can be established according to a doctor's approval and current CDC recommendations.
- ❑ Provide instruction and training for cleaning staff on how to:
 - ❑ Clean and disinfect surfaces according to product specifications.
 - ❑ Correctly use face coverings.
- ❑ Provide Safety Data Sheets for cleaning chemicals and ensure cleaning staff are aware of the hazards of use.
- ❑ Train all staff about the sources of exposure to the virus, the health risk associated with that exposure, and appropriate workplace protocols in place to prevent or reduce the likelihood of exposure or transmission. Training should include (but not be limited to) information about what individuals should do to isolate if they have suspected or confirmed COVID-19, how to cooperate with public health officials to enable contact tracing, and how to quarantine safely, if there is a significant exposure.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

- ❑ Provide hand sanitizer (60% ethyl alcohol), throughout venues and too all staff and athletes.
- ❑ Provide disinfectant wipe stations in training facilities, near dugouts and benches, and in common areas indoors to allow athletes and staff to wipe/disinfect surfaces before and after use, including machinery, exercise equipment, and benches and



handrails. Examples of equipment surfaces in direct contact with the skin that should be regularly cleaned and disinfected include but are not limited to:

- Door handles
 - Folding chairs in locker rooms
 - Hand grips on cardio equipment such as treadmills, bicycles, ellipticals
 - Hand grips on dumbbells, weight bars, and other strength-training systems
 - Pads/cushioned components such as fitness mats, bike seats, lifting benches, and other cushioned components of strength training machines
 - Fitness balls, rope handles, and other fitness accessories
 - Handrails
- Add hand sanitizer stations next to wipe stations to allow staff to clean their hands after wiping down equipment.
 - Clean and disinfect common areas, restrooms, and locker rooms at least once per game or practice session.
 - Establish a disinfection routine with staff at regular intervals to include cleaning and disinfecting common areas, restrooms, and locker rooms. Follow manufacturer's guidelines for cleaning products, including application methods and contact time required for disinfection.
 - High contact areas such as door handles, hand railings, toilets, faucets, and sinks should be disinfected multiple times per day.
 - Any shared use items should be disinfected regularly.
 - Any equipment or supplies that have been used and require cleaning should be kept in a labeled container noting it requires disinfection.
 - As with other activities facemasks are required.
 - Cloth face coverings used by staff should be laundered after each use.
 - Protect shared furniture, equipment, and laundered items, such as towels and clothing, from becoming contaminated before use. Bagging clean laundry is recommended.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR GAME PRODUCTION STAFF

In all broadcast areas, player areas, and press areas, production staff must wear face coverings and maintain 6 feet of distance from other production staff, athletes, and AU staff if possible. Camera crew and production staff should perform activities (filming, interviews, etc.) outside as much as possible and must avoid filming of locker rooms when athletes are present.



POLICY/PLANNING

- Production staff should travel to and from games separately from AU athletes and staff.
- Production staff and AU athletes should avoid socializing before and after games.
- Production staff must be health-screened at least weekly, prior to games or other filming.
- A mechanism to report presumptive or confirmed COVID-19 cases among production crew members to AU administration should be developed.
- If a production staff member is experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms, they must report these to their management and to the AU healthcare team immediately.
- Production staff should have and use their own restrooms and dining areas, separate from AU athletes and staff.
- Production staff should arrange for lodging separate from AU athletes.
- Production staff must bring at least two face coverings to games to allow for changing a face covering if it gets wet or soiled.

SET-UP

- Production staff must not work if they are sick or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Camera operator areas should be demarcated with cones, tape, decals, etc., restricting anyone from entering within 6 feet of camera crew.
- Maintain at least 6-feet of physical distance from AU athletes and staff and more than 6 feet of spacing from other camera crew members, whenever possible.
- Avoid close interactions with AU athletes and staff unless necessary and ensure all production staff wear a face covering at all times.
- Production staff should bring all of their own equipment and supplies, including food and water.

DURING GAME PLAY

- Camera crew members should wear a cloth face covering at all times.
- Camera crew members should avoid interactions with AU team members unless necessary.
- The camera crew should maintain at least a 6-foot physical distance from AU team members.



- ❑ Camera crew members should maintain at least 6-foot physical distance from other camera crew members whenever possible.
- ❑ If a crew member experiences symptoms during a game, they should be sent home, or otherwise isolated from other crew members and AU athletes, immediately. AU Healthcare staff should be contacted to arrange for follow-up evaluation. Their work area and equipment should be cleaned and disinfected. Employees within their vicinity should be considered potentially exposed. Implement next steps from the AU Interim Guidance on Testing.



REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Athletic Facilities*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/mrsa/community/environment/athletic-facilities.html>

USA Gymnastics. *Member Club Considerations for a Safe Re-opening*.

<https://usagym.org/PDFs/About%20USA%20Gymnastics/covid/safereopening.pdf>

American Industrial Hygiene Association. *Back to Work Safely*.

<https://www.backtoworksafely.org/>

U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration. *COVID-19 Control and Prevention*.

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/controlprevention.html#health>

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