



**San Francisco
Department of Public Health**

**SAN FRANCISCO
RECREATION
& PARKS**

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Outdoor Youth Sports to Return to San Francisco with Safety Precautions

*Rec and Park to offer field space for “mini” spring season for soccer,
baseball, softball, lacrosse, flag football and more*

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – The San Francisco Department of Public Health and Recreation and Park Department today announced the expansion of youth sports in San Francisco. The City’s anticipated reassignment to the red tier next week will allow outdoor contact sports, organized and supervised through youth sports leagues, all with safety protocols. In order to put kids in the game as soon as possible, Rec and Park has launched a field allocation program in partnership with local youth sports leagues.

Rec and Park’s “Let the Kids Play” program will give youth a fast track back to the sports they love by providing field space to leagues offering a seven-week spring season for soccer, baseball, softball, flag football, and lacrosse. This “mini-season” will start April 10 and run up to Memorial Day. Participants and coaches must follow all precautions outlined in the Health Order. More information on Let the Kids Play can be found [here](#).

“Kids have waited a long time to be allowed to play league sports. Since we own most of the City’s athletic fields, we are going to make sure they don’t wait a moment longer than necessary,” said San Francisco Recreation and Park Department General Manager Phil Ginsburg. “We are thrilled to have them back on our fields. Playing outdoors provides crucial health benefits for youth, from relieving stress to promoting cooperation to sharpening problem solving skills.”

Based on analysis of San Francisco’s current health indicators, the City will meet the state’s [red tier criteria](#) on Tuesday, March 2. The Department of Public Health is preparing the amended Health Order and directives outlining allowable activities so the City can open as quickly as possible when the new tier reassignment takes effect, which under state rules is the next day, Wednesday, March 3. The eased outdoor youth sports guidelines for San Francisco largely align with the [state’s](#), with some additional safety precautions.

Under the new Health Order, outdoor moderate-contact sports such as baseball, softball, field hockey, gymnastics, cheerleading, and girls or women's lacrosse will be permitted with face coverings required at all times except when participants are playing in a competition and easily able to maintain at least six-feet apart from other participants and staff. The Order will also include outdoor high-contact sports permitted in the orange tier, including football, basketball, soccer, rugby, crew and boys' lacrosse with face coverings worn by participants, coaches and staff at all times.

Capacity for both moderate and high-contact activities is generally limited to stable cohorts of up to 25 youth. No more than 25 players on each team can participate, including any players who are on the sidelines, with limited exceptions. Under the Order, youth may participate in only one outdoor sports team cohort at a time. Programs for outdoor moderate or high-contact sports must obtain the written informed consent from the parents or guardians of all youth participants, and spectators will be limited to parents or guardians as allowed under state guidance. Snacks and post-game snacks are not allowed. No indoor sports will be permitted, at least while the City remains in the red tier. More details about youth sports in the forthcoming Order can be found below.

“We are delighted that the City has come so far and that we can allow our youth to get back into the activities they love,” said San Francisco’s Acting Health Officer Dr. Susan Philip. “However, we need everyone to be mindful that during sports we come into close contact with individuals outside our household while often breathing deeply and rapidly, which can increase risk of infection. By using masks and following the guidance, we can have fun and minimize that risk.”

Adult leagues

With practices beginning April 5 and running through nine weeks, a limited number of adult leagues will be permitted to play. Adult leagues are generally subject to the same safety protocols that apply to outdoor youth sports. Adult league play will run weeknights from April 5 up to Memorial Day, and weekends starting March 27 and 28 for nine weeks. More information can be [found here](#).

Additional Forthcoming Guidelines for Youth Sports

- Outdoor youth sports programs operated by schools can exceed the 25-participant limit if and to the extent necessary to compete in the sport, under a health and safety plan approved by the Department of Public Health.
- Playing against teams from other counties is prohibited in San Francisco except under limited circumstances with teams from adjoining counties. Under state guidelines competitions are allowable only in the county or with teams from adjacent counties—Marin, San Mateo and Alameda—in the same or less restrictive tier and only between two teams at a time. Only one competition per team per day is allowed.
- Consistent with state guidelines, no travel is allowed for out of state tournaments.
- Adults may coach more than one outdoors sports team cohort at a time if they wear face coverings and adhere to physical distancing.
- Physical conditioning, practice, skill building and training are allowed so long as they take place outdoors with at least six feet of physical distancing, face coverings, and stable cohorts.

- Indoor pools are closed with the exception of basic swimming and drowning prevention classes for children, which are allowed at up to 25 percent capacity (based on child participants only) with safety protocols.
- Locker rooms will remain closed. However, youth participating in sports requiring specialized equipment (such as football) may use indoor locker rooms to change their clothing as long as: locker rooms are limited to 10 percent of the facility's maximum capacity; face coverings are worn at all times; showers remain closed; participants minimize their time inside; only one team uses the locker room at a time. Implementation of ventilation measures for locker room use is recommended.
- Outdoor sports programs may not coordinate, arrange, or engage in travel outside of San Francisco so that its participants or members can participate in athletic activity that is not allowed in San Francisco (e.g., playing a sport not currently allowed in San Francisco, or practicing or competing outside San Francisco without face coverings for a sport that is allowed in San Francisco with face coverings. San Francisco sports programs should encourage teams they play in other adjoining counties to follow the same safety protocols.
- Water polo will not be permitted because it cannot be played with face coverings.

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