



Covid-19 Game & Practice Protocols for Coaches

December 14, 2021

Practices & Games

Following are COVID-19 guidelines for coaches and commissioners who directly manage basketball practices and games in which their teams are engaged. First, we must acknowledge that we are still in a pandemic, and we must continue to observe the required protocols set forth by local and Federal governments to protect everyone engaged in HCYP Basketball activity from incurrence of Covid to the best of our capabilities.

HCYP Basketball schedules its games and practices in the local school gyms through permission of the Howard County Public School System (**HCPSS**). Permits are issued to HCYP Basketball on a per-gym basis for all practices (weekdays) and games (weekends). As part of the Howard County Government, HCPSS has two separate Covid mandates: 1) One is specific to school operations for all students and staff in the classroom and all school-sponsored functions, and 2) Required policy for community use of its facilities (i.e., athletic events held in their gymnasiums), which are “**in alignment with CDC recommendations.**” HCYP Basketball falls under the latter.

Basketball is an aggressive sport and requires close contact; however, coaches can take steps to help mitigate contact with and spread of Covid-19 and its variants by observing HCYP Basketball’s published Covid policy and recommendations as follows:

- Observe and maintain HCYP Basketball’s **Covid Health & Safety Protocols – Procedures** published on this website.
- If a coach is made aware that a player on his/her team has tested positive for Covid, they should advise the player and the player’s parents to call the Howard County Covid-19 information line at 410-313-6284 or follow instructions provided by the school.
- Federal HIPPA and FERPA regulations prohibit organizations from disclosing private information. Because of this, coaches should not disclose who has reported being positive with Covid to anyone.
- At all times, parents should be asked to monitor their children for **Covid-related symptoms** (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) and to quarantine them (not allow to attend practices or games) if they exhibit these symptoms let alone if they have tested positive. This also applies to coaches.
- **After a player or coach has tested positive for Covid**, they should **isolate for at least 10 days** and may return if they no longer exhibit symptoms. Re-testing is not a required protocol by the CDC. They may return sooner than ten days if they are asymptomatic, however, if they do retest for Covid and test negative.

- The bottom line, parents need to manage these Covid indicators for their children engaged in HCYP Basketball. **The coaches manage this** by making sure anyone who has Covid-related symptoms does not participate in practice or game activities and also ensuring that they follow the required masking, separation and related Covid prevention protocols HCYP Basketball has put in place.
- **Players Showing Symptoms:** If children show symptoms like the sniffles, it *could* be a sign of Covid but is not necessarily the case. If they do, it's always best to keep them home until the symptoms go away or it is determined not to be Covid (it could be an allergy or other non-Covid symptom). The coach should have this communication with the parent (but, remember, the coaches cannot ask the parents if the player or parents have Covid) to determine if the child's symptoms show a potential to be those of Covid. If so, then proceed with the current Covid protocols published here and per CDC guidelines.
- **This is a good time for recreation coaches** to focus on developing basketball playing skills rather than focusing on the aggressive, competitive aspects that require constant body contact. This is especially important in the youngest leagues. The more contact can be limited, the lesser the opportunities for possible contraction and spread of Covid-19.
- **The best practice is MASKING.** Unless a player is actively engaged in playing the game, they must be masked. (Referees must also wear their masks when they are not actively engaged in officiating.)
- **CONTACT:** All coaches should contact their respective league commissioner if there are any issues with this protocol or if a situation becomes troublesome or problematic. The commissioners would then contact HCYP Basketball Management (Recreation Leagues Commissioner or the Middle School/Travel Teams Commissioner) who will take it up with senior executive management to be immediately addressed as warranted.
- **ALWAYS ERR ON THE SIDE OF SAFETY FIRST** in all cases. We are all in this together and will work together to ensure the healthiest, safest and most productive basketball sporting experience for all involved, especially the welfare and well-being of the children.

Further Reading:

- **Covid Health & Safety Protocols – Procedures**
<https://hcybbasketball.org/wp-admin/nav-menus.php>
- **Covid Related Symptoms**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- **What to Do if You Are Sick – Quarantine & Isolation**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/quarantine-isolation.html>
- **Best Practices for Youth Sports – Maryland State Government**
<https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/BusinessResource/Youth-Sports-COVID-19-Best-Practices.pdf>

