

# Youth Sports and COVID-19 – Where Are We and Where Are We Headed?

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**Home Schooling Day 4-PhysEd**



**How's Your  
COVID-19  
Quarantine  
Going?**

# A UNH Update



**University of  
New Hampshire**

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Department responses and plans

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Summer and fall internships

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Reopening plans and plans for Fall instruction

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Some exciting news - new transcribed option in Outdoor Leadership and Management (OLM); new concentrations in Community Recreation and Sport; Event Planning; and Tourism Management; Lifetime Activity Program (LAP)

# Youth Sports Takeaways – Pre-COVID

## Some Positives:

- Participation rates are relatively **high** and **have stabilized**
- Demand for youth sports appears to be **growing** in the past 5 years
- The **participation gap** between boys and girls **continues to narrow** (74.9% vs. 61.1%)
- Multisport play is starting to **make a comeback**, but...

## Things to Work On:

- Boys continue to participate at a **higher rate than girls**
- Significant barriers to participation continue to be **cost, time commitment**
- Youth with more access to economic resources have **higher participation rates**
- The average sport drop-out age **continues to decrease**
- Playing **one sport** year-round **continues to grow**
- Fewer than **30%** of youth sports coaches **have been trained**



## *Youth Sports Worry About Weathering Pandemic, and Future Play*

Will parents and children be eager to return to team sports once the threat of the coronavirus outbreak has passed?

SPORTS

## Coronavirus Could Cause Youth Sports Recession

Kids are at home instead of on ball fields—and the slumping economy means some could stay there

April 21, 2020

### **Will youth sports “tournacations” and megacomplexes survive COVID-19?**

Pandemic costing youth sports millions, creating uncertainty

by SCHUYLER DIXON The Associated Press | April 19, 2020 at 4:00 a.m.



### **Local parent frustrated after youth sports league cancels season without refund**





# What Does Youth Sports Look Like Post-COVID?

- When can we **start**?
- Can we manage **sports and social distancing** guidelines?
- What role, if any, will **PPE (masks) or increased/improved testing** play in coming back?
- How virus fears and realities affect **coaching/volunteers**?
- What about kids who are **immuno-compromised**?
- What is the **future of travel sports**?
- What will the demand be for **low-cost, in-town recreational sports**?
- Will parents and kids be willing to **re-invest time and money** into competitive youth sports?
- What will **municipal budgets** look like on the other side?



Some questions to ponder.  
There are LOTS of others,  
I'm sure...

# What Does Youth Sports Look Like Post-COVID?

- Phased reopenings
- Individual training then small groups
- Few or limited spectators
- Drop-off/Pickup procedures
- Social distancing (e.g. dugouts, stands, positioning of umpires/officials)
- Use of PPEs when social distancing can't be maintained
- No concessions
- Temperature checks, verification of health, no recent contact with COVID
- Constant cleaning of equipment, etc.
- Training/practicing in specific groups
- Can financial risk be mitigated?



Some questions to ponder.  
There are LOTS of others,  
I'm sure...

# Some Thoughts and Predictions

- ✓ Start-up predictions vary from **Summer to “Sometime” in the Fall**
- ✓ Variation in virus prevalence and control **by geography**
- ✓ Significant **revenue loss** from cancelled camps, tournaments, and facility reservations
- ✓ Loss of **economic impact** for towns and cities due to cancelled events
- ✓ Loss of tax receipts and **stresses on municipal budgets**
- ✓ More than **22 million** people have filed for unemployment
- ✓ Sport participation tends to **rise and fall with the economy**
- ✓ Discretionary **income will be reduced** and **existing inequities** are likely to increase
- ✓ Youth sport organizations may have **reduced access to facilities**
- ✓ Predicted **reductions in philanthropic giving** and grants
- ✓ Significant number of private **youth sport providers will fold** or consolidate





Recreation Management  
& Policy

Recreation Rx

Please Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Rx

✓ Healthy People

✓ Healthy Places

✓ Healthy Communities

Age: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



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## Parks and Recreation WILL Help Rebuild Our Communities Post-COVID

We Build Healthy:



People

Places



Communities

What can we do to help shape youth sport  
priorities and meet youth sports needs in a  
post-COVID world?

# Parks and Recreation - Post-COVID-19



- Time now to **plan** – volunteer recruitment and coach training
- Recreation programming will **help in recovery** (mental, physical, and social health)
- **New Habits** - Free play, pick-up sports, family time, close-to-home
- Role for **low-cost, in-town, local** youth sport leagues and options
- Opportunities for **individual and dual sports** to increase in the near term
- Return towards **development-focused** youth sports
- Push and document the **value of youth sports** and **public recreation!**
- Dare I say.....E-sports?





# State of Youth Sports – Some Data and Reports

- State of Play: Trends and Developments in Youth Sports (Aspen Institute, 2019)
- Coronavirus and Youth Sports (Aspen Institute, 2020)
- Coronavirus and Youth Sports – What the Future Holds (Aspen Institute Webinar) - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=1&v=jpVgXQwtmhU&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=jpVgXQwtmhU&feature=emb_logo)
- Return to Play – COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool (Aspen Institute, 2020)
- Leaders Chart Path Back to Playing Fields for Amateur Sports (NY Times, 2020)
- The National Youth Sports Strategy (US DHHS, 2019)
- Who Plays, Who Pays? Funding for and Access to Youth Sports (Rand Corporation, 2019)
- Teen Sport in America: Why Participation Matters (Women’s Sports Foundation, 2018)
- Sports Specialization and Intensive Training in Young Athletes (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2016)
- The Astronomical Cost of Kid’s Sports (Time Magazine, 2017)
- Effects of a Facilitated Fee Waiver Program on Participation in Youth Sports (Berk & Moon, 2016)
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/20/sports/coronavirus-youth-sports.html>
- <https://www.wsj.com/articles/coronavirus-could-cause-youth-sports-recession-11586260815>
- <https://www.cbssports.com/general/news/coronavirus-youth-sports-are-feeling-the-financial-brunt-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-report-says/>



# 71.8%

% of 6-12 year olds who played a team or individual sport in 2018

## KIDS



## Top-Line Numbers

- Participation rates remain **relatively flat** since 2012
- **37.9%** participated in a team sport on **regular basis** (core = organized, engaged participation)
- **17.1%** engaged in **no sport** activity

## SPORTS TEAMS



# 1.87

Average number of team sports played by kids ages 6-12 in 2018

- Down from **high of 2.11** team sports in 2011

### *Average Length of Participation:*

- Field Hockey (5.7 years)
- Skiing/Snowboarding (4.3 years)
- Tackle Football (4.1 years)
- Flag Football (4.1 years)
- Baseball (3.3 years)

# 10.5

## AGE OF DROPOUT

Average age of last regular participation in youth sports





**33.4%**



**LOW-INCOME**

% of kids in homes with incomes under \$25,000 who did not play youth sports in 2018 (vs. 9.9% of kids in homes over \$10,000)

**Game over: Middle-class and poor kids are ditching youth sports**

- CBS News

**FAMILY SPENDING**



**\$693**

Average annual family spending on sports for one child in 2018

**Kids aren't playing enough sports. The culprit? Cost** - ESPN

**The Astronomical Cost of Kids' Sports**  
- Time

**\$25 Billion**

The size of the youth sports industry in the United States

**3 YR GROWTH**

- Cheerleading
- Wrestling
- Gymnastics
- Volleyball
- Lacrosse
- Flag Football



**3 YR DECLINE**

- Tackle Football
- Soccer (Outdoor)
- Swimming (Team)
- Bicycling
- Tennis