



NATICK BOARD OF HEALTH  
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To: Julie McDonough, Chair  
Natick School Committee  
Natick Public Schools Community

From: James M. White, Jr,  
Director of Public Health

RE: Natick High School Athletics

Date: September 23, 2020

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J. White', written over a faint, stylized leaf or feather graphic.

Please note below the CDC guidance relative to youth sports issued in May, 2020,  
[CDC Youth Sports Guidance](#)

Included within Governor Bakers' 4 Phase Plan for reopening Massachusetts, were the phases and steps for addressing youth and amateur sports.

Phase II COVID-19 Order #35 effective June 9, 2020, allowed for youth and amateur sports to begin non-contact skills and drills. Sports were categorized into three levels (Low, Moderate & High Risk) depending on each sports associated risk factor of contact between the participants.

Phase III, Step 1 COVID-19 Order #43 effective July 24, 2020 allowed Low and Moderate Risk sports to begin full practices and competitions with modifications; High Risk sports were to participate in skills and drills only.

Phase III, Step 1 COVID-19 Order was amended on August 13, 2020, effective August 16, 2020, which further expanded sports activity with increased modifications for safe participation. The guidance can be found at [EEA Guidance on Youth Amateur Sports](#)

Since the effective dates of the COVID orders noted above, youth and amateur sports have occurred around the state including the Town of Natick. Natick High School athletes have also been participating in captains practices during the summer.

In addition, I have read through the Fall 1 Athletics Protocols for the Bay State League and Natick High School. Followed up the review with a conversation with Natick Athletic Director Tim Collins. The safety precautions proposed for practices and league play matches or exceeds the

safety guidance in the EEA guidance on youth sports noted above. The competition will be reduced to five sports and a five team "pod" determined by the league to limit exposure. Three sports, golf, cross country and swimming/diving are low risk while soccer and field hockey are considered moderate risk. All five sports have been modified to reduce potential contact with the opposition, the competition between teams have been reduced to eight meetings and there will be no tournament play. The guidance and modifications have been vetted by the MIAA, DESE, MDPH and EEA.

I have been in contact with Health Departments in four other Bay State League communities. The consensus is, with the safety precautions and modifications in place, to allow the Fall 1 Athletic Program to proceed. The program does not pose any additional risk to the participants as programs associated with the youth sports currently in place.

The Health Departments within the "pod" will communicate any potential situation that may arise between communities, if necessary. The Natick Board of Health will continue to examine all current COVID-19 dashboards, metrics and threshold information available to monitor the safety of the participants, students and the schools.

CC:Peter Delli Colli, Chair  
Natick Board of Health