



**DT:** December 21, 2020  
**TO:** Minnesota Youth Basketball Community  
**FR:** Dawson Blanck, MYAS Executive Director  
**RE:** **Minnesota Youth Basketball Alliance (MYBA) Return to Participation**

Dear Minnesota Youth Basketball Participants:

As you may know, the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services' mission is to enhance the delivery of youth sports services to every youth athlete, coach, parent, and official, as well as the parent-volunteer youth athletic associations that serve them. Since 1991, we have been delivering that commitment to the sports we serve throughout the state of Minnesota.

Since this pandemic began, we have also been dedicated to working directly with Commissioner Tomes, the MDH, and the rest of the state leadership to provide opportunities through sport in a safe and healthy way. We teamed up with the Metro Baseball League and Minnesota Softball to create the *Safe Play: Back to the Diamond COVID-19 Safety Guidelines*. Through those efforts, and our continuing work with the State Task Force led by Jayme Murphy of the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission, we facilitated a return to participation for youth baseball and softball players from July-October.

In June, we turned our attention to youth basketball and collaborated with club operators from MN Fury and MN Metro Stars to create the *Safe Play: Back to the Hardwood COVID-19 Safety Guidelines*. Our staff remained committed to disseminating all CDC, MDH, and youth sport-specific guidance to our network throughout the state. This effort led to a return to participation for youth basketball tournaments from July-October.

All the while, the MYAS, our Basketball Board of Advisors, and leaders around the state continued to prepare for the 2020-2021 winter community-based youth basketball season. In the process, we began to realize that more so than ever before, the youth basketball associations around the state wanted a "unified, collaborative voice" to enhance community-based winter basketball. In June, the MYAS launched the Minnesota Youth Basketball Alliance (MYBA), which has allowed Minnesota youth basketball to be more connected than ever as we moved to start practices and competition at the end of October.

As we approached the start of the season, our communication and correspondence ramped up with leaders around the state through virtual outreach sessions. This outreach ensured we could disseminate COVID-19 guidance from CDC, MDH, and the state of Minnesota, along with the ability to provide other return to play resources. When the season started, the one thing missing was a consistent, universal return to participation in youth basketball with specific reporting and compliance requirements.

As the Minnesota youth basketball community paused all programming on November 18 due to Emergency Executive Order 20-99, the Minnesota Youth Athletic Services, MYBA/MYAS Basketball Board of Advisors (comprised of 25 youth basketball association leaders from around the state) focused on the development and implementation of a universal set of requirements that will ensure the health and safety of youth basketball participants when we are able to resume practice and competition.

Beginning on November 21, the MYBA/MYAS Basketball Board of Advisors created a subcommittee called the MYBA Return to Participation Task Force, comprised of leaders who have implemented and maintained extremely detailed COVID-19 preparedness plans for their local youth basketball associations. Their goal was to build a roadmap for a healthy and safe return to participation for all MYBA member associations and their teams—players, coaches, parents/guardians.

The guiding principles include the following:

- Universal COVID-19 policies and procedures to be implemented as requirements and recommendations by MYBA associations
- All MYBA member associations must agree to 100% compliance with the new RTP requirements
  - Attestation Pledges for all participants, parents, and coaches
  - Each association also pledges 100% to attain COVID-19 Compliance Recognition
- Non-compliant associations will not be allowed to schedule games, participate in association basketball tournaments, or participate in the MYAS Grade State Basketball Championships
- Associations will demonstrate compliance on a regular basis
  - Submit report every two weeks
  - Non-compliance will be reviewed by MYBA Compliance Committee

Through the above guiding principles, the MYBA RTP Task Force, made up of dedicated volunteers from eight youth basketball associations, developed these core documents that provided a universal and consistent return to participation for all MYBA member associations:

- *MYBA Return to Participation Manual*
- *MYBA Comprehensive COVID Preparedness Guide* – this document specifically lays out the consistency for all Minnesota youth basketball associations related to reporting and compliance.
- *MYBA Checklist: A Framework for Return to Sport from COVID-19*
- **MYBA COVID-19 RETURN TO PARTICIPATION PLEDGE**
- MYBA COVID CARE TOOLBOX – this is a collection of guidance and best practices by CDC, MDH, MSHSL, individual colleges/universities or with college conferences and “best practices” implemented by youth basketball associations. Ultimately, the categories assisted us in determining the information that has now become the MYBA Return to Participation Manual.

Additionally, I want to recognize the invaluable assistance and expertise that Dr. Craig Perry of the U.S. Council for Athletes’ Health (USCAH) provided on the manual, checklist, and compliance portion of the plan. This collaborative partnership with MYBA/MYAS has provided our youth basketball community with an external, independent, and unbiased review of our return to participation requirements. The ongoing support and guidance of USCAH has played a significant role in the development of our return to participation requirements.

I am confident that the work of the MYBA Task Force allows all MYBA member associations and the MYAS to successfully leverage the RTP Manual and available tools for consistent implementation and compliance for all youth basketball associations across the state, ensuring a safe and successful return to the hardwood. By doing the right things and by being “a good teammate”, we have the opportunity see our youth enjoy the great game of basketball with their teammates for the remainder of the 2020-2021 winter community-based youth basketball season.

Thank you for your time and dedication to youth basketball!

Sincerely,



Dawson N. Blanck  
MYAS Executive Director