



# Guidelines for High-Contact Sports

*Approved 3/15/2021*

## Overview

On March 13, we were informed that the “Santa Cruz County Public Health Division has no oversight or Orders related to return-to-play issues for high-school sports. Guidelines for practice, competition, testing, spectators and other issues are developed by the California Department of Public Health. It is the responsibility of local governing and oversight bodies, including the County Office of Education, to monitor and implement those guidelines, including any changes.” The following guidelines represent the County Office of Education and School District implementation of the guidelines provided by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH).

The CDPH Guidelines [Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports](#) issued February 19, 2021 (updated on 3/4) have conflicting guidelines about the testing requirements for contact sports while Santa Cruz County is in the red tier. We have reached out to CDPH for clarification. Until clarification to the guidelines is provided by CDPH, Santa Cruz County High School teams for outdoor high-contacting sports will be able to play if they participate in **weekly PCR tests**. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education has worked closely with School Districts to support their capacity to administer PCR and Antigen testing. **Observers will be allowed at sporting events** and will be limited to immediate household members, and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision.

Santa Cruz County High School teams for **indoor high-contact sports** (i.e. basketball) will be able to play if they participate in **weekly PCR tests and daily antigen testing while in the red and orange tiers**. The Santa Cruz County Office of Education has worked closely with School Districts to support their capacity to administer PCR and Antigen testing, however, this requirement for an intensive collegiate level of testing cadence will be challenging for high school programs to implement. **Observers will be allowed at sporting events** and will be limited to immediate household members, and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision. We will limit indoor sports activities (practice, conditioning) to comply with capacity limits (which shall include all athletes, coaches, and observers) indicated in current CDPH Gym & Fitness Center Guidance Capacity.

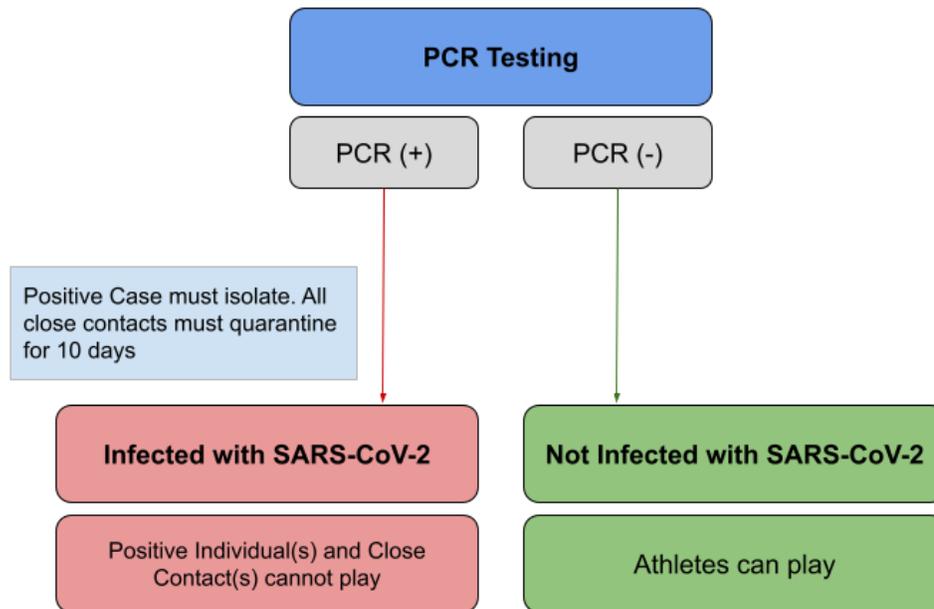
### Testing and Observers for High Contact Sports at Different Tiers

	Red Tier	Orange Tier	Yellow
<b>High-Contact Outdoor Sports</b> (i.e. Football, Water Polo, etc.)	Weekly PCR Testing	No Testing	No Testing
	<b>Observers allowed at outdoor sporting events</b> and will be limited to immediate household members, and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision.		
<b>High-Contact Indoor Sports</b> (i.e. Basketball)	Weekly PCR Testing Daily Antigen Testing	Weekly PCR Testing Daily Antigen Testing	No Testing
	Observers allowed, limited to household members. 10% Capacity of Gym	Observers allowed, limited to household members: 25% Capacity of Gym	Observers allowed, limited to household members: 50% Capacity of Gym

### PCR Testing

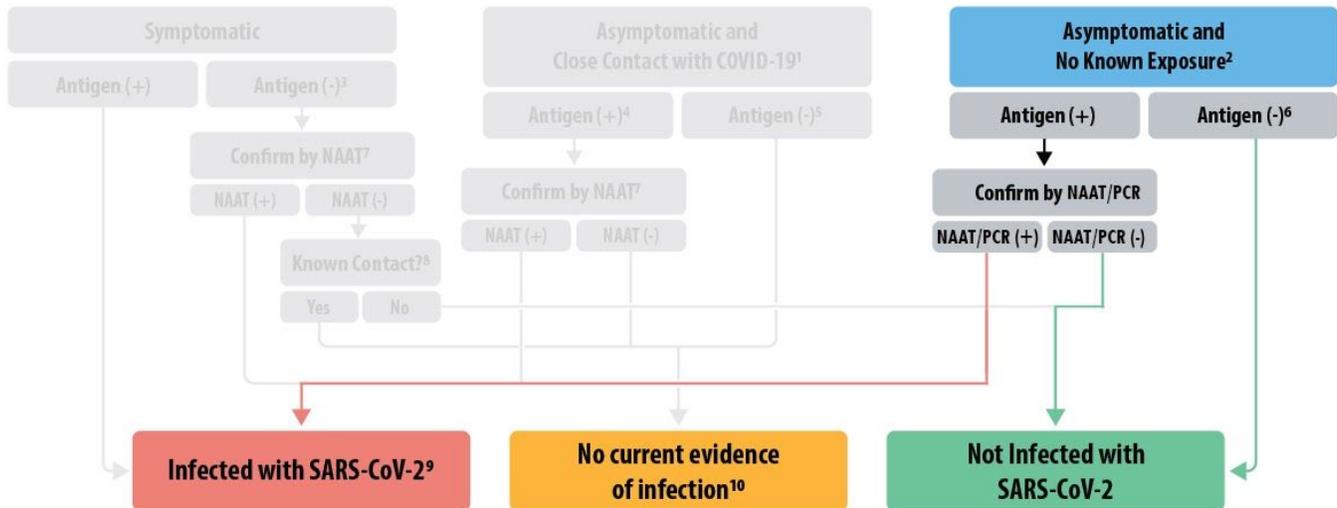
- While the county remains in the Red Tier, all athletes of outdoor high-contact sports and staff must participate in weekly PCR (polymerase chain reaction) testing. School Districts will utilize the Color/Valencia Labs PCR tests. Sample collection is done using a swab to collect respiratory material found in the nose. A swab contains a soft tip on a long, flexible stick, similar to a Q-Tip, that is inserted into your nose. After collection, the swab is sealed in a tube and then sent to Valencia Labs for analysis.
- Once Santa Cruz County is in the Orange Tier, weekly PCR testing will no longer be required
- PCR tests will be timed such that the results would be back within 48 hours of game days.
- Testers and staff must protect the confidentiality of students especially with regard to test results.
- Those testing positive will need to isolate for 10 days and follow the return to sports guidelines. All members of the team and staff who are close contacts must quarantine for 10 days.

- Those who were in close contact with the individual who tested positive 48 hours before the PCR sample was collected will need to quarantine for 10 days from the moment of exposure.



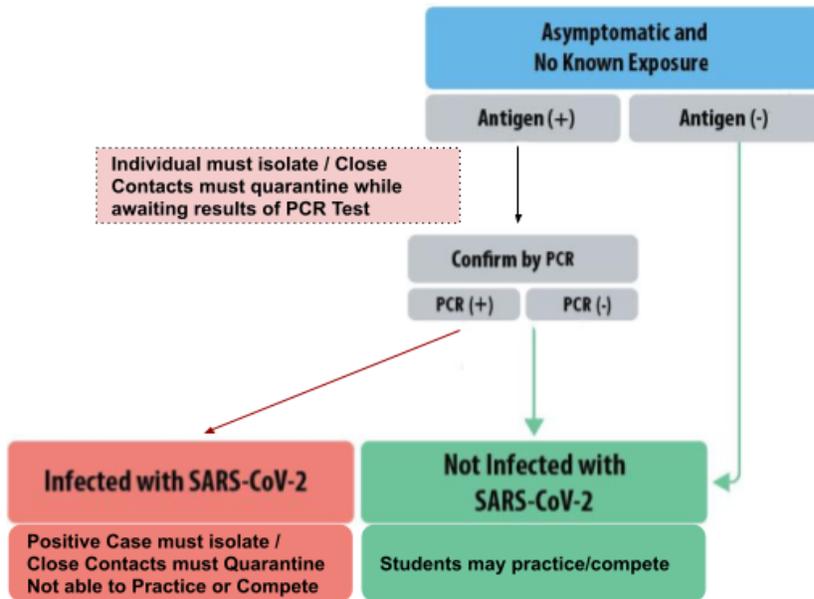
### Antigen Testing

- For Outdoor high-contact sports, Antigen testing is not required if PCR testing is conducted weekly.
- If athletes and staff participate in a BinaxNow Antigen Test, it will be conducted by a school nurse who is certified to administer and evaluate the test. This rapid COVID-19 antigen test involves inserting a small swab, similar to a Q-Tip, into the front of the nose. The swab is then inserted into a BinaxNOW Card which provides a result that can provide results after 15 minutes. There will be occasions when a rapid COVID-19 antigen test may be falsely positive or falsely negative and there are specific situations when a follow up RT-PCR COVID-19 test is warranted.
- Antigen testing for athletes meets the CDPH [Outdoor and Indoor Youth and Recreational Adult Sports](#) and [CDC test matrix for Asymptomatic and No Known Exposure](#) (see below)



Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html>

An enhancement of this chart demonstrates its implications for the testing of athletes and staff



### Protocol for Positive Test Results

- If a Student or staff tests positive for COVID-19 on an antigen test, they must be sent to receive a PCR as quickly as possible and isolate as they await the results. Close contacts to that athlete/staff must quarantine while awaiting confirmation from a PCR test.



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- If a PCR test is negative after a positive antigen test, then the student is confirmed negative and can resume participation in sports. Those who were identified as close contacts would no longer need to quarantine.
- If a PCR test is positive after a positive antigen test, then the student is a confirmed positive and must isolate for 10 days. All individuals who were in close contact with the confirmed positive case must quarantine for 10 days .
- Due to the nature of athletic participation, schools (or teams, as applicable) must take steps to assist with the contact tracing process including, but not limited to, film review of practice, if available, and extended assessment of contact associated with athletic participation so that all athlete contacts can be identified.

### Symptomatic Individuals

- Symptomatic Athletes or Staff should **not** be tested at the team antigen testing location and instead be tested at a facility designed for symptomatic individuals, such as the Optumserve locations available throughout Santa Cruz County or through their medical provider.
- Symptomatic individuals must remain in isolation until test results are available, and repeat testing should be considered if initial testing is negative and symptoms continue and are consistent with COVID-19 symptoms.

### The following are Strongly Encouraged by CDPH

- Face Coverings (during play)
- Physical Distancing (during play)
- Hygiene and Sanitation
- Limitations on mixing by participants
- Travel Considerations

### Limitations for Inter-Team Competitions and Tournaments

- Inter-team competitions, meets, races, or similar events are permitted to occur only if (a) both teams are located in the same county and the sport is authorized in the Tables below; or (b) teams are located in immediately bordering counties and the sport is authorized in both counties in the Tables below.

### Limitations on Observers



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- Limit observation of youth sports (age 18 years and under) to immediate household members, and for the strict purpose of age appropriate supervision. This includes observation of practice and competition. Limit number of observers to ensure physical distance can be maintained, reduce potential crowding, and maintain indoor and outdoor capacity limits.
- Consider video streaming of games so that they can be watched "live" from home.