

September 25, 2020

Staying safe at athletic events during COVID-19 pandemic

MOBILE, Ala. — As the Southeastern Conference begins its football season this weekend, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offer the following considerations for ways in which people who go to a sporting event can slow the spread of COVID-19.

Spectators at sporting events should consider the number of COVID-19 cases both where they live and where the sporting event is taking place before deciding to attend. The higher the transmission of COVID-19 in the community, the higher the risk is at sporting events.

The CDC has not recommended a specific limit on the number of people that are safe to attend a sporting event. People who plan to go to a sporting event should contact the sporting program to find out whether seating arrangements and event logistics allow people to stay at least 6 feet apart, as well as the maximum number of attendees the program will allow.

Emphasis should be placed on the ability to reduce and limit contact between people at all sporting events. If the safety measures implemented by the sports program do not allow people to remain at least 6 feet apart, those planning to attend sporting events should consider alternate ways of participating. Before attending an event, participants should learn more about what risks are involved when deciding to go out.

According to the CDC, the risk of COVID-19 increases for spectators in sporting event settings when:

- The event is held in a confined, poorly ventilated indoor space.
- Attendees do not wear masks.
- Attendees yell, chant, and sing without masks.
- Attendees do not stay at least 6 feet apart from people they do not live with.
- Attendees travel from outside the area to attend the event.
- Attendees freely share their food and personal items (such as noisemakers) with people they do not live with.
- The sports program has no modifications or messaging in place to prevent or reduce the spread of COVID-19.

For more information on COVID-19 and the updated CDC guidelines, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/attending-sports.html>