



IREDELL COUNTY
PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Post Office Box 788
Statesville, North Carolina 28687

Ph: (704) 878-3103
Fax: (704) 832-2321
www.iredellparksandrec.com

Mask Mandate Clarification for Youth Sports

March 5, 2021

On Tuesday, March 2, 2021 the Iredell County Commissioners unanimously voted and passed a motion “for the County Manager to authorize her staff not to enforce that particular part of the mask mandate for youth sports while they are actively participating in a game or practice.”

Participants are highly encouraged to wear masks as much as possible, in order to reduce possible transmission of Covid-19. However, in cases where youth participants are “actively participating” and/or are able to maintain distancing (6 ft) from others while participating, Iredell County employees will not enforce mask wearing. In addition, if players are on the bench and can social distance they are not required to wear a mask, however if they cannot social distance they must wear a mask. This is specific **only** to youth sports participants on Iredell County Parks & Recreation property, and only during periods of activity (during games/practices). Youth participants are still required to wear a mask outside of the game or practice session as applicable (e.g. arriving or departing a field or facility), and all spectators and other non-participants are still subject to the requirements in EO 195. We appreciate the efforts of all players, families, coaches, and volunteers to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Supplemental information regarding current mask mandates:

- *North Carolina Executive Order 195 (EO 195):* effective February 26, athletic participants are still required to wear masks during practices and games, unless the player(s) has a medical condition preventing them from doing so. No changes were made to the requirement for face coverings nor the exception list. This order is effective until March 26 at 5pm. Mask wearing and maintaining physical distancing should remain a priority.

EO 195: <https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO195-Easing-Restrictions.pdf>

- *North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services (NCDHHS):* there is clarification in the “Interim Guidance for Administrators and Participants of Youth and Amateur Sports Programs” which was updated March 1:

<https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Youth-Amateur-Sports.pdf>

Per this guidance, “regardless of the type of sport being played, all administrators of sports programs are required to:

- Have all coaches, athletes, spectators and other participants wear a face covering indoors, unless they state that an exception applies.
 - Have all coaches, athletes, spectators and other participants wear a face covering outdoors, unless they state that an exception applies, or they are more than 6ft away from anyone outside of their household at all times.”
- *North Carolina Youth Soccer Association (NCYSA):* an updated statement was provided on March 1: <https://www.ncsoccer.org/assets/112/6/ebstatement-3-1-2021.pdf>

The ICRD/Impact FC recreation soccer program is chartered with NCYSA, and therefore must follow the guidelines set forth by NCYSA and the state.

Some notes from NCYSA include:

- Please urge coaches to identify only true mask exceptions to keep the season safe and fair, and to minimize canceled matches.
- A referee may stop or end a match if they are concerned about safety from the number of exceptions.
- Referees have been encouraged to allow players to step out of the action momentarily to “catch their breath”, at a safe social distance, by briefly pulling down their masks.
- Encourage players/parents to bring extra masks. Players are adapting to wet and warm weather by having additional clean masks during training or matches.
- As always, parents have the ultimate say in allowing their kids to play