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## The reinstatement of outdoor sports in Lamorinda

By Jonathan Pham

Under new guidelines released by the California Department of Public Health, outdoor recreational sports resumed as of Feb. 26. Even though the Contra Costa County's COVID-19 cases placed it within the purple tier of the Blueprint for a Safer Economy, athletes throughout the county may now compete in outdoor sports.

"I'm super excited to get out there for a couple games this season with my squad. I think it's super important for all the athletes in California. It gives us something to look forward to and enjoy in such a rough period of time," Miramonte High School junior and varsity football wide receiver Sam Ross said. Disregarding a county's COVID-19 tier designation, the key metric in determining whether or not outdoor recreational sports may resume is the number of COVID-19 cases per 100,000 people. The new guidelines allow outdoor high-contact sports in counties at or under 14 cases per 100,000. Contra Costa County currently sits within the threshold at 9.3 cases per 100,000.

Players over the age of 13 in sports such as football, basketball, rugby, and water polo will have to submit weekly COVID-19 tests. This is because participants in these sports are more likely to play with face-to-face contact without masks. On the contrary, sports with moderate contact such as baseball, softball, and cheerleading may continue without weekly testing.

"It's great that students will have the choice to participate in high school sports again. Some families may choose not to, but I know that having the kids play sports, interact with each other and their coaches, and set goals again will be extremely beneficial for them. We will strictly follow guidelines from the state and county to ensure that our coaches and athletes stay safe," Miramonte High School Athletic Director and men's water polo head coach James Lathrop said.

Coaching staff, spectators, and athletes are required to wear face coverings when observing games.

Spectators for high school sports must be members of a participant's immediate household.

Jonathan Pham is a junior at Miramonte and writes for the school's newspaper, The Mirador.

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