



## **Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association**

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October 23, 2020

To: NIAA Member Schools and School Districts

From: Bart Thompson, Executive Director, NIAA

RE: Update 15: **Move to Phase 3 with Modifications in NIAA Guidance**

### **Gubernatorial Emergency Directive 034; Move to Modified Phase 3 in the NIAA Guidance**

On October 2, 2020, Governor Sisolak issued Emergency Directive 034 regarding the opening of youth sports. While the provisions of the Directive deal primarily with youth and adult recreational sports, they are action taken regarding state-wide baseline restrictions specifically in regard to reopening of sports.

The provisions of that Directive allow for a shift to Phase 3 of NIAA Guidance with modifications. As of the date of this memorandum and by the authority granted by Emergency Directive 034, Section 13, the guidelines, restrictions and requirements in Phase 3 of the NIAA Guidance as modified herein, are in place for all NIAA member schools. That guidance was originally issued in conjunction with previous gubernatorial Directives 022 and 028. Since the issuance of the NIAA Guidance on June 9, 2020, and the subsequent updating of that guidance on July 1, 2020, NIAA member schools have been subject to the conditions in Phase 2 of that guidance. The relaxation of restrictions on youth and adult sports in Emergency Directive 034 reflect Phase 3 in the NIAA Guidance. The modifications to Phase 3 of the NIAA Guidance included in this document brings that guidance in line with Emergency Directive 034. The shift to Phase 3 of the NIAA Guidance allows for practice in all NIAA sports within sport specific restrictions. It also allows for competition in what the Directive categorizes as “minimal-contact sports” and moves a step closer to the possibility of competition in “full-contact and close-contact sports”. Competition in minimal-contact sports, those sports designated as “moderate transmission risk sports” in the original NIAA Guidance, was not allowed in Phase 2 of that guidance.

While the move to Phase 3 of the NIAA Guidance does allow for the possibility of competition in all NIAA sports, the pandemic is still with us. Phase 3 maintains many of the restrictions in place with Phase 2, including but not limited to: face covering, especially when not competing, distancing requirements when not competing or directly participating in practice, workouts in pods whenever possible, screening prior to workouts and/or competitions, facilities cleaning, hygiene for participants, clothing and equipment, etc. Schools, school districts and health authorities will also have requirements in place. While none of the measures individually or collectively can guarantee absolute prevention of the spread of the disease, careful attention to

and compliance with those measures significantly reduces the risk of spread of COVID-19 and may well allow competition to occur or continue for an individual, team and/or league.

In consultation with the Governor's office, it was made clear that the restrictions outlined in Directive 034 and the guidance issued in conjunction with that Directive, [\*Nevada Guidance for Adult & Youth Sports. COVID-19 Reopening Guidance\*](#), in regard to the categorization of sports and the permissibility of practices and competition in those sports, does indeed apply to NIAA sanctioned sports at NIAA member schools.

As modified to comply with Emergency Directive 034 and the guidance issued pursuant thereto, Phase 3 of the NIAA Guidance will allow for competition to take place in NIAA sports in both the "Non-contact" and "Minimal-contact" categories. However, competition in sports in the "Full/Close-contact" category is not allowed under the provisions of the Directive. Practice in full-contact sports is limited to "athletic conditioning, drills, practices in which dummy players, sleds, punching bags and similar equipment is used, but athletes may not come in contact with other players. Training and conditioning such as weightlifting, running drills and intra-squad scrimmaging, cannot include full contact of any kind."

Prior to the move to Phase 3, competition was not allowed in sports that were classified as moderate or high risk under the previous guidance. The hope that future conditions would allow for competition in those sports was at least in part a reason for the adoption of the current NIAA schedule of sports seasons. The move to Phase 3 as modified herein is a step in that direction.

While competition in full/close-contact sports is not permitted under Emergency Directive 034 and the associated guidance, the Directive and guidance are a positive step in opening sports in the state of Nevada. Competition in full-contact sports being allowed will require additional action by the Governor. The NIAA has received assurance from the Governor's office that the issue will be revisited in preparation for the beginning of practice in NIAA winter season sports on January 2, 2021. As communicated in previous Update Memoranda, NIAA out of season regulations (those usually in effect during the summer) are currently in place through January 1, 2021. Sports conditioning is allowed within the restrictions set forth in the modified Phase 3 guidance outlined in this document.

It is noted that all NIAA sports programs are run by the schools and school districts that sponsor those programs. As schools and school districts grapple with the myriad of issues the pandemic has created, many schools may not be able to return to activities associated with those programs or field teams as quickly as others, if at all. In contrast to neighboring states that are currently competing in education-based sports, a large majority of students at NIAA member schools are still not able to attend school in-person, even on a hybrid schedule. NIAA member schools and school districts that do not have in-person instruction have indicated they will not field teams and the NIAA Board of Control took action in their June, 2020, meeting to require that schools offer some type of in-person instruction to be able to compete.

As noted, modifications of the restrictions and requirements of the original NIAA Phase 3 Guidance have been made. Some of the more salient modifications of the NIAA Guidance to bring it in line with Directive 034 deal with the categorization of sports. Emergency Directive 034 places sports into one of three categories and replaces the designation of sports in the NIAA Guidance that was previously issued. The updated categorization of NIAA sanctioned sports is reflected in the chart below:

The following chart shows the category for each of the NIAA sanctioned sports per Directive 034:

Sport assignment to categories is taken from [Nevada Guidance for Adult & Youth Sports. COVID-19 Reopening Guidance](#)

| Season | Non-Contact Sports | Minimal-Contact Sports | Full-Contact/Close Contact Sports |
|--------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Fall   | Cross Country      | Soccer                 | Football                          |
|        | G. Golf            | G. Volleyball          |                                   |
|        | Tennis             |                        |                                   |
| Winter | Bowling            | Flag Football          | Basketball                        |
|        | Skiing             |                        | Wrestling                         |
|        |                    |                        |                                   |
| Spring | B. Golf            | Baseball               |                                   |
|        | Swimming & Diving  | Softball               |                                   |
|        | Track & Field      | B. Volleyball          |                                   |

**All sports, regardless of category, must adhere to all restrictions and requirements of the phase in which practice or competition takes place, as well as all state, local and school district directives. These include but are not limited to restrictions, requirements and directives regarding distancing, face covering, pre-practice/competition screening, gathering size, workout pods, cleaning, sanitation, etc.**

All of the general Phase 3 restrictions and requirements, with modifications, are listed below. In the coming weeks, sport specific restrictions and requirements that incorporate these general restrictions and requirements will be published to the NIAA membership.

### **NIAA Modified Phase 3 Restrictions and Requirements**

As indicated earlier, at this time, NIAA modified Phase 3 restrictions and requirements as outlined here are in place. These modified Phase 3 restrictions and requirements are part of the re-opening of high school sports in the COVID-19 pandemic and are implemented by authority granted to the NIAA in Emergency Directive 034, section 13.

As is stated in [Update 11](#), “Out of season regulations (regulations traditionally in place during the summer) will be in place through January 1, 2021.” This statement refers to NIAA regulations in place regardless of whether there is a pandemic or not, which due to the pandemic and schedule adjustment have been extended through January 1, 2021. Out of season activity by NIAA member schools is also subject to the restrictions and requirements of the modified Phase 3. **The requirements, restrictions and recommendations contained in this memorandum supersede previous requirements, restrictions and recommendations issued by this office in so far as they may conflict or differ.**

### **Modified Phase 3**

#### **Testing & Screening**

Discourage any person, including players, at risk for severe illness or with serious underlying medical conditions from attending any sporting activities.

##### **Testing**

- Coaches, managers, officials/referees, and team staff are required to take a COVID-19 test prior to the start of the season or resumption of athletic activity. Tests should be completed as close to the beginning of the start of the season as possible. It is strongly encouraged every other week during a season.
- It is strongly recommended but not mandatory that all players/athletes test for COVID-19 prior to the start of the season.

##### **Screenings**

- Contactless temperature screenings **MUST** be provided for all players/athletes, coaches, referees/officials, league officials, staff, and managers before each practice, game, or other team event. Contactless temperature screenings are strongly encouraged for spectators and attendees.
  - Ensure that the thermometer (touchless temperature scanners are recommended) has been thoroughly cleaned in between each check.
- All participants (coaches, managers, athletes/players, referees/officials, league officials, spectators/attendees, staff, etc.) **MUST** respond to COVID-19 screening-survey questions upon arrival and check-in at each practice, game, or other team event. See [NV COVID-19 Health Screening Guide](#)
- A record should be kept of all individuals present. [COVID-19 Screening for Sports](#)
- Conduct regular symptom and exposure assessments for all participants including players, coaches, referees, league officials, and managers. Daily symptom assessments should include monitoring for fever, cough, trouble breathing, and also whether individuals have been exposed through household members or others.
- Parents are encouraged to be on the alert for signs of illness in their children and themselves and stay home when sick.

### **If Someone Displays Symptoms**

- If a player, coach, official, staff member, volunteer or spectator displays symptoms of COVID-19 (confirmed temperature of 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher or if they say “yes” to any of the COVID-19 screening-survey questions) or if there is any suspicion that they are sick or symptomatic, they must be declined admittance and will not be allowed to participate or watch a sporting practice, game or competition. If they arrived with other people (parents/guardians, teammates, etc.), everyone in the group must also be declined admittance and they are to leave immediately.
  - Advise them to go home, stay away from other people, contact their primary care provider or local health authority for further instructions, including where and when to access a test.
  - Assigned staff or volunteers should provide the individual with a face covering and help the individual minimize their contact with others before leaving the facility. Immediately disinfect all areas used by the individual.

### **Positive Test Protocols**

- If a coach, manager, or player/athlete of the same team tests positive for COVID-19, the entire team (if they had been in close contact with the positive individual) **MUST** quarantine for 14 days. All team activities and practices must be canceled for 14 days during the quarantine period.
- If a household member of a coach, manager, or player/athlete of the same team tests positive for COVID-19, that coach, manager, or player/athlete must notify the school administration and/or NIAA and must cease all activities with the team for 14 days from the most recent exposure even if she/he tested negative.
- If a player/athlete, coach, or team staff member become sick with or test positive for COVID-19, they are to notify the school administration and/or NIAA. They **MUST** cease all athletic activity and participation and **MUST** be suspended until 10 days of home isolation are completed and symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours after that. Cases which continue to be symptomatic cannot return to participation even if test results are negative.
  - CDC: "youth sports organizations should notify local health officials, youth sports program staff, umpires/officials, and families immediately of anyone with COVID-19 while maintaining that person's confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)." For NIAA sports, the youth sports organizations are the school and NIAA, youth sports program staff are athletic directors, school coaches and all game administrators.
  - School officials are to immediately notify local health authorities and the NIAA in addition to those mentioned above in the case of an individual with COVID-19. A person's confidentiality is to be maintained in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

- Schools are to assure that anyone within their authority who previously tested positive for COVID-19 receive medical clearance before returning to play or activity.
- Official/referee organizations are to assure that officials/referees within their authority who previously tested positive for COVID-19 receive medical clearance before returning to officiating/refereeing.
- An official/referee who becomes ill with or tests positive for COVID-19 is to immediately notify their respective sport commissioner and/or the NIAA. The individual MUST cease all refereeing/officiating and participation and MUST be suspended until 10 days of home isolation are completed and symptoms have resolved for at least 24 hours after that. Cases which continue to be symptomatic cannot return to participation even if test results are negative.

### **Contact Tracing**

- Cooperation with Local Health Authorities on contact tracing is expected.
- Referee/officials organizations as well as school and school district staff, including but not limited to administrators, athletic directors, school nurses, school safety specialists, counselors, athletic trainers, coaches and any other staff deemed appropriate by the school and/or school district, shall collaborate and assist Local Health Districts with contact tracing in the event of illness of a player, coach, referee, athletic trainer, and/or anyone else involved with a sports team/group and/or event.

### **Limitations on Gatherings:**

#### **Capacity Limits**

In compliance with [Emergency Directive 033](#), county school districts, charter schools, and private schools that re-open school buildings or facilities must ensure that occupancy shall not exceed the lesser of 50% of the listed fire code capacity of a single space within a school site or 250 persons in an appropriately sized space that enables all social distancing requirements to be satisfied. These limits apply to outdoor fields and facilities as well as indoor facilities. All distancing requirements must be met. If distancing requirements cannot be satisfied, the capacity limit is to be reduced to the point where they are. So long as competitors, coaches or players always maintain at least 25 feet of distance from spectators, they are not required to be included in the occupant capacity limit. Should they join spectator spaces, they must be included in the occupant capacity limit. Event staff that interact with spectators as part of their duties during an event should not be counted against the occupancy limit. Prior to hosting any athletic event, be sure to carefully review and assure compliance with [Emergency Directive 033](#), particularly section 11, and its accompanying guidance, [Nevada Guidance for Safe Gatherings, Celebrations, Ceremonies and Events](#).

## **Spectators**

Under the Governor's Directive 033 related to gatherings, spectators may be allowed at sporting events covered under this guidance pursuant to the capacity restrictions set forth in the directive. However, it is still recommended that fans at sporting events be additionally limited and restricted to minimize the congregation of fans, parents/guardians, household members, and other spectators during this pandemic. Schools may consider limiting spectators to immediate household members or guardians of participants. Schools are responsible to enforce capacity limits as well as distancing and face covering requirements at events in which a school is involved. Plans should be developed by schools, if spectators are to be allowed, to assure compliance with capacity limits as well as distancing and face covering requirements in addition to all the other expectations normally associated with a high school contest. Careful review of and compliance with [\*Nevada Guidance for Safe Gatherings, Celebrations, Ceremonies and Events\*](#) is essential if spectators are to be allowed.

## **Support Groups**

The restrictions and requirements listed here and including those in Directive 033 and the associated guidance [\*Nevada Guidance for Safe Gatherings, Celebrations, Ceremonies and Events\*](#) apply to support groups such as cheerleaders, bands, pep clubs, etc. Limiting those who attend competitions reduces risk of the spread of the disease. Bands, pep clubs, etc. are discouraged at athletic competitions during the pandemic. If cheerleaders are allowed at a non-cheer sports competition, per Directive 033 and the associated guidance, a distance of at least 25 feet must be maintained between any cheerleader and any spectator. Individual cheerleaders must, at all times, maintain distancing of at least six (6) feet from any other individual including without limitation other cheerleaders including those on the same squad, game officials and members of either team including coaches and team personnel. The number of cheerleaders allowed in the cheerleader area is to be reduced when necessary to preserve the distancing. Cheerleaders who join the spectator space would count toward the capacity limit of the venue. Cheerleaders who are in the cheerleader area are not required to be included in the capacity limit. Stunts that require physical contact with another person are not allowed. Face covering is required.

## **Manage the Flow of People to Avoid Congestion and Crowding**

- When games and/or practices are held one after the other on the same facility, they **MUST** be scheduled to allow ample time between the finish and start of subsequent contests/practice sessions, to allow for departure and arrival without congestion.
- Players and coaches are encouraged to plan their arrival time prior to a game or practice session to avoid arriving earlier than necessary. Where possible staggered arrivals, possibly by position played/coached, are preferable.

- Teams and spectators are required to depart the facility immediately upon completion of the game or practice in a manner that minimizes congregating.
- Provision should be made for players to remain properly distanced while waiting for the beginning of practice, warm-up, or game, instead of forming a group.
- Strategies which prevent the congregation of practice and competition participants as well as spectators both before and after practices and competitions should be devised and implemented. These strategies should allow people to leave the premises before next groups enter and should minimize gathering.
- To follow required physical distancing requirements, stagger arrival and departure times for staff, players and spectators to minimize congregating at entrances, exits and restrooms. To the extent practicable, separate entrances/exits for staff, players and spectators.
- Consider assigning staff to monitor the number of individuals in a restroom at one time to prevent congestion.
- When multiple sporting events occur at the same sports complex or venue at the same time, site administration is required to:
  - Ensure players and spectators for sporting events do not share space, including but not limited to restrooms, hallways, concession stands.
  - Ensure that high-traffic areas such as entrances, exits, check-in tables, restrooms, and concession areas, are cleaned and sanitized between subsequent games and events.

### **Face Covering**

- Decreasing potential exposure to respiratory droplets is the guiding principle behind distancing and the use of face coverings. The use of cloth face coverings is meant to decrease the spread of respiratory droplets. Any student who prefers to wear a cloth face covering during a contest should be allowed to do so.
- Emergency Directive 028 requires that all students and school staff must wear a cloth face covering while on school buses, in school buildings, or on school campuses unless approved for an exemption.
- The guidance issued in conjunction with Emergency Directive 034 spells out the requirement for face coverings for players in athletic contests. It states, “Players and athletes must wear face coverings indoors and outdoors, except when:
  - actively eating or drinking (it is noted that social distancing must be maintained);
  - if an exemption can be applied under Directive 024; or
  - when actively exercising or participating in practices or competitions. If social distancing cannot be maintained during activity, players are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings to the extent practicable.”
- Emergency Directive 028 also states, “Parents, vendors, volunteers, visitors, and guests who are unable or unwilling to wear cloth face coverings under any circumstances or exemptions should not be allowed on school buses, in school buildings, or on school campuses.”



- The guidance issued with Directive 034 states, “Face coverings should be worn by coaches, managers, sports staff, officials, parents/guardians, and allowed attendees and spectators.”
- Schools are to assure compliance with the face covering requirements at NIAA athletic events in which that school is involved. Schools are encouraged to notify potential spectators that face covering will be required.

### **Social Distancing**

- Schools are responsible to monitor and make sure that spectators from different households keep six (6) feet of physical distance, including at entrances, exits, restrooms and any other area where people may gather.
- Develop and implement a plan to limit the number of spectators admitted into the premises so that all staff, volunteers, contractors, and spectators can keep six (6) feet of physical distance.
- If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, there must be a minimum distance of six (6) feet between individuals at all times. Efforts should be made to encourage students and coaches to limit the use of locker rooms when at all possible by arriving ready for workouts and showering at private residences.
- Ensure everyone at the sports facility, including all players, coaches, referees, volunteers, and independent contractors, keep a physical distance of at least six (6) feet from individuals not residing in the same household, especially in common areas.
- When feasible, increase the size of the field or court, particularly the area outside the playing area.
- Encourage social distancing through increased spacing during warm-ups, small groups with limited mixing between groups, and staggered scheduling and arrival as feasible.
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain distancing between each individual. Ensure social distancing by increasing space between coaches, players and other team personnel on the sideline, dugout, or bench. Additionally, coaches can encourage athletes to use downtime for individual skill-building work or cardiovascular conditioning, rather than staying clustered together.
- Space players at least six (6) feet apart on the field, when possible, while participating in the sport (such as during warmup, skill building activities and simulation drills).
- If keeping physical distance is difficult with players in competition or group practice, consider relying on individual skill work and drills.
- Create physical distance between players when instructing, explaining drills, or the rules of the game, etc.
- Provide physical guides and post signs or visual cues on the ground or walls to indicate appropriate spacing distance.
- Limit contact with other teams. Scrimmages with another school are discouraged.

- Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs. Traditional post and pre-game handshakes will not take place.
- If a school allows for travel other than on school transportation, players are strongly encouraged not to travel with other members of the team and only members of their immediate households.

### **Facilities Cleaning**

- Adequate, frequent cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases. Use disinfectants that are included on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approved list for the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes COVID-19.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, gate handles, door knobs, light switches, sink handles, countertops, benches, etc.).
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered.
- No spitting of sunflower seeds or similar products is to be allowed. Spitting is strongly discouraged.

### **Personal & Clothes/Equipment Hygiene**

- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts. If hands become visibly soiled, they should be washed with soap and water prior to using hand sanitizer.
- Hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, should be plentiful and available to individuals throughout practices/workouts/games. Availability applies to all participants including but not limited to players, coaches, team personnel, athletic trainers, game administration and support staff, security and medical personnel, media, spectators, etc. Staff and players must practice healthy hygiene.
- Personal items and equipment temporarily stored in a team area or workout area should be spaced at least six (6) feet apart.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat transmission onto equipment/surfaces.
- Students should be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing/uniforms immediately upon returning home.
- There should be no sharing of towels, clothing including uniforms, scrimmage vests or pinnies, or shoes between students.

- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing and uniforms (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels/uniforms should be washed and cleaned after every use.
- All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned and disinfected frequently during practices and contests as appropriate to the sport. For example, between sets, periods, innings, as balls come out of use prior to re-entering a contest, etc.
- Athletic equipment such as bats, batting helmets, catchers gear, track & field implements (shots, discus, javelins, vaulting poles, relay batons, landing areas for vertical jumps), etc. should be cleaned between each use.
  - Clean all equipment that directly contacts the head, face and hands with extra attention and detail.
- Equipment to be cleaned and disinfected prior to subsequent use is to be kept separate from cleaned, disinfected equipment.
- Other equipment, such as hockey helmets/pads, wrestling ear guards, football helmets/other pads, lacrosse helmets/pads/gloves/eyewear, knee and elbow braces/pads, shin guards, etc. should be worn by only one individual and not shared.

### **Physical Activity**

- Non-contact and minimal contact sports practices and competitions may be held within the requirements and restrictions listed here.
- Where possible, workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same group of students always working out together. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training. This ensures limited exposure if an individual develops an infection.
- Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Spotters should stand at each end of the bar.
- Modified practices may begin for full/close-contact sports:
  - Modified practices for full/close-contact sports are limited to athletic conditioning, drills, practices in which dummy players, sleds, punching bags and similar equipment is used, but athletes may not come in contact with other players. Training and conditioning such as weightlifting, running drills and intra-squad scrimmaging, cannot include full contact of any kind.
  - Re-assess epidemiology data and experiences in other states and other levels of competition to determine when full/close-contact sports competition may resume. Allowing of unmodified practice and competition in full/close-contact sports will require action by the Governor.

## **Hydration**

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- No shared drinking fountains or hydration stations (water cows, water troughs, water coolers, etc.) may be utilized. Close water fountains, except for those designed to refill water bottles without contact between the bottle and fountain. Encourage players to bring prefilled water bottles.

## **Signage**

- Post signage at practice and contest venue entrances outlining established protocols. Consider utilizing signage with easy to interpret graphics in commonly used languages reminding everyone to maintain six (6) feet of distance, wear masks, wash hands, etc.
- Post instructions for individuals throughout the practice and competition venue at entrances, and inform individuals of:
  - Capacity limits (see above);
  - Prohibitions on entering a gathering if they are experiencing symptoms;
  - Hygiene and social distancing instructions, signage, and markings; and
  - Face covering requirements.

## **General Considerations**

While the opportunity to participate in at least some sports is available under Emergency Directive 034, its related guidance and the guidance provided here, this is not a return to “normal” in any of those sports. Doing all that can be done to limit the spread while conducting practices and competitions is imperative. No guidance can cover every situation, please consider the following when planning practice, competition and any other team activities.

- Face covering, hygiene and distancing effectively prevent the spread
- Outdoor locations are safer than indoor
- Smaller groups are safer than larger
- The more people with whom there is contact the better the chance of being infected
- Practice activities that allow for distancing of participants are safer than those with closer contact
- Shorter duration is safer than longer
- Teams or individuals in quarantine cannot compete

The return to play for education-based high school sports, while frustratingly slow, is coming. Sports and athletics programs are funded and administered by schools because of the benefits participation in those programs provide in the education of the students attending those schools. Sports and athletic programs are an extremely important tool in educating high school aged youth. The possibility for sports programs to make any type of return to a very large extent depends on how well programs that have the opportunity to practice and compete assure the

actions that reduce the spread of the disease are taken consistently over time. Even though there are no guarantees that such action will absolutely preclude contracting the virus, at this time it is the best chance we have for our student/athletes to be able to compete in the sports programs they love. The restrictions and requirements listed here not only seem but are, to a great extent, onerous. However, they are designed by health experts to provide the best chance of being able to compete and prevent the spread of the disease to the community at large.

In states where students are attending school in-person and education-based sports have been contested, where these types of restrictions and requirements have been followed, there have been few if any issues with spread of the disease associated with high school sports. Where compliance has been suspect, there have been problems. The tough thing about restrictions during this pandemic is that in the case of high school sports, the restrictions are as much or more about protecting other vulnerable populations in the whole of our community as protecting those who are participating. Abiding by the restrictions and requirements will be one of the most selfless acts these incredible students, coaches, officials, and administrators will perform.