



OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT RETURN TO PLAY TOPICS

This document was released on July 29, 2020. Over time this document will change – please check back frequently for updates. The first four pages of this document feature easy-to-understand overviews of Fall 2020 COVID-document related guidelines. For more detailed answers, read this entire packet. Fall athletics will not be risk-free, but by following the guidance in this document we all can help mitigate those risks. We also ask that you consider your interactions outside of sports during this season in order to limit the potential for exposure in other portions of your daily routine.

PROTOCOL FOR POSITIVE CASES: A detailed and more complete version of these protocols can be found on page five of this document (“What to Do When Someone Gets Sick”).

1. Contact health department and follow guidance.
2. Close contacts MAY have to quarantine for 14 days – follow health department guidance. “Close contact” is defined as anyone who was less than six feet apart for more than 15 minutes, at any point from two days before symptoms until the time the individual is isolated.
3. Notify all schools, families and officials involved without identifying the person involved.
4. Student, coaches, officials and others at the event but NOT in close contact should be closely monitored for symptoms and may not need testing. Follow health department guidance.
5. Clean the area.

FACE COVERINGS: Athletes while participating on the field/court are not required to wear face coverings but are permitted to do so. Bench personnel are required to wear face coverings at all times – this includes athletes not currently in the game, coaches, managers, trainers, statisticians, media and anyone else on the sideline. It is recommended that game officials wear face coverings, but it is not required when carrying out their duties. Contest management, school administrators, media and all staff are required to wear face coverings. Spectators are also required to wear face coverings.

REGULAR SEASON TOURNAMENTS, INVITATIONALS, MULTI-TEAM COMPETITIONS: The following limitations are in place for regular season fall tournaments and invitationals, both home and away. Regular season dual/head-to-head matchups, between multiple levels of two different schools, are not affected.

- Cross Country – maximum of 70 runners are allowed in a race
- Golf – maximum of 72 competitors at an 18-hole site
- Football – two teams at a site
- Soccer – four teams at a site
- Swimming & Diving – four teams at a site
- Tennis – four teams at a site
- Volleyball – four teams at a site

When determining the number of teams present at a tournament, count the school’s varsity team as one team, and its JV team as a second team. The goal is to achieve physical distancing at all possible times; teams not in competition should be provided adequate space, and spectator limitations must be followed. Consider staggered contest and team arrival times to maintain physical distancing.

SCRIMMAGES: There are no scrimmages allowed for any sports this fall.

SPECTATOR LIMITATIONS: Spectators will be limited. The number of spectators and individuals allowed for indoor and outdoor events will be based on future guidance from the governor's office, and will be posted prior to the first dates of competition.

ENTRANCE/EXIT STRATEGIES: Consider strategies to prevent groups from gathering at entrances/exits to facilities to limit crossover and contact, including staggering starting/ending times.

PRE-WORKOUT AND PRE-GAME SCREENING: All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including with a temperature check. This check may take place onsite or be completed and verified prior to arrival onsite (at home, for example). Anyone with a temperature of greater than 100.3 degrees should not participate and be sent home. Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19. These records must be kept confidential. Any person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate, and contact his or her primary care provider or other health-care professional. Continue to remind and insist that coaches and students disclose symptoms so all schools can compete safely. Involve local health departments if positive cases of COVID are discovered. Vulnerable adult individuals should not coach, supervise or participate in any competitions or workouts. School districts will make the decision on vulnerable individuals.

COVID GAME CANCELLATIONS: Except for football, any game cancelled because of COVID issues is not considered a forfeit. It is considered a no play provided the contest has not started. For official's payment purposes this is considered an act of God.

TICKETS: Schools should strongly consider using a digital ticket or cashless system. Schools must work together to develop a distribution plan for the limited amount of tickets available per game. If a physical ticket is used, each school should consider conducting a pre-sale, with no on-site ticket sales – only tickets, not money, is collected at the event site.

TRANSPORTATION: The use of buses is a local school district decision. Cleaning and ability to physical distance should be part of the decision. Schools should also consider length of trips when determining the season schedule. When feasible, consider having parents drive athletes to and from games.

LOCKER ROOMS: Home teams are not required to offer locker room access. Visiting teams should arrive dressed and ready to play. Locker room restrooms should be available, and a cleaning schedule should be created.

INCLEMENT WEATHER: Have an action plan ready for outdoor sports that go into a weather delay. Determine where teams should go in the case of lightning or thunder.

FACILITY CLEANING: Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities. Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (bleachers, chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before participating in workouts. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.

CONCESSIONS: Schools should consider closing concessions stands, especially when there are limited spectators.

BEST PRACTICES FOR NON-ATHLETES – THIS IS NOT SPORT SPECIFIC

Administrators/Host Management

- Administrators must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Obtain officials' information in order to trace contacts if necessary. (This information may be accessible through Arbiter.)
- Provide clear instruction to teams in advance of contests about entrance and exit points of the facility.
- At larger spectator events, consider providing volunteers to monitor entrances and spectator seating areas who can promote physical distancing and face coverings.
- When possible, officials and teams should be provided separate bathrooms and/or gathering areas.
- Scorer's Table/Press Box – essential personnel should be 3-6 feet apart when possible.
- A cordless microphone could be used.
- Cleaning supplies should be available on site with devices sanitized between uses.

Coaches

- Coaches must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Provide and review NFHS Playing Rule modifications with players and parents.

Officials

- Officials must practice physical distancing, and it is recommended they wear face coverings.
- Electronic whistles are permitted.
- Officials must come dressed to officiate; a locker room will not be provided.
- Officials should bring their own food and water, and their own pen to sign lineup sheets, scorebooks, etc.
- Officials will not be expected to monitor physical distancing; each person is responsible.

Spectators

- Spectators must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Entrance and exit protocols, and posted signs by host management must be obeyed.

Media Personnel

- Media must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Press box/table accommodations should allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Promote to local media the need to call in advance of the event to secure accommodations.
- Designate locations where photographers may shoot from and enforce it. Make sure photographers are aware of restrictions when they arrive. Photographers must be kept out of team box (football) and bench areas (basketball, volleyball, other sports).
- Limit postgame interviews to open air areas. No locker room access.
- Establish times when the venue will become available to the media and when it will close.



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Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Precautionary Measures (in addition to other protocols and precautions)

- Anyone attending or participating in an MHSAA regular season or tournament event should check his/her temperature before arriving. Spectators, participants or personnel displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., *fever, cough or shortness of breath*), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Prior to participation, the COVID-19 athlete/coach monitoring form should be used, which includes five questions plus a temperature check. **NOTE: Athletic Directors should consider requiring similar precautions for game officials.**

Protocol for Suspected Cases of COVID-19

- All schools should have an emergency action plan in place for each site. If a student, coach or official is or becomes sick on site with symptoms of COVID-19, they should be placed in a clearly identified and designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they can be picked up. Staff who are identified to care for students must wear a mask.
- A symptomatic student should be sent home with a parent or designated adult until they have tested negative or have been released from isolation according to the local health department's protocols.
- Students, coaches, and/or officials should be transported by their parent or guardian, emergency contact or ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being brought to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19. If a student, coach or official becomes sick, they must not use group transportation to return home.

Protocol for Positive Cases of COVID-19

- The local health department should be contacted by the school for further direction. They likely will initiate contact tracing, following regular public health practices.
- All schools, public and private, must cooperate with the local public health department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, and collect the contact information for any close contacts (*i.e., individuals less than six feet apart for more than 15 minutes*) of the infected individual from two days before he or she showed symptoms to the time when he or she was last at the event. Close contacts should be quarantined for 14 days at home. Local health officials may identify other contacts who require quarantine.
- Administrators of the schools involved, as well as students/families/officials in attendance, should be notified of the presence of any laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed cases of COVID-19 so there continues to be awareness and close observation of any symptoms. **NOTE: Student communicable disease related information is protected health information. The individual with COVID-19 should not be identified by name to non-family or non-health department officials. Even if a family/student acknowledges and publicly discloses a positive test, school staff and officials must not participate in discussion or acknowledgement of a positive test by identifying a specific student.**
- Students, coaches or officials who were at the event, but not in close contact with a positive case, should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Areas that were used by the sick person should be closed off and should not be used until after cleaning and disinfecting them (this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area). If possible, cleaning and disinfecting of the area should not occur until at least 24 hours has elapsed. If 24 hours is not feasible, as much time possible should be allowed to pass before cleaning or disinfection occurs.



SPORT: Cross Country

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Considering all recommendations by the [MISafeSchools Return to School Roadmap](#), [MHSAA Re-Opening Guidelines](#) and the Sports Medicine Advisory Committees, the following are the specific guidelines for Cross Country:

The MHSAA/NFHS Guidance for Re-Opening School Sports lists Cross Country as a low risk sport.

Low risk sports can be done with physical distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.

Competition and Spectator Limitations

- 2020 Fall regular season tournament competition limit – no more than 70 runners in a race.
- No scrimmages allowed.
- Spectators will be limited. The number of spectators and individuals allowed for indoor and outdoor events will be based on future guidance from the governor’s office, and will be posted prior to the first dates of competition.

Cross Country Race Management Considerations – This document will be updated many times throughout the season.

<https://www.mhsaa.com/Portals/0/Documents/BXC/2020finals/2020-XC-Considerations.pdf>

Special Equipment and Facility Considerations for Cross Country

| Sports Equipment | Facility |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual Student Equipment / Personal Items• Stretching Equipment• Timing Devices• Tents/Shelters• Flagging/Marking Equipment (Cones, Paint Cans)• Bibs/Tags/Chips• Water Bottles• Any item that is held in the hands or makes contact with the body | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Team Areas• Bleachers• Bathrooms• Locker Rooms• Weight Training Facilities• Athletic Training Facilities• Drinking / fountains / jugs |

CROSS COUNTRY – Return to Play Guidelines

PRACTICE

- Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same small group of students always working out together. Smaller pods can be utilized for ability levels, different distances, intensities or practice plans. This will ensure limited exposure if someone develops an infection. Pod sizes can and should be determined by coaches and schools.
- Runners should maintain the recommended six feet of distancing between individuals and should not be in contact with each other, no sharing of equipment.
- Recommended that all activities occur outdoors.
- Avoid grouping of athletes at start and end of practice or during transitions.
- Staggered start times for meetings are recommended.
- Educate athletes about physical distancing, handwashing, and other immune system protocols.
- Masks not required while running, but recommended before and after practice for everyone (coaches and athletes).
- All coaches and other school personnel should be masked, and gloved when appropriate with PPE.

COMPETITION

- Scheduling of host sites and courses needs to be done ahead of time to ensure the venue can both handle a race and is willing to be the host site. This includes private facilities like parks that may have restrictions on races or congregations of people like cross country races. No spectators may need to be strongly considered.
- Avoid grouping of athletes at start and end of competitions or during transitions. (Team and athletes) will have to be a smaller controlled number.
- Course design should be considered and adjusted as necessary to include non-repeating courses and at least 6 ft wide at its narrowest points. In addition, “passing lanes” could be considered as a way to have competitors physically distance during a race.
- If spectators are allowed at the course, there must be a restricted area at the finish that keeps spectators away so they do not interfere with the "quick exit" of each athlete.
- All event workers should be masked, and gloved when appropriate with PPE.
- Host schools can add course monitors and marshals to the course in multiple key spots to monitor social distancing and remind runners to run their line for proper distancing.
- Educate athletes about physical distancing, handwashing, and other immune system protocols. This would include the use of hand sanitizer before and after competition.
- Masks not required while running or racing, but recommended before and after practice/meets (when not racing) for everyone (coaches and athletes).
- No pre or post-race handshakes or fist bumps should take place.

CROSS COUNTRY – NFHS Playing Rule Modifications

Cross Country Rules Considerations General Considerations:

- Physical distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained at all times. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
- Cross country meets should consider using staggered, wave or interval starts.
- Possible Rule Modifications:
 - 8-1-3a: Consider widening the course to at least 6 feet at its narrowest point.
- Finish:
 - Consider using finish corrals and FAT timing for larger meets as easier to distance at finish.
 - With no FAT timing system consider alternative means of finish place and time to address congestion at finish line.
 - Consider using image-based equipment at finish to assist with picking place to avoid congestion.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment.
- *Pre and Post Game Ceremony*: Establish cross country specific physical distancing meet protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the match.



Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Cross Country Guidelines

Included below are considerations for contest officials within the guidelines for returning to school sports. They have been developed in consultation with health professionals, government officials, the National Federation and officials from around the state of Michigan. They include general expectations for schools in relation to officials, provisions specific to officials in the sport, rules and mechanics modifications and protocols for when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified.

Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as physical distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring remains the responsibility of the coaching staff and school personnel.

General Expectations for Schools

- School athletic directors and officials should communicate with one another well in advance of the contest so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each. Failure to discuss the details may create greater conflicts at the date/time of the contest.
- Officials should be provided a designated parking area apart from the general public.
- An adult host should meet the officials at a single, designated location and time for arrival. They should be escorted all together to an open and ventilated meeting area before the start of the contest, to and from the contest during any intermissions and to the parking areas following the conclusion of the contest.
- Officials should be provided cold beverages either (1) in a sealed, disposable bottle or (2) in a newly washed, reusable bottle. Each shall be designated for a single official and should be marked to indicate to which official the beverage is assigned.
- If offered, snacks or meals provided to officials should be individually packaged separately for each official.
- It is recommended that officials' fees are paid using an electronic payment method.

Protocols for Suspected and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

Suspected Cases at Contest

- If an official becomes symptomatic at a contest, he or she should be moved to a designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they are transported from the facility. If the symptoms are severe, the official should be picked up by an emergency contact or by ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being transported to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

Confirmed Cases

- If an official has a laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19, he or she should immediately contact the local health department for further instructions, and inform the athletic director(s) of any host school he or she visited within the previous two days before displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Officials must inform any host school for which they are scheduled to officiate for (at least) 14 days following confirmation that they are unable to work those contests. They will remain ineligible to officiate any MHSAA contests until they are medically cleared by their personal healthcare provider.



- All officials considered close contacts (*i.e., individuals less than six feet apart for more than 15 minutes*) will be informed when a positive case of COVID-19 is identified from a contest they officiated within two days of when the infected individual first displayed symptoms. If identified as a close contact, an official should quarantine and must return assignments scheduled for the next 14 days.
- If an official was at the event, *but not in close contact with a positive case*, he or she should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

Cancellations/Failure-to-Fulfills

- Games that are cancelled because of COVID-19 are considered cancelled as a result of an act of God and are not subject to a 10-day minimum advanced notice by the school.
- Officials are not subject to a failure-to-fulfill penalty if they break a contract for an assignment when (1) they have been diagnosed with, or display symptoms of, COVID-19 or (2) if a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified with a team or facility which/where he or she is scheduled to officiate.

Officials' Sport-Specific Provisions

It is incumbent of MHSAA officials to take necessary precautions to ensure a safe working/playing environment. This is especially important for those considered “vulnerable individuals” – people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Individual circumstances, proximity to others while officiating and overall risk level will determine for many the extent of precautions taken.

Provisions are listed in categories described below. As independent contractors, MHSAA officials have the ability to choose or decline assignments as they see fit. Likewise, because officials are hired by the schools, districts and their administrators may require additional precautions be taken by officials that work their contests beyond those mandated in this document. Officials should check with the schools as to any additional precautions or requirements before accepting an assignment and/or arriving to contest.

Provision Categories

- Permitted** – Precautions and safety measures which officials are allowed to take during MHSAA contests. This list is not exhaustive and officials should contact the host school for guidance if they wish to take further precautions not listed in this document.
- Suggested** – Best practices for MHSAA officials based on the recommendations of health professionals. Not required, but should be followed if possible.
- Mandated** – Required practice in order to officiate MHSAA contests. If an official is unwilling or unable to follow these requirements, he or she is not permitted to officiate the contest.

NOTE: “Physical distancing” refers to a separation of individuals of at least six feet, except for momentary interactions.

Permitted Provisions:

- Officials may use electronic whistles.
- Officials may wear gloves – including medical latex gloves, work gloves or gloves designed specifically for officiating.



- Officials may wear plastic face shields which connect to a hat, wrap around the forehead or that hang around the neck.

Suggested Provisions:

- Each official should check his/her temperature on game days. Officials displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough or shortness of breath), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Officials should consider bringing their own marked beverage(s).
- Upon arrival at the site/facility and throughout the contest, officials should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Officials should not share uniforms, towels apparel or equipment.
- Cloth or surgical face coverings, which cover the mouth and nose are recommended for individuals that can wear them without significant impact upon breathing.
- The starter should utilize his/her own starter pistol or electronic starting device; or if he/she uses starting equipment owned by the school, it should be sanitized prior to the first use, and following any use of the equipment by any other person.
- Meet officials should bring their own pens/pencils for confirming meet results.

Mandated Provisions:

- Officials will arrive to the site or facility dressed in their uniforms (uniform tops may be put on at the facility).
- Officials will arrange to arrive to the site/facility at a single location and time. Unless unavoidable, officials will enter the facility as a group, maintaining proper physical distancing.
- Officials' pregame meetings shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.
- Officials shall not engage in pregame/postgame handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches or administrators.
- Officials shall not physically contact players during the contest, including players that appear to be injured or ill.
- Officials will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the officials should avoid speaking face-to-face.
- Only the referee will meet with coaches at the pre-meet meeting (without the presence of the starter or captains). The meeting should be limited to a single coach from each team, and multiple meetings may be needed to ensure proper physical distancing is maintained.
- When providing an explanation of a ruling to a head coach, the official will meet the coach apart from others, while practicing proper physical distancing.
- When checking/confirming final results from the meet, the referee will do using proper physical distancing.



Rules Modifications (Cross Country)

- **MEET STARTS**
 - Staggered, wave or interval starts are permitted.

- **WIDTH OF COURSE (Rule 8-1-3a)**
 - It is recommended that the minimum width of a course at its narrowest point should be at least six feet.

- **MEET FINISH**
 - It is recommended that finish corrals, FAT timing be used and image-based finish line equipment be utilized, when possible.

