

## COVID-19 Sports Regulations

The following regulations will be in place for all sports until further notice. These regulations do not guarantee safety, but they are meant to encourage safe practices that will maximize our ability to engage in sports competition during the COVID-19 pandemic. While much about COVID-19 and its spread remains unknown, our collective hope for continuing sports competition depends on the willingness of every member school to apply and enforce these regulations.

1. **Temperature checks are required for all coaches, players, and team personnel prior to every practice.** Anyone whose temperature measures 100.4 or greater must be sent home immediately and may not return to participation until he/she provides documentation that they have tested negative for COVID-19 or obtained a medical evaluation by a physician verifying that COVID-19 is not the cause of his/her fever.
2. **No coach, player, or team personnel may participate in practice or a contest without first completing appropriate COVID-19 screening.** Persons should not participate while ill. If the answer is “YES” to any of the following questions, the coach, player, or team personnel may not participate until obtaining an evaluation by a medical provider verifying his/her fitness to safely do so:
  - Have you had any of the following symptoms in the past 7 days?
    - Fever
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Shaking chills
    - Chest pain, pressure, or tightness with exercise
    - Fatigue or difficulty with exercise
    - Racing heart rate
    - Unusual dizziness
    - Loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat
    - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
    - Unusual rash or painful discoloration of fingers or toes
  - Do you have moderate to severe asthma, a heart condition, diabetes, chronic kidney or liver disease, or take medication or have a medical condition that weakens your immune system?
  - Have you or a family/household member been diagnosed with or tested positive for COVID-19 infection or been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the past 14 days?

Each coach, player, or team personnel member must be asked these questions before the first practice in which he/she participates, and again on at least a weekly basis.

A printed list of the questions should be given to each coach, player, or team personnel member with instructions that the questions are continuing throughout the season. If at any time the answer to any question becomes “YES,” the individual should promptly inform

the head coach or team trainer and should obtain an evaluation by a medical provider before further participation.

3. **No scrimmages, jamborees, 7-on-7 practice, or other types of practice with other teams is permitted.** Team versus team competition may take place only at official contests. *[Off-season practice in contact sports such as basketball, wrestling, etc., remains restricted to non-contact conditioning work consistent with the Governor's order.]*
4. **At contests all coaches, players, team personnel, officials, administrators, and fans must have their temperatures checked before entering the facility.** No one whose temperature measures 100.4 or greater may be admitted. Any coach, player, and team personnel refused admission under this regulation may not return to participation until providing documentation that he/she has tested negative for COVID-19 or obtained a medical evaluation by a physician verifying that COVID-19 is not the cause of his/her fever. For spectator screening areas, if a line forms or is anticipated to form, ensure 6 or more feet of separation between persons or household groups (e.g., ground markings and/or announcements).
5. **At each contest the following symptom checklist shall be posted prominently** at the spectator entrance(s) instructing that anyone who is experiencing any of these symptoms during the preceding 7 days must not be admitted:
  - Fever
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Shaking chills
  - Chest pain, pressure, or tightness with exercise
  - Fatigue or difficulty with exercise
  - Racing heart rate
  - Unusual dizziness
  - Loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea
  - Unusual rash or painful discoloration of fingers or toes
6. **At contests in localities where fan attendance is permitted, member schools are encouraged to limit fan attendance to a number that will allow adequate social distancing (e.g., 1/4 to 1/3 of typical seating capacity, depending on the characteristics of the particular venue) and should mark/designate bleachers or seats in order to promote social distancing among spectators.** Member schools must facilitate compliance with any applicable state or local order limiting gathering sizes for participation in public events. In consultation with local health providers, member schools in areas experiencing high virus transmission should consider further limitations on attendance (e.g., family members only, or no spectators). Limit informal gathering in areas where social distancing cannot be maintained.

7. **Member schools will require that all fans wear facial coverings at all times while on-site** (except children under age 2) **and maintain social distancing** (six feet, or the equivalent of two empty seats between themselves and other fans) from anyone other than those living in the same household.
8. The temperature check and questionnaire requirements of Items 1 and 2 above, as well as the social distancing requirement of Item 7, **shall also apply to members of a school band or pep band, cheerleaders**, or other similar student groups attending a contest in a supporting role. Due to the potential increased risk of virus transmission during certain activities, the use of school bands at contests is discouraged. If the band is present, limit to a halftime performance or relocate the band from the stands to other available areas away from crowds and increase the amount of physical distance between band members. Increase the amount of physical distance between cheerleaders as well as between cheerleaders and other persons if projected voices are to be used.
9. **If a public address system is in use for a contest, the host school will make public service announcements at various times during the contest to remind those in attendance to use masks and maintain physical distancing.**
10. **The host school is responsible for providing staff to engage in frequent cleaning and sanitizing of restroom facilities during contests.**
11. **Concession stands are discouraged** because they tend to invite gatherings of people in close quarters. If a member school chooses to operate a concession stand at a contest, signage or other appropriate markings must be in place to encourage customers to maintain physical distancing while standing in line. Where possible, schools that choose to operate concession stands are encouraged to arrange for call-in orders in order to reduce the number of people gathering to stand in line and to limit the number of concession workers. All concession stand workers must wear facial coverings and must maintain as much physical distance as possible in the confines of the concession stand.
12. **All coaches must complete the free NFHS online course “COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators,”** before the first contest (preferably as soon as possible). Administrators with athletic responsibilities are also encouraged to complete the course. The link to access the course is here: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>.

In addition to these regulations, TSSAA has developed the accompanying rules modifications and guidelines for returning to competition generally and for the specific fall sports. Those rules modifications and guidelines, like these regulations, do not guarantee the safety of participants and fans but are designed to encourage the member schools to engage in safe practices. The knowledge base related to COVID-19 is evolving. TSSAA may modify the regulations, rules modifications, and guidelines as more about COVID-19 is learned. All coaches and administrators are encouraged to check the TSSAA website regularly for any modifications to these regulations, rules modifications, or guidelines.

# **General Rule Considerations for all TSSAA Sports Returning to Competition During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

## **Pre-Game Procedures**

- While it has always been customary to shake hands as a part of the pre-game conferences and activities, this should not take place during this pandemic.
- Pre-game conferences will take place with fewer officials, coaches and staff than in years past. Refer to the sport specific guidelines for details.

## **Team Benches**

- Social Distancing is encouraged for bench personnel. Schools should carefully consider the role of all bench personnel and eliminate those who are non-essential.
- Players and coaches should provide their own water, sports drinks, etc.

## **Officials Table / Press Box**

- Should be limited to essential personnel to ensure social distancing. Schools should carefully consider the role of all personnel at the officials' table and press box and eliminate those who are non-essential.

## **Post-Game Procedures**

- Handshakes, hugs, etc. have always been an integral part of postgame procedures. During this pandemic, these should not take place.

## **Dressing Facilities**

- If available, dressing facilities for game officials and teams should be large enough for them to use social distancing protocols and should be properly cleaned and sanitized prior to their arrival.

## **Contest Officials**

- Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illness, handshakes, or other such issues. The responsibility of monitoring remains with school personnel.
- Cloth face coverings are permissible. If worn, they should be solid in color, all alike, and not contain any images or logos.
- Electronic whistles are permissible, but not likely to be available
- Officials should provide their own water, sports drinks, etc.

# **NFHS Football Rule Modifications**

## **BALL (Rule 1-3-2)**

- The ball holders should maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times during the contest.

## **FACE MASKS [Rules 1-5-1a, 1-5-3c(4)]**

- Cloth face coverings are permissible.
- Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.

## **GLOVES (Rule 1-5-2b)**

- Gloves are permissible but still must comply with Rule 1-5-2b by meeting either the NOCSAE Standard or the SFIA Specification.

## **CHARGED TIME-OUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES (Rules 2-6-2, 3-5-3, 3-5-8)**

- A single charged time-out may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length.
- The authorized conference for the charged time-out should take place between the 9-yard marks and not at the sideline for social-distancing purposes. (It would be permissible for no more than three coaches to be involved in this conference and for technology to be used.)
- Each game official and player should have their own beverage container brought out to them on the field.

## **INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING (Rule 3-5-7I)**

- The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.

## **FOOTBALL GAME OFFICIALS MANUAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **GAME OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**

- Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
- Cloth face coverings are permissible.
- Gloves are permissible.
- Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.

### **PREGAME CONFERENCE, COIN TOSS AND OVERTIME PROCEDURES**

- For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, umpire and one designated representative from each team.
- Coin toss should take place in the center of the field with designated individuals maintaining social distancing of 6 feet.

- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet while performing all pregame responsibilities with all officiating crew members, game administration staff, line-to-gain crew, clock operators, individuals handling the balls during the game and team personnel.
- For the overtime procedure, please use the same procedure as used at the start of the contest for the coin toss.