

Return to Competition for Competitive Athletics and Activities in Maine

Based on currently known information, the MPA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee believes that STRICT ADHERENCE by schools and teams to these guidelines and to their own COVID-19 prevention plans should provide a reasonably safe environment for return to both school-based athletics and community-based athletics. It is important to remember that all sports and activities carry a potential risk of injury and illness. The risk of contracting COVID-19 illness is in addition to the underlying risks of a given sport or activity. It is also important to note that participation in any competitive sport and/or activity is strictly voluntary for both the individuals and the schools.

Reducing exposure to respiratory droplets through physical distancing and face coverings, as well as increased hand hygiene and avoidance of shared and common touch items, remain the primary tools to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Because of the increased possibility of infection through droplets, vigorous exercise in closely confined spaces should be avoided.

Sports and activities present multiple challenges in the effective use of primary prevention strategies. These challenges include:

- Risk of exposure to the virus due to close physical proximity during sports and activities through participation in the sport activity itself, group seating, and group travel.
- Increased risk during intense and sustained physical contact whether purposeful or accidental.
- Increased projection of respiratory particles during cardiovascular activities, yelling or shouting as part of play, or common sneezing or coughing. This increase in projection of droplets can be up to 14 feet. While face coverings are recommended to reduce the risk of viral transmission between individuals, face coverings may not be compatible with many sports. Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during active play, with the exception of volleyball. Face coverings should be used when not engaged in active play (e.g. during coaching strategy sessions, in bench area).

Framework for Assessing the Risk of Sports and Recreation Activities

The risk of participating in sports and recreation activities is determined by a combination of (1) risk of transmission of COVID-19 inherent to each sport in terms of duration and proximity of contact (e.g. golf versus basketball) and (2) risk associated with the type of play (e.g., skill-building drills, within-team competition, competition between teams from different geographic areas).

Risk Level of Sport or Recreation Activity

Sports and recreation activities are categorized as lower risk, moderate risk, and higher risk.

Lower Risk: Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.

Examples: Individual running events, throwing events (javelin, shot put, discus), individual swimming, golf, weightlifting, alpine skiing, sideline cheer, single sculling, cross country running (with staggered starts)

Moderate Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants.

Examples: Basketball, volleyball, baseball*, softball*, soccer, water polo, gymnastics* (if equipment can't be sufficiently cleaned between competitors), ice hockey, field hockey, tennis*, swimming relays, pole vault*, high jump*, long jump*, girls lacrosse, crew with two or more rowers in shell, 7 on 7 football*

*Could potentially be considered "Lower Risk" with appropriate cleaning of equipment and use of masks by participants

Higher Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.

Examples: Wrestling, football, boy's lacrosse, competitive cheer, dance

High-Risk Populations

1. Vulnerable or high-risk populations require special consideration for sporting activities.
2. Individuals should discuss the risk of COVID-19 with their primary care provider to determine if sports activities are a safe option for them or their child.
3. The following populations are at higher risk. Higher risk should be considered regarding participation in sporting activities as a player or a coach (and in some settings, as a spectator):
 1. People 65 or older
 2. People who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility
 3. People of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled including:
 1. People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
 2. People who have serious heart conditions
 3. People who are immunocompromised: Many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment,

- smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications
 - 4. People with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
 - 5. People with diabetes
 - 6. People with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
 - 7. People with liver disease
4. Consider offering options for individuals at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, such as virtual coaching and in-home drills that limit their exposure risk.

General Guidance

1. Organizers of competitive sports and activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order on gathering size limits, currently set at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors.
 1. Players, coaches, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
 2. If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the six-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
2. Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
 1. Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during active practice or competition.
 2. Players are encouraged to wear face coverings when not engaged in active play (e.g. during coaching strategy sessions, in bench area).
 3. Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
 4. Face coverings should be worn by coaches, staff, officials, and spectators as much as possible.
 5. To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn in place of a whistle.
3. Require individuals to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.
 1. Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
 2. Space players at least 3-6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).

3. Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between themselves and other spectators as well as players.
4. Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.

Communicating COVID-19 Policies

1. Inform participants and spectators of your COVID-19 policies and procedures in advance, if possible, via website, newsletters, social media channels, etc.
 1. Coaches are encouraged to send a welcome email or call players and/or parents to inform them about actions that the program will take to protect players. During these calls, coaches should remind them to stay home if they are sick or have been around someone who is sick.
2. Place signage at entrances and throughout the venue alerting individuals to required gathering limits, physical distancing requirements, face covering policies, symptoms of COVID-19, and other health and hygiene reminders. The federal CDC has developed free, printable posters on these topics (see: [Print Resources](#); For communications resources specific to sporting activities see: [Considerations for Youth Sports](#)).
3. It is strongly recommended that program organizers and coaches remind players, spectators, and staff that if they are ill (e.g. have a fever or cough) they must not visit, train, or play. Signage reminding individuals of the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 is highly recommended.
4. Consider using announcements and/or recorded messages to communicate COVID-19 policies to individuals during their time at the venue, if applicable.

Operational Considerations

1. Risk of virus transmission decreases in outside environments. Indoor sports activities significantly increase exposure to respiratory droplets in the shared air space. Prioritize outdoor, as opposed to indoor, practice and play as much as possible. Vigorous exercise amongst team members from different households in closely confined spaces should be avoided, even if masked and physically distanced.
2. Provide training to coaches, officials, and staff on:
 1. hand hygiene
 2. physical distancing guidelines and expectations
 3. monitoring personal health
 4. proper wear, removal, and disposal of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
 5. laundering of face coverings and uniforms: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility, How to Disinfect: Laundry \(CDC\)](#)
 6. cleaning protocols, including how to safely and effectively use cleaning supplies: [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes \(CDC\)](#)

7. All coaches of fall sports are required, and officials, staff, and athletes, are strongly recommended to take the NFHS course on COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>
3. Conduct training virtually or ensure that physical distancing is maintained during training.
4. Youth activities require adult supervision to ensure careful attention to mitigation strategies.
5. Coaches, volunteers, and athletes must stay home if they are feeling ill or have any symptoms of COVID-19. Organizers/coaches should ask all staff and players (or guardians of players, if appropriate) to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms prior to practice or competition using either of the following approaches:
 1. Use an electronic or app-based self-screening form, such as the Coronavirus Self-Checker available on the [federal CDC's homepage](#).
 2. Self-screen using the following questions:
 1. Do you feel ill or have you been caring for someone who is ill?
 2. In the past two weeks, have you been exposed to anyone who tested positive for COVID-19?
6. Promote frequent handwashing or hand sanitizing with all participants engaged in sports activities. If soap and water are not readily available, use hand sanitizers with a minimum of 60% alcohol content. Handwashing and/or sanitizing should occur before and after the sport activities, and more often if the activity involves the use of shared objects.
 1. Providing a method to rinse hands before applying hand sanitizer is recommended for situations where participants may become dirty or dusty.
 2. Encourage visitors to be prepared to bring their own hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol for use in facilities where soap and water are not readily available.
7. Educate players about covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or their elbow. Discourage spitting.
8. For contact tracing purposes, to the extent practicable, organizers should maintain a record including contact information for athletes and coaches who have direct prolonged interaction.
 1. Based on current knowledge, a close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 48 hours before illness onset until the time the patient is isolated. Close contacts should stay home, maintain physical distancing, and self-monitor until 14 days from the last date of exposure.
9. Encourage players to wait in their cars until just before the beginning of a practice, warm-up, or game, instead of forming a group.
10. If practice or competition facilities must be shared, consider increasing the amount of time between practices and competitions to allow for one group to leave before another group enters the facility/venue. This will minimize interaction between individuals at points of ingress and egress and allow time for cleaning and disinfecting.

11. Avoid activities and events such as off-site competitions or excursions (e.g., watching a professional team compete).
12. Limit the number of players sitting in confined player seating areas (e.g., dugouts). Ensure 3-6 feet of physical distance by allowing players to spread out into spectator areas if more space is available.
13. Provide physical guides, such as signs and tape on floors or playing fields, to make sure that coaches and players remain at least 3-6 feet apart.

Facilities

1. Indoor sports activities significantly increase exposure to respiratory droplets in the shared air space. If indoor facilities are used, take steps to improve ventilation in the building.
 2. Increase the percentage of outdoor air (e.g., using economizer modes of HVAC operations) potentially as high as 100% (first verify compatibility with HVAC system capabilities for both temperature and humidity control as well as compatibility with outdoor/indoor air quality considerations).
 3. Increase total airflow supply to occupied spaces, if possible.
 4. Disable demand-control ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 5. Consider using natural ventilation (i.e., opening windows if possible and safe to do so) to increase outdoor air dilution of indoor air when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
2. Take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (for example, drinking fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown to minimize the risk of disease. Further guidance is available from the CDC (see: [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation](#)).
3. Consider restricting the use of water fountains to water bottle refill only with instruction for individuals to wash or sanitize hands after use.
4. Require any organizations that share or use the sports facilities to follow the considerations in this guidance.

Cleaning and Disinfection

1. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces on the field, court, or play surface at least daily, or between uses as much as possible. Use of shared objects and equipment (e.g., balls, bats, gymnastics equipment) should be limited and objects should be cleaned between uses if possible.
2. Identify a staff member or volunteer to ensure proper cleaning and disinfection of objects and equipment, particularly for any shared equipment or frequently touched surfaces.
3. Cleaning products should not be used near children, and staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling toxic fumes.
4. Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands after removing gloves.

5. Refer to the following documents for guidance on general cleaning and disinfection:
 1. [COVID-19 Prevention Checklist General Guidance \(State of Maine\)](#)
 2. [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility \(CDC\)](#)
 3. [Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes \(CDC\)](#)

Shared Objects

1. Participants should bring and use their own equipment when possible, or have equipment designated and labeled for individual use by the organization.
2. Discourage sharing of items, especially those that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect. Do not let players share towels, clothing (e.g. uniforms, pinnies), or other items they use to wipe their faces or hands.
3. Make sure there are adequate supplies of shared items to minimize sharing of equipment to the extent possible (e.g., protective gear, balls, bats, water bottles); otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of players at a time and clean and disinfect between use.
4. Keep each player's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, bags, or areas.
5. If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of a buffet or family-style meal. Avoid sharing food and utensils.
6. Water bottles should be labeled to avoid cross-contamination.

Cohorting Players and Coaches

1. Keep players together in small, stable groups with dedicated coaches or staff, and make sure that each group of players and coach avoid mixing with other groups as much as possible.
2. Teams might consider having the same group of players stay with the same coach or having the same group of players rotate among coaches.
3. Consider staging within-team scrimmages instead of playing games with other teams to minimize exposure among players and teams.

Transportation

1. Transportation to and from sports activities require attention because of increased risk of proximity and poor ventilation.
2. Limit the use of carpools or van pools. When riding in a vehicle to a sports event, encourage players to ride with persons living in their same household. Carpooling with individuals from different households is not recommended.
3. If carpooling with individuals outside one's household group is necessary, increase ventilation in the vehicle, and all riders must wear a facial covering, and use hand sanitizer.

4. If buses are used, spread individuals out to the extent possible, increase the airflow with open windows if weather permits, require use of face coverings, and provide hand sanitizer for use when entering and exiting the bus.

References

Maine Department of Economic and Community Development – Phase 2 Community Sports <https://www.maine.gov/decd/checklists/community-sports>

The National Federation of State High School Associations – Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf



General Recommendations for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS (APPLY TO ALL SPORTS):

- Individuals (student-athletes, coaches, officials, and other athletic personnel) should complete a personal health screening daily.
 - Any individual showing symptoms or is sick, must stay home.
 - Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
 - Adhere to school/organization adopted plans if you begin to show symptoms.
- Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Make sure to educate all participants on the importance of washing hands or using hand sanitizer before, during, and after competitions.
- Ensure that facilities have been properly sanitized and have hand sanitizer and disposable masks readily available for practices and contests.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment including balls. (Please use recommendations by the ball manufacturer)
- Social distancing should be maintained, where feasible. No hugging, high fives, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
 - Social distancing should be maintained on all sidelines.
 - Outdoor sports may need to extend bench areas to permit social distancing. Indoor sports may need to use bleachers or multiple levels of seating to ensure social distancing.
 - Athletes are not required to wear face coverings while actively engaged in workouts and competition that prevent the wearing of face coverings, but must wear face coverings when on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. and anytime 3-6 feet of social distancing is not possible. Volleyball, as an indoor sport, must have athletes, coaches, and spectators, wear facemasks at all times.
 - Coaches, staff, and spectators (if permitted) must wear face coverings, unless they meet the face mask exemption rule adopted by the State of Maine.
- Athletes and coaches should bring and use their own water bottle. Each team should have a hydration plan and ability to provide water to student-athletes and coaches in a safe manner should they not have their own water bottle. Coordinate with visiting teams to ensure that they have safe access to water for their participants.
- If a positive COVID-19 case is determined, follow their school safety plans, Department of Health, CDC, and local health guidelines in determining the plan of action.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES/COACHES/HOST ADMINISTRATORS:

- Teams should consider making each student responsible for their own supplies. Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing and not share clothing. Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- All schools, teams and facilities **MUST** have a well-rehearsed Emergency Action Plan in place for every sport and every venue prior to any event taking place.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Student-athletes should keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition. If the mouth guard is taken out, proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before doing so.
- Student-athletes are encouraged to develop healthy habits including, but not limited to, a balanced diet, adequate sleep, and proper hydration.
 - Healthy eating and attention to hydration is especially important for student-athletes to enhance training capacity and reduce the risk of illness and injury.
- All participants should bring and use their own water bottle.
 - High school athletes are at increased risk for dehydration. It is important that they drink enough fluid before, during and after practice and competition.
- Coaches should communicate all guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Coaches should consider conducting workouts in “pods” of the same students, always training and rotating together in practice to ensure less exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Coaches must keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Coaches should limit game day squad sizes for social distancing purposes.
- Coaches should make sure the team brings their own medical supplies.
- Parents/Guardians should monitor their children of any symptoms prior to any sporting activities. Children who are sick or showing symptoms must stay home. (If there is doubt stay home).
- Parents/Guardians, along with the coaches, should assess levels of risk of individual athletes who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.
- Parents/Guardians should assist their child in disinfecting their clothing and equipment after each game or practice.
- Parents/Guardians should inform coaches if the student-athlete has been exposed to someone who is known to have COVID-19.



MPA Golf Committee

Golf Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports has labeled the sport of cross country as a “Lower Risk” activity. “Lower Risk” activities are those that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors. The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 3-6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, officials, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order (https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents) on gathering size limits.
- Players, coaches, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.

- If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 3-6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
 - Face coverings must always be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators.
 - Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between themselves and others.
- **FACE COVERINGS**
 - Face coverings are permitted by any athlete choosing to wear one during activity.
 - Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
 - Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during high intensity play.
 - Players are encouraged to wear face coverings when not engaged in active play (e.g. during coaching strategy sessions, in bench area, or any indoor activity).
 - Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
 - Face coverings must always be worn by coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.
 - To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
- **SCREENING**
 - It should be the understanding of all teams involved that student-athletes have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, prior to participation.
 - All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.
- **SCHEDULING**
 - Schedules should be made up of regional opponents.
 - There shall be no minimum number of matches required.
- **COMPETITION CONSIDERATIONS:**
 - Schools must adhere to local course competition rules in relation to COVID-19 accommodations.
 - Social distancing of at least 6 feet (3 feet with a mask) should always be maintained. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
 - Normal golf groups (twosomes, threesomes and/or foursomes) are permitted.
 - Limit use of golf shop and retail operations to maintain social distancing guidelines. A mask must be worn prior to entering a pro shop or clubhouse for any reason. If social distancing cannot be maintained, golf shop access should be prohibited prior to the competition.
 - To limit congestion, limiting field size and starting from one tee only is recommended. Also, consider the expanded spacing of starting times (10 minutes apart for groups of 3 and 12 minutes apart for groups of 4) to match the course policy on tee time intervals. Consider keeping players in the vicinity of the putting green to minimize congregation on the first tee.
 - Team meetings must be held outside and employ proper distancing measures.
 - Congregating after the round needs to be minimized and monitored by all to ensure proper distancing.

- Players should not touch nor remove the flagstick at any time. Should a flagstick need to be adjusted (i.e. leaning the wrong way) a putter or towel should be used to adjust the flagstick. If a player accidentally removes a flagstick, there is no penalty, and the player must replace the flagstick and sanitize prior to playing their next stroke. If a player makes a stroke with the flagstick out of the hole, it will result in a two-stroke penalty. If a player does this more than one time, then the player will be disqualified.
- Bunker rakes and ball washers should not be on the course. If they are on the course, then they should not be used. In the case of a bunker, the players will be allowed to take a preferred lie of one club length no nearer the hole and remain in the bunker. The preferred lie in the bunker is a lift, clean and place (not drop). The player cannot build a lie in the bunker and should try to smooth out footprints only upon exit with one's foot.
- Tees, pencils and ball-markers and sharpies will not be available. Players must bring their own equipment and food/beverage as needed. Do not plan on water provided by the course on the course as water must be a refill station only. Please ensure players are properly hydrated as conditions warrant.
- Sanitized paper cards will be available but not exchanged. Players will verbally agree on the hole-by-hole scoring and that verbal agreement will act as a signature. A score is official once the players have left the scoring area (which may be a designated area determined by the coaches).
- Electronic scoring is allowable for regular season competition. The exchange of scorecards by players is discouraged and verbal confirmation of scores may be accepted.
- To limit congestion, it is recommended that a window of time be established for players to access practice facilities before their round based on their starting times.
- It is recommended that practice facilities not be used after the round and that all players be encouraged to depart immediately when finished.
- No one will be allowed to ride in a cart (except coaches). If a player must ride, then the cart must be sanitized, and the rider must ride alone. Another player or competitor cannot put their bag on the cart and walk.
- Ensure coaches and courses have a foul weather plan which could lead to congregating, for example, a thunder storm or any sudden departure from the golf course.



MPA Cross Country Committee Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports has labeled the sport of cross country as a “Lower Risk” activity. “Lower Risk” activities are those that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors. The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

CROSS COUNTRY RULE CONSIDERATIONS

- **PRE-RACE**
 - Widen courses to 6 feet at their narrowest point.
 - Course sections where runners potentially overlap should maintain enough width for 3-6 of spacing between athletes.
 - Meet directors should designate areas for team tents that are at least 20 feet apart. Participants should not congregate under the tent and should maintain appropriate spacing.
 - Runners should wear face coverings to the start line of the race. Runners should wear a disposable mask that can be discarded prior to starting or wear a cloth mask that they can carry with them throughout the race. Trash receptacles should be available at the starting line for athletes to discard face coverings, preventing having to pick them up off the ground by another individual. Athletes should not wear warm up clothing to the starting line; they should come to the starting line ready to run.
 - Divide the starting line to accommodate spacing based on the number of runners. Waves should be stationed 6 feet apart.
 - Coaches are responsible for picking up race packets prior to race. Face coverings should be worn when picking up packets.

- **RACE**

- Cross country meets should consider using staggered, wave, or interval starts.
- Pack running should be discouraged and runners should strive to maintain social distance throughout the race.
- The finish corral should be widened to encourage distancing. Runners should make an effort to not collapse at the finish line. Runners should disperse immediately after they finish and return to their team site.
- The maximum number of competitors, race workers, coaches, and spectators at any regular season meet should be under the per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.

- **POST-RACE**

- Runners should disperse immediately after they finish and return to their team area and put on a face mask.
- Eliminate hugs, handshakes, high fives, and fist bumps after the meet.

- **DISTANCING**

- Social distancing of at least 3-6 feet should always be maintained. No hugging, hand shaking, high fives, or fist bumps are allowed.
- Race officials should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among runners.

- **FACE COVERINGS**

- Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
- Face coverings are not currently recommended for athletes during high intensity practice or competition.
- Athletes are encouraged to wear face coverings when not engaged in the race.
- Face coverings should be worn by coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.
- To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.

- **SCHEDULING**

- Schools are encouraged to schedule meets that will keep participants under the gathering guidelines.
- Regional scheduling is encouraged. Individual athletic conferences will be responsible for creating league schedules.

- **FACILITY**

- When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from spectators.
- Medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space for if an athlete becomes sick during the meet.
- Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations.

- **VISITING TEAM**

- Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner
 - Come ready to compete dressed in uniform
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies
 - This should include back up face coverings and gloves.

- Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
- These jugs/refill station should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
- Home team medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during competition.

- **SCREENING**

- It should be the understanding of all teams involved in the race that student-athletes have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
- All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.

- **STUDENTS**

- Students are responsible for their own supplies.
- Athletes should wear their own appropriate workout clothing - they should not share clothing. All workout clothing should be washed immediately upon returning home.
- Athletes should immediately tell coaches when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted.
- Athletes must bring their own water bottles.

- **SPECTATORS**

The approval of spectators, if allowed, must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order. (https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents) on gathering size limits.
- Runners, coaches, race officials/workers, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
- Masks should always be worn by coaches, staff, race officials/workers, and spectators.
- Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between each other and runners.

- **OFFICIALS**

- Bring hand sanitizer and wash hands regularly.
- Follow social distancing guidelines:
 - Pre and post meet conferences
 - Clerking at the start line
 - Tabulations and posting of results
- Do not shake hands.
- Official personnel should always wear cloth face coverings.
- Social distancing guidelines should be employed during the meet for officials when interacting with coaches and student-athletes.



MPA Field Hockey Committee

Field Hockey Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS, along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports, has labeled the sport of field hockey as a “Moderate Risk” activity. “Moderate Risk” activities are those that involve intermittent contact, but with protective equipment or mitigating measures in place may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants. (e.g., wearing masks, modifying play to maintain 3 to 6 feet of physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting). The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 3-6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order (https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents) on gathering size limits.

- Players, coaches, cheerleaders, officials, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
 - If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 3-6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
 - Face coverings must always be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators.
 - Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between themselves and others.
- **FACE COVERINGS**
 - Face coverings are permitted by any athlete choosing to wear one during activity.
 - Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
 - Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during high intensity play.
 - Players must wear face coverings when not engaged in active play (e.g. during coaching strategy sessions, in bench area, or any indoor activity).
 - Unless the governing body for a sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
 - Face coverings must always be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators.
 - To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
- **SCHEDULING**
 - Schedules should be made up of regional opponents.
 - There shall be no minimum number of games required.
- **FACILITY & PLAYING AREA**
 - When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from the public.
 - Home team medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space for if an athlete becomes sick during play.
 - Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations at the scorer's table and each team bench.
- **VISITING TEAM**
 - Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner.
 - Provide their own balls for warmups.
 - Come ready to play the contest dressed in uniform.
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies.
 - All students-athletes must bring their own water vessel clearly labeled with their name.
 - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
 - These jugs/refill stations should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
 - Designated space for visiting teams may be available at schools that have protocols in place for sanitizing those areas.
 - Visiting teams will be briefed by the home team medical staff on protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during play.

- **SCREENING**
 - It should be the understanding of both teams involved in the contest that student-athletes have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
 - All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.

- **TEAM BENCHES**
 - Team areas may be expanded for players only toward the end line to promote social distancing.
 - Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3-6 feet.
 - All participants and coaches shall always wear face covering while on or in the bench area.
 - Mask may be removed while hydrating so long as the person hydrating is 3-6 feet from anyone else in/on the bench area

- **PRE-GAME CONFERENCE**
 - Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.
 - Move the location of the pregame conference away from the team benches and into the center of the field. All individuals should be masked and maintain a social distance of 3-6 feet during the conference.
 - Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference. Coaches and captains can use a good sportsmanship wave.
 - No pregame introductions. Send players to their field positions for the start of play.

- **BALL**
 - The balls should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest.
 - 3 to 4 balls should be available for rotation into the game on each sideline.

- **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS**
 - Student-athletes should keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition. If the mouth guard is taken out, proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before doing so.

- **SUBSTITUTIONS**
 - Substitutes should remain socially distant from the team benches, head table, and opposing team substitutes.
 - The number of substitutes in the substitution area is limited to one athlete per team. The use of a visual field marking such as an "X" (or other markings) in the substitution box is encouraged so that substitutes from the opposing team will remain 3-6 feet away from each other.

- **OFFICIALS' TABLE**
 - Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended distance 3-6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel may need to find an alternative location.

- All scorers table personnel must wear masks.
- Scorer's table shall have its own hand sanitizer/sanitizing station.
- If a member of either team is carded, the use of chairs is discouraged. The player should take a knee and remain socially distant from the substitution area as well as the head table.

- **IN-GAME MODIFICATIONS**
 - Coaches are encouraged to hold pre-game, quarter, half-time and post-game meetings socially distant. Masks are required for these meetings.
 - The timer will implement a 30-second warning horn to be used before the start of the game, each quarter, and during overtime procedures.
 - An additional minute is recommended between the first and second quarter, as well as the third and fourth quarter, to allow for the players to access their water bottles and masks before meeting the coach. An additional minute is recommended between the first and second overtimes for the same reasons.
 - Avoid touching the ball with your hands whenever possible. The use of the stick or the feet should be used to move the ball during the stoppage of play and on the sidelines.

- **EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES**
 - Cloth face coverings are permitted.
 - Gloves are permitted.
 - Participants may not share any personal belongings.

- **POST GAME**
 - No post-game shaking of hands. Teams should conduct a good sportsmanship wave to opponents following the conclusion of the game.



MPA Volleyball Committee Volleyball Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports has labeled the sport of volleyball as a “Moderate Risk” activity. “Moderate Risk” activities are those that involve intermittent contact, but with protective equipment or mitigating measures in place may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants. (e.g., wearing masks, modifying play to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting). The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 3-6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators, if allowed, must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order (https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents) on gathering size limits..
- With a limit of 50 people for indoor activities, teams are limited to 20 team members at each match.
- Players, coaches, cheerleaders, officials, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
- If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 3-6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
- Face coverings should be worn by players, coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.

- Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between themselves and other spectators as well as players.
- **FACE COVERINGS**
 - Face coverings must always be worn by players, coaches, staff, officials, and spectators while in the gym.
 - Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
 - To facilitate the use of a face coverings, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
- **SCHEDULING**
 - Schedules should be made up of regional opponents.
 - There shall be no minimum number of games required.
- **FACILITY & PLAYING AREA**
 - When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from the public.
 - Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations at the scorer's table and each team bench.
- **VISITING TEAM**
 - Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner.
 - Provide their own volleyballs for warmups.
 - Come ready to play the contest dressed in uniform.
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies.
 - This should include back up face coverings and gloves.
 - All student-athletes must bring their own water vessel clearly labeled with their name.
 - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
 - These jugs/refill station should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
 - Home teams must provide an empty, sanitized ball cart for visiting team's balls.
 - Visiting teams may elect to come with their own ball cart but must properly store away when not in use.
 - Designated space for visiting teams may be available at schools that have protocols in place for sanitizing those areas.
 - Visiting teams will be briefed by the home team medical staff on protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during play.
- **SCREENING**
 - It should be the understanding of both teams involved in the contest that student-athletes have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
 - All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.

- **TEAM BENCHES**

- Suspend the protocol of teams switching sides/benches between sets.
 - Home team will select their bench prior to the match and remain on the same side for the duration of the match.
 - In the event there is a clear and distinct disadvantage, teams may switch sides, observing all social distancing protocols. Officials will determine if a disadvantage is present.
- Team areas may be expanded to promote social distancing outside of playable areas.
- Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3-6 feet. Distances should be marked on the floor.
- Schools should maximize the number of bench seats for each team (seats may be arranged in such a way that one is behind the other).
- Participants beyond the number of seats given by the home team may utilize the bleacher space for additional seating.
- All participants and coaches must wear face coverings.
 - Masks may be removed while hydrating, so long as the person hydrating is 3-6 feet from anyone else in/on the bench area.

- **PRE-MATCH CONFERENCE**

- Suspend roster submission at the pre match conference. Rosters are submitted directly to the officials' table before the 10-minute mark.
- Pre-game match conference
 - Limit attendees to one coach from each team and the first referee.
 - Move the location of the pre-match conference to center court.
 - All individuals maintain a social distance of 3-6 feet.
- Coin toss will still take place but must take place in accordance with guidelines outlined above for pre-match conference. First Referee shall be the only one to touch the coin or object flipped.
- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference. Coaches and captains can use a good sportsmanship wave.
- No prematch introductions. Send players to their positions for the start of play.

- **SUBSTITUTIONS**

- Substitution Procedures (2-1-7, 10-2-1, 10-2-3, 10-2-4)
 - Maintain social distancing of 3-6 feet between the second referee and the player and substitute by encouraging substitutions to occur within the substitution zone closer to the attack line.
 - All substituted shall sanitize their hands prior to entering the playing area.

- **OFFICIALS' TABLE**

- Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer, libero tracker and timer with a recommended distance 3-6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) and may need to find an alternative location.
- All scorer's table personnel must wear a mask.
- Scorer's table shall have its own hand sanitizer/sanitizing station.

- **IN-GAME MODIFICATIONS**

- Suspend the protocol of teams switching benches between sets.
- Face coverings must be worn by players, coaches, staff, officials, and spectators always.
- Athletes, coaches, game personnel should sanitize hands in between every set and when entering or exiting the playing area.
- Athletes involved in the contest should be the only ones to handle in game equipment (game balls).
 - Use of a three-ball rotation system should be considered for matches.

- This would allow for periodic sanitation of the balls in accordance with the ball manufacturers recommendations.
 - Ball in play should be rotated when a change in team serve happens or when someone outside of court players touches the ball.
- If a ball rolls past a sidelines judge or fan, those individuals should be instructed, during the pre-match, to not handle the game balls
- Participants must socially distance whenever possible.
 - Schools/coaches should make the effort to eliminate handshakes and contact between same team players.
 - Coaches are encouraged to hold pre-game, quarter, half-time and post-game meetings socially distant.
 - Schools/coaches should instruct players to not “huddle” after a scoring play. Players should immediately return to their position following a point.
 - Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
- **CONSIDERATION FOR VOLLEYBALL OFFICIALS**
 - Please review the General Considerations for Officials.
 - Social distancing guidelines should be employed during the contest for officials when interacting with coaches and student-athletes.
 - Officials are permitted to use electronic whistles but must be aware of signaling difficulties when using both hands and the increased chance of inadvertent whistles.
 - Use of a three-ball rotation system should be considered for matches.
 - This would allow for periodic sanitation of the balls.



MPA Soccer Committee

Soccer Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS Return to Play document lists soccer as “moderate risk.” Moderate Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that can’t be cleaned between participants.

The Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports has labeled the sport of soccer as a “High Risk” activity. “High Risk” are sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 3-6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators, if allowed, must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's

Executive Order (https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents) on gathering size limits.

- Players, coaches, cheerleaders, officials, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
- If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 3-6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
- Face coverings must always be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators.
- Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between themselves and others.

- **FACE COVERINGS**

- Face coverings are permitted by any athlete choosing to wear one during activity.
- Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
- Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during high intensity play.
- Players are encouraged to wear face coverings when not engaged in active play (e.g. during coaching strategy sessions, in bench area, or any indoor activity).
- Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
- Face coverings must always be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators.
- To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.

- **SCHEDULING**

- Schedules should be made up of regional opponents.
- There shall be no minimum number of games required.

- **FACILITY & PLAYING AREA**

- When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from the public.
- Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations at the scorer's table and each team bench.

- **VISITING TEAM**

- Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner.
 - Provide their own soccer balls for warmups.
 - Come ready to play the contest dressed in uniform.
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies.
- All students-athletes must bring their own water vessel clearly labeled with their name.
 - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
 - These jugs/refill stations should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
- Designated space for visiting teams may be available at schools that have protocols in place for sanitizing those areas.
- Visiting teams will be briefed by the home team medical staff on protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during play.

- **SCREENING**
 - It should be the understanding of both teams involved in the contest that student-athletes have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
 - All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.

- **TEAM BENCHES**
 - Team areas may be expanded for players only toward the end line to promote social distancing.
 - Limit bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3-6 feet.
 - Schools should maximize the number of bench seats for each team (seats may be arranged in such a way that one is behind the other.)
 - All participants and coaches shall always wear face covering while on or in the bench area.
 - Mask may be removed while hydrating so long as the person hydrating is 3-6 feet from anyone else in/on the bench area.

- **PRE-MATCH CONFERENCE**
 - Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.
 - Move the location of the pregame conference away from the team benches and into the center of the field. All individuals should be masked and maintain a social distance of 3-6 feet during the conference.
 - Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference. Coaches and captains can use a good sportsmanship wave.
 - No pregame introductions. Send players to their field positions for the start of play.

- **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS**
 - Student-athletes should keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition. If the mouth guard is taken out, proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before doing so.

- **OFFICIALS' TABLE**
 - Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended distance 3-6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel may need to find an alternative location.
 - All scorers table personnel must wear masks.
 - Scorer's table shall have its own hand sanitizer/sanitizing station.

- **BALL RUNNERS**
 - Ball runners must always wear masks. Encourage social distancing of 3-6 feet. Additional game balls may be placed around the outside of the field to limit contact with the ball. Ball runners are encouraged to use their feet to return balls to designated areas. Teams are responsible for retrieving balls on the bench side of the field.

- **SUBSTITUTIONS**

- Substitutes should remain socially distant from the team benches, head table, and opposing team substitutes.
- The number of substitutes in the substitution area is limited to one athlete per team. The use of a visual field marking such as an "X" (or other markings) in the substitution box is encouraged so that substitutes from the opposing team will remain 3-6 feet away from each other.

- **IN-GAME PROCEDURE**

- Coaches and all bench personnel must always wear masks during the contest.
- Athletes involved in vigorous activity on the field during play will be the only ones exempt from wearing masks.
- Athletes, coaches, and game personnel should sanitize hands and game balls after the first natural stoppage following the 20:00 mark of both halves and when entering or exiting the playing area.
- If a game ball is touched by an outside person, that ball should be removed and sanitized prior to reusing.
- Prohibit unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.

- **SOCCER SPECIFIC RULE/GAME MODIFICATIONS**

- Stop the clock at the first natural stoppage after the 20:00 mark of each half to allow for sanitization of hands, game balls and water break.
- **Slide tackling** is suspended if players are within 6 feet of another player, which is to avoid tripping over or falling on top of one another. Any slide tackle within 6 feet of an opponent will result in an indirect free kick for a dangerous play. It is allowed outside of 6 feet because it is a legal method of tackling a ball where you can slide to save it from going out of bounds.
- **Throw-ins and corner kicks** will have restrictions to help prevent large groups from pushing and shoving to play the ball. At the time of a throw in or corner kick into the penalty box (including the arc at top of the penalty box) there may only be 5 offensive players and 5 defensive players plus the goalie in the penalty box at the time of the throw or kick. Other players may enter the box once the throw or kick has been played.
- On all **indirect and direct free kicks**, players must reasonably remain at least 3 feet from each other (an arm's length). This eliminates the traditional wall and jostling for positioning in front of a goalkeeper. By rule they will need to provide 10 yards from the ball prior to the kick.
- The **drop-ball restart** has been suspended, and the referee will instead award an indirect free kick to whichever team is deemed to be in possession (must follow 2020 NFHS rule change).



MPA Football Committee

Football Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS, along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports, has labeled the sport of football as a “High Risk” activity. “High Risk” activities are those that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

- **DISTANCING**

- Space players at least 3-6 feet apart whenever possible (e.g., during warmup, skill building activities, simulation drills, when explaining drills or the rules of the game).
- Organizers should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among players, coaches, umpires/referees, and spectators.
- Require individuals to maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance from individuals who are not part of their household group whenever possible.

- **SPECTATORS/CAPACITY**

The approval of spectators must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order (https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents) on gathering size limits.
- Players, coaches, cheerleaders, officials, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.

- If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 3-6 foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
 - Face coverings should always be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators.
 - Spectators must maintain 3-6 feet of physical distance between themselves and others.
- **FACE COVERINGS**
 - Cloth face coverings are permitted.
 - Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
 - Face coverings are not currently recommended for players during active practice or competition.
 - Players are encouraged to wear face coverings when not engaged in active play (e.g. during coaching strategy sessions, in bench area).
 - Unless the governing body for your sport has a specific recommendation regarding plastic face shields, do not wear them in place of a face covering given potential safety risks.
 - Face coverings must be worn by coaches, staff, and spectators at all times.
 - To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
 - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and made of a clear material without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
- **SCHEDULING**
 - Schedules should be made up of regional opponents.
 - There shall be no minimum number of games required.
 - Include a three-week preseason.
- **FACILITY & PLAYING AREA**
 - When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators in an effort to separate the teams from the general public.
 - Home team medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space for if an athlete becomes sick during play.
- **VISITING TEAM**
 - Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner
 - Provide their own footballs for warmups
 - Come ready to play the contest dressed in uniform
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies
 - This should include back up face coverings and gloves.
 - All student-athletes must bring their own water vessel clearly labeled with their name.
 - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
 - These jugs/refill station should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
 - Designated space for visiting teams may be available at schools that have protocols in place for sanitizing those areas.

- Home team medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during play.
 - Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations at each team bench, which eliminates the possibility of teams showing up without any.
- **SCREENING**
 - It should be the understanding of both teams involved in the contest that student-athletes have been screened for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
 - All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete a self-screening as well.
- **TEAM BOX**
 - The team box will be expanded on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for players only) for more to social distancing for the teams.
 - Limit sideline personnel to observe social distancing of 3-6 feet.
 - Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.
 - All coaches and staff must wear a face covering while on the sidelines.
 - Mask may be removed while hydrating so long as the person hydrating is 3-6 feet from anyone else in/on the sideline area.
- **PREGAME, QUARTER, HALF-TIME**
 - Water bottles are not allowed on the field of play and should be used off the playing surface.
 - Coaches are encouraged to hold pre-game, quarter, half-time and post-game meetings socially distanced.
 - No post-game handshake.
 - Time may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second, third and fourth periods, timeouts, following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.
- **BALL**
 - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
 - 3 to 4 balls should be available for rotation into the game on each sideline.
 - The ball holders should always maintain social distancing of 3-6 feet during the contest.
- **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS**
 - Student-athletes should keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition. If the mouth guard is taken out proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before doing so.
 - The mouth guard should be attached to the helmets facemask to reduce the handling of the portion inserted in the mouth.
- **GLOVES**
 - Gloves are permitted but must comply with the NOCSAE Standard.

- **IN-GAME MODIFICATION**

- For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, and one designated representative from each team. Only the referee should handle the coin.
- Coin toss should take place in the center of the field with designated individuals maintaining social distancing of 3-6 feet.
- No handshakes prior to and following the coin toss.
- For the overtime procedure, the same procedure will be followed as used at the start of the contest for the coin toss.
- Coaches must wear their mask during the contest.
- Athletes involved in physical activity on the field of play will be exempt from wearing mask.
- All athletes must social distance whenever possible.
 - Encourage the minimization of offensive and defensive huddles and encourage coaching staffs to utilize other methods of communication with player (such as signals, cards, signs, etc.) to minimize grouping.
 - Physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs are discouraged.
- A charged time-out may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length specifically to allow more time for re-hydration.
 - For social-distancing purposes the authorized conference for the charged time-out should take place between the numbers and the hash marks (not at the sideline). It would be permissible for more than one coach to be involved in this conference.

- **EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES**

- Cloth face coverings are permitted.
- Gloves are permitted.
- Participants may not share any personal belongings.

- **POST-GAME**

- No post-game shaking of hands. Teams should conduct a good sportsmanship wave to opponents following the conclusion of the game.



General Considerations for Officials

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

These considerations are meant to cover officials in all sports while keeping in mind that protocols may be different in each sport and adjustments may need to be made.

OFFICIALS' GUIDELINES WHEN RETURNING TO OFFICIATE:

Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring obligation remains with the coaching staff and administration.

CONTACT THE HOST SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION:

- Contact should be made with administrator of the event leading up to the contest about (1) host expectations, (2) to determine where you should enter the venue and (3) to obtain other information that the event staff may want to communicate to each other prior to your arrival.
 - Officiating crews should designate one crew member to contact the event host and provide information to other members of the crew.
 - Request separate and secured parking areas away from other participants.
 - Request hand sanitizer be available at scorer's table, if applicable, and use it between periods and during time outs. (Officials are encouraged to bring their own in the event none is available.)
 - Conversations should occur with the host administration regarding the size of changing areas or locker rooms to ensure social distancing can occur.
 - Whenever possible officials should come to contests fully dressed in uniform.

GENERAL OFFICIAL GUIDELINES:

- Officials should complete a personal health screening daily.
- Any individual showing symptoms or is sick, must stay home.
- Upon conclusion of the contest, leave the contest area and do not interact with others.
- Officials must pay special attention to playing rules that require distances between players during play.
- Reminders should be stressed during the pregame conference for situations that involve hygiene (spitting, etc.).
- Be aware of the location of medical personnel while you are on school property.
- Limit the exchanging of documents between yourself and others.
- Once the contest begins, avoid conversations within 3-6 feet with others.

- Wash/sanitize your hands frequently.
- Officials are not required to wear face coverings while officiating a contest, but they are permitted. Coverings must be worn when entering the host site and while inspecting the field/court prior to the contest unless social distancing can be maintained while doing so.
- Officials' Uniforms and Equipment.
 - Electronic whistles are permissible.
 - Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside.
 - Be aware of the increased risk of inadvertent whistles.
 - Face coverings by participants are permitted.
 - Gloves may be worn by contestants.
 - Bring your own towels and hygiene materials. Do not share them with others.

GAME DAY:

- Complete a personal health screening on the day of your contest. If you feel sick – STAY HOME. Notify the event administrator, your partner(s) and the assignor to let them know.
- Upon arrival at the host site and throughout the contest, wash and sanitize your hands frequently.
- When traveling to and from a contest with other officials the use of a mask should be considered.
- Arrive at the contest ready to officiate, there will not be changing rooms available.
- Do not share uniforms, towels, apparel, and equipment.
- Maintain social distancing of 3-6 feet, whenever feasible, including while in the locker room and/or on the court/field.
- Bring your own water bottle or rehydration beverages.
- Use a mask when communicating verbally within 3-6 feet of others.
- In an effort to maintain social distancing, officiating positions may need to be changed in a manner that are not necessarily in conformance with standard officiating mechanics.

PREGAME CONFERENCE:

- Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team, while maintaining social distance.
- Pre-contest official crew meetings should be held outside when possible and where social distancing is more easily accomplished.
- Coin Toss – should involve only the Head Referee (wearing a face covering) and 1 captain and head coach from each team. Only the head official should handle the coin.
- Move the location of the pregame conference away from the sideline. All individuals should maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
- No handshakes are permitted.
- Maintain social distancing while performing all pregame responsibilities.
- Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3-6 feet.
- Encourage social distancing of 3-6 feet between substitutes and teammate(s).

OFFICIALS' TABLE:

- Limit the table to essential personnel, including the home team scorer and timer, with a recommended distance of 3-6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) may need to find an alternative location. Space availability at the table is a variable in determining the number of individuals permitted at the officials' table.

PREGAME AND POSTGAME CEREMONY:

- No pregame introductions should be made.

- No postgame shaking hands. A good sportsmanship wave may be utilized.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Training
 - Review current and past year rule and case books.
 - Attend online and in-person meetings to review the rules for the coming year.
 - Start physical training using online video or complete skills alone. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should be cleared by your medical provider prior to initiating an exercise program.
- Positive COVID-19 Test
 - You should notify the administration where you officiated and partners of those contests.
- It is recommended that all officials view the COVID-19 course that is available on the NFHS Learn website.