



NJSIAA/NFHS 2020 Football Considerations

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Football Rules Committee & NJSIAA staff offers this document as reasonable modifications to the football rules for the 2020 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

OFFICIALS

Highly Suggested Provisions:

- Officials should bring their own marked beverage(s) and snacks.
- Officials should not share uniforms, towels apparel or equipment. Electronic whistles are permissible.
- Cloth or surgical face coverings, which cover the mouth and nose are recommended for individuals that can wear them without significant impact upon breathing. Gloves are permissible.
- Officials should sanitize their hands after inspecting footballs, casts, or braces.
- The officials handling the yard sticks during a measurement should sanitize their hands following the completion of the measurement.
- It is recommended that officials retrieve their own bean bags and penalty flags after they have been dropped.
- Officials will arrive to the site or facility dressed in their uniforms. A designated location should be reserved and provided for game officials.
- Officials' pregame meetings shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.
- Officials shall not engage in pregame/postgame handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches, or administrators.
- The coin toss (including overtime) will be conducted with only the referee, the umpire and a single captain from each team, maintaining physical distancing and without handshakes prior to and following the coin toss. NO MEDIA.
- Officials shall not physical contact players during the contest, including players that appear to be injured or ill.



Highly Suggested Provisions for Officials continued:

- NJSIAA Sportsmanship Statement to be read to each team during warm-ups in each team's respective endzone.
- Officials will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the officials should avoid speaking face-to-face.
- Only one official will meet with the timer before the start of the game, while maintaining proper physical distancing.
- When providing an explanation of a ruling to a head coach, the referee will meet the coach between the sideling and the 9-yard marks, away from others located on the sideline. One other official may be present, but physical distancing should be practiced by all involved.

SITE MANAGEMENT

Rules Modifications (Football):

- **TEAM BOX (Rule 1-2-3g)**
 - The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for players only) for more physical distancing space for the teams.
 - Increase the sideline belt from 2 yards to 4 yards when feasible to give officials more space.
- **PRESS BOX**
 - Limit to essential personnel which includes timer, announcer with a recommended distance that is based on local health department and CDC guidelines between individuals and all are expected to wear face coverings. All media are to be located in the endzone 2 yards behind the end lines and not on the sidelines or in the pressbox. All media must maintain social distance and wear a face covering.
- **BALL (Rule 1-3-2)**
 - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer. Balls must be sanitized prior to the game, between quarters and at halftime.



- **FACE MASKS (Rule 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.
- **FACE COVERINGS – The CDC affirmed that face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 that could reduce the spread of the disease, particularly when used universally within communities. This most recent research adds to a growing body of evidence that face coverings help prevent the person wearing a face covering from spreading COVID-10 to others.**
 - Coaches are required to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the coach's health.
 - Student-athletes are required to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the student's health, the student is in extreme heat outdoors, the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
 - Spectators and media personnel are required to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
 - Officials are required to wear face coverings, unless doing so would inhibit the official's health, or the official is in extreme heat outdoors, or the official is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- Lavatory facilities must be made available to officials prior to a contest and at half time.
- Only players in uniform, coaches, team attendants, medical and supervisory personnel allowed on the sidelines.
- It is required that all officials, non-players, team attendants, medical personnel on the field on sideline during a contest wear a face covering.
- School athletic directors and officials should communicate with one another well in advance of the contest so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each. Failure to discuss the details may create greater conflicts at the date/time of the contest.
- Officials should be provided a designated parking area apart from the public.
- An adult host should meet the officials at a single, designated location and time for arrival. They should be escorted all together to an open and ventilated meeting area before the start of the contest, to and from the contest during any intermissions and to the parking areas following the conclusion of the contest.
- Officials should bring their own beverages and snacks to limit contact and interaction.