



NJSIAA COVID-19 Fall Season Guidelines

This document provides specific guidelines for participation in high school sports for the fall 2020 season. In addition to this guidance, schools must comply with the guidelines issued by the CDC, NJDOH, NJDOE and local health departments while participating in practices and NJSIAA interscholastic contests. Schools must also provide the necessary materials and guidance to promote behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing, and the use of face coverings.

Face Coverings – The CDC affirmed that face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 that reduces the spread of the disease, particularly when used universally within communities.

- 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, or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities. Student-athletes on the bench or sidelines are required to wear face coverings.
- 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, the official is in extreme heat outdoors, or the official is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.

Screening – School districts must adopt a policy for screening students and staff upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure.

- All student-athletes must be screened at least once per day to participate in NJSIAA practices or games.
- Full time remote learners must be screened before they can participate in practices or games.
- Part-time remote learners that were screened by the school at some point during the school day do not need to be rescreened before practices or games.
- All student-athletes must be screened for all Saturday or Sunday practices or games.
- The Summer Recess period screening documents may serve as a guide to school districts, if needed.

Remote Learning – All student-athletes participating in full day or part-time remote learning are permitted to participate in NJSIAA athletics.

Four Seasons – Athletes are permitted to participate in all four seasons during the 2020-21 school year.

Hygiene/Sanitization – It is critical that school districts, student-athletes, coaches and staff maintain a high standard of sanitization and hygiene.

- Students and staff should make every effort to wash their hands as often as possible.
- Hand sanitizer shall be accessible at all times.
- Workout apparel and uniforms shall not be left at the school after games and practices.
- There shall be no spitting, chewing seeds or gum during the workout.
- Schools must ensure that all facilities are cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation.

Hydration – Sharing of water bottles is strictly prohibited. Each student-athlete should have his/her own water bottle.

- Multi use hydration stations are strictly prohibited.
- Schools shall provide and monitor hydration stations for individuals to refill water bottles one at a time.

Heat Policy – The NJSIAA Heat Policy remains in effect. Please refer to the policy guidelines on the NJSIAA website.

Heat Acclimatization – Heat acclimatization may begin on September 11th for football & field hockey only. All other sports will begin practice on September 14th.

Training Room – Proper protocols regarding access to the training room must be followed, based on the guidelines set by the school district.

- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the training room, unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure that indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.

Locker Rooms – Proper protocols regarding access to locker rooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the school district.

- Locker room use is only for students-athletes that are in the building at the end of the school day. All student-athletes participating in full day or part-time remote learning must come prepared for practice.
- Locker rooms must be used for changing and storage of equipment only. Schools must monitor the activity to minimize the amount of time permitted in the locker room.
- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the locker room, unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.

Weight Rooms – Proper protocols regarding access to the weight room must be followed based on the guidelines set by the school district.

- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the weight room, unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All equipment must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- School must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.

Restrooms – Proper protocols regarding access to restrooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the school district.

- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while using restrooms, unless it will inhibit the individual's health.
- Restrooms must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.

Equipment Storage – Proper protocols regarding access to equipment storage rooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the school district.

- Schools must monitor activity to minimize the amount of time permitted in these rooms.
- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the equipment storage room, unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.

Transportation – Proper protocols regarding athletic transportation must be followed based on the guidelines set by the school district.

- Face coverings are required for all staff and students while on busses, unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- Schools should maintain social distancing practices on buses to the maximum extent practicable.
- Best practices must be followed for cleaning and disinfecting all vehicles.
- Teams should limit travel to essential players and staff.
- Teams should consider parental transportation, if approved by the school district.

Spectators – The Governor established outdoor gathering guidelines in NJ Executive Order 161. Please be advised these guidelines may change at any time. Please refer to the nj.gov website for updates.

- Outdoor gatherings are limited to 500 people. Currently, the 500-person cap does *not* include participants or individuals that are on the field of play (coaches, officials, trainers, etc.).
- All spectators attending outdoor events must wear face coverings, unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All spectators must follow social distancing guidelines set by the host school district or facility.

Levels – Every effort should be made to minimize crossover between varsity, JV and freshman levels. Crossover can lead to a greater number of student-athletes being sidelined due to exposure to a student who tests positive for COVID-19.

Practices – Coaches must maintain a high level of awareness to possible COVID-19 exposure throughout all practices.

- 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, or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- Coaches must ensure social distancing practices are maintained to the maximum extent practicable during all practices.
- Indoor practices for fall sports are not permitted.

Scrimmages – Schools will have the opportunity to participate in one pre-season scrimmage, preferably with a neighboring school.

- The scrimmage may occur any time within seven days of the regular season start date for that sport.
- Football teams may begin scrimmaging on Thursday, September 24, 2020.
- When possible, schools are encouraged to participate in intra-squad scrimmages and utilize officials to provide additional preseason preparation.

Games – All school personnel must maintain a high level of awareness to possible COVID-19 exposure throughout all phases of the game.

- 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, or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities. Students on the bench or sideline must wear a face covering.
- Schools must ensure social distancing practices are maintained to the maximum extent practicable during the game.
- Sidelines must be limited to essential personnel. Coaches must be realistic with the number of players at each game.
- Spectators, media, and all ancillary game 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, the official is in extreme heat outdoors, or the official is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- The sportsmanship statement is limited to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team while wearing masks and maintaining social distance.
- Schools are not permitted to have rooms available for the officials.
- It is recommended that visiting teams keep their busses available for use as needed.
- Post-game handshakes and celebrations are prohibited.

Out-of-State Competition – Out-of-state competition is prohibited, unless a waiver is granted by the NJSIAA for exceptional circumstances.

- New Jersey schools playing each other outside of NJ is also considered out-of-state competition and a waiver must be granted by the NJSIAA.

NJ Travel Advisory – The State of New Jersey has issued an incoming travel advisory that all individuals entering New Jersey from states with a significant spread of COVID-19 should quarantine for 14-days after leaving that state.

- The provided link will take you to the most updated advisory list. <https://covid19.nj.gov/faqs/nj-information/travel-and-transportation/which-states-are-on-the-travel-advisory-list-are-there-travel-restrictions-to-or-from-new-jersey>

Post-Season – The NJSIAA will strive to open post-season participation to any school wishing to participate.

- Depending on the sport, the post-season will be structured regionally based on counties or based on NJSIAA Sections.
- Each sport has specific tournament modifications that are listed on the NJSIAA website.
- If the NJSIAA determines that the post-season in any particular sport includes a Sectional Championship, it will rely on the 2019-2020 classifications.

League/Conference/County Tournaments – All league, county, and conference team tournaments are permitted. All team tournaments for field hockey, football and soccer will count toward the maximum game count. Team tournaments for tennis and cross country will not count toward the team maximum contests.

- **Individual Tournaments (tennis):** All league, county, and conference individual tennis tournaments are permitted; however, attending schools may only participate if they are a member of the league, county, or conference that is sponsoring the tournament. These individual tournaments will not count toward the team maximum contests; However, you may only participate in one per week.
- **Individual Tournaments (cross country):** All league, county, and conference individual cross-country tournaments are permitted; however, attending schools may only participate if a member of the league, county, or conference that is sponsoring the tournament. These individual tournaments will not count toward the team maximum contests; However, you may only participate in one per week.
- Invitationals not sponsored by any league, county or conference are permitted for cross country only. Schools must follow the cross-country regulations regarding invitationals. These individual tournaments will not count toward the team maximum contests; However, you may only participate in one per week.

Six-Day Practice Rule

To All: Due to the COVID-19 environment we all find ourselves in, the NJSIAA has decided to make the following amendment (9/21/20) to the six-day practice rule. What we have approved for this year only is the following:

- Any lapse of time from the start of practices and before the completion of six practices because of quarantine or some other COVID related issue, the school may pick up where they left off pending principal approval.
- The student-athletes or team still must complete the six-practice total before any student-athlete or team can participate in scrimmages or games.
- We are also strongly encouraging virtual workouts when possible during the student-athletes or team quarantined period.
- Virtual workouts do not count toward the 6 practices total.
- Upon completion of six practices, it will be the school's decision, through consultation with the appropriate school personnel, to determine the date for student-athletes and/or teams to safely return to competition after a period of quarantine.