



**NJSIAA COVID-19 Season 2, 2A & 3 Guidelines**

This document provides specific guidelines for participation in high school sports for the 2020-21 seasons 2, 2A & 3. Schools must 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.

In addition to this document, schools must comply with all guidelines issued by the Governor’s office, the CDC, NJDOH, and local health officials while participating in practices and NJSIAA interscholastic competition. These guidelines are subject to change based on actions taken by the Governor’s office, the CDC, and the NJ Department of Health.

**PRACTICES/GAME GUIDELINES**

Sport	Season	Virtual Start	Practice Start	Competition Start	Competition End
Ice Hockey (outdoor)	2	N/A	Dec. 14	Jan. 15	Mar. 6
Ice Hockey (Indoor)	2	Dec. 14	Jan. 2	Jan. 15	Mar. 6
Skiing	2	N/A	Dec. 14	Jan. 15	Mar. 6
Basketball	2	Dec. 14	Jan. 11	Jan. 26	Mar. 6
Bowling	2	Dec. 14	Jan. 11	Jan. 26	Mar. 6
Fencing	2	Dec. 14	Jan. 11	Jan. 26	Mar. 6
Swimming	2A	Jan. 11	Feb. 1	Feb. 16	Mar. 27
Diving	2A	Jan. 11	Feb. 1	Feb. 16	Mar. 27
Winter Track	2A	Jan. 11	Feb. 1	Feb. 16	Mar. 27
Gymnastics	3	Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Mar. 16	Apr. 24
Girls Volleyball	3	Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Mar. 16	Apr. 24
Wrestling	3	Feb. 1	Mar. 1	Mar. 16	Apr. 24

**Virtual Workouts**

The NJSIAA recognizes the importance of socially and emotionally engaging student-athletes with their coaches and teammates, while also helping them to prepare physically and mentally for their upcoming season.

- School administration must approve the virtual workouts.
- In season sports must take priority over virtual workouts or virtual meetings for any out of season sport.
- Virtual workouts do not count towards the six days of practice and one day of rest requirement.
- Regarding physicals, it is the school’s decision whether to require student-athletes to have a completed physical before the start of virtual workouts.

**Multiple Season Participation** – Students are permitted to participate in all seasons as defined by the NJSIAA during the 2020-21 school year, which include season 1, season 2, season 2A, season 3, and season 4.

- No student may practice or compete in two sports at the same time unless it involves the non-strenuous sports of bowling and golf.
- Students that are involved in overlapping sports are not subject to the six-day practice rule if they start the next sport within three days of the completion of the first sport.
- Students that begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> overlapping sport within three days are eligible for competition immediately unless the school imposes a minimum amount of required practices before a student is approved for competition in an overlapping sport.
- If a student is inactive for more than three days involving overlapping sports, then the six-day practice rule will be in effect.

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

**Practices** – Coaches must comply with all NJ executive orders regarding indoor limits. Coaches MUST also maintain a high level of awareness of possible COVID-19 exposure throughout all practices.

- Coaches are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the coach's health.
- Students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student's health, 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.

**Scrimmages** – Schools will have the opportunity to participate in one pre-season scrimmage, preferably with a neighboring school. 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 of 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.
- Students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student's health or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- Schools must ensure social distancing practices are maintained to the maximum extent practicable during the game.
- Team benches must be limited to essential personnel. Coaches must limit the number of players at each game.
- Officials are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the official's health 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 required to have rooms available for the officials. If possible, communication with the official regarding this would be appreciated.
- Post-game handshakes and celebrations are prohibited.

**League/Conference/County Tournaments** – All league, county, and conference team tournaments are permitted. All team tournaments will count toward the maximum game count.

**Back-to-Back Games** – There is no need for a sanitization delay between back-to-back games. However, the following applies:

- Home team players should leave the facility at the completion of their game unless they are determined essential for the next game.
- Visiting teams should be transported separately and depart immediately following the game; however, realistically that may not be possible.
- The following are the guidelines when teams need to stay in the facility:
  - Designated areas must be set up for both home and visiting teams while they are waiting to play or upon completion of the first game.
  - People in this area must be sitting at least 6 feet apart and wearing face coverings.
  - A surface cleaning of the bench area is recommended between games.
  - Any changes or updates to Executive Order 196 will necessitate updates to these guidelines.

**Post-Season** – The NJSIAA will not be hosting any post-season tournaments for the following sports during the Indoor Seasons 2 & 2A. Ice Hockey, Skiing, Fencing, Basketball, Bowling, Swimming, Diving and Winter Track. Post-season may be hosted locally by participating leagues and conferences at their discretion.

**Out-of-State Competition** – On November 10, 2020, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order No. 194 which prohibits member schools from hosting an interstate competition in all indoor sports. Therefore, no member school may host an out-of-state opponent or host an event out of state. Moreover, NJSIAA is prohibiting member schools from traveling out-of-state to compete.

## **FACILITY GUIDELINES**

**Third-Party Facilities** (ice hockey, swimming, etc.)

- Sports using third party facilities must follow the guidelines set forth by the NJ Department of Health.
- Schools using these facilities should have a plan in place if the locker rooms are closed.
- All guidelines under “Locker Rooms” remain in effect along with the facility-specific guidelines.
- Showers may only be utilized at pool facilities in accordance with the NJ public bathing code and are only permitted if the showers are individually partitioned or communal showers with installed barriers/partitions at least 6 feet apart.

**Indoor School Facilities** - Any use of indoor facilities must be approved by the school district before use. All New Jersey Department of Health and CDC guidelines must be followed including:

- The facility is following all DOH regulations regarding indoor gatherings.
- All participants are maintaining social distancing
- All participants are wearing masks
- The facility is cleaned before and after using CDC and NJ DOH guidelines.
- Indoor air quality guidelines and recommendations regarding COVID-19 can be found on the NJSIAA website under “Current Resources.”
- Showers may only be utilized at pool facilities in accordance with the NJ public bathing code and are only permitted if the showers are individually partitioned or communal showers with installed barriers/partitions at least 6 feet apart.

**Air Quality & Flow** - Indoor facilities should ensure appropriate indoor air/ventilation by following the DOH recommendations below:

- Keep doors and windows open where possible and utilize fans to improve ventilation.
- Inspect and evaluate the heating, ventilation, and conditioning (HVAC) unit to ensure that the system is operating within its design specifications and according to existing building code standards.
- Conduct routine maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer or HVAC professional.
- Within the design specification of the HVAC unit:
  - Increase the volume of outdoor air to the maximum capacity while the gym is occupied.
  - Reduce the volume of recirculated air being returned to the indoor spaces
  - Increase the volume of air being delivered to the indoor spaces to the maximum capacity
  - Select maximum filtration levels for the HVAC unit.
  - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs continuously while the facility is occupied.
  - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs for at least two hours before and two hours after the facility is occupied.
  - Consider installing portable air cleaners equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to increase the amount of clean air within the facility.
  - Please check our website for CDC and ASHRAE guidance on ventilation requirements.

**Capacity/Attendance** - On November 16, 2020, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order 196, which further restricts the number of people permitted at both outdoor and indoor sporting events.

- Under the Order, indoor practices and competitions are limited to 10 persons.
- If the number of individuals who are **necessary** for the practice or competition, such as players, coaches, and referees, is greater than 10 persons, the practice or competition may proceed.
- If the above exception applies, the number of individuals still may not exceed 25 percent of the capacity of the room in which it takes place, or 150 persons, whichever is less.
- Practically speaking, this means that spectators are prohibited.
- For outdoor winter sports, it is important to note that the Order also restricts the number of people permitted at outdoor events to 150, inclusive of the athletes, coaches, referees, and trainers.
- Any changes or updates to Executive Order 196 will necessitate updates to these guidelines.

**Locker Rooms** – Proper protocols regarding access to locker rooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Locker room use is only for students that are in the building at the end of the school day. All students participating in full-day or part-time remote learning must come prepared for practice.
- Locker room use is limited to changing, equipment storage, hand washing, and restroom use only.
- Schools must monitor the activity to minimize the amount of time spent 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.
- Showers use – Sports specific use of showers (except swimming) is still TBD. Once we have clarity from the DOH, we will send that information out separately.

**Training Room** – Proper protocols regarding access to the training room must be followed, based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and 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 their hands frequently.

**Weight Rooms** – Proper protocols regarding access to the weight room must be followed based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and 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.
- The 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 NJ Department of Health and 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 NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Schools must monitor activity to minimize the amount of time spent 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.

## **HEALTH GUIDELINES**

**Physicals** – There will be no further extensions for the 2020-21 school year, therefore the DOE regulations regarding physicals will be as written.

- All students must have an approved physical examination prior to the first day of official practice in any season to be eligible to participate. The physical examination shall be conducted by a licensed physician, advanced practice nurse (APN), or physician's assistant (PA).
- If a physical expires during the season, the student may continue until that sport is completed but must get a new physical before their next sport. Please be advised that some school districts may require a new physical before that 365-day time period ends.
- Examples regarding the rearranged seasons due to COVID-19:
  - A basketball player's physical that expires on Dec 1, 2020, will need a new physical to start the season on Jan 11, 2021.
  - A basketball player's physical that expires on Feb 1, 2021 can continue to the end of the basketball season unless the school requires a new physical by Feb 1<sup>st</sup> to continue.
  - A basketball player's physical expires on Jan 25, 2021 and wants to swim; that student-athlete will need a new physical by the start of swimming season on Feb 1<sup>st</sup>.
  - A football player's physical expires on July 15, 2021, and wants to also compete in basketball, winter track, wrestling, and baseball is permitted for all 5 sports.
- It's the school district's decision whether to require student-athletes to have a completed physical before the start of any NJSIAA approved virtual workouts.

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

**Heat Acclimatization** – Heat acclimatization is only applicable in the fall season

**Health History Update Questionnaire** – There are no changes to this DOE requirement. Any athlete that took advantage of the PPE extension this past fall was required to complete the form. Going forward the DOE requirement for the HHQ form is the following: *To participate on a school-sponsored interscholastic or intramural athletic team or squad, each student whose physical examination was completed more than 90 days prior to the first day of official practice shall provide a health history update questionnaire completed and signed by the student's parent or guardian.*

**Screening** – School districts must continue their policy for screening students and staff upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure.

- All students 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 students must be screened for all Saturday or Sunday practices or games.

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

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

**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.
- Students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student's health, the student is in extreme heat, or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities. Students on the bench or sidelines are required to wear face coverings.
- Officials are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the official's health, the official is in extreme heat, or the official is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- All other personnel necessary for the practice or competition are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- Neck Gaiters: Although neck gaiters were an acceptable alternative for face coverings outdoors, they are not recommended for indoors. Please be aware of the current CDC and NJDOH guidelines regarding proper face-covering protection indoors.

**Hygiene/Sanitization** – It is critical that school districts, students, 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.

## **NJSIAA GENERAL GUIDELINES**

**Remote Learning** – All students participating in full-day or part-time remote learning are permitted to participate in NJSIAA athletics if the school district permits it.

### **Six-Day Practice Rule**

Due to COVID-19, the NJSIAA has decided to make the following amendment 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 students or team still must complete the six-practice total before any student or team can participate in scrimmages or games.
- We are also strongly encouraging virtual workouts when possible during the students 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 students and/or teams to safely return to competition after a period of quarantine.
- Students that are involved in overlapping sports are not subject to the six-day practice rule if they start the next sport within three days of the completion of the first sport.
- Students that begin the 2<sup>nd</sup> overlapping sport within three days are eligible for competition immediately unless the school self imposes a minimum amount of practices needed before a student is approved for competition in an overlapping sport.
- If a student is inactive for more than three days involving overlapping sports, then the six-day practice rule will be in effect.

### **Transfers** (Varsity Athletes Only):

- Student-athletes that transferred before March 16, 2020, are subject to the transfer sit-period and will be eligible for participation on the following dates:
  - Skiing – January 19, 2021
  - Ice Hockey – February 1, 2021
  - Basketball, Bowling, and Fencing - February 8, 2021
  - Swimming, Diving, and Winter Track & Field - March 1, 2021
  - Gymnastics, Girls Volleyball, and Wrestling – March 29, 2021
- Student-athletes that transferred between March 16, 2020, and November 1, 2020, are NOT subject to the transfer sit-period, as long as the previous school did not check athletic advantage.
- If a student-athlete transferred after November 1, 2020, the student-athlete shall be ineligible to participate for a period of 30 calendar days, or one half of the maximum number of games being played, whichever is less.

### **Credits** (NJSIAA By-Laws: Article V E.)

1. To be eligible for athletic competition during the first semester (September 1 to January 31) a pupil must have passed 25% of the credits (30) required by the State of New Jersey for graduation (120), during the immediately preceding academic year.
  - Season 2: Ice Hockey, Skiing, Basketball, Bowling, and Fencing
2. To be eligible for athletic competition during the second semester (Feb. 1 to June 30), a pupil must have passed the equivalent of 12 1/2% of the credits (15) required by New Jersey for graduation (120) at the close of the preceding semester (Jan. 31). Full-year courses shall be equated as one-half of the total credits to be gained for the full year to determine credits passed during the immediately preceding semester.
  - Season 2A: Swimming, Diving, and Winter Track & Field
  - Season 3: Girls Volleyball, Gymnastics, Wrestling
  - Season 4: Baseball, Boys Golf, Girls Golf, Boys Lacrosse, Girls Lacrosse, Softball, Boys Tennis, Boys Spring Track and Field, Girls Spring Track and Field

### **Captains Practices**

The phrase “Captains Practices” or any other student-led workouts does not exist within the NJSIAA guidelines.

- Official practices are sponsored by the school district and conducted by a coach that has satisfied all the requirements from the school district, the department of education, and the NJSIAA.
- An official practice takes place during the NJSIAA regulated seasons (fall, winter, spring).
- During the out-of-season period, practices/workouts sanctioned by the school and or under the direction of a coach are not permitted.

### ***Clarifications***

1. Coaches may not attend out-of-season student-led workouts.
2. Coaches may not supply practice plans or equipment for out-of-season student-led workouts.
3. Coaches may not tell students they can use the district’s facilities for their out-of-season student-led workouts.
4. Students that organize an out-of-season student-lead workout that does not involve clarifications 1-3 is not a violation.
5. Students that organize an out-of-season student-led workout, using district facilities but do not involve clarifications 1-3 is not a violation; However, the school district will be liable for any injuries. Athletic directors should be cognizant of the school’s facility use to prevent this type of action.