



MASSACHUSETTS INTERSCHOLASTIC
ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



MIAA COVID-19 Task Force Meeting Highlights

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) formed a MIAA COVID-19 Task Force Sub-Committee, under the leadership of MIAA President Jeffrey Granatino, and were charged to determine appropriate measures for a safe return to MIAA athletics in alignment with guidelines set forth by Governor Baker, MA Department of Health (DPH) and MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Educational athletics is foundational to the core values and mission of the MIAA. The belief that educational athletics is integral to the holistic development of our students and their high school experience is central to the work, thinking and decision making of this working group.

The Task Force will continue to formulate guidance and recommendations as the high school athletic based guidelines are provided by Governor Baker, MA Department of Health (DPH) and MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Additional information and resources, including a list of Task Force members, can be found on the [MIAA COVID-19 Task Force Page](#)

- **A survey was created and sent to all MIAA Member School**
Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors, Coaches and Athletic Trainers with a goal of collecting information related to concerns and expectations with athletics this fall. This data will assist in guiding the task force with their efforts.
- **The COVID-19 Task Force has created three sub-groups to look at each of the three possibilities for return to school.**
 - **New Normal** – The goal was to explore all MIAA Rules that may be impacted. Dive into protocol, questions and concerns related to athletics under a “New Normal”. Communicate and share resources to members.
 - **Hybrid** – Discussion around health and safety standards including PPE requirements, outside vs indoor activities, access and equity issues, density of practice, transportation concerns and the Fall timeline.
 - **Remote** – The goal was to build a model to assist coaches and students in any scenario of return to school, whether the students were on the field or not. The focus was to incorporate the five pillars of the MIAA (Leadership, Sportsmanship, Coaches Education, Community Service, & Wellness).
- **Two members of the MIAA Sports Medicine Committee** have provided updates at each meeting. The MIAA SMC is working on a “Return to Play” document to submit to the BOD. They expressed the need to wait for guidance from the state before finalizing this document.

- **The MIAA Sports Medicine Committee has petitioned the MA Department of Public Health to allow physicals to stretch from the current 13 month law/mandate to extend to 18 months.** This will help alleviate the rush and difficulty in student-athletes being able to see doctors for non-sick emergencies as most doctors are not seeing patients unless it is more critical.
- The creation of a **disclaimer document** for all member schools to use has been discussed at length. [Click here to view a sample waiver agreement.](#) This along with other sample documents will be made available to all MIAA Member Schools once completed.
- The Task Force discussed a **petition to allow Spring Coaches the ability to meet with their players in the month of July**, no more than 3x per week and 12 total days, to remediate (as much as possible) the absence of coaching and team gatherings this spring. The vast majority of the committee agreed that on the surface this was a great idea but with concerns of the unknown with respect to state guidelines, it was best to focus on the Fall.
- **Task Force Members are working on a “Do’s and Don’t’s” document** with respect to returning to play that will be finalized and shared by MSSADA. This document will provide guidance but it is understood that the mandates will come from the State.
- Discussion took place around the **importance of school leaders, including Athletic Directors, connecting and engaging with their local Board of Health** to determine how they are allowed to move forward. Each district and community may be different.
- **Anne Gilligan, DESE**, has provided updates to the committee each of the last two meetings. Anne articulated that a parametric dashboard would be made available to the public next week. This tool will include the entire square footage of almost every school and assist with determining how many students each school can safely bring back.
- **Creative “outside the box” ideas that were shared and discussed:**
 - **Moving select Spring sports to this Fall (2020) and select Fall sports to the Spring (2021).**
 - ❖ Major concerns around putting select Spring athletes in a position to possibly lose two straight seasons.
 - ❖ Additional concerns around making students choose what sport to play if their Spring sport was moved to the Fall but their Fall sport remained in place. For example, a field hockey and softball player. If both are placed in the Fall, that puts the student in difficult position and they essentially lose a season of one sport.
 - ❖ Discussion took place that while on the surface it may seem logical to flip some sport seasons around, the risk may be too great.
 - **Moving Fall start date to August 1, 2020 and ending the season by October 31st**
 - ❖ Rationale would be to get ahead of a potential late fall spike.
 - ❖ Concerns about cutting the summer of students, parents, coaches, ADs and the pressure it would put on student-athletes.

- ❖ Additional concerns about equity. Some communities may be ready to go, while others are not. What kind of position would this put schools and communities in?
 - ❖ The MIAA Sports Medicine Committee has discussed an earlier start to preseason activities but is awaiting state guidelines for both the re-opening of school and Phase 3.
 - ❖ Discussion about relaxing the out of season coaching restrictions.
- **The MIAA Task Force will be reporting to the MIAA Board of Directors at their July 21st meeting.**

Please know that the Task Force efforts will continue as needed and we sincerely appreciate your patience as we navigate through these unprecedented times.

EDUCATIONAL ATHLETICS

MIAA | 33 Forge Pkwy | Franklin, MA 02038 | 508-541-7997

