



# Rules Modifications & Guidelines

## Swimming & Diving

Fall 2020

### General Information

Every school district/program should consult with their local health department to determine which risk level to start this program safely. Continued consultation with local health department should be used to determine when progression to the next risk level can be initiated.

This document is to be utilized in compliance with all EEA, DESE and DPH guidelines in place.

### Pre-Workout/Pre-Contest Screening:

Athletes and coaches may not attend practices or games if they are isolated for illness or quarantined for exposure to infection.

Prior to attending practices or games, athletes and coaches should check their temperature. If a student-athlete or a coaching staff member has a temperature of 100 degrees or above, they should not attend practices or games. Likewise if they have any other symptoms of COVID-19 infection (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>), they should not attend practices or games. Student-athletes and coaches who have symptoms of COVID19 infection should follow DPH guidance regarding isolation and testing.

For students with symptoms who test negative for COVID-19 infection, they may return to sport once they are approved to return to school (when afebrile for 24 hours and symptomatically improved).

Student athletes and coaches who are diagnosed with COVID-19 infection may return to school once they have been afebrile for 24 hours and with improvement in respiratory symptoms, and once ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared, according to DPH guidelines. In addition, persons with COVID19 infection need to receive written clearance from their health care provider in order to return to sport.

Student-athletes and coaches who were exposed to COVID should not participate in practices or games until their 14-day quarantine is completed.

Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice social distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.

### Cohorts and/or Participants:

A record should be kept of all individuals present at team activities i.e. – practices, practice cohorts, competitions, etc.

### Social distancing:

- **Practice** – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This includes additional spacing between athletes while stretching, warming up, chatting, changing drills, etc. Athletes must

maintain spacing, and there should be no congregating of athletes while running drills. Workouts should be conducted in 'pods' of athletes, with the same 5-10 athletes always working out together. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection. Records should be kept of who is in each group, each day.

- **Locker Rooms** – Locker rooms and changing areas may be used but should be limited to 50% capacity. Facility Operators should ensure that users can abide by capacity restrictions and social distancing standards and establish signage and visual guidelines. Signage should remind users to limit time spent in enclosed area. If locker rooms are utilized, staggered use based on time and distance is recommended.

When possible, students should report to workouts in proper gear and immediately return home to shower, clean clothing, and equipment at the end of every workout.

- **Practice Site/Pool** – Only essential personnel are permitted on the deck or in the area where athletes are practicing/competing. These are defined as athletes, coaches, medical personnel/athletic trainers, and officials (competition). All others (i.e. managers, photographers, media, etc.) are considered non-essential personnel and are not to be on the deck in close contact with participants.
- **Personal Items** – It is recommended that each athlete bring their own gym bag for personal items (see gym bag information below). All personal items should remain in the gym bag when not in use. Gym bags should be placed in a predetermined area 6 feet apart for the duration of practice.
- **Huddles** – Social distancing (6 feet between individuals) must be maintained, as much as possible, and face coverings utilized when the coach is communicating with the entire team, or in smaller groups. Communicating with smaller groups is preferred.
- **Team Handshakes** – Athletes shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during or following practices and competitions. Some MIAA sport specific modifications suggest sportsmanship recognition practices which replace handshakes.
- **Spectators** – Spectators must practice social distancing between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines. The number of spectators is determined in compliance with EEA, DESE and DPH guidelines.
- **Media** – All social distancing and hygiene guidelines for spectators must be followed by media members planning to attend games. Media members should contact host school administrators prior to arriving at games to plan appropriate entry and available workspace

#### **Practice and Game Protocols:**

- **Masks/Face Coverings** – Athletes are required to wear cloth face coverings/masks per EEA guidelines. Gaiters are acceptable. Face coverings comprised of multiple layers and a tighter weave are more effective and preferred.

Wet face coverings can lose effectiveness. It should be noted that extra face coverings for swimmers may be necessary and should be planned for.

During competition when spacing between participants is greater than 10 ft athletes may momentarily take brief face covering relief. The default expectation is that the mask will be on. Athletes should reference sport specific guidelines for mask breaks.

Caution should be exercised when replacing a mask if hands are wet, soiled, or dirty. For individuals that are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability. (Coach must possess the medical note/documentation excusing the player from wearing a mask)

It is the responsibility of the head coach to monitor and ensure that all players not on the playing field are wearing face coverings. A game administrator, home athletic director, or other designee may also assist in monitoring this.

Coaches and officials are also required to wear face coverings. Coaches and officials may remove their face covering briefly for a “break” at any point during play when they are socially distanced greater than 6 feet. Spectators, workers, and others are required to wear face coverings and they are expected to follow social distancing guidelines.

- **Player habits** – Coaches should work to break old habits and create new ones to minimize the spread of the virus. Spitting, licking fingers, and spitting on hands during practices and competitions is not permitted. The habit of minimizing any touching of the face and covering the cough should be practiced.
- **Interaction with Officials** – Coaches must follow social distancing guidelines (6 feet) when interacting with an official or any other individual. Conversations can occur at a distance. Athletes should not approach a official closer than 6 feet at any time.
- **Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes** – Athletes, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes and use them frequently – including prior to taking the field and upon return to the sideline. Additionally, it is emphasized to avoid touching the face throughout practice and competition.
- **Pre-Game Introductions and Preparation** – If pre-game meetings are necessary, they should be held with limited team representation – a single coach, single captain, etc. At the pregame meeting, all participants will be required to wear face coverings and to socially distance from all participants

If a school chooses to do introductions, players will take their position on the field prior to being introduced. Introductions are suggested to be limited or eliminated to decrease time of athletes on the competition field. The National Anthem may be played before competition.

- **Post-Game Procedures** – Refer to Team Handshakes in this guidance. Recognition of the other team, coaches and/or officials should be done from a distance greater than 6 feet and should not delay departure from the competition venue. Teams and group of players should maintain social distancing and/or staggering departure times at the conclusion of the contest.

#### **Equipment:**

- **General Equipment** – There should be no shared athletic equipment. Any equipment that is used for practice should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and immediately following practice. Only one individual should handle the set-up and break-down of equipment on any given day (i.e. goals, cones, etc.).
- **Personal Items** – Shoes, clothing, towels, and other personal items must not be shared among athletes. Any items that are not currently being worn/used should be stored inside a personal gym bag. Gym bags should be placed in a predetermined area 6 feet apart for the duration of practice/competition.

### Hydration:

- All students must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles cannot be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized.
- Water fountains are to be used as refill stations ONLY.

### COVID-19 Coach:

- It is recommended that schools could designate a coach to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.
- All coaches, staff, officials, and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Train coaches, officials, and staff on all safety protocols. Conduct training virtually and ensure that social distancing is maintained during training. (NFHS COVID-19 FREE Course)

### Gym Bag: (Supplies recommended for a personal gym bag)

- Reusable facial covering(s)/mask(s) – The mask/face covering must be worn at all times. Sport specific modification may have further guidance for face coverings. Extra face coverings should be planned for.
- Warm-up clothing, electronic devices, and other personal items that are used by the athlete, prior to practice/competition, must be placed back in the gym bag before practice/competition begins.
- Athletes are recommended to always have a personal bottle of hand sanitizer available. There will be less chance of possible cross contamination and less time standing around waiting to use a shared hand sanitizer. Be sure to have this inside a sealable bag, in case it leaks. This will be used when you enter and exit the practice/competition site, and at other necessary times in between.
- Athletes are recommended to have disinfectant wipes for personal use. When using a restroom area, it is best to disinfect any surface that may be touched, before and after using the facilities.
- Athletic braces, tape, inhalers, or any other sports-medical item used before, during or after practice/meets should be stored in a personal gym bag when not in use.
- Additional shoes should also be stored in a separate compartment or bag inside a gym bag to prevent possible cross contamination with other items in the gym bag.
- Any other item that is deemed necessary for practice or competition must be stored in the gym bag when it is not being used

\*\*Everything inside the gym bag must be disinfected after every practice and before return to practice again. Be sure to spray the inside and the outside of the bag as well. This is for everyone's protection.

### Swimming Specific Guidelines

All current and future EEA, MIAA, and DESE guidelines pertaining to the sport of swimming and diving will be adhered to throughout the Fall season. In addition, any state Mandated Safety Standards for Public and Semi-Public Pools will be incorporated into individual swimming and diving team practices and dual meet planning. It is also understood that local Boards of Health and individual facilities may impose additional standards as well as restrictions and will be **the final authority** on site usage rules for team practices/meets.

## Recommended Guidelines & Best Practices for High School Dual Meets

- During the Fall I High School Swimming and Diving season dual meet in person competition will be the standard. If virtual meets are utilized, competition could be expanded to more than two participating teams.
- The host team will be required to contact the visiting school at least 48 hours in advance of the meet to review any facility restrictions in terms of spectators, number of athletes who can compete, warm up protocols, availability of locker rooms as well as the amount of time available to conduct the meet.
- Hand sanitizer will be provided at the scorer's table.

### General Considerations:

- **Team Seating and Lane Selection** - Teams will sit on opposite sides of the pool whenever possible and remain in this area throughout the meet. The visiting team will have choice of either lanes 1 – 3 or 4 – 6 for competition. (Note this is a change from the traditional even/odd lane selection for competition.)
- **Spacing for Officials** – It should be noted that 6 foot spacing is recommended to allow officials to work both sides of the pool during a meet.
- **Warm-ups** - Depending on the time available and number of swimmers allowed per lane, teams may have to adjust within the normal warm –up period to accommodate as many athletes as possible (i.e. 2 – 15 min., 3 – 10 min. 4 – 7min. blocks etc.)
- **Warm Down** - At the conclusion of each race all swimmers (including anchor leg of relays) must swim to the other end of the pool and exit from this location. This will supplement warm-ups and eliminate any additional congestion in the starting area while times are being collected and preparations for the next race are underway. Swimmers participating on the first three legs of relays will depart the starting area immediately after finishing.
- **Submission of Entries NFHS 5 - 2** – To minimize multiple handling of paper entries and/or if electronic entries are not feasible, alternative submission methods should be designed to reduce face to face interactions. One method may be to submit all entries on a single sheet of paper to the scorer's table at the start of the meet with the understanding that a change can be made at any time prior to the long whistle signaling the start of an event. Where/how to/when entries are submitted should be a discussion item during the coaches' phone conference and reviewed again in the pre contest meeting with head coaches and an official.
- **Diving** - To streamline the meet, diving will be the first event per NFHS 5- 2a with a 10 minute in water break provided where the event would normally be held. The number of exhibition divers expecting to compete should be discussed in the pre meet coaches phone conversation and reviewed again in the pre contest meeting with head coaches and an official.
- **During Races** - Athletes and team personnel must wear face coverings and remain on their respective side of the pool while all races are in progress. Athletes should be separated by a minimum distance of 3 – 6 feet (while wearing face coverings) if they line up on their team's side of the pool. Due to the increased possibility of virus transmission caused by yelling and many individuals speaking at the same time, group cheering will not be permitted.

- **Lap Counting** - Per NFHS 2 – 7 -6 and 3 – 4 only one person per team is allowed behind the lane to serve as a counter for the 500 yd Freestyle event. Hand sanitizer should be provided, and each lap counter is required to clean their hands as well as wipe down their counting devices at the conclusion of the race.

#### Officials and Meet Admin Personnel:

- To minimize personal contact, officials will hold the required pre-meet conference with just one member of each coaching staff, and a separate pre meet captains' meeting with just one representative from each team.
- At the conclusion of each race, timers will remain behind their respective lane, and one of the two meet officials will record the individual time to maximize social distancing. The other official will check in with the scoring table after each event.
- All relay “take off” judging will be performed from the sides of the pool. Relay swimmers will be spaced 3–6 feet apart (wearing face coverings) from each other behind their respective lanes. The next swimmer to enter the pool can unmask after previous swimmer enters the pool and must maintain 6 ft spacing from the next relay participant and other participants. If this type of spacing is not attainable, the other relay participants will remain on their respective sidelines until it is appropriate for them to move in and swim their respective relay “leg”. Swimmers competing on the first three relay legs will leave the starting area immediately after finishing. Only one relay grouping will be allowed in the area behind the blocks while relay events are being conducted.
- Various procedures, rules, and disqualification notices require interaction between officials, coaches, and athletes with social distancing and use of face coverings. Alternative methods of communication can include utilization of electronic whistles, PA system, hand signals and/or written communication.
- The diving event might also require alternative methods of submitting entries and movement of non-electronic information might be required. Individuals seated at the scorer’s table/desk must also utilize 6 foot spacing and wear face coverings.

#### Post Meet Responsibilities and Additional Information:

- All “high touch” surface areas must be cleaned at the conclusion of each meet to include but not limited to team benches, scorer’s table, pool ladders, diving board/handrails and starting blocks.
- Activity organizers should ensure that individuals are not congregating in common areas or parking lots following practices or events.
- If “Virtual Meet” competition is utilized a list of guidelines for conducting this type of meet will be published in advance of the season start date to assist with logistics and planning.

# EDUCATIONAL ATHLETICS



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