

RETURN TO INTERSCHOLASTIC  
ATHLETICS



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## Signs and Symptoms of COVID-19

**Note:** This is not an exhaustive list and there may be additional steps in each school and city to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with COVID-19 is rapidly changing and this information may quickly become outdated. Please continue to monitor information provided by the CDC as well as local and the NYSDOH.

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), people with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

### When to Seek Emergency Medical Attention

Look for emergency warning signs\* for COVID-19. If someone is showing any of these signs, seek emergency medical care immediately:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

\*This list is not all possible symptoms. Please call your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning to you.

\*Call 911 or call ahead to your local emergency facility: Notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

**Source:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>

**Extra-curricular:**

Policies regarding extracurricular programs and which activities will be allowed, considering social distancing, PPE usage, and cleaning and disinfection, as well as risk of COVID-19 transmission (e.g., interscholastic sports, assemblies, and other gatherings). Policies should consider how to maintain cohorts, if applicable, or members of the same household. Responsible Parties must refer to DOH's "[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)" to assist in development of these policies and the conduct of school-sponsored sports.

*Further, lower- and moderate-risk sports (e.g., tennis, soccer, cross country, field hockey, and swimming) may practice and play, effective September 21, 2020. However, travel for practice or play is prohibited outside of the school's region or contiguous regions/counties until October 19, 2020.*

*Higher-risk sports (e.g., football, wrestling, rugby, hockey, and volleyball) may practice, effective September 21, 2020, but not play until authorized at a later date, but no later than December 31, 2020;*

In accordance with the State-issued guidance, such practices are limited to individual or group, no- to low-contact training (e.g., skills development) whereby contact between players may only be incidental and any activities that are specifically designed to promote close physical contact are prohibited. If school is closed for in-person education during the school year due to an increase in confirmed COVID-19 cases, school-sponsored sports must be suspended until in-person education is resumed; provided, however, that this restriction does not apply to schools that are conducting only remote instruction.

## Overview

In response to questions and concerns expressed by member schools, the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA), offers this document as a recommended resource on how schools may consider approaching the [“Return To Interscholastic Athletics.”](#)

As NYSPHSAA and its 11 member sections continue to gather information pertaining to the COVID-19 virus and receive continued feedback the contents of this document may be revised. NYSPHSAA is committed to maximizing the interscholastic athletic opportunities for students across the state. Furthermore, NYSPHSAA will remain flexible in considering that certain sports may be impacted differently, and play may need to be modified at some point during the season.

Participation in interscholastic athletics is certainly voluntary for both the individuals and the schools. NYSPHSAA recognizes school district superintendents and boards of education have the authority and autonomy to administer their district’s athletic programs as they deem appropriate.

In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), the ability to participate in sports and recreation activities is determined by a combination of the risk for COVID-19 transmission (1) inherent in the sport or recreation activity itself and (2) associated with the “type of play” (e.g. individual practice vs. game). Sports and recreation activities are categorized by NYSDOH as “low” risk, “moderate” risk, and “high” risk.

- **Higher Risk:** Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants. As of September 4, 2020 – these sports are only allowed to practice. If no further action is take these sports will be permitted to play games after December 31, 2020.  
*Examples: Wrestling, football, basketball, boys lacrosse, competitive cheer, dance, ice hockey, volleyball.*
- **Moderate Risk:** Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that can’t be cleaned between participants.  
*Examples: baseball, softball, soccer, gymnastics, field hockey, tennis, swimming relays, pole vault, high jump, long jump, girls lacrosse.*
- **Lower Risk:** Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.  
*Examples: Individual running events, throwing events (javelin, shot put, discus), individual swimming, golf, alpine skiing, sideline cheer, cross country running (with staggered starts)*

# **NYSPHSAA 2020-2021 (Fall, Winter, Fall2, Spring)**

## **Fall Sports 9/21 – 11/30**

- **All levels of Girls & Boys Soccer, Field Hockey, Tennis, Golf, Cross Country**
- Season cannot exceed 15 weeks
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (07-16-20), no Regional/ State championships
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (08-25-20), practice requirements – 10 practices for all Fall- Golf Training
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (08-25-20) in accordance with approved NYSPHSAA rules, teams must play games within their section or league until October 19th; games may be played beyond a school's section or league after October 19th
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (07-16-20) in accordance with approved NYSPHSAA rules, seven consecutive day rule waived starting on October 12th
- Game/ Contest limits – no change

## **Winter Sports (November 30th – TBD)**

- Revised start date of Monday, November 30th
- Season cannot exceed 22 weeks
- State Championships as scheduled (Subject to change)

## **Fall Sports Season II (March 1st – May 1<sup>st</sup>)**

- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (09-09-20), high risk Fall sports (**Competitive Cheer, Football, Volleyball**)
- West Seneca seeking approval from Niagara Frontier League to participate in **Girls Swimming**
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (09-10-20), practice requirements for Fall Sports Season II are 6 for all sports, except for Football which will require 10.
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (09-10-20), Seven Consecutive Day Rule will be waived for entire Fall Sports Season II.
- Game/ Contest limits – no change.
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (07-16-20) no Regional/ State championships.

## **Spring Sports (April 19th – June 30<sup>th</sup>)**

- o NYSPHSAA staff will work with NYSED pertaining to the impact of the Regents exams upon the spring interscholastic athletic season.
- Approved by NYSPHSAA officers (09-10-20), Fall Sports Season II athletes may carryover three practices for all sports, except for Baseball which may carry over four practice

## Important Reminders and Guidance

### Student-Athletes

- In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation) responsible parties must ensure a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. practicing, playing) requires a shorter distance. ***If a shorter distance is required, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings, unless players are unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity (e.g. practicing, playing); provided, however, that coaches, trainers, and other individuals who are not directly engaged in physical activity are required to wear a face covering.***
- Note gaiters or buffs are permitted with accordance with NYS Department of Health guidance
- Students should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Students are encouraged to keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition/ practice, however, if this is not possible, proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before doing so.
- Students should be advised to bring and use their own water bottle.
  - High school athletes should drink enough fluid before, during and after practice and competition.
  - Student-athletes should follow established guidelines for hydration.
  - Please see National Athletic Trainer Association (NATA) Resource:
    - [Healthy Hydration For Young Athletes](#)
- Student-athletes are encouraged to shower at home as quickly as possible after practice and games.
- No hugging, high fives, shaking hands, or fist bumps.

### Coaches

- In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), responsible parties must ensure a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals at all times, whether indoor or outdoor, unless safety or the core activity (e.g. practicing, playing) requires a shorter distance. If a shorter distance is required, individuals must wear acceptable face coverings, unless players are unable to tolerate a face covering for the physical activity (e.g. practicing, playing); provided, however, that coaches, trainers, and other individuals who are not directly engaged in physical activity are required to wear a face covering.
- Set clear expectations for student-athletes from day one.
- Communicate guidelines in a clear and consistent manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.

- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice and game/contest in case contact tracing is needed. Coaches will be provided digital thermometers and daily attendance logs
- Coaches should limit game day team/ roster sizes for social distancing purposes.
- Coaches should bring their own water bottle(s) and follow established guidelines for hydration.
- No hugging, high fives, shaking hands, or fist bumps.

### **Parents/ Spectators**

- As per NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), spectators must maintain six feet of physical distance between individuals and/or family/household units at all times and all spectators must wear face coverings when they are in common areas and situations where six feet of distancing is not able to be maintained, so long as they are over the age of two and medically able to tolerate such covering.
- Disinfect student's personal equipment after each game or practice.
- In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), responsible parties must limit spectators to no more than two spectators per player.
- Provide personal items to children and clearly label them.

### **Spectators at Sporting Events**

- **Each Athlete will be given 2 Spectator passes for the Fall Season. YOU MUST have this pass to enter Home & Away Contests.**
- Spectators will be asked to show their pass and sign in at all home contest. This will allow us better contract tracing.
- In cases of doubleheader contests, spectators may only attend the game their child/player is playing in. All spectators will be asked to leave the facility as soon as the contest is completed. Spectators will sign in at each game.
- The West Seneca School District will ensure spectators maintain six feet of physical distance between individuals and/or family/household units at all times and **all spectators must wear face coverings.**
- The West Seneca School District may facilitate appropriate distancing through the use of markings on the ground or seating areas, and other signage.
- The West Seneca School District will ensure that, among all spectators, no individual group exceeds the gathering limit that is currently in place for the region.



## Screening

NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Schools), states the following pertaining to screening:

- **Coaches/Athletic Staff:** the West Seneca School District will conduct daily health screenings of coaches and athletic staff, to be completed via online district reporting system or upon arriving to school each day
- **Students:** Upon arrival at school, Coaches will take athletes temperature and ask athletes a series of assessment questions. All information will be documented.
  - If an individual presents a temperature of greater than 100.4°F, the individual must be denied entry into the facility or sent directly to the athletic trainer's tent prior to being picked up or otherwise sent home.

## Cleaning and Disinfecting

In accordance with the NYSDOH "[Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID 19 Public Health Emergency](#)" (August 15, 2020) the following could be utilized for proper hygiene, cleaning and disinfecting (Pgs. 10-11):

- Responsible Parties must ensure adherence to hygiene and cleaning and disinfection requirements as advised by the CDC and DOH, including "[Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection of Public and Private Facilities for COVID-19](#)," and the "[STOP THE SPREAD](#)" poster, as applicable. Responsible Parties must maintain cleaning logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection.
- Responsible Parties must provide and maintain hand hygiene stations on site, as follows:
  - District will provide handwashing stations throughout the outdoor fields
  - Port-o-potties will be sanitized prior to all practices and games
- The district will provide appropriate cleaning and disinfection supplies for shared and frequently touched surfaces and encourage employees to use these supplies, following manufacturers' instructions, before and after use of these surfaces, followed by hand hygiene.
  - *The district has purchased disinfecting solution to be used as needed to shared equipment*
  - *The district has also purchased disinfecting wipes, cleaners and PPE to be used as needed when disinfecting surfaces or equipment*
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
  - *Hand sanitizer will be included in every medical kit for each team.*
  - *Students should utilize their own masks, however the school district will place a few back up masks in every med kit for emergency purposes.*
- Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

In accordance with the NYSDOH [“Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID 19 Public Health Emergency”](#) (August 15, 2020) the following could be utilized to ensure appropriate social distancing during interscholastic athletic participation.

### **Social distancing during Contests/Events/Activities**

#### a. Sidelines/benches

Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines/bench during contests and events. All coaches and athletes must wear a facemask while on the sidelines and at team benches

#### b. Who should be allowed at events?

Group people into tiers from essential to non-essential and decide which tiers will be allowed at an event:

1. Tier 1 (*Essential*): Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
2. Tier 2 (*Preferred*): Media – will not be permitted in the press box, the district will provide work stations along the sideline opposite the benched
3. Tier 3 (*Non-essential*): Two Spectators per athlete playing in the contest

## **Preventing Transmission**

The following information has been provided to State High School Athletic Associations by the National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) to minimize COVID-19 transmission for interscholastic athletic participation.

### **Considerations for Coaches:**

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment.
- *All West Seneca School District coaches and athletic staff will complete the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) prior to their season starting.*

<https://www.nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>



### **Pre and Post Game/ Contest Ceremony:**

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained at all times. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.

## Staying Home when Appropriate

- Educate staff and player families about when they should stay home and when they can return to activity.
  - Actively encourage sick staff, families, and players to stay home. Develop policies that encourage sick employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees aware of these policies.
  - Individuals, including coaches, players, and families, should stay home if they have tested positive for or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Individuals, including coaches, players, and families, who have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19 should also stay home and monitor their health.

## Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Teach and reinforce handwashing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer).
- Do not allow spitting and encourage everyone to cover their coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of their elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
  - **If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.**

## Face Coverings

- Teach and reinforce the use of cloth face coverings. Face coverings are not intended to protect the wearer, but rather to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 from the person wearing the mask (who may not have any symptoms of disease). Face coverings may be challenging for players (especially younger players) to wear while playing sports. Face coverings should be worn by coaches, youth sports staff, officials, parents, and spectators as much as possible.
- Wearing cloth face coverings is most important when physical distancing is difficult.
- People wearing face coverings should be reminded to not touch the face covering and to wash their hands frequently. Information should be provided to all participants on the proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings.
  - Note: Cloth face coverings should not be placed on:
    - Babies and children younger than 2 years old;
    - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious;
    - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance.

# Sport Specific Information

## Cross Country

The NYSDOH has determined that cross country is a low risk sport (greatest ability to maintain physical distance and/or be performed individually; greatest ability to (1) avoid touching of shared equipment, (2) clean and disinfect any equipment between uses by different individuals, or (3) not use shared equipment at all).

### **General Considerations:**

- Players MUST bring their own water
- No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps.
- Schools are encouraged to comply with NFHS Rule 8-5, that events contested with 4 or fewer teams be limited to a maximum of 12 participants from each team.
- Cross country meets should consider using staggered, wave or interval starts, with a minimum of one (1) minute.
- Meet organizers should take into account using FAT timing, course layout, use of waves, and social distancing in consideration of determining the size of an invitational meet.
- In non-dual meets, it is recommended athletes wear numbers for easy identification.
- It is recommended a course is 200 yards from the start line to the narrowing point.
- Possible Rule Modifications:
  - 8-1-3a: Consider widening the course to at least six feet at its narrowest point.
- Finish:
  - Consider using finish corrals and FAT timing for larger meets as easier to distance at finish.
  - With no FAT timing system consider alternative means of finish place and time to address congestion at finish line.
  - Consider using image-based equipment at finish to assist with picking place to avoid congestion.
- Event organizers should have a hydration plan for the end of the race.

### **Pre and Post Meet:**

- Establish cross country specific social distancing meet protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the match.
- The use of team tents on site is discouraged.
- Teams are expected to provide individual water for their athletes and discourage the use of water stations and open cups.

### **Considerations for Coaches:**

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.

**Considerations for Students:**

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Bring own water bottle.

**Considerations for Parents:**

- A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others:
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Spectators should not congregate around the finish area.
- In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), only two spectators per participant are permitted.

## Field Hockey

The NYSDOH has determined that field hockey is a moderate risk sport (limited ability to maintain physical distance and/or be done individually; limited ability to: (1) avoid touching of shared equipment, (2) clean and disinfect equipment between uses by different individuals, or (3) not use shared equipment at all).

### **General Considerations:**

- Players asked to bring their own ball, water, appropriate field hockey equipment, no equipment may be shared at anytime
- No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment including balls.
- Ball Retrievers should be placed on the opposite side of the team bench.
- Balls – Each player should bring their own ball or use the same school-issued ball during practice. Skill training, conditioning, agility, etc. can be done with the one player/one ball concept. Balls should be sanitized before and after each practice/game.

### **Pre and Post Game Ceremony:**

- Establish field hockey specific social distancing game protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the match.
- Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.
- Move the location of the pregame conference to center of the field. All individuals should maintain a social distance of six feet during the conference.
- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.

### **Considerations for Coaches:**

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.

### **Considerations for Students:**

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Bring own water bottle.

### **Considerations for Parents:**

- A family’s role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others:
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.

In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), only two spectators per participant are permitted.

## **Boys Soccer & Girls Soccer**

The NYSDOH has determined that soccer is a moderate risk sport (limited ability to maintain physical distance and/or be done individually; limited ability to: (1) avoid touching of shared equipment, (2) clean and disinfect equipment between uses by different individuals, or (3) not use shared equipment at all..

### **General Considerations:**

- Players asked to bring their own ball, water, and appropriate soccer equipment
- Pregame Conference (5-2-2d)
  - Limit attendees to head referee or center referee, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team. (Rule waiver)
  - Move the location of the pregame conference to center of the field. All individuals maintain a social distance of six feet.
  - Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Conference.
- Team Benches (1-5-1)
  - No linear bench area, adjust backward from the touch line.
- Substitution Procedures (3-4)
  - Maintain social distancing of six feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the center line. Hand sanitizer should be used prior to entering the game.
- Officials Table (6-2; 6-3)
  - Limit the table to essential personnel, including the home team scorer and timer. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential and may need to find an alternative location. Space availability at the table is a variable in determining the number of individuals permitted at the officials' table and observing social distancing requirements.
- Goalkeepers may not spit on their gloves. They can wet them with a water bottle. If the official determines this happen, gloves will be taken out of play. (NYSPHSAA Rule)
- A mandatory two (2) minute hydration/mask break will be taken at the first dead ball situation after the 20-minute mark. Players must stay on the field during the break and may remove their mask as long as they maintain social distancing. Substitutes who report to the table prior to the break taking place, may enter the game following the break. (Waiver of the NFHS Rule)
- The use of a dropped ball is suspended. To replace this procedure, an indirect kick will be awarded to the team whom the referees deemed to be in possession at the time of stoppage. (Waiver of the NFHS Rule)

### **Pre and Post Match Ceremony**

- Suspend the pregame world cup introduction line and send players to their field positions with bench personnel lined up on the touch line (six feet apart) for introductions.
- Suspend post game protocol of shaking hands.

## **Soccer Rules Interpretations**

- Rule 4-1 EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES
  - No hard material should be worn on face covering.
  - Gloves are permissible.
- Rule 4-2 LEGAL UNIFORM
  - Long sleeves are permissible. (4-1-1)
  - Long pants are permissible. (4-1-1)
  - Under garments are permissible but must be of a similar length for the individual and a solid like color for team. (4-1-1d)
- Rule 5-3 OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT
  - By state association adoption, long-sleeved shirt/jackets are permissible. (5-1-3) (Waiver of the NFHS Rule)
  - Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
    - Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside.
    - Fox 40 Mini
    - Fox 40 Unisex Electronic - 3 tone
    - Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) – orange
    - Windsor - (3 tone) grey
    - Check the market for other choices
  - Gloves are permissible.

### **Considerations for Coaches:**

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed

### **Considerations for Students:**

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing)
- Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Bring own water bottle.

### **Considerations for Parents:**

- A family’s role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others:
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), only two spectators per participant are permitted.



## Girls Tennis

The NYSDOH has determined that tennis is a low risk sport (greatest ability to maintain physical distance and/or be performed individually; greatest ability to (1) avoid touching of shared equipment, (2) clean and disinfect any equipment between uses by different individuals, or (3) not use shared equipment at all).

### **General Considerations:**

- Players asked to bring their own water, tennis equipment.
- Maintain social distancing when changing ends.
- Consider spraying tennis balls briefly with a disinfectant spray (e.g., Lysol or Clorox) at the conclusion of play. Using new balls on a regular basis is encouraged. o When possible consider using one separate can of balls per player per match. Players should serve their own tennis balls throughout the match.
- Tennis practice equipment should be touched only by the coach and should be cleaned frequently. Use alcohol-based disinfectant to clean all tennis gear, including racquets, towels, target cones, ball machines, etc.
- Consider using a ball machine for giving lessons. Using ball tubes and basket pickups to pick up loose balls after a ball machine rotation also limits contact.
- Avoid using unnecessary equipment such as throw-down lines.

### **Considerations for Coaches:**

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “cohorts” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.

### **Considerations for Students:**

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Bring own water bottle.
- Use the racquet/foot to pick up balls and hit them to your opponent. Avoid using your hands to pick up the balls.
- If a ball from another court comes to you, send it back with a kick or with your racquet.

**Considerations for Parents:**

- A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others:
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Spectators should not congregate around a court without maintaining social distancing.
- In accordance with NYSDOH guidance (Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Sports and Recreation), only two spectators per participants are permitted.

## Frequently Asked Questions

(as of 9/10/20)

### **NYSPHSAA COVID-19 Response**

*Q: What is NYSPHSAA doing to address the ongoing COVID-19 crisis?*

A: The NYSPHSAA continues to work with state officials in response to the COVID-19 crisis. NYSPHSAA has also established a COVID-19 Task Force with member representatives to examine the impact of the virus and provide guidance and recommendations to NYSPHSAA member schools. The Task Force is comprised of NYSPHSAA staff, superintendents, athletic directors, principals, section executive directors, and athletic trainers within the NYSPHSAA membership. NYSPHSAA and its Task Force continue to analyze rules for each sport it sponsors to determine additional safety guidelines to minimize risk.

*Q: Where is the best source of information for interscholastic athletics related to the COVID-19 crisis?*

A: The NYSPHSAA has created a dedicated page on its website to provide up-to-date information related to the COVID-19 crisis. [www.nysphsaa.org](http://www.nysphsaa.org)

*Q: Who has the authority to amend or change the state issued guidance related to interscholastic athletics?*

A: State Officials (New York State Department of Health, New York State Education Department) are the only entities that have the authority to modify, amend or revise the guidance provided to schools. NYSPHSAA is required to follow state issued guidance. NYSPHSAA only has the authority to amend NYSPHSAA rules or regulations.

*Q: How often is the NYSPHSAA COVID-19 Task Force meeting?*

A: The Task Force meets as needed to ensure the most updated information can be examined and reviewed. The Task Force has met on June 10, June 30, July 16, August 25, and August 31. The committee will continue to meet as concerns arise during the 2020-21 school year.

*Q: How will NYSPHSAA decisions be made moving forward?*

A: Both the NYSPHSAA COVID-19 Task Force and NYSPHSAA Officers will be part of the decision making process between quarterly NYSPHSAA Executive/Central Committee meetings. The Task Force is a recommending body and will forward its recommendations to either the officers or Executive/Central Committees of NYSPHSAA. In the absence of quarterly Executive/Central Committee meetings, the NYSPHSAA Officers have the authority, as per the NYSPHSAA constitution, to approve recommendations as needed.

## Eligibility Standards & NYSED

*Q: If a student is fully remote, are they eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics?*

A: According to the New York State Education Department, a student may participate in interscholastic athletics if he/she is taking three courses plus physical education (Bona Fide Student) regardless of the education platform being utilized (fully remote, hybrid, etc.).

*Q: Do students need a physical exam to participate in the Fall interscholastic athletic season?*

A: No; NYSED has waived the physical exam requirement for students for the 2020 Fall season. According to the New York State Education Department, any student who had a physical during the 2018-19 or 2019-20 school year is eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics this Fall (2020) providing they submit an updated healthy history form to the district. At this time, no extension has been granted to Winter or Spring athletes.

*Q: Has the NYSPHSAA Transfer Rule been amended or revised because of the COVID-19 crisis?*

A: There have been no revisions to the current NYSPHSAA Transfer Rule.

*Q: Has the NYSED Athletic Placement Process (APP) been modified or revised as a result of the COVID19 crisis Testing?*

A: No revisions have been made to the APP. According to the New York State Education Department, students must complete all components of the Athletic Placement Process (APP) including a current physical, maturation test and physical fitness test.

*Q: Has the NYSED recommended any revisions to the Health History update?*

A: No revisions have been recommended for the Health History update form. According to the New York State Education Department, all students are required to provide the school district an updated health history form if they have not had an updated physical within 30 days of the season.

*Q: Will students be provided additional years of eligibility because of the COVID-19 crisis?*

A: As per the New York State Education Department's Duration of Competition Regulation, students are limited to 4 consecutive years of athletic eligibility upon entering the 9th grade (5 years for students who participate at the high school level as an 8th grader and 6 years for students who participate at the high school level as a 7th grader). Students are able to apply for an extension of eligibility, as per the regulation, if the student experiences an illness, accident or social/ emotional condition which causes the student to miss a semester of eligibility AND the illness, accident or social/ emotional condition requires the student to take additional semesters to graduate. The current interpretation is students who repeat a grade because of the COVID-19 crisis would not be candidates for an extension of eligibility since school has continued to occur and credits towards graduation have not been interrupted.

*Q: Can DASA training be conducted online?*

A: On March 20, 2020, the NYSED provided the following guidance on DASA training: "Some institutions of higher education and other organizations that provide the six clock hour Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) training are no longer holding classes in-person due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) public health emergency, preventing them from conducting the required minimum three clock hours of face-to-face instruction in the DASA training. To allow DASA training to continue, all approved DASA training providers, and institutions of

higher education that include the DASA training in their educator preparation program curricula, may offer the DASA training entirely online during the time period of the state of emergency in New York State for the COVID-19 virus.

## Fall 2020 Season

*Q: If the Fall sports season is interrupted, could the condensed seasons model still be considered?*

A: With regional differences, schools and areas will continue to be impacted differently by the COVID-19 crisis. If the Fall sports season is interrupted or impacted by the COVID-19 crisis then a condensed seasons plan could still be implemented. That decision will be made by the NYSPHSAA officers with the information available at that time.

*Q: Has the NYSPHSAA Seven Consecutive Day Rule been waived?*

A: The NYSPHSAA Officers waived the Seven Consecutive Day Rule starting on October 12, 2020. The rule was waived to allow schools and teams more days to complete Fall schedules. The Seven Consecutive Day Rule has also been waived for the entire Fall Sports Season II.

*Q: Can sections decide to move the Football and Volleyball seasons to a different time of the year?*

A: Yes; sections have the autonomy and authority to move any sport to a different season. The decision to move the football and volleyball (and fall competitive cheer) seasons to the Spring was already made by the NYSPHSAA officers on September 9th. This new season will be known as Fall Sports Season II and will commence on March 1st. The Fall Sports Season II will not include regionals or state championships.

*Q: Will there be Regionals and State Championships this Fall?*

A: No; NYSPHSAA Regionals and State championship events will not be conducted this Fall.

*Q: Can sections host a Sectional Championship this Fall?*

A: Yes; sections can host a Sectional Championship this Fall. Sections will have 15 weeks to conduct the Fall season and may schedule a Sectional Tournament following their regular season.

*Q: Will Modified and Junior Varsity athletics be permitted this Fall?*

A: The hosting of interscholastic athletics this Fall is at the sole discretion of the individual school district.

*Section One will determine if and when modified sports will be permitted in the fall season*

## Winter 2020-2021 Season

*Q: When can high-risk Winter sports start practicing and competing?*

A: NYSPHSAA announced November 30th has been approved as the official Winter sports start date. Winter sports must abide by the NYSDOH guidance on high risk sports; no games may be played until additional authorization is provided. See pages 6-7 for information on off-season conditioning practices.

The decision to conduct off-season conditioning practices is determined by the individual school districts.

*Q: Will there be Regionals and State Championships during the Winter Season?*

A: Yes, however it is subject to change.

## Fall Sports Season II

*Q: What is the Fall Sports Season II?*

A: The NYSPHSAA officers approved the creation of an additional season (Fall Sports Season II) to commence on March 1, 2021 to provide high risk fall sports (competitive cheer, football and volleyball) the opportunity to participate in a season. The sections have the responsibility to determine season end dates, however the NYSPHSAA officers have recommended the season end on May 1, 2021.

*Q: When can Fall Sports Season II start practicing and competing?*

A: NYSPHSAA announced March 1st has been approved as the official Fall Sports Season II start date. Fall Sports Season II sports must abide by the NYSDOH guidance on high risk sports; no games may be played until additional authorization is provided. See pages 6-7 for information on off-season conditioning practices. The decision to conduct off-season conditioning practices is determined by the individual school districts.

*Q: Can a student participate in the traditional Fall season, Winter season, Fall Sports Season II and the Spring season?*

A: Yes, a student may participate in all four seasons during the 2020-2021 school year assuming they meet all NYSPHSAA and NYSED eligibility requirements.

*Q: Will the NYSPHSAA practice requirements be adjusted for the Fall Sports Season II?*

A: No, students may represent their school after six practices in all sports with the exception of football and gymnastics which will require 10 practices.

*Q: Can other sports be added to the Fall Sports Season II?*

A: Other sports seasons may be added to Fall Sports Season II; this would be at the discretion of the individual sections.

*Section One will be adding Girls Swimming and Diving*

*Q: There appears to be a two week overlap between Fall Sports Season II and the Spring sports season. Can students participate in both seasons and will any practices carryover?*

A: Sections may allow students to participate in both seasons. The NYSPHSAA officers approved allowing three practices for all sports (4 for baseball) to carryover to the Spring sports season.

## Spring 2021 Season

*Q: When can high-risk Spring sports start practicing and competing?*

A: NYSPHSAA announced March 15th April 19th has been approved as the official Spring sports start date.

*Q: Will there be Regionals and State Championships during the Spring Season?*

A: Yes, however it is subject to change.

**For additional questions please contact:**

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