



Fall Sports 2021 Return to Play Competition Guidelines

The considerations outlined in this document are meant to provide guidance and mitigating strategies to operate interscholastic sports during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Member schools should follow state, district or school policy for sports and host school protocols during competition.

With the return to fall sports, normalization is being recommended with the following guidance:

- Full vaccination is strongly encouraged
- Follow Delaware DPH and [CDC](#) quarantine guidance
- Continue with appropriate hygiene – do not share water with others, avoid spitting and use hand sanitizer.
- Encourage social distancing
- Follow State, DPH and school guidelines for spectator limits
- Recommend the host school implement a "COVID Event Coordinator" (CEC) to oversee COVID-19 risk mitigation strategies compliance at each hosted athletic event **indoors**. The CEC may be the Athletic Director or designee (not a game day coach) at each athletic event.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice and competition in case contact tracing is needed.

Risk Mitigation Recommendations & Considerations	Sport		
	Cross Country, Field Hockey & Soccer	Football	Volleyball
Face coverings	N/A	N/A	Required. Reference Governor Carney's Announcement , DOE Emergency Order 815 , DHSS Emergency Order 4202
Ball sanitization	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ball Shaggers/Holders	Should maintain social distancing during contest.		
Pre-activity screenings	Follow local school policy		

Social distancing	Per CDC guidelines of 3 feet apart when possible	Per CDC guidelines of 3 feet apart when possible	Per CDC guidelines of 3 feet apart when possible
Pre/post game protocol	No pregame or post game handshakes. Social distancing should be maintained during pregame conferences. Only the head coach and one captain attending pregame conference. Member schools are encouraged to use a post game cheer to display sportsmanship and respect to their opponent.		
Locker room use	Teams should adhere to local school policy regarding locker room access.		
Hydration	Drinks should not be shared. Student athletes, coaches and officials are encouraged to bring their own water bottle. Using disposable cups and personal water bottles from a large central (Gatorade style) container is acceptable. Drinks/water should be prepped/handled by one volunteer so players with dirty hands do not accidentally contaminate water cooler spigot. Personal water bottles should be wiped down prior to filling.		
Spectator policies	Member schools should adhere to local school policies.		
Hand sanitization	Recommended as an effective risk mitigation strategy before, during, and after athletic activity.		
Self-awareness	Student athletes should notify their coach/athletic trainer/nurse when not feeling well and when not feeling well should stay home. If symptoms persist seek medical attention.		

FOOTBALL GAME DAY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Team Box**
 - Team box will be extended from ten-yard line to ten-yard line so social distancing can be maintained on the sideline for players only (80 yards of sideline space in total.) Coaches must remain restricted to the 25 yard lines.
 - Cones (made of soft, pliable material) or markings on the field may be used on the sidelines that maintain the social distance guidelines.
 - Only Team members can be in the team box. Everyone that is a team member and not in a uniform must have a team box pass. (Injured player with jersey only will count as uniform)
- **DURING GAME CONSIDERATIONS**
 - **Charged Time-Outs and Authorized Conferences**
 - Timeouts will be held inside the numbers and are limited to one coach, no more than three attendants and the eleven on field players. Social distancing id encouraged.

CROSS COUNTRY CONSIDERATIONS

General Considerations:

- Cross country meets can consider using staggered, wave or interval starts.
- 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.

VOLLEYBALL CONSIDERATIONS

Mask Use

Indoor Sports must wear face coverings while indoors. This mandatory face coverings guidance is in effect for all member schools as detailed in the [Governor's August 10, 2021 Announcement](#), [Department of Education Emergency Order 815](#) and [Department of Health and Social Services Emergency Order 4202](#).

- Warm-Ups
 - Standard Delaware warm-up times for varsity matches will occur: 5 minutes – each team on own side, 6 minutes on whole court for home team, 6 minutes on whole court for visitors
 - Warm-ups should not be directed towards the opponent's court.
 - When it is not a team's time on the court, they may not participate in any warm-up activity on the playing surface or any activity at all in the gym using a ball. (In other words, you can stretch behind your bench, etc. but you may not stretch off the end line, etc.)
 - In the event a sub-varsity contest follows the varsity, each team will have 5 minutes on the court (home team first) with the same restrictions as those for the Varsity warm-ups.
 - Warm-ups should be limited to eligible rostered players (including coaches, managers, team personnel, etc.).
- Team Benches
 - Teams will not switch sides during the match unless a clear and distinct advantage exists on one side of the court.
 - The determination of such an advantage will be determined by DIAA (via the state interpreter) prior to the start of the season if the situation is identified in advance. It is requested that any facility which has such a potential situation submit notification to DIAA one week prior to the start of the regular season. Visiting teams and officials will be notified of the ruling. If the officials determine a clear and distinct advantage which had not been previously identified is present, the officials will make the final determination for that contest. DIAA will then be notified of the situation to make a permanent ruling for the facility.

- If a clear and distinct advantage is identified (per the above procedure), there may be a need to switch sides and teams must be prepared to physically distance and sanitize accordingly. In some cases, the home team may be required to play on the disadvantageous side for all sets.
- No exception may be made to the team benches to allow seating between the attack line and the center line.
- Pre-Match Conference
 - No coin toss will take place at the pre-match conference. As teams will not switch sides during the match unless a clear and distinct disadvantage exists on one side of the court, the home team will have the choice of bench area (and thus playing side). The visiting team will then have choice of serve or receive for the first set and make the call for the deciding set coin toss.
- Uniforms
 - In accordance with the rules, players are permitted to wear long sleeves or tights under their uniform jersey and shorts. These undergarments should match the color of the uniform jersey or shorts respectively.
- Line Judges
 - Properly trained line judges must be supplied by each team unless mutually agreed upon to be supplied by only one team. It is expected that schools will assume the responsibility to provide adequate training in advance of the match.
 - Flags should be properly sanitized between use.
- Scorers' Table
 - Only the official scorer, libero tracker, and timer shall be seated at the table unless ample space exists for additional personnel from the opposing team. It is highly recommended if there is room for proper distancing in the bleachers or on the floor behind the table, a scorer from the opposing team be located there to assist if necessary.
- Start of Match
 - At the start of the match, players should immediately proceed to their respective positions. They will not line up on the end line prior to the start of the first set and no handshakes, fist bumps or high fives or other such exchanges should take place between opposing teams.
- Coaching Area
 - If standing, coaches may stand beyond the end line near the team bench area and as far as the full length of the team bench.
 - Bench personnel must maintain proper distance from all officials and assistant officials (line judges, scorers, etc.) at all times.

- Coaches must stay at least three feet from the court during play and may not go behind the end line or above the attack line.
- Spectators
 - If spectators are permitted in the facility, they should not be seated in the first two rows of the gym, at minimum. In some facilities, a restriction may need to be placed on additional rows.
 - When conditions allow, it is recommended that spectators not be seated behind teams (and should be seated on the opposite side of the gym where possible).
- Ball Rotation
 - A ball rotation system (minimum 3 balls) is recommended.
 - When game balls should be switched (at time-outs, every so many points, etc.) will be determined during pre-game conference.
- Deciding Set Coin Toss
 - Should there be a need for a fifth set in the varsity contest or a third set in a sub-varsity contest, one captain from each team will participate in the coin toss at a location determined by the second referee. This coin toss will be to determine choice of serve or receive only when teams are not switching benches in the contest. In the rare circumstance where other bench procedures are necessary, the coin toss may also be used to determine choice of side.
- Conclusion of Match
 - At the conclusion of the match, team members on the court shall immediately proceed to their bench area. No handshakes, fist bumps or high-fives or other such exchanges should take place between opposing teams.