



Recommendations to Return to Sports after Covid-19

Revised: 02/21'

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented athletics across the world with a myriad of challenges. The COVID-19 virus is a highly contagious illness that primarily attacks the upper respiratory system. The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages. Research from the Centers for Disease Control, among others, has found that while children do get infected by COVID-19, relatively few children with COVID-19 are hospitalized. However, some severe outcomes have been reported in children, and a child with a mild or even asymptomatic case of COVID-19 can spread the infection to others who may be far more vulnerable. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families.

SJCA will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from the federal, state, and local governments, CDC, PA DOH, as well as the NFHS and PIAA. SJCA realizes the knowledge regarding COVID-19 is constantly changing as new information and treatments become available. These recommendations will be adjusted as needed as new information becomes available in order to decrease the risk of exposure for our staff, students, and spectators.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for **ALL LEVELS** for Junior and Senior High Athletics

1. Athletes, Coaches, and Staff will undergo a COVID-19 health screening prior to any practice, event, or team meeting. The type of screening will be dependent upon the available resources and the Phase level. The purpose is to check for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The screenings could range from a verbal/written questionnaire to a temperature check. Temperatures at 100.4 or higher will be sent home.
2. Promote healthy hygiene practices such as hand washing (20 seconds with warm water and soap) and employees wearing a cloth face covering as feasible. (Face coverings are recommended to help decrease potential exposure to COVID-19 respiratory droplets by an infected individual. Face Coverings will not be used for athletes while practicing or competing.) Hand Sanitizer will be available for team use as resources allow.
3. Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation in all facilities
4. Encourage social distancing through increased spacing, small groups, and limited mixing between groups, if feasible
5. Educate Athletes, Coaches, and Staff on health and safety protocols
6. Anyone who is sick must stay home
7. Plan in place if a student or employee gets sick – go home. (If student, call parent/guardian).
8. Regularly communicate and monitor developments with local authorities, employees, and families regarding cases, exposures, and updates to policies and procedures
9. Athletes and Coaches **MUST** provide their own water bottle for hydration. Water bottles must not be shared.
10. PPE (gloves, masks, eye protection) will be used as needed and situations warrant or determined by local/state governments.
11. Identify Staff and students who may be at a higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 due to underlying medical conditions. (See – CDC “People Who are at a Higher Risk for Severe Illness”)
12. Concession stands or other food must adhere to the Guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry.



CLASSIFICATION OF SPORTS

High 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. Examples: football, wrestling, cheerleading (stunts), dance

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 that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants. Examples: basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, ice hockey, tennis, pole vault, high jump, long jump, 7 on 7 football

Low Risk: Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between uses by competitors. Examples: running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, weightlifting, sideline cheer

** High/Moderate Risk Sports may move to a Low Risk category with non-contact modifications. Team Activities should be limited to individual skill development drills that maintain social distancing.

LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Level 1 (PA State Red)

Team Activities: No In-person gatherings allowed, Athletes and Coaches may communicate via online meetings (zoom, google meet, etc.), Athletes may participate in individual home workouts including strength and conditioning.

- All school facilities remain closed as per PA State Guidelines.
- Athletes and Coaches should abide by guidelines set forth by the local and state governments.

Level 2 (PA State Yellow or Green - once permitted by PIAA)

Team Activities may include: team meetings, open gym, kick around, weight training/conditioning, running events, cross country, throwing events, swimming, golf, and sideline cheer, etc.

Pre-workout Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. The screenings could range from a verbal/written questionnaire to a temperature check. (See Appendix for COVID-19 Screening Form)
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional. A clearance may be required to return to play.



Limitations on Gatherings:

- No gathering of more than (25 Yellow - 250 Green) individuals per group including coaches per practice area.
- Controlled non-contact practices only, modified game rules
- Social Distancing should be applied during practices and in locker rooms and gathering areas.

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and post workouts and team gatherings, high touch areas should be cleaned more often
- Weight Room Equipment should be wiped down after an individual's use
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces

Physical Activity:

- Lower risk sports practices may begin
- Modified practices may begin for Moderate and High risk sports (practices must remain non-contact and include social distancing where applicable, activity should focus on individual skill development)
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary
- Hand Sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar

Hydration:

- Students **MUST** bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water coolers, water fountains, water cows, water troughs, etc.) should not be utilized

Level 3 (PA State Green - once permitted by PIAA)

Team activities may include: basketball, volleyball, baseball, softball, soccer, ice hockey, tennis, pole vault, high jump, long jump, 7 on 7 football, etc.

Pre-workout/Contest Screening:

- Any person who has COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to participate in practice/games and should contact their primary care physician or another appropriate health-care provider. A clearance may be required to return to play.
- COVID-19 Screenings (Questionnaire and Temperature Checks may continue as per State and Local government recommendations)
- Team attendance should be recorded



Limitations on Gatherings:

- As per State and Local Guidelines
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, social distancing should be considered and applied when able

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and post workouts and team gatherings, high touch areas should be cleaned more often
- Weight Room Equipment should be wiped down after and individual's use
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- Low, Moderate, and High Risk practices and Low and Moderate Risk competitions may begin (As per State, Local, and PIAA Guidelines)
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies.
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary
- Hand Sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar

Hydration:

- Students MUST bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration Stations may be used but MUST be cleaned after every practice/event.

Level 4 (PA State Green - once permitted by PIAA)

Team Activities include: Low/Moderate Sports may resume. High Risk Sports (Football, Wrestling, and Cheerleading Stunting) may begin full person to person contact and competition.

Pre-workout/Contest Screening:

- Any person who has COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to participate in practice/games, and should contact their primary care physician or another appropriate health-care provider.
- COVID-19 Screenings (Questionnaire and Temperature Checks may continue as per State and Local government recommendations)
- Team attendance should be recorded

Limitations on Gatherings:

- As per State and Local Guidelines
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, social distancing should be considered and applied when able



Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable disease
- Athletic Facilities should be cleaned prior to arrival and post workouts and team gatherings, high touch areas should be cleaned more often
- Weight Room Equipment should be wiped down after and individual's use
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- All sports may resume normal practice and competition
- Students should refrain from sharing clothing/towels and should be washed after each practice, including pinnies.
- Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) should be cleaned intermittently during practice and events as deemed necessary
- Hand Sanitizer should be used periodically as resources allow
- Spotters for maximum weight lifts should be stationed at each end of the bar

Hydration:

- Students **MUST** bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration Stations may be used but **MUST** be cleaned after every practice/event.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Travel:

- Pennsylvania Department of Health travel guidelines state: If you travel out of the state for any reason, you must quarantine for 10 days or receive a negative test within 72 hours of your return to the state. If you choose to get tested upon returning, or are waiting for test results, you must quarantine for 10 days, or until receipt of a negative test result, whichever comes first.

Transportation:

Modifications for student/coach transportation to and from athletic events may be necessary. This may include:

- Reducing the number of students/coaches on a bus/van
- Using hand sanitizer upon boarding a bus/van
- Social distancing on a bus

These potential modifications will be determined by the school district, bus companies, Department of Education, State and Local governments.

Social Distancing during Contests/Events/Activities

- Sidelines/Bench – appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines/bench during contests and events, as deemed necessary by the school, PIAA, state and local governments. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.



Who should be allowed at events?

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

1. Tier 1 (Essential) – Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
2. Tier 2 (Preferred) – Media
3. Tier 3 (Non-essential) – Spectators, vendors
 - Only Tier 1 and 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events until state/local governments lift restrictions on mass gatherings.
 - Changes to seating capacity and social distancing may be necessary for each venue facility and will be determined as more recommendations are released by the local/state governments.

Overnight/Out of State Events/ Events in COVID-19 Hot Spots

- SJCA will evaluate each event and follow all local/state government guidelines on a case by case basis. Every consideration will be taken as to not expose students to unnecessary or potential high risk exposure.

POSITIVE CASES AND COACHES, STAFF, OR ATHLETES SHOWING COVID-19 SYMPTOMS

What are the signs and symptoms of COVID-19?

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The symptoms may range from mild to severe. (See CDC Fact Sheet in Appendix). Symptoms may include:

- Fever or chills (100.4 or High)
- 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

What to do if you are sick?

- If you are sick with COVID-19 or think you are infected with the virus, **STAY AT HOME**. It is essential that you take steps to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home or community. If you think you have been exposed to COVID-19 and develop a fever and symptoms, call your healthcare provider for medical advice.
- Notify the school immediately (principal, athletic director, athletic trainer, coach)
- It will be determined if others who may have been exposed (students, coaches, staff) need to be notified, isolated, and /or monitored for symptoms
- If a Positive case of COVID-19 is Diagnosed Contact Tracing will be implemented with the assistance of local health professionals and the CDC/PA DOH. See Information in Appendix.



What to do if a student or staff become ill with COVID-19 symptoms during practice, event, or during transportation to or from an event?

- Every effort will be made to isolate the ill individual from others, until the student or staff member can leave the school or event
- If student, parent/guardian will be contacted immediately, and arrangements will be made for the student to be picked up
- Ill individual will be asked to contact their physician or appropriate healthcare professional for direction

If a student-athlete has had close contact with a known COVID-infected individual, they should:

- Stay home and self-quarantine. Close contact is defined as within 6 feet for more than 15 minutes.
- Call your family physician to discuss the length of self-quarantine and determine if a COVID test is needed. CDC guidelines recommend self-quarantine for 14 days after exposure to the infected individual. Quarantine can end at day 10 without testing if you have had no symptoms during the 10 day monitoring period. Quarantine can end at day 7 if you have had no symptoms for the 7 day monitoring period, tested 48 hours before the end of quarantine (day 5), and receive negative test results.
- If a COVID test is needed, continue to self-quarantine until the test results are returned.
- If the test results are negative and they have remained symptom-free, the student/school employee may return to SJCA.

Return of student or staff to athletics following a COVID-19 diagnosis?

- Student or staff needs to have medical clearance from their physician or appropriate healthcare professional to return to sport, determined to be non-contagious, Fever free (without fever-reducing medicine), improvement in respiratory symptoms (cough, shortness of breath), no vomiting or diarrhea.

EDUCATION

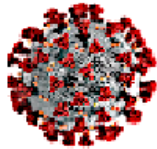
Staff, Coaches, Parents and Athletes will be educated on the following (through posters, flyers, meetings, emails, phone calls):

- COVID-19 signs and symptoms
- Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (hand washing, cough in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, social distancing, avoid touching eyes, nose, face and mouth, no spitting, gum chewing, etc.)
- No Handshakes/Celebrations (high fives, fist/elbow bumps, chest bumps, hugging), etc.
- The content of this Return to Sport Guidelines Document
- Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by state/local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.
- students should come dressed for activity
- Limit indoor activities and the areas used. Locker room use is not permitted Facility showers cannot be used
- Student Athletes should remain with their assigned groups during each workout and during daily workouts to limit the number of people they come in contact with.
- No students allowed in training areas without the presence of an athletic trainer



APPENDIX

What you should know about COVID-19 to protect yourself and others



Know about COVID-19

- Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an illness caused by a virus that can spread from person to person.
- The virus that causes COVID-19 is a new coronavirus that has spread throughout the world.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild (or no symptoms) to severe illness.



Know how COVID-19 is spread

- You can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet or two arm lengths) with a person who has COVID-19. COVID-19 is primarily spread from person to person.
- You can become infected from respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- You may also be able to get it by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it, and then by touching your mouth, nose, or eyes.



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- There is currently no vaccine to protect against COVID-19. The best way to protect yourself is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.
- Stay home as much as possible and avoid close contact with others.
- Wear a cloth face covering that covers your nose and mouth in public settings.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.



Practice social distancing

- Buy groceries and medicine, go to the doctor, and complete banking activities online when possible.
- If you must go in person, stay at least 6 feet away from others and disinfect items you must touch.
- Get deliveries and takeout, and limit in-person contact as much as possible.



Prevent the spread of COVID-19 if you are sick

- Stay home if you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Avoid public transportation, ride-sharing, or taxis.
- Separate yourself from other people and pets in your home.
- There is no specific treatment for COVID-19, but you can seek medical care to help relieve your symptoms.
- If you need medical attention, call ahead.



Know your risk for severe illness

- Everyone is at risk of getting COVID-19.
- Older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions may be at higher risk for more severe illness.



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WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING?

BACKGROUND

Contact tracing is the process of reaching out to anyone who came into close contact with an individual who is positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing helps monitor close contacts for symptoms and to determine if they need to be tested. Contact tracing is a key strategy for preventing the further spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

WHAT DOES THIS PROCESS LOOK LIKE?

- In contact tracing, public health staff work with a case to help them recall everyone they have had close contact with during the time they were infectious.
- Public health staff then inform individuals who have had close contact (e.g. “close contacts”) that they have potentially been exposed to COVID-19. Close contacts are only told that they may have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19; they are not told who may have exposed them.
- Close contacts are given education, information and support so they understand their risk. They receive information on what they should do to separate themselves from others who have not been exposed, how to monitor themselves for illness, and are made aware that they could possibly spread the infection to others, even if they do not feel sick.
- Close contacts will be asked to quarantine themselves and are encouraged to stay home and maintain social distancing through the end of their infectious period, which is about 14 days, in case they become sick. They should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice a day and watch for any other symptoms of COVID-19. Public health staff will check in with these contacts to make sure they are self-monitoring and have not developed symptoms.
- If a close contact develops symptoms, they should isolate themselves and let public health staff know. The close contact will be evaluated to see if they need medical care. A test may be necessary unless the individual is already in a household or long-term care facility with a confirmed case, then the close contact would be considered a probable case without a test.

WHAT TERMS SHOULD I KNOW WHEN IT COMES TO CONTACT TRACING?

- A **case** is a patient who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. A case should isolate themselves, meaning they should stay away from other people who are not sick to avoid spreading the illness.
- A **close contact** is an individual who had close contact (within 6 feet with no mask for more than 15 minutes) with a case while the case was infectious. A close contact should quarantine themselves, meaning they should stay at home to limit community exposure and self-monitor for symptoms.
- A **contact of a close contact** is an individual who had or continues to have contact with a close contact. A contact of a close contact should take all regular preventative actions, like washing hands, covering coughs and sneezes, and cleaning surfaces frequently. A contact of a close contact should be alert for symptoms.



RESOURCES

NFHS: Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities (per update on May 2020)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Website: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html)
“What You Should Know About COVID-19 to Protect Yourself and Others”,
“Schools Decision Tree”

PA Department of Health Website: [health.pa.gov](https://www.health.pa.gov)

“Coronavirus Symptoms”

“What is Contact Tracing”

“Phased Reopening Plan by Governor Wolf”

A Guide to Re-Entry to Athletics in Texas Secondary Schools

By Jamie Woodall, MPH, LAT, ATC, CPH and Josh Woodall Med, LAT, ATC

Guidance for All Sports Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletes, and the Public

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/sports-guidance/>

Concession stands or other food must adhere to the Guidance for Businesses in the Restaurant Industry.

<https://www.governor.pa.gov/covid-19/restaurant-industry-guidance/>