



# Rules Modifications & Guidelines

## Volleyball

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.

- **Benches** – No benches should be used during practice. Players' items should be separated as below for personal items, at least 6 feet apart. Benches should be permitted only during games.
- **Practice Court** – Only essential personnel are permitted on the practice/competition court. 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 area of play.
- **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.

During play when spacing between players 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 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 court 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 and licking fingers 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 referee 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 court 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 court prior to being introduced. Introductions are suggested to be limited or eliminated to decrease time of athletes on the court. The National Anthem may be played before competition.

- **Ball Retrievers** – Ball retrievers for any sport ARE NOT permitted. See sport specific modifications for extra ball placement procedures.
- **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.).

- **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 must be sanitized before and after each practice/game. Sport specific modifications also list other ball cleaning practices during competition.
- **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 your 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.
- 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.

## Volleyball Specific Modifications

### **Pre-match:**

- All equipment is to be set up to meet NFHS rule regulations (net height, ball pressure) and must be sanitized prior to the visiting team's arrival to the playing area.
- Benches and warm up areas should be marked to indicate 6 feet of spacing between participants.
- Scoring table may need to be extended to accommodate 3 people, 6 feet apart.
- Game balls - minimum of 6 should be set apart from other balls
- Home team will choose side to play on.
- Each team will provide their own balls for warmup.
- Tape will be applied to the floor 3 feet from the centerline on each side of the net.

### **Pre-match Conference:**

- Limit attendees to the head coach from each team, first referee and second referee.
- The pre-match conference will take place at center court (with face coverings) with one coach and one referee positioned on each side of the net. All four individuals are to maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
- Teams warming up are required to be beyond the attack lines and their extensions during pre-match conference to provide for social distancing.

### **Pre-match Administration:**

- Suspend roster requirements
- Suspend requirement for written scorer and or libero tracker, if untrained or school system has a "no paper" mandate.
- Visual scoreboard is required.

### **Team Benches:**

- Teams will remain on the same side of court throughout the match.
- In the event there is a clear and distinct disadvantage (i.e. sun), home teams should consider scheduling start times to reduce the disadvantage.
- Team members shall be seated or standing 6 feet apart. Consideration should be given for use of bleachers behind the bench. Teams will be allowed to "curl" beyond the end line if their position does not interfere with play.

### **Warmup protocol:**

- When a team does not have exclusive use of the court they will social distance and will not use balls.

### **Start of Play Protocol:**

- Starting players will go to their starting positions and not the endline for the first and all sets of the match.
- Once the lineup is confirmed by the R2. The R1 will double whistle and waive indicating players should waive a hand toward their opponent to acknowledge “good luck”.

#### During play:

- Substitutions will take place at the attack line
- Player entering the match will stand at the extension of the attack line (approximately 6’). Players leaving the match will stand near the sideline. There is to be no contact during substitution exchange.
- There are to be no team huddles or any physical contact (high fives, fist bumps)
- Time outs require social distancing of 6 feet.
- Balls are to be replaced with a clean ball after every rally. This task is to be completed by an adult
- To reduce intermittent contact with opponents, front row plays will be restricted from traditionally attacking the ball while the ball is above or in front of the 3-foot line

#### Deciding Set Procedures:

- The deciding set coin toss will take place at center court. It shall be limited to one team captain and the second referee maintaining the appropriate social distance of 6 feet.
- A coin toss, called by the home team, will decide serve/receive.

#### End of Match Protocol:

- After the last point of the match is scored, the R1 will signal end of match.
- The R1 will then double whistle and waive indicating players should waive a hand toward their opponent to acknowledge “nice match”.

#### Other considerations:

- Line judges will not be used
- Each participant is limited to one personal bag.
- An area should be designated for officials to store their personal bag.
- Officials shall use electronic whistles.

**EDUCATIONAL ATHLETICS**

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