



# **Southern Lehigh School District**

## **Return to Competition Athletics Health and Safety Plan**

**Updated  
March 2021**

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## **Introduction**

The goal of the Southern Lehigh School District Return to Competition Athletics Health and Safety Plan is to provide recommendations for the resocialization of sport with regard to practice and competition, keeping in mind the health and safety of our secondary school athletes, coaches, district staff, parents/guardians, and overall Southern Lehigh School District community.

## **Benefits of Sport**

Participation in sport has known health benefits, including promoting physical fitness and mental wellness. Sports provide a social construct and interaction which is necessary in a time of uncertainty for the Southern Lehigh School District student-athletes. It is widely recognized that physical activity, performed for the right amount of time and intensity can provide benefits to the immune system. In addition, sports can provide a template for young athletes to learn concepts of teamwork, leadership, work ethic and integrity.

## **Inherent Risk of Sport**

Participation in sports involves unavoidable exposure to an inherent risk of physical injury. It is important to recognize that rule books, safety guidelines and equipment standards, while helpful means of promoting safe athletics participation, are themselves insufficient to accomplish this goal. To effectively minimize the risks of injury from athletics participation, everyone involved in athletics must understand and respect the intent and objectives of applicable rules, guidelines, and standards.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has presented local and national athletic programs with a myriad of distinct challenges. The virus that causes COVID-19 can infect people of all ages and has been proven to be a highly contagious infection that primarily affects the upper respiratory system. While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of furthering the spread of COVID-19, the current science suggests that there are steps that institutions can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and the community.

The Southern Lehigh School District will take the necessary precautions and recommendations from federal, state, and local health and safety authorities including [the Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#), Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH), the [Pennsylvania Department of Education \(PDE\)](#), as well as the [National Federation of State High School Associations \(NFHS\)](#) and the [Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association \(PIAA\)](#). As more public health information becomes available, the SLSD will work with local health and safety agencies and the PIAA to release further guidance which could impact the fall, winter, and/or spring seasons. These recommendations will be adjusted as new information becomes available in order to ensure a decreased risk of exposure for our staff, students, and the community. In addition to the guidance and recommendations present in the Southern Lehigh School District Return to Competition Athletics Health and Safety Plan, the SLSD Athletic Department will follow the information outlined in the Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan. The recommendations discussed throughout this plan are meant as general guidelines that reflect current federal, state, and local health and safety guidelines and recommendations. Additionally, the Southern Lehigh School District may place stricter criteria than what is listed in this document pending health and safety guidance

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## General Information

- All Southern Lehigh School District students and staff will be required to complete a [Daily Health Screener](#) as a critical component of the SLSD Health and Safety Plan. All SLSD student-athletes will undergo an additional health screening process prior to the start of practice or a competition. This additional health screening is being completed in accordance with recommendations from the St. Luke's University Health Network Sports Medicine Team due to the increased level of physical contact present in interscholastic athletics. Fundamental health screening criteria are as follows:
  - If a SLSD student-athlete or staff member has a temperature of 100.0 or higher or an individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 they will immediately be isolated and sent home.
  - All SLSD student-athletes and staff **MUST** stay home and not attend athletic practice if they have a temperature of 100.0 or higher or are showing symptoms of COVID-19. Any student athlete or staff member exhibiting symptoms related to COVID-19 should seek medical guidance.
  - Additional health and safety guidelines are outlined within this plan if student-athletes or staff begin to demonstrate [symptoms of COVID-19](#).
- Per the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Covering \(November 17, 2020\)](#), all Southern Lehigh School District student-athletes and coaching staff are required to wear a mask or face covering **AT ALL TIMES**.
  - All SLSD student-athletes **MUST** wear masks or face-coverings during all pre and post sports activities (busing, travel to and from fields/sites, etc.)
  - All SLSD student-athletes **MUST** wear masks or face-coverings at **ALL TIMES** while participating in indoor physical activity (gym, fitness center, or group fitness classes) where another person or persons who are not members of the individual's household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance unless a student with disabilities whose IEP or 504 teams have granted an exception per Section III of the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Covering \(November 17, 2020\)](#).
  - SLSD student-athletes **MUST** wear masks or face coverings while participating in outdoor physical activity with others who are not members of a person's household and are unable to maintain sustained or consistent physical distance unless a student with disabilities whose IEP or 504 teams have granted an exception per Section III of the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Covering \(November 17, 2020\)](#).
    - During all Colonial League Competitions, Southern Lehigh student athletes and coaches will follow the face covering guidelines outlined in the [Colonial League Spring 2021 Game Day Action Plans](#).
    - During all Non-League Competitions, Southern Lehigh student athletes and coaches will follow the face covering guidelines set by the associated league.
  - It is expected that all adult staff (coaches, athletic trainers, etc.) wear masks or face coverings **AT ALL TIMES** both indoors and outdoors in accordance with the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#).
  - There are no color restrictions on masks or face coverings; however masks or face coverings

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must adhere to Southern Lehigh School District Code of Conduct requirements and Restriction on Advertisements or Sponsors Names on Uniforms policy, as adopted by the PIAA Board of Directors.

- All SLSD student-athletes and staff **MUST** cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- The SLSD encourages all student-athletes to regularly and thoroughly wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - The SLSD Athletic Department will emphasize to all participants the importance of washing hands or using hand sanitizer before, during, and after competitions.
- The SLSD will follow the School Board approved cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfection plan established in the District Health and Safety Plan to ensure that the athletic facilities have been properly sanitized, that hand sanitizer is available, and reserve disposable face coverings are available for practices and competitions should they be needed.
- The SLSD will ensure appropriate cleaning and disinfecting of frequently touched surfaces and equipment including balls will occur in a manner that follows health and safety recommendations.
- The SLSD will follow appropriate social distancing guidelines of **AT LEAST 6 FEET** at all times, whenever feasible, including during the National Anthem and while student-athletes and coaches are on the sidelines. Student athletes should refrain from hugging, high fiving, shaking hands, or fist bumping for support/encouragement.
- The SLSD Athletic Department will extend sideline or team areas for outdoor and indoor sports to ensure appropriate social distancing of **AT LEAST 6 FEET** is achievable. All indoor sports may need to use additional locations within facilities including bleachers or multiple levels of seating to ensure appropriate social distancing of **AT LEAST 6 FEET** is achievable.
- The SLSD Athletic Department has an established hydration plan within the Return to Competition Athletic Health and Safety Plan. Within that plan is an ability to provide water to student-athletes and coaches in a safe manner in the event of an emergency. The SLSD Athletic Department will coordinate with visiting teams to ensure that they have safe access to water for their participants during competition.
- If a positive COVID-19 case is determined, the SLSD Athletic Department will follow the Board Approved Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan, the Pennsylvania Department of Health Guidelines, CDC, and local health guidance in determining the plan of action.

## STUDENT-ATHLETES

- SLSD Athletic Teams should create a plan that meets the equipment needs for each sport that each student-athlete is responsible for their own athletic supplies and equipment, when feasible.
- Student-athletes should wear their own sport appropriate workout clothing and all student-athletes are **NOT** permitted to share clothing. Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned following every workout, practice, or competition.
- The SLSD Athletic Department will ensure that hand sanitizer is available at all practices and contests.
- All SLSD student-athletes will communicate with their coaches immediately when they are not feeling well or are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19. SLSD Coaches will **IMMEDIATELY** contact the Athletic Director or the Athletic Trainer to notify him of any situation where a student-athlete or staff

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member is demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19.

- Student-athletes should keep their mouth guards in their mouth for the duration of all workouts, practices, and competitions. If the mouth guard is taken out proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. The St. Luke's University Health Network Athletic Training Staff will outline how to properly disinfect mouthguards. Hands should also be washed or disinfected.
- The PIAA encourages that all student-athletes are encouraged to develop healthy habits including, but not limited to, a balanced diet, adequate sleep, and proper hydration.
  - Healthy eating and attention to hydration is especially important for student-athletes to enhance training capacity and reduce the risk of illness and injury.
- All SLSD student-athletes and staff **MUST** bring their own water or sports drink to all team activities (practice, workout, competition); Student-athletes and staff are **NOT** permitted to share water or sports drinks for the duration of the pandemic.
  - High school athletes are at increased risk for dehydration. It is important that all student-athletes drink enough fluid before, during and after practice and competition.
  - SLSD athletic teams will have access to bottled water for those who run out of water or do not have access to water. Each student-athlete will be **REQUIRED** to bring at least 64 oz (half gallon) of water to all practices and games. The Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Department will provide **EMERGENCY** refill stations at each practice and game facility. The refill station can **ONLY** be accessed by a coach or athletic trainer.
  - Please see National Athletic Trainer Association (NATA) Resource: [Healthy Hydration For Young Athletes](#)
- All SLSD student-athletes and staff should refrain from congregations in groups.
- No student-athletes are permitted in training areas without the presence of an Athletic Trainer.
- No whirlpool or hot/cold tubs should be used for the duration of the pandemic.
  - The St. Luke's Athletic Training Staff would make an exception for use in accordance with the SLSD Emergency Action Plan related to heat illness. Student-athletes are encouraged to shower as quickly as possible at the conclusion of a workout, practice, and competition.
- Student-athletes attending school in-person will have access to the after-school student-athlete study hall if they are in need of supervision prior to the start of their practice. Each team will be assigned a designated area in the HS cafeteria.
- All Southern Lehigh School District student-athletes and coaches will be asked to complete Return to Athletics Pledge outlining the District's mitigation strategies and expectations before participating. Student-athletes and coaches who cannot follow these guidelines will be prevented from participating. Student-athletes who cannot follow these guidelines will be prevented from participating.
- All Southern Lehigh School District student-athletes will follow the St. Luke's University Health Network graduated return to play protocol outlined in the SLUHN [Cardiac Screening and Return to Play Guidelines for Athletes following COVID-19](#).

## COACHES

- All SLSD coaches must complete the [Daily Health Screening](#) prior to attending athletic practice, workouts, or competition on a daily basis. If the individual has a temperature of 100.0 or higher, the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is sick, they **MUST** stay home.

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- All SLSD coaching staff must follow the guidelines present in the Southern Lehigh School District Return to Competition Athletics Health and Safety Plan. Coaches **MUST** communicate these guidelines in a clear manner to student-athletes during practices, workouts, and competition.
- When feasible, all SLSD staff should consider conducting workouts and or practices in cohorts or **PODS** where the same group of student-athletes is always training and rotating together during the practice. The use of practice cohorts or **PODS** will ensure a more limited likelihood of potential exposure if a student-athlete or staff member develops symptoms COVID-19.
- SLSD coaching staff **MUST** develop a system to ensure accurate records of student-athletes and staff who attend each practice, workout, or competition in the event that contact tracing is needed following a COVID-19 exposure.
- When feasible, all SLSD coaching staff should limit the size of competition teams in order to ensure greater compliance with established social distancing guidelines while engaged in competition.
- All SLSD student-athletes and staff **MUST** bring their own water or sports drink to all team activities (practice, workout, competition); Student-athletes and staff are **NOT** permitted to share water or sports drinks for the duration of the pandemic.
  - High school athletes are at increased risk for dehydration. It is important that all student-athletes drink enough fluid before, during and after practice and competition.
  - SLSD athletic teams will have access to bottled water for those who run out of water or do not have access to water. Each student-athlete will be **REQUIRED** to bring at least 64 oz (half gallon) of water to all practices and games. The Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Department will provide **EMERGENCY** refill stations at each practice and game facility. The refill station can **ONLY** be accessed by a coach or athletic trainer.
  - Please see National Athletic Trainer Association (NATA) Resource: [Healthy Hydration For Young Athletes](#)
- All coaches will be required to complete the Return to Athletics Pledge before the start of the season.

## PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- SLSD parents/Guardians must complete the [Daily Health Screening](#) prior to any SLSD student-athletes attending school on a daily basis. All SLSD student-athletes will undergo an additional health screening prior to the start of practice or a competition. This additional health screening is being completed in accordance with recommendations from the St. Luke's University Health Network Sports Medicine Team due to the increased level of physical contact present in interscholastic athletics.
- SLSD student-athletes who are sick or showing symptoms of COVID-19 **MUST** stay home.
- If a parents/guardians has a concern that their student-athlete is immunocompromised or has any concern regarding their risk in terms of participation in sports and activities, they should consult their health care provider to independently assess the levels of risk of student-athletes who may be at a higher risk for severe illness as a result of individual participation on an athletic team.
- Parents/guardians **MUST** ensure that all personal items including water bottles are labeled.
- Parents/guardians **MUST** disinfect your student's personal equipment after each practice, workout, or competition. Additional information, [CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#).
- Parents/guardians **MUST** ensure that all their student-athlete(s) are prepared with appropriate masks or face coverings and reinforce that they must be properly worn at appropriate times.

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- Parents/guardians **MUST** inform the head coach, the SLSD Athletic Department, the Athletic Trainer, or the school nurse if your student-athlete has been exposed to someone who is known to have COVID-19.

### **WHEN TRAVELING TO A COMPETITION**

- The SLSD Athletic Department will communicate with the host school prior to any competitions in an effort to discuss health and safety plans, local practices, and to ensure compliance.
- The SLSD Athletic Department will ensure that all teams follow all health and safety policies and guidelines that a host school has communicated and set in place for their facilities.
- The SLSD Athletic Department will ensure that all SLSD athletic teams bring their own medical supplies and emergency action plans.
- Modifications for transportation related to athletic events may be necessary and may include:
  - Reducing the number of students/coaches on a bus/van to a maximum of two individuals per seat while leaving the front two rows empty per PA DOH Public Safety Guidelines.
  - Use of hand sanitizer upon boarding a bus/van.
  - Social distancing on a bus to the greatest extent feasible.
- Additional potential transportation modifications will be determined by the Southern Lehigh School District, the transportation company, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and state and local governments once transportation for events is permitted.
- The SLSD Athletic Department will follow the guidelines outlined in the Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan if a student-athlete or staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19 while traveling to a competition.

### **WHEN HOSTING A COMPETITION**

- The SLSD Athletic Department will ensure that coaching staff members have an administrative contact (cell number) to complete necessary communications specific to all events. Communications should occur in a timely manner and not wait until the subsequent school day.
- PIAA Officials must complete the [Colonial League Event Worker Screener](#) and the [Southern Lehigh School District Daily Health Screening](#) prior to any SLSD athletic contest.
- Communicate ahead of time with the incoming interscholastic athletic team and officials about procedures, policies and guidelines. Examples to be covered include but not limited to:
  - Parking
  - Where to enter facility
  - What equipment should the visiting team bring
  - Water availability
  - Bench area seating (how many athletes can be accommodated while maintain 6 ft. social distancing)
  - Locker room availability and resources
  - Emergency action plans
  - How will game day paperwork be handled (electronic exchange is preferred)
- The SLSD Athletic Department will ensure that athletic facilities have been properly sanitized before the visiting team has arrived.

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- The SLSD Athletic Department will have hand sanitizer and reserve disposable face coverings available for competitions should they be needed.
- When feasible, sharing of athletic equipment should be minimized. Athletic equipment that may be used by multiple individuals (balls, shields, tackling dummies, shot put, discus, pole vault, etc.) are to be cleaned after each individual's use during practice and competitions. See manufacturer guidelines for appropriate cleaning and sanitizing procedures.
- The SLSD Athletic Department will follow the guidelines outlined in the Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan if a student-athlete or staff member shows symptoms of COVID-19 while hosting a competition on the Southern Lehigh campuses.

## GATHERING LIMITATIONS

- All sports-related gatherings must conform with the [amended guidelines on safe gathering limits released by the PA Department of Health](#) on March 1, 2020.
  - The Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Department will work with the Southern Lehigh School District Support Services Department in order to determine occupancy limits as defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code and then apply the attendee calculator provided by the PA Department of Health to determine how many attendees are permitted to attend Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Events.
  - The Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Department will develop a system to provide access to spectators that falls within the guidelines set forth by the PA Department of Health, the Southern Lehigh School District, and the Colonial League.
  - The Southern Lehigh Athletic Department will adhere to the Spectator Guidelines set by the Colonial League and provide updated information to all Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Programs specific to gathering limitations and spectator expectations.

## SPECTATORS

- All sports-related gatherings must conform with the [amended guidelines on safe gathering limits released by the PA Department of Health](#) on March 1, 2020
- All spectators who are permitted to attend athletic contests are subject to the specific limitations that were also included in the [Preliminary School Sports Guidance](#):
  - All spectators **MUST** complete a [Daily Health Screener](#) prior to attending the athletic contest. If the individual has a temperature of 100.0 or higher, the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is sick, they **MUST** stay home.
  - Seating areas, including bleachers, must adhere to social distancing requirements of at least 6 feet of spacing for anyone not in the same household.
  - ALL spectators **MUST** wear masks or face coverings at all times in accordance with the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#) (November 17, 2020).
  - Spectators should not enter the field of play or bench areas.
  - As per the Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan, all nonessential visitors and volunteers will be limited, when possible, including activities with external groups or organizations.

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## **MEDIA**

- All sports-related gatherings must conform with the [amended guidelines on safe gathering limits released by the PA Department of Health](#) on March 1, 2020
- Should media members be permitted to attend a contest, they **MUST** complete a [Daily Health Screener](#) prior to covering the athletic contest.
  - If the individual has a temperature of 100.0 or higher, the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is sick, they **MUST** stay home.
- The media must make contact with the SLSD Athletic Department prior to attending any athletic event to ensure that they are able to make appropriate arrangements for attendance.
  - Media availability or attendance is likely to be limited especially in the event that there are limits on capacity.
  - Media should be restricted to areas outside of the team areas and should not have access to student-athletes.
  - Interview requests may be limited and should be accommodated either virtually or in person if social distancing protocols of 6 ft can be followed and all parties are wearing an appropriate mask or face covering in accordance with the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#) (November 17, 2020).
  - Media are required to wear a mask or face covering in accordance with the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Coverings](#) (November 17, 2020).
  - Locker room access will be prohibited for the duration of the pandemic.
  - Access to student-athletes will be limited on a case by case basis and, if it occurs, media must wear mask or face covering while in a building and maintain social distancing at 6ft in all locations.
  - Press box availability may be limited for the duration of the pandemic.

## **GAME DAY WORKERS**

- The SLSD Athletic Department will coordinate with all individuals completing game day work responsibilities specific to the requirements outlined in the Southern Lehigh School District Return to Competition Athletics Health and Safety Plan.
- All game day workers **MUST** complete the [Daily Health Screening](#) prior to attending athletic practice, workouts, or competition on a daily basis. If the individual has a temperature of 100.0 or higher, the individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 or is sick, they **MUST** stay home.
- All Game Day Workers are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's order of July 1st, 2020](#).

## **Prior to Resuming Physical Activity**

- When feasible, the SLSD Athletic Department will make special considerations for student-athletes and staff at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.
- SLSD student-athletes and staff who should consider delaying their participation in sports and coaching activities are those with any of the following:

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- Diabetes
- Chronic Lung Disease including Asthma
- Severe obesity (Body Mass Index >40)
- Chronic kidney disease
- Heart conditions
- Immunocompromised (e.g. any transplant recipient, needing immunosuppressant medications (e.g. steroids, biologics, etc.), patients receiving chemotherapy, etc.)
- Age 65 or older
- If there is a concern that someone is immunocompromised or has any concern regarding their risk in terms of participation in sports and activities, they should consult their health care provider to independently assess the levels of risk of student-athletes who may be at a higher risk for severe illness as a result of individual participation on an athletic team.
- **Pre-Participation Physical Examination Considerations**
  - The associated requirement for individual student-athletes to complete a pre-participation physical examination is dependent on the requirements set forth by the PIAA.
  - The SLSD Athletic Department will notify district families if there is a deviation from the standard annual frequency requirement established by the PIAA prior to COVID-19 pandemic.

### **Requirement of Sick Athletes and Staff to Stay Home**

- The Southern Lehigh School District will utilize communication tools including Blackboard Connect, the SLSD Website, social media, and other communication methods to inform student-athletes, staff, and parents about COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures, and appropriate hygiene practices.
- The SLSD will provide information about local COVID-19 resources including testing sites.
- The SLSD will establish procedures to ensure athletes and staff that become sick onsite or arrive onsite sick are sent home as soon as possible.
  - The SLSD Athletic Department will require an individual who becomes sick during athletics or demonstrates a history of exposure (defined as close contact to a confirmed case of COVID) to wear a face covering.
  - Require an individual (one who becomes sick in school or demonstrates a history of exposure) to report immediately to the designated isolation area.
    - The Boys and Girls locker rooms at SLHS and SLMS will be used as an isolation room for student-athletes and staff who do not pass the athletics daily screening process or become ill during a practice or competition. In the event of a student-athlete, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the student.
  - Students or staff with fevers or symptoms associated with COVID-19 should seek medical attention for further evaluation and instructions on returning to school or athletics.
  - When feasible, close off the area used by a person testing positive for COVID-19 for at least 24 hours and do not use it before cleaning and disinfecting.
- Notify staff and families confirmed cases while maintaining confidentiality.

### **Health Screening Procedure**

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- All Southern Lehigh School District students and staff will be required to complete a [Daily Health Screener](#) as a critical component of the SLSD Health and Safety Plan. SLSD student-athletes will undergo an additional health screening process prior to the starting of practice or a competition. This additional health screening is being completed in accordance with recommendations from the St. Luke's University Health Network Sports Medicine Team due to the increased level of physical contact present in interscholastic athletics. Fundamental health screening criteria are as follows:
  - If a SLSD student-athlete or staff member has a temperature of 100.0 or higher or an individual is showing symptoms of COVID-19 they will immediately be isolated and will be sent home. All SLSD student-athletes and staff **MUST** stay home and not attend athletic practice if they have a temperature of 100.0 or higher or are showing symptoms of COVID-19.
  - All SLSD student-athletes and staff **MUST** cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
  - Additional health and safety guidelines are outlined within this plan if student-athletes or staff begin to demonstrate symptoms of COVID-19.
- Educate all stakeholders (students, staff, parents/guardians) on how to screen for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 at home before sending children to school and/or reporting to work.
- A mask must be worn by the person conducting the screening. Gloves shall be utilized by the health care provider if any direct contact with a person screened is required.
- Per the [Updated Order of the Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Health Requiring Universal Face Covering \(November 17, 2020\)](#), all Southern Lehigh School District student-athletes and coaching staff are required to wear a mask or face covering **AT ALL TIMES**. Athletic staff, such as but not limited to an administrator, athletic trainer, coach, and/or nurse should conduct the screening.
  - Temperature check with a thermometer is required
  - Temperature threshold is greater than or equal to 100°F
  - If temperature is above 100°F threshold, two additional measures should be taken to verify initial measure
  - Forehead thermometer/non-contact thermometer is preferable.
  - Temperature check should take place in a temperature controlled environment whenever possible.
  - Person screened should be well rested, i.e. no recent physical activity
  - All health screenings will be performed by athletic staff and athletic trainers
- The Symptoms of COVID-19 may include (but are not limited to):
  - Fever or chills (100.0 or higher)
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Muscle aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Diarrhea
- If a student/staff is sick or thinks that he/she is sick with the COVID-19 virus, the student/staff **MUST** stay home and contact their physician or an appropriate healthcare professional for further directions.

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- All members of the SLSD Athletic Staff will perform a [Daily Symptom Screener](#) on himself or herself prior to leaving for work, and will stay home if ill.
- Signage will be posted throughout the school district to ensure that students and staff are consistently made aware of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19.
- Student athletes and athletic staff will go to the athletic trainers immediately if feeling ill.
- PA DOH will notify the school entity immediately upon learning that a person with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 was present at the school or a school event while infectious.
- PA DOH staff will assist the school with risk assessment, isolation, and quarantine recommendations, and other infection control recommendations.

### **Isolating or Quarantining a Student-Athlete or Staff if They Become Sick or Demonstrate a History of Exposure**

- The Athletic Trainers will evaluate any individual who presents with symptoms of COVID-19 during practice, workouts, or competitions.
- Require an individual who becomes sick in school or demonstrates a history of exposure (defined as close contact to a confirmed case of COVID) to wear a mask or face covering.
- Require an individual (one who becomes sick in school or demonstrates a history of exposure) to report immediately to the designated isolation area.
  - The Boys and Girls locker rooms at SLHS and SLMS will be used as an isolation room for student-athletes and staff who do not pass the athletics daily screening process or become ill during a practice or competition. In the event of a student-athlete, a parent/guardian will be contacted to pick up the student.
- Parents/guardians should have a plan in place for picking up a student-athlete when directed by the Athletic Trainer(s).
- If a parent or caregiver is not present, a predetermined staff member should escort them to a designated isolation room (HS and MS Boys and Girls Locker Rooms) or area away from others and have them wear a mask or face covering. They should then be directed to contact their health care provider for evaluation and potential COVID-19 testing. Those without a health care provider can be directed to a local COVID hotline such as St. Luke's University Health Network 1-866-785-8537 Option 7 or Lehigh Valley Health Network 1-888-402-5846. Positively screened individuals should not return until they have documentation demonstrating the SARS-CoV-2 test was negative or a note from their healthcare provider indicating they do not need to be tested and their symptoms are not due to COVID-19.
- Positively screened student-athletes or staff should seek medical attention for further evaluation by a primary care professional while following the guidelines outlined in the [Exclusion From and Returning to School](#).
- When feasible, close off the area used by a person testing positive for COVID-19 for at least 24 hours and do not use it before cleaning and disinfecting.
- SLSD Athletic Staff will notify staff and families of confirmed cases while maintaining confidentiality.

### **Returning isolated or quarantined staff, students, or school visitors to school**

\*\* Please note, all of the content held within these pages is subject to change. The content in the Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan represents the requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for the physical return to school. This document does not encompass all of the incremental planning necessary to physically reopen the schools and that planning is ongoing and additional details will be shared throughout the summer. \*\*

- A student-athlete who was diagnosed with COVID-19 may return when **ALL FOUR** of the following criteria are met:
  - At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared
  - At least 48 hours have passed since last fever without the use of fever reducing medications
  - Symptoms (i.e. cough, shortness of breath ...) have significantly improved.
  - All Southern Lehigh School District student-athletes will follow the St. Luke's University Health Network graduated return to play protocol outlined in the SLUHN [Cardiac Screening and Return to Play Guidelines for Athletes following COVID-19](#).
  - Written documentation of clearance from a health care provider (MD, DO, NP, PA)
    - Written documentation is required for **ALL** student-athletes who are returning to play from an injury or sickness that requires medical care.
- Further information about the conditions outlined in the [Southern Lehigh School District Exclusion From and Return to School Requirements](#) can be found using that link.
- A student-athlete or staff member who is quarantined following close contact with a case may not return to school until cleared to do so by the PA DOH or the appropriate County or Municipal Health Department. A negative test obtained prior to the end of quarantine does **not** clear an individual for return. The entire quarantine period must be completed.

### **Notifying staff, families, and the public of school closures and within-school-year changes in safety protocols**

- Post the approved Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan and the Southern Lehigh School District Return to Competition Athletics Health and Safety Plan on the SLSD website.
- Provide regular multi-modal updates on the SLSD website, social media accounts, and through the Blackboard Connect System.
- The District will be prepared to refer symptomatic individuals or those who have a known exposure to a confirmed case to an appropriate health care provider or testing site.
- The District will coordinate with local health officials on the strategies for COVID-19 cases as the district would do with similar conditions, such as measles, pertussis, and other infectious diseases.
- Local DOH staff or CMHD (County Municipal Health Department) will notify the school district and PDE immediately upon learning of a positive case of COVID who was present at the school or school event while infectious. Public health staff will assist the school with risk assessment, isolation and quarantine recommendations, and other infection control recommendations.

### **Other monitoring and screening practices**

- A “close contact” is defined as either being within approximately 6 feet of a COVID-19 case for 15 or more minutes (close contact can occur while caring for, living with, visiting, or share a health care waiting area or room with a COVID-19 case), or having direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (i.e. being coughed on).
- The individual who tested positive will not be identified in communications from the PA DOH or CMHD to the school community at large but may need to be selectively identified for contact tracing by the PA DOH and CMHD staff.
- The District will contact local PA DOH staff before acting in response to a known or suspected

communicable disease. A representative is on-call 24 hours a day.

- The local PA DOH staff will provide guidance to schools regarding disease information, appropriate letters and communications, identification of high risk individuals, appropriate action and treatment, and ongoing support and assistance.
- If the person is present on school property when PA DOH staff notify the school of the positive case information, the person should immediately, but discreetly, be taken to the COVID-19 related isolation space for pick up (if a student) or asked to return home (if staff).
- SLSD will contact the PA DOH for further guidance if a parent/guardian notifies the school of potential exposure by a student, staff member, or essential visitor.
- As per the PA DOH, the entire school building does not have to be evacuated.
- The PA DOH staff will assist the K-12 school entity with contact tracing and may request information regarding potential close contacts from school district staff.
- Decisions to track additional health information will be made at the local school district level.

### **Promote Wellness and Hygiene**

- The potential for pre-symptomatic transmission is why the use of masks or face coverings and social distancing, including the avoidance of congregate settings, is imperative to reduce COVID-19 spread.  
Staying Home when Appropriate
  - Education and Promotion on [Self Screening for Signs and Symptoms](#) (CDC - If You Are Sick)
- Hand hygiene is essential. Schools need to promote frequent and effective, hand hygiene with ample hand sanitizer (>60% ethanol or >70% isopropanol) dispensers and areas with soap and water in many different locations. Hand washing or use of hand sanitizer should take place pre- and post-activity. Hand washing facilities or hand sanitizer should be made available during activity.
- Regular use of hand sanitizer will be encouraged prior to, during, and after sessions.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva must not be allowed; including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
- No team huddles should take place. Encourage the minimization of offensive and defensive huddles and encourage the coaching staff to utilize other methods of communication with players (such as signals, cards, signs) to minimize grouping.

### **When Physical Activity Resumes**

- The decision to resume sports-related activities, including conditioning, practices, and games, is the discretion of a school's entity's governing body. Each school entity must develop and adopt an Athletics Health and Safety Plan aligning to the PDE Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools and Pennsylvania's Guidance for Sports prior to conducting sports-related activities with students. The plan must include the provisions of this guidance, be approved by the local governing body of the school entity, and be posted on the school entity's publicly available website. The plan does not need to be submitted to the DOH or PDE for approval.

## Physical Activity and Usage of Athletic Equipment

- No sharing of athletic towels, clothing or shoes
- Athletic equipment should not be shared between student-athletes in an effort to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets through contact. Items that may need to be shared in congregate settings ( such as bats, batting helmets, & catcher's gear ) should be disinfected in accordance with CDC, PA DOH, and manufacturing guidelines after each use.
  - Other equipment such as football helmets, lacrosse pads, ear guards & eyewear should only be used by one individual and not shared
- Spotters for weight lifts are to be stationed at each end of the bar when use of the weight room is permitted.
- Regular use of hand sanitizer will be encouraged prior to, during, and after sessions.

## Individualized Hydration

- All SLSD student-athletes and staff must bring their own water or drinks to all athletic activities; Student-athletes and staff are **NOT** permitted to share water or sports drinks for the duration of the pandemic.
  - SLSD athletic teams will have access to bottled water for those who run out of water or do not have access to water. Each student-athlete will be **REQUIRED** to bring at least 64 oz (half gallon) of water to all practices and games. The Southern Lehigh School District Athletic Department will provide **EMERGENCY** refill stations at each practice and game facility. The refill station can **ONLY** be accessed by a coach or athletic trainer.
- Ice towels may be used for single use only and **MUST** be either discarded or washed properly following use.
- Team water coolers and disposable cups **WILL NOT** be permitted.
- Hydration stations and or fixed water fountains **WILL NOT** be permitted.
- All personal water bottles should be properly identified with an individual's name.

## Sanitizing Facilities

- The Southern Lehigh School District will complete cleaning, disinfecting, and ventilation practices outlined in the [Southern Lehigh School District Health and Safety Plan](#).
- SLSD Support Services will implement adequate cleaning and disinfecting schedules for all athletic facilities. Cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting will be performed in accordance with current CDC and PA DOH guidelines to mitigate the spread of communicable diseases.
- Use EPA approved (List N) products for use against SARS-CoV-2 in accordance with labeling requirements, be for commercial use in schools without harmful components of fragrances, and applicable staff will be trained on how to appropriately use these products.
- Equipment and tables with holes that expose foam should be covered.
- Ensure that all hard surfaces, high-touch, and high traffic areas are included in frequent cleaning and disinfecting schedules.
- SLSD custodial staff will continue everyday responsibilities and tasks specific to athletic cleaning and disinfecting.
- Any visibly dirty surfaces will be washed with soap/water or an approved cleaner before disinfecting.

- Disinfecting fogger or misting spray applicator will be used in all areas at least once a week.
- Southern Lehigh School District weight room facilities will be marked with tape to position anyone using the facilities present in that room to ensure appropriate social distancing.
- Signage will be placed in the weight room and athletic hallways promoting wellness and hygiene
- SLSD weight room equipment should be disinfected before and after each individual's use.
  - Signage will be placed in the weight room and athletic hallways promoting wellness and appropriate hygiene
  - Containers of "Gym Wipes" are located in the weight room for student-athletes, coaches, and staff to use.
  - Appropriate clothing/shoes must be worn at all times in the weight room when use is permitted to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment surfaces. Equipment should be wiped down after each individual's use.

### **Stakeholder Education**

- The Southern Lehigh School District will provide stakeholder education through the publication of posters, flyers, meetings, emails, and phone calls specific to COVID-19 to Staff, Coaches, Student Athletes, and Community Members.
- The Southern Lehigh School District will provide stakeholder education specific to the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 through a variety of different modalities.
- Proper ways to limit exposure to COVID-19 (hand washing, cough in your elbow, disinfecting touched surfaces, social distancing, avoiding touching eyes, nose, face and mouth, no spitting, gum chewing, etc.)
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs.
- The content of this Return to Sport Guidelines Document
- Any pertinent COVID-19 information released by state/local governments, NFHS, and PIAA.
- Students are to come dressed for activity
- No indoor sessions permitted without prior and direct permission from the Athletic Director. Once permitted, limit indoor activities and the areas used. Locker room use is not permitted. Facility showers may not be used.
- Student-athletes must remain with their assigned groups during each workout and during daily workouts to limit the number of people they come in contact with.

### **Important Reads and Source Documents:**

- Pennsylvania's 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 Published June 10, 2020.
- Pennsylvania Department of Education, Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools. Published June 3, 2020, version 1. PDE Preliminary Guidance for Pre-K to 12 Schools
- CDC - Youth Sports Considerations Last reviewed June 8, 2020.
- CDC - Schools Considerations Last reviewed June 1, 2020.
- Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities, National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), accessed May 15, 2020
- PIAA Press Release Published June 10, 2020.
- Sports Event Planning Considerations Post-COVID-19, United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee April 28, 2020 – v0.11
- CDC Cleaning and Disinfection Tool. CDC.gov. CDC - Cleaning and Disinfection Decision Tool. Last reviewed May 7, 2020.
- CDC Handwashing Guidelines. CDC.gov. CDC - Handwashing Last reviewed April 2, 2020.
- Criteria for Return to Work for Healthcare Personnel with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19 (Interim Guidance). CDC.gov. CDC - Return to Work Criteria. Last reviewed April 30, 2020.
- State of Missouri Novel Coronavirus Analytics. Health.mo.gov. State of Missouri - Coronavirus Analytics. Published May 5, 2020.
- The resurgence of sport in the wake of COVID-19: cardiac considerations in competitive athletes. BMJ.com. BMJ Blog - Cardiac Considerations in the Wake of COVID-19 Published April 24, 2020.
- A Game Plan for the Resumption of Sport and Exercise After Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Infection. JAMA Cardiol. JAMA Cardiology - Game Plan for Resumption of Sports Published online May 13, 2020. doi:10.1001/jamacardio.2020.2136
- Korey Stringer Institute's Return to Sports and Exercise during the Covid-19 Pandemic: Guidance for Collegiate and High School Athletics Programs. Published June 6, 2020. KSI Return to Sport and Exercise Guidance
- COVID-19: NSCA Guidance on Safe Return to Training For Athletes, National Strength and Conditioning Association (NSCA) COVID-19 Return to Training Taskforce. Published May 2020.
- CSCCA and NSCA Joint Consensus Guidelines for Transition Periods: Safe Return to Training Following Inactivity; Caterisano, A, Decker, D, Snyder, B, Feigenbaum, M, Glass, R, House, P, Sharp, C, Waller, M, and Witherspoon, Z. 2019. CSCCa and NSCA Joint Consensus Guidelines for Transition Periods. Strength and Conditioning Journal, 41(3), 1-23.
- National Athletic Trainers Association: Covid-19 Return-to-Sport Considerations for Secondary School Athletic Trainers. Published May 2020.

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## Return to Competition: General Considerations for Baseball



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)  
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

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<b>SPORT:</b>	Baseball	<b>STAFF LIAISON:</b>	Mark Byers
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Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. ([FAQ's on Order](#))

Outdoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings if they cannot maintain sustained physical distance from persons outside of their household. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.

### **BASEBALL RULE CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Have hand sanitizer and wipes available at the field.
- Wash stations or sanitizer at each dugout.
- No one touches the score sheet except the scorer.
- Disinfect the bench/dugout prior to competition.
- Stagger seating of fans.
- Each team may provide sanitized balls (bucket) while on defense.
  - Have a bucket of available for used balls so they can be sanitized after the game.
- Note: If a school is required to provide game balls for their half-inning as the visiting team, this is to be communicated in advance of the contest.
- Sanitize bases after each contest.
- Limit attendees to head coach and one captain from each team plus the plate umpire. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR COACHES:**

- Eliminate handshakes post-game.
- Maintain 6' distance between players and umpires.
- No seeds, gum or spitting.

### **CONSIDERATIONS FOR PLAYERS:**

- No seeds, gum or spitting.
- Players must clean and sanitize equipment after each game.
- Social distancing on the bench and/or dugout.
- No sharing of water bottles.

- The use of personal equipment is preferred. However, if equipment is shared, it is recommended to sanitize equipment between use by players.
- Sanitize all equipment after each game.
- Eliminate handshakes post game.
- Eliminate handshakes with coaches/umpires pre-game.
- Pitchers are encouraged not to put their hands to their mouth.
- If the pitcher is wearing a face covering in the field, it must be a solid dark color.

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR UMPIRES:**

- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently
- Do not share equipment.
- The umpire-in-chief is required to wear a face covering behind the plate.
- The field umpires shall follow the universal masking order. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.
- Clean equipment after each game.
- Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when talking to others (players, coaches, other umpires) at plate meeting.
- Do not shake hands and follow pre- and post-game ceremony guidelines.

**CONSIDERATIONS FOR PARENTS:**

(A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home),
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your students' personal equipment after each game or practice.

## Return to Competition: General Considerations for Boys' Lacrosse



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)  
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

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<b>SPORT:</b>	Boys' Lacrosse	<b>STAFF LIAISON:</b>	Melissa Mertz
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Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. ([FAQ's on Order](#))

Outdoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings if they cannot maintain sustained physical distance from persons outside of their household. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.

Using football as an example, wearing a mask in addition to a mouth guard and a helmet would likely create a medical issue for the athlete whether the athlete is a professional or youth player even if a previous medical issue was not present. For example, the CDC says that "wearing a mask with these types of protective equipment is not safe if it makes it hard to breathe." There are other sports where there are similar concerns that a mask would create a medical issue where one would otherwise not exist in an athlete.

### **BOYS' LACROSSE RULES CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications (The Field (1-2-7)):** The Scorer's Table.
  - Provide adequate spacing for 6-foot social distancing between individuals.
- **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications (The Field (1-2-8)):** Players' and Coaches' box.
  - Extend the players' box to end line to ensure proper social distancing.
- **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications (Player Equipment (1-9-2)):**
  - Optional Equipment, Face Shields and Masks –  
Clear, molded, and non-rigid face shields approved by the helmet manufacturer are allowed.
- **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications Players, Coaches, and Other Game Personal:**
  - Coaches and officials should attempt to maintain social distancing whenever possible during a game including stick checks, official's meetings, etc.
- **Boys Lacrosse Rules Book Modifications (Facing Off (4-3-1, 2, and 3)):** Starting Play with Facing Off.
  - The mechanic for faceoffs will be:
    - Place the ball on the ground with players 6+ feet away from each other and the official.
    - The official instructs both players to get into position by saying "Down".

- When players are positioned, the FO and Lead left officials will check the player's alignment (FO official checks neutral zone and "top to stop" alignment, Lead Left checks verticality by looking down midfield line) after both officials have backed away, FO official says "Set" (players may not move after "Set")
- The whistle shall be blown quickly with the expectation that the ball is moved quickly into play by the players.
  - After a goal, the goalkeeper shall throw or roll the ball out to the official.

### **POINTS OF EMPHASIS AND PRE/POST GAME CONSIDERATIONS**

- Optional pre-game checks shall occur at or near the wing line opposite the scorer's table.
  - Players requesting a stick check shall remain socially distanced at all times while waiting. When the official is ready, the player will place their stick on the ground for the official. An official will check the stick and place it back on the ground for the player to retrieve it.

### **PREGAME:**

- Limit attendees to head coach and one captain from each team and lead official.
- Make sure athletes are socially distant during the lineup, no handshakes.
- Officials should wear a mask when instructing table personnel. Table personnel should wear mask.
- Minimize table personnel – official scorer and timekeeper, visiting team personnel should be at their team bench and not at the table. Extend the table if needed.

### **SUBSTITUTION/SIDELINE:**

- Team bench areas should be more clearly marked to remind players of proper location.
- Split substitution box with a cone so that each team subs in from their own half of the box.
- Players serving a penalty should sit in the back of each team's side of the substitution box to allow for social distancing from others.

### **POSTGAME:**

- Eliminate post-game handshakes.

## Return to Competition: General Considerations for Girls' Lacrosse



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)  
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

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<b>SPORT:</b>	Girls' Lacrosse	<b>STAFF LIAISON:</b>	Melissa Mertz
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Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. ([FAQ's on Order](#))

Outdoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings if they cannot maintain sustained physical distance from persons outside of their household. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.

### GIRLS' LACROSSE RULES CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Pre-Game Meeting (3-5-3)**
  - Limit attendees to head coach and one captain from each team and lead official.
  - Ensure the pre-game meeting is away from sideline and all individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
  - Eliminate handshakes following pre-game meeting and at the conclusion of the game.
- **Equipment and protective clothing (2-4-1, 2-7-3, 2-9-5)**
  - Players and officials may wear gloves and long undergarments.
  - Stick Checks:
    - All players will put their sticks on the ground, in a line (not a pile) and players step back to their bench.
    - Officials will then come through and conduct the stick checks without interaction or proximity to the players, and the players will not be in prolonged proximity to one another.
- **Table Personnel (3-6-1, 3-7-1)**
  - Limit to essential personnel only at the table. Statisticians or visiting scorer personnel are not essential. Home team scorer and timer are essential.
- **The Draw (5-2)**
  - No change from traditional draw mechanics.
  - The goalie should roll or throw the ball to the official after a goal.

- ***Substitution and Sideline Protocol (1-1-4h thru l, 4-7-3, 4-7-4)***
  - Ensure that players substituting, coaches, and the table personnel are maintaining social distancing.
  - Split substitution box with a cone so that each team substitutes in from their own half of the substitution box.
  - Players serving a penalty should sit in the back of each team's side of the substitution box to allow for social distancing from others.

## Return to Competition: General Considerations for Softball



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)  
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

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<b>SPORT:</b>	Softball	<b>STAFF LIAISON:</b>	Melissa Mertz
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Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. ([FAQ's on Order](#))

Outdoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings if they cannot maintain sustained physical distance from persons outside of their household. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.

### **SOFTBALL RULE CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **Face Shields (1-7-1, 1-8-4):** Per guidance from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, Plastic shields covering the entire face (**unless clear and integrated into the face mask and attached to a helmet**) shall not be allowed during contests. Their use during practices increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or teammates.
- **Additional Equipment (1-8):** Pitchers cannot wear optic yellow cloth facial coverings.
- **Pregame Conference (2-14-2):** Limit attendees to head coach and one captain from each team plus the plate umpire. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person.
- **Substitutions: (3-3-3):** The verbal exchange should occur 6 feet from the coach to scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes.
- **Coaching (3-5-1 NOTE):** Umpires should not handle equipment on the field during play. Contact with the game balls should be as limited as possible.
- **Coaching (3-5-3, 3-6-14):** Coaches who wish to discuss a rule or a ruling on the field must maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance from the umpire.
- **Bench and Field Conduct (3-6-6):** The number of individuals in the dugout is dependent on the size of dugout. Players and coaches must maintain 6 feet of social distance. NFHS rules allow for dugouts/designated warm up areas to be extended toward the

outfield to provide for social distancing; extension must be outside the field of play and away from spectators and general public. (Safety precautions should be taken).

- **Exchange of Lineup Cards (4-2-1b):** Lineups should be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup.
- **Infractions by the Pitcher (6-2-2):** Pitchers are encouraged not to lick fingers or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball.
- **Plate Umpire (10-2-1):** The plate umpire is required to wear a face covering behind the plate. The field umpires shall follow the universal masking order. (Plate umpires will follow mechanics as listed in the NFHS rules book.)

#### **SOFTBALL UMPIRES MANUAL MODIFICATIONS:**

- **Mechanics Sections 3, 4b and c**  
Base umpires should maintain 6 feet from any player as a starting position when rotated and/or counter rotated.
- **Section 2E**  
Keep the catcher and batter at a 6-foot distance when dusting off the plate.

## Return to Competition: General Considerations for Tennis



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)  
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)  
USTA COVID 19: Playing Tennis Safely

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**SPORT:** Tennis

**STAFF LIAISON:** Jen Grassel

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Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. ([FAQ's on Order](#))

Outdoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings if they cannot maintain sustained physical distance from persons outside of their household. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, in the dugout, etc. If sustained six-foot distancing can be maintained, face coverings may be removed when outdoors.

### **TENNIS MATCH CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **PRE-MATCH CONFERENCE:**
  - Limit attendees to any pre-match conference between athletes and coaches. Make sure to maintain social distancing of 6 ft.
  - Instead of shaking hands, tap racquets.
- **TEAM AREAS:**
  - Make sure team personnel observe social distancing of 6 ft.
- **DURING MATCHES:**
  - While there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted by touching tennis balls, sanitary precautions, such as hand-washing, should still be utilized.
  - Maintain physical distancing if changing ends of the court.
  - Avoid touching your face after handling a ball, racquet, or other equipment.
    - Wash your hands promptly if you have touched your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - When playing doubles, coordinate with your partner to maintain physical distancing, where possible.
  - Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer before, during (between sets), and after play.
  - Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles. Use new balls and a new grip, if possible.
  - Use only your own towels and water bottles. Avoid sharing food and touching common surfaces such as court gates, fences, benches, etc.



- Rules 6-4-11 and 6-5-24: Schools may consider alternate ways to conduct the vertical jumps. Lowering the cross bar after competition has begun may be one-way states may modify rules. With small numbers of competitors, schools may wish to jump each athlete to completion.
- **Point of Emphasis:** Rule 4-2-4a. In dual meets, each school is entitled to enter three contestants in individual events, but it is recommended each school be permitted to enter as many contestants as conditions warrant.
  - This permits additional sections to be run to maximize participation in the event. Schools should communicate the anticipated number of additional sections with their opponent and officials in advance of the meet for planning purposes.

## Return to Competition: General Considerations for Volleyball



Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA)  
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)  
Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

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**SPORT:** Volleyball

**STAFF LIAISON:** Jen Grassel

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Individuals are required to wear face coverings in accordance with the [Secretary of Health's Order](#) effective November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020. ([FAQ's on Order](#)).

Indoors: Coaches, athletes (including cheerleaders), and spectators must wear face coverings, when indoors and where another person or persons who are not members of the individual's household are present in the same space, irrespective of physical distance. This includes while actively engaged in workouts, competition, and on the sidelines, etc.

**\*Line Judges are required in the Spring, as they are required by the NFHS Rule Book. In the Fall due to capacity limitations of 25 they were optional.**

### **VOLLEYBALL RULES CONSIDERATIONS:**

- **PRE-MATCH CONFERENCE:**
  - Limit attendees to the first referee, head coach, and one captain from each team.
  - Move the location of the pre-match conference away from table and center court to an area with enough space for social distancing. All four individuals should maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
  - Suspend roster submission at the pre-match conference. Rosters should be submitted directly to the officials' table before the 10-minute mark.
- **TEAM BENCHES**
  - Suspend the protocol of teams switching sides/benches between sets.
    - Home team will select their bench prior to the match and remain on the same side for the duration of the match.
  - Team areas may be expanded to promote social distancing outside of playable areas.
- **DECIDING SET PROCEDURES:**
  - Move the location of the deciding set coin toss away from table and center court to an area with enough space for social distancing. One team captain from each team and the second referee maintaining the appropriate social distance of 6 feet.
  - Suspend the protocol of teams switching sides/benches before a deciding set.

- ***SUBSTITUTION PROCEDURES:***
  - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the second referee and the player and substitute by encouraging substitutions to occur within the substitution zone closer to the attack line.
- ***OFFICIALS' TABLE:***
  - Limit to essential personnel (which includes home team scorer, libero tracker and timer), with a recommend distance of 6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential personnel and will need to find an alternative location.

**VOLLEYBALL OFFICIALS MANUAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- ***PRE AND POST MATCH CEREMONY***
  - Establish volleyball specific social distancing match protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the match.

**VOLLEYBALL RULES INTERPRETATIONS:**

- ***EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES:***
  - Gloves are permitted.
- ***LEGAL UNIFORM***
  - Long sleeves are permitted.
  - Long pants are permitted.
  - Under garments are permitted, but must be unadorned and of a single, solid color similar in color to the predominant color of the uniform top or bottom.
- ***OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT:***
  - By state association adoption, long-sleeved, all-white collared polo shirt/sweater is permitted. (Electronic whistles are permitted.)
  - Gloves are permitted.

**CONSIDERATION FOR VOLLEYBALL OFFICIALS:**

- Please review the General Considerations for Officials.
- Long sleeves and gloves are permitted.
- Officials are permitted to use electronic whistles but must be aware of signaling difficulties when using both hands and the increased chance of inadvertent whistles.
- Use of a three-ball rotation system should be considered for matches. This would allow for periodic sanitation of volleyballs.