



2020-21 Swimming & Diving Requirements, Rule Modifications and General Recommendations

With the support from the NFHS Swimming & Diving Rules Committee and the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Ohio schools are required to follow state COVID-19 general guidance for “Youth, Collegiate, Amateur and Professional Sports”

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>

Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with COVID-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your area.

Visit the COVID-19 General Guidance Document for further requirements and recommendations that apply to all sports, including basketball. Please know that some of the requirements and recommendations in this sport-specific document duplicate state guidance.

*A **rule modification** is a modification to a playing rule from the governing body of the sport and is a **requirement** to adhere to and follow. A requirement must be adhered to and followed. A **recommendation** is a consideration to the sport and allows for optional guidelines. Recommendations are not required but are permitted.*

REQUIREMENTS:

General Requirement: Symptom Assessment

- Anyone attending a practice or meet – swimmers/divers, coaches, officials, trainers, volunteers, staff, spectators, etc.: Must conduct a symptom assessment before each practice or meet, and anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>). Individuals with COVID-19 symptoms should isolate themselves per CDC’s guidance and contact their healthcare provider (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/isolation.html>). Individuals with confirmed COVID-19 or who have symptoms should follow CDC’s guidance for when they can be around others again (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>). An athlete who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients.

General Requirement: Confirmed or Suspected Covid-19 Cases

- Immediately isolate, and seek medical care for, any individual who becomes ill or develops symptoms.
- Contact the local health department about suspected COVID-19 cases or exposure.
- The affected person should seek COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. Teams, schools, and clubs should work with parents to ensure they have access to testing through their healthcare providers or direct them to testing options.
- Coaches/administrators must work with the local health department to identify individuals who were potentially exposed to help facilitate contact tracing. This includes, but is not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and other support personnel.
- A team, school, or club must notify all athletes and parents/ guardians associated with the affected team regarding a positive test. Athletes and families must be reminded of proper daily health screening protocols.
- If the affected individual participated in competitive play, the team is responsible for notifying any opponents played between the date of the positive test and 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms. If the teams, schools, or clubs reside in different counties, the health departments in each county should be notified to help facilitate effective contact tracing.
- An individual who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients. More information on this issue can be found at <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2020/07/13/13/37/returning-to-play-after-coronavirus-infection>.
- Follow protocol for cleaning and disinfecting if a COVID-19 case is identified at the venue.
- Players, coaches, officials or other individuals who had close contact (within six feet of an infected individual for at least 15 minutes), or who had direct physical contact with the person (e.g., who were coughed on or sneezed on by the infected person), must self-quarantine for 14 days following exposure based on CDC guidance (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>). Individuals may return to play afterward if they have not had any COVID-19 symptoms.

General Requirement: Out of State Travel

- For out-of-state travel, follow the COVID-19 guidance of the state and local public health jurisdiction to which the team is traveling. Also be aware of Ohio's Travel Advisories (<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/families-and-individuals/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory/COVID-19-Travel-Advisory>).

Requirements for Coaches:

- Coaches shall wear face coverings at all times, including entering and exiting the facility, and during active competition. At minimum, facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- CDC does not recommend the use of gaiters or face shields. Evaluation of these face covers is on-going, but effectiveness is unknown at this time.

Requirements for Participants:

- Participants must wear face coverings anytime they are not warming up or competing. At minimum, facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.

Requirements for Officials:

- Officials must wear face coverings at all times except to allow the use of whistles, and except for other allowable exceptions under the state's Sports Order. At minimum, facial coverings (masks) should be cloth/fabric and cover an individual's nose, mouth, and chin.
- Electronic whistles are permitted.
- Do not shake hands or fist bump other officials, players or coaches.

Requirements for Spectators

- Six-foot social distancing must be maintained between individuals/family groups.
- Facial coverings are required unless exceptions can be met as listed in Ohio Health Director's Sports Order.

Requirements for Facility Hosts:

- Inform the local health district when events are scheduled and establish a plan to handle those persons who fail a symptom assessment or temperature check or exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Limit sideline personnel to participants, coaches, medical staff and game-day staff.
- If possible, provide designated space (locker room, classroom, etc.) for officials' pre-meet and post-meet activities. If the designated space cannot accommodate six-foot social distancing of all officials, then a separate space should be provided where officials can observe six-foot social distancing and be removed from spectator/team interaction.
- Develop a spectator pathway that allows for physical distancing as spectators move from parking lots through the ticket scanning and/or purchasing lines to their seats.
- Install signage concerning hygiene, social distancing and facial coverings.
- Develop one-way ingress and egress plans and one-way aisles that also allows for social distancing.
- Assign seats in groups of no more than four from a single household and use staggered rows and sections to ensure 6 feet of social distance between groups.
- Employees, staff and volunteers must wear facial coverings at all times.
- Clearly review prior to the contest mandates, best practices and school/host facility policies with visiting team administrators and/or coaches and officials as they relate to, but are not limited to, parking; entrances and exits; medical care; spectators; ticketing; locker rooms/showers; athletic training rooms and restrooms; water; towels; and equipment.
- Spectator limit shall be lesser of 300 spectators or 15% of fixed seating capacity.
- Work with the local health department in determining in advance how many teams can safely be accommodated for practice and/or competition. This includes determining how many swimmers are permitted per lane.

2020-21 NFHS RULE MODIFICATIONS:***Lap Counting (2-7-6, 3-4)***

- Only one person per lane should be permitted at turning end. Provide hand sanitizer and require lap counters to clean hands and wipe down devices.

Pre-Meet Conference (3-3-6, 4-2-1d)

- Decrease number of participants or hold one conference with coaches and one meeting with captains. The referee can use P.A. system or starting system microphone to allow participants to hear but keep them properly separated (6 ft. or greater separation).

Referee and Starter (4-2, 4-3)

- Various rules require interactions between officials, coaches and athletes. Alternative methods for of communications include utilization of the P.A. system, hand signals or written communication.

Notification of Disqualification (4-2-2d, e)

- Notification shall occur from a distance via use of hand signals or the P.A. system.

Timers (4-9)

- Timers must assemble at the finish of each race, at the edge of the pool within the 6-8 feet confines of the lane which they are timing.

Submission of Entries to Referee (5-2)

- Alternative forms of entry submission can be designed to reduce face-to-face interaction when submitting a proper entry, where/how/to whom entries are submitted, and a reduction or elimination of certain penalties currently attached to improper entries.

Relay Takeoff Judges and Relays (8-3)

- Require all takeoff judging from the sides of the pool. Space relay swimmers apart from one another.

Diving Officials (9-6)

- Alternative methods for submitting entries (3-2) and movement of non-electronic information will be required. Recommendations include a minimum distance of 6 feet between individuals seated at the desk/table. Create a 6-foot space between judges by spacing groups of judges on opposite sides of boards or on one side of the board on a multi-level platform.

Swimming Warm-up Areas

- Establish multiple sessions for warm-up periods to limit number of swimmers per lane. Restrict the number of swimmers in competition area. Limit number of swimmers per lane during warm-up and warm-down periods.

Diving Warm-up Areas

- Limit number of divers during warm-up by creating multiple sessions. During competition, divers may not approach the board until their turn to compete. Hot tubs should not be permitted. Dive order sheets should be posted in multiple areas to reduce number of divers viewing at the same time.

Teams Seating and Lane Placement

- Keep the teams on opposite sides of the pool and require the home team to compete in lanes 1-3 and visitors to swim in lanes 4-6.

Preparing Athletes for Competition

- Athlete clerking areas should be eliminated.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

General Recommendations:

- Participants and coaches from visiting teams and officials should arrive at the contest facility dressed in partial or full uniforms or coaching/officiating gear and should plan to leave the contest facility in partial or full uniforms or coaching/officiating gear (e.g. not dress or change in visiting locker rooms).
- Consideration should be given to limiting contests against only teams in your local area or, if out-of-state, against teams located in counties that are contiguous to Ohio.
- Coaches shall not share clipboards, whiteboards, dry erase boards, headsets or any other equipment used for coaching purposes.
- Contest officials shall not share whistles or any other equipment used for officiating purposes. Electronic whistles can be utilized.
- Participants shall bring their own water bottles and not share a filling station.
- When conducting temperature checks, take into account the potential for environmental factors causing an elevated temperature. Should the temperature be elevated, it is appropriate to isolate the individual and recheck the temperature after 5-to-10 minutes of sitting in a cool environment.

Recommendations for Facility Hosts:

- If applicable, stagger the entry of all participants, coaches, officials, student game-day auxiliary groups and spectators to adhere to six-foot social distancing.
- Consider multiple points of entry to help ensure there is six-foot social distancing.
- Use contact-less payments where possible.
- Limit official's table to essential personnel only and demonstrate social distancing as much as possible.
- Appoint an individual(s) who is responsible for assisting the host facility manager(s) in logging all incidents and action plans when mandates have not been followed and/or incidents occur; logging recommendations for improving the host facilities' game-day strategies, and creating reports on said items that were logged.

OHSAA Postseason Note:

- Potential options may be considered regarding the Sectional, District, and State Tournament competitions/format depending upon the status of COVID-19.

A Note on Public Health Issues:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ohio Governor, Ohio General Assembly, Ohio Department of Health and/or the local health district will offer guidance as to whether to close a school or university due to a public health issue. Local decisions can also be made by the local health authority or each board of education/governing board.

Help Links *These resources are provided to guide operations during this Covid-19 pandemic.*

- Ohio Department of Health – Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/>
- Centers for Disease Control – Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- National Athletic Trainers Association – Coronavirus (COVID-19): <https://www.nata.org/practice-patient-care/health-issues/covid-19-coronavirus>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Emergency Preparedness and Response: <http://emergency.cdc.gov/planning/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Preparedness for All Hazards: https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/documents/ahpg_fi_nal_march_2013.pdf
- Ohio Department of Health Guidelines and Publications: <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/home/>
- OHSAA Covid-19 Resource Center: <https://www.ohsaa.org/Home/OHSAA-COVID-19-Correspondence>