



## Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association

1188 Victorian Plaza Circle • Sparks, NV 89431 • (775) 453-1012 • Fax (775) 453-1016 • [www.niaa.com](http://www.niaa.com)

June 9, 2020

To: NIAA Member Schools and Districts

From: Bart Thompson, Executive Director, NIAA

Re: Update 8, Phase 2

On June 9, 2020, Governor Steve Sisolak issued Declaration of Emergency Directive 022. Section 7 of this directive orders that, “County school districts, charter schools, and private schools may reopen school athletic fields and facilities for student athletics training, practices, and competition in accordance with guidance promulgated by the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association (NIAA) and any applicable conditions set forth by directive regarding athletic events.” The guidance to which the directive refers is enclosed at the end of this memo. It is noted that Declaration of Emergency Directive 021 is still in effect and will apply to competitions held at school athletic fields and facilities. Section 22 of that Directive states in pertinent part, “...musical performances, live entertainment, concerts, **competitions, sporting events**, and any events with live performances **may resume, but shall remain closed for public attendance**. Events held pursuant to this section may be recorded, filmed, streamed or broadcast to the public...” [emphasis added] Until this restriction on public attendance is lifted by Directive of the Governor, no spectators are to be allowed at competitions that are held at or in conjunction with NIAA member schools.

While the re-opening, a part of Phase 2, is cautious, not a return to the way things were when school buildings and facilities were initially closed, and subject to the guidance indicated, there is no longer a statewide closure of school buildings and facilities. Therefore, the temporary protocols listed in the memoranda issued by this office on April 30, 2020 and May 12, 2020 with subject lines respectively, “Update 5, Spring and Summer 2020 Protocols” and “Update 6, Phase One Re-opening” are lifted effective immediately. NIAA out of season regulations are now in effect. (see NAC [385B.370](#) and [385B.372](#))

Per the directive, school athletic fields and facilities may re-open. Those fields and facilities are controlled by school districts and governing entities of charter and private schools. Those districts and governing entities ultimately control when their own athletic fields and facilities will open as they determine is prudent and subject to gubernatorial directives in place at the time. Directive 022, issued by Governor Sisolak, allows but does not mandate the opening of

school athletic fields and facilities. The Directive specifically states in Section 10, “County school districts, charter schools, and private schools, may keep any school buildings, facilities, or athletic fields closed to students, staff, parents, guardians, or the public at their discretion in the interest of the health and safety of their school community.” The actual opening of those fields and facilities is the prerogative of the school district or other governing entity which controls the fields and facilities.

While the most stringent restrictions have been lifted, COVID-19 remains active in our communities and extremely contagious. The phased re-opening of school athletic fields and facilities is exactly that, a phased re-opening. If as a transition to a new, less restrictive phase occurs, the data shows continued positive progress in the control of the spread of the disease, transition to the next even less restrictive phase may take place. Each of the phases, however, do contain restrictions and requirements. Compliance with those restrictions and requirements is critical to progress. As schools open their athletic fields and facilities, it is incumbent upon those who supervise and control the activities at those fields and facilities, to assure compliance with the restrictions and requirements in place.

School and district administrators as well as athletic directors, coaches and athletic trainers should be completely familiar with and able to implement and monitor compliance with all restrictions and requirements associated with the current phase. Questions and concerns are to be directed to local public health authorities and guidance received is to be implemented. Protocols may be implemented which would be more restrictive than those included in the guidance enclosed in this document but are not to be less restrictive.

Nevada Department of Education Press Release is available at:

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/News\\_Media/Press\\_Releases/2020/Governor\\_Sisolak\\_Signs\\_Directive\\_Allowing\\_K-12\\_School\\_Facilities\\_to\\_Re-Open\\_for\\_Summer\\_Learning\\_and\\_Activities/](http://www.doe.nv.gov/News_Media/Press_Releases/2020/Governor_Sisolak_Signs_Directive_Allowing_K-12_School_Facilities_to_Re-Open_for_Summer_Learning_and_Activities/)

The full text of Declaration of Emergency Directive 022 is available at:

[http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/News\\_Media/Press\\_Releases/2020\\_Documents/directive022.pdf](http://www.doe.nv.gov/uploadedFiles/ndedoenvgov/content/News_Media/Press_Releases/2020_Documents/directive022.pdf)

Enclosure: Guidance on Phased Re-Opening of High School Sports in Nevada

## Phased Re-Opening of High School Sports in Nevada

This guidance is based heavily on guidance issued by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), [Guidance for Opening up High School Athletics and Activities](#) issued May 19, 2020. This document and the NFHS SMAC guidance are rooted in the belief that "...it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of high school students across the nation to return to physical activity and athletic competition." It is recognized that due to the pandemic, all students may not be able to return to athletic activity in all schools and areas of the state at the same time. It is also recognized that athletic activity may be suspended for an individual, a team, a school, or for an area of the state or the entire state, in a particular sport or several sports as may be dictated by the need for safety resulting from the pandemic. While reservations concerning such disparities would typically be raised, the guidance here is based in the idea that students ought to have the opportunity to return to participation in school-based athletics and activities in any and all situations where it is safe to do so.

It is recommended:

- With the transition to Nevada Phase 2, school facilities be opened in accordance with Phase 2 of the White House/CDC guidance. With schools open under restrictions for individuals, Phase 2 of the NFHS SMAC guidance is to be used for school facilities that are open.
- Similarly, Phase 3 of the NFHS SMAC guidelines would apply in Nevada Phase 3.

### Points of Emphasis:

1. Decreasing potential exposure to respiratory droplets is the guiding principle behind social distancing and the use of face coverings. It is also the basis of the stratification of risk by sport presented later on in this document. The use of cloth face coverings is meant to decrease the spread of respiratory droplets. As state and local COVID-19 prevalence decreases, the need for strict social distancing and the use of face coverings will lessen. Look to guidance from your state and local health departments.
  - a. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is additionally "advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others." ("Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission")
  - b. Recognizing the benefits and potential drawbacks of the use of cloth face coverings during conditioning and physical activity, the NFHS SMAC recommends the following:
    - i. State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed.
    - ii. Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend "medical grade" masks for athletic activity.
    - iii. Any student who prefers to wear a cloth face covering during a contest should be allowed to do so.

- iv. In the absence of guidelines to the contrary, we recommend that cloth face coverings be worn by students during Phases 1 and 2 as outlined below. Exceptions are swimming, distance running or other high intensity aerobic activity. Cloth face coverings may continue to be used during Phase 3 when not engaging in vigorous activity, such as sitting on the bench during contests, in the locker room and in the athletic training room.
  - v. Plastic shields covering the entire face (or 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.
  - vi. Coaches, officials, and other contest personnel may wear cloth face coverings at all times during Phases 1 through 3. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)
2. Testing regimens, specific guidelines regarding mass gatherings, and response to a student or team member testing positive for COVID-19 (including contact tracing) are all currently under review, and guidance will come from CDC and state and local health departments. Limited testing availability, lack of resources for contact tracing, and expanding knowledge of the characteristics of COVID-19 transmission could all result in significant changes to the recommendations below.
3. Due to the near certainty of recurrent outbreaks this coming fall and winter in some locales, state associations must be prepared for periodic school closures and the possibility of some teams having to isolate for two to three weeks while in-season. Development of policies is recommended regarding practice and/or competition during temporary school closures, the cancellation of contests during the regular season, and parameters for the cancellation or premature ending to post-season events/competitions.
4. With the uncertainty of which phase of recovery will be active at the beginning of a sports season or maintained during a season, scheduling contests that require less travel when possible should be considered. Such scheduling will reduce time spent in buses or vans. It will also potentially decrease the need for rescheduling contests as “opening up” may occur regionally. If opponents at the time of a contest are subject to different restrictions, re-scheduling that contest for a later date may be problematic.
5. Until a cure, vaccine or very effective treatment is readily available, or so-called “herd immunity” is confidently reached, social distancing and other preventive measures such as face covering will be a “new normal” if workouts, practices, and contests are to continue.

## Areas to Address:

### Preparticipation Physical Evaluation

Due to concerns regarding access to primary care providers during the late spring and early summer, the NFHS SMAC released a position statement giving guidance to state associations concerning timing of the Preparticipation Physical Evaluation. Options vary from a one-year extension to keeping current requirements. State associations and their SMACs can also consider interim history updates by having students complete a form or having a telemedicine visit with their primary care provider.

## Mandatory Education

It is recommended that online education courses take the place of hands-on or in-person training, including accepting online training courses for AED/CPR and First Aid for the 2020-21 academic year.

## Equipment Reconditioning

The National Athletic Equipment Reconditioners Association (NAERA) has advised the NFHS that significant equipment reconditioning capacity is currently operational. If schools have not sent out equipment for reconditioning, they should be directed to do so immediately. If schools currently have equipment being reconditioned, a school official should contact the reconditioning company to make specific delivery arrangements if their school is currently closed.

## Conduct of Conditioning and Practice Sessions

Should be determined in accordance with guidance from state and local public health officials.

### Phase 2

#### Pre-Workout/Contest Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening includes a temperature check.
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19 (see Appendix II for sample Monitoring Form).
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should **not** be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
- Vulnerable individuals (over 65, pre-existing health conditions) should **not** oversee or participate in any workouts during Phase 2.

#### Limitations on Gatherings:

- No gathering of more than 10 people in a single indoor space. Up to 50 individuals may gather outdoors for workouts.
- If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, there must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between individuals at all times. Efforts should be made to encourage students and coaches to limit the use of locker rooms when at all possible by arriving ready for workouts and showering at private residences.
- Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same 5-10 students always working out together. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training. This ensures limited exposure if an individual develops an infection.
- There must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between individuals at all times, whether indoors or outdoors. If this is not possible indoors, then the maximum number of individuals in the room must be decreased until proper social distancing can occur. Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines and benches during practices. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.

#### Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.

- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after each individual's use of equipment.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered.

#### **Personal & Clothes/Equipment Hygiene:**

- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place as well as at all practices and contests.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat transmission onto equipment/surfaces.
- Students should be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.
- There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing, or shoes between students.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned intermittently during practices and contests.
- Athletic equipment such as bats, batting helmets and catchers gear should be cleaned between each use.

#### **Physical Activity:**

- Lower risk sports practices and competitions may resume (see Potential Infection Risk by Sport below).
- Modified practices may begin for Moderate risk sports.
- Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Spotters should stand at each end of the bar.

#### **Hydration:**

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should **not** be utilized.

### **Phase 3**

#### **Pre-Workout/Contest Screening:**

- Any person who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours should **not** be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.

**Limitations on Gatherings:**

- Gathering sizes of up to 50 individuals, indoors or outdoors.
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of 3 to 6 feet between each individual. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.

**Facilities Cleaning:**

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered.

**Personal & Clothes/Equipment Hygiene:**

- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place as well as at all practices and contests.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat transmission onto equipment/surfaces.
- Students should be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.
- There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing, or shoes between students.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned intermittently during practices and contests.
- Athletic equipment such as bats, batting helmets, and catchers gear should be cleaned between each use.
- Other equipment, such as hockey helmets/pads, wrestling ear guards, football helmets/other pads, lacrosse helmets/pads/gloves/eyewear should be worn by only one individual and not shared.

**Physical Activity:**

- Moderate risk sports practices and competitions may begin.
- Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Spotters should stand at each end of the bar.
- Modified\* practices may begin for Higher risk sports:
  - \*Continue pre-practice screening as in Phase 2. Shower immediately after practices/contests.
  - Re-assess epidemiology data and experiences in other states and other levels of competition to determine when Higher risk sports competition may resume.

### Hydration:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) may be utilized but must be cleaned after every practice/contest.

### Contests

1. Potential Infection Risk by Sport (modified from United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee – Sports Medicine recommendations)

**Higher Risk:** Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.

*Examples: Wrestling, football, boys' lacrosse, competitive cheer, dance*

**Moderate Risk:** Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants.

*Examples: Basketball, soccer, water polo, ice hockey, field hockey, girls' lacrosse, crew with two or more rowers in shell, 7 on 7 football, swimming relays, volleyball\*, baseball\*, softball\*, gymnastics\* (if equipment can't be sufficiently cleaned between competitors), tennis\*, pole vault\*, high jump\*, long jump\**

\*Could potentially be considered "Lower Risk" with appropriate cleaning of equipment and use of masks by participants

**Lower Risk:** Sports that can be conducted with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.

*Examples: Individual running events, throwing events (javelin, shot put, discus), individual swimming, golf, weightlifting, alpine skiing, sideline cheer, single sculling, cross country running (with staggered starts)*

In all phases, teams should suspend pre-game and post-game handshakes/high-fives/fist bumps.

2. Transportation to events - Schools must consider social distancing requirements when scheduling contests and events for the fall. Social distancing (as required by state or local health department) will need to be maintained on buses/vans. Thus, multiple buses/vans and/or parental/guardian transportation will likely be needed.
3. Social distancing during Contests/Events/Activities
  - a. Sidelines/benches - Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines/bench during contests and events. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.
  - b. Who should be allowed at events? Group people into essential and non-essential groups. Those allowed to attend would first be those in the essential group. If gathering limits and/or direction from local health authorities won't allow all essential personnel to be in attendance, holding the contest may not be

practical. Allowing non-essential personnel should only be done in compliance with gathering limits, capacity of facility to allow for proper social distancing and in consultation with local health authorities.

- i. Essential: Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
- ii. Non-essential: Media, spectators, vendors. These may be prioritized in accordance with limits on the size of gatherings, ability to properly social distance in the facility, and in consultation with local health authorities.

### Athletic Training Services

Athletic trainers in high schools are positioned to play a vital role as sports return following this pandemic. As healthcare professionals, they can take lead roles in developing and implementing infection control policy throughout the school. Whenever needed, state associations and their SMACs should promote the importance of athletic trainers in high schools and their role in injury evaluation, treatment and risk minimization as well as being a vital component of any return-to-school and athletics plan.

### Illness Reporting

Create notification process for all event athletes, coaches, event staff, media, spectators, and vendors if the organizers/medical personnel learn of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at the event. This process should be cautious of stigmatizing infection and should protect personally identifiable information in accordance with federal and state law and local policies.

### References

“Opening up America Again.” *The White House*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>. Accessed: 5/6/2020.

“Protection Concept for Exit from the Corona-Lockwood and Resumption of Sports Activities.” *Swiss Rugby Union*. [http://www.suisserugby.com/fileadmin/content/Medical/Coronavirus/Suisserugby\\_Protection\\_Concept\\_EN\\_20200508.pdf](http://www.suisserugby.com/fileadmin/content/Medical/Coronavirus/Suisserugby_Protection_Concept_EN_20200508.pdf), Version 1.0. Accessed: 4/29/2020.

“Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission.” *Center for Disease Control and Prevention*. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>. Accessed: 5/6/2020.

“Return to Training Considerations Post-COVID-19.” *United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee - Sports Medicine*, Version 0.12. <https://www.teamusa.org/coronavirus>. Accessed: 4/28/20.