

**Maryland Public Secondary  
Schools Athletic Association  
(MPSSAA)**



**Spring Sport Bulletins**

ORGANIZED 1946



TELEPHONE: (410) 767-0376  
FAX: (410) 333-3111

MEMBER OF THE  
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF

R. ANDREW WARNER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Maryland State Department of Education  
200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Section I - General Information

General Considerations for All Sports	3
General Considerations for Contest Officials	6

### Section II Fall Sport Bulletins:

Baseball	10
Lacrosse	15
Softball	19
Tennis	23
Track and Field	26



# MPSSAA Bulletins

## 2020-2021

This publication contains information pertaining to state competition, health and safety information, sport and rule accommodations to mitigate risks, and culminating events. This section is divided into two sections. The first section contains information pertinent to all sports. The second section contains the particular rules for each sport.

It is each school and school system's responsibility to read and follow the guidelines provided in this publication.

### **I. Responsibilities of Local School System (LSS) and Member Schools**

- A. LSS shall compete within defined competition timeframes as well as determined systemwide out-of-season options to make respective LSS decisions regarding interscholastic athletic and extracurricular activities.
- B. LSS should utilize the [Covid-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools](#), [Maryland Department of Health metrics](#), and local health department guidance to determine the extent of participation in their respective LSS.
- C. LSS should utilize daily screening based on their respective educational agency decisions on screening. Guidance on screening can be found in the [Covid-19 Guidance for Maryland Schools](#) and the [MPSSAA Roadmap for the Return of Interscholastic Athletics](#). The [CDC does not recommend universal testing](#) of all students and staff as a prerequisite to school attendance.
- D. Individual team and sport mitigation strategies should be implemented to further reduce the risk of spreading Covid-19. These mitigation strategies can be found in the [MPSSAA Roadmap for the Return of Interscholastic Athletics](#) and in the individual sport settings of this publication.
- E. **Shared Responsibility** - Games and Events will be contested on the basis of shared responsibilities. Personnel from the visiting schools must accept their joint responsibilities with the persons in charge for supervision and maintenance of behavior on the part of students, spectators, and participants. This includes COVID-19 mitigation policies and procedures, good sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, and protection of property are of primary importance before, during and after each contest.

**F. Point of Emphasis** - The MPSSAA would like to make a point of emphasis for coaches. Coaches are reminded that you set the tone for your team and are the foremost influential figures representing your school. Your adherence and the adherence of your team and school to the mitigation requirements and recommendations will be a determining factor on the ability of these programs to continue operating within the modifications caused by COVID-19.

**G. Multi-Jurisdictional Competition** - Each local school system shall have implemented COVID-19 policies and procedures in place in accordance with Maryland Department of Health, MPSSAA, and local school and health department requirements. During any multi-jurisdictional competition, the policies and procedures of the hosting sites jurisdiction shall be followed by all competing schools. When conflicts arise in which representatives, including but not limited to coaches, participants, and spectators, are not following the mandated COVID-19 policies and procedures of the local school system, the site director in collaboration with school administration shall have the authority to:

1. Initially provide a warning to those not in compliance to adhere to the local school system policies
2. Suspend the competition and refer the conflict to Supervisors of Athletics for resolution.
3. The MPSSAA Executive Director shall be consulted

**II. General Considerations** - The following recommendations have been approved by the MPSSAA Medical Advisory Committee in the preparation of participation for all conditioning, training, and participation. LSS should review the [MPSSAA Roadmap for the Return of Interscholastic Athletics](#) preparation section.

**A. Social Distancing** - All individuals shall adhere to the face covering requirement and operating requirements, including six feet social distancing between individuals and/or groups when possible, in accordance with the MDH amended order, [No. MDH 2020-10-16-01](#) pursuant to [Executive Order No. 20-10-16-02](#).

**B. Cloth Face Coverings** - All individuals present, including but not limited to staff, spectators, coaches, officials, and participants, not directly involved in physical competition, shall wear a cloth or medical grade face mask at all times.

1. The Medical Advisory Committee (MAC) recommends any participants wearing a face mask cover during exercise should:
  - a) Be aware of the face mask will increase CO2 retention;
  - b) Be aware of increased concerns of heat illness;
  - c) Be washed daily by the user;

- d) Take additional water and rest breaks;
  - e) Find social distancing areas of six or more feet from other participants during recovery; and,
  - f) Designate a set area for intermittent removal and storage.
2. The MDH has issued [Guidance for use of Cloth Face Coverings in Schools](#).

### **C. Cleaning and Hygiene**

1. Hand hygiene is essential. Regularly and thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer (>60% ethanol or >70% isopropanol).
2. School cleaning should be done according to the CDC "[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)." The guidance provides information on [EPA registered products](#) effective against the COVID-19 virus.
3. Any equipment used during activities should be disinfected utilizing [EPA registered products](#) effective against the COVID-19 virus. Certain ball manufacturers have provided information about disinfecting practice and game balls.

### **D. Hydration**

1. Coolers, which should be limited in use, should be properly sanitized after each use, and a new cooler should be used for each team or group.
2. Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) are not recommended. If used, they should be utilized only for the refilling of personal water bottles and must be cleaned after every practice/contest.
3. There shall not be any sharing of water bottles. An individual athlete should use their own clearly marked bottle.

### **E. Equipment**

1. Student-Athletes are not to share towels, clothing, or pinnies. Clothing/towels/pinnies shall be washed and cleaned after every workout.
2. There should not be any sharing of equipment as best as possible.
3. Any jerseys used during workouts, practices, and competitions should be washed daily and not switched to different players.

### **F. Participant Considerations**

1. Mitigation efforts should be implemented to limit unnecessary contact between participants. This includes suspending the tradition of high fives, shaking hands, hugging, and fist bumps for support or sportsmanship.
2. There should be no spitting or use of sunflower seeds.
3. Student-Athletes are recommended to keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition.
  - a) Leaving the stem of the mouth guard unaltered provides participants with a spot to remove and place the mouthguard in the mouth with limited exposure.
  - b) Disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to initial insertion and reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before and after doing removal or reinsertion of mouthguards.

### **G. Spectators and Parental Considerations**

1. All sports-related activities must adhere to the gathering limitations set forth by the latest orders of the Maryland Department of Health.
2. Seating areas, including bleachers, must adhere to social distancing requirements of at least 6 feet of spacing for anyone not in the same household.
3. Practice or game times should be spaced out to decrease the number of individuals coming and going at the same time and facilitate social distancing.
4. Limit spectators allowed at any workouts or practices. Parents/caregivers can remain in their cars during this time. No congregating should be allowed in the parking lot or fields. A drop-off line for practices is recommended to avoid unnecessary exposure.

## **III. Officials Considerations**

### **A. Preparation**

1. Attend online meetings to review the rules for the coming year.
2. Start physical training using online video or complete skills alone. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should be cleared by your medical provider prior to initiating an exercise program.
3. Communicate with the school athletic administrator about school/corporation contest expectations.
4. **NOTE:** Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses, and other such issues. This monitoring remains with the coaching staff and school personnel.

5. Travel – considerations should be given to travel policies.

## **B. Competition**

1. If you do not feel well and COVID-19 symptoms are present, notify the contracted school, your crew members, your assigner and stay at home.
2. “Vulnerable individuals” are defined by CDC as people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Officials fitting this description may wish to seek medical advice prior to returning to officiating.
3. Upon arrival at site and throughout the contest, wash and sanitize your hands frequently.
4. Do not share uniforms, towels, apparel, and equipment.
5. Maintain social distancing of 6 feet while in the locker room and/or on the court/field.
6. Bring your own beverages.
7. Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses, and other such issues. This monitoring remains with the coaching staff and school personnel.

## **C. Uniforms**

1. Legal Uniform
  - a) Long sleeves are permissible.
  - b) Long pants are permissible.
  - c) Undergarments are permissible but must be of similar length for the individual and solid like color for the team.
  - d) Cloth face coverings may be worn at all times. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable. Cloth face coverings must be worn at all times when not directly officiating. Officials must continue to wear face covering in sports that do not require significant physical exertion.
2. Equipment
  - a) Air horns are permissible.
  - b) Electronic whistles are permissible and encouraged.
    - (1) Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside

- (a) Fox 40 Mini
  - (b) Fox 40 Unisex Electronic - 3 tone
  - (c) Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
  - (d) Windsor - (3 tone) grey
  - (e) Check the market for other choices
- c) Any equipment needed by student assistant officials (e.g. soccer and volleyball flags, pens, pencils, etc) shall be supplied by the home school.

#### **D. Rule Considerations**

##### 1. Pregame Conference

- a) Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team; or speak with the team representatives in a separate meeting.
- b) Use of headsets with other crew members (if applicable).
- c) Script the conference to ensure consistency with both teams.
- d) Coin Toss – Head referee and 2 captains.
- e) Move the location of the pregame conference to the center of the court/field. All individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
- f) Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.
- g) Maintain social distancing while performing all pregame responsibilities.
- h) Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet.
- i) Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitute(s), officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the area designated for substituting.

##### 2. Officials Tables

- a) Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended distance of 6 feet between individuals.
- b) Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential and may need to find an alternative location. Space available at the table is a variable in determining the number allowed at the officials table.



- c) Combine responsibilities for table personnel as appropriate.
3. Pregame and Postgame Ceremony
- a) Suspend pregame protocol of shaking during introductions.
  - b) Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.

# MPSSAA Return to Play: Baseball Bulletin

## I. General Considerations

- A. All schools should read and implement the recommendations found in the front section of this publication.
- B. All schools should utilize the MPSSAA *Roadmap for Return of Athletics* for the preparation of facilities in consultation with their Local School System Return to Play Committee.
- C. The following information provides additional clarification specific to the sport of Baseball.
- D. Unless specifically stated, all rules and regulations stipulated in the NFHS Baseball Rule Book will be followed.

## II. Competition Modifications

### A. Local School System Scheduling Considerations

- 1. Doubleheader contests are not advised, however, may be necessary based on LSS logistics and facilities. Appropriate time in between double header contests, such as JV and Varsity should be allocated to allow for necessary cleaning and disinfecting.
- 2. Regular season tournaments should be limited to four-teams.

### B. Regular Season Policy and Procedures

- 1. A regular season regulation game is seven innings (turns at bat) for each team unless shortened as in Rule 4-2-2 or unless extra innings are necessary to break a tie score.
  - a) By state adoption, all games that are tied or not considered a complete game will be a suspended game. A suspended game will be continued from the point of interruption unless the game is declared complete by mutual agreement between the two schools.
  - b) Any inning started must be completed to be considered a complete game. No innings will be reverted back to the previous inning to be considered a complete game.
- 2. All games, including doubleheaders, must be scheduled for seven innings.
- 3. The National Federation 10-run rule is mandatory for all games.

4. The MPSSAA will use the National Federation suggested speed-up rules for courtesy runners.
5. Intentional walks: An intentional walk may be given by the defensive team by having their catcher or coach request such from the umpire. This may be done before pitching to the batter or on any ball-and strike count.
6. Pitching Limitations (penalty for violation – forfeit game in which illegal pitcher was used):
  - a) The pitching limitations rule is in continuous effect throughout the regular and postseason.
  - b) All contests, including suspended games, shall use current pitching limitations.
  - c) It is the responsibility of the coach to have all pitchers, with their pitching limitations, listed on the lineup cards presented to the umpire and opposing coach at the beginning of the game.
  - d) The calendar rest begins on the day following the date on which the game began or a resumed game began regardless of the conclusion time of the game.
  - e) The pitch count is based on pitches thrown for strikes (including all foul balls); balls; balls in play and outs.
  - f) A pitcher at any level who reaches the daily pitch maximum limit in the middle of an at-bat will be allowed to finish that hitter.
  - g) Warm-up pitches allowed before each inning, warm up pitches allowed by the umpire in case of injury or game delay, and plays attempted against the batter-runner or any runner at first, second or third base do not count against the limit.
  - h) All NFHS Substitution and Pitching Rules must be followed.
  - i) The pitch count charts of both teams from prior contests are to be presented to the opposing coach BEFORE the game.
  - j) During the game, pitch counts will be recorded by an official Designated Pitch Count Recorder (DPCR) supplied by the home team. The visiting team has the option of providing an additional DPCR to sit with the official DPCR to assist in pitch count recording. Any discrepancy shall be settled by the DPCR and coaches without umpire involvement and that record shall be considered final.
  - k) At game's conclusion, the MPSSAA pitch count form will be signed by both head coaches or designated representatives. Both schools have the responsibility to maintain every pitching chart form until the school season is complete.

- l) Any discrepancy found during/after the game will be reported to the local school system for review.
- m) A hard copy must be available upon Local School System or MPSSAA request at any point during and following the season

**DAILY LIMITATION**

The limit on the number of pitches is based on the level of pitching. Specific rest periods are in place when a pitcher reaches a threshold of pitches delivered in a day. The rest periods required during the regular and postseason are listed in the table that follows.

Grade	Daily Max (Pitches in Game)	Required Days Rest (Pitches)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
SENIOR	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
JUNIOR	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
SOPHOMORE	105	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+
FRESHMAN	95	1-30	31-45	46-60	61-75	76+

- 7. The official state baseball required for use during region AND state tournament games is the Wilson A1010BPROSST. It is highly recommended that this same ball be used during the regular season as well.

**C. COVID-19 Rule Modifications**

- 1. Team areas may be expanded to promote social distancing i.e., outside of the dugouts may be utilized if fencing is along the baselines.
- 2. The number of individuals in the dugout is dependent on the size of the dugout. Players and coaches must maintain 6 feet of social distance. NFHS rules allow for dugouts/designated warm up areas to be extended to provide for social distancing of 6 feet.

#### **D. Administrative Considerations**

1. LSS should be in compliance with MDH and state facility limitations, including the number of permitted spectators at an event.
2. Hand washing/sanitizing stations should be set up or designated for encouraging frequent hand washing/sanitizing during the course of competition and practices.
3. The use of noisemakers and other distractions that disrupts the orderly progress of the game, (i.e., use of noisemakers coinciding with a pitch being delivered), are prohibited.
4. Locker rooms are not recommended at the time of this publication. LSS should implement the most recent information on locker room use.

### **III. COVID-19 Mitigation Considerations**

#### **A. Pregame Conference and Post Game Ceremony**

1. Limit attendees to one coach from each team plus the umpires. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person and shall wear masks.
2. Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.
3. Coaches are encouraged to hold pregame and postgame meetings socially distant and off the playing surface, where possible.
4. No post game shaking hands.

**B.** Teams should suspend the practice of team huddles directly before and after each inning being played.

**C.** Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players when scoring or after home runs.

**D.** No seeds, gum, or spitting.

**E.** Players are encouraged not to share batting helmets, bats, or catchers equipment. If items are to be shared, disinfection of the equipment shall be performed between use with an approved disinfectant.

**F.** All players are prohibited from licking their fingers and wiping them off. Pitchers are not allowed to put their hands to their mouths or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball. This will be a "no pitch." Any umpire is permitted to make this call. The ball should be called dead immediately and it will be a "no pitch." Ball goes to the dugout for sanitizing, pitcher sanitizes hands before play continues.

- G.** 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.
- H.** Coaches must stay 6 feet from a runner at all times after suspension of play.
- I.** Coaches, pitchers, and catchers shall remain 6 feet apart from one another during visits to the mound.
- J.** Face coverings are permitted on the field of play. Face coverings shall be worn at all times by all players and team personnel not in competition. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable. Facial coverings must be of one color, not distracting, and no designs (school logos are permitted). Pitchers cannot wear optic yellow face coverings.
- K.** Teams are expected to provide individual water for their athletes and discourage the use of water stations and open cups. No sharing of water bottles.
- L.** Lineups should be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup.

**M. Umpire Considerations**

1. Please review the General Considerations for Officials.
2. Long-sleeved shirts/jackets are permitted.
3. Face coverings are permitted on the field of play. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.
4. Social distancing guidelines should be employed during the contest for umpires when interacting with coaches and student-athletes (ex. ejections).
5. The umpire-in-chief shall wear a face covering behind the plate.
6. Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when talking to others (players, coaches, other umpires) at plate meeting.
7. Base umpires shall wear a face covering and maintain 6 feet from any player as a starting position when rotated and/or counter rotated.

# MPSSAA Return to Play: Lacrosse Bulletin

## I. General Considerations

- A. All schools should read and implement the recommendations found in the front section of this publication.
- B. All schools should utilize the MPSSAA *Roadmap for Return of Athletics* for the preparation of facilities in consultation with their Local School System Return to Play Committee.
- C. The following additional information provides additional clarification specific to the sport of Lacrosse.
- D. Unless specifically stated, all rules and regulations stipulated in the NFHS Boys and Girls Lacrosse Rule Books will be followed.

## II. Competition Modifications

### A. Local School System Scheduling Considerations

- 1. Local school systems should consider only allowing single competitions between two opposing schools.
- 2. Doubleheader contests are not advised, however, may be necessary based on LSS logistics and facilities. Appropriate time in between double header contests, such as JV and Varsity should be allocated to allow for necessary cleaning and disinfecting.
- 3. Regular season tournaments should be limited to four-teams.

### B. Regular Season Policy and Procedures

- 1. Games postponed during the regular season must be played or made up in order of the regular season schedule on the first available playing date for both schools.
- 2. The home team shall place at least 6 balls behind each goal end line.

### C. COVID-19 Rule Modifications

- 1. **Team Benches - Team** areas may be expanded to promote social distancing. All schools are to encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet.
- 2. **Girls Modifications**
  - a) The goalie should hit the ball with their stick to the center circle after a goal.

- b) Only one player per hash on 8-meter setup, the existing rule that allows the defense to adjacent hashes remains in force.

#### **D. Administrative Considerations**

1. LSS should be in compliance with MDH and state facility limitations, including the number of permitted spectators at an event.
2. Hand washing/sanitizing stations should be set up or designated for encouraging frequent hand washing/sanitizing during the course of competition and practices.
3. The use of noisemakers and other distractions which disrupt the orderly progress of the game, i.e. whistles and air horns similar to those used by the officials and timer, are prohibited.
4. Locker rooms are not recommended at the time of this publication. LSS should implement the most recent information on locker room use.

### **COVID-19 Mitigation Considerations**

#### **A. Pregame Conference**

1. Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.
2. Move the location of the pregame conference to the center of the field. All individuals should maintain a social distance of 6 feet during the conference and shall wear masks.
3. Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.
4. **GIRLS** - Pre-game stick and equipment checks will be completed by one official per team. Each team will place their sticks on their restraining line during pre-game meeting. One official will check sticks per team. Recommended hand sanitization after official stick checks. Players return to collect their own stick after the pre-game check is completed.
5. **BOYS** - No equipment inspections prior to the game – Goalkeepers (new NOCSAE guideline) or field players.

#### **B. Team Benches**

1. Team areas may be expanded to promote social distancing.
2. All sideline personnel and players shall wear face coverings. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.
3. Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet.



4. Place team benches opposite the spectator seating.

### **C. Substitution Procedures**

1. Ensure that players substituting, coaches, and the table personnel are maintaining social distancing of 6 feet.
2. If available, recommend that a penalty area be marked off that allows social distancing between penalized players, substitutes, and the table personnel.
3. Limit contact between players when substituting.
4. **GIRLS** - Split sub box so that each team subs in from their own half of the sub box.

### **D. Official's Table**

1. Limited to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended distance of 6 feet between individuals.
2. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential personnel and will need to find an alternative location.
3. If a team member is carded, it is recommended to mark a location of where the individual is to stand that is socially distant from the officials' table.
4. Place officials table sufficiently away from the sideline to allow for additional space for substitutes.
5. Table personnel shall adhere to any required local/state face covering requirements. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.

### **E. Pregame, Quarter, Half-Time, and Post Game Ceremony**

1. No pregame introduction line. Send players to their field positions for introductions.
2. Water bottles should not be allowed on the field of play and should be used off the playing surface.
3. Coaches are encouraged to hold pre-game, quarter, half-time, and post-game meetings, as well as time-outs, socially distant and off the playing surface, where possible.
4. No post game shaking hands.

## **F. Equipment and Accessories**

1. Face coverings are permitted and shall be worn at all times by all players and team personnel not in competition. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.
2. Student-Athletes are recommended to keep their mouth guards in their mouth throughout the competition. If the mouth guard is taken out proper disinfection of the mouth guard should be performed prior to reinsertion. Hands should also be washed or disinfected before and after doing so.
3. **BOYS** - Clear, molded, and non-rigid face shields approved by the helmet manufacturer are permitted

## **G. Legal Uniform:**

1. Long sleeves are permitted.
2. Long pants are permitted.
3. Undergarments are permitted but must be of a similar length for the individual and a solid like color for the team.

## **H. Officials Considerations**

1. Please review the General Considerations for Officials.
2. Long-sleeved shirts/jackets are permitted.
3. Electronic whistles are permitted. Check the general consideration for more information on electronic whistles.
4. Officials shall wear face coverings. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.
5. Social distancing guidelines should be employed during the contest for officials when interacting with coaches and student-athletes (ex. penalties or carding).

# MPSSAA Return to Play: Softball Bulletin

## I. General Considerations

- A. All schools should read and implement the recommendations found in the front section of this publication.
- B. All schools should utilize the MPSSAA *Roadmap for Return of Athletics* for the preparation of facilities in consultation with their Local School System Return to Play Committee.
- C. The following additional information provides additional clarification specific to the sport of Softball.
- D. Unless specifically stated, all rules and regulations stipulated in the NFHS Softball Rule Book will be followed.

## II. Competition Modifications

### A. Local School System Scheduling Considerations

- 1. Doubleheader contests are not advised, however, may be necessary based on LSS logistics and facilities. Appropriate time in between double header contests, such as JV and Varsity should be allocated to allow for necessary cleaning and disinfecting.
- 2. Regular season tournaments should be limited to four-teams.

### B. Regular Season Policy and Procedures

- 1. As allowed in NFHS Rule 4-2-3, by state adoption, a game called for any reason, where a winner cannot be determined, will be treated as a suspended game. If the game is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension, with the lineup and batting order of each team exactly the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules of the game.
- 2. All games, including doubleheaders, will be scheduled as seven inning games.
- 3. The Girls State Softball Committee has established a tiebreaker procedure as authorized by rule NFHS Rule 4-2-6, to determine the winner of a game that remains tied after seven innings of play. Individual school systems are encouraged to adopt this procedure during the regular season for both varsity and junior varsity games.

Beginning with the eighth inning, each half inning will begin with the last completed turn at bat from the previous inning (or her legal substitute or courtesy runner) on second base. [Note: Enforcement of an “automatic out” as described in

NFHS Rule 3-3-8b or 4-3-1g shall never be interpreted to create an out before the extra inning is begun.] After the lead off batter has completed her turn at bat, any “automatic out” in the batting order will be an automatic out as prescribed in NFHS Rule 7-4-1.

4. A game will be considered complete anytime after 4-1/2 to 5 innings when a team is 10 runs behind and has completed its term at bat
5. The Girls State Softball Committee has adopted the rule permitting the courtesy runners and a double first base for play all season long.
6. As per NFHS rules, an optic yellow ball is required for all contests. The Girls State Softball Committee highly recommends the use of the Dudley SB12LRFY-FP Optic Yellow ball with red stitching.
7. All games must be played on a regulation softball field. The field must be skinned and cannot be a baseball field or one with a raised mound.

### **C. COVID-19 Rule Modifications**

1. Team areas may be expanded to promote social distancing i.e., outside of the dugouts may be utilized if fencing is along the baselines.
2. The number of individuals in the dugout is dependent on the size of the dugout. Players and coaches must maintain 6 feet of social distance. NFHS rules allow for dugouts/designated warm up areas to be extended to provide for social distancing of 6 feet.

### **D. Administrative Considerations**

1. LSS should be in compliance with MDH and state facility limitations, including the number of permitted spectators at an event.
2. Hand washing/sanitizing stations should be set up or designated for encouraging frequent hand washing/sanitizing during the course of competition and practices.
3. The use of noisemakers and other distractions which disrupt the orderly progress of the game, i.e. whistles and air horns similar to those used by the officials and timer, are prohibited.
4. Locker rooms are not recommended at the time of this publication. LSS should implement the most recent information on locker room use.

### **III. COVID-19 Mitigation Considerations**

#### **A. Pregame Conference and Post Game Ceremony**

1. Limit attendees to one coach from each team plus the umpires. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person and shall wear masks.
2. Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.
3. Coaches are encouraged to hold pregame and postgame meetings socially distant and off the playing surface, where possible.
4. No post game shaking hands.

**B.** Teams should suspend the practice of team huddles directly before and after each inning being played.

**C.** Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players when scoring or after home runs.

**D.** No seeds, gum, or spitting.

**E.** Players are encouraged not to share batting helmets, bats, or catchers equipment. If items are to be shared, disinfection of the equipment shall be performed between use with an approved disinfectant.

**F.** All players are prohibited from licking their fingers and wiping them off. Pitchers are not allowed to put their hands to their mouths or blow into their hands prior to pitching the ball. This will be a "no pitch." Any umpire is permitted to make this call. The ball should be called dead immediately and it will be a "no pitch." Ball goes to the dugout for sanitizing, pitcher sanitizes hands before play continues.

**G.** 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.

**H.** Coaches must stay 6 feet from a runner at all times after suspension of play.

**I.** Coaches, pitchers, and catchers shall remain 6 feet apart from one another during visits to the mound.

**J.** Face coverings are permitted on the field of play. Face coverings shall be worn at all times by all players and team personnel not in competition. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable. Facial coverings must be of one color, not distracting, and no designs (school logos are permitted). Pitchers cannot wear optic yellow face coverings.

- K.** Teams are expected to provide individual water for their athletes and discourage the use of water stations and open cups. No sharing of water bottles.
- L.** Lineups should be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup.

**M. Umpire Considerations**

1. Please review the General Considerations for Officials.
2. Long-sleeved shirts/jackets are permitted.
3. Face coverings shall be worn on the field of play. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.
4. Social distancing guidelines should be employed during the contest for umpires when interacting with coaches and student-athletes (ex. ejections).
5. The home plate umpire shall wear a face mask behind the plate.
6. Follow social distancing guidelines. Consider six feet minimum distance when talking to others (players, coaches, other umpires) at plate meeting.
7. Base umpires shall wear a face covering and maintain 6 feet from any player as a starting position when rotated and/or counter rotated.

# MPSSAA Return to Play: Tennis Bulletin

## I. General Considerations

- A. All schools should read and implement the recommendations found in the front section of this publication.
- B. All schools should utilize the MPSSAA *Roadmap for Return of Athletics* for the preparation of facilities in consultation with their Local School System Return to Play Committee.
- C. The following additional information provides additional clarification specific to the sport of Tennis.
- D. Unless specifically stated, all rules and regulations stipulated in the USTA's "Friend at Court" Rule Book and Code will be followed.

## II. Competition Modifications

### A. Local School System Scheduling Considerations

- 1. Local school systems should consider only allowing single competitions between two opposing schools.
- 2. Regular season tournaments should be limited to four-teams.

### B. Regular Season Policy and Procedures

- 1. The MPSSAA State Tennis Committee has adopted the following policies prior to, during, and after match play in the interest of sportsmanship and safety:
  - a) Abusive, loud, profane, threatening or obscene language, gestures or taunting during play shall also be considered unsportsmanlike conduct. The first offense will result in a one point penalty and the second offense will result in the disqualification of the offending player.
  - b) Any tennis ball that is struck in frustration or anger outside of the normal run of play and comes in contact with the court, fencing, net, net post, another player, or leaves the court confines shall be deemed as equipment abuse.
  - c) Any racket that is swung in frustration or anger that comes in contact with the court, fencing, net, net post, another player, or any racket intentionally propelled out of a player's hand toward the court, skyward, or in any horizontal direction shall be deemed as equipment abuse.

- d) The normal escalating penalty scale for Code Violations will be applied unless the equipment abuse causes injury to an opponent where the opponent cannot continue to play, then a default by the equipment abuser will be declared.
2. Officials and coaches are performing a disservice to the sport and the athletes when they allow unsportsmanlike acts to go uncalled because they do not want to appear to be “too picky”. When those athletes do participate in a culminating event and the rules are enforced according to the code, players then think that the rules are unfair or that they should have received a warning, since the call was never made during the regular season. Resulting disqualifications are ultimately the responsibility of the athlete and the coach, however officials who have tolerated illegal actions during the regular season must also assume some responsibility.

### **C. COVID-19 Rule Modifications**

1. Schools may adhere to off-site court competition rules in relation to COVID-19 accommodations.

### **D. Administrative Considerations**

1. LSS should be in compliance with MDH and state facility limitations, including the number of permitted spectators at outdoor events.
2. Hand washing/sanitizing stations should be set up or designated for encouraging frequent hand washing/sanitizing during the course of competition and practices.
3. Locker rooms are not recommended at the time of this publication. LSS should implement the most recent information on locker room use.
4. Require athletes to arrive at a venue already in competitive attire or provide alternative accommodations for players to change that allows for 6 feet of social distancing.

## **III. COVID-19 Mitigation Considerations**

### **A. Prematch Conference**

1. Limit attendees to the head coach and one captain from each team.
2. Move the location of the pre-match conference to center court with one coach and one captain positioned on each side of the net. All four individuals should maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
3. Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.

### **B. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.**



**C. Team areas** - all team personnel shall observe social distancing of 6 feet and be separated as best as possible.

**D. During Matches**

1. Between points, use your racquet or foot to advance the tennis balls back to your opponent. Also, avoid using your hands when returning balls to another court.
2. Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet if changing ends of the court.
3. Avoid touching your face after handling a ball, racquet or other equipment. Wash/sanitize your hands promptly if you have touched your eyes, nose or mouth.
4. When playing doubles, coordinate with your partner to maintain physical distancing, where possible.
5. Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer before, during (between sets), and after play.
6. Clean and wipe down your equipment, including racquets and water bottles. Use new balls and a new grip, if possible.
7. Use only your own towels and water bottles. Avoid sharing food and touching common surfaces such as court gates, fences, benches, etc.
8. Home team handles the scoring and the touching of the scoring devices (score cards/score tubes). If doubles, the home team designates one person from the home team to handle scoring.

**E. Tennis Balls** - Although unlikely, it's possible that a tennis ball can transmit the COVID-19 virus, as virtually any hard surface can transmit the disease.

1. Open two cans of tennis balls that do not share the same number on the ball.
2. Use four or six tennis balls.
3. Take one set of numbered balls, and have your playing partner take a set of balls from the other can. (Have one player mark their balls for easier identification.)
4. Proceed with play, making sure to pick up your set of numbered balls only. Should a ball with the other number wind up on your side of the court, do not touch the ball with your hands. Use your racquet head or feet to advance the ball to the other side of the court.

# MPSSAA Return to Play: Track and Field Bulletin

## I. General Considerations

- A. All schools should read and implement the recommendations found in the front section of this publication.
- B. All schools should utilize the MPSSAA *Roadmap for Return of Athletics* for the preparation of facilities in consultation with their Local School System Return to Play Committee.
- C. The following additional information provides additional clarification specific to the sport of Track and Field.
- D. Unless specifically stated, all rules and regulations stipulated in the NFHS Track and Field Rule Book will be followed.

## II. Competition Modifications

### A. Local School System Scheduling Considerations

- 1. Local school systems should consider only allowing dual, tri, or quad competitions between opposing schools, dependent on the size of rosters competing.
- 2. Regular season tournaments should be limited to four-teams.

### B. COVID-19 Rule Modifications

- 1. **Uniform Rule - The** uniform rule shall be waived for participants in outdoor meets. Participants' attire should not pose any additional health risks during competition.
- 2. Frequent hand washing/sanitizing is encouraged specifically after shot put and relays.
- 3. All shared equipment, shot puts, batons, pole vaults, etc., shall be cleaned with approved disinfectant between uses.
- 4. During relay events, four batons may be used with a tap of batons to symbolize the traditional relay hand-off.

### C. Meet Organization

#### 1. Order of Events and Modifications for outdoor events.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Modifications for outdoor events</b>
4x800 Relay	Allow four batons to be used with a tap of batons in lieu of handoffs. If one baton is used athletes shall thoroughly hand wash/sanitize at the completion of the event at the hand washing/sanitizing station(s).
110m H	Consider multiple heats, leaving lanes in between competitors open
100m H	Consider multiple heats, leaving lanes in between competitors open
100m	Consider multiple heats, leaving lanes in between competitors open
1600m	Consider multiple heats with space in between competitors.
4x200m Relay	Allow four batons to be used with a tap of batons in lieu of handoffs. If one baton is used athletes shall thoroughly hand wash/sanitize at the completion of the event at the hand washing/sanitizing station(s).
400m	Run event in lanes.
3200m	Consider multiple heats with space in between competitors.
300m H	Consider multiple heats, leaving lanes in between competitors open
200m	Consider multiple heats, leaving lanes in between competitors open
800m	Stagger the start at 3 meters apart and break at the back. Or consider multiple heats with space in between competitors.
4x100 Relay	Allow four batons to be used with a tap of batons in lieu of handoffs. If one baton is used athletes shall thoroughly hand wash/sanitize at the completion of the event at the hand washing/sanitizing station(s).
4x400 Relay	Allow four batons to be used with a tap of batons in lieu of handoffs. If one baton is used athletes shall thoroughly hand wash/sanitize at the completion of the event at the hand washing/sanitizing station(s).
Discus	Hand washing/sanitizing station at event for frequent hand cleaning. Implement specific equipment cleaning between uses.
Shot Put	Hand washing/sanitizing station at event for frequent hand cleaning. Implement specific equipment cleaning between uses.
Triple Jump	Hand washing/sanitizing station at event for frequent hand cleaning.
High Jump	Hand washing/sanitizing station at event for frequent hand cleaning.
Long Jump	Hand washing/sanitizing station at event for frequent hand cleaning.
Pole Vault	Hand washing/sanitizing station at event for frequent hand cleaning. Implement specific equipment cleaning between uses.

2. Preliminary events are not recommended.

3. An athlete may compete in a maximum of four events.

4. Consider using alternative time methods in lieu of traditional FAT timing.

5. Starting blocks should either not be used or disinfected after each use.
6. Order of field events
  - a) Boys shot put and triple jump will start first.
  - b) Girls discus, pole vault, high jump, and long jump will start first
7. No pole vault event shall be contested unless vaulters are weighed in and poles verified utilizing a scale according to state adoption. (NFHS Rule 7-5, Article 3).
8. Each school entering a meet agrees to abide by decisions made by that meet's games committee. Protests at any level of competition—dual, triangular, city, county, region, state—shall be settled by an appointed jury of appeals or similar committee at the site of that particular meet.

#### **D. Administrative Considerations**

1. LSS should be in compliance with MDH and state facility limitations, including the number of permitted spectators at indoor or outdoor events.
2. Locker rooms are not recommended at the time of this publication. LSS should implement the most recent information on locker room use.
3. Hand washing/sanitizing stations should be set up or designated for encouraging frequent hand washing/sanitizing during the course of competition and practices.
4. Face coverings shall be worn at all times unless competition is imminent. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.
5. Determine alternative ways to hold pre-meet, violation, and appeal decisions between officials and coaches.
6. Determine set warmup times and areas to support social distancing of athletes.
7. Team areas should be separated as best as possible.

### **III. COVID-19 Mitigation Considerations**

#### **A. Competition Considerations**

1. SP should enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
  - a) To limit contact: athletes can provide their own implements (that pass inspection) and retrieve their own implements after all throws.
  - b) If athletes can't provide their own implements, then it is recommended that implements be sanitized between each use.

2. LJ, TJ should enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
3. HJ, PV should enforce social distancing for all athletes and officials.
  - a) To lower the risk of these events meets can cover pits by a tarp that is removed and disinfected after each athlete (therefore multiple tarps needed to keep the event moving).
  - b) To limit contact: athletes should not share vaulting poles.
  - c) Consider having staggered schools compete to conclusion in field events prior to the next school's participation.
4. Sprint, hurdle, relay events run entirely in lanes, may use every other lane to assist with distancing.
  - a) Blocks should be disinfected after each heat / race.
  - b) Recommend not using baskets at the start line for apparel.
5. Middle distance and distance races on the track of 800m and longer (any event not run entirely in lanes) are considered moderate risk activities if conducted under normal circumstances.

## **B. Officials Considerations**

1. Please review the General Considerations for Officials
2. Follow social distancing guidelines:
  - a) Pre and Post Meet conferences,
  - b) Clerking at the start line,
  - c) Tabulations and posting of results.
3. Consider using electronic whistles or devices.
4. Do not shake hands and follow pre- and post-game ceremony guidelines established by state associations.
5. Official's personnel shall wear cloth face coverings. Medical grade or cloth face coverings are acceptable.