



## **OVERVIEW OF IMPORTANT RETURN TO PLAY TOPICS**

*This document was updated on October 12, 2020. Over time this document will change – please check back frequently for updates. The first five pages of this document feature easy-to-understand overviews of Fall 2020 COVID-document related guidelines. For more detailed answers, read this entire packet. Fall athletics will not be risk-free, but by following the guidance in this document we all can help mitigate those risks. We also ask that you consider your interactions outside of sports during this season in order to limit the potential for exposure in other portions of your daily routine.*

**PROTOCOL FOR POSITIVE CASES:** A detailed and more complete version of these protocols can be found on page five of this document (“What to Do When Someone Gets Sick”).

1. Contact health department and follow guidance.
2. Close contacts MAY have to quarantine for 14 days – follow health department guidance. “Close contact” is defined as anyone who was less than six feet apart for more than 15 minutes, at any point from two days before symptoms until the time the individual is isolated.
3. Notify all schools, families and officials involved without identifying the person involved.
4. Student, coaches, officials and others at the event but NOT in close contact should be closely monitored for symptoms and may not need testing. Follow health department guidance.
5. Clean the area.

**FACE COVERINGS:** [Facial coverings are covered in detail in the guidance released on Sept. 10](#), and [updated again on Oct. 6](#). In general, facial coverings are not required for athletes in Cross Country, Golf, Tennis and Swimming & Dive, but are required for athletes in Football, Soccer and Volleyball. Face coverings continue to be required of indoor officials at all times and outdoor officials when not involved in active officiating which includes arrival at the site, pregame duties, timeouts, intermissions, extended stoppages in play and any postgame responsibilities while still onsite. Bench personnel are required to wear face coverings at all times – this includes athletes not currently in the game, coaches, managers, trainers, statisticians, media and anyone else on the sideline. It is recommended that game officials wear face coverings, but it is not required when carrying out their duties. Management, school administrators, media and all staff are required to wear face coverings. Spectators are required to wear face coverings.

**REGULAR SEASON TOURNAMENTS, INVITATIONALS, MULTI-TEAM COMPETITIONS:** The following limitations are in place for regular season fall tournaments and invitationals, both home and away. Regular season dual/head-to-head matchups, between multiple levels of two different schools, are not affected.

- Cross Country – maximum of 70 runners are allowed in a race
- Golf – maximum of 72 competitors at an 18-hole site
- Football – two teams at a site
- Soccer – four teams at a site
- Swimming & Diving – four teams at a site
- Tennis – four teams at a site
- Volleyball – four teams at a site

When determining the number of teams present at a tournament, count the school’s varsity team as one team, and its JV team as a second team. The goal is to achieve physical distancing at all possible times; teams not in

competition should be provided adequate space, and spectator limitations must be followed. Consider staggered contest and team arrival times to maintain physical distancing. Where two sites/facilities are used, there should not be any crossover competition between the two tournaments.

**SCRIMMAGES:** There are no scrimmages allowed for any sports this fall.

**SPECTATOR LIMITATIONS:** Limitations on spectators are based on the MDHHS Emergency Order of Oct. 5.

As of October 6, if an indoor event is in a fixed indoor seating venue (gymnasium or pool), 20% of seating capacity is allowed for up to 500 spectators (25% in Region 6). If your gymnasium seats 2,500 or more, you would be able to sell 500 spectator tickets. If your gymnasium seats less than 2,500, take 20% (or 25% in Region 6) of your maximum capacity to determine the number of allowed spectators. If an outdoor event is in a fixed outdoor seating venue (football or soccer stadium), 30% of seating capacity is allowed for up to 1,000 spectators. If your stadium seats 3,333 or more, you would be able to sell 1,000 spectator tickets. If your stadium seats less than 3,333, take 30% of your maximum seating capacity to determine the number of allowed spectators. Note that if an outdoor event is NOT in a fixed out-door seating venue (cross country, golf, soccer field with no permanent/fixed seating), a site must maintain no more than 30 spectators per 1,000 square feet of the facility, up to a maximum of 1,000 spectators. We realize this will be challenging to enforce in cross country and golf in particular given the massive expanse of many cross country and golf courses. In these cases, use every opportunity possible to announce and remind all involved to keep social distancing at all times. Effective immediately, local schools may use these new indoor and outdoor limitations or may continue to use the two spectators per participant guidance. If local health department orders exist that are stricter than these updated MHSAA requirements, member schools and host venues are expected to follow those local orders.

**ENTRANCE/EXIT STRATEGIES:** Consider strategies to prevent groups from gathering at entrances/exits to facilities to limit crossover and contact, including staggering starting/ending times.

**PRE-WORKOUT AND PRE-GAME SCREENING:** All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating, including with a temperature check. This check may take place onsite or be completed and verified prior to arrival onsite (at home, for example). Anyone with a temperature of greater than 100.3 degrees should not participate and be sent home. 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. These records must be kept confidential. Any person displaying symptoms of COVID-19 should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate and contact his or her primary care provider or other health-care professional. Continue to remind and insist that coaches and students disclose symptoms so all schools can compete safely. Involve local health departments if positive cases of COVID are discovered. Vulnerable adult individuals should not coach, supervise or participate in any competitions or workouts. School districts will make the decision on vulnerable individuals.

**COVID GAME CANCELLATIONS:** Except for football, any game cancelled because of COVID issues is not considered a forfeit. It is considered a no play provided the contest has not started. For official's payment purposes this is considered an act of God.

**TICKETS:** Schools should strongly consider using a digital ticket or cashless system. Schools must work together to develop a distribution plan for the limited amount of tickets available per game. If a physical ticket is used, each school should consider conducting a pre-sale, with no on-site ticket sales – only tickets, not money, is collected at the event site.

**TRANSPORTATION:** The use of buses is a local school district decision. Cleaning and ability to physical distance should be part of the decision. Schools should also consider length of trips when determining the season schedule. When feasible, consider having parents drive athletes to and from games.

**LOCKER ROOMS:** Home teams are not required to offer locker room access. Visiting teams should arrive dressed and ready to play. Locker room restrooms should be available, and a cleaning schedule should be created.

**INCLEMENT WEATHER:** Have an action plan ready for outdoor sports that go into a weather delay. Determine where teams should go in the case of lightning or thunder.

**FACILITY CLEANING:** Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities. Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (bleachers, chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.). Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds before participating in workouts. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.

**CONCESSIONS:** Concessions stands are not allowed at indoor venues. Concession stands may be open with appropriate physical distancing for outdoor venues.

### **BEST PRACTICES FOR NON-ATHLETES – THIS IS NOT SPORT SPECIFIC**

#### **Administrators/Host Management**

- Administrators must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Obtain officials' information in order to trace contacts if necessary. (This information may be accessible through Arbiter.)
- Provide clear instruction to teams in advance of contests about entrance and exit points of the facility.
- At larger spectator events, consider providing volunteers to monitor entrances and spectator seating areas who can promote physical distancing and face coverings.
- When possible, officials and teams should be provided separate bathrooms and/or gathering areas.
- Scorer's Table/Press Box – essential personnel should be 6 feet apart when possible.
- A cordless microphone could be used.
- Cleaning supplies should be available on site with devices sanitized between uses.

#### **Coaches**

- Coaches must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Provide and review NFHS Playing Rule modifications with players and parents.

## **Officials**

- Officials indoors must wear facial coverings at all times, unless an exception applies (e.g., medical intolerance or while exercising).
  - An official only needs to notify the school that an exception applies; but do not have to inform them which exception, or give further explanation or proof.
- Officials outdoors are not mandated to wear facial coverings because they can maintain six feet of distance except for fleeting moments.
- All officials must wear facial coverings during downtimes (i.e., upon arrival to the facility, during intermissions, after the contest(s) until leaving the facility) unless an exception applies.
- Individual schools and/or districts may require officials to wear facial coverings at all times, but must notify officials of this policy at least 10 days in advance of the contest date.
- Electronic whistles are permitted.
- Officials must come dressed to officiate; a locker room will not be provided.
- Officials should bring their own food and water, and their own pen to sign lineup sheets, scorebooks, etc.
- Officials will not be expected to monitor physical distancing; each person is responsible.

## **Spectators**

- Spectators must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Entrance and exit protocols, and posted signs by host management must be obeyed.

## **Media Personnel**

- Media must wear face coverings and practice physical distancing.
- Press box/table accommodations should allow for appropriate physical distancing.
- Promote to local media the need to call in advance of the event to secure accommodations.
- Designate locations where photographers may shoot from and enforce it. Make sure photographers are aware of restrictions when they arrive. Photographers must be kept out of team box (football) and bench areas (basketball, volleyball, other sports).
- Limit postgame interviews to open air areas. No locker room access.
- Establish times when the venue will become available to the media and when it will close.



Updated 07/28/20

## Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

### **Precautionary Measures (in addition to other protocols and precautions)**

- Anyone attending or participating in an MHSAA regular season or tournament event should check his/her temperature before arriving. Spectators, participants or personnel displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., *fever, cough or shortness of breath*), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Prior to participation, the COVID-19 athlete/coach monitoring form should be used, which includes five questions plus a temperature check. **NOTE: Athletic Directors should consider requiring similar precautions for game officials.**

### **Protocol for Suspected Cases of COVID-19**

- All schools should have an emergency action plan in place for each site. If a student, coach or official is or becomes sick on site with symptoms of COVID-19, they should be placed in a clearly identified and designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they can be picked up. Staff who are identified to care for students must wear a mask.
- A symptomatic student should be sent home with a parent or designated adult until they have tested negative or have been released from isolation according to the local health department's protocols.
- Students, coaches, and/or officials should be transported by their parent or guardian, emergency contact or ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being brought to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19. If a student, coach or official becomes sick, they must not use group transportation to return home.

### **Protocol for Positive Cases of COVID-19**

- The local health department should be contacted by the school for further direction. They likely will initiate contact tracing, following regular public health practices.
- All schools, public and private, must cooperate with the local public health department if a confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified, and collect the contact information for any close contacts (*i.e., individuals less than six feet apart for more than 15 minutes*) of the infected individual from two days before he or she showed symptoms to the time when he or she was last at the event. Close contacts should be quarantined for 14 days at home. Local health officials may identify other contacts who require quarantine.
- Administrators of the schools involved, as well as students/families/officials in attendance, should be notified of the presence of any laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed cases of COVID-19 so there continues to be awareness and close observation of any symptoms. **NOTE: Student communicable disease related information is protected health information. The individual with COVID-19 should not be identified by name to non-family or non-health department officials. Even if a family/student acknowledges and publicly discloses a positive test, school staff and officials must not participate in discussion or acknowledgement of a positive test by identifying a specific student.**
- Students, coaches or officials who were at the event, but not in close contact with a positive case, should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.
- Areas that were used by the sick person should be closed off and should not be used until after cleaning and disinfecting them (this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area). If possible, cleaning and disinfecting of the area should not occur until at least 24 hours has elapsed. If 24 hours is not feasible, as much time possible should be allowed to pass before cleaning or disinfection occurs.



**SPORT:** Football (8 & 11-Person)  
**ASSISTANT DIRECTORS:** Nate Hampton & Brent Rice [nate@mhsaa.com](mailto:nate@mhsaa.com) & [brent@mhsaa.com](mailto:brent@mhsaa.com)

Considering all recommendations by the [MISafeSchools Return to School Roadmap](#), [MHSAA Re-Opening Guidelines](#) and the Sports Medicine Advisory Committees, the following are the specific guidelines for Football:

**The MHSAA/NFHS Guidance For Re-Opening School Sports lists Football as a higher risk sport.**  
*Higher risk sports involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.*

**Competition and Spectator Limitations**

- No scrimmages allowed.
- Limitations on spectators are based on the school’s Phase in the MI Safe Start Plan, and updated based on Executive Order 176. In Phase 4 schools, each participant is allowed two guests. In Phase 5 schools, a maximum of 500 spectators is allowed or 25% of capacity (whichever is smaller).

**Season Calendar**

- Starting with an acclimatization week on **Aug. 10**, only helmets can be worn at practice.
- Full pads and equipment can be worn starting **Aug. 17**.
- An announcement for the start of competition will be made by **Aug. 20**.
- The start of competition is the weekend of Sept. 17-19. Start the season with your contracted “Week 4” game.

**Special Equipment and Facility Considerations for Football**

Sports Equipment	Facility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Footballs</li> <li>• Mouthguards</li> <li>• Kicking Tees</li> <li>• Ball Bags</li> <li>• Gloves</li> <li>• Practice/Game Uniforms &amp; Pads</li> <li>• Towels</li> <li>• Pennies/Helmet Covers</li> <li>• Water Bottles</li> <li>• Shields</li> <li>• Any item that is held or that makes contact with the body (ie. Blocking pads/dummies)</li> <li>• Goal Post Pads</li> <li>• End Zone Pylons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bleachers</li> <li>• Sidelines / Team Bench</li> <li>• Trainers equipment</li> <li>• Water source</li> <li>• Bathrooms</li> <li>• Locker rooms</li> <li>• Press Box</li> <li>• Ticket Booths</li> <li>• Entry Gates</li> <li>• Concessions</li> <li>• Weight training facilities</li> </ul>

## **FOOTBALL – Return to Play Guidelines**

### **PRACTICE**

- Facial coverings must be worn during all activity.
- Balls may be passed/shared, provided students wash their hands before and after practice.
- Appropriate physical distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines and benches during practices. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.
- Individual drills requiring the use of weight equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual.
- Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual.
- Balls may be passed/shared, provided students wash their hands before and after the practice.
- Sanitize uniforms and pads often.
- Reinforce Blood Born Pathogen protocols.

### **COMPETITION**

- Facial coverings must be worn during all activity.
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual. Consider using tape or paint as a guide for students and coaches.
- No pre-game and post-game handshakes/high-fives/fist bumps.
- All field equipment should be cleaned and sanitized after set up and before contest.
- Each school is responsible to bring towels (if necessary).
- Recommend face coverings be worn during the captains meeting.
- Each team is responsible for its own hand sanitizer and its own med kit.
- Sanitized back up balls should be available (someone needs to be designated to sanitize the ball).
- Sanitize uniforms and pads often.
- Reinforce Blood Born Pathogen protocols.

## FOOTBALL – NFHS Playing Rule Modifications

### **1. Football Rules Considerations**

In support of the NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Football Editorial Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020 football season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging physical distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment

- **TEAM BOX (Rule 1-2-3g)**
  - The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (both players and coaches) in order for more physical-distancing space for the teams.
  - Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times while in the team box.
  - Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.
- **BALL (Rule 1-3-2)**
  - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
  - The ball handlers should maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times during the contest.
- **FACE MASKS [Rules 1-5-1a, 1-5-3c(4)]**
  - Cloth face coverings are permissible.
  - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
- **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS [Rule 1-5-1d(5)]**
  - **\*\*Still being determined at this time on how to best handle the tooth and mouth protector during the contest. The NFHS SMAC will update the membership as soon as guidance is developed for all sports that require a tooth and mouth protector**
- **GLOVES (Rule 1-5-2b)**
  - Gloves are permissible but still must comply with Rule 1-5-2b by meeting either the NOCSAE Standard or the SFIA Specification
- **STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS (Rule 1-7)**
  - Each state association may adopt other playing/administrative rules for football for the 2020 season that would decrease exposure to respiratory droplets and COVID-19.
- **CHARGED TIME-OUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES (Rules 2-6-2, 3-5-3, 3-5-8)**
  - A single charged time-out may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length.
  - The authorized conference for the charged time-out should take place between the 9-yard marks and not at the sideline for physical-distancing purposes. (It would be permissible for more than one coach to be involved in this conference and for technology to be used.)
  - Each game official and player should have their own beverage container brought out to them on the field
- **INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING (Rule 3-5-7I)**
  - The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick

## 2. Football Game Officials Manual Considerations

### ▪ **GAME OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT**

- Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
- Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside:
  - Fox 40 Mini -
  - Fox 40 Unisex Electronic – (3 tone) -
  - Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
  - Windsor - (3 tone)
  - Check the market for other choices
- Face coverings are required.
- Gloves are permissible.
- Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment

### ▪ **PREGAME CONFERENCE, COIN TOSS AND OVERTIME PROCEDURES**

- For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, umpire and one designated representative from each team.
- Coin toss should take place in the center of the field with designated individuals maintaining physical distancing of 6 feet.
- No handshakes prior to and following the coin toss.
- Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet while performing all pregame responsibilities with all officiating crew members, game administration staff, line-to-gain crew, clock operators, individuals handling the balls during the game and team personnel.
- For the overtime procedure, please use the same procedure as used at the start of the contest for the coin toss.

### ▪ **PRE AND POST GAME CONSIDERATIONS**

- Suspend pregame protocol of shaking hands during introductions.
- Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.

## **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOTBALL**

- Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
- Maintain physical distancing of 6 feet at all times while on the sidelines and on the field of play when possible.
- Everyone should have their own beverage container that is not shared.
- Cloth face coverings are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
- Gloves are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
- Try and limit the number of non-essential personnel who are on the field level throughout the contest.
- If available, dressing facilities for game officials and teams should be large enough for them to use physical-distancing protocols and should be properly cleaned and sanitized prior to their arrival.
- On field Player Huddles – When possible players should be spaced as far from each other as possible between plays. Consider hand signals to call plays so players need not be standing close to each other while breathing heavily. Eliminate hand holding in huddles, during anthems, etc.
- Pre-game, Special Teams or Change of Possession Near Sideline Huddles- - When possible players should be spaced far from each other to receive coaching instructions prior to taking the field.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present at team activities.
- 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.
- Physical distancing at Practice – Coaches are responsible for ensuring physical distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This means additional spacing between players while playing, chatting, or changing drills so that players remain spaced out, and no congregating of players while waiting during drills.

- Sidelines – Players’ items should be lined up outside at least six feet apart and wear face coverings. Players should maintain physical distancing unless they are actively participating in the practice.
- Field of Play – Only essential personnel are permitted on the field of play. These are defined as players, coaches, athletic trainers, and officials. All others, i.e., ball shaggers, managers, video people, media photographers, etc. are considered non-essential personnel and are to be on the sideline, maintaining physical distance of 6 feet apart.

## **Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Football Guidelines**

Included below are considerations for contest officials within the guidelines for returning to school sports. They have been developed in consultation with health professionals, government officials, the National Federation and officials from around the state of Michigan. They include general expectations for schools in relation to officials, provisions specific to officials in the sport, rules and mechanics modifications and protocols for when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified.

Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as physical distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring remains the responsibility of the coaching staff and school personnel.

### **General Expectations for Schools**

- School athletic directors and officials should communicate with one another well in advance of the contest so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each. Failure to discuss the details may create greater conflicts at the date/time of the contest.
- Officials should be provided a designated parking area apart from the general public.
- An adult host should meet the officials at a single, designated location and time for arrival. They should be escorted all together to a *private open and/or ventilated locker room or meeting area* before the start of the contest, to and from the contest during any intermissions and to the parking areas following the conclusion of the contest.
- Officials should be provided cold beverages either (1) in a sealed, disposable bottle or (2) in a newly washed, reusable bottle. Each shall be designated for a single official and should be marked to indicate to which official the beverage is assigned.
- If offered, snacks or meals provided to officials should be individually packaged separately for each official.
- It is recommended that officials' fees are paid using an electronic payment method.

### **Protocols for Suspected and Confirmed Cases of COVID-19**

#### **Suspected Cases at Contest**

- If an official becomes symptomatic at a contest, he or she should be moved to a designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they are transported from the facility. If the symptoms are severe, the official should be picked up by an emergency contact or by ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being transported to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

#### **Confirmed Cases**

- If an official has a laboratory positive or clinically diagnosed case of COVID-19, he or she should immediately contact the local health department for further instructions, and inform the athletic director(s) of any host school he or she visited within the previous two days before displaying COVID-19 symptoms.
- Officials must inform any host school for which they are scheduled to officiate for (at least) 14 days following confirmation that they are unable to work those contests. They will remain ineligible to officiate any MHSAA contests until they are medically cleared by their personal healthcare provider.



Updated 9/29/20

- All officials considered close contacts (*i.e., individuals less than six feet apart for more than 15 minutes*) will be informed when a positive case of COVID-19 is identified from a contest they officiated within two days of when the infected individual first displayed symptoms. If identified as a close contact, an official should quarantine and must return assignments scheduled for the next 14 days.
- If an official was at the event, but not in close contact with a positive case, he or she should continue to be closely monitored for any symptoms of COVID-19. At this time, these individuals are not required to receive testing unless they develop COVID-19 symptoms.

### **Cancellations/Failure-to-Fulfill**

- Games that are cancelled because of COVID-19 are considered cancelled as a result of an act of God and are not subject to a 10-day minimum advanced notice by the school.
- Officials are not subject to a failure-to-fulfill penalty if they break a contract for an assignment when (1) they have been diagnosed with, or display symptoms of, COVID-19 or (2) if a confirmed case of COVID-19 has been identified with a team or facility which/where he or she is scheduled to officiate.

### **Officials' Sport-Specific Provisions**

It is incumbent of MHSAA officials to take necessary precautions to ensure a safe working/playing environment. This is especially important for those considered “vulnerable individuals” – people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Individual circumstances, proximity to others while officiating and overall risk level will determine for many the extent of precautions taken.

Provisions are listed in categories described below. As independent contractors, MHSAA officials have the ability to choose or decline assignments as they see fit. Likewise, because officials are hired by the schools, districts and their administrators may require additional precautions be taken by officials that work their contests beyond those mandated in this document. Officials should check with the schools as to any additional precautions or requirements before accepting an assignment and/or arriving to contest.

### **Provision Categories**

- Permitted** – Precautions and safety measures which officials are allowed to take during MHSAA contests. This list is not exhaustive and officials should contact the host school for guidance if they wish to take further precautions not listed in this document.
- Suggested** – Best practices for MHSAA officials based on the recommendations of health professionals. Not required, but should be followed if possible.
- Mandated** – Required practice in order to officiate MHSAA contests. If an official is unwilling or unable to follow these requirements, he or she is not permitted to officiate the contest.

**NOTE:** “Physical distancing” refers to a separation of individuals of at least six feet, except for momentary interactions.

### **Permitted Provisions:**

- Officials may use electronic whistles.
- Officials may wear gloves – including medical latex gloves, work gloves or gloves designed specifically for officiating.

- Officials may wear plastic face shields which connect to a hat, wrap around the forehead or that hang around the neck.
- The umpire may carry a spray disinfectant to use on the football between downs.
- The umpire may take a position deeper or wider than normal to avoid a position in close proximity to defensive players. It is not permissible for umpires to take a position behind the offensive team.
- Sideline officials (*i.e., head linesman, line judge, side judge and field judge*) may take their starting positions a yard into the field of play as long as this position does not interfere with play.
- Crews have the option to utilize the following mechanics deviation regarding the spotting of the football. If utilized, the Referee **must** discuss with the head coach of each team what will be required of their players in order to ensure play continues in as normal of a manner as possible. **NOTE: This crew mechanic will be mandatory for use in the 2020 MHSAA Postseason Tournament.:**
  - Officials will not be responsible for handling footballs during the course of the game. The responsibility to bring balls onto the field for a free kick or new series, retrieve footballs following an incomplete pass or after a kick and to spot the ball during an offensive possession belongs to the offensive team.
    - The kicker will bring the ball out with him/her for a free kick to start a half or following a score.
    - Receivers will retrieve the ball following an incomplete pass and return it to their snapper.
    - Team K players will retrieve the ball (or have another available) following a successful field goal or try attempt.
    - Receivers or runners will return the ball to their snapper following the completion of the previous play.
    - At the request of the officials, ball handlers from each team's sideline may bring in new footballs while their team is on offense when a ball is overthrown or gets away from the field of play, when necessary due to inclement conditions or at the start of a new series.
  - Forward progress will be marked in the same manner as normal, except that the umpire will mirror the position of the covering official and mark the spot of the next snap with his foot.
    - If the ball is downed at a yard line which may result in a measurement, the covering official will request the ball from a player so that it can be accurately placed on the ground.
    - The ball may be handled by **ONLY** the covering official when a measurement occurs. This includes during the measurement process and if/when the ball is re-spotted inside the hash marks.
  - The snapper is responsible to hold the ball between downs and carry it to the spot of the snap. When the snapper approaches the line of scrimmage, the umpire will instruct him/her to spot the ball at the toe of the umpire's foot. **NOTE: Alternatively, a member of the offensive team may place the ball at the spot of the next snap as he/she returns to the huddle or line of scrimmage.**
  - The Ready-for-Play will still be indicated by the umpire stepping away from the ball back to his position, so the ball cannot be snapped any earlier than normal. **NOTE: Following the**

**conclusion of a timeout, when the offensive team does not immediately return to the field, the Referee may sound his whistle and signal ready-for-play without the ball present at the line of scrimmage. The Umpire will remain at the spot and the offensive team may not snap the ball until he backs away to his position. Referees should use the ready-for-play to encourage players to come out of their huddles in a timely manner.**

- The mechanics for both the play clock and game play will remain the same as normal. The play clock may be reset to :25 if there is an unusual circumstance that wouldn't allow normal play to occur. This **DOES NOT** include when the offensive team is simply delayed in getting to the line of scrimmage by their own actions.
- There is no change in the mechanics for "hurry-up" or no huddle offenses since it still requires the umpire to step away in order for the ball to be legally snapped.

#### **Suggested Provisions:**

- Each official should check his/her temperature on game days. Officials displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough or shortness of breath), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Officials should consider bringing their own marked beverage(s).
- Upon arrival at the site/facility and throughout the contest, officials should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Officials should not share uniforms, towels apparel or equipment.
- Cloth or surgical face coverings, which cover the mouth and nose are recommended for individuals that can wear them without significant impact upon breathing.
- Officials should sanitize their hands after inspecting footballs, casts or braces.
- The officials handling the yard sticks during a measurement should sanitize their hands following the completion of the measurement.
- It is recommended that officials retrieve their own bean bags and penalty flags after they have been dropped.

#### **Mandated Provisions:**

- Officials will arrange to arrive to the site/facility at a single location and time. Unless unavoidable, officials will enter the facility as a group, maintaining proper physical distancing.
- Officials' pregame meetings shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.
- Officials shall not engage in pregame/postgame handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches or administrators.
- The coin toss (including overtime) will be conducted with only the referee, the umpire and a single captain from each team, maintaining physical distancing and without handshakes prior to and following the coin toss.



Updated 9/29/20

- Officials shall not physically contact players during the contest, including players that appear to be injured or ill.
- Officials will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the officials should avoid speaking face-to-face.
- Only one official will meet with the timer before the start of the game, while maintaining proper physical distancing.
- When providing an explanation of a ruling to a head coach, the referee will meet the coach between the sideline and the 9-yard marks, away from others located on the sideline. One other official may be present, but physical distancing should be practiced by all involved.

## Rules Modifications (Football)

- **TEAM BOX (Rule 1-2-3g)**
  - The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for both coaches and players) in order for more physical distancing space for the teams. Coaches and players located outside of the traditional team box (*i.e., the area between each 10- and 25-yard lines*) are being granted this latitude based on the special circumstances, and officials must be especially diligent in enforcing conduct and behavior rules in these expanded areas.
  
- **BALL (Rule 1-3-2)**
  - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
  
- **FACE MASKS (Rules 1-5-1a, 1-5-3c(4))**
  - Cloth face coverings are permissible by rule. If worn, they must be connected directly to the face, or must be attached to the *inside* of the facemask. **NOTE: Executive Orders 176 and 180 require the use of facial covering by all athletes; however, officials have no role in the enforcement of this mandate. See [Face Coverings and Contest Officials](#) for further information regarding this subject.**
  - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest. **NOTE: The MHSAA also permits the use of half face shields (top or bottom) under the same conditions (*i.e., attached to the inside of the facemask and 100% clear – no tint*).**
  - If a facial covering is grasped while inside the helmet or facemask, officials should use the same judgment as with the facemask foul rule. If a facial covering is grasped inside the neck area or along the nameplate area, officials should use the same judgment as with the horse collar tackle foul rule.
  
- **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS (Rule 1-5-1d(5))**
  - **\*\*Still being determined at this time on how to best handle the tooth and mouth protector during the contest.\*\***
  
- **GLOVES (Rule 1-5-2b)**
  - Gloves are permissible but still must comply with Rule 1-5-2b by meeting either the NOCSAE Standard or the SFIA Specification.
  
- **CHARGED TIMEOUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES (Rules 2-6-2, 3-5-3, 3-5-8)**
  - A single charged timeout may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length.
  - The authorized conference for the charged timeout should take place between the 9-yard marks and not at the sideline for physical distancing purposes. (It would be permissible for more than one coach to be involved in this conference and for technology to be used.)
  - Each game official and player should have their own beverage container brought out to them on the field.
  
- **INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING (Rule 3-5-7I)**



Updated 9/29/20

- The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick

