



2020-21 Cross Country Considerations

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020-21 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and state to help prevent the spread of the virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be a risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with Covid-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your state.

Return to Competition

General Considerations:

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should always be maintained. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
- Allowed Rule Modifications:
 - 8-1-3a: Consider widening the course to at least 6 feet at its narrowest point.
 - The starting line should be as wide as possible to encourage social distancing of participants prior to the start of the race.
 - During the regular student athletes should be called to the start line no more than 5 minutes prior to the start of the race. Additionally, there should be no runouts prior to the start of the race.
- Finish:
 - With no FAT timing, consider scoring race with finish place only to address congestion at the finish line. Using image-based (video camera) equipment at the finish will assist in selecting a place.
 - Consider using FAT timing for larger meets as it is easier to distance at the finish.
 - Coaches and or designee must be available at the finish line to assist their student athletes and to help maintain social distancing post-race.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment.
- **Pre and Post Game Ceremony:** Establish cross country specific social distancing meet protocols, including the elimination of handshakes before and after the meet.

Considerations for Coaches:

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Conduct workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those student athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Coaches and team personnel should always wear cloth face coverings.

Considerations for Student Athletes:

- Making each student athlete responsible for their own equipment and supplies including personal water bottle.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Student Athletes should inform coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are required when not participating in strenuous physical activity.

Considerations for Officials and meet personnel:

- Bring personal hand sanitizer and/or wash hands frequently.
- Don't share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines:
 - Pre and Post Meet conferences,
 - Clerking at the start line,
 - Tabulations and posting of results.
- Consider using electronic whistle.
- Do not shake hands and follow pre and post-game ceremony guidelines.
- Officials and meet personnel should always wear cloth face coverings.

Considerations for Parents:

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

- Make sure your student athlete and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home),
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.