

MHSA Reopening Sports/Activities Summer Guidance

Objective	<p>This document is intended to provide guidance for MHSA member schools to consider with their stakeholders in designing return-to-activity protocols in accordance with state and county restrictions. It allows for a coordinated reopening following the initial stay at home orders and Phase 1 restrictions ending and may also be used if conditions dictate the need for increased restrictions in the future.</p> <p>All MHSA out-of-season and summer rules are unchanged and in effect. It is important to note that schools cannot be involved in any way with any summer camps or tournaments during the summer.</p> <p>It is up to the school on whether coaches can have contact with their players within MHSA rules and whether school facilities can be used regarding MHSA summer rules. This is a school decision after checking with their school district legal counsel along with following the Governor’s directive and local health department regulations. Camps and tournaments must have an outside sponsor (no school or booster support or subsidy), rent must be paid for the facility and insurance provided depending on approval by the school for use of facilities. Schools also must determine if equipment will be allowed to be used and that proper cleaning and sanitizing of their equipment and facilities take place with approved outside use of their equipment/facilities.</p>
Foundational Statements	<p>The MHSA believes it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of students to return to physical activity and athletic competition.</p> <p>The MHSA recognizes that all Montana students may be unable to return to – and sustain – athletic activity at the same time across the state. There will also likely be variation in what sports and activities are allowed over the next 9 to 12 months.</p> <p>While recognizing that county-by-county reopening may lead to inequities, the MHSA advocates for returning students to school-based athletics and activities and allowing youth sports organizations to operate in any and all situations where it can be done safely.</p> <p>Prior to allowing use of facilities, schools and youth sports organizations should review facility use agreements, especially in the areas of sanitation requirements and liability.</p>
Points of Emphasis	<p>Limited testing availability, lack of resources for contact tracing, and expanding knowledge of COVID-19 transmission could all result in significant changes to this guidance. The MHSA will disseminate more information as it becomes available.</p> <p>Administrators and coaches must emphasize the need for all coaches and participants who have signs or symptoms of illness to stay home when ill to decrease risk of viral transmission. “Vulnerable individuals” are defined by DPHHS as people age 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.</p> <p>Current pre-season conditioning and acclimatization models assume that athletes have deconditioned during the stay at home orders. The current pandemic may result in students being deconditioned for several months. The intensity and duration of training should be moderated upon return. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) is currently involved with several organizations in developing consensus guidelines for the resumption of workouts and practices. These guidelines will be reviewed by the MHSA after they are finalized.</p> <p>Due to the near certainty of recurrent outbreaks in the coming months, schools and youth sports organizations must be prepared for periodic school closures and the possibility of some teams having to isolate for two or more weeks while in-season. Development of policies is recommended regarding practice and/or competition during temporary school closures, the cancellation of contests during the regular season, and parameters for the cancellation or premature ending to post-season events/competitions.</p> <p>Phases are in accordance with guidelines published by the State of Montana and are subject to change. Please note that further criteria must be met to advance to Phase 3 and those will be announced by the Governor. These criteria will be determined by the Governor and should be strictly followed.</p>

	Phase 2	Phase 3	Points of Emphasis
Facilities Cleaning	<p>Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities.</p> <p>Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).</p> <p>Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or hand sanitizer before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.</p> <p>Appropriate clothing/shoes should always be worn to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.</p> <p>Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered.</p> <p>Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.</p>		
Entrance/Exit Strategies	<p>Consider strategies to prevent groups from gathering at entrances/exits to facilities, limiting crossover and contact.</p>		
Limitations on Gatherings	<p>No gathering of more than 50 people at a time (inside or outside) if more than 50 people the facility must allow for appropriate social distancing. Groups of more than 50 people should be cancelled unless physical distancing can be maintained.</p> <p>Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same students working out together weekly to limit overall exposures. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training.</p> <p>There must always be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual. If this is not possible indoors, then the maximum number of individuals in the room must be decreased to obtain a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p>
Pre-Workout Screening	<p>All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs / symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating. Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to participate, should self-isolate, and contact their primary care provider or other health-care professional.</p> <p>Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored if possible.</p> <p>Vulnerable individuals should not supervise or participate in any workouts during Phase 2.</p>		<p>Symptoms to watch for include but are not limited to: fever, cough and shortness of breath.</p>

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Face Coverings	<p>Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend “medical grade” masks for physical activity. Any student who prefers to wear a cloth face covering should be allowed to do so.</p> <p>In the absence of guidelines to the contrary, we recommend that cloth face coverings be worn by students. Exceptions are swimming, distance running or other high intensity aerobic activity. Plastic shields covering the entire face will not be allowed during participation due to the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or others.</p> <p>Coaches, officials and other contest personnel may wear cloth face coverings at all times and are strongly encouraged to wear cloth face coverings whenever physical distancing is not possible. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)</p>		
Hygiene Practices	<p>Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.</p> <p>Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow. Avoid touching your face. Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible. Strongly consider using face coverings while in public.</p>		
Hydration/Food	<p>All students must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. Food should not be shared. Hydration stations (water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized.</p>		
Travel	<p>Keep travel local if possible, however check with the county health department regulations at the site you are traveling to. Remember that MHSA summer regulations only allow scrimmages between two teams (one team vs. one team – no tournaments or round robin sponsored or subsidized by the school or boosters)</p>		
Locker Rooms and Athletic Training Areas	<p>Reporting in appropriate attire and immediately returning home to shower is the best practice. If a locker room is used, the proper cleaning and sanitizing before, during and after needs to be done and proper social distancing practiced. No students should be allowed in the training room/ area unless the Athletic Trainer or adult supervision is present.</p>		
Weight Rooms	<p>Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual’s use of equipment.</p> <p>Resistance training should be emphasized as body weight, weight machines, and free weights that do not require a spotter. Free weight exercises that require a spotter cannot be conducted while honoring physical distancing norms. Safety measures in all forms must be strictly enforced in the weight room.</p> <p>Weight rooms must adhere to strict physical distancing and exercise frequent sanitation protocols before, during and after use.</p>		<p>Appropriate clothing/shoes should always be worn to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.</p>

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment	<p>There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, shoes, or sports specific equipment) between students. Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing). Individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.</p> <p>All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned after each individual use and prior to the next workout. Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual.</p> <p>Physical contact such as high-fives, fist bumps, and hugs should not be allowed.</p>		
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	Phase 2	Phase 3	Points of Emphasis
General Activity Description	Individual skill development and workouts maintain physical distancing. Practices allowed with school permission and within the guidelines of Phase 2 and local health departments and specific to guidance listed for each activity on this chart. Camps/meets/ tournaments cannot be school sponsored however those entities should check with local health departments for approval and schools should check on whether to allow rental of their facilities for camps/meets/tournaments, if allowed.		
Lower Infection Risk Activities	Activities that can be done with physical distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors. MHSA Activities: cross country (with staggered starts), track and field, swimming, golf, tennis, speech; Other Examples: Sideline cheer.		
Cross Country	Runners should maintain at least 6 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes) during practices. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad races. Other entities would have to check whether non-school road races are permitted as permission may be given to conduct races with less than 50 individuals participating.		Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.
Track & Field	Runners should maintain at least 6 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes) during practices. No sharing of implements / equipment. Padded equipment should be cleaned between use. Any field event with an implement needs to be cleaned after each use and masks may be worn by participants. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad events. Other entities would have to check whether non-school meets/events are permitted as permission may be given to conduct meets/events with less than 50 individuals participating.		High jump and pole vault pits would need to be sanitized after each jump in order to participate in these events. Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.
Swimming	Swimming pools – use only if the facility can adhere to strict physical distancing and the facility exercises frequent sanitation protocols. Relays need to maintain social distance.		Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.
Golf	Maintain appropriate physical distancing 6 feet apart. Do not touch the flagstick, other players clubs, equipment, etc. Ball washers and rakes for sand traps should not be used.		Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.
Tennis	Conditioning, no sharing of balls, each player may use own can of balls to serve and uses racket to pass other balls (singles only), ball machine use by individuals only. Players may do individual drills, wall volleys and serves. Wipe down rackets and balls after. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad scrimmages. Other entities would have to check whether non-school road meets are permitted as permission may be given to conduct meets with less than 50 individuals participating.		Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.
Speech	Maintain appropriate physical distancing 6 feet apart. Check with local health departments on students participating in non-school sponsored meets as meets or events may be allowed with less than 50 individuals participating.		Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.

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Moderate Infection Risk Activities	<p>Activities that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group sports OR sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants.</p> <p>MHSA Activities: volleyball*, soccer, softball*, basketball</p> <p>Notes: *Could potentially be considered "Lower Infection Risk" with appropriate cleaning of equipment and use of masks by participants.</p>		
Volleyball	<p>Conditioning, individual ball handling drills, each player has own ball. The balls should be cleaned individually throughout the practice. Conducting drills for specific skill development and intra-squad scrimmages may be allowable within Phase 2 guidelines and local school and health department restrictions. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad scrimmages or one team vs. one team allowed by MHSA rule. Other entities would have to check whether non-school tournaments are permitted as permission may be given to conduct tournaments with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p> <p>No contact allowed during in match celebrations.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.</p>
Soccer	<p>Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, each player has own ball, feet only (no heading/use of hands). The balls should be cleaned individually throughout the practice. Conducting drills for specific skill development and intra-squad scrimmages may be allowable within Phase 2 guidelines and local and health department restrictions. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad scrimmages or one team vs. one team allowed by MHSA rule. Other entities would have to check whether non-school tournaments are permitted as permission may be given to conduct tournaments with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.</p>
Softball	<p>Conditioning and tee work. Players should not share gloves or bats. A single player may hit in cages, throw batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). The balls should be cleaned individually throughout the practice. Conducting drills for specific skill development and intra-squad scrimmages may be allowable with Phase 2 guidelines and local school and health department restrictions. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad scrimmages or one team vs. one team allowed by MHSA rule. Other entities would have to check whether non-school tournaments are permitted as permission may be given to conduct tournaments with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.</p>
Basketball	<p>Practicing in pods is recommended (groups of five or ten players to minimize exposures). The balls should be cleaned individually throughout the practice. Conducting drills for specific skill development and intra-squad scrimmages may be allowable with Phase 2 guidelines and local school and health department restrictions. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad scrimmages or one team vs. one team allowed by MHSA rule. Other entities would have to check whether non-school tournaments are permitted as permission may be given to conduct tournaments with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.</p>

	Phase 2	Phase 3	Points of Emphasis
Higher Infection Risk Activities	<p>Activities that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.</p> <p>MHSA Activities: football, wrestling, cheerleading, dance/drill, choir, band, orchestra, solo music; Other Examples: marching band</p>		
Football	<p>Practices in pods is recommended (groups of five or ten players to minimize exposures). There should be no sharing of tackling dummies / donuts / sleds. The only protective equipment allowed is helmets. The balls should be cleaned individually throughout the practice. Conducting drills for specific skill development and intra-squad scrimmages may be allowable with Phase 2 guidelines and local school and health department restrictions. Check with local health departments in allowing intra-squad scrimmages or one team vs. one team allowed by MHSA rule. Examples could be 7 on 7 / other offense/defensive drills. Other entities would have to check whether non-school competitions are permitted as permission may be given to conduct competitions with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p> <p>Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.</p>
Wrestling	<p>Conditioning, mirror drills with spacing, no contact. Wrestlers may skill and drill without touching a teammate (as long as physical distancing is adhered to). Conducting drills for specific skill development may be allowable with Phase 2 guidelines and local school and health department restrictions. Other entities would have to check whether non-school meets are permitted as permission may be given to conduct meets with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals.</p>
Cheerleading	<p>Conditioning and individual technique/choreography work. Students may not practice/perform partner or group stunts. Chants, jumps, dance, tumbling without contact are permissible as long as physical distancing is adhered to. Other entities would have to check whether non-school competitions are permitted as permission may be given to conduct competitions with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p>
Dance/Drill	<p>Conditioning and individual technique/choreography work. Students may not practice/perform partner or group stunts. Jumps, dance, tumbling without contact are permissible as long as physical distancing is adhered to. Other entities would have to check whether non-school competitions are permitted as permission may be given to conduct competitions with less than 50 individuals participating.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p>
Music	<p>The extent of the spread of respiratory droplets during singing and the playing of wind instruments is currently under investigation. We recommend restricting these activities in schools until further guidance is available. Individual auditions are allowed.</p>		<p>Always be aware of local policies regarding fan restrictions during events. More than 50 may be possible if social distancing can be practiced.</p>
Signage	<p>CDC Print Resources</p>		

Additional Resources / Links

[White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again](#)

[CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#)

[CDC Recommendations Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings](#)

[NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletic and Activities](#)

[NCAA Core Principles of Resocialization of Collegiate Sport](#)

[NATA COVID-19 Resource Center](#)