



NJSIAA COVID-19 Season 4 Guidelines

This document provides specific guidelines for participation in high school sports for the 2020-21 spring season (season 4). All students participating in full-day or part-time remote learning are permitted to participate in NJSIAA athletics if the school district permits it. Schools must provide the necessary materials and guidance to promote behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as social distancing, frequent hand washing, and the use of face coverings.

In addition to this document, schools must comply with all guidelines issued by the Governor’s office, the CDC, NJDOH, and local health officials while participating in practices and NJSIAA interscholastic competition. These guidelines are subject to change based on actions taken by the Governor’s office, the CDC, and the NJ Department of Health.

PRACTICES/GAME GUIDELINES

2021	First Practice	First Scrimmage	Competition Start	Tournament Start	Transfer Date	Max Contests	Contests Per Week	3 in a Row	Competition End
Lacrosse - Boys	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 19	June 1	May 11	18 / 20	3	NO	June 20
Lacrosse - Girls	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 19	June 1	May 11	18 / 20	3	NO	June 20
Golf (B/G)	Apr 1	N/A	Apr 9	May 10	Apr 23	No Max	No Max	YES	June 20
Tennis-Boys (Team/Ind)	Mar 26	Apr 2	Apr 19	May 24 / June 12	May 7	No Max	No Max	YES	June 20
Baseball	Apr 1*	Apr 8	Apr 19	June 1 / June 4	May 11	25	No Max	YES	June 20
Softball	Apr 1*	Apr 8	Apr 19	June 1	May 11	25	No Max	YES	June 20
Track (NP/Pub)	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 19	June 1	May 11	No Max	3	NO	June 20
Volleyball-Boys	Apr 1	Apr 8	Apr 19	June 1	May 11	No Max	No Max	YES	June 20

***Early start for baseball/softball pitchers and catchers is Friday, March 26, 2021.**

Virtual Workouts

The NJSIAA recognizes the importance of socially and emotionally engaging student-athletes with their coaches and teammates, while also helping them to prepare physically and mentally for their upcoming season.

- School administration must approve the virtual workouts.
- In season sports must take priority over virtual workouts or virtual meetings for any out of season sport.
- Virtual workouts do not count towards the six days of practice and one day of rest requirement.
- Regarding physicals, it is the school’s decision whether to require student-athletes to have a completed physical before the start of virtual workouts.

Captains Practices

The phrase “Captains Practices” or any other student-led workouts does not exist within the NJSIAA guidelines.

- Official practices are sponsored by the school district and conducted by a coach that has satisfied all the requirements from the school district, the department of education, and the NJSIAA.
- An official practice takes place during the NJSIAA regulated seasons (fall, winter, spring).
- During the out-of-season period, practices/workouts sanctioned by the school and or under the direction of a coach are not permitted.

Multiple Season Participation – Students are permitted to participate in all seasons as defined by the NJSIAA during the 2020-21 school year, which include season 1, season 2, season 2A, season 3, and season 4.

- For this year only, The NJSIAA Executive Committee approved a waiver of the Bylaws to allow student-athletes to participate in two strenuous sports at the same time during the overlap period between seasons for any sports that would not normally be played in the same season (for example, basketball and wrestling is excluded).
- Students that are involved in overlapping sports are not subject to the six-day practice rule if they start the next sport within three days of the completion of the first sport.
- Students that begin the 2nd overlapping sport within three days are eligible for competition immediately unless the school imposes a minimum amount of required practices before a student is approved for competition in an overlapping sport.
- If a student is inactive for more than three days involving overlapping sports, then the six-day practice rule will be in effect.

Practices & Scrimmages – Coaches must comply with all NJ executive orders regarding indoor and or outdoor limits. Coaches MUST also maintain a high level of awareness of possible COVID-19 exposure throughout all practices.

- Coaches are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the coach’s health.
- Students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health, or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- Coaches must ensure social distancing practices are maintained to the maximum extent practicable during all practices.

Games – All school personnel must maintain a high level of awareness of possible COVID-19 exposure throughout all phases of the game.

- Coaches are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the coach’s health.
- Students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student’s health or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- Schools must ensure social distancing practices are maintained to the maximum extent practicable during the game.
- Team benches must be limited to essential personnel. Coaches must limit the number of players at each game.
- Officials are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the official’s health or the official is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- The sportsmanship statement is limited to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team while wearing masks and maintaining social distance.
- Schools are not required to have rooms available for the officials. If possible, communication with the official regarding this would be appreciated.
- Post-game handshakes and celebrations are prohibited.

Out of State Competition – Pursuant to Executive Order No. 194 (2020) and Administrative Order No. 2020-25, member schools are prohibited from hosting interstate competition in both indoor and outdoor sports until further notice. Therefore, no member school may host an out-of-state opponent or host an event out of state. Moreover, NJSIAA is prohibiting member schools from traveling out-of-state to compete. Should either the Executive Order or Administrative Order be amended, then we will notify member schools and update these limitations as appropriate.

Capacity Limits / Spectators – Pursuant to Executive Order No. 230 (2021), sports activities are currently subject to the following restrictions:

Indoors:

- Indoor practices and competitions are limited to 25 persons.
- If the number of individuals who are **necessary** for the practice or competition, such as players, coaches, referees and two parents/guardians per participating athlete, is greater than 25 persons, then the practice or competition may proceed.
- If the above exception applies, the number of individuals still may not exceed 35% of capacity of the room in which it takes place, or 150 persons, whichever is less.

Outdoors:

- Outdoor practices and competitions are limited to 50 persons.
- If the number of individuals who are **necessary** for the practice or competition, such as players, coaches, referees and two parents/guardians per participating athlete, is greater than 50 persons, then the practice or competition may proceed.
- If the above exception applies, then there is no overall gathering limit...schools must ensure that only **necessary** persons are present.

Should the Executive Order be amended, then we will notify member schools and update these limitations as appropriate.

Levels – Every effort should be made to minimize crossover between varsity, JV, and freshman levels. Crossover can lead to a greater number of students being sidelined due to exposure to a student who tests positive for COVID-19.

Back-to-Back Games – There is no need for a sanitization delay between back-to-back games. However, the following applies:

- Home team players should leave the facility at the completion of their game unless they are determined essential for the next game.
- Visiting teams should be transported separately and depart immediately following the game; however, realistically that may not be possible.
- The following are the guidelines when teams need to stay in the facility:
 - Designated areas must be set up for both home and visiting teams while they are waiting to play or upon completion of the first game.
 - People in this area must be sitting at least 6 feet apart and wearing face coverings.
 - A surface cleaning of the bench area is recommended between games.
 - Any changes or updates to Executive Order 196 will necessitate updates to these guidelines.

Post-Season – Please consult the sports specific tournament regulations.

League/Conference/County Tournaments – Please consult the sports specific tournament regulations.

FACILITY GUIDELINES

Indoor School Facilities - Any use of indoor facilities must be approved by the school district before use. All New Jersey Department of Health and CDC guidelines must be followed including:

- The facility is following all DOH regulations regarding indoor gatherings.
- All participants are maintaining social distancing
- All participants are wearing masks
- The facility is cleaned before and after using CDC and NJ DOH guidelines.
- Indoor air quality guidelines and recommendations regarding COVID-19 can be found on the NJSIAA website under “Current Resources.”

Third-Party Facilities

- Sports using third party facilities must follow the guidelines set forth by the NJ Department of Health.
- Schools using these facilities should have a plan in place if the locker rooms are closed.
- All guidelines under “Locker Rooms” remain in effect along with the facility-specific guidelines.

Air Quality & Flow - Indoor facilities should ensure appropriate indoor air/ventilation by following the DOH recommendations below:

- Keep doors and windows open where possible and utilize fans to improve ventilation.
- Inspect and evaluate the heating, ventilation, and conditioning (HVAC) unit to ensure that the system is operating within its design specifications and according to existing building code standards.
- Conduct routine maintenance as recommended by the manufacturer or HVAC professional.
- Within the design specification of the HVAC unit:
 - Increase the volume of outdoor air to the maximum capacity while the gym is occupied.
 - Reduce the volume of recirculated air being returned to the indoor spaces
 - Increase the volume of air being delivered to the indoor spaces to the maximum capacity
 - Select maximum filtration levels for the HVAC unit.
 - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs continuously while the facility is occupied.
 - Ensure that the HVAC unit runs for at least two hours before and two hours after the facility is occupied.
 - Consider installing portable air cleaners equipped with a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter to increase the amount of clean air within the facility.
 - Please check our website for CDC and ASHRAE guidance on ventilation requirements.

Locker Rooms – Proper protocols regarding access to locker rooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Locker room use is only for students that are in the building at the end of the school day. All students participating in full-day or part-time remote learning must come prepared for practice.
- Locker room use is limited to changing, equipment storage, hand washing, and restroom use only.
- Schools must monitor the activity to minimize the amount of time spent in the locker room.
- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the locker room unless it would inhibit the individual’s health.
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare, and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.
- Showers use – Sports specific use of showers (except swimming) is still TBD. Once we have clarity from the DOH, we will send that information out separately.

Training Room – Proper protocols regarding access to the training room must be followed, based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the training room unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure that indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare, and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash their hands frequently.

Weight Rooms – Proper protocols regarding access to the weight room must be followed based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the weight room unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All equipment must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- The school must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.

Restrooms – Proper protocols regarding access to restrooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while using restrooms unless it will inhibit the individual's health.
- Restrooms must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation, must prepare, and maintain hand sanitizing stations, and must ensure that students wash hands frequently.

Equipment Storage – Proper protocols regarding access to equipment storage rooms must be followed based on the guidelines set by the NJ Department of Health and the school district.

- Schools must monitor activity to minimize the amount of time spent in these rooms.
- Social distancing and face coverings are required for all staff and students while inside the equipment storage room unless it would inhibit the individual's health.
- All areas must be cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.

HEALTH GUIDELINES

Physicals – There will be no further extensions for the 2020-21 school year, therefore the DOE regulations regarding physicals will be as written.

- All students must have an approved physical examination prior to the first day of official practice in any season to be eligible to participate. The physical examination shall be conducted by a licensed physician, advanced practice nurse (APN), or physician's assistant (PA).
- If a physical expires during the season, the student may continue until that sport is completed but must get a new physical before their next sport. Please be advised that some school districts may require a new physical before that 365-day time period ends.
- Examples regarding the rearranged seasons due to COVID-19:
 - A basketball player's physical that expires on Dec 1, 2020, will need a new physical to start the season on Jan 11, 2021.
 - A basketball player's physical that expires on Feb 1, 2021, can continue to the end of the basketball season unless the school requires a new physical by Feb 1st to continue.
 - A basketball player's physical expires on Jan 25, 2021 and wants to swim; that student-athlete will need a new physical by the start of swimming season on Feb 1st.
 - A football player's physical expires on July 15, 2021, and wants to also compete in basketball, winter track, wrestling, and baseball is permitted for all 5 sports.
- It's the school district's decision whether to require student-athletes to have a completed physical before the start of any NJSIAA approved virtual workouts.

Heat Policy – The NJSIAA Heat Policy remains in effect. Please refer to the policy guidelines on the NJSIAA website.

Heat Acclimatization – Heat acclimatization is only applicable in the fall season

Hydration – Sharing of water bottles is strictly prohibited. Each student should have his/her own water bottle. Schools shall provide and monitor hydration stations for individuals to refill water bottles one at a time. Multi-use hydration stations are strictly prohibited.

Health History Update Questionnaire – There are no changes to this DOE requirement. Any athlete that took advantage of the PPE extension this past fall was required to complete the form. Going forward the DOE requirement for the HHQ form is the following: To participate on a school-sponsored interscholastic or intramural athletic team or squad, each student whose physical examination was completed more than 90 days prior to the first day of official practice shall provide a health history update questionnaire completed and signed by the student's parent or guardian.

Screening – School districts must continue their policy for screening students and staff upon arrival for symptoms and history of exposure.

- All students must be screened at least once per day to participate in NJSIAA practices or games.
- Full-time remote learners must be screened before they can participate in practices or games.
- Part-time remote learners that were screened by the school at some point during the school day do not need to be rescreened before practices or games.
- All students must be screened for all Saturday or Sunday practices or games.

Face Coverings – The CDC affirmed that face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against COVID-19 that reduces the spread of the disease, particularly when used universally within communities.

- Coaches are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the coach's health.
- Students are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the student's health, the student is in extreme heat, or the student is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities. Students on the bench or sidelines are required to wear face coverings.
- Officials are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the official's health, the official is in extreme heat, or the official is engaged in high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities.
- All other personnel necessary for the practice or competition are required to wear face coverings unless doing so would inhibit the individual's health.
- Please be aware of the current CDC and NJDOH guidelines regarding proper face-covering protection indoors.

DOH update regarding face masks (1/19/21): If indoor sports take place, proper use of a face mask for all indoor sports training and competition is strongly recommended.

Hygiene/Sanitization – It is critical that school districts, students, coaches, and staff maintain a high standard of sanitization and hygiene.

- Students and staff should make every effort to wash their hands as often as possible.
- Hand sanitizer shall be accessible at all times.
- Workout apparel and uniforms shall not be left at the school after games and practices.
- There shall be no spitting, chewing seeds, or gum during the workout.
- Schools must ensure that all facilities are cleaned and sanitized in accordance with CDC and EPA guidelines.
- Schools must ensure indoor facilities have adequate ventilation.

NJSIAA GENERAL GUIDELINES

Transfers

Due to the cancellation of the spring 2020 sports season, there will be no transfer sit period applicable to any transfer that has occurred prior to the season or occurs after the start of the season. However, there will be a sports-specific cut-off date for transfers to be eligible for NJSIAA post-season play. Please refer to each sports' tournament regulations for this transfer cut-off date. The transfer for athletic advantage rules remains in effect.

Credits

Pursuant to NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V, Section E, to be eligible for athletic competition during the second semester (Feb. 1 to June 30), a pupil must have passed the equivalent of 12 ½ % of the credits (15) required by New Jersey for graduation (120) at the close of the preceding semester (Jan. 31). Full-year courses shall be equated as one-half of the total credits to be gained for the full year to determine credits passed during the immediately preceding semester.

A temporary bylaw amendment has been adopted, that is applicable to seniors for this year only. The requirement that a senior may only withdraw from a course with a passing grade has been removed for this year. Therefore, for this year, the clarification reads:

CL 3: It is recognized that students may accelerate their academic programs during their first three years of secondary schooling. Consequently, such students may be eligible in the second semester of their senior year even when they carry less than 12 ½ % of the State minimum (15 credits) during the first semester provided they are meeting their school district's graduation requirements and are passing all courses in which they are enrolled at the start of the first semester. Seniors will be eligible provided they are carrying sufficient credits for graduation purposes.

CL 5: (remains the same): An athlete who is ineligible under Article V, Section 4.E(2) may become eligible for the remainder of the spring sports season on May 1, if he/she meets the requirements of Article V, Section 4E(2) as of that date.

Note: In order for a 9th, 10th, or 11th grader to become eligible per CL 5, the student must be passing all courses taken during the 3rd marking period and accumulated 22.50 credits when grades are averaged for marking periods 1, 2, and 3. 22.50 credits after three (3) marking periods puts the student-athlete on track to obtain the required 30 credits at the end of the school year.

Six-Day Practice Rule

Due to COVID-19, the NJSIAA has decided to make the following amendment to the six-day practice rule. What we have approved for this year only is the following:

- Any lapse of time from the start of practices and before the completion of six practices because of quarantine or some other COVID related issue, the school may pick up where they left off pending principal approval.
- The students or team still must complete the six-practice total before any student or team can participate in scrimmages or games.
- We are also strongly encouraging virtual workouts when possible during the students or team quarantined period. Virtual workouts do not count toward the 6 practices total.
- Upon completion of six practices, it will be the school's decision, through consultation with the appropriate school personnel, to determine the date for students and/or teams to safely return to competition after a period of quarantine.
- Students that are involved in overlapping sports are not subject to the six-day practice rule if they start the next sport within three days of the completion of the first sport.
- Students that begin the 2nd overlapping sport within three days are eligible for competition immediately unless the school self imposes a minimum amount of practices needed before a student is approved for competition in an overlapping sport.
- If a student is inactive for more than three days involving overlapping sports, then the six-day practice rule will be in effect.