



To: NJSIAA Member Schools
From: NJSIAA Sports Advisory Task Force
Date: October 13, 2020
RE: Return-to-Play – Season 2 Update

The NJSIAA Sports Advisory Task Force is pleased to provide the following update on Season 2. We appreciate your continued flexibility and understanding as we navigate these plans.

NJ Department of Health Guidelines

On Monday, October 12, 2020, Governor Murphy issued Executive Order 187, which permits indoor contact practice and indoor competition for all sports activities, regardless of risk level. In other words, all activities in all of our sports are now permitted, provided that gathering limits are followed. The New Jersey Department of Health (NJ DOH) “Guidance for Sports Activities” has been updated and can be found via the link below:

https://nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/COVID_GuidanceForSportsActivities.pdf

As a reminder, NJSIAA member schools must abide by NJSIAA protocols, which take into account this NJ DOH guidance.

Under the Executive Order, the number of people permitted at a practice or competition will be limited to 25% of the capacity of the room in which the event takes place, with such limit not to exceed 25 persons or be less than 10 persons. However, if the number of individuals who are necessary for the practice or competition, such as players, coaches and referees, is greater than 25 persons, the practice or competition may proceed as long as no individuals are present who are not necessary for the event. If this exception applies, the number of individuals at the event still may not exceed 25% of the capacity of the room or 150 persons, whichever is less.

Season 2 – Winter Sports

Season Dates:

Season 2 will start practice on Thursday, December 3, 2020. Regular season competition will begin Monday, December 21, 2020, and end on Wednesday, February 3, 2021. NJSIAA will host post-season competition from Friday, February 5, 2021 through Wednesday, February 17, 2021.

Game Limitations:

Competition in all sports will be limited to two events per week; however, two three-game weeks will be permitted. The total maximum events for all sports will be 15 events during the regular season. This total represents all games played, including in regular season tournaments or other events, if permitted.

Multi-Team/Multi-Game/Invitational Events:

Currently, all competition will be limited to two teams only, but this is subject to change. The NJ DOH is aware of the nature of certain competition specific to our winter sports (i.e., basketball holiday tournaments, wrestling quad meets, and invitational meets) and will continue to monitor and advise as to what may or may not be permissible; however, we expect that decisions on expanding the scope of participants and/or teams for events will not be made until closer to the start of the season, or even during the season.

Scrimmages:

Schools will have the opportunity to participate in one pre-season scrimmage, preferably with a neighboring school. When possible, schools are encouraged to participate in intra-squad scrimmages and utilize officials to provide additional preseason preparation.

Post-Season:

The NJSIAA will strive to open post-season participation to any school wishing to participate. Depending on the sport, the post-season will be structured regionally based on counties or based on NJSIAA Sections. The 2019 – 2020 classifications will be relied on if Sectional championships are hosted.

Seeding committees will be convened for each sport in order to reduce the reliance on power points and other ranking systems. Objective data may be reviewed by the seeding committee, but it may also consider school location and other criteria.

Out-of-State Competition:

Out-of-state competition is prohibited, unless a waiver is granted for exceptional circumstances.

Transfers:

Any student-athlete that is subject to a transfer sit-period will be eligible for participation on Monday, January 11, 2021. This eligibility date is applicable to every winter sport. As a reminder, those student-athletes that transferred between March 16, 2020 and November 1, 2020 are not subject to the transfer sit-period. If a student-athlete transfers after November 1, 2020, the student-athlete shall be ineligible to participate for a period of 30 calendar days, or one half of the maximum number of games being played, whichever is less.

Spectators:

As is explained above, spectators will be subject to the capacity limitations established by Executive Order 187. NJSIAA will continue its discussions with the Governor's office and the NJ DOH and will update its guidance in this regard if capacity limitations are amended.