



ATHLETIC RETURN TO PLAY- GAME PROTOCOL

Fall Sports - September 2020

Pioneer Athletic Conference

As of 9/17/20

Overview

While it is not possible to eliminate all risk of spreading and contracting COVID-19, current science suggests there are many steps schools can take to reduce the risks to students, coaches, and their families. The Pioneer Athletic Conference will take the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of students and staff while following the recommendations of federal, state and local governments as well as the CDC, NFHS and PIAA. As more information becomes available about COVID-19, this plan may be modified and updated.

Attendance

Any student-athlete or coach attending a practice or competition should be in good physical condition. Anyone feeling sick or experiencing any unusual symptoms associated with Covid-19 must stay home to protect themselves and others.

If a student-athlete starts to feel sick at a practice or competition, the individual should immediately inform one of the coaches who should isolate the individual. The parent/guardian should be alerted immediately and the student-athlete should be sent home.

PPE Requirements

All coaches directly interacting with student-athletes must wear face coverings at all times. Any exceptions to this – for medical reasons – must be approved by the Athletic Director.

It is recommended that student-athletes wear a face covering any time the individual is not actively engaged in practice or competition. If a student-athletes is not in a drill or game, the individual must have a face mask on. During team talks/meetings, face coverings will be required. Face masks which are worn during PIAA competitions may not have any advertising or corporate names on them.

Contest Screening

The PAC screening process for home and away teams must be completed prior to any contest. During this screening process, coaches, athletic trainers and student-athletes must be wearing a face covering. Documentation will be done via a paper/computerized form or the use of online documentation. Responses of screening questions for each student-athlete is to be recorded and stored, and may be used to keep a record of everyone present, should a student, coach, or staff member develop COVID-19.

If a student-athlete or coach has symptoms, the situation will be handled per the schools health and safety plan.

If a student-athlete or coach gets sick, he/she will be isolated and sent home and must follow the student-athlete/coach return to play protocol.

Social Distancing

While contact is permitted, coaches and student-athletes should stay 6 feet apart whenever possible. An example of this includes during warm-up runs and stretching. Student athletes should continue to remain 6 feet apart when not actively participating (ie. sidelines, bench).

Number of Participants

Each outdoor activity area will be limited to 250 participants (or such other number as the Commonwealth, PIAA or CDC may determine) which includes coaches, student-athletes, administration, sports medicine staff, game workers, and officials. Each indoor activity area will be limited to 25 participants (or such other number as the Commonwealth, PIAA or CDC may determine) which includes coaches, student-athletes, game workers, and officials.

Hygiene

At the conclusion of contests, student-athletes should wash their hands or use hand sanitizer. Student-athletes will be encouraged to shower as soon as they get home from an athletic event. In addition, student-athletes should be encouraged to wash all garments and wash or disinfect equipment after each practice or contest.

Travel to Away Competitions

The approved PAC screening process must be completed by athletic department personnel prior to a team leaving for an away event.

Team Meals

Family-style team meals will not be permitted. If there are team functions that require meals, these should be individually packaged and participants must stay 6 feet apart when eating.

Home Competitions

All home competitions will follow the parameters of this plan. Individual sports will have specific guidelines based on the facility being used and the unique requirements of each sport.

The approved PAC screening process must be completed by athletic department personnel prior to taking the field for a home event.

Contest sites will have sanitation supplies available for players, coaches, officials and games workers.

Competition Considerations

The pre-game conference in all sports will be limited to one official, the head coach from each team and one captain from each team. These individuals should be a minimum of 6 feet apart and/or be wearing masks. This includes the coin toss as well. These conferences will be moved to the center of the court/field and away from other coaches or players warming up.

Coaches and players on the bench should be wearing masks and sitting 6 feet or more apart.

The scoring table will be limited to the home team scorer and/or timer. If space is available, the visiting team scorer will be permitted at the table. All seating will be 6 feet or more apart.

During the pre-game introductions there will be no hand shaking. In addition, all players and coaches must be 6 feet apart during introductions. There will be no post-game handshake line between teams and officials.

Inclement Weather Considerations

During inclement weather situations (thunder/lightning), or any emergency where a contest is postponed or delayed, the following plan of action will take place for all participants:

- Plan A- The visiting team would be to load their respective bus
- Plan B- If the visiting team does not have a bus on campus during the delay or postponement, the home school will provide the away team with a predetermined location indoors.

Spectator Information

We will refer to the updated approved spectator document that is consistent for the entire conference.

Spectator size may be limited depending on the facility being used and reservations may be required.

All spectators will be required to wear face coverings at all times and will not be allowed to enter the playing surface or bench area.

Consideration for Coaches

All facilities utilized will be cleaned and sanitized on a regular basis. The Director of Buildings and Grounds will establish a schedule for cleaning.

- Coaches may access the building at select doors utilizing their access cards in order to gather necessary equipment/materials for practices and games.
- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting 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 athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Coaches may have to limit game day squad sizes for social distancing purposes.
- Coaches are reminded to wear proper coaching attire per weather conditions.
- Coaches should bring their own water bottle(s) and follow established guidelines for hydration.
- Coaches should emphasize the importance of social distancing, hydration and hygiene with their student-athletes.

Consideration for Parents/Guardians

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

- Parents/Guardians should monitor their children of any symptoms prior to any sporting activities. Children who are sick or showing symptoms must stay home. (If there is any doubt, stay home).
- Parents/Guardians and coaches should assess levels of risk based on individual athletes on the team who may be at a higher risk for severe illness.
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Disinfect your student’s personal equipment after each practice or contest.
- Be prepared with face coverings for members of your family if permitted to attend events.

Considerations for Media

- Media members should complete a personal health assessment daily. Any media member who attends a game in person will be subject to school district Covid-19 screenings including having his/her temperature taken.
- The media must make contact with the school prior to attending to make appropriate arrangements for attendance.
- Media availability may be limited especially if there are limits on capacity. Use of the press box is contingent on the requirements by the teams and coaches.
- Media should be restricted to areas outside of the team areas.
- Interview requests may be limited and only permissible if social distancing is possible.

Consideration for Game Workers and Officials

- Game workers and officials should complete a personal health assessment daily. Individuals working a game will be subject to school district Covid-19 screenings including having his/her temperature taken. Any official or game worker that feels sick should stay home.
- Officials will not have access to the locker room/changing rooms before, during, or after games. All officials should arrive ready to go.
- Maintain 6 feet of social distancing from players, game workers and other officials as much as possible.
- Officials and game workers are encouraged to wear a mask at all times. If any official is addressing a player or a coach less than 6 feet apart, a mask should be worn. This includes between periods/halves and before and after play.
- Officials should provide their own towels and hydration bottles. These should be labeled with each individuals' name on them and should not be shared with anyone.
- If you feel sick, please stay home! Contact the athletic director and your assignor ASAP.

Positive Case or Close Contact of COVID-19

All participants must follow their schools health and safety plan guidelines with regards to a positive case or close contact of COVID-19.

Sport-Specific Accommodations

Cheerleading – *High Risk (stunting), Low Risk (sideline)*

When stunting, student-athletes should wear face coverings when possible. If stunting occurs, masks or gaiters can be used. Face shields are not permitted for stunting.

During contests, cheerleaders should stand 6 feet from each other. They must wear face covering if they are less than 6 feet apart.

Poms should be assigned to each individual and labeled in some way. Cheerleaders should not touch anyone else's poms.

Water bottles should be placed off the track surface and must be separated by 6 feet of space.

There will be no use of a crash banner at the start of games.

Cross-Country – *Low Risk*

During meets, each school will be limited to 12 runners per race. The starting line will be extended to allow for greater distance between runners and there will be a minimum of 6 feet through all parts of the race course.

Finish line – Disposable place markers will be utilized for all finishes. There will be no snack table at the finish line. Student-athletes should bring their own food and hydration.

No pre-game or post-game handshakes will be permitted. No team tents allowed on campus.

Field Hockey – *Moderate Risk*

Additional game balls will be placed throughout the field. If ball holders are being used, they will not be permitted to use their hands. They may either put a ball into play using their feet or using a field hockey stick.

Substitutions – Substitutes entering the game will check in with the scoring table from a 6 feet distance. They will then go to the sideline. When there are multiple subs, they will spread out on the sidelines. Subs will not slap hands with the player she is replacing.

During pregame meetings, pre-game introductions, quarter breaks, halftime and post-game, players should be wearing masks.

Green/Yellow Card – 2 chairs will be spread out to accommodate players that may have a sit-out period.

Penalty Corners – Players may wear a penalty corner mask but each player must use their own masks. These should be individual labeled.

Football – *High Risk*

A maximum of 250 total individuals will be permitted at games according to current guidance.

School administration will communicate with each other prior to each football contest to finalize approved personnel. The home school is responsible for gathering approved names for the above groups prior to each football contest.

The team box will be extended to the 10-yard line for players to allow for greater social distancing. Players should stay more than 6 feet from each other on the sideline. Coaches are only permitted between the 25-yard lines (normal coaching box). Players and coaches should stay 5 feet away from the sideline (previously this was 2 feet)

There should be a minimum of 2 ball holders per team with 3 balls rotated throughout. Balls should be regularly sanitized during the game and ball holders must stand 6 feet from each other. These individuals should be wearing gloves.

Coaches should wear face coverings at all times. Managers and ball holders must also wear face coverings. All individuals working on the chain crew must also wear face coverings.

Timeouts and intermissions between quarters and following a try, successful field goal or safety (prior to the succeeding free kick) will be extended to 2 minutes. Players will be required to pick up their own water bottles during this time. They should not touch any other players' water bottle. If players come to the sideline for their water, individuals not in the game should move out of the way to allow for more distance between players.

Golf – *Low Risk*

Competitions must strictly adhere to any COVID-19 modifications made to individual golf courses or golf practice facilities (driving ranges).

Normal golf groups are permitted but there should always be 6 feet of space between competitors.

If there is a need to access the golf shop, bathrooms or snack stand, competitors must have their masks on. This is a state requirement for indoor facilities.

The number of golfers attending a match may be limited by PIAA or league mandates.

Players should provide their own tees, pencils, ball markers and any other equipment. If appropriate, equipment should be marked with the golfers' name. Players should not touch any other player's equipment, golf ball, scorecard, etc.

There should be no exchange of scorecards by players. Each player will keep his/her own scorecard but there must be a verbal accounting of scores for each holes. Players may keep an unofficial score of their competitors. Electronic scoring is permitted for regular season competitions.

At the end of the match, players are permitted to depart with a parent/guardian and a permission note.

Soccer – *Moderate Risk*

Additional game balls will be placed throughout the field. Ball runners will not be permitted to use their hands. They should put a ball into play using their feet.

Substitutions – Substitutes will spread out on the sidelines in proximately to the center line. Subs will not slap hands with the player being replaced and/or may not exchange a pinnie or any other item to signal the substitution.

During pregame meetings, pre-game introductions, halftime and post-game, players should be wearing masks. There will be no "world cup" introduction. Players will be introduced while maintaining a 6 feet distance between them.

Goalkeepers should keep a water bottle behind the net if needed for wetting their gloves. They are not permitted to spit on their gloves.

Schools may decide to adjust team benches to be on opposite sides of the field in order to create more opportunities for social distancing.

Tennis – *Moderate Risk*

There will be no pre-match introductions of competitors or hand-shaking. One head coach from each team and one player may participate in a pre-game meeting.

For home matches, tennis balls must be clearly marked for each competitor and both athletes should make note of their tennis ball numbers. Competitors may only serve with their assigned tennis ball. To advance tennis balls to the opposing side, players should use a racquet or their foot. Players should not touch the tennis balls with their hands and should avoid touching their face. Players may bring a sharpie marker to label their tennis balls.

When picking up a large number of tennis balls during practice, ball hoppers or racquets should be used.

When changing ends of the court, players should walk to the right to maintain social distancing.

During doubles, players should maintain 6 feet apart as much as possible.

Players should utilize hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching common surfaces such as the court gates, fences, benches, etc. Players should only touch their individual scorecard. These should be sanitized if being re-used for doubles after the singles matches are complete.

Tennis racquets and other equipment should be wiped down regularly. Players should not touch any other competitor's racquet, water bottle, towel, etc. All personal items should be labeled with the owner's name.

Volleyball – *Moderate Risk*

Team will be limited so that no more than 25 individuals are in the facility at one time.

Rosters should not be submitted at the pre-game conference. Rosters should be submitted directly to the scoring table before the 10-minute mark. Between each set, coaches should fill out their line-ups in the team bench area instead of at the scoring table.

During player introductions, pre-game and between sets, players should have face coverings on.

During home games, we will be limited to 25 individuals in the gym as follows:

1 coach per team (2 total)

2 PIAA officials

2 line judges

2 game workers (home timer and scorer)

1 athletic trainer/athletic administrator

8 players per team (16 total)

Should Pennsylvania recommendations change from a limit of 25 individuals for indoor events, these numbers and the structure may change as appropriate.

Teams will not switch sides of the court or benches. The home team will designate a side and will remain on that side for the duration of the match. The team bench area will be expanded to allow more room between chairs. Players on the bench and coaches must wear masks.

Substitutions may occur at the attack line so that the substitute is socially distant from the second referee. Subs will not slap hands with the player being replaced and/or may not exchange a pinnie or any other item to signal the substitution.

A minimum of 3 game balls will be used. Balls should be routinely sanitized.