



COVID-19 AND OTHER IMPORTANT UPDATES

To: NJSIAA Member Schools
From: Colleen Maguire, Chief Operating Officer
Date: July 2, 2020
RE: NJSIAA Weekly Update

COVID-19 Medical Advisory Task Force Update:

The below statement is submitted by Mary Liz Ivins, Chair of the Medical Advisory Task Force:

The Medical Advisory Task Force continues to weigh current trends in the COVID-19 spread, the Department of Education's directives for the reopening of schools, and feedback from school administrators. Summer conditioning can begin on July 13 in accordance with Phase 1 guidelines. After two weeks, Phase 2 guidelines will allow expanded conditioning as well as guidelines regarding weight room and other indoor use. We expect the release of Phase 2 guidelines to be next Friday, July 10. School districts may choose which date is best for them to start. The July 13 start date is by no means mandatory.

Please see the attached document for additional clarifications.

Summer Recess Period:

Per the NJSIAA Rules and Regulations, Program Regulations, Section 11, the Summer Recess period is defined as "that period from the last NJSIAA scheduled championship to September 1st." For this summer only, the start of the summer recess period has been delayed to Monday, July 13th, but will continue until September 1st. Consistent with every summer recess period, participation is optional and at the discretion of each school. As a result of the Governor's Executive Order #149 and new to this summer, the NJSIAA is providing return-to-play guidelines for those schools choosing to host sports activities during the summer recess period in order to protect the health and safety of our student-athletes. The return-to-play guidelines being used are consistent with research-based best practices used throughout the country and at all levels of competition including both the professional and collegiate levels.

ANY TEAM OR SCHOOL THAT DOES NOT PARTICIPATE DURING THE SUMMER RECESS PERIOD WILL NOT BE DISADVANTAGED WHEN THE FALL REGULAR SEASON STARTS.

COVID-19 Sports Advisory Task Force Update:

The below statement is submitted by David Frazier, Chair of the Sports Advisory Task Force:

The Sports Advisory Task Force is striving to release models for a return to the fall sports regular season next Friday, July 10. The models will identify different scenarios that will be available based on the status of the start of the school year as well as the COVID-19 health guidelines. The goal of the models is to identify practice & competition start dates and regular season periods that will be in place in order to help leagues and conferences begin planning for different scenarios.

It is our goal to provide students the much needed opportunity to participate in athletics while providing the safest conditions possible. We all recognize the fluidity of this pandemic, and how information is changing on an almost daily basis which will likely have our fall season look different than athletic seasons prior to the pandemic. Some of these differences include:

1. Travel - CDC guidelines continue to indicate that travel may increase risk. Schools should minimize length and amount of travel for competitions in order to maximize student safety.
2. Length of Season - The regular season length and maximum number of games to be played will most likely need to be reduced.
3. Post-Season Tournaments - The schedule may not permit statewide postseason competition in the format we are accustomed to.

While many are continuing to wait for direction from the NJSIAA, there are factors that Leagues and Conferences can begin to examine. The creation of smaller divisions to reduce travel and risk of exposure, limiting independent contests and giving strong consideration to equitable divisional schedules and utilizing the weekend for competitions that may normally compete on the weekdays to assist with flexibility in transportation to name a few.

It is important to note that the models will continue to be assessed all summer for compliance with the current Department of Education return to school guidelines, current health guidelines, as well as decisions coming from the Governor's office. We will continue to strive to find safe solutions that pave the way back to high school athletics.

Pre-Participation Examination (PPE) Proposal Status:

The PPE bill now has a designated sponsor in the Assembly and has been referred to the Assembly Education Committee. We anticipate the Assembly will act quickly now that a sponsor has been designated. We will keep you posted on the bill's status within the Assembly as timely as possible.

Just a reminder, the Senate passed the proposed bill (S2518) on Monday, June 15th. Below is the link to the full Senate bill for your reference:

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/S3000/2518_R1.PDF

Happy 4th of July...hope you and your family have a safe and healthy holiday weekend!

SUMMER RECESS - PHASE 1 CLARIFICATIONS (B)

1. Protocols for a positive test
 - The procedures for these scenarios are currently being worked out and will be available with the phase 2 rollout.
2. Can a school add “pre-existing condition” questions to the COVID questionnaire before the start of Phase I?
 - Yes, but schools are advised to make the following statement and not ask for information unless it is being reviewed by a medical professional.
 - Recommended Statement to add to the COVID questionnaire – All student-athletes with pre-existing medical conditions should consult with an MD or DO before they participate in summer workouts.
 - School districts shall notify all parents/guardians that student-athletes with pre-existing medical conditions should consult with a doctor before they are permitted to participate in the workouts.
3. Is there a minimum number of days for participation in order to move into the next Phase?
 - Yes, the critical piece is the 14 days - not the number of practices. If the 14 day period is interrupted, then it must be repeated. This phase is per athlete. It is important to note that Phase 1 requires the smallest number of students within the groupings, which will ensure, once workouts begin, that any confirmed COVID-19 case(s) will impact the fewest number of student-athletes possible. We hope that during the 14 days of Phase 1 we can identify any potential positive cases before we move to Phase 2.
4. Can a student-athlete bring a ball from home? Our clarifications indicated school-supplied, is this “only school-supplied” or is there flexibility?
 - Yes, schools are permitted to allow personal balls if they choose to as long as all hygiene and cleaning protocols are followed.
 - All balls may be used throughout Phase 1 as part of conditioning.
 - All balls can be dribbled, passed, caught, thrown, punted, handed off etc. within their 10 person pods only.
 - All other equipment like sticks may be used if they are the student-athletes personal equipment and part of the conditioning.
 - During Phase 1, no helmets or shoulder pads are permitted.
5. We are aware that there are questions regarding possible HIPAA & OCR violations concerning our COVID-19 Questionnaire. Our attorneys are looking into this and we will have further clarification on the issue by next week.
6. If a student-athlete recently received a new sports physical, do they need to fill out the COVID-19 Questionnaire?
 - No, we would assume doctors are now asking COVID questions as part of their routine.
7. If a student-athlete completed the Health History Update Questionnaire (HHQ) as part of the school district's normal procedure, do they need to fill out the COVID-19 Questionnaire?
 - No, the same COVID questions are on both forms.
8. Only a Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) and/or a Doctor of Medicine (MD) can clear athletes for summer workouts concerning COVID-19 signs, symptoms, and history.