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Introduction to the CIF Guidelines for Return to Physical Activity/Training

With the health and safety of students in mind, this document is intended to be a framework for schools and school districts to consider in designing return to physical activity/training standards that are in accordance with state and local county requirements. These guidelines are meant to assist schools and school districts as they begin to return to on campus physical activity/training but are not intended to supersede the state and local county directives designed to ensure student health and safety.

Much of the information in this document is consistent with the previously released NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, with the major exception of the Pre-Participation Physical Examination waiver that the CIF is allowing. The waiver that the CIF is allowing is described in the guidelines. In order to be granted a temporary waiver of the Pre-Participation Physical Examination (Bylaw 503.G.), the parent/legal guardian and student MUST complete, sign and submit to their school administration the required 503.G. Waiver and Release of Liability Form. In addition to the requirements discussed above, a student athlete requesting a temporary waiver must submit to the school administration a student Health Screening Form completed and signed by the student's parent/legal guardian prior to participating in tryouts, practice or interscholastic athletic competition. These documents will be posted on the CIF website in the coming weeks (www.cifstate.org).

The term "phases" as used in this document is intended to serve as a guideline for schools in developing a process for returning to physical activity/training on their campuses and is not intended to refer to the term as used by state and local county agencies on the gradual opening of workplaces, public activities, and travel. Schools and school districts are strongly encouraged to continually monitor the updates and guidance from state and local county departments of public health and to make adjustments to their process accordingly. This document does not cover return to competition policies in the COVID-19 era. The development of return to competition policies will be disseminated as they become available.

This document is not intended as medical or legal advice. Schools and school districts should refer to their local governing bodies and their own legal counsel for assistance.



CIF Return to Physical Activity/Training Guidelines

Foundational Statement

The CIF believes education-based athletics is essential to the physical, mental and social well-being of students and it is important for them to return to physical activity and athletic competition. That said, the CIF also recognizes that not all California students may be able to return to, and sustain, athletic activity at the same time across the state pending county and/or school district guidelines. This may likely create variations to our regular seasons of sport given the different contact and risk levels of the sports offered. However, all contingency plans and sport calendars currently under consideration include fall, winter and spring competition seasons. We certainly promote the idea of students returning to athletic competition and allowing programs to operate in situations where it can be done in a healthy and safe manner.

Therefore, we continue to advocate for the CIF to be part of the conversation at a variety of levels when there are discussions about schools reopening as we know how important high school sports are to our students and school communities as are all forms of co-curricular activities. This is what we do, and we want to assist to provide the best experience for who matters most - our students. In doing so, we will continue to develop guidelines consistent with the directives from the Governor's Office, the California Department of Education and State/Local Public Health Departments.

Objective

This document is intended to provide guidance for CIF 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 may also be used if conditions dictate the need for increased restrictions in the future.

Points of Emphasis

It is recommended that schools begin with or move through the phases in accordance with the protocol put into place by their local county (and school district in the case of public schools) with respect to a return to group activities. For example, if a county allows groups of no more than 10 people, then a school would be in phase one. -Reference [Covid19.ca.gov](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Return-to-Activity.aspx)

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 CIF will disseminate more information as it becomes available. Administrators, coaches, and Athletic Trainers 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 CDPH as people age 65 years and older and others with underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, moderate to severe asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy. 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.

Pre -Participation Exam

In order to address the impact that the COVID-19 virus and school closures have had on students, and in recognition that families may experience delays in obtaining appointments for their student for a Preparticipation Physical Examination, governing boards of school districts and private schools may elect to provide a one-time, temporary waiver of Bylaw 503.G. that must be signed by the student athlete's parent/legal guardian and submitted to the high school administration before the student may tryout, practice or participate in interscholastic athletic competition. This waiver will allow the student athlete to participate in athletics for a maximum of thirty (30) calendar days from their school's first day of practice in that sport. This waiver only applies to CIF sanctioned Fall 2020 sports. Further, a waiver may only be obtained if the high school has a Preparticipation Physical Examination for the 2019-2020 school year on file for the student athlete or, in the event the high school does not have on file the student's 2019-2020 Preparticipation Physical Examination, the parent/legal guardian may provide a copy of the student athlete's 2019-2020 Preparticipation Physical Examination to the school administration. This waiver also applies to incoming 9th graders and transfer students. An incoming 9th grader may request a waiver if they are able to provide a copy of a 2019-2020 Preparticipation Physical Examination or Well Child Check. An incoming transfer student may request a waiver if they are able to provide a copy of a 2019-2020 Preparticipation Physical Examination. After termination of the temporary thirty (30) day waiver period, the student athlete must submit a current 2020-2021 Preparticipation Physical Examination in order to continue participating in interscholastic athletics.

In order to be granted a temporary waiver of the Pre-Participation Physical Examination (Bylaw 503.G.), the parent/legal guardian and student MUST complete, sign and submit to their school administration the required 503.G. Waiver and Release of Liability Form. In addition to the requirements discussed above, a student athlete requesting a temporary waiver must submit to the school administration a student Health Screening Form completed and signed by the student's parent/legal guardian prior to participating in tryouts, practice or interscholastic athletic competition. These documents will be posted on the CIF website in the coming weeks (www.cifstate.org).

Facilities Cleaning

Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities.

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.).

Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts. Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.

Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times to ensure appropriate hygiene.

Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. having holes with exposed foam should be covered. Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

Entrance/Exit Strategies

Consider strategies to prevent groups from gathering at entrances/exits to facilities to limit crossover and contact, including staggering starting/ending times.

Pre-Workout Screening

All coaches and students should be screened daily for signs / symptoms of COVID-19 prior to participating.

Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored (see sample Monitoring Form attached).

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. Written medical clearance will be required to return to activity.

Vulnerable individuals should not supervise or participate in any workouts during Phase One.

Hygiene Practices

Wash your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.

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, and particularly when using mass transit.

Hydration/Food

All students must bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. Food should not be shared. Hydration stations (water coolers, water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should be utilized only for the purpose of re-filling personal water bottles.

Travel

Keep it local and avoid statewide travel when possible, especially if counties are in different phases.

Face Coverings

State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed.

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.

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. This does not apply to any equipment allowed by NFHS rules.

It is recommended that coaches, officials and other contest personnel wear cloth face coverings at all times and especially when physical distancing is not possible. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn, electronic whistle, or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)

Limitations on Gatherings

PHASE ONE*

No gathering of more than allowed by the prescribed local county guidelines (inside or outside).*

Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same 5-10 students working out together weekly to limit overall exposures. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training.

There must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times. 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. ***Note: Local county guidelines must be followed**

PHASE TWO*

No gathering of more than allowed by the prescribed local county (inside). Up to 50 individuals may gather outdoors for workouts.*

Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same 5-10 students working out together weekly to limit overall exposures. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training.

There must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times. 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. ***Note: Local county guidelines must be followed**

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment

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.

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.

Physical contact such as high-fives, fist/chest bumps, and hugs should not be allowed.

Weight Rooms

Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.

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.

Weight rooms should follow physical distancing guidelines and adhere to CDPH Guidance for Fitness-Related Organizations.

Locker Rooms and Athletic Training Areas

Locker rooms should not be utilized during Phase One. Students should report in appropriate attire and immediately return home to shower after participation. No students allowed in training area unless AT is present. -

[NATA – Return to Sport Considerations](#)

Prepare Athletes to Return to Physical Activity

Once the policies and procedures have been established by the school for safe return to sport, coaches, athletic trainers, and strength and conditioning coaches must determine the health and current activity/fitness level of each athlete. This will allow for a directed approach to "transition" the athlete back to full activity levels in a supervised and progressive fashion. Athletes have been separated from their regular training and sport activity for prolonged periods of time during this pandemic, therefore a transition period is mandatory to prevent injury.

Considerations must be made for the detraining and acclimatization of athletes since most have been at home since mid-March. [NATA – Return to Sport Considerations](#)

- Allow for a retraining period as opposed to engaging in sport-specific activities immediately
- Ensure appropriate progression of sport-specific activities once practices are initiated
- Consider the detraining effects on acclimatization. To prevent heat illness, a full heat acclimatization period needs to be completed
- In addition to assessing physical readiness, mental readiness should also be considered. Students may have lost a loved one due to COVID-19. The loss of the ability to play sports or the abrupt ending of their seasons may also contribute to higher levels of anxiety and depression. Coaches and athletic trainers can play a significant role as their words and actions carry tremendous influence and many students will seek them out for comfort and understanding. Have a referral plan in place utilizing school resources- counselors, nurses, wellness center etc.

If social distancing is feasible and modifications are made, the sports listed immediately below may resume with Phase One and Phase Two activities pending local county guidelines.

| General Activity Description | Phase One* Individual Skill Development and Workouts Maintain Physical Distancing; No Contact with Others No Sharing of Equipment; No Grouping. *Note: Local county guidelines must be followed. | Phase Two* Modified Team Practices May Begin No Contact with Other Teams. *Note: Local county guidelines must be followed. |
|------------------------------|--|--|
| Cross Country | Runners should maintain at least 6 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes). | Runners should maintain at least 6 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes). |
| Track & Field | Runners should maintain at least 6 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes). No sharing of implements / equipment. Clean Equipment. Padded equipment should be cleaned between use. | Runners should maintain at least 6 feet of distancing between individuals, no grouping (i.e. starts and finishes). No sharing of implements / equipment. Padded equipment should be cleaned between use. |
| Swimming | Opening of Swimming pools is a local county and school district decision. | Swimmers should maintain appropriate physical distancing 6 feet apart. Do not share lanes. |
| Golf | Maintain appropriate physical distancing 6 feet apart. Equipment needs to be cleaned. | Maintain appropriate physical distancing 6 feet apart. |
| 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 | No sharing of balls, each player may use own can of balls to serve and uses racket to pass other balls (singles only). |
| Badminton | Conditioning, no sharing of birdies, each player may use own can of birdies to serve and uses racket to pass other birdies (singles only). Players may do individual drills and serves. Wipe down rackets and equipment after. | No sharing of birdies, each player may use own can of birdies to serve and uses racket to pass other birdies (singles only). |

For all of the sports below, given that social distancing requirements remain in effect, the only activities permitted are those listed below unless local county guidelines permit otherwise.

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| Volleyball | Conditioning, individual ball handling drills, each player has own ball. A player should not use a single ball that others touch or hit in any manner. |
| Boys/Girls Lacrosse | Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, no contact or sharing of balls. A player may shoot with a ball(s), but a team should not practice/pass a single ball among the team where multiple players touch the same ball. |
| Soccer | Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, each player has own ball, feet only (no heading/use of hands), no contact. |
| Baseball/Softball | Conditioning and tee work. Players should not share gloves or bats or throw a single ball that will be tossed among the team. A single player may hit in cages, throw batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). Prior to another athlete using the same balls, they should be collected and cleaned individually. |
| Gymnastics | No sharing of implements / equipment. Padded equipment should be cleaned between use. |
| Field Hockey | Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, no contact or sharing of balls. A player may shoot with a ball(s), but a team should not practice/pass a single ball among the team where multiple players touch the same ball. |
| Football | Conditioning and individual drills. A player should not participate in drills with a single ball that will be handed off or passed to other teammates. Contact with other players is not allowed, and there should be no sharing of tackling dummies / donuts / sleds. Protective equipment prohibited. |
| Wrestling | Conditioning, mirror drills with spacing, no contact. Wrestlers may skill and drill without touching a teammate (as long as physical distancing is adhered to). |
| Competitive Cheerleading | 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. |
| Basketball | Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, no contact or sharing of balls. A player may shoot with a ball(s), but a team should not practice/pass a single ball among the team where multiple players touch the same ball. |
| Water Polo | Conditioning, individual ball skill drills, no contact or sharing of balls. A player may shoot with a ball(s), but a team should not practice/pass a single ball among the team where multiple players touch the same ball. |

Additional Resources/Signage/Links

California Phases for Reopening:

<https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Update-on-California-Pandemic-Roadmap.pdf>

California COVID-19 Industry Guidance:

[Covid19.ca.gov](https://www.covid19.ca.gov)

[COVID-19 Athletic Training Room, Recommendations, Policies & Procedures](#)

EPA approved list of cleaning products:

<https://cifstate.org/covid-19/index>

National Athletic Trainers Association:

[NATA – Return to Sport Considerations](#)

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

[Printable Signage](#)

Additional Resource Links

CDC School Reopening Considerations:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/Schools-Decision-Tree.pdf>

CDC Guidance for Large Community Events and Mass Gatherings:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>

CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

CDC Guidance for Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>

CDC Guidance on Coronavirus and Travel in the US:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>

American Academy of Pediatrics

<https://services.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/covid-19-planning-considerations-return-to-in-person-education-in-schools/>

NCAA

<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/core-principles-resocialization-collegiate-sport>

Dr. Brian Hainline – NCAA Planning around COVID-19 and Sports Programming

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=youtu.be&v=TAfHmz-4ePI&app=desktop>

White House Guidelines for Opening Up America Again:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Guidelines-for-Opening-Up-America-Again.pdf>