



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

PROMOTING SUCCESS ON THE COURT, ON THE FIELD, ON STAGE
AND EVERYWHERE ELSE UNDER THE BIG SKY SINCE 1921.

July 27, 2020

TO: MHS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
FROM: MARK BECKMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RE: RETURN TO MHSA FALL ACTIVITIES

During a recent MHSA Executive Board meeting, the Board approved various directives, requirements and considerations regarding the return to MHSA Fall Activities. Along with the National Federation of High School Associations, the MHSA Executive Board believes the resumption of sports and other activities is crucial to the growth, development, and mental and emotional wellness of our Montana youth.

The process utilized to come up with these directives, requirements and considerations included consultation with national, state and local experts from the CDC, NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), the Governor's directives, state and local health departments and input from state activity associations across the country. For the return to fall activities, school's will follow these MHSA requirements along with the Governor's directives and the directives from their local health departments.

Once again, we believe that the safety and well-being of our student activity participants is paramount. These requirements, both general and activity specific, attempt to reduce the possibility of transmission of coronavirus for our student activity participants and for coaches, officials and fans of MHSA activities.

Actions

All fall sports practices will begin on the scheduled dates (Tier 1). First contests can be played on the scheduled dates if the required number of practices for that sport is met.

Football / Volleyball / Soccer

There will be no multi-team events (triangular, invitational tournaments, etc.) in the sports of football, soccer and volleyball. The status of allowing multi-teams events in relation to the current phase and restrictions in place later in the season will be reevaluated accordingly.

Golf

Golf dual meets are recommended and encouraged. Golf can have multiple team events (invitational meets with 3 or more schools present) meeting the following criteria: 1) no practice round or use of practice facilities, 2) shotgun starts are required with a maximum of 90 players on an 18-hole course and 45 players on a 9-hole course during multi-team events (one 5-some starting per hole), 4) the point of entry to the course is different to access their starting holes, and; 5) teams will play together (grouping by school), there will be no mixing of players by score. They cannot gather at the clubhouse before or after a meet. After the meet, teams must exit to their bus immediately and team and individual scores will be shared with each team.

Cross Country

Cross Country dual meets are recommended and encouraged. Cross Country can have multiple teams participate if the following restrictions are followed: 1) no more than 200 participants (or by the current Governor's phase), 2) teams must remain in their own team staging area, 3) no more than 25 on the start line, 4) the next runners up will be placed in a corral before they start, 5) all runners must wear masks in the team staging area, corral and until they are called by the starter to the starting line, 6) once the race is completed individuals must immediately exit the finish line area and return to their team bus. There can be no gathering of teams after each race.

Music

The All State Band, Choir and Orchestra Music Festival on October 14-16 has been cancelled. The MHSA Executive Board cancelled the festival due to concerns from the MMEA, MHSA limitations for fall sports and activities, and concerns of high-risk transmissions through the playing of instruments and singing. The Festival will not be rescheduled during the 2020-2021 school year.

Fans

The attendance of fans at regular season contests will be determined by the school in consultation with their local health department authority. Schools may have to submit a plan for fan attendance to their local health department for approval.

General Requirements/Considerations

1. Workouts/practices should be conducted in "pods" / "bubbles" of participants with same players working out together to limit overall exposure.
2. Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, and administration should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
3. No out of state competition or teams traveling from out of state for competition, unless it is in a dual format and approved by the MHSA Executive Director.
4. Always maintain social distancing of 6 feet while on the field/court of play when possible.
5. Everyone must have their own beverage container that is not shared. Safe handling practices should be adhered during hydration, which includes refilling, retrieval and identification of water source.
6. Time-outs (if applicable) may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length for safe hydration practices. Social distancing requirements must always be followed.
7. Cloth facial coverings are allowed for players, coaches and officials. Facial coverings must be a single solid color and unadorned. Face Coverings must be worn per the Governor's directive.
8. Gloves are permissible for all players, coaches and officials.
9. The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest / event as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
10. Administrators must limit the number of non-essential personnel who are on the field/player surface area throughout the contest.
11. Attendance at MHSA events is dependent on host site and local health department guidelines and restrictions.
12. A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others is very important. Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home). Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.

MHSA Returning to Participation – Fall Activities – Tiers

	Practices*	Regular Season*	Post Season*
<u>Tier 1</u>	Start as scheduled	Games played as scheduled No multi-team events (triangulars, invitational tournaments, etc. with XC and Golf exceptions) Masks per Governor's directive	Dates/Sites – Same Possible playoff post season format / possible separation of sites
<u>Tier 2</u>	Delayed start or interruption	Non-conference games cancelled classification by sport input No multi-team events (triangulars, Invitational tournaments, etc.) Masks per Governor's directive	Dates/Sites – Same Possible playoff post season format / possible separation of sites
<u>Tier 3</u>	Delayed start or interruption longer period of time	Non-conference games cancelled Conference season shortened input from classification by sport No multi-team events (triangulars invitational tournaments, etc.) Masks per Governor's directive	Dates/Sites – Same Possible playoff post season format / possible separation of sites
<u>Tier 4</u>	Start however mid-season interruption	Conference season shortened seeding by conference No multi-team events (triangulars invitational tournaments, etc.) Masks per Governor's directive	Post season tournament adjusted dates, formats and possible sites depending on location of virus breakouts - same dates if possible
<u>Tier 5</u>	Long interruption	Some Games /Round Robin Play seed by previous year/ district or div criteria – or other? Masks per Governor's directive	Post season tournament adjusted dates, formats and possible sites depending on location of virus breakouts Post season – playoff only or round robin, etc.

*During all Tiers – Schools must follow the Governor's Phase Directives, State and Local Health Department Directives regarding fan attendance (limits, social distancing, **enforce the mask requirement**, facility cleaning, sanitizing, etc.), travel requirements (bus maximum numbers and mask wearing, etc.) and MHSA sport specific requirements.

*Schools and teams in communities that follow the Governor's Phase, State and Local Health Department Directives and MHSA's current Tier and sport specific requirements will be allowed to participate.

*Schools could print “at your own risk” statement on every ticket sold for contests.

*Fan attendance – local health department requirements will differ, and schools need to consult their local health authority and be ready to submit a plan for approval if required. Schools/districts/classifications will have to determine number of tickets they will provide to the visiting team per allowed maximum attendance.

*Some schools may experience quarantines before or during a season – those scheduled contests will be considered “no contest”. If a school refuses to go to a location where contests are allowed it will be considered a forfeit. Districts/Divisions/Classifications will be responsible for determining post season seeding criteria taking into consideration these situations.

*Depending on teams available, post season formats may be adjusted according to those teams able to participate. Alternate formats – playoffs instead of central sites / single loss events / reduced qualifiers / or end of season round robin play with remaining teams.