



MONTANA HIGH SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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

November 4, 2020

TO: MHSA SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
FROM: MARK BECKMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RE: WINTER SPORTS REQUIREMENTS/CONSIDERATIONS

During a recent MHSA Executive Board meeting, the Board approved various directives, requirements and considerations regarding MHSA Winter Activities. Along with the National Federation of High School Associations, the MHSA Executive Board believes the continuation 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 is like those used for the resumption of fall activities along with winter sport specific guidance from various sources. For winter 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 winter sports practices will begin on December 7th. First contests can be played on **January 2nd** (change from the previous January 4th date) if the required number of practices for that sport is met.

It is recommended that all coaches and players receive the flu vaccine.

Calendar

Basketball - The basketball calendar will remain unchanged. Dates for the post season tournaments will be the same.

Wrestling and Swimming

Start Date – Monday December 7, 2020

First Contest – Monday, January 2, 2021

Divisional Tournaments – Wrestling – February 26-27, 2020

State Tournament – March 5-6, 2021 - Sites and formats will be discussed

Post Season Events

The dates for post season events will be as scheduled. For each activity the post season formats will be evaluated according to the conditions at the time. Possibilities include regular tournament formats, playoff formats, separation of sites etc. Sites will be determined according to availability and local health departments approval.

Basketball

There will be no multi-team events (tip-off tournaments etc.). The eighteen-game limit will remain in place however conference games will take precedence over non-conference games. Additional requirements/considerations for basketball are attached.

Wrestling

- 1) Regular season contests will be individual duals only. No invitational tournaments (one or two day) will be allowed in state or out of state. Teams may have more than one dual in a day (2 are allowed) but must keep teams separated to meet social distancing guidelines. Only two teams per gym will be allowed to compete at the same time. Contests must be scheduled to allow for appropriate cleaning and sanitizing when the new team come to the facility.
- 2) 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.
- 3) Wrestling can have multi-team events (**mixers**) if they meet the following criteria:
 - These events can have no more than 40 wrestlers competing if allowed by the local county health authority
 - Each wrestler can only wrestle twice during these events
 - Wrestlers wrestling twice must wear a clean singlet for the second match,
 - All wrestlers must wear masks while not competing
 - Try to schedule multi-team events at least 5-7 days apart to allow for time for students to get symptomatic if exposed.
 - All other wrestling requirements/considerations must be followed and are attached.

Swimming

Swimming dual meets (including double duals) are recommended and encouraged. Meet management will limit entries and timing of events to ensure social distancing. Virtual meets can be conducted utilizing the MHSA requirements and the NFHS Virtual Meet Considerations. Additional requirements/considerations for swimming are attached.

Cheer

The requirements/considerations for spirit are attached.

Speech and Drama

Speech and Drama practices began on October 19th. Meets can be conducted beginning December 1st. Meets will be held virtually at this time.

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. Vaccination for the flu is encouraged for players, coaches and officials.

3. Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, and administration should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
4. 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.
5. Always maintain social distancing of 6 feet while at the court/mat/pool area when possible.
6. 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. No sharing of food or items from coolers is allowed.
7. Time-outs (if applicable) will be according to each specific sports requirements/consideration. Social distancing requirements must always be followed.
8. Cloth facial coverings are required for all players, coaches and officials. Face Coverings do not have to be worn during play, but substitutes must wear masks when not competing or per specific MHSA sport requirements. Face Coverings must be worn by players/coaches by rule, no matter the number of active COVID-19 cases in the county. Facial coverings must be a single solid color and unadorned, except the mask can include the school logo/name and bear only a single manufacturer's logo/trademark/reference (partial or whole) that does exceed 2 ¼ square inches with no dimension exceeding 2 ¼ square inches.
9. Gloves are permissible for all players, coaches and officials.
10. The ball (if applicable) should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest / event as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
11. Administrators must limit the number of non-essential personnel who are near the court/mat and pool area throughout the contest.
12. Attendance at MHSA events is dependent on host site and local health department guidelines and restrictions.
13. 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.

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 and activity specific requirements/considerations will be allowed to participate.

*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. Post season ticket allowances will have a minimum and maximum determined by the MHSA Executive Board.

*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 for consideration include: playoffs instead of central sites / single loss events / reduced qualifiers / or end of season round robin play with remaining teams.