



## **VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION**

### **GUIDANCE FOR WINTER SPORTS RETURN TO PLAY 2020 – 21**

**PROTECT YOUR FAMILY      PROTECT YOUR TEAM      PROTECT YOUR SEASON**

The VISAA executive committee has received and unanimously approved recommendations from its Winter Sports Competition Committee regarding plans for winter postseason play.

VISAA intends to support postseason opportunities for National Federation of State High School Associations moderate risk sports of basketball, indoor track and swimming/diving. Postseason participation will be based on open invitations to member schools.

The preparation and ultimate release of the winter sports return to play documents were based on input received from VISAA's Winter Sports Competition Committee, VISAA's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, VISAA's Winter Sports Committees, NFHS, CDC, Virginia Department of Health, VCPE and the Virginia Governor's Office.

The VISAA winter sports return to play documents include: safety and effective mitigation strategies for athletes, coaches, staff, officials, spectators and facilities.

The VISAA member schools have the right to implement additional safety guidelines when properly disclosed in the VISAA Game Day contract.

## 2020-21 Swim/Dive Requirements, Rule Modifications and General Recommendations

PROTECT YOUR FAMILY

PROTECT YOUR TEAM

PROTECT YOUR SEASON

### MINIMUM VISAA APPROVED SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

\* ALL SCHOOLS MUST FOLLOW: [Directive for Recreational Pool Opening](#) updates to the requirements set forth by the Governor.

#### General Requirements

- **Entrance/Exit** - Have a separate entrance and exit point for facilities.
- **Signage** - Create and display COVID-19 information signage throughout the venue.
  - Use tape, paint, and signage within the bleachers and around the facility to mark areas where spectators may gather to maintain social distancing. Specify where spectators may sit.
- **Everyone** inside the facility is required to wear a mask at **all** times, (i.e. spectators, managers, coaches, workers, statisticians and media) and maintain 6 feet of social distance at all times. Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible. (Some facilities may not allow spectators)

**Athletes** - Swimmers/Divers **must** wear a mask at **all** times, unless they are actively participating. **NOTE: Actively participating is a direct reference to an individual/a team engaged in performing their competition.**

- **Meets**
  - **Meet Capacity** – Limit student participants, coaches, timers, paid/volunteer meet officials, spectators, and media per state health restrictions.
  - **Dual meets** - are most effective in maintaining fewer competitors, school personnel, officials, and spectators. Dual meets make it easier to space those in attendance to the appropriate social distancing.

- **Multi-team Meets** - If schools have scheduled anything larger than a dual, then again, hosts must adhere to meet capacity guidelines listed above.
- **Auxiliary Spaces** – For larger meets, auxiliary spaces (i.e. gymnasiums, classrooms, lunch rooms, etc.) can be used as holding areas for student participants, meet personnel, spectators, etc. as long as all auxiliary spaces allow for social distancing and adhere to state health restrictions.

## Requirements for Meet Managers

- **Pool Facilities**
  - Eliminate the use of locker rooms whenever possible. Athletes should wear swimming suits to practice and competitions to limit use of locker rooms.
  - Watches, clip boards, and lap-counters must be sanitized after each use.

**Only essential personnel are permitted on the deck.** These are defined as swimmers/divers, coaches, athletic trainers, lifeguards, and officials. Authorized timers, recorders, runners, computer operators necessary to conduct competition are essential. All others, i.e., team managers, video people, media photographers, family members, non-competing students, etc. are considered non-essential personnel and are to be in the gallery remaining in the seating area (when present) or remaining outside the deck area.

- **Submission of Entries to Referee**
  - Alternative forms of entry submission can be designed to reduce face-to-face interaction when submitting a proper entry, where/how/to whom entries are submitted, and a reduction or elimination of certain penalties currently attached to improper entries.
- **Diving Warm-up Areas**
  - Limit number of divers during warm-up by creating multiple sessions.
  - During competition, divers may not approach the board until their turn to compete.
  - Hot tubs should not be permitted.
  - Dive order sheets should be posted in multiple areas (or online) to reduce the number of divers viewing at the same time.
- **Teams** - Team members must maintain an appropriate social distance of 6 feet from each other when they are not actively engaged in a competitive event. Handshakes, first bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible.
  - **Teams** - must be separated from the audience by a minimum of 12 feet.
  - **Teams Seating and Lane Placement**

- For duals, keep the teams on opposite sides of the pool and require the home team to compete in lanes 1-3 and visitors to swim in lanes 4-6. (Coaches may choose to have a one lane buffer)
  - For larger meets, auxiliary spaces may need to be used to adhere to state health restrictions.
  - Establish multiple sessions for warm-up periods to limit the number of swimmers per lane. (per facility guidelines)
  - Restrict the number of swimmers in the competition area. (per facility guidelines)
  - Athletes should be spaced out in the pool to ensure social distancing at all times. It is recommended that no more than 3 athletes share a lane at a time, alternating two athletes at one end and one at the other.
- **Coaches Packet Pick-up**
  - Transmit as much information as possible electronically prior to the meet.
  - For any information that cannot be submitted electronically, organize a method for the packet pick up that keeps coaches socially distanced (i.e. time slots for small numbers of coaches to pick up packets, marks on the ground that are 6 feet apart for coaches lines formed at packet pick-up, etc.)
- **Pre-meet coaches' meetings**
  - Consider using methods to keep coaches socially distanced during coaches' meetings:
    - Electronic or virtual meetings are encouraged when possible.
    - Multiple smaller meetings with a smaller number of attendees at a time is also a way to allow for social distancing.
- **Clerking**
  - Officials must conduct clerking at the starting blocks to avoid competitors congregating in a separate location prior to their race.

**Timers** - Timers must assemble at the finish of each race, at the edge of the pool within the 6-8 feet confines of the lane which they are timing. Timers **must** wear face masks.

Pools with electronic timing (touch pads) can use 1 timer per lane. Pools without touch pads can use 2 timers per lane.

- **Crowding**
  - Avoid meet protocols that cause coaches, participants, and spectators to congregate closely together (results boards, awards ceremonies, water stations, etc.).
    - Consider using an online platform for results.

- Consider using general PA announcements or an online platform for award recognitions.
- Ask athletes to bring their own water and have their own plan for retrieving their water after competition.
- **Sanitation** - Have sanitation materials (disinfecting wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer, etc.) in prime locations for meet personnel to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and meet equipment.

**Official's locker room** - Appropriate locker room space should be provided to officials for social distancing (i.e. larger room or separate rooms). The space(s) must be sanitized prior to arrival.

### **Requirements and Considerations for Coaches**

- For practices, consider conducting workouts in “pods” of the same students who are always training and rotating together. This will 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.
- Always have a plan to maintain social distancing amongst your team and coaching staff at all times.
- Always require use of face masks when not engaged in training, competing, or other strenuous physical activity.
- Require athletes to arrive at the competition venue already in competitive attire. If locker rooms must be used, ensure athletes can maintain social distancing.
- It is recommended to always have sanitation materials available (i.e. hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc.) for the team and coaching staff.

**\*Coaches must wear face masks at all practices and meets.**

## Requirements and Consideration for Officials

- Use of electronic whistles is required.
- **Referee and Starter** - Various rules require interactions between officials, coaches and athletes. Alternative methods of communication include utilization of the P.A. system, hand signals or written communication (signs).
- **Notification of Disqualification** - Notification shall occur from a distance via use of hand signals or the P.A. system.
- **Meet Officials** - Officials responsible for information processing are often located together at a desk/table adjacent to the competition course or in an office/remote location. Develop alternative methods for submitting entries (3-2) and movement of non-electronic information. Require a distance of 6 feet between individuals seated at the desk/table.

**Relay Takeoff Judges and Relays** - Require all takeoff judging from the sides of the pool. Space relay swimmers apart from one another. Timers and relay takeoff judges **must** wear cloth facial coverings.

- **Diving Officials** - Alternative methods for submitting entries (3-2) and movement of non-electronic information will be required. Recommendations include a distance of 6 feet between individuals seated at the desk/table. Create a 6 feet space between judges by spacing groups of judges on opposite sides of boards or on one side of the board on a multi-level platform.
- **Follow social distancing guidelines**
  - Communication with coaches, participants, meet personnel, or spectators must be done at the appropriate social distance.
  - Refrain from shaking hands.
  - Wear a face mask at **all** times.



**The VISAA Executive and Sports Medicine Committees provide the following guidance to all VISAA member schools concerning professional development training for Athletic Directors and Coaches. It is strongly recommended that all athletic directors and coaches complete the NFHS course, Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators. This course is available in the NFHS Learn section of the website and is available at no cost. Participants are awarded a certificate after completion of the requirements for each course.**



## **LEARNING CENTER**

<https://nfhslearn.com>

**COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators**

The COVID 19 pandemic presents a myriad of challenges to high school athletic and activity programs. To help address some of those challenges, the National Federation of State High School Associations has developed "COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators."

The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee developed "Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities" to aide state associations during this unprecedeted event. This course will present material from that document along with some other helpful information and materials to assist school administrators and coaches conduct workouts, practices and contests as safely as possible.

**\*The VISAA also recommends the completion of the Concussion and Heat Illness courses!**



## HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE

CDC Report: People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

**Are you experiencing any of the following?**

- Fever of 100.4 or higher
- Chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fatigue
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

**Are you living with or caring for an individual who is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID 19?**

**Are you currently waiting for COVID 19 test results?**

**Have you been in contact with anyone known or suspected to have COVID 19 in the past 14 days?**

VIRGINIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

WINTER SPORTS GAME/MEET CONTRACT 2020 – 21

THIS AGREEMENT, entered into this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ by and between  
\_\_\_\_\_ visitor, and, \_\_\_\_\_ host.

The said parties mutually agree to engage in a game/meet for \_\_\_\_\_.

The above mentioned athletic event shall be conducted under the VISA Rules, Regulations and Covid 19 Safety Protocols in force at the time of the contest.

Contest Information:

Date of Contest: \_\_\_\_\_

Location/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival & Game Time: \_\_\_\_\_

The host school will additionally require the following safety protocols for the contest listed above:

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Both parties agree to the date, time, competitive event and mentioned safety protocols outlined above.

**VISITING SCHOOL:**

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SIGNATURE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL / ADMINISTRATOR

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DATE

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SIGNATURE OF ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

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DATE

**HOST SCHOOL:**

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SIGNATURE OF HEAD OF SCHOOL / ADMINISTRATOR

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DATE

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SIGNATURE OF ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

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DATE