



South Dakota High School Activities Association

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***SDHSAA Fall Sports/Activities Task Force Recommendations
July 2020***

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SDHSAA- Serving Students Since 1905

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Guiding Principles:

1. A return to sports/activities for regular season contests and state championships must be safe for athletes, coaches, officials, and fans.
2. The goal of the SDHSAA in 2020 should be to incorporate school-based sports and fine arts activities when practical and safe.
3. Standardized procedures should be in place at all schools for the screening of athletes and coaches. This procedure should also be followed by all officials and judges for contests.
4. Standardized protocols should be in place, in conjunction with the South Dakota Department of Health, at all schools regarding confirmed close contact and confirmed positive cases of rostered individuals, members of the coaching staff, and all officials and judges.
5. SDHSAA Policies should be in place regarding the re-scheduling of events, events to be deemed a “no contest”, and events to be deemed a “forfeit”.
6. Benchmarks should be established to signify the need to reconvene and re-evaluate the recommendations in this document.
7. The SDHSAA should offer guidance on issues that would normally be a matter of local control.

Principle #1 – Safety

- Following peaks in Mid-April and Mid-May, rates for confirmed cases, recoveries, and hospitalizations decreased and have since leveled out in South Dakota. Areas impacted significantly, including Minnehaha, Lincoln, Pennington, and Beadle counties have leveled out. Due to the disparate geography and population centers in the state, surges and peaks in cases, recoveries, and hospitalizations may not appear as apparent as they would in more densely populated areas of the country.
- The NFHS has proposed rule modifications for all Fall sports. Recommendations from SDHSAA staff on those rule modifications fall under three categories- mandatory, optional, and impermissible. In addition to fall sports, proposed solutions for fall fine arts events have also been created.
- The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory has released recommendations for classification of sports and fine arts activities in regards to contact and risk. Those categories are Low, Moderate, and High.
- Fall Sports:
 - Low Contact/Risk- Golf, Tennis, Cross Country
 - Moderate Contact/Risk- Soccer, Volleyball
 - High Contact/Risk- Football, Competitive Cheer, Competitive Dance
- Fall Fine Arts:
 - Low Contact/Risk- Journalism, Oral Interp
 - High Contact/Risk- All-State Chorus and Orchestra

Principle #2- Keeping Students Active and Involved

- A recent study by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (McGuine et al., 2020) examined the impact of school closures and sport cancellations on the health of adolescent athletes in Wisconsin. In the adolescents studied, 65% reported anxiety symptoms in May of 2020, 25% of which were in the moderate and severe category. Additionally, 68% reported symptoms of depression, compared to a historical baseline of 31%. Further, the study found a 50% decrease in physical activity in the athletes. As an overall trend the study found that the school closures and sport cancellations had a statistically significant negative impact on the physical health, psychosocial health, and overall health of the adolescents in the study. The study was replicated with adolescents from several states in the Midwest, with similar results. The sample size in South Dakota was too low to produce a separate report, but a summary of the South Dakota responses followed the same trends, in addition to findings that the increases mental health issues, lower physical activity, and lower quality of life were greater in counties with the highest poverty levels, indicating that the school closures and sport cancellations impacted adolescents from more vulnerable populations to a greater extent.
- Season switches were explored by the committee and not determined to be practical or necessary at this time. Flexibility in scheduling could potentially allow us to shorten other seasons and resume unfinished fall seasons in the late spring (without overlapping with Spring sports) if necessary.

Principle #3- Screening Procedures

- All rostered individuals (athletes, managers, statisticians, coaching staff, cheerleaders) and other school personnel involved (bus drivers, etc) will be screened daily for CDC recommended indicators of COVID-19. **The COVID-19 Monitoring Form Response Guide, on page 2 of the SDHSAA Monitoring Form, will be used to determine positive responses to screening questions.**
- Depending upon school policies, screening for fever may be done at the school or at home.
- All contest officials and judges will self-screen the day of the contest and report to site host administrator. Any individuals with unexplained positive responses must not be allowed to officiate/judge until they follow guidance from the Monitoring Form Response Guide.
- Athletes, participants, coaches, and officials who are in a vulnerable population should take extra precaution and visit with their physician about participation, particularly in sports/activities that do not allow for consistent social distancing.

Principle #4- Protocol for Confirmed Close Contact and Positive Cases

- **ALL indications of positive cases and confirmed close contact (within 6 feet for at least 15 minutes of time starting two days prior to symptom onset) must come through the South Dakota Department of Health.**
- Any Department of Health verified close contact (student/coach/official/judge/team personnel) must follow SDDOH guidelines. Currently, those guidelines require a 14-day quarantine from the date of contact away from school and daily screening of symptoms.
- Any Department of Health verified positive case (student/coach/official/judge/team personnel) must satisfy the following requirements prior to returning to activities:
 - 14 days have passed since onset of symptoms
 - Asymptomatic for at least 7 days without the use of fever reducing medication
 - SDHSAA Return to play form completed by an approved health care provider (MD/DO/PAC/ARNP)
 - The approved health care provider completing the Return to Play form has the option to
 - a) Clear the individual for an immediate return to activity,
 - b) clear the student pending a Graduated Return to Play Progression due to moderate or severe symptoms, or
 - c) Deny clearance to return to activity
- Schools must notify the SDHSAA of any verified close contact or positive cases of rostered individuals via the SDHSAA School Zone. No personally identifiable information will be contained in the notification to the SDHSAA. All information will be treated in compliance with HIPAA and FERPA from the member school and the SDHSAA. Dr. Swartos from the SDHSAA will be part of the SDDOE/SDDOH School Response Team.
- SDDOH Case Investigation outline from <https://doe.sd.gov/coronavirus/documents/CaseInvestigation.pdf>

Principle #5- SDHSAA Policies

- Re-Scheduling Contests- The SDHSAA will assist teams as much as possible in working towards the satisfactory rescheduling of missed contests. Re-scheduling of football contests will be difficult and may not be possible, with the exception of shared bye weeks.
- “No Contest”- If a school has substantial spread of cases within their building such that they are forced to deliver instruction completely via distance learning, all efforts should be made to reschedule. If that is not possible, the contest will be declared a “no contest” for both teams. Similarly, if both teams agree not to play, but are not in a “shutdown”, in exceptional scenarios it could become a “no contest” with prior approval from SDHSAA.

- “Forfeit”- If a school decides on their own, without a school/district shutdown or without SDDOH recommendation, that they do not want to play a contest, the contest will be declared a “forfeit” with the team deciding not to play awarded a loss and the opposing team a win.
- Any post-season contests that are unable to be played will be considered a forfeit.
- The SDHSAA will act as a mediator and make final decisions as it pertains to forfeit and no contest determinations.
- The SDHSAA should develop policies for virtual Fine Arts events.

Principle #6- Benchmarks for Re-Evaluation

- The SDHSAA will work with this task force, in addition to the South Dakota Department of Health, throughout the fall to determine if it is necessary to re-examine this document.

Principle #7- Other Guidance

- Schools should post guidance regarding social distancing and hygiene at their facility entrances and other high traffic areas of their facilities.
- Schools should encourage and support the use of masks by spectators.
- Schools should evaluate local conditions in determining restrictions on crowd size. **If fan attendance is allowed at a contest, fans from both/all teams involved should be allowed to attend in the same capacity deemed safe for home teams to attend.**
- Schools should consider using 7- or 14-day trends and other indicators of active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations in their District/County area to develop a tiered system for fan attendance, such as:

<u>TIER</u>	<u>Fan Attendance</u>	<u>Conditions</u>
Tier 1	Open attendance	Steady/Decreasing rates of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations.
Tier 2	Parents/Student Body Only	Slow/intermittent increase of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations. Isolated cases, no evidence of exposures in large communal settings.
Tier 3	Student Body or Parents Only	Steady/incremental increase of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations. Sustained increases, potential exposures in large communal settings.
Tier 4	No Fans	Sharp increase of community active cases, new cases, and/or hospitalizations WITHOUT concurrent increase of cases/contacts within the school setting. Confirmed exposures in large communal settings.

- If fan attendance is being limited, schools should consider using a pass system to control crowd sizes and limit build ups at the gate. In addition, any pass system should be extended to visiting teams and coordinated between athletic directors prior to the contest.

- **The SDHSAA encourages conferences and other like groups of schools to consider agreeing to similar attendance policies across the conference/like group to avoid confusion from fans.**
- **During bus travel to away contests and for transportation to practice for cooperative programs, schools should strongly consider assigned seating and mandating the use of cloth face masks by everyone on the bus to assist with contact tracing and potentially assist with the numbers confirmed close contact.**
- Schools should consider cashless transaction at the gates via a system like Huddle. Ticket takers and other event workers should be offered protective equipment such as masks and gloves.
- With the dramatic rise in streaming capabilities for contests, in addition to the NFHS Network offer of free Pixellot systems to every school, schools should evaluate their current streaming offerings and **actively encourage fans to self-screen and watch from home if exhibiting any symptoms. Similarly, schools should actively encourage those who are vulnerable to watch from home.**
- A joint SDDOH/SDHSAA set of recommendations for concession stands is attached to this document as **APPENDIX D**.
- Schools should evaluate their media areas and attempt to reconfigure to allow social distancing.
- Facility cleaning guidance for the summer period should be continued throughout the school year.

FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. The task force recommends that all SDHSAA-sanctioned fall sports proceed according to schedule with the attached rule modifications, in addition to screening procedures and South Dakota Department of Health protocol for confirmed close contacts and confirmed positive tests.
2. Due to the nature of the event (nearly 1,100 students from over 150 different schools), the Task Force recommends that SDHSAA staff further consider the All-State Chorus and Orchestra concert, examine the results of the pending NFHS aerosol study, and make a determination on that event at a later date.
3. The Task Force recommends that remaining fall season SDHSAA Fine Arts Events (Journalism and Oral Interp) continue, with SDHSAA staff evaluating the need for the events to be held virtually due to the size of the event in student count and number of communities represented.

References

Elliott, N., Martin, R., Heron, N., Elliott, J., Grimstead, D., & Biswas, A. (2020). Infographic. Graduated return to play guidance following COVID-19 infection. *British journal of sports medicine*, bjsports-2020-102637. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2020-102637>

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