



**South Dakota High School Activities Association**

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***SDHSAA Winter Sports/Activities Task Force Recommendations  
October 2020***

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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 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. The SDHSAA should offer guidance on issues that would normally be a matter of local control.

### Principle #1 – Safety

- The NFHS has proposed rule modifications for all Winter sports. Recommendations from SDHSAA staff on those rule modifications fall under three categories- mandatory, optional, and impermissible. In addition to winter sports, proposed solutions for winter 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.
- Winter Sports:
  - Moderate Contact/Risk- Basketball, Gymnastics
  - High Contact/Risk- Wrestling
- Winter Fine Arts:
  - Moderate/Low Contact/Risk- One-Act Play, Debate

### Principle #2- Keeping Students Active and Involved

- 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 winter 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) should 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 school or the South Dakota Department of Health.**
- Any Department of Health verified close contact (student/coach/official/judge/team personnel) will follow SDDOH guidelines. Currently, those guidelines recommend a 14-day quarantine from the date of last contact away from school and daily screening of symptoms. Schools have developed local policies regarding close contacts, and those guidelines will be honored by the SDHSAA, with the exception of policies directly called for in rules modifications.
- Any **PARTICIPANT** with a Department of Health verified positive case must satisfy the following requirements prior to returning to activities:
  - 14 days have passed since onset of symptoms, or if asymptomatic, 14 days from the date of the positive COVID-19 test.
  - Asymptomatic for at least the last 7 days of the 14-day period without the use of fever reducing medication
  - SDHSAA Return to play form must be 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
- Non-Participants with a DOH verified positive case must follow CDC/SDDOH guidelines (currently 10 days since symptom onset, 24 hours asymptomatic without the use of fever-reducing medication) and receive DOH clearance prior to returning.
- 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.

**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.
- “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.

**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 winter 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:

| <b><u>TIER</u></b> | <b><u>Fan Attendance</u></b> | <b><u>Conditions</u></b>  |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Tier 1</b>      | Open attendance              | Steady/Decreasing rates of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations. |

|               |                              |   |
|---------------|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Tier 2</b> | 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.   |
| <b>Tier 3</b> | Student Body or Parents Only | Steady/incremental increase of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations. Sustained increases, potential exposures in large communal settings.  |
| <b>Tier 4</b> | 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/fall period should be continued throughout the school year.

**FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. The task force recommends that all SDHSAA-sanctioned winter sports proceed with the attached rule modifications, in addition to screening procedures, Return to Play procedures, and the SDDOH guidelines for confirmed positive tests.
2. The Task Force recommends that All-State Band auditions be completed virtually, with the hope that the All-State Band event can still be held in person March 25-27, 2021.
3. The task force recommends that the SDHSAA continue moving forward with plans to hold the One-Act Play festival in-person, with appropriate mitigation strategies in place to include pod scheduling and the potential of multiple sites.
4. The Task Force recommends that preparations be made to hold the State Debate competition virtually, due to the lack of accommodating facilities willing to allow multiple schools worth of competitors to utilize school classrooms for the competition.
5. The Task Force recommends that the state Virtual Arts competition be held alongside the State A basketball tournament with appropriate mitigation strategies in place.
6. The Task Force recommends that decisions on the events of All-State Band, All-State Jazz Band, and All-State Chorus and Orchestra be made with decisions on SDHSAA spring events.

## 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>
- Drezner, J. A., Heinz, W. M., Asif, I. M., Batten, C. G., Fields, K. B., Raukar, N. P., Valentine, V. D., and Walter, K. D. (2020). Cardiopulmonary Considerations for High School Student-Athletes During the COVID-19 Pandemic: NFHS-AMSSM Guidance Statement. *Sports Health*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1941738120941490>
- McGuine, T., Biese, K., Hetzel, S., Kliethermes, S., Reardon, C., & Bell, D. et al. (2020). The Impact of School Closures and Sport Cancellations on the Health of Wisconsin Adolescent Athletes. *University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Department of Orthopedics and Rehabilitation*. Madison, WI.

## ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 1. Out-Of-State Open Enrollment Considerations:

- a. **North Dakota:** open enrollment allowed per the SDDOE agreement with North Dakota (border school can open enroll to any school).
- b. **Iowa:** open enrollment allowed per the SDDOE agreement with Iowa (districts must be adjoining and the physical location of the high school in South Dakota must be closer to the residence than the high school in Iowa)
- c. **Minnesota:** open enrollment allowed per SDCL 13-36-7 and 13-15-21 (both districts must be located on the border, request must be made prior to July 1<sup>st</sup> of the school year- in this case, July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020). Current tuition agreements between districts and cooperative agreements between districts will be honored.
- d. **Nebraska, Wyoming, Montana, and all non-contiguous states:** No open enrollment allowed, must involve a bona fide move.

### 2. Playoff/Post-Season Changes

#### a. Basketball:

- i. Change minimum contests played from 14 games to 10 games.
- ii. For each game difference between actual games played and minimum of 10, the team will be granted at Tier 4 power point loss (30 points) for calculation of seeding at Regions. Actual record will be used to calculate points for opponent wins/losses.
  1. Example: Team A plays 8 games prior to regions and goes 8-0. They would receive their normal Power Point calculations for their eight wins and would receive two Tier 4 Power Point losses (30 points). Their Power Point average would be determined using an 8-2 record with the two Tier 4 losses. The opponents they actually played would receive Tier 1 Power Point losses (39 points) due to the 8-0 actual record.
- iii. In any Region where two or fewer teams remain at the start of Region play, they will be paired off with another Region to form a "Super Region", and the Super Region would play out for four spots in the SoDak16. If necessary, Super Regions would be paired as Regions 1 and 2, 3 and 4, 5 and 6, or 7 and 8.

b. **Wrestling:** TBD, nothing at the moment.

c. **Gymnastics:** TBD, nothing at the moment.