

**Franklin Public Schools
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038**

Action Required

Subject: FHS Athletics

Date: August 25, 2020

Dept: FHS

Reason: Required Vote

Enclosure: yes

Recommendation:

Athletics at Franklin High School

I recommend the approval of Franklin High School sports teams participating in MIAA seasons, starting with the fall season, although school is opening in a predominantly remote environment.

Action Requested of the School Committee:

Majority vote of the School Committee is required.

<u>Vote Tabulator</u>	
A Bergen:	Y / N T Keenan: Y / N
J D'Angelo:	Y / N M J Scofield: Y / N
J Pond-Pfeffer:	Y / N D Spencer: Y / N
E Stokes:	Y / N Action: _____



Franklin Public Schools

Office of the Superintendent
355 East Central Street; Suite 3
Franklin, Massachusetts 02038
Phone: 508-553-4819

To: Franklin School Committee

From: Sara E. Ahern, Ed.D., Superintendent

Date: August 21, 2020

RE: MIAA Athletics 2020-2021

The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) presented *Joint Guidance on Modified Sports Seasons for School Year 2020-2021* on August 18, 2020. This guidance outlines a modified sports schedule for the organization taking the *Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Guidance* provided by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) into consideration. This guidance was ratified by the MIAA board on August 19, 2020.

In summary:

- FHS fall sports deemed to be low-risk includes golf.
- FHS fall sports deemed to be moderate-risk include Cross Country Running, Field Hockey, Soccer, and Volleyball.
 - Moderate-risk sports must be modified in accordance with EEA expectations
- FHS fall sports deemed to be high-risk include Football, Competitive Cheer, and Unified basketball.
- The 2020-2021 will have four modified seasons:
 - Fall -- September 18 -- November 20
 - Winter -- November 30 -- February 21
 - Floating Season -- February 22 -- April 25
 - Spring -- April 26 -- July 3
- No post-season/MIAA tournaments will be played in the fall season
- The schedule is subject to change
- MIAA waived its rule on out-of-season contact between coaches and teams. Coaches may engage in out-of-season contact with athletes
- Student-athletes may participate in all four seasons

The Hockomock Athletic Directors (ADs) have met several times and have agreed to the following:

- Fall season will include Golf, Cross Country Running, Field Hockey, and Soccer (which all occur outside).
- Football, Competitive Cheer, Unified Basketball, and Volleyball (although moderate-risk, it is played indoors) will be moved to the floating season.

- All games will be played within the Hockomock League.
- The Hockomock League ADs will craft recommendations on guidance/limitations for coaches on appropriate out-of-season contact.

In preparation for a modified season, we have worked with our attorney to update our Athletics Permission Form to include language pertinent to COVID-19. Locally, several details remain to be determined. This includes the allowance of spectators at games. We are consulting with the local Board of Health on this matter. The ADs are developing game schedules with transportation in mind, given the COVID-19 restrictions on buses makes transportation much more difficult to secure. Transportation responsibilities may need to be shared between the district and families. Additionally, we are examining our athletics' user fees although we plan to collect the typical user fee during registration. Although the season is shortened, we do anticipate some additional COVID-related expenses. User fees do not cover the entire budget of the athletics department and offset approximately one-third of typical expenses.

As a district that is beginning the year remotely, the Franklin School Committee must approve the participation of its high school student-athletes in the MIAA sports seasons. We recommend that the School Committee make this approval. Although the high school is starting remotely, we have asserted through the Reopening Plan that we will strive to bring small groups of students together for relationship building, social-emotional development, and "reverse" academic field trips. We see these athletic practices and competitions as consistent with the Reopening Plan. Additionally, the fall sports have been selected by the Hockomock ADs because of their outdoor nature; volleyball as an indoor sport has been moved to the floating season, out of recognition that several Hockomock High Schools are beginning the year remotely.



Joint Guidance on Modified Sports Seasons for School Year 2020-21

Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

August 18, 2020

As the Commonwealth of Massachusetts begins the process of opening schools, we must also look at the possibility of providing athletic experiences for our students. Sports can be an important part of a well-rounded educational experience, even during the current public health crisis. Notwithstanding the risks associated with COVID-19, organized physical activity should be encouraged, within clear health and safety parameters. Most sports can be played in ways that minimize those risks. In many cases, that will mean that inter-scholastic competitions may not look the same and may need to be played under fairly stringent restrictions with modified rules. Unfortunately, in some cases, competitive play may need to be cancelled or postponed. While difficult for all involved, it is essential that we keep health and safety paramount, both for everyone directly involved and the wider community.

Working in close consultation with a variety of stakeholders and our medical advisors and based on the [Youth and Adult Amateur Sports Guidance](#) recently provided by the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA), the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have collaborated to provide the following modified sports schedule for school year 2020-21 and guidance for sports participation for students who are learning remotely. Please note that this guidance is pending ratification by the MIAA board and is subject to change throughout the school year.

The MIAA, in consultation with their medical advisers and EEA, will develop sport-specific modifications to meet the guidance from EEA for issuance prior to the start of each season. At this time, based on current statewide health data, sports that the EEA guidance lists as lower and moderate risk may be held during their normal seasons, provided that MIAA's recommended modifications specific to those sports meet the standards outlined in the EEA guidance. For the fall season, higher risk sports, including football, cheer, and unified basketball, will be practice only, using the cohort method described in the [EEA guidance](#). Schools/districts choosing to engage in practice for these sports must complete the [Sport Attestation Compliance](#) form and keep it on file.

Higher risk sports in later seasons will continue to be evaluated in light of health metrics and the EEA guidance, and MIAA will make final decisions in consultation with their medical advisers closer to the start of each season. The sports that MIAA ultimately does not approve to be played

in their normal season will be moved or considered for later in the year during the floating season.

The health and safety of our school communities must remain the top priority, and we recognize that any plans for athletic opportunities must adapt to evolving public health metrics.

2020-21 Modified Sports Seasons

All sports must adhere to the minimum modifications outlined in the EEA guidance to achieve Level 3 play (inter-team competition). If those modifications cannot be met, the sport may consider moving to a later season or adopting a “practice only” model using the EEA cohort method and in alignment with other EEA guidelines. Guidance from EEA will be re-issued prior to the start of each season, based on public health data, testing availability, and any new information, and MIAA will make final decisions for each season following that updated guidance.

Season	Dates	Sports
Fall	Starting Sept. 18	Golf, XC running, field hockey, soccer, gymnastics, girls volleyball, fall swimming/diving, football practice,* cheer practice,* unified basketball practice* *Practice only using EEA cohort modifications : Football, cheer, unified basketball
Winter	TBA by MIAA	Winter gymnastics, boys and girls indoor track, ski, dance, winter swimming/diving, cheer, hockey, basketball, wrestling
Floating season	TBA by MIAA	Sports unable to play in earlier seasons may engage in Level 3 play (competitions) if permitted by updated EEA guidelines. Schools that offered only remote learning in early fall may use this season for play that was missed during their remote schedule.
Spring	TBA by MIAA	Girls golf, baseball, softball, tennis, boys volleyball, girls and boys lacrosse, track and field, rugby

At this time, the sports listed above have been conditionally approved for the fall season, provided they are able to meet the minimum modifications outlined in the EEA guidance. For the fall season football, cheer, and unified basketball will be practice only, using the cohort method described in the [EEA guidance](#). Schools/districts choosing to engage in practice for these sports must complete the [Sport Attestation Compliance](#) form and keep it on file.

Higher risk sports in later seasons (including hockey, basketball, wrestling, boys lacrosse, and rugby) will continue to be evaluated in light of health metrics and the EEA guidance and final decisions will be made closer to the start of each season. Those that are ultimately not approved by MIAA to be played in a season will be moved or considered for later in the year during the floating season, as reflected above. All sports, regardless of risk level, must follow the EEA guidelines, and moderate and higher risk sports must adopt the required minimum modifications for achieving different levels of play. To be able to engage in competitive play, modifications should include eliminating deliberate contact, modifying or eliminating intermittent contact, and increasing distancing. If these modifications are not possible, the sport may achieve a modified Level 2 play (competitive practice) using the cohort method outlined in the [EEA guidance](#). Again, schools/districts choosing to engage in practice for these sports must complete the [Sport Attestation Compliance](#) form and keep it on file. The EEA guidance also outlines best practices for all sports, including the use of protective equipment and masks. The sport specific modifications and plan for implementation will be developed by MIAA in consultation with their medical advisors.

Based on the schedule above, school districts should work with MIAA to develop their schedules for the year and be ready to modify those schedules as needed. More detailed information on the guidelines for practices and the start of competitions will be outlined in the guidance that MIAA will release.

Sports participation for remote learners

Districts designated as “red” based on the [Department of Public Health \(DPH\)’s metric](#) of average daily cases per 100,000 residents and which therefore have their high school students learning remotely at the start of a season, *must postpone their entire season, including practices*, until the floating season later in the year.

Districts designated as yellow, green, or unshaded based on the DPH metric that nonetheless have their high school students learning remotely at the start of a season *may similarly delay their season to the floating season*. If a yellow, green, or unshaded district that is only offering remote learning to its high school students wishes to participate in the regularly scheduled sports season, this must be approved by the local school committee.

The MIAA will develop a timeline for looking at data prior to the start of each season to determine which color-coded designation a district should fall into for the purposes of engaging in sports. For example, the MIAA could determine a school’s color-coded designation/eligibility on September 1 to determine initial eligibility and check again on October 1 to determine if the school remains eligible to participate in the fall season.



MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

WORKPLACE SAFETY and REOPENING STANDARDS FOR BUSINESSES and OTHER ENTITIES PROVIDING YOUTH and ADULT AMATEUR SPORTS ACTIVITIES – Phase III, Step 1 Expansion of Activity Number 1

Amended on August 13, 2020

Effective on August 17, 2020

These safety standards for youth and adult amateur sports activities are posted in advance of the effective date to allow Facility Operators and Activity Organizers time to prepare to operate in compliance with these mandatory health and safety standards. Facility Operators and Activity Organizers may not allow any additional level of play beyond that currently allowed in the Phase III, Step 1 guidance issued July 24, 2020 until August 17, 2020.

I. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the authority granted to the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) pursuant to [COVID-19 Order No. 43](#) to issue Sector-Specific Rules to implement COVID-19 safety measures for organized youth and adult amateur sports activities, this Expansion of Activity Number 1 (“Expansion 1”) amends the Phase III, Step 1 guidelines and is effective on August 17 2020.

This document provides guidance for how to implement general workplace safety standards and other public health guidance (“COVID-19 measures”) in the context of recreational operations in Phase III, Step 1 of the Commonwealth’s reopening. Facility Operators and Activity Organizers who fail to implement applicable COVID-19 measures may be sanctioned in accordance with COVID-19 Order No. 43. Facility Operators and Activity Organizers are further reminded that in addition to implementing COVID-19 measures in Phase III, Step 1, they must still comply with all federal, state, and local laws.

The public health data and guidance on which this document is based can and does change frequently. The most recent version of this document can be found on the Commonwealth’s reopening website, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>.

II. HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The guidelines in this document are designed to provide instructions to Facility Operators and Activity Organizers of youth and adult amateur sports activities to help protect against the spread of COVID-19. For the avoidance of doubt, this guidance applies to K-12 school and other youth sports activities.



The guidelines that follow include information on: (1) allowable sports and recreational activities; (2) facial covering requirements; and (3) additional safety protocols (e.g., social distancing, hygiene, staffing and operations, and cleaning and disinfecting).

Recognizing that in many instances, activities are organized by one entity and take place at a facility operated by a second entity, this document categorizes guidance based on an entity's role. The guidance provided on safety protocols includes specific guidance for both Facility Operators and Activity Organizers. Entities that organize activities in facilities for which they are responsible should comply with both sets of guidance (Facility Operator Guidance and Activity Organizer Guidance).

III. LIMITATIONS ON RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES DURING PHASE III, STEP 1

The ability to participate in sports and recreational activities is determined by a combination of: (1) risk of transmission of COVID-19 inherent in the sport or recreational activity itself as traditionally played; (2) level of risk associated with the "Type of Play" without modifications to play; and (3) whether a sport or activity can "Modify Play" to reduce risk. This section covers each of these categories and outlines what activities are allowed to be performed under this Expansion 1 during Phase III, Step 1 as a result.

Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must comply with activity limitations listed herein. For non-organized sports and recreation, individuals should follow these guidelines, where it applies to their activities. Organizers of athletic and recreational activity competitions or tournaments should follow the competition and tournament guidance herein.

Organizations, businesses, schools, and government entities that operate outdoor or indoor sports facilities, such as athletic fields, courts and other playing surfaces, pools, and sailing and boating facilities, can operate their premises and facilities for use by adults and youth in Phase III, Step 1 provided that the safety measures outlined herein are implemented by Facility Operators and Activity Organizers.

Such athletic facilities subject to this guidance include, but are not limited to:

- Gymnastics Facilities
- Indoor & Outdoor Pools*
- Indoor and Outdoor Athletic Fields and Courts
- Ice Rinks
- Indoor and Outdoor Tracks
- Indoor Gymnasiums
- Martial Arts & Dance Facilities
- Indoor and Outdoor Racquet Courts
- Indoor and Outdoor Batting Cage Facilities

*Pool Facilities (both indoor and outdoor) must also ensure compliance with the [*Safety Standards for Public and Semi-Public Pools*](#).



Fitness Centers and Health Clubs must follow the [Sector Specific Workplace Safety Standards for Fitness Centers and Health Clubs to Address COVID-19](#).

Recreational camps or other programs that are subject to [105 CMR 430.000](#) must follow the requirements outlined in the [Massachusetts Child and Youth Service Programs Reopen Approach: Minimum Requirements for Health and Safety](#).

A. RISK LEVEL OF SPORTS

Sports and recreational activities are categorized as “**Lower Risk**,” “**Moderate Risk**,” and “**Higher Risk**” based on the risk of transmission of COVID-19 inherent in the sport or recreational activity itself as traditionally played.

Lower Risk sports and recreational activities are characterized by:

- Sports or activities that can be done with social distancing and no physical contact
- Sports or activities that can be done individually

Examples: Tennis, pickleball, swimming, catch, disc golf, golf, individual biking, surfing, horseback riding, individual sailing, fishing, hunting, motor sports, no contact exercise classes, gymnastics, cross country, individual crew

Moderate Risk sports and recreational activities are characterized by:

- Sports or activities that involve intermittent close proximity or limited, incidental physical contact between participants

Examples: Baseball, softball, crew, sailing, track and field, running clubs, team swimming, volleyball, dance class, fencing, field hockey, girls’ lacrosse, soccer

Higher Risk sports and recreational activities are characterized by:

- Sports or activities for which there is a requirement or a substantial likelihood of routine close and/or sustained proximity or deliberate physical contact between participants and a high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants

Examples: Football, wrestling, rugby, basketball, lacrosse, ice-hockey, competitive cheer, martial arts, ultimate frisbee, boxing, pair figure skating



B. SPORTS & RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES ALLOWED BY RISK LEVEL DURING PHASE III, STEP 1

The risk associated with an activity is also dependent on the type of play. The following types of play are defined by level from least to greatest risk.

- **Level 1:** Individual or socially distanced group activities (non-contact workouts, aerobic conditioning, individual skill work, and drills)
- **Level 2:** Competitive Practices (Intra-team/group games, contact drills, and scrimmages)
- **Level 3:** Competitions (Inter-team games, meets, matches, races, etc.)
- **Level 4:** Tournaments (Outdoor only)

In Phase III, Step 1, through this Expansion 1 sports and recreational activities are subject to the limitations and guidelines set forth below:

- Sports and activities included in the **Lower Risk** category can participate in **Level 1, 2, 3, and 4** type of play.
- Sports and activities included in the **Moderate Risk** category can participate in **Level 1 as traditionally played**. Level 2 and Level 3 play are only allowed if the Minimum Mandatory Standards for Modification to Play are met.
- Sports and activities included in the **Higher Risk** category can participate in **Level 1 as traditionally played**. Level 2 and Level 3 play are only allowed if the Minimum Mandatory Standards for Modification to Play are met.

C. MINIMUM MANDATORY STANDARDS FOR MODIFICATION TO PLAY

All Facility Operators and Activity Organizers of **Moderate** and **Higher** risk sports and activities **must** develop and implement sport-specific modifications to play to minimize the risk of transmission of infection among participants.

There will always remain an inherent risk in participating in sports. To plan activities and implement modifications to minimize risk, Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must consider the following:

- ❖ Identify measures that can be implemented to significantly limit contact and increase physical distancing. Modify play and practice as much as possible to keep players spaced 6 feet apart for the majority of a game or practice.
- ❖ Conduct the activity or sport outdoors where possible, as outdoor participation is generally safer than indoors and allows for greater distancing.
- ❖ Shorten activities, practices, and game play or perform the activity with fewer participants to the extent possible.
- ❖ Modify the activity or sport to reduce the sharing of equipment or to allow for cleaning of shared equipment between participants.
- ❖ Incorporate protective equipment in a safe manner to further reduce the spread of respiratory particles.



Notwithstanding the above considerations, the below minimum standards for modifications **must** be met in order for **Moderate** and **Higher** risk sports to engage in **Level 2** or **Level 3** play. See the Appendix for additional representation of the below guidance.

i. Mandatory Modifications for Level 2 and Level 3 Play

In order for **Moderate** and **Higher** risk activities and sports to engage in Level 2 and Level 3 play, Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must:

- ❖ **Modify Play to Limit Contact or Increase Distancing for Participants** where there is intermittent close participant proximity and/or sustained face to face contact between participants. Modifications should strive to keep participants 6 feet apart for the majority of play and must eliminate all deliberate contact. Such modifications include, for example:
 - **Stagger Starts:** In race-like activities where players typically start or finish together, modifications **must** include staggered starts to avoid close contact. Starting lines should also be adjusted to allow for 6 feet distancing between participants at the start (e.g., have runners in every other lane, spacing competitors on start line 6 feet apart). If space is limited, staggered start times should be used to allow appropriate spacing for participants for each starting group.
 - **Eliminate Deliberate Contact:** Deliberate close contact must be eliminated. Deliberate close contact includes but is not limited to collisions, body checking, tackling, blocking, and racing/riding in packs.
 - **Minimize Intermittent Contact:** Game situations that result in intermittent close physical or face-to-face contact must be modified or eliminated, including: restarts, face-offs, throw-ins, scrums for the ball/puck, or similar activities. These activities may be allowed if face masks are used during contact (e.g., face-offs could take place with face masks worn by each player involved).

Those activities and sports that **cannot** modify play as outlined above cannot engage in **Level 3** play but may be able to participate in **Level 2** play **IF** they can incorporate the below modifications.

ii. Mandatory Modifications for Modified Level 2 Play (for Sports that Cannot Modify Play to Limit Contact or Increase Distancing)

Moderate and **Higher** risk activities and sports that cannot implement the mandatory modifications as described above, can participate in modified **Level 2** play. **Level 2** play can take place for sports with close physical or face to face contact using a cohort concept for competitive contact practices or training, provided that Facility Operators and Activity Organizers meet the following minimum requirements:

- Training activities must be performed in “cohorts” of the same small group of individuals that performs all training activities together and without interacting with other individuals or cohorts.



- Cohorts can be **no larger than ten (10) participants** and the same cohort assignments must be used for every training session or class. Participants cannot be a member of multiple cohorts, nor can cohort assignments rotate.
- Training areas or boundaries must be marked so that training **cohorts are separated in all directions by at least 14 feet**. Class sizes should be capped by the number of available training areas based on the size of the facility and in no event more than 25 people on a playing surface.
- A cohort can compete against other cohorts if each cohort performs separately from other cohorts (e.g., pair figure skating, or small group synchronized swimming) and no contact occurs between cohorts.

D. LEVEL 3 AND LEVEL 4 PLAY – COMPETITION AND TOURNAMENT REQUIREMENTS

For the purposes of these guidelines, a “**Competition**” is defined as multiple participants or two teams competing against one another in a single contest. A competition includes inter-team games, matches, shows, meets, and races. Teams are limited to competing against a single opposing team per day. A team may play multiple competitions against the same team in a single day, however there may be no competitions with additional teams.

A “**Tournament**” is a formal contest that consists of multiple competitions or a series of games between multiple persons or teams, that might include multiple stages, played in a condensed period of time, such as over the course of a single day or multiple days in a row. For the avoidance of doubt, a series of games is still a tournament even if there is a lack of an overall prize, scores, eliminations, brackets, or otherwise.

In Phase III, Step 1, only outdoor Tournaments are allowed for **Lower Risk Sports**.

Competition and Tournament Organizers must adhere to the following:

- **Outdoor Competitions & Tournaments Capacity Limits:**
 - No more than 25 players on any surface/playing area for team/group sports.
 - No more than 50 people excluding players, coaches, referees, or facility/activity workers in the aggregate in, on, or surrounding any surface/playing area or start/finish lines at any one time, provided that there is adequate space for all players, coaches, referees, facility/activity workers and spectators to maintain at least six feet social distancing, recognizing that for some moderate and high risk sports intermittent and limited contact may occur for players.
 - Spectators must wear facial coverings and maintain six feet of social distance at all times.
 - For competitions and tournaments in the water, the aforementioned limitations apply to any applicable activities on land.
 - No spectators are allowed for sports and activities played by individuals 21 years and older.
- **Indoor Competition Capacity Limits:**



- No more than 25 players on any surface/playing area for team/group sports.
 - If an indoor facility has a chaperone or spectator viewing area which allows for at least six feet social distancing between spectators and the presence of spectators plus players, coaches, referees, and facility/activity workers does not cause the facility to exceed more than 40% of the maximum occupancy for the indoor facility, then 1 spectator per player under 21 years old is allowed to attend.
 - Spectators must wear facial coverings and maintain six feet of social distance at all times.
 - For indoor competitions in the water, the aforementioned limitations apply to any applicable activities on land.
 - No spectators are allowed for sports and activities played by individuals 21 years and older.
- **Multiple Playing Surface Capacity Limits:**
 - For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces, courts, etc. the above capacity limitations for Outdoor Competitions & Tournaments and Indoor Competitions shall apply per playing field, surface, court, etc. provided that there is adequate spacing for at least six feet social distancing for all individuals, including those at adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc.
 - Activity Organizers should set Competition and Tournament schedules with a time buffer to prevent the overlap of competitions at any one time and to allow for disinfecting of equipment and cleaning of commonly touched surfaces, if necessary. Games should end in a draw if time expires.
 - For facilities with multiple fields, surfaces, courts, etc. Facility Operators and Activity Organizers should mark off designated areas for spectators for each field, surface, court, etc. to minimize the overlap of spectators from adjacent fields, surfaces, courts, etc.

IV. PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT AND FACIAL COVERINGS FOR ALL SPORTS

While limiting proximity of participants is the first line of defense to reduce the risk of transmission, Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must require facial coverings to be worn by all participants except:

- During high intensity aerobic or anaerobic activities, swimming, water polo, water aerobics or other sports where individuals are in the water; or
- When distancing of 6 feet or more is possible between participants whenever feasible; or
- For individuals that are unable to wear a face covering due to a medical condition or disability

Otherwise, Activity Organizers must require facial coverings to be worn while engaged in an activity wherever possible. Some sports by their nature involve intense aerobic activity throughout play. For these sports, it is required that players use facial coverings when possible, taking frequent breaks when they are out of proximity to other players using caution to avoid touching the front or inside of the face covering by using the ties or ear loops to remove and replace. For example, soccer players should have facial coverings with them at all times, and where possible play with the facial covering on, removing it for long runs down the field, for plays without close contact, and in the goal; baseball/softball batters must wear



facial coverings while at bat; lacrosse or hockey players participating in face-offs must wear facial coverings. Participants for all sports must wear facial coverings on the bench at all times and in any huddles or time-outs.

Coaches, staff, referees, umpires, and other officials are required to wear facial coverings and maintain social distancing of 6 feet from players, coaches, spectators, and other persons at all times.

V. REQUIRED SAFETY PROTOCOLS

All Facility Operators and Activity Organizers must incorporate the following standards for social distancing, hygiene, staffing and operations, and cleaning and disinfecting into sports across all risk categories.

A. SOCIAL DISTANCING

Facility Operator Guidance

- ❖ Indoor and outdoor athletic facilities may operate their facilities for use by youth and adult amateur sports activities and programs.
- ❖ Indoor facilities must limit capacity to no more than 40% of the building's maximum permitted occupancy and ensure adequate social distancing of at least 6 feet for all visitors and staff.
- ❖ For team and group sports, no more than 25 players or participants can be on a single playing surface/area/court at any one time. The number of coaches and staff should be limited. Larger playing areas and surfaces, such as athletic fields, tracks, facilities that have multiple courts or playing areas, may be used by more than one group of 25 at one time, provided that adequate social distancing and group separation can be maintained. To ensure group separation, groups must be spaced at least 14 feet apart while sharing a single playing surface, court or field.
- ❖ For outdoor facilities: Spectators must maintain distance of at least 6 feet between spectator groups. Operators are encouraged to mark off spectator/chaperone viewing sites to allow for social distancing and all spectators must be at least 6 feet away from the playing field, court, or activity area. Spectators must wear facial coverings or masks.
- ❖ For indoor facilities: If an indoor facility has a chaperone or spectator viewing area which allows for at least 6 feet social distancing between spectators and if the presence of spectators plus players/coaches as well as staff does not cause the facility to exceed more than 40% of the maximum occupancy for the indoor facility, then 1 spectator per player under 21 years old is allowed. Operators are encouraged to mark off spectator/chaperone viewing sites to allow for social distancing. Spectators must maintain distance of at least 6 feet between spectator groups. Spectators must wear facial coverings.
- ❖ Locker rooms and changing areas may open in Phase III, Step 1, but should be limited to 50% capacity. Operators should ensure that users can abide by capacity restrictions and social distancing standards and establish signage and visual guidelines. Signage should remind users to limit time spent in enclosed area. Locker room users must use facial coverings or masks whenever possible and safe to do so.
- ❖ Indoor showers should remain closed in Phase III, Step 1. Indoor and outdoor pool facilities



must provide access showers to swimmers prior to swimming in compliance with 105 CMR 435. If outdoor showers are not available, facilities may meet this requirement by providing access to indoor showers. If outdoor showers are available, facilities should keep indoor showers closed.

- ❖ Limit any nonessential visitors, spectators, staff, volunteers, and activities involving external groups or organizations as much as possible. While indoors, visitors, spectators, volunteers, and staff must wear facial coverings.
- ❖ Where feasible, indoor facilities should institute one-way entrance and exits while adhering to established fire and building codes.
- ❖ Indoor and outdoor batting cage facilities shall ensure adequate social distancing between each cage, such as limiting use to every other cage.
- ❖ Access to equipment storage and office space should be limited to employees only. First aid kits should be available at the playing area or court rather than in an office, where possible.
- ❖ Operators should ensure that individuals are not congregating in common areas or parking lots following practices or events.

Activity Organizer Guidance

- ❖ For team and group sports, no more than 25 players or participants can be on a single playing surface/area/court at any one time. The number of coaches and staff should be limited. Larger playing areas and surfaces, such as athletic fields, tracks, facilities that have multiple courts or playing areas, may be used by more than one group of 25 at one time, provided that adequate social distance and group separation can be maintained. To ensure group separation, groups must be spaced at least 14 feet apart while sharing a single playing surface, court or field.
- ❖ **Dugouts, benches & bleachers are allowed to open only if six feet of distance can be maintained between each participant at all times** and they can be thoroughly cleaned before and after every use.
- ❖ Sportsmanship should continue in a touchless manner – no handshakes/slaps/fist bumps.
- ❖ If social distancing is not possible in an athletic facility, chaperones/spectators may be asked to wait outside the facility until an activity is completed.
- ❖ Activity Organizers should ensure that individuals are not congregating in common areas or parking lots following practices or events.
- ❖ Once athletes have completed their competition or activity, they must leave the area if another team is taking the field or using the playing surface to ensure adequate space for distancing.

B. HYGIENE

Facility Operator Guidance

- ❖ If any equipment is provided by the Operator, the Operator must clean and disinfect shared equipment at the end of a practice or competition session using a product from the [list of disinfectants meeting EPA criteria for use against the novel coronavirus](#).



- ❖ Indoor facilities must provide access to handwashing facilities on site, including soap and running water, and allow sufficient break time for staff and participants to wash hands frequently; alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol may be used as an alternative.
- ❖ All facilities must supply employees with adequate cleaning products (e.g., sanitizer, disinfecting wipes).
- ❖ Operators must post visible signage throughout the site to remind employees and visitors of hygiene and safety protocols.
- ❖ Allow water fountains to be used as refill stations only, provided that social distancing can be maintained. Customers and workers should bring their own water bottles or purchase from the business.
- ❖ Any concessions or food service must follow the [Safety Standards for Restaurants](#).

Activity Organizer Guidance

- ❖ Organizers must ensure that any shared personal equipment is disinfected before use by each individual using a product from the [list of disinfectants meeting EPA criteria for use against the novel coronavirus](#). Personal equipment includes all gear that is worn by players (e.g., gloves, helmets, masks, skates, footwear, pads, etc.).
- ❖ Organizers should minimize sharing of other equipment, and clean and disinfect all shared equipment at the end of a practice session using a product from the [list of disinfectants meeting EPA criteria for use against the novel coronavirus](#).
- ❖ No shared food or drink may be provided during any activities for participants or spectators except by concessions and food service providers following the [Safety Standards for Restaurants](#).
- ❖ Water bubblers, fountains, and bottle filling stations can open. Managers are encouraged to install signs near any drinking equipment advising users to use for bottle refill only and not to touch the tap with their mouth or the mouth of their water bottle.
- ❖ Participants and spectators should only drink from their own containers. Organizers must provide individual, dedicated water bottles for children if they do not have their own.
- ❖ Participants and coaches must achieve proper hand hygiene at the beginning and end of all activities, either through handwashing with soap and water or by using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❖ Organizers should encourage athletes to arrive dressed for practice and to leave immediately after practice. Locker room and changing room use should be minimized.

C. STAFFING AND OPERATIONS

Facility Operator Guidance

- ❖ Operators must ensure that hand sanitizer or hand washing stations are available in indoor facilities for use by players, staff, and coaches.



- ❖ All high touch surface areas must be cleaned at the end of each activity.
- ❖ Operators should work with Activity Organizers to stagger activity start and end times or to put in place other protocols to limit contact between all visitors as much as possible. This also allows for more time to clean the facility between users. Operators must have daily schedules prepared in advance.
- ❖ Operators of indoor facilities shall establish traffic patterns (one-way flow, designated exits and entrances where possible), and limit capacity to maintain social distancing for the facility, including any restrooms and locker rooms. If social distancing cannot be maintained, spectators should be asked to wait outside.
- ❖ Operators should log all persons (name and phone number or name and email address) who come in contact with facility to facilitate contact tracing, including staff, participants, and spectators.
- ❖ Operators must post notice to employees, workers, and participants of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in government guidelines.
- ❖ Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the workplace employer for purposes of cleaning / disinfecting and contact tracing. If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer shall notify the Local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LBOH as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and / or at the request of the LBOH.
- ❖ Employers should take measures to ensure employees comply with all State-issued rules concerning out of state travel for any employer-paid or employer-reimbursed travel.

Activity Organizer Guidance

- ❖ To participate or attend, organizers should ensure that participants, volunteers, coaches, and spectators must show no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 for 14 days. Current list of symptoms is available from the [CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/covid/symptoms/).
- ❖ If any individual develops symptoms of COVID-19 during the activity, they should promptly inform organizers and must be removed from the activity and instructed to return home.
- ❖ Organizers of activities are responsible for following all guidelines and creating a safe environment for participants.
- ❖ Organizers must educate all participants and spectators on the applicable protocols for the relevant activity, protocols for entering/leaving the facility, and any other hygiene requirements.
- ❖ Organizers in coordination with Facility Operators must ensure that hand sanitizer is available to all players.



D. CLEANING AND DISINFECTING

Facility Operator Guidance

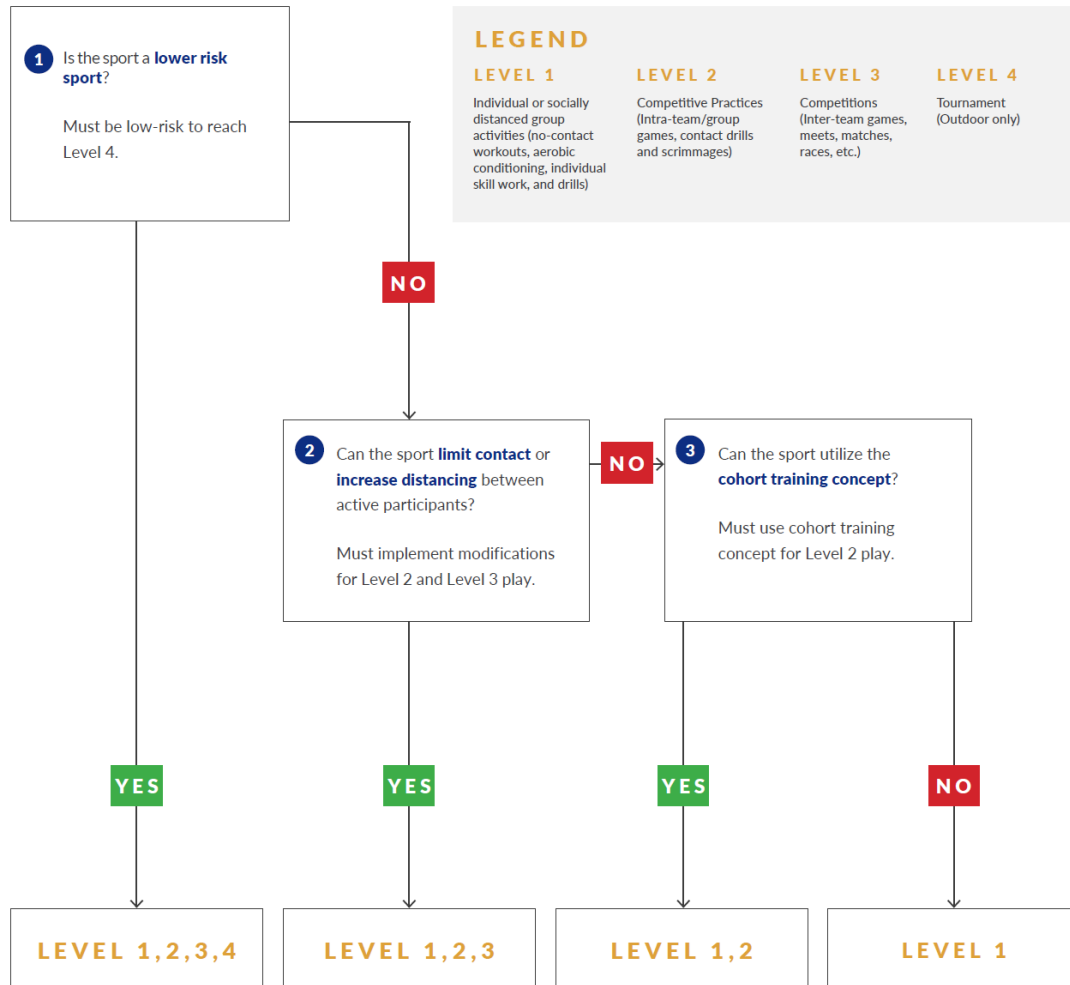
- ❖ Restrooms facilities shall be cleaned and disinfected in accordance with Centers for Disease Control guidance and best practices linked here: [*EEA COVID-19 Outdoor Recreation Facility Restroom Cleaning Best Practices*](#)
- ❖ Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning.
- ❖ Conduct frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, handrails, bathrooms).
- ❖ In event of a positive case, shut down site for a deep cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace in accordance with current guidance.

Activity Organizer Guidance

- ❖ Organizers should disinfect any shared equipment before and after every clinic, practice, and game.
- ❖ Organizers should assess the cleanliness and disinfection protocols being employed at the facility they are using for athletic activity. If cleanliness is low, or any other concerns arise, organizer should immediately stop any ongoing athletic activity until such time as operator can show that conditions have been brought up to the standards outlined in this guidance.
- ❖ Organizers should understand the cleaning and disinfection protocols employed at the facility they are using and should raise any issues to the operator or Local Board of Health.



APPENDIX – SPORT ACTIVITY LEVEL ASSESSMENT



1

Lower risk sports include:

- Sport activities are **done individually**
- Sport activities are **conducted with 6 ft social distancing** and **no physical contact**

Examples: Fishing, hunting, motor sports, no-contact exercise classes, pickleball, tennis, swimming, disc golf, golf, surfing, horseback riding, gymnastics, cross country, individual biking, individual sailing, individual crew

2

Required modifications:

- Where players typically start together (e.g., start / finish of running events) modifications must include staggered starts or equivalent to avoid close contact
- Deliberate close contact must be eliminated including: body checking, tackling, blocking, racing/riding in packs or similar activities engaged deliberately
- Game situations that result in intermittent close face-to-face contact (where players are within 6 feet of one another) must be modified or eliminated, including: restarts, face-offs, throw-ins, scrums for the ball/puck, or similar activities. These activities may be allowed if face masks are used during contact (e.g., face-off could take place with face masks worn by each player involved).

3

The cohort concept is described as:

- Cohorts can be no larger than **ten (10)** participants. Cohorts must workout together in all practices. Participants cannot be a member of multiple cohorts.
- Cohorts must be **separated by 14 feet**. Class sizes should be capped by the number of available training areas, based on the size of the facility. In no event should there be more than 25 people on a playing surface.
- A cohort can compete against other cohort, if each cohort performs separately from other cohorts (e.g., pair figure skating, or small group synchronized swimming).



HOCKOMOCK

L E A G U E

August 21, 2020

******PRESS RELEASE******

We have all patiently, yet eagerly, awaited the Massachusetts DESE guidelines pertaining to Interscholastic Athletics for the 2020-21 school year. Late Tuesday we received those guidelines and the MIAA Board of Directors have voted to approve those guidelines. Very importantly, there is still a lot of work to be accomplished before a Fall 2020 sports season is permitted. The earliest date to begin any practices is Friday, September 18.

Each school district was tasked over the last several weeks to develop a detailed DESE-approved plan for the return-to-learning this school year. Rightly so, each district's School Committee and Superintendent's office is now focused on implementing that approved learning plan. Some districts have opted for a full-remote start while others have approved a hybrid model. Both come with their own obstacles that each district is aiming to overcome. Both plans will impact how Fall sports may look for that district.

We do know under these DESE-approved guidelines that the high-risk sports, Football and Competitive Cheer, have moved to a "Fall II" season with a start date of February 22, 2021. The low-risk sports, Cross Country and Golf and the moderate-risk sports, Field Hockey, Soccer, and Girls' volleyball must undergo modifications, some significantly changing the look of the game, to adhere to the EEA/DESE guidelines. Those MIAA-sport committees are working on that goal now. Girls' volleyball, as an indoor sport, has some very significant hurdles for high school programs to overcome.

Please be patient as our twelve districts individually tackle the DESE parameters and logistics of implementing their return-to-learning models. We hope to know more in the coming week or two what a Fall Sports season will look like. Each district's School Committee is charged with approving the specific sports programs that will be offered at each of our schools. Once those details are gathered by our League ADs and Principals, schedules can be drawn up and approved for publication.

Please know we all want to see as many student-athletes return to the competitive playing field this Fall. The health and safety of our students is paramount in any and all of these decisions which are forthcoming.

Sincerely,

The Hockomock League ADs

Mark Houle, Attleboro

Danny Erickson, Canton

Joe Cusack, Foxboro

Tom Angelo, Franklin

Gary Brown, King Philip

Mike Redding, Mansfield

Peter Boucher, Milford

Kurt Kummer, North Attleboro

Bill Matthews, Oliver Ames

Nick Schlierf, Sharon

Ryan Donahue, Stoughton

Mark Ottavianelli, Taunton