



2020-21 Officials Considerations for Returning to Officiating

In support of the Guidance for State Associations to Consider in Re-opening High School Athletics and Other Activities document released last month by the NFHS, the NFHS Officials Advisory Committee offers these considerations for state associations for the 2020-21 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment. These considerations are meant to cover officials in all sports while keeping in mind that protocols are different in each sport and adjustments may need to be made.

Return to Competition

1. Uniform

a. LEGAL UNIFORM

- i. Long sleeves are permissible.
- ii. Long pants are permissible.
- iii. Undergarments are permissible but must be of a similar length for the individual and a solid like color for team.

b. OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

- i. Air horns are permissible.
- ii. Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
 1. Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside.
 - a. Fox 40 Mini
 - b. Fox 40 Unisex Electronic - 3 tone
 - c. Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
 - d. Windsor - (3 tone) grey
 2. Check the market for other choices.
- iii. Cloth face coverings are permissible.
- iv. Gloves are permissible.

Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring remains with the coaching staff and school personnel.

2. Rules Considerations

a. PREGAME CONFERENCE

- i. Limit attendees to one official, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team; or speak with the team representatives in a separate meeting.
 1. Use of headsets with other crew members (if applicable).
 2. Script the conference to ensure consistency with both teams.
- ii. Coin Toss – Head Referee and 2 captains.
- iii. Move the location of the pregame conference to the center of the court/field. All individuals maintain a social distance of 3 to 6 feet.
- iv. Suspend handshakes prior to and following the pregame conference.
- v. Maintain social distancing while performing all pregame responsibilities.
- vi. Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 3 to 6 feet.
- vii. Maintain social distancing of 3 to 6 feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the area designated for substituting.

b. OFFICIALS TABLE

- i. Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended distance of 3 to 6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential and may need to find an alternative location. Space available at the table is a variable in determining the number allowed at the officials table.

3. Pregame and Postgame Ceremony

- a. Suspend pregame protocol of shaking during introductions.
- b. Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.

4. Personal Responsibilities

a. TRAINING

- i. Attend online meetings to review the rules for the coming year.
- ii. Start physical training using online video or complete skills alone. If you have been diagnosed with COVID-19, you should be cleared by your medical provider prior to initiating an exercise program.

b. COMPETITION

- i. If you do not feel well and COVID-19 symptoms are present, notify the contracted school, your crew members, your assigner and stay at home.
 1. Take temperature in the morning and then again prior to leaving home/work for a contest.
 - a. Notify site administrator immediately if temperature is elevated above 100.3 or a level recommended by your local or state health department.
- ii. “Vulnerable individuals” are defined by CDC as people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Officials fitting this description may wish to seek medical advice prior to returning to officiating.
- iii. Communicate with school athletic administrator about school/corporation contest expectations.
- iv. Upon arrival at site and throughout the contest, wash and sanitize your hands frequently.
- v. Travel – considerations should be given to travel policies.
- vi. Do not share uniforms, towels, apparel and equipment.
- vii. Maintain social distancing of 3 to 6 feet while in the locker room and/or on the court/field.
- viii. Bring your own beverages.