2020-21 Cross Country Modifications

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020-21 season. The modifications 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.

Rule Modifications
  o 8-1-3a: Widening the course to at least 6 feet at its narrowest point when possible

Best Practices
  General:
    • Finish:
      o Consider using finish corrals and FAT timing for larger meets as easier to distance at finish.
      o With no FAT timing system consider alternative means of finish place and time to address congestion at finish line.
      o Consider using image-based equipment at finish to assist with picking place to avoid congestion.
    • Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment.
    • Pre and Post Game Ceremony: Establish cross country specific social distancing meet protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the match.
    • Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained at all times. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
    • Cross country meets should consider using staggered, wave or interval starts.

Coaches:
  • Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
  • Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to 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.
Students:
- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted.
- Bring your own water bottle.

Officials:
- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently
- Don't share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines:
  - Pre and Post Meet conferences,
  - Clerking at the start line,
  - Tabulations and posting of results.
- Consider using electronic whistle.
- Do not shake hands and follow pre and post-game ceremony guidelines established by state associations.
- Officials personnel may wear cloth face coverings at all times.

Parents:
(A family’s role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):
- Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home),
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with Covid-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your state.