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Covid-19 School Sports and Extra Curricular Activity Guidance

This guidance is prepared by the Rock County Public Health Department to assist local schools in their preparations and planning for potential sports and extra-curricular activities as related to Covid-19 conditions in our community. Sports and extra-curricular activities are viewed as essential to the physical and mental well-being of students, however that benefit must be weighed against the potential for serious Covid-19 health implications to students, staff, family members, and the community in general. This guidance may change as we learn more about the new corona virus and how it relates to our local epidemiological data. It is likely that this guidance is not inclusive of all activities in all schools and therefore schools should consider this as a general framework guidance that can be adjusted to safely fit their individual needs. We encourage utilizing some of the suggested state and national guidance documents listed below along with additional guidance that will likely be forthcoming to prepare your own Covid-19 plan for sports and extra-curricular activities.

The main risk associated with Covid-19 transmission is through exposure to respiratory droplets. These recommendations do not cover every aspect of how transmission can be prevented. These are some of the main mechanisms that prevent transmission and should be considered in all aspects of school activities:

Physical Distancing (Are students and staff far enough apart to prevent spread?)

- **Face Coverings** (reduces respiratory droplet transmission, but not a replacement for physical distancing)
- **Stay at Home if sick and exhibiting any symptoms**

Exposure Time (The longer the time together, the greater the chance of virus transmission)

Cleaning and Disinfection Processes

- **Clean equipment and commonly touched surfaces frequently**
 - **Wash hands frequently**
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Collaborating with Community Partners to ensure a healthy, thriving Rock County...

The Rock County Public Health Department has implemented a **Reopening Phased Plan** (link is below) that is protective of individuals and the community and is based on gating criteria that are data driven. As we move through these recovery phases, we must keep in mind that we may need to take precautionary actions within each phase to prevent moving backwards. Individual schools and activities within the schools need to build flexibility into their plans moving forward and prepare for potential resurgence of the virus, positive cases or outbreaks. Rock County will move forward in the phases, however each school activity may need to assess which phase is appropriate for their current situation.

General Guidelines

The following guidelines are recommended by the Rock County Public Health Department and are based on state and national guidance's, local health department information, and through consultation with Rock County School Districts. It is recommended that each sport have a written Covid-19 plan to follow that fits their sport and their local system. The plan you prepare should be distributed to all participants and parents in each sport prior to the start of each season.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- During Phase 1, it is highly recommended that students and coaches maintain 6 feet of separation to minimize potential for virus spreading.
- During Phase 2, it is recommended that 6 feet of physical distancing be continued.
- During Phase 3, maintaining physical distancing is recommended when possible.
- Stay at home if sick, exhibiting any symptoms, or exposed to a positive Covid-19 case.
- Physical distancing may not be possible when in competition, however it can still be maintained on benches, sidelines, and during many training activities.
- Attendance at events, when they resume, may be limited.
 - Participants and event staff are essential if events occur.
 - Fans and vendors are non-essential (consider in Phase 3 only).
 - Gathering capacity limits should be followed to maintain physical distancing.

FACE COVERINGS

Cloth-type face coverings provide very limited protection to the person wearing the covering but do provide protection for those near the person wearing the mask and should be considered as 'acceptable practice' and highly recommended where possible. Face masks should not be viewed as a replacement for recommended physical distancing.

- Face coverings are not recommended for high aerobic activities or swimming.
- If a student/parent prefers to wear a mask it should be allowed (may want to consider a waiver).
- Face coverings are recommended for coaches, event staff, fans (if present), and participants when not conducting high aerobic activities.
 - Coaches/Officials may need alternatives to whistles (air horn?).
- Evaluate potential use of cooling neck gaiters that could double as face coverings when needed.

- Consider the potential health effects of heat when wearing face coverings.

CLEANING AND SANITIZING

- All facilities and common surfaces need to be cleaned before and after use.
- Frequent hand washing by participants, coaches and officials.
 - Use soap and water and wash for 20 seconds.
 - Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Equipment should not be shared at all in Phase 1.
- Equipment should be sanitized between every individual use before sharing.
- Do not share water bottles or use common hydration stations (water cows, troughs, fountains).
- Wash sports equipment and clothing after each practice or game.

TRAVEL IMPLICATIONS

- In order to maintain physical distancing, larger transport vehicles (bus vs. van) or multiple transport vehicles may be necessary.
 - Face covering recommended during transportation.
- Avoid or reschedule long road trips. Minimizing time in a confined space is very important.
- Clean and sanitize transport vehicles between uses.

SYMPTOM SCREENING

- Before any daily practices, contests or activities it is recommended that all participants, including coaches, officials and event staff be screened for Covid-19 symptoms and that anyone exhibiting symptoms be prevented from participating and directed to see their primary health care provider. This screening should be documented in writing.
- Competitive atmosphere could lead to players, parents, or coaches ‘wanting to play through’ some minor symptoms that could potentially be Covid-related. All participants need to understand that a single positive could not only have major health implications but could result in steps to exclude other players or an entire team or even an entire school from future participation.

VULNERABLE PERSONS

- **Players at higher risk of developing serious disease.** Parents, staff and coaches should assess level of risk based on individual players or other participants who may be at higher risk for severe illness, such as individuals who may have asthma, diabetes, or other health problems.
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>
- If school sports physicals are conducted, physicians should be monitoring athletes for high-risk conditions as they related to Covid-19.

GATHERINGS

- Phase 1: 10 people or less with physical distancing (25% capacity guideline).
- Phase 2: 25 people or less with physical distancing (50% capacity guideline).
 - Emphasis needs to be on physical distancing, capacity is only a guide.
- Phase 3: To be determined.
- It is recommended that participants be in small groups or pods and remain in the same small group of individuals from day to day to minimize the number exposed to a positive individual.
- Consider elimination or modifications to ‘team meals’ or other special gatherings.

LOCKER ROOMS

- Use of locker rooms is not recommended in Phase 1 or Phase 2.
 - It is recommended that participants shower and wash clothing immediately at home.
 - Showering at home prior to pool use advised if locker rooms are closed.

PRE-GAME/POST-GAME SPORTSMANSHIP AND CELEBRATIONS

- No shaking hands or fist bumping (consider other ways to recognize sportsmanship).
- Avoid unnecessary contact in practice and games.

PLAN FOR POSITIVE CASES

- Consider these possibilities during the athletic seasons and school year:
 - Potential school closures or reverting to virtual schools due to an outbreak
 - Team isolation or quarantines
 - Cancellation of games or seasons
 - What precautions are your opponents taking?
 - What do you do if there is a positive on an opposing team?

Specific Sport Examples

The following are some examples of specific sports and potential general recommendations related to Covid-19. Please consider these examples in the context that virus conditions are ever changing and individual sports have many aspects from training to practices to competition that may not fall cleanly into these recommendations. See the *Additional Resources* section below for more specific recommendations. Also keep in mind that further guidance will likely be developed as we progress in this pandemic.

BASEBALL/SOFTBALL (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual skill training, no sharing of equipment.
- Phase 3 – Competition with special precautions.

BASKETBALL (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual skills, 1 ball per person (no sharing).
- Phase 3 – Consider competition with frequent cleaning of ball, hand washing and physical distancing where possible.

CHEERLEADING/DANCE (low to high risk)

- Phase 1 – Not recommended.
- Phase 2 – With physical distancing (consider more than 6 feet physical distancing).
 - No partner activities/stunts/pyramids.
- Phase 3 – With physical distancing.
 - No partner activities/stunts/pyramids.

FOOTBALL (high risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual training, small groups with physical distancing, no sharing of equipment (balls, sleds, dummy's, etc.) unless equipment disinfected after each use.
- Phase 3 – To be determined.

GOLF (low risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Practice and competition possible with modifications.
 - No contact flag stick and cup modifications.
- Phase 3 – Competition possible.

GYMNASTICS (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – “No contact” practicing or events.
- Phase 3 – Competition allowed with modifications.

HOCKEY (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual skills/practices with physical distancing, small groups.
- Phase 3 – Consider competition with modifications.

SINGING/BAND/PERFORMING ARTS (low to high risk)

- Phase 1 – Not recommended.
- Phase 2 – With physical distancing.
 - Singing and wind instruments not recommended at 6 feet distancing.
- Phase 3 – With special precautions.

SOCCER (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual skills, 1 ball per person (no sharing).
- Phase 3 – Consider competition with frequent cleaning/switching of ball and physical distancing where possible.

SWIMMING/DIVING (low risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Competition considered, with no contact with others.
 - Per CDC, Covid-19 is not known to spread in pool water.
 - Clean pool deck daily.
 - Check water chemistry before use.
 - Shower at home before swimming (assuming closed locker rooms).
- Phase 3 – Competition considered.

TENNIS (moderate to low risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual skill training only, maintaining physical distancing.
- Phase 3 – Competition with precautions.
 - Frequent ball replacement.

TRACK/CROSS COUNTRY (low to moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual running events okay with 6 feet spacing.
 - No sharing of equipment.
 - No relays, no pole vault, no high jump.
- Phase 3 – Clean shared equipment between uses.

VOLLEYBALL (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – Individual skills, without sharing equipment.
- Phase 3 – Competition with special precautions and frequent cleaning of volleyball and hand washing.
 - Eliminate team gathering/celebrations with contact after points.

WEIGHT TRAINING (moderate risk)

- Phase 1 – Not recommended.
- Phase 2 & 3 – Cleaning before and after all individual equipment use.
 - No use of equipment requiring spotters in Phase 2.
 - Observe physical distancing and capacity limits.
 - Use small work out groups of the same individuals.
 - Require reservations or time slots for each group.
 - Cover any tears or holes in padded equipment to prevent transmission.

WRESTLING (high risk)

- Phase 1 – Team activity/gathering not recommended.
- Phase 2 – “No contact” training/practicing.
- Phase 3 – To be determined.

Additional Resources

ROCK COUNTY REOPENING PHASED PLAN

- https://www.co.rock.wi.us/images/web_documents/departments/health/rock_county_reopening_phased_plan.pdf

ADDITIONAL COVID-19 SPORTS GUIDANCE

- **The Aspen Institute Project Play “Return to Play Covid-19 Risk Assessment Tool”.**
https://assets.aspeninstitute.org/content/uploads/2020/05/Return-to-Play_4-v2.pdf?_ga=2.247386049.43847055.1591627444-1901534800.1591627444
- **National Federation of State High Associations.**
https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812287/2020-nfhs-guidance-for-opening-up-high-school-athletics-and-activities-nfhs-smac-may-15_2020-final.pdf
- **CDC Considerations for Youth Sports.**
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
- **Michigan High School Athletic Association Guidance.**
<https://www.mhsaa.com/Portals/0/Documents/AD%20Forms/Guidance%205-29-20.pdf>
- **USA Volleyball.**
<https://www.teamusa.org/usa-volleyball/features/-/media/A455B89BE0094BDC96FEC89BFD324D6.ashx>
- **Resocialization of Collegiate Sports: Action Plan Considerations.**
<http://www.ncaa.org/sport-science-institute/resocialization-collegiate-sport-action-plan-considerations>
- **USA Soccer Recommendations.**
<https://ussoccer.box.com/shared/static/4ogc1muyk4lw93yswgajwi1qc5psrpse.pdf>

SPORTS EQUIPMENT CLEANING

- https://www.sportengine.com/article/tips-cleaning-and-disinfecting-sports-gear?utm_source=Email&utm_medium=Inside+Youth+Sports&utm_campaign=2020.06.04&utm_content=Families

EXAMPLES: COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH MESSAGING SIGNS/POSTERS

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention-H.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/posters.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs-11x17-en.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/images/face-covering-checklist.jpg>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/CDC-COVID-19-PSA-Everyday-Prevention-Actions.mp3>