

## HGRA'S REVISED POLICY ON MASKS AND FACE COVERINGS

In response to the declining COVID case rates locally, the continuing heat spell and the relaxing of Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) guidance on masks in outdoor settings, HGRA has revised its Mask and Face Coverings policy as follows for athletes ages 14 and under:

- *Masks or other face coverings are optional for soccer and baseball players when they are actively competing on the field (or at bat) during games, and for track athletes when they are actively engaged in running, throwing or jumping events at track practices or meets. Masks or other face coverings are also optional for referees and umpires while officiating at games.*
- *Masks or other face coverings are optional for soccer or baseball players during practices when they are actively engaged in scrimmages or drills where social distancing is not possible.*
- *Masks or other face coverings are required for athletes at all other times, including those times when the athlete is on the bench or sideline, or otherwise not actively engaged in their game, practice or meet.*
- *Masks or other face coverings are required for coaches and team volunteers at all times during games, practices and meets.*
- *In accordance with MDH guidelines, athletes competing without masks or face coverings should be tested once a week for COVID. We strongly encourage the families of these athletes to secure such testing if you believe that doing so is appropriate.*

This new policy is consistent with what the City and other comparable programs in our area are doing, and HGRA athletes will now be able to compete more comfortably with minimal risk of infection due to limited close contact with others. However, requiring masks on the sidelines for our younger athletes who still are unable to be vaccinated will continue to protect them during those times when they are in more extensive contact with others and are not able to practice effective social distancing. This also frees our coaches to focus on coaching their players rather than spending significant time enforcing social distancing protocols.

This change is effective as of June 12, 2021.

Any questions or comments regarding this change should be directed to [hgrapresident@mail.com](mailto:hgrapresident@mail.com).

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