



2020-2021 Baseball Rules Modifications



The following rules modifications by the NFHS have been approved by MSHSAA for implementation for the 2020-2021 school year. 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.

Return to Competition

1. Equipment/Facility:

- Be mindful of dugout capacity. Extend the dugouts to allow for more distancing. Extension must be out of the field of play. Social distance while in the dugout as much as possible. Consider keeping equipment outside the dugout to allow for more space inside the dugout.
- Sharing equipment is prevalent in baseball. Helmets, catcher's gear, bats, balls. Equipment need to be cleaned frequently. In an effort to minimize the sharing of equipment, offensive helmets need not to match.
- Per guidance from the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to a helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during contests. Their use during practices increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or to teammates.
- Cloth facial coverings are recommended but not required. Pitchers cannot wear white cloth facial coverings.
- Personnel in the dugout should be essential to the game.

2. Competition:

- The pregame conference should be limited to the head coach and the umpires. Each shall wear a face covering and maintain six feet after exchanging lineups.
- Substitutions: The verbal exchange should occur 6 feet from the coach to scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes.
- Coaches who wish to discuss a rule or a ruling on the field must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from the umpire.
- Base coaches must stay 6 feet from a runner at all times after suspension of play.
- No gathering at the mound after put-outs.
- Players should not leave the dugout to congratulate scoring.
- No spitting or chewing of seeds by player, coach or umpire.

3. Athlete Considerations:

- Wear face coverings when not actively engaged in physical exertion (in the dugout)
- Avoid sharing of equipment

4. Coach Considerations:

- Wear face coverings at all times
- Practice social distancing when possible
- Develop plan for on-field conferences to maintain social distancing

5. General Guidance for Officials

- **Monitoring**
 - 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.*
- **Rules Consideration**
 - Officials Table/Press Box
 - Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and public address announcer while maintaining current recommended social distancing guidelines. 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.
- **Pregame and Postgame Ceremonies**
 - Suspend pregame and postgame handshakes with players, coaches and other persons to minimize contact
- **Personal Responsibilities**
 - Take temperature in the morning and then again prior to leaving home/work for a contest; if temperature is elevated above 100.3 or a level recommended by your local or state health department notify contracted school immediately.
 - 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.
 - “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.
 - Communicate with school athletic administrator about school/corporation contest expectations.
 - Upon arrival at site and throughout the contest, wash and sanitize your hands frequently.
 - Travel – considerations should be given to travel policies.
 - Do not share uniforms, towels, apparel and equipment.
 - Maintain social distancing of 3 to 6 feet while in the locker room and/or on the court/field.
 - Consider supplying your own hydration and snacks to the venue.