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TO: MHSAA Community
FROM: Mark Uyl, Executive Director
DATE: May 29, 2020
SUBJECT: Updates on Summer Activity & Re-Opening Guidance

We have two updates regarding summer activity that can be put into categories of “when” and “how.” The “when” question continues to be fluid based on direction from state government leadership, but we do have an updated timeline to share. The “how” activity can be re-opened is outlined in the guidance document. Even though this guidance cannot be implemented until after June 12 at the earliest under the current “Safer-at-Home” order, we wanted schools to have this information so that local discussion, communication and planning can occur now for future activity.

The “WHEN” Update:

The state’s current “Safer-at-Home” order runs through Friday, June 12. There can be no use of any school facilities (indoor and outdoor) and there can be no organized onsite athletic activity, including conditioning or competition, until the current stay-at-home order expires or is lifted by Governor Whitmer. When the stay-at-home order expires or is lifted (or other government action takes place in the meantime), the return-to-activity recommendations may be implemented locally by school district leadership, provided the district declares its facilities open to students and staff and the 2019-20 school year has ended for that district (based on its last originally scheduled school day). Again, under the current order, activity cannot take place until expiration of that order on June 12.

At the present time, the only activity allowed continues to be individual, outdoor recreational activity including walking, hiking, running, etc. (as announced in Executive Order 2020-96). If this type of individual conditioning activity takes place with more than one person present, it must be in groups of fewer than 10 people with social distancing followed, and the activity cannot involve school coaches or be school-sponsored, nor can it occur at any school facility (indoor or outdoor) until at least June 12. For example, a coach could remotely provide a conditioning workout plan to a student to complete on his or her own, but a coach cannot be onsite directing or supervising any activity until the current order expires on June 12. Voluntary, virtual (not in-person or onsite) communication and instruction from coaches to any number of students is permitted under MHSAA rules in all sports during the summer. Many coaches are conducting virtual team meetings to teach team strategies, offensive & defensive concepts and sharing video; this type of communication can continue with unlimited numbers of students through the summer.

As state government continues to announce changes, dates and plans for re-opening parts of our state, we will continue to communicate with you as these actions impact school sports. Our plan is to provide further updates to member schools on important dates and timelines during these fluid, changing times.

The “HOW” Update:

The following “MHSAA/NFHS Guidance for Re-Opening School Sports” document is based on direction provided by the MHSAA and National Federation of State High School Associations’ (NFHS) Sports Medicine Advisory Committees, in addition to reopening plans provided by the Michigan and federal governments and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Concepts from the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee were also consulted. The MHSAA/NFHS plan recommends a three-step process to returning to full athletic participation, and each step outlines actions to be taken in five major areas: pre-workout/contest screening of athletes and coaches for sickness, limitations on the number of participants who may be involved in a gathering, proper cleaning of facilities, the use of equipment during activity, and best practices for keeping participants safely hydrated. The plan also places sports into categories based on risk for transmitting the virus (low/moderate/high), with adjusted return-to-activity steps based on that level of risk. This is an initial roadmap for schools to use when we are able to return to activity. Know that schools will be allowed to move from step to step based on the size of groups allowed locally by government and health department officials. Step 1 begins with a limit of 10 people, and schools will possibly move to the next steps as those limits are increased. Again, we remind you that this guidance cannot be implemented until after June 12 at the earliest under the current “Safer-at-Home” order.

The one thing we have learned over the past 10 weeks is that change is constant, and we will continue to communicate with you as things continue to develop over the coming weeks.

Thank you.



May 29, 2020

MHSAA/NFHS GUIDANCE FOR RE-OPENING SCHOOL SPORTS

Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA)
National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
MHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)
NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC)

This guidance document is the collaborative effort of the MHSAA and the NFHS, along with the Sports Medicine Advisory committees of both associations. The MHSAA and NFHS believe it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of high school students across the nation to return to physical activity and athletic competition. The medical professionals and school administrators that serve on both Sports Medicine Advisory Committees recognize that it is likely that ALL students will not be able to return to – and sustain – athletic activity at the same time in all schools, regions and states. There will also likely be variation in what sports and activities are allowed to be played and held. While typically there would be reservations regarding such inequities, the MHSAA and the NFHS endorse the idea of returning students to school-based sports in any and all situations where it can be done safely.

The steps of “re-opening” outlined in this document are based upon the MI Safe Start, A Plan to Re-Engage Michigan’s Economy which was released May 7, 2020 and the White House document released in April 2020. It must be understood that this is a **HOW** document, not a **WHEN** document. **WHEN** a school may begin Step 1, and then move to Steps 2 and 3, will be based on action from state government and health department officials. Schools should be ready to implement the **HOW** guidance which is provided here. This guidance document is a resource for member schools and school districts may adopt stronger or more restrictive local policies. The steps in this document will continue to be in accordance with guidelines published by the Governor’s Office and are subject to change. Additional guidance and direction in the weeks ahead should also be anticipated.

This guidance has been divided into four major sections:

Points of Emphasis
Administrative Areas to Address
Summer Conditioning and Practice Sessions
Contests, Games and Competitions

Points of Emphasis:

1. Decreasing potential exposure to respiratory droplets is the guiding principle behind social distancing and the use of face coverings. It is also the basis of the stratification of risk by sport presented later in this document. The use of cloth face coverings is meant to decrease the spread of respiratory droplets. As state and local COVID-19 prevalence decreases, the need for strict social distancing and the use of face coverings will lessen. Guidance should continue to be sought from state and local health departments and some direction could also be provided on a sport-by-sport basis.
 - a. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is additionally “advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.” (“Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission”)

- b. Recognizing the benefits and potential drawbacks of the use of cloth face coverings during conditioning and physical activity, this guidance recommends the following:
 - State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed.
 - Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend “medical grade” masks for athletic activity.
 - Any student who prefers to wear a cloth face covering during a contest should be allowed to do so.
 - In the absence of guidelines to the contrary, the recommendation is that cloth face coverings be worn by students during Steps 1 and 2 as currently outlined. The exceptions are swimming, distance running or other high intensity aerobic activity. Cloth face coverings may continue to be used during Step 3 when not engaging in vigorous activity, such as sitting on the bench during contests, in the locker room and in the athletic training room.
 - Plastic shields covering the entire face (or attached to a helmet) shall not be allowed during contests. Their use during practices increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or teammates.
 - Coaches, officials and other contest personnel may wear cloth face coverings at all times during Steps 1 through 3. (Artificial devices such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)
2. Testing regimens, specific guidelines regarding mass gatherings, and response to a student or team member testing positive for COVID-19 (including contact tracing) are all currently under review, and guidance will come from CDC and state and local health departments. Limited testing availability, lack of resources for contact tracing, and expanding knowledge of the characteristics of COVID-19 transmission could all result in significant changes to these recommendations. The MHSAA will continue to disseminate this information as it becomes available.
3. Due to the near certainty of recurrent outbreaks this coming fall and winter in some locales, MHSAA member schools will prepare for periodic school closures and the possibility of some teams having to isolate while in-season. School districts will develop policies regarding practice and/or competition during temporary school closures, the cancellation of contests during the regular season, and parameters for the cancellation or premature ending to post-season events/competitions. MHSAA tournament progression policies will remain for MHSAA tournaments.
4. With the uncertainty of which step(s) will be attained at the beginning of a sports season or maintained during a season, scheduling contests that require less travel when possible should be considered. Such scheduling will reduce time spent in buses or vans. It will also potentially decrease the need for rescheduling contests as “opening up” may occur regionally. If opponents at the time of a contest are subject to different restrictions, re-scheduling that contest for a later date may be problematic.
5. “Vulnerable individuals” are defined by CDC as people age 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.
6. Social distancing and other preventive measures such as a face covering will be the “new normal” as workouts, practices and contests begin.

Administrative Areas to Address:

1. ***Pre-participation Physical Evaluation***

Due to concerns regarding access to primary care providers during the late spring and early summer, the MHSAA Representative Council and MHSAA SMAC provided guidance and the option to vary to a one-year extension of a previous year's physical with the utilization of an MHSAA Sports Health Questionnaire.

2. ***Mandatory Education***

The COVID-19 pandemic has currently caused the cancellation of many "in person" educational events. It is acceptable to have online training courses for AED/CPR and First Aid for the 2020-21 academic year.

3. ***Equipment Reconditioning***

The National Athletic Equipment Re-Conditioners Association (NAERA) has indicated that significant equipment reconditioning capacity is currently operational. If schools have not sent out equipment for reconditioning, they can do so immediately. If schools currently have equipment being reconditioned, contact should be made with the reconditioning company regarding delivery.

4. ***Athletic Training Services***

Athletic trainers in high schools are positioned to play a vital role as sports return following this pandemic. As health-care professionals, they can take lead roles in developing and implementing infection control policy throughout the school. The MHSAA and its SMAC continues to promote the importance of athletic trainers in high schools and their role in injury evaluation, treatment and risk minimization as well as being a vital component of any return-to-school and athletics plan.

5. ***Return to Physical Activity***

Current pre-season conditioning and acclimatization models assume that athletes have deconditioned over the summer months. The current pandemic may result in students being deconditioned for four to five months. The MHSAA and NFHS are currently involved with a number of other organizations in developing consensus guidelines for fall sports practices.

6. ***Hygienic Considerations***

Illness reporting

- Create notification process for all event athletes, coaches, event staff, media, spectators and vendors if the organizers/medical personnel learn of suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 at the event.

Considerations for Officials, Coaches, Other Personnel

- Vulnerable individuals should not participate in any practices, conditioning activities, contests or events during Steps 1 and 2.
- Masks may be worn, social distancing enforced and "hygiene basics" adhered to in all situations.

Hygiene Basics

- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer, especially after touching frequently used items or surfaces.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue, or the inside of your elbow.
- Do not spit at all – air, ground, equipment, hands, sunflower seeds, etc.
- Disinfect frequently used items and surfaces as much as possible.
- Strongly consider the use of face coverings while in public, and particularly when using mass transit.

People Who Feel Sick Should Stay Home

- Do not go to work or school.
- Contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.

Other Considerations

- Availability of hand sanitizer at contests and practices.
- Participants, coaches and officials should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Balls and equipment should be wiped down frequently.
- There should be no pre-game and post-game handshakes/high-fives/fist bumps.
- Officials and sideline volunteers should be given option to wear face coverings (may use artificial devices in place of whistle).

Summer Conditioning and Practice Sessions:

Steps are in accordance with guidelines published by “MI SAFE START – a Plan to Re-Engage Michigan’s Economy” and “Opening Up America Again”, The White House. https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_SAFE_START_PLAN_689875_7.pdf <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

The MI Safe Start Plan evaluates where the state and each of its regions are across six phases of the COVID-19 pandemic:

1. **Uncontrolled growth**: Increasing number of cases every day, likely to overwhelm the health system. Only critical infrastructure remains open.
2. **Persistent spread**: Continue to see high case levels with concern about health system capacity. Only critical infrastructure remains open, with lower-risk recreational activities allowed.
3. **Flattening**: Epidemic is no longer increasing and health system capacity is sufficient for current needs. Specified lower-risk businesses can reopen given adherence to strict safety measures.
4. **Improving**: Epidemic clearly decreasing and health system capacity is strong with robust testing and contact tracing. Additional businesses can reopen given adherence to strict safety measures.
5. **Containing**: Epidemic levels are extremely low and outbreaks can be quickly contained. Health system capacity is strong with robust testing and tracing. Most businesses can reopen given adherence to strict safety measures.
6. **Post-pandemic**: Community spread is not expected to return (e.g., because of a vaccine) and the economy is fully opened.

STEP 1: CONDUCT OF CONDITIONING AND PRACTICE SESSIONS

Pre-workout Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening includes a temperature check.
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19 (see pg. 10 for sample Monitoring Form). Do not share a writing instrument to complete the form.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
- Vulnerable individuals should not oversee or participate in any workouts during Step 1.

Limitations on Gatherings:

- No gathering of more than 10 people (coaches and players, inside or outside) at a time.
- Locker rooms should not be utilized during this step. Students should report to workouts in proper gear and immediately return home to shower at end of the workout.
- Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same small group of students always working out together. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- There must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times. If this is not possible indoors, then the maximum number of individuals in the room must be decreased until proper social distancing can occur.

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use of equipment.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. which have holes with exposed foam should be covered.
- Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, shoes, or sports specific equipment) between students.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing) individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned after each use and prior to the next workout.
- Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual.
- Resistance training should be emphasized through the use of body weight, sub-maximal lifts and resistance bands.
- Free weight exercises that require a spotter cannot be conducted while honoring social distancing norms. Safety measures in every form must be strictly enforced in the weight room.

Examples (including, but not limited to):

- A basketball player can shoot with a ball(s), but a team should not practice/pass a single ball among the team where multiple players touch the same ball.
- A football player should not participate in team drills with a single ball that will be handed off or passed to other teammates. Contact with other players is not allowed, and there should be no sharing of tackling dummies/donuts/sleds.
- A volleyball player may use a single ball that others do not touch or hit in any manner.
- Softball and baseball players should not share gloves, bats, or throw a single ball that will be tossed among the team. A single player may hit in cages, throw batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). Prior to another athlete using the same balls, they should be collected and cleaned individually.
- Wrestlers may drill without touching a teammate.
- Cheerleaders may not practice/perform partner stunts or building. Chants and jumps without contact are permissible.
- Tennis players may do individual drills, wall volleys and serves.
- Runners should maintain the recommended 6 feet of distancing between individuals

Hydration/Food:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized.
- Food should not be shared.

STEP 2 - CONDUCT OF CONDITIONING AND PRACTICE SESSIONS:

Pre-Workout/Contest Screening:

- All coaches and students should be screened for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Screening includes a temperature check.
- Responses to screening questions for each person should be recorded and stored so that there is a record of everyone present in case a student develops COVID-19 (see pg. 10 for sample Monitoring Form). Do not share a writing instrument to complete the form.
- Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
- Vulnerable individuals should not oversee or participate in any workouts during Step 2.

Limitations on Gatherings:

- Gathering sizes may be regulated as determined by Government and Health Departments officials.
- If locker rooms or meeting rooms are used, there must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times.
- Workouts should be conducted in “pods” of students with the same small group of students always working out together. Smaller pods can be utilized for weight training. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- There must be a minimum distance of 6 feet between each individual at all times. If this is not possible indoors, then the maximum number of individuals in the room must be decreased until proper social distancing can occur. Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines and benches during practices. Tape or paint could be used as a guide for students and coaches.

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual’s use of equipment.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. which have holes with exposed foam should be covered.
- Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- Lower risk sports practices and competitions may resume (see *Contests, Games and Competition - Potential Infection Risk by Sport*).
- Modified practices may begin for Moderate risk sports.
- There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing or shoes between students.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- All athletic equipment, including balls, should be cleaned intermittently during practices and contests.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.

- Athletic equipment such as bats, batting helmets and other gear should be cleaned between each use.
- Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Spotters should stand at each end of the bar.

Hydration/Food:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized.
- Food should not be shared.

STEP 3: CONDUCT OF CONDITIONING AND PRACTICE SESSIONS:

Pre-Workout/Contest Screening:

- Any person who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional.
- A record should be kept of all individuals present.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing and minimize exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.

Limitations on Gatherings:

- Gathering sizes may be regulated as determined by government and health department officials.
- When not directly participating in practices or contests, care should be taken to maintain a minimum distance of 3 to 6 feet between each individual. Tape or paint could be used as a guide for students and coaches.

Facilities Cleaning:

- Adequate cleaning schedules should be created and implemented for all athletic facilities to mitigate any communicable diseases.
- Prior to an individual or groups of individuals entering a facility, hard surfaces within that facility should be wiped down and sanitized (chairs, furniture in meeting rooms, locker rooms, weight room equipment, bathrooms, athletic training room tables, etc.).
- Individuals should wash their hands for a minimum of 20 seconds with warm water and soap before touching any surfaces or participating in workouts.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful and available to individuals as they transfer from place to place.
- Weight equipment should be wiped down thoroughly before and after an individual's use.
- Appropriate clothing/shoes should be worn at all times in the weight room to minimize sweat from transmitting onto equipment/surfaces.
- Any equipment such as weight benches, athletic pads, etc. which have holes with exposed foam should be covered.
- Students must be encouraged to shower and wash their workout clothing immediately upon returning to home.

Physical Activity and Athletic Equipment:

- Moderate risk sports practices and competitions may begin.
- There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing or shoes between students.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.

- Athletic equipment such as bats, batting helmets and catchers gear should be cleaned between each use. Other equipment, such as hockey helmets/pads, wrestling ear guards, football helmets/other pads, lacrosse helmets/pads/gloves/eyewear should be worn by only one individual and not shared.
- Maximum lifts should be limited and power cages should be used for squats and bench presses. Spotters should stand at each end of the bar.
- Modified practices may begin for Higher risk sports (Continue pre-practice screening as in Steps 1 and 2. Shower at home immediately after practices and contests).
- Higher risk competition may resume after reassessing the epidemiology data, experiences in other states and government or health department directives.

Hydration/Food:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) may be utilized but must be cleaned after every practice/contest.
- Food should not be shared.

Contests, Games and Competition:

1. **Potential Infection Risk by Sport** (modified from United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee – Sports Medicine recommendations which was examined through the probability of respiratory droplet transmission/exposure).

Higher Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.

- Examples: *Wrestling, football, boys lacrosse, girls competitive cheer.*

Moderate Risk: Sports that involve close, sustained contact, but with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants or intermittent close contact or group sports or sports that use equipment that can't be cleaned between participants.

- Examples: *Basketball, volleyball*, baseball*, softball*, soccer, gymnastics* (if equipment can't be sufficiently cleaned between competitors), bowling*, ice hockey, tennis*, swimming relays, pole vault*, high jump*, long jump*, girls lacrosse, 7 on 7 football.*

(* = Could potentially be considered "lower risk" with appropriate cleaning of equipment and use of masks by participants.)

Lower Risk: Sports that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between uses by competitors.

- Examples: *Individual running events, throwing events (shot put, discus), individual swimming, golf, weightlifting, alpine skiing, sideline cheer (no contact - chants and jumps only), cross country running (with staggered starts).*

2. **Transportation to Events**

Schools must consider social distancing requirements when scheduling contests and events for the fall. Social distancing (as required by state or local health department) will need to be maintained on buses/vans. Thus, multiple buses/vans and/or parental/guardian transportation will likely be needed.

3. **Social distancing during Contests/Events/Activities**

Sidelines/benches: Appropriate social distancing will need to be maintained on sidelines/bench during contests and events. Tape or paint could be used as a guide for students and coaches.

Individuals allowed at events: Individuals could be grouped into tiers from essential to non-essential and decide which tiers will be allowed at an event:

1. Tier 1 (Essential): Athletes, coaches, officials, event staff, medical staff, security
2. Tier 2 (Preferred): Media
3. Tier 3 (Non-essential): Spectators, vendors

Only Tier 1 and 2 personnel will be allowed to attend events until state/local health departments lift restrictions on mass gatherings.

References:

“MI SAFE START – A Plan to Re-Engage Michigan’s Economy”, Governor Gretchen Whitmer, https://www.michigan.gov/documents/whitmer/MI_SAFE_START_PLAN_689875_7.pdf - 5/07/20 document.

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