



MEMORANDUM

TO: All Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors, and Coaches

FROM: Denise Ainsworth, Assistant Director

RE: **URGENT! Best Practices for Sporting Events**

DATE: **August 21, 2020**

Last night was the end of a long spring and summer journey to get back to high school sports. It was so exciting to see our student-athletes, bands, cheerleaders and fans once again doing what they enjoy and communities coming together! Now that we have started the fall season, our next goal is to continue sports throughout the season. While opening night was exciting, it also made evident we have many areas that need improvement. If we want to continue to play the games we love and provide opportunities for kids, everyone must do their part to follow the state health order and the AHSAA Best Practices for Return to Play. **Administrators are responsible for their student-athletes, fans and facilities** as required by AHSAA bylaws, Rule VI. Administration. Section 2. Principals' Accountability:

The Principal of a school shall be held ultimately responsible in all matters that concern interscholastic athletics at his/her school.

Note: The Principal is responsible for the conduct of spectators and fans at all athletic contest, keeping current Emergency Action Plans (EAP) for all sport facilities and all required documents for eligible athletes and certified coaches on file in the principal's office.

This responsibility requires following ADPH guidelines and doing everything possible to mitigate the Covid-19 virus.

The following are areas that immediate improvement must occur:

Wearing of Masks

Any time physical distancing cannot be maintained by students, coaches, spectators, etc. wearing a facial covering is required as set out in the state health order. Players, coaches, officials, and spectators shall wear a mask or other facial covering that covers his or her nostrils and mouth at all times when within 6 feet of a person from another household except when a player or official is directly participating in the athletic activity. (Based on the July 29, 2020 Current Order of the State Health Office)

· **Social Distancing of Students, and Fans**

In accordance with the Current State Health Order, paragraph 11.b. and c., spectators are allowed to attend athletic events, but attendance at events will be significantly reduced as *“spectators shall not congregate within 6 feet of a person from another household except to the extent necessary.”* Furthermore, *“spectators shall wear a mask or other facial covering that covers his or her nostrils and mouth at all times while within six feet of a person from another household.”* (Based on the July 29, 2020 Current Order of the State Health Officer). Venues used to host athletic activities are not subject to a specific capacity limit, but capacity will necessarily be limited by the requirement to maintain proper distancing between spectators from different households.

· **Social Distancing of Players and Coaches on the Sideline**

When possible, team bench areas should accommodate proper physical distancing. When not feasible, other mitigation methods, such as facial coverings, may be implemented. According to the state health order, *“players coaches, officials, and spectators shall not congregate within 6 feet of a person from another household except to the extent necessary and only to the extent necessary—for players, coaches, and officials to directly participate in the athletic activity.”* (Based on the July 29, 2020 Current Order of the State Health Officer).

Only school personnel, certified coaches, athletic trainers, and student-athletes should be present on the sidelines during games. Attendance of non-essential personnel is not recommended until further notice.

The health and safety of our student-athletes, opponents and communities must be a priority. These are indeed unusual times and require unusual measures, as well as unusual leadership in order for sport and the benefits of sport to continue.

Thank you in advance for your **immediate** cooperation.

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