



## 2020-21 Cross Country Requirements and General & Rule Recommendations

With the support from the NFHS Track and Field Rules Committee and the Ohio High School Athletic Association, the considerations 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.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and state to help prevent the spread of virus. Ohio schools are required to follow state COVID-19 general guidance for “Youth, Collegiate, Amateur and Professional Sports”

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>

Even when taking all precautions, there will still be risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone should stay vigilant about the health of members of their teams. Lastly, the situation with Covid-19 is rapidly changing. These considerations may quickly become outdated. Please keep up with the latest from the CDC and other health officials in your area.

*Visit the COVID-19 General Guidance Document for further requirements and recommendations that apply to all sports, including cross country. Please know that some of the requirements and recommendations in this sport-specific document duplicate state guidance.*

*A **requirement** must be adhered to and followed. A **recommendation** is a consideration to the sport and allows for optional guidelines. Recommendations are not required but are permitted.*

### REQUIREMENTS

#### Requirements for Coaches:

- Coaches must wear face masks at all times, including arriving and departing the facility and during active play.
- Cross country meets should use staggered, wave, or interval starts to allow for 6 foot social distancing between athletes.

#### Requirements for Facility Hosts

- Inform the local health district when events are scheduled and establish a plan to handle those persons who fail a symptom assessment or temperature check or exhibit signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Predetermine areas for all participants, coaches, contest officials and game-day personnel to shelter in the event there is lightning and/or thunder.
- Limit sideline personnel to participants, coaches, medical staff and game-day staff.
- If possible, provide designated space (locker room, classroom, etc.) for officials’ pre-meet, and post-meet activities. If the designated space cannot accommodate six-foot social distancing of all officials, then a separate space should be provided where officials can observe six-foot social distancing and be removed from spectator/team interaction.

- Clearly review prior to the contest mandates, best practices and school/host facility policies with visiting team administrators and/or coaches and officials as they relate to, but are not limited to, parking; entrances and exits; medical care; spectators; ticketing; locker rooms/showers; athletic training rooms and restrooms; water; towels; equipment, and shelters in the event there is inclement weather.

## **2020 NFHS RULE RECOMMENDATIONS**

### ***NFHS Rule 8-1-3a***

Consider widening the course to at least 6 feet at its narrowest point. This is strongly recommended.

### ***Finish Line***

- Consider using finish corrals and FAT timing for larger meets as easier to distance at finish.
- With no FAT timing system consider alternative means of finish place and time to address congestion at finish line.
- Consider using image-based equipment at finish to assist with picking place to avoid congestion.

### ***Pre and Post Event Ceremony***

- Establish cross country specific social distancing meet protocols including the elimination of handshakes before and after the meet.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General Recommendations:**

- Consider multiple points of entry to help ensure there is six-foot social distancing.
- Participants and coaches from visiting teams and officials should arrive at the contest facility dressed in partial or full uniforms or coaching/officiating gear and should plan to leave the contest facility in partial or full uniforms or coaching/officiating gear (e.g. not dress or change in visiting locker rooms).
- When conducting temperature checks, take into account the potential environmental factors causing an elevated temperature. Should the temperature be elevated, it is appropriate to isolate the individual and recheck the temperature after 5-to-10 minutes of sitting in a cool environment.
- Predetermine areas for all participants, coaches, contest officials and game-day personnel to shelter in the event there is lightning and/or thunder.
- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained at all times. No hugging, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and exercise equipment.

### **Recommendations for Coaches:**

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Coaches should adhere to all face mask requirements that the host site’s county, state, and locale have set forth.

**Recommendations for Students:**

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Athletes MUST tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted.
- Bring your own water bottle.
- Bench water may be provided by the facility host, but the visiting team/participants should supply their own coolers unless agreed upon by the facility host. If used, water coolers shall be sanitized frequently prior to use during the contest, and disposable one-time-use cups shall be utilized.

**Recommendations for Officials:**

- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently
- Don't share equipment.
- Follow 6' social distancing guidelines:
  - Pre and Post Meet conferences,
  - Clerking at the start line,
  - Tabulations and posting of results.
- Consider using electronic whistle.
- Contest officials should not share a whistle or any other equipment used for officiating purposes.
- Do not shake hands and follow pre and post-game ceremony guidelines established by state associations.
- Officials should adhere to all face mask requirements that the host site's county, locale, and state public health orders have set forth.

**Recommendations for Parents:**

(A family's role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others):

- Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is doubt stay home).
- Conduct daily health assessments using the CDC COVID-19 self-checker found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Educate yourself on the risks and benefits of athletic participation in the time of COVID and ensure you and your athlete are aware of the guidance surrounding athletic events.

**COVID-19 Resources:**

- Ohio Department of Health coronavirus website ([coronavirus.ohio.gov](https://coronavirus.ohio.gov))
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://cdc.gov/coronavirus))