2020-21 Football Recommendations and Modifications

Below are the NFHS Rule modifications for the 2020 football season as well as some OHSAA procedural changes. These are followed by some Recommendations. The last item of the document is a link to some recommendations from the Coaches Association (OHSFCA).

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. 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 These considerations may quickly become outdated.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.

Return to Competition

1. **NFHS FOOTBALL RULES**
   - **Team Box Rule (Rule 1-2-3g)**
     - The team box will be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines (for players only) in order for more social-distancing space for the teams.
     - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times while in the team box.
     - Do not share uniforms, towels and other apparel and equipment.
   - **BALL (Rule 1-3-2)**
     - The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
     - The ball holders should maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times during the contest.
     - The officials will have limited contact with the ball. The players of the offensive team will handle the ball and take it with them to the huddle. The Umpire will place a bean bag at the spot where the ball will be snapped.
   - **FACE MASKS [Rules 1-5-1a, 1-5-3c(4)]**
     - Cloth face coverings are permissible.
     - Plastic shields covering the entire face (unless integrated into the face mask and attached to the helmet and clear without the presence of any tint) shall not be allowed during the contest.
   - **TOOTH AND MOUTH PROTECTORS [Rule 1-5-1d(5)]**
     - **Still being determined at this time on how to best handle the tooth and mouth protector during the contest. The NFHS SMAC will update the membership as soon as guidance is developed for all sports that require a tooth and mouth protector.**
   - **GLOVES (Rule 1-5-2b)**
▪ Gloves are permissible but still must comply with Rule 1-5-2b by meeting either the NOCSAE Standard or the SFIA Specification.

○ STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTIONS (Rule 1-7)
  ▪ Each state association may adopt other playing/administrative rules for football for the 2020 season that would decrease exposure to respiratory droplets and COVID-19.

○ CHARGED TIME-OUTS AND AUTHORIZED CONFERENCES (Rules 2-6-2, 3-5-3, 3-5-8)
  ▪ A single charged time-out may be extended to a maximum of two minutes in length.
  ▪ The authorized conference for the charged time-out should take place at the bottom of the numbers. Players will social distance during timeouts.
  ▪ Each game official and player should have their own beverage container brought out to them on the field.

○ PREGAME CONFERENCE, COIN TOSS AND OVERTIME PROCEDURES
  ▪ For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, umpire and one designated representative from each team.
  ▪ Coin toss will take place in the center of the field with designated individuals maintaining social distancing of 6 feet.
  ▪ No handshakes prior to and following the coin toss.
  ▪ Maintain social distancing of 6 feet while performing the pregame meeting between officials and coaches.
  ▪ For the overtime procedure, please use the same procedure as used at the start of the contest for the coin toss.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

○ INTERMISSION BETWEEN PERIODS AND AFTER SCORING (Rule 3-5-7I)
  ▪ The intermission may be extended to a maximum of two minutes between the first and second and the third and fourth periods and following a try, successful field goal or safety, and prior to the succeeding free kick.

○ HALFTIME
  ▪ It is recommended that the halftime be shortened to the NFHS minimum of 10 minutes and that teams social distance outside of the locker rooms.

3. PRE AND POST GAME CONSIDERATIONS
  ▪ Suspend pregame protocol of shaking hands during introductions.
  ▪ Suspend postgame protocol of shaking hands.

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR FOOTBALL
  ▪ Before, during and after the contest, players, coaches, game officials, team personnel and game administration officials should wash and sanitize their hands as often as possible.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet at all times while on the sidelines and on the field of play when possible.
- Everyone should have their own beverage container that is not shared.
- Cloth face coverings are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials. **THIS IS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED!**
- Gloves are permissible for all coaches and team staff and for all game administration officials.
- Try and limit the number of non-essential personnel who are on the field level throughout the contest.
- If available, dressing facilities for game officials and teams should be large enough for them to use social-distancing protocols and should be properly cleaned and sanitized prior to their arrival
- OHSFCA Recommendations:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PvS61cu_GTS1y2urqQRtkSiV9tyMf1OP4YECRdNzis/edit