



2020-21 Soccer Requirements and General & Rule Recommendations

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Soccer Rules Committee offers this document for state associations to consider whether any possible rules could be altered for the 2020-21 season. 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 These considerations may quickly become outdated.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 soccer. 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.
- Limit day-of roster to 22 dressed players.

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’ pregame, halftime and post-game 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

Pregame Conference (NFHS Rule 5-2-2d)

- Limit attendees to head referee or center referee, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.
- Move the location of the pregame conference to center of the field. All individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
- Suspend the pregame world cup introduction line and send players to their field positions with bench personnel lined up on the touch line (6 feet apart) for introductions.
- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Conference.

Ball Holders (NFHS Rule 6-1)

- Encourage social distancing of 6 feet
- No more than 4 ball holders; each ball holder to cover 1/4 of the field

Team Benches (NFHS Rule 1-5-1)

- Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet.
- Benches on opposite sides of the field to allow greater social distancing
- Players on the bench and coaches should be masked

Substitution Procedures (NFHS Rule 3-4)

- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the center line.

Officials Table (NFHS Rule 6-2; 6-3)

- Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommend distance of 6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential personnel and will need to find an alternative location.

Soccer Rules Interpretations

- ***Rule 4-1 EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES***
 - Cloth face coverings are permissible.
 - Gloves are permissible.
- ***Rule 4-2 LEGAL UNIFORM***
 - Long sleeves are permissible. (4-1-1)
 - Long pants are permissible. (4-1-1)
 - Under garments are permissible but must be of a similar length for the individual and a solid like color for team. (4-1-1d)
- ***Rule 5-3 OFFICIALS UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT***
 - By state association adoption, long-sleeved shirt/jackets are permissible. (5-1-3)
 - Electronic whistles are permissible (supplies are limited).
 - Choose a whistle whose tone will carry outside.
 - Fox 40 Mini -
 - Fox 40 Unisex Electronic - 3 tone
 - Ergo-Guard - (3 tone) - orange
 - Windsor - (3 tone) grey

- Check the market for other choices
- Cloth face coverings are permissible.
- Gloves are permissible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

General Recommendations

- 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).
- Consideration should be considered to limiting contests against only teams in your local area or, if out-of-state, against teams located in counties that are contiguous to Ohio.
- Coaches should not share clipboards, whiteboards, dry erase boards, or any other equipment used for coaching purposes.
- Contest officials should not share whistles or any other equipment used for officiating purposes.
- When conducting temperature checks, take into account the potential for 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.

Recommendations for Facility Hosts

- If applicable, stagger the entry of all participants, coaches, officials, student game-day auxiliary groups and spectators to adhere to six-foot social distancing.
- Consider multiple points of entry to help ensure there is six-foot social distancing.
- Use contact-less payments where possible.
- 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 prior to use and frequently during the contest and disposable one-time-use cups shall be utilized.
- Limit press box space to essential personnel only and demonstrate social distancing as much as possible.
- Appoint an individual(s) who is responsible for assisting the host facility manager(s) in logging all incidents and action plans when mandates have not been followed and/or incidents occur; logging recommendations for improving the host facilities' game-day strategies, and creating reports on said items that were logged.

Additional Resources

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

- OHSAA Covid-19 Correspondence:
 - <https://www.ohsaa.org/Home/OHSAA-COVID-19-Correspondence>
- Ohio Gov. Sector Specific:
 - <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/sector-specific-operating-requirements/sector-specific-operating-requirements>

- Ohio Department of Education guidance on reopening schools:
 - <http://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Reset-and-Restart>
- Ohio Department of Health:
 - <https://odh.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/odh/home>