

2020-21 BOYS SWIMMING & DIVING COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS & RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

As of November 12, 2020

With support of the NFHS, the KSHSAA Sports Medicine Committee and the KSHSAA Executive Board, we offer this document as guidance to the member schools of the KSHSAA to consider for the 2020-21 Boys Swimming & Diving Season. The considerations outlined are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging physical distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate and reasonable protective equipment.

Note: This is not an exhaustive list and there might be additional steps in each school, city, and county 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 These considerations may quickly become outdated.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 state.

Venues/facilities vary greatly. Apply considerations/risk mitigation strategies accordingly.

(Differences in lane-width, deck space, spectator seating, diving facilities, locker/restrooms, HVAC system, etc.)

Competition Scheduling Considerations:

- Keep participant numbers low and manageable according to the facility being used.
- Preferable to schedule smaller 2-4 team meets; avoid larger invitationals or reduce participant numbers.
- Schedule teams in the same geographic area; reduce travel distance and exposure.
- Consider only scheduling single-day competitions.
- Allow for competitions to take longer due to safety/sanitation protocols.
- Consider a reduced regular season schedule; not required to schedule 10 meets.
- Consider one competition per week; schedule meets throughout season, not several in one week.
- All personnel, participants, and spectators should have space to follow social distancing guidelines.

Additional Information and Examples:

- Dual/smaller meets allow for more participants per team such as varsity and sub-varsity.

- League/conference meets could be accomplished by hosting 2-4 schools at the same venue/site on different days.

Athlete Considerations:

- Daily screening and temperature checks prior to practices and competitions.
- Notify coaches immediately when not feeling well; stay home.

- Face Coverings/Masks: Swimmers and divers are not required to wear face coverings while swimming and diving. Wear face coverings up until entering the water (stepping onto the blocks or diving board) and after exiting the water.
- Water Bottles: All athletes should have their own water bottles clearly labeled; **do not share**.
- Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) should be available for athletes' frequent use.
- Training Equipment: Athletes should use their own personal equipment, or school equipment should be assigned to athletes. Clearly label equipment and **do not share**. Sanitize after each use.
- Spitting/Nose Clearing/Coughing: No spitting/nose clearing and must cover coughs.
- Social distance in and out of the water.
- No sharing of towels, goggles, caps, clothing, or other personal belongings.

Coach Considerations:

- Daily screening and temperature checks prior to practices and competitions.
- Stay home when not feeling well.
- Keep accurate records of who attends practices/competitions – days and times.
- Face Coverings/Masks: Wear at all times and social distance.
- Use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) frequently.
- Sanitize personal equipment (watch, clip board, whistle, etc.) after usage.
- If using a whistle, do so underneath a face-covering (mask or shield).
- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents. Athlete safety is paramount.
- Communicate expectations regarding minimizing the spread of the virus and the habits that will contribute.
 - Reinforce the need for athletes and team personnel to maintain social distance, wear face coverings/masks, and not attend if exposed to someone with COVID or if ill themselves.
 - Remind athletes to wash hands and/or use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) frequently.
- Follow the CDC guidelines for cleaning and disinfecting the practice/competition venue.
- Coaches should socially distance when interacting with a judge or any other event worker. Conversations can occur at a distance.
- Learn more by taking the free online NFHS Learn course: [COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators](#).

Practice Considerations:

- Keep team members in small pod/cohort practice groups and lane assignments.
 - Do not move swimmers from lane to lane; keep same swimmers in same lanes.
 - Provide multiple practices (a.m. and p.m. or two p.m.) to split team up (varsity/sub-varsity or sprint/distance).
- Numbers of swimmers per lane: Keep minimal to allow for social distancing.
 - [Example Lane Configurations from USA Swimming](#) – Beginning on page 4 are illustrations.
 - [Blank Pool Lane Layouts from USA Swimming](#) – May use for social distance planning purposes.
- Provide verbal instruction and workout explanation to athletes socially distanced on deck prior to practice. Have practice sets/workouts displayed visually.
- During practice, provide any verbal instruction from mid-pool allowing swimmers to be socially distanced in the water at both ends and mid-pool rather than having all the swimmers in lanes on top of one another at one end of the pool receiving instruction/coaching.
- If multiple coaches are on deck, space around the pool for coaching/instruction (one at each end, one at mid-pool, etc.).
- Deck dryland training: Mark athlete locations on the deck for social distancing.
- Mark spots behind the blocks and the diving boards to socially distance athletes in line.

- Assign any training equipment (boards, buoys, fins, snorkels, dryland mats, etc.) so the same athlete uses the same equipment daily. Number or label the equipment by name. Sanitize equipment frequently. Do not allow athletes to share equipment.
- Have assigned hooks (Command Strip hooks work well) for athletes' face masks or labeled zip-lock bags to keep masks in to keep them dry. Wet masks are less effective.
- Clearly identify traffic flow directions within the practice facility (entrance, locker/restrooms/deck).
- Diving:** Clean/sanitize bars and fulcrum between divers. If multiple schools are practicing with one coach, have the divers from the same school dive after one another, then clean/sanitize bars and fulcrum before divers from another school use the board.
 - Ask divers to use their feet to adjust the fulcrum setting.

Transportation Considerations:

- Consider doing temperature checks before traveling to destinations.
- Follow the guidelines and protocols of the school district.
- Face coverings should be worn by all individuals. Mitigating the spread is important with the longer time together on a bus or in a van.
- Reduce traveling groups to essential personnel only (competitors, coaches, medical).
- Consider providing multiple buses/vans to reduce numbers together in the same vehicle.

Locker Room Considerations:

- Stagger/schedule times for students to use locker rooms allowing social distancing.
- Consider locker room assignments for practices and competitions.
- Wear face coverings/masks when in locker rooms.
- Students should bring own towels to shower.
- Do not leave any personal items in lockers unless they are secured/locked.
- The school should establish sanitizing protocols for the locker rooms.
- Teams may want to consider coming dressed to practices/meets to avoid time in locker rooms.

Competition Considerations:

- Consider temperature checks or ask schools to self-screen/temp check prior to boarding the bus.
- Provide and label team crash areas that are socially distanced from other teams.
- Assign warm-up times and lanes for teams to allow for social distancing within lanes and at the boards.
 - Multiple warm-up times may be needed depending on number of teams.
 - Consider having an open lane between teams since multiple swimmers will be in lanes simultaneously.
- Consider amount of deck space behind starting blocks.
 - For relay events: One heat at a time behind blocks; consider an open lane between relay teams.
 - For individual events: If socially distancing allows, no more than two heats at a time with a competitor at the block and one located at least six feet behind in each lane.
- Consider having all swimmers in a heat remain in the water until the last one finishes. Then have that heat swim down a 25 to the other end to exit the pool.
- Consider assigning lanes for each team for the meet; keep them the same as warm-ups.
 - In dual meets, teams can be on opposite sides of the pool with one team competing in lanes 1-3 and the other team in lanes 4-6.
 - In a six team meet, each team could compete in an assigned lane.
- During the 500 Freestyle, only one lap counter per lane. Sanitize lap counters after each heat. Consider providing disposable gloves to wear.
- Behind starting blocks and diving boards consider having hooks (Command Strip hooks work well) for athletes' face masks or zip-lock bags to keep masks in to keep them dry. Wet masks are less effective.

- Clearly identify traffic flow directions within the competition facility (entrance, locker/restrooms/deck).
- Diving:** For diving order, have all divers from the same school dive consecutively; this will minimize the number of times the bars and fulcrum are sanitized because it could just be done each round between the different schools' divers rather than between every single diver.
- Once again, mark spots behind the blocks and the diving boards to socially distance athletes in line.
- Award Ceremonies – Consider suspending; awards may be given to coaches wrapped in packaging.

Admission/Ticketing Considerations:

- Consider cashless admission utilizing digital tickets.
- Follow CDC guidelines. (masks, gloves, washing hands, spray guards/clear plastic barrier)
- Designate spots on floor to assure social distancing in lines.

Spectator Considerations:

- Follow county guidelines for indoor group size, social distancing, and face coverings.
- Consider designating/labeling school areas for seating to keep each school's community separate.
- Communicate to participating schools prior to the meet the spectator guidelines and admission numbers allowed.
- Consider having no spectators if need those seating areas for teams to ensure social distancing.
- Livestream competitions for spectator viewing.

Concessions/Hospitality Considerations:

- Follow CDC guidelines. (masks, gloves, washing hands, spray guards/clear plastic barrier)
- Consider only bottle drinks and pre-packaged items.
- Designate spots on floor to assure social distancing in concessions lines.
- Hospitality: Consider only bottle drinks, pre-packaged items, box meals.

Official/Worker Considerations:

- Perform self-screening and temperature checks prior to arrival at competition site/venue.
- Face Coverings/Masks: Wear at all times and social distance when possible.
- Use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) frequently.
- Sanitize personal equipment (watch, clip board, whistle, starting system microphone, etc.) after usage.
- If using a whistle, consider doing so underneath a face-covering (mask or shield); electronic whistles are permissible.
- Consider wearing disposable gloves.
- With electronic timing systems, consider one timer per lane.
- May have timers in a designated area other than behind the starting blocks for the start of a race where they can see and hear the starting system. Then the timers could go to their lanes for the end of the race. This may be a way to reduce congestion and allow for social distancing behind the starting blocks.

KSHSAA Virtual Competition Considerations

Any virtual regular season competitions must be approved by the KSHSAA and will count towards the maximum meet limit of ten for participants. Schools must request permission for approval from the KSHSAA in writing providing meet details including meet name/host, date/s, events, participating schools, and meet locations/sites. Requests can be emailed to rgarman@kshsaa.org.

Verification of the following items must be met:

- Each location/venue hosting must meet all requirements of NFHS Rule 2 – Pool, Lanes, and Equipment Specifications and NFHS Rule 9 – Diving Competition.
- Competition should be officiated by qualified personnel of sufficient number (see NFHS Rule 4-1-3) to assure fair results at each location. Coaches may not officiate.
- Fully automatic timing at all locations/venues is best, but regardless, the same timing protocol should be used at all venues involved in the virtual competition. There should be no mixing of fully automatic timing, semi-automatic timing, or manual watches.
- Only members of the school teams participating may compete. Do not include any adults, alumni, or any other non-high school team members in competition at any location/venue.
- KSHSAA state qualifying and consideration **swimming** times achieved in a virtual competition format are valid.
- Diving:** KSHSAA state qualifying standards achieved in a virtual meet format are valid if:
 - Judges from each participating school are able to view and judge competitors from each site/location live (in real time) using video technology (EX: Zoom, Facebook Live, etc.).
 - After each dive, judges' scores from each site/location are shared (via video, text group, etc.) with the diving referee who is located at the main/overall host school of the meet.
 - The main/overall host school records and tabulates the official diving scores.
 - A diving scoresheet for each participant shall be submitted electronically to the main/overall host school by the specified time prior to the actual competition indicated by the main/overall host school. This is in accordance with NFHS Rule 9-3-5.
 - Must follow and be compliant with NFHS Rule 9 – Diving Competition.
 - All dives at all sites/locations are video recorded. These recordings serve as back-up if live, video feed glitches occur during a virtual competition, and judges at other sites/locations are unable to view a participant's entire dive.
- Consider having each diving site/location announce dives for their participants.
- Diving order: For each round of diving, consider having all divers at one site/location perform consecutively, then all divers at another site/location, and so on until a round is completed.
- Consider hosting a virtual diving competition prior to or after any swimming competition or on a separate day. NFHS Rule 5 – Meet Management allows this change in event order by prior mutual consent of competing teams.



2020-21 Swimming and Diving Rule Considerations

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Swimming and Diving 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.

1. Swimming and Diving Rule Considerations

Conduct (1-3-2) - Require athletes to arrive at venue already in competitive attire or provide alternative accommodations for swimmers and divers to change that allows for 6 feet of social distancing.

Lap Counting (2-7-6, 3-4) - Only one person per lane should be permitted at turning end. Provide hand sanitizer and require lap counters to clean hands and wipe down devices.

Pre-Meet Conference (3-3-6, 4-2-1d) - Decrease number of participants or hold one conference with coaches and one meeting with captains. The referee can use P.A. system or starting system microphone to allow participants to hear but keep them properly separated.

Referee and Starter (4-2, 4-3) - Various rules require interactions between officials, coaches and athletes. Alternative methods for of communications include utilization of the P.A. system, hand signals or written communication.

Notification of Disqualification (4-2-2d, e) - Notification shall occur from a distance via use of hand signals or the P.A. system.

Meet Officials (4-8, 4-10, 4-11, 4-12, 4-13) - Officials responsible for information processing are often located together at a desk/table adjacent to the competition course or in an office/remote location. Develop alternative methods for submitting entries (3-2) and movement of non-electronic information. Require a distance of 3-6 feet between individuals seated at the desk/table.

Timers (4-9) - Timers must assemble at the finish of each race, at the edge of the pool within the 6-8 feet confines of the lane which they are timing. Timers should wear cloth facial coverings.

Submission of Entries to Referee (3-2) - Alternative forms of entry submission can be designed to reduce face-to-face interaction when submitting a proper entry, where/how/to whom entries are submitted, and a reduction or elimination of certain penalties currently attached to improper entries.

Relay Takeoff Judges and Relays (8-3) - Require all takeoff judging from the sides of the pool. Space relay swimmers apart from one another. Timers and relay takeoff judges should wear cloth facial coverings.

Diving Officials (9-6) - Alternative methods for submitting entries (3-2) and movement of non-electronic information will be required. Recommendations include a distance of 3-6 feet between individuals seated at the desk/table. Create a 3-6 feet space between judges by spacing groups of judges on opposite sides of boards or on one side of the board on a multi-level platform.

2. General Considerations

Swimming Warm-up Areas - Establish multiple sessions for warm-up periods to limit number of swimmers per lane. Restrict the number of swimmers in competition area. Limit number of swimmers per lane during warm-up and warm-down periods.

Diving Warm-up Areas - Limit number of divers during warm-up by creating multiple sessions. During competition, divers may not approach the board until their turn to compete. Hot tubs should not be permitted. Dive order sheets should be posted in multiple areas to reduce number of divers viewing at the same time.

Teams Seating and Lane Placement - Keep the teams on opposite sides of the pool and require the home team to compete in lanes 1-3 and visitors to swim in lanes 4-6.

Preparing Athletes for Competition - Athlete clerking areas should be eliminated.

NFHS VIRTUAL SWIMMING AND DIVING COMPETITION

Considerations for High School Competition



The NFHS rules which govern high school swimming and diving competition assume that such competition will be “head-to-head” with ALL participants engaging in an environment that is identical for all and thus equitable to all. “Virtual” competition cannot provide such identical conditions, however. With that understanding in mind, there are no NFHS rules provisions that would prohibit “virtual” competition when unique conditions, such as a pandemic, necessitate its use.

Following are some best practices and suggestions to guide state associations in overseeing “virtual” swimming and diving competition, should a state wish to offer such an option to its member schools.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Competition for each team/school involved should take place in a venue that meets all requirements of Rule 2 (Pool, Lanes, and Equipment Specifications) and Rule 9 (Diving Competition), with special emphasis on risk minimization.
- Competition should be officiated by qualified personnel of sufficient number (see Rule 4-1-3) to assure fair results at each location. The meet must be conducted under the supervision of a meet referee who is a duly certified NFHS or state association registered official. The official (s) may not be coaches of the team(s) involved in the meet.
- All rules regarding athlete entry, participation and conduct should apply; technical rules for competition (Rules 8 and 9) should be enforced.
- The course must be the same at each site. All teams must compete in short course yards or short course meters.

SWIMMING

- State associations must determine whether a swimmer can achieve a qualifying time during a “virtual” meet that is used for future purposes such as the state championships. Fully automatic timing should be mandated in the case of qualifying times.
- Configuration of swimmers in a race should be considered. State associations should determine whether they wish to prohibit configurations that might provide advantages, such as allowing empty lane between competitors.
- Participants in each race must be limited only to those eligible to score points. For example, non-scoring swimmers, specifically to establish pace, should not be permitted.
- State associations should consider whether “breaks” in the competitive program will be permitted in addition to the required break following the 50-yard freestyle. State association may need to stipulate the pace of the meet and determine if extended pauses between events will be permitted.
- State associations may permit competition to be conducted using manual watches or semi-automatic timed results. Fully automatic timing is the most equitable in a “virtual” situation, but some facilities may not be able to offer that environment. Be aware that it will not be possible for the meet referee or other official to perform an across-the-board place pick to serve as a “check” on the times from stop watches/buttons. Regardless, the same timing protocol should be used at all venues involved in the “virtual” competition. There should be no mixing of fully automatic timing, semi-automatic timing, or manual watches.

DIVING

- State associations should consider whether scores from the “virtual” competition be permitted for any purposes other than deciding the outcome of the immediate “virtual” competition.
- Determine whether a diver can achieve a qualifying score for subsequent competition via a “virtual” meet.

Divers will be judged by different sets of officials. State associations should consider what adjustments might be made to eliminate possible scoring inequities.