




FALL SPORTS EVENT GUIDELINES

MEMORANDUM

To: Member School Principals, Athletic Directors, Parish Athletic Directors, Superintendents, LHSAA Officials and Cross Country, Football, Swimming and Volleyball Head Coaches

From: LHSAA Executive Director/ Eddie Bonine 

Subject: Fall Sport Event Guidelines

Date: August 7, 2020

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Dear LHSAA Administrators and Coaches,

As the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA) prepares to move forward with fall sports for the 2020-2021 school year, we have included regulations and guidelines pertaining to COVID-19 that were made with support from the NFHS, the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and local health officials and was approved by the LHSAA Executive Committee on August 5, 2020. These regulations and guidelines are effective immediately for the sports of Cross Country, Football, Swimming and Volleyball.

The LHSAA acknowledges that no plan can guarantee that an individual will not contract COVID-19. The recommendations in this plan are designed to mitigate the spread of the virus. The LHSAA fully intends to support its member schools and the student-athletes who desire to compete in interscholastic athletics and will continue to assess all areas as more information becomes available. These are minimal guidelines that are subject to modification. Regulations, guidelines and circumstances can vary from one member school to the next. The goal from everyone is to provide a safe environment for student-athletes, coaches, athletic directors, athletic trainers, game officials and spectators. It is recommend to schools to work with local health officials if further guidance is desired. If you have questions, please contact your school administrators as they will have the latest information pertaining to your school and/or parish.



CROSS COUNTRY

Recommended COVID-19 guidelines to implement 2020 Cross Country events:

1. **Minimize total attendance:**
 - i. Exclude any non-LHSAA member schools' race divisions.
 - ii. Staggered start times.
 - iii. Only 2 spectators per competing athlete or depending on the site, no spectators.
2. **Wave/Interval Options During Phase 2 or 3 (scoring by time):**
 - i. Individual Time Trial (ITT) Racing: Athletes enter course one at a time separated by 15-30 second intervals (depending upon host site and timing capabilities).
 - ii. Team Time Trial Racing: Teams enter course one at a time separated by 30-60 second intervals (depending upon host site and timing capabilities).
 - iii. Up to 25 athletes on starting line (Phase 2): Options could include: 3 teams of 8 athletes, top 25 athletes by time, or each team's fastest athlete (up to 25).
Up to 50 athletes on starting line (Phase 3): Options could include: top 50 athletes by time, or each team's fastest athlete (up to 50).
3. **Create staging areas** where physical distancing is possible in order to facilitate the wave start. Only competing athletes should be in the "staging area." Staging areas open to athletes 5 minutes prior to their scheduled start time. The maximum number of athletes permitted into a staging area will be determined by its size and number of athletes permitted in each wave. In an ITT or TTT, each athlete or team should have a specific start time. If they are scheduled to enter the course at 9:10 a.m., they would be permitted inside the staging area at 9:05 a.m. Facilitators will need to move each group or individual to the starting line from the staging area in order to start the race on time.
4. **Athletes and spectators must wear masks upon arrival to the facility.**
5. **All spectators and athletes in attendance MUST wear masks when physical distancing isn't possible.**
6. **Spectators and coaches must wear masks when lining the course to cheer on runners.** This is the safest way for cheering spectators to be allowed at meets. There is always the option of not allowing any spectators. If health conditions prevent anyone from wearing a mask, they should avoid the meets in order to help prevent the spread of the virus.
7. **Athletes are asked to leave the facility and/or physical distance** (with only members of their team) post-run. The goal is to reduce crowd size and group gatherings at every point of the day. Athletes should be encouraged to leave the facility grounds within 30 minutes post-run.
8. **Carry in Carry out** rules apply for food and drinks. Athletes, coaches, spectators, and volunteers are encouraged to bring their own water bottles. Concessions to be determined by host site. Host sites should consider using food trucks that can adhere to CDC and state guideline for food service as an alternate option.



CROSS COUNTRY

9. **To reduce gathering sizes, facilities/meets can adhere to the following around the course:**
 - i. Runners enter the staging area or course only when it is their turn to approach the starting line to reduce the maximum number of runners on the course at any one time. This also prevents starting lines with large numbers of individuals in close proximity.
 - ii. If athletes are allowed 2 spectators, they will be permitted along the course at any one time. Spectators are asked not to aggregate along the course until 10 minutes prior to their athletes start time. Upon athletes finishing the race, associated spectators should immediately return to their cars.
 - iii. Each athlete can be given 30 minutes to cool down and return to their car before being asked to leave the facility.
 - iv. Athletes should warm-up and cool-down away from the cross country course to maximize physical distancing efforts and minimize group sizes.
 - v. Minimum of 30 minutes between races/divisions to allow for turnover of athletes, spectators, and volunteers. Each division can be run in waves/intervals until that division's athletes are done. 30 minutes from the last wave, the next division can start.
10. **Start line and finish line in different locations.**
11. **All individuals present on race day should avoid shaking hands, fist bumps, or high fives before, during, or after competition.**
12. **No awards ceremonies** – awards can be sent to participating schools post-meet.
13. **Separate entrance and exits** should be identified, if possible, to minimize cross traffic.
14. **Reporting requirements if an athlete or spectator falls ill** – individuals or representative of said individual (coach, parent, guardian, etc.) will make the Meet Director aware of any positive COVID19 diagnosis in the days following any event. Contact information will be part of the athlete or team registration process. Those individuals who would have been in the “staging area” with the COVID-19+ athlete will be notified of the positive test result.
15. **LIABILITY:** All schools hosting events can be protected under Act 9 (House Bill 59) provided all minimum safety standards have been implemented. The Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved minimum statewide health and safety standards in July for the reopening of K-12 schools for the 2020-21 school year. The policy shifts will help ensure the protection of students, faculty, staff and any others in school events to the fullest extent possible and practical.
16. **NFHS Covid-19 Course:** All head coaches will be required to complete the FREE course offered by the NFHS on Covid-19. This course must be completed by September 1st and the certificate of completion must be kept on file along with other LHSAA compliance forms for review. The link is here: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>.

2020 LHSAA XC Meet Guidelines

Phase 2

Phase 3

Without Mask

With Mask (optional)

Without Mask

Groups of **25 students** allowed at starting line at one time

Limited to 25 students (phase 2) or 50 students (phase 3) on starting line

Groups of **50 students** allowed at starting line at one time

Staggered start times/ interval spacing required if more than 25 students are running (30-60 sec. intervals)

Courses need to be established with wide start lines, running paths that are **at least 6 feet** wide, and a wide finish line

Interval starts required for races with more than 25 students (phase 2) or 50 students (phase 3)

Staggered start times/ interval spacing required if more than 50 students are running (30-60 sec. intervals)

Courses need to be established with wide start lines, running paths that are **at least 6 feet** wide, and a wide finish line

Masks may be discarded once physical distance has been achieved

If interval starts are used, the course can **NOT** have multiple loops

Pre and post meet protocols need to be established that follow physical distancing guidelines

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FOOTBALL

Recommended COVID-19 guidelines to implement 2020 Football events:

This document is not an exhaustive list, but it provides recommendations from the LHSAA to member schools concerning football and may be updated before and during the 2020 fall season. It is vital that administrators, athletic directors and head coaches are familiar with the information in this document and purposeful in its application. Due to possible changes in the foreseeable future all the below is subject to change.

1. SOCIAL DISTANCING

- i. Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as best/much as possible.
- ii. Spacing among players while stretching; performing drills; waiting in any line; while on the sideline; and in post-practice “huddles” so that players must remain 6 feet apart.
- iii. Players maintain proper social distancing of at least 6 feet apart when receiving coaching instruction.
- iv. Athletic Directors/Coaches should separate the different levels of football within their program into different areas so that social distancing can be maintained. This includes the use of locker rooms.
- v. Team Box on the Sideline: The LHSAA will expand the team box for the 2020 season to each of their respective 15-yard lines, providing ten additional yards on each side for players and coaching personnel to socially distance. This addition assists in supervision of players by coaches. Teams are strongly encouraged to expand toward the bleachers as well in respect to social distancing.
- vi. Roster Size: Depending on team size, it is recommended that roster limits be implemented to improve social distancing. Travel rosters for teams with large rosters are encouraged to follow this recommendation. This assists in the number of individuals in the team box on the sidelines.
- vii. Sideline Protocol for Essential Personnel: Only essential personnel are permitted on the field of play. The field of play is defined as the area within the boundary lines and the goal lines. Essential personnel are defined as players, coaches, athletic trainers, officials, and the chain crew. Note: We understand that “other” personnel are important to the administration of a football contest. Those personnel are considered to be ball boys, student managers and trainers, and statisticians. All are expected to be on the sideline, maintaining social distance of 6 feet apart, and not entering the playing field. Please remember that LHSAA Handbook Bylaw 6.27, “Contest Management” states, “A school shall be prohibited from allowing non-essential and unauthorized personnel on its sideline and/or its team bench area during any LHSAA contest at any level of play” and must be enforced by school administration. Because of the extension of sidelines



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from the 10 yard line to the 10 yard line, we ask that school administration severely restricts the use of the area from the 10 yard line to goal line on both ends for the proper game administration by officials, contest limits for players and coaches, and chain crew/ball boys. Your help is greatly needed and appreciated in this to help ensure social distancing. **PLEASE** assist in adhering to By-law 6.27.

- viii. Coin Toss/Pre-Game/Post-Game: For the coin toss, the referee, umpire, and one designated player from each team will meet with social distancing of 6 feet. No handshakes will take place prior to or following the coin toss. For overtime protocol, the aforementioned pre-game procedure will be followed. All pre-game and post-game handshake engagements will be suspended.

2. SCRIMMAGES / JAMBOREES

- i. For the 2020 football season, scrimmages, jamborees, 7-on-7 practices/tournaments, or other types of practices between teams will not take place. These inter-school competitions will be eliminated to decrease contact between opposing players, coaches, school personnel, and fans.

3. PRACTICE / GAME PROTOCOLS

- i. Sanitizing: The wide availability of hand sanitizer should be accessible to all personnel. Hand sanitizing should be used as much as possible. The NFHS and LHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) recommends using hand sanitizer when going on and off the field. Players are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer and/or disinfecting wipes.
- ii. Game Administration: The break between the 1st and 2nd quarter and the 3rd and 4th quarter should be two minutes in length in order to allow for proper player sanitizing and hydration.
- iii. Masks: Masks will be required to be worn by players, coaches, athletic trainers, chain crews, ball boys, statisticians, managers and ANY non-essential personnel when on the sideline. Only the "22" players participating on a particular play will not be required to wear a mask.
- iv. Mouthpieces: It is strongly recommended that players keep their mouthpieces in their mouths at all times. Each time they touch their mouthpieces, they should sanitize their hands.
- v. Use of Water: Players must have their own water bottles/jugs for water consumption. Water is to be consumed ONLY. Players should not rinse their mouth out for spitting purposes, rinse out their mouthpieces, or pour water on their faces or necks.
- vi. Game Balls: Balls should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest using sanitizing solutions recommended by the ball manufacturer. It is recommended that each team provide at least two reliable and knowledgeable



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ball boys for each contest. The ball boys must maintain the appropriate social distance of 6 feet throughout the contest.

- vii. Post-Game Team Meetings: Game administrators should keep all fans and others from congregating/ not engaging with players, coaches, and team personnel in post-game team activity.
- viii. Facility Sanitizing: Follow all CDC and public health guidelines regarding facility sanitization.
- ix. Other Considerations: Coaches must assist to facilitate in the reduction of handshakes, high fives and fist bumps.

4. GENERAL FOOTBALL CONSIDERATIONS

- i. Online Football Rules Clinic: The annual rules clinic has been shifted to an online platform. The clinic will open on September 21st and close on October 4th. All head coaches are required to complete the rules clinic prior to the deadline on October 4th. Coaches who fail to complete the rules clinic by the deadline shall not legally coach in a LHSAA football game this season.
- ii. NFHS Covid-19 Course: All head coaches will be required to complete the FREE course offered by the NFHS on Covid-19. This course will present material from that document along with some other helpful information and materials to assist school coaches to conduct workouts, practices and contests as safely as possible. This course must be completed by September 1st and the certificate of completion must be kept on file along with other LHSAA compliance forms for review. The link is here: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>.
- iii. Bowl Game Option: Due to the reduced regular season, teams that do not make the playoff bracket will have the option of playing a bowl game as an “extra” contest. Schools may schedule other schools that did not make the post-season. Schools have until the Regional round to participate in the contest. Schools are encouraged to play games on Saturday if their bowl game is during the Bi-District round and on Thursday and Saturday during the Regional round of the playoffs. Schools will split the gate after expenses with NO fee to the LHSAA. In order for a contest to be sanctioned the host school must complete the LHSAA Football Sanction Form (similar to the jamboree form) and then officials will be assigned. More information on the process and form will be available on the LHSAA website prior to the end of the regular season.



SWIMMING

Recommended COVID-19 guidelines to implement 2020 Swimming events:

All coaches, athletes, officials and personnel must wear a mask in accordance with the State of Louisiana mandate

1. Entries

- i. Limit entries to a manageable number.
- ii. Maximum occupancy based on pool location:
Phase 2: 25 people max; Phase 3: 50 people max.
- iii. Warm-ups – Maximum of 3 swimmers per lane (socially distanced when not swimming).

2. Timing

- i. Touch pads are recommended whenever possible with or without a backup (either push button or stop-watch).
- ii. Push button timer (includes Dolphin system and stop watches)
 - a. 1 timer per lane
 - Timer would need to sit/stand approximately 7' behind the block to allow swimmers to approach and step up onto the block.
 - Timer approaches the pool on last leg of race.
 - Pushes the button and then goes back 7'.
 - b. 2 timers per lane (***ONLY*** if the timers live in the same household)
 - Timers follow same procedure as stated above

3. Swimmers

- i. Swimmers should wear a mask until the start of the race.
- ii. Required designated queuing area to accommodate two heats
 - a. Swimmers should be spaced 6' apart and in order by lane.
 - Swimmers are **REQUIRED** to report to queuing area.
 - Furthest lane would be first.
 - b. Swimmers walk to their blocks and follow traditional starting protocol.
- iii. Exiting the pool
 - a. Option 1: Swimmers wait until last swimmer finishes.
 - Exit the pool and exit behind the blocks 6' apart.
 - Next heat walks in and restarts to process.
 - b. Option 2: Swimmers wait until the last swimmer finishes.
 - Swim a 25 choice and then exit the pool.
 - While swimmers are swimming their 25-choice, next heat approach the blocks.

4. Events

- i. Individual Events
 - a. Option 1: Traditional format (alternating girls and boys by event)
 - b. Option 2: Run all girl events followed by all the boy events



SWIMMING

- This allows for fewer swimmers in/around the facility at a given time.
 - Girls would warm-up, compete, and then depart.
 - Boys would warm-up, compete, and then depart.
 - c. Option 3: Virtual Meet
 - Teams would swim and submit their results to a “host” school. The host school will combine results from several teams and the outcome of those results will be the official meet results.
 - ii. Relays Events
 - a. Relays are not required and are at the discretion of the host team.
 - Officials will only be located on the outside lanes.
 - Must have a queuing area large enough to accommodate relay swimmers.
 - Once swimmer #1 starts, swimmer #2 should approach the block.
 - Swimmer #3 will approach the block once the swimmer #1 has exited the pool. Swimmer #4 approaches block once swimmer #2 exits the pool.
 - Swimmers MUST remain 6’ apart.
5. **Forms**
- i. Each team MUST submit a “COVID-19 Athlete/Coaches Monitoring Form” to the host team prior to entering the facility.
 - a. Please note: if athletes carpool to a meet, if one athlete answers “yes” to any question or is running a fever then all athletes from the carpool are not permitted to attend and must leave.
6. **Disinfecting Surfaces**
- i. Keep egresses open
 - ii. Blocks washed down between heats
 - iii. Timing devices (excluding touch pads) should be disinfected each time the timer changes
7. **NFHS Covid-19 Course:** All head coaches will be required to complete the FREE course offered by the NFHS on Covid-19. This course must be completed by September 1st and the certificate of completion must be kept on file along with other LHSAA compliance forms for review. The link is here: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>.



VOLLEYBALL

Recommended COVID-19 guidelines to implement 2020 Volleyball events:

In cooperation with the LHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) Chairman, Dr. Greg Stewart of Tulane University, and LVCA President, Ms. Tara Campo, I (we) submit the following information relating to the start of volleyball for the 2020-2021 school year. As we all know, COVID-19 pandemic presents all fall sports, including the 2020 high school volleyball season, with numerous challenges. The LHSAA (Louisiana High School Athletic Association) and LHSAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) have provided recommendations up to this point as it relates to what is permissible during the "Summer Rules" time frame of our sports calendar. The Governor has now extended Phase II until August 28, 2020.

Please know your school system/ school(s) may choose not to start at this time. Many parishes and their schools have either modified, suspended or canceled their summer workouts due to virus cases. So, as of today, not all member schools are planning to start volleyball on this year's permissive start date of August 10, 2020.

During Phase II, practice and intra-squad scrimmages are allowed in the sport of volleyball. Also, know until Louisiana gets into Phase III and establishes a positive trend as it relates to the virus, the start of the regular volleyball season, including but not limited to interschool scrimmages, jamborees and eventually the beginning of interscholastic competitions will inevitably need to be adjusted. All of us here at the **LHSAA** are very much aware of the challenges that lay ahead as you prepare to open schools in compliance with any/all minimum COVID-19 safety standards set forth by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (**BESE**) on July 14, 2020. This all said, I (we) felt it was imperative that a communication as such be sent to **LHSAA** Member Schools providing clear expectations in terms of equipment and activities allowable during Phase II. The following information is intended to highlight those expectations for planning purposes as we proceed towards the start of school and the 2020-2021 Volleyball Season.

August 10, 2020

- Allow practice
- Allow intra-squad scrimmages
- Static groupings of 25 students (indoors and outdoors) are allowed;
- If a group convenes indoors, it must convene in a room enclosed by a wall or partition. This includes large rooms, such as a gymnasium or auditorium, which may include more than one group if each group is separated by a wall or partition.
- If groups convene outdoors, a physical barrier is not required, but each group must remain separated.

Summer Rules Expire Midnight August 9, 2020

When the state of Louisiana transitions into Phase III by order of the Governor, the start date for the following volleyball expectations will coincide with the designated start date prescribed for Phase III by the Governor.



VOLLEYBALL

Date to be announced

- Allow the use of ball handling exchange drills;
- Allow intra-squad scrimmages
- Allow interscholastic competitions
- Groupings of 50 students (indoors and outdoors) are allowed;
- If a group convenes indoors, it must convene in a room enclosed by a wall or partition. This includes large rooms, such as a gymnasium or auditorium, which may include more than one group if each group is separated by a wall or partition
- Multiple groups of 50 students can practice outdoors, as long as there is no contact between groups or mixing of groups.

It is our hope that we all do our part to ensure the positive progress for the sport of volleyball and all fall sports during these unusual times. The information provided within this document is to assist in that progress and could change as more is learned about COVID-19. LHSAA staff and sport specific advisory committees have been working on the formulation for sport seasons and those potential modifications.

The Volleyball Important Dates have been modified to reflect the Governor's announcement to keep Louisiana in Phase II for an additional twenty-one days. No tournaments or tri-matches will be allowed this season. LHSAA By-law 24.7.1 has been suspended for the 2020-2021 Volleyball season. There will be no minimum match requirement.

Guidance for opening high school athletics and activities, game modifications and rule interpretations as well as ball cleaning recommendations have been sent to schools and can be found in the LHSAA weekly playbook. *NFHS Covid-19 Course*: All head coaches will be required to complete the FREE course offered by the NFHS on Covid-19. This course must be completed by September 1st and the certificate of completion must be kept on file along with other LHSAA compliance forms for review. The link is here: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>.

The LHSAA will not provide any guidelines and/or recommendations that will supersede any of the minimum standards set forth by recent legislation prescribed in ACT 9, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and/or the Louisiana Department of Health.

In closing, the LHSAA Constitution Article 3 states, "*In matters pertaining to the athletic affairs of a school it shall be a school's responsibility to educate its student-athletes, coaches and other appropriate persons on all LHSAA rules, including eligibility rules along with potential penalty rulings that could affect them. Additionally, a school shall be required to monitor its compliance with all LHSAA constitutional articles and bylaws.*" Let's work together to move forward and safely reopen our high schools and their sports for our student athletes, communities and state.



GENERAL INFORMATION

NFHS COVID-19 for Coaches and Administrators Course (free) -
<https://nfhslearn.com/courses/covid-19-for-coaches-and-administrators>

Act 9 (Liability for COVID-19) -<https://legis.la.gov/legis/ViewDocument.aspx?d=1185639>

BESE Minimum Standards -

[https://go.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/BRDTN7782333/\\$file/B741NP.pdf](https://go.boarddocs.com/la/bese/Board.nsf/files/BRDTN7782333/$file/B741NP.pdf).

General Points of Emphasis:

1. Decreasing potential exposure to respiratory droplets is the guiding principle behind social distancing and the use of face coverings. It is also the basis of the stratification of risk by sport presented later on in this document. Per advisement from Governor Edwards and the Louisiana Department of Health, the use of protective face coverings are encouraged in public.
 - a. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is additionally “advising the use of simple cloth face coverings to slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others.” (“Recommendation Regarding the Use of Cloth Face Coverings, Especially in Areas of Significant Community-Based Transmission”)
 - b. Recognizing the benefits and potential drawbacks of the use of cloth face coverings during conditioning and physical activity, the NFHS SMAC recommends the following:
 - i. State, local or school district guidelines for cloth face coverings should be strictly followed.
 - ii. Cloth face coverings should be considered acceptable. There is no need to require or recommend “medical grade” masks for athletic activity.
 - iii. Any student who prefers to wear a cloth face covering during a contest should be allowed to do so.
 - iv. The NFHS recommends that cloth face coverings be worn by students during Phases 1 and 2 as outlined below. Exceptions are swimming, distance running, or other high intensity aerobic activity. Cloth face coverings may continue to be used during Phase 3 when not engaging in vigorous activity, such as sitting on the bench during contests, in the locker room, and in the athletic training room.
 - v. Plastic shields covering the entire face (or attached to a helmet) shall not be allowed during contests. Their use during practices increases the risk of unintended injury to the person wearing the shield or teammates.
 - vi. Coaches and staff should wear cloth face coverings at all times during Phases 1 through 3. (Artificial noisemakers such as an air horn or a timer system with an alarm can be used to signal in place of a traditional whistle.)



GENERAL INFORMATION

2. Testing regimens, specific guidelines regarding mass gatherings, and response to a student or team member testing positive for COVID-19 (including contact tracing) are all currently under review, and guidance will come from CDC and state and local health departments. Limited testing availability, lack of resources for contact tracing, and expanding knowledge of the characteristics of COVID-19 transmission could all result in significant changes to the recommendations below. The NFHS SMAC and LHSAA expect to disseminate this information as it becomes available.
3. Due to the near certainty of recurrent outbreaks this coming fall and winter in some locales, schools must be prepared for periodic school closures and the possibility of some teams having to isolate for two to three weeks while in-season. Policies regarding practice and/or competition during temporary school closures, the cancellation of contests during the regular season, and parameters for the cancellation or premature ending to post-season events/competitions are all currently under review.
4. “Vulnerable individuals” are defined by CDC as people age 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions, including high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune systems are compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.
5. Until a cure, vaccine or very effective treatment is readily available, or so-called “herd immunity” is confidently reached, social distancing and other preventive measures such as face covering will be a “new normal” if workouts, practices and contests are to continue.