



2020-21 Baseball Considerations

NHIAA Baseball Committee Adopted for 2020-21 Season

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, the NFHS Baseball 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. 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 These considerations may quickly become outdated.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.

The NHIAA Baseball Committee highly recommends and encourages that all participants (players, coaches, managers, umpires, etc.) wear face coverings (cloth is permissible if the nose and mouth are covered) during practice and competition. The NHIAA Council **recommends** that face coverings be worn while actively participating in spring tournaments and **requires** that face coverings be worn when not actively participating and appropriate distancing cannot be maintained.

If a school participating in the playoffs has more restrictive playing requirements than those prescribed by the NHIAA, in the spirit of sportsmanship and by mutual agreement, the Council supports the two schools playing by the more restrictive policies.

Return to Competition

General Considerations:

- Have hand sanitizer and wipes available at the field.
- No one touches the score sheet except the scorer.
- Disinfect the bench/dugout prior to competition.
- Sanitize bases after each contest.
- No seeds, gum or spitting.
- Eliminate handshakes pre and post-game.
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- Each team must provide their own sanitized baseballs while on defense.
 - The game should begin with a sanitized ball for each half-inning.
 - Anytime a ball leaves the playing field, it must be sanitized prior to returning to play.
 - Have a bucket available for non-sanitized balls so they can be sanitized.

Considerations for Athletes:

- Players must clean and sanitize equipment after each game.
- During sporting events (competitive scrimmages and games for sports), the dugout/bench areas shall be allowed to extend to areas around the dugout in order to provide for six feet of separation of athletes during time in dugout/bench areas. Areas outside of the dugout/bench shall be protected by a safety fence/barrier from the field of play.
 - Players are not permitted to leave the dugout area to congratulate players when scoring or after home runs.
- When possible, equipment should not be shared (helmets, bats, catching equipment) however shared equipment provided by staff or volunteers must be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidance after every use between athletes and at the completion of each practice, training session, or sporting event.
- Pitchers must carry hand sanitizer.
 - If the pitcher puts his/her hands to their mouth off the mound and touches the ball, "Time" is called, a new ball is put into play and the pitcher must sanitize their hands before throwing the next pitch.
- No sharing of water bottles.

Considerations for Coaches:

- Lineups should be handed to the umpire, and the umpire will verbally approve or ask any questions about the lineup. Recommended for lineup cards exchanged team to team and teams to scorekeeper to be shared via photo or text.
 - The verbal exchange of substitutions should occur 6 feet from the coach to scorer and opposing team when making lineup changes.
- Maintain six feet of distance between players and umpires.

Considerations for Umpires:

- Bring personal hand sanitizer.
- Umpires do not handle equipment on the field during play. Contact with the game balls should be as limited as possible.
- During a pre-game conference, limit attendees to one coach from each team plus the umpires. Coaches should stay outside the width of the batter's box at home plate, maintaining 6 feet of distance between each person.

- Do not share equipment.
- Clean equipment after each game.

Baseball Committee Approved – 3.15.2021

Sports Medicine Committee Approved – 3.17.2021

NHIAA Council – “took out cloth/mask and added face coverings (cloth is permissible if the nose and mouth are covered) and “cloth is permissible”. Approved 3.19.21

NHIAA Council Amended re: face coverings during the spring tournaments – 5.13.21