



2020-2021

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Football

Football COVID-19 Fall Training

Note that the resumption of all activities and athletics are subject to change based on the most current information, directives from state government and health department officials, and member school feedback.

Football Fall Training Seasons:

- Start Date—September 14
 - End Date—October 3
 - Maximum Number of daily sessions per sport — 12
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- All aspects of athletics including meetings, practices, competitions, transportation and facility usage must align with the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Education plan for return to learning, must follow the requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health’s Guidance on Youth Sports, and must include the required actions identified in the Governor’s Executive Orders.
 - The first week of practice should focus on implementing effective protocols and routines for pre-participation screenings, effective social distancing, compliance with all health recommendations, establishment of pod limits of 25 or less, and additional actions that mitigate the spread of disease and enhance safety of student-athletes and coaches.
 - Athletic programs must follow the identified protocols for student-athletes or coaches who have tested positive, are experiencing symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 diagnosis or have had exposure to an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - For schools that are required by localized metrics to be in a distance learning mode, practices are limited to virtual contact only.
 - Interscholastic scrimmages will not be allowed.
 - No captain’s practices should be held.
 - Competition is not allowed.
 - Strength and conditioning is allowed



**COVID-19 NOTICE
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY**

In accordance with governmental directives, the MSHSL will offer certain activities subject to compliance with local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines. The Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education and the MSHSL have developed guidance and requirements related to youth sports, use of school facilities and modifications of MSHSL activities designed to keep participants safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Even with these measures, the MSHSL cannot guarantee that student-athletes or other individuals participating in organized athletic activities (“Participants”) will not be exposed to COVID-19. Participants and their parents/legal guardians should consider the risks before participating in any MSHSL activities. It is a shared responsibility to protect everyone from COVID-19 and Participants should follow MDH/CDC guidelines to reduce the risk of exposure, including but not limited to the following:

- Stay home as much as possible;
- Stay at least 6 feet from other people if you are in public places;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds;
- Always wash your hands after being in a public place;
- Always wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol;
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw used tissues in the trash;
- Wear face coverings/masks that cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of your face.

In recognizing the serious nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the positive impact that participation in MSHSL fine arts activities and athletics has on student participants, it is imperative that student-athletes and families know and understand the following:

1. Participating in MSHSL activities is **voluntary**.
2. While participating in MSHSL activities, all laws as well as MSHSL and school rules, guidelines, and protocols related to COVID-19 must be followed.
3. Participant acknowledges the contagious nature of COVID-19, and the Participant understands that there is risk of injury and/or illness from participating in MSHSL activities, including the risk to have direct or indirect contact with individuals who have been exposed to and/or diagnosed with COVID-19.
4. Participant agrees that if he/she is exposed to, or infected by, COVID-19 during the period of participation, they will immediately cease participation and follow Minnesota Department of Health protocols for schools and activities and MSHSL guidelines for notification and return to participation.
5. Participant has signed a separate Eligibility Statement connected to general participation in MSHSL athletics/activities and agrees that the terms of that statement are wholly incorporated into this document and that the terms of this document are incorporated into the Eligibility Statement.

Additional information regarding Activity Participation and COVID can be found at:

- health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguide.pdf,
- health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf
- www.mshsl.org
- www.nfhs.org

General COVID Safety:

1. Educate student-athletes about physical distancing, handwashing and sanitizer use, and other immune system protocols.
2. Any person who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
3. Individually or as a team, participants should confirm that they are symptom free. These confirmations can be aligned with the CDC's "Coronavirus Self-Checker" or current MDH recommendations.
4. A record should be kept of all individuals present at practices and competitions (contact tracing).
5. It is recommended that personal prep areas are to be set up prior to practice - Cones or other markers should be set up at least 6 feet apart so student-athletes have a specific place for their own bag, water bottle, etc. One cone or marker should be assigned per player.
6. Avoid grouping of athletes at start and end of practice or during transitions. Staggered start times for practices and team meetings are recommended, when possible and when field/court space does not allow student-athletes to come and go from separate areas.
7. Workouts should be conducted in "pods" – following current MDH Return-to-Play guidelines. Pods are small groups of student-athletes always working out together. This will ensure limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
8. Whenever possible, student-athletes should maintain the recommended six feet of distancing between individuals and should not be in contact with each other. In addition, there is to be no sharing of equipment to the extent that it is possible.
9. Team celebrations or congratulations should be no-touch and should be done with appropriate social distancing.

Practice

Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitizer should be available for each student-athlete and used as often as possible.
Recommendations and Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Masks are strongly recommended for student-athletes and coaches before and after practice. • Masks or gaiters are recommended for coaches and school personnel during practice. Err on the side of safety whenever possible. • Recommended that all activities occur outdoors

Equipment

Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footballs should be sanitized before and/or after each practice, whether self-provided or brought by the coach. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spalding Football Cleaning Recommendations: https://nfhs.org/media/4029991/spalding-ball-cleaning-7-7-20-revised.pdf • All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. • Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should not be utilized.
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There should be no shared athletic equipment (towels, clothing, shoes, or sports specific equipment) between students. • Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing) individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout. • Individual drills requiring the use of athletic equipment are permissible, but the equipment should be cleaned prior to use by the next individual.

Football Practice Restrictions

***Please note that rest days (Days 6 & 7) do not count towards your 12 days of practice. Equipment does not need to be used. If it is, follow the progression below.**

Days 1–5	<p>“Contact Practices” are not allowed.</p> <p>No single practice may last more than 2 hours with total practice time per day not to exceed 4 hours.</p>
Day 1:	Helmets only
Day 2:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoulder pads may be worn for up to 1 hour of practice time
Days 3 & 4:	Helmets and shoulder pads only
Day 5:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full pads are allowed — No Thud or Live Action
Days 6 & 7:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest days, no practice is allowed.
Days 8–11:	No restrictions on what equipment can be worn. a) No practice may last more than three hours, with total practice time per day not to exceed five hours.
Day 12:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culminating day: Intra-squad Scrimmage with Thud and no Live Action is allowed. - No spectators

Definitions

- 1) **Heat Acclimatization Period** is defined as the initial 14 consecutive day period of pre-season practice, which begins the first day of practice prior to the regular season. Any practices or conditioning conducted before this time shall not be considered a part of the heat-acclimatization period.
- 2) **Practice** is defined as the period of time a participant engages in coach-supervised, school approved, sport or conditioning-related physical activity, including stretching, running, conditioning or physical training in the skills and fundamentals. Strength training and team meetings or video sessions do not count as a practice for the purpose of this policy.
- 3) **Levels of Contact**, as defined by USA Football, focuses on varying intensity levels throughout practices, to build player confidence, ensure their safety and prevent both physical and mental exhaustion. Six intensity levels are used to introduce players to practice drills which position them to master the fundamentals and increase skill development.
 - a) **AIR**: Intensity = 0 Players run a drill unopposed without contact.
 - b) **BAGS**: Intensity = 1 Drill is run against a bag or another soft-contact surface.
 - c) **CONTROL**: Intensity = 2 Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact; one player is predetermined the 'winner' by the coach. Contact remains above the waist and players stay on their feet when involved with contact.
 - d) **RESTRICTED CONTACT**: Intensity = 3 Teaching safe & proper techniques (block, shed, tackle) involving shoulder pads, and wearing helmets for protection. Contact above the hips only with hands, shoulders and chest. Keep the head out! Use quick whistle; no gang-tackling or cut blocking/tackling. Players stay on their feet when involved in contact.
 - e) **THUD**: Intensity = 4 Drill is run at assigned speed through the moment of contact; no pre-determined "winner." Contact remains above the waist, players stay on their feet and a quick whistle ends the drill.
 - f) **LIVE ACTION**: Intensity = 5 Drill is run in game-like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground.
- 4) **Contact Practice** is defined as a practice during which drills and/or team work includes “**Thud**” or “**Live Action**,” as described below. There are no restrictions on “**Air**,” “**Bags**,” “**Control**,” and “**Restricted Contact**.” The Contact portion of this practice may not exceed 30 minutes.
- 5) **Walk-thru** is defined as a teaching opportunity with the athletes not wearing protective equipment. A walkthru is not considered part of the 2 or 3 hour single practice limitation, but does count toward the daily practice time limit; cannot last more than 1 hour; and does not include any kind strength training or conditioning activities. A “walk-thru” is only for running plays and teaching team schemes and assignments — full speed drills and/or physical contact are not allowed. Special team skills (punting and catching punts, kickoffs, and place kicking) are allowed.
- 6) **Recovery Period** is defined as the time between the end of one practice or walk-thru and the beginning of the next practice or walk-thru. During this time athletes must rest in a cool environment(65-80 degrees F), with no sport or conditioning-related activity permitted. Team meetings and video may be part of this recovery period if conducted in a cool environment.