



2020-2021

# MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

---

## Soccer, Girls and Boys

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.

### Soccer, Boys and Girls:

Start date: August 17

First competition date: August 27

Last date of regular season competition: October 10

End date: October 24

Total weeks including postseason: 10

Maximum number of contests: 11

Maximum number of contests per week: 2

Opponents: Conference, Section, local teams only

- 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 students and coaches.
- Athletic programs must follow the identified protocols for students 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.
- Competitions with opponents from bordering states are allowed when less than 50 miles one way and when determined as local. Competitions of greater distances may be approved by the MSHSL with supporting rationale. Any out of state competition must follow MSHSL guidelines for competition types.
- Sportsmanship should have a constant presence in all school-based athletics.
  - Teams are encouraged to find appropriate methods of demonstrating good sportsmanship and respect towards others within the physical distance guidance.
  - Additional care should be taken when addressing contest officials with questions or seeking interpretations. At no time, other than in the natural course of competition, should a coach or player violate the required physical distance with an official. Any coach or player verbally interacts with an official must do so with a mask on and at a safe distance.



**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 students 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 students 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](http://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguide.pdf),
- [health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf](http://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf)
- [www.mshsl.org](http://www.mshsl.org)
- [www.nfhs.org](http://www.nfhs.org)

### General COVID Safety:

1. Educate 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 players 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 space does not allow players 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 students always working out together. This will ensure limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
8. Whenever possible, players 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. Officials are not expected to monitor physical distancing: each person is responsible to provide space between themselves and others. Coaches should provide direction to their students regarding social distancing and other safety protocols.
10. Team celebrations or congratulations should be no-touch and should be done with appropriate social distancing.
11. When spectators are allowed at outside events, they should not have access to student athletes during the competition. Social distancing should be practiced throughout the entire event and spectators may connect with participants following the completion of the event.

## MSHSL Soccer Guidance and Information

| <b>Practice</b>                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Required:                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand sanitizer should be available for each student-athlete and used as often as possible.</li> </ul>   |
| Recommendations and Considerations: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Masks* are strongly recommended for student-athletes and coaches before and after practice.</li> <li>• Masks are recommended for coaches and school personnel during practice. Err on the side of safety whenever possible.</li> <li>• Recommended that all activities occur outdoors</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Equipment</b>                    |  |
| Required:                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pinnies should not be shared among student-athletes and need to be washed in between uses.</li> <li>• Soccer balls should be sanitized before and/or after each practice, whether self-provided or brought by the coach.</li> </ul>   |
| Recommendations and Considerations  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goalies are recommended to use hand sanitizer to moisten their gloves (instead of saliva).</li> <li>• With the exception of goalies, players should avoid any hand contact with soccer balls during practice. Feet should be used for collecting soccer balls, etc.</li> <li>• A limited number of people should handle cones, with the use of hand sanitizer after handling cones.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Competition</b>                  |  |
| <b>Masks/Face Coverings</b>         |  |
| Required:                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants, including student-athletes, coaches, officials and personnel, must wear masks <u>if they cannot socially distance</u> at 6 feet from others, unless actively participating in the game. This includes coming and going from the facility, and on the sideline during the game.</li> <li>• If a student-athlete needs to recover after coming off the field and before putting on mask, the player should stand 12 feet away from others.</li> </ul>   |
| Recommendations and Considerations: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All participants are strongly encouraged to wear masks during the Pregame Conference.</li> <li>• All participants, including student-athletes, coaches, officials and personnel, are strongly encouraged to wear masks when arriving and leaving the site.</li> <li>• All participants, including student-athletes, coaches, officials and personnel, are strongly encouraged to wear masks on the sideline. If coaches need to remove a mask to give instructions to a player across the field, they need to be away from other sideline personnel and players.</li> </ul> |

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
|                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On field, masks are permissible for players and officials, but not required.</li> <li>• Note: Gaiters can also be used in place of masks.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Equipment</b>                    |  |
| Required:                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soccer balls should be sanitized pregame, at halftime, and postgame. This is the home team’s responsibility.</li> </ul>   |
| Recommendations and Considerations: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical gloves are permissible for players and officials.</li> <li>• If a player uses a mouthguard, it should not be removed. Wash hands after handling. (4-2-7)</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Site Set Up</b>                  |  |
| Required:                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team Benches - Bench personnel should observe social distancing of 6 feet. Recommend to place tape or other marks 6 feet apart on the bench.</li> <li>• Coaches are limited to regular team box, but box width for student-athletes and other bench personnel can be flexible to allow social distancing. (Rule 1-5-3)</li> <li>• If Officials Table is on sideline - Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommended 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.</li> </ul>  |
| Recommendations and Considerations: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaches/administration should assess and determine appropriate sideline spacing for each individual site. How can you best spread out bench personnel? What is best for your site? For example, benches can be put on opposite sides of the field, or on the same side, whichever is best for each site to allow social distancing. Benches can be staggered or spread out in a line. (Rule 1-5-1 and 1-5-3)</li> <li>• Recommended that players’ bags/equipment should be placed/stored 6 feet away from others’ bags. Players should store their gear in their bags (as opposed to a community pile, or tossed on the bench).</li> <li>• In inclement weather, remind student-athletes to bring appropriate rain gear, etc. (Bench personnel cannot safely all huddle under an 8x8 or 10x10 tent.)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Pre-competition</b>              |  |
| Required:                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pregame Conference (5-2-2d) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Limit attendees to head or center referee, the head coach from each team, and a single captain from each team.</li> <li>- Move the location of the pregame conference to center of the field (or other area that allows participants to spread out). All individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet.</li> <li>- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Conference.</li> <li>- Only the owner of the coin should handle the coin during toss.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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 and National Anthem (or similar adjustment to avoid close player contact).</li> <li>• Team huddles should be avoided (pregame and throughout competition).</li> <li>• If teams are arriving for the second game of a double-header, they should not enter the venue until the previous teams have left the venue.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Recommendations and Considerations:</p> |   |
| <p><b>Competition</b></p>                  |   |
| <p>Required:</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Substitution Procedures - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitutes, officials and/or teammate(s). (Rule 3-4-1a)</li> <li>• No Substitutions on Corner Kicks: Rule 3-3-4b. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rationale: Corner Kicks often result in 15 to 16 players tightly grouped together in close proximity. Adding substitutions to this situation adds unnecessary time and exposure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ball chasers must socially distance from one another and other personnel of at least 6 feet.</li> <li>• Ball chasers must be 7th grade or above.</li> <li>• Prolonged injuries – Teams may be dismissed to the benches. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rationale: be able to handle their own water bottle, as opposed to teammates handing them onto field, and can make unlimited subs on injuries regardless. (Rule 12-8-1a)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Eliminate Overtime for Regular Season Games: Rule 7-3-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rationale: Extra time adds unnecessary exposure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Running Time: Mercy rule 5-goal difference (Rule 6-2-3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rationale: Stopping the clock after goals will end when a team is losing by 5 or more goals. Stopping the clock will resume when the difference falls to less than 5 goals. Extra time adds unnecessary exposure.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p>Recommendations and Considerations:</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit number of ball chasers (recommendation to limit to four and place one ball at each goal).</li> <li>• Ball chasers are recommended to wear masks, and use hand sanitizer frequently. Consider travel-sized sanitizer to carry throughout game.</li> <li>• Ball chasers should use feet instead of hands whenever possible.</li> <li>• Avoid delays in start of play, so that players do not have prolonged periods of standing in close proximity. Players should limit direct contact until the ball is ready to be put into play (free kicks, throw ins, goal kicks, corner kicks).</li> <li>• Personal hygiene – coaches should remind student-athletes to practice safe personal hygiene (being away from others when spitting, covering sneezes/coughs, etc.)</li> </ul>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inclement weather – if a game has to be postponed due to lightning, when making the decision to wait 30 minutes or postpone to a later date (if the game is in the first half) or declare the competition complete (if the game is in the second half), administration and officials should work together to consider if student-athletes can be safely socially distanced while taking shelter. If taking shelter will put many participants in a tight indoor space (bus, practice shed, small hallway, etc.), officials and administration may choose to implement a contest-ending procedure prior to waiting 30 minutes.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Post Competition</b>                    |   |
| <b>Required:</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suspend post-game protocol of shaking hands.</li> <li>• Teams need to clean bench areas completely so they are free of ALL trash and belongings.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Recommendations and Considerations:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teams’ post-game meetings should be brief (leave venue asap).</li> <li>• Referees’ post-game meetings should be brief (leave venue asap).</li> <li>• Teams/coaches can consider other ways to show post-game appreciation for opponents and officials.</li> </ul>  |

### **NFHS Official Rules Considerations:**

**Rules 1-5-1 and 1-5-3:** Coaches/administration should assess and determine appropriate sideline spacing for each individual site. How can you best spread out bench personnel? What is best for your site? For example, benches can be put on opposite sides of the field, or same side, whichever is best for each site to allow social distancing. Benches can be staggered or spread out in a line.

**Rule 1-5-3:** Coaches are limited to regular team box, but box width for student-athletes and other bench personnel can be flexible to allow social distancing.

**Rule 3-3-4b:** No Substitutions on Corner Kicks

- Rationale: Corner Kicks often result in 15 to 16 players tightly grouped together in close proximity.

**Rule 3-4-1a:** Substitution Procedures - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitutes, officials and/or teammate(s).

**Rule 5-2-2d:** Pregame Conference

- Limit attendees to head 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 (or other area that allows participants to spread out). All individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Conference.
- Only the owner of the coin should handle the coin during toss.

**Rule 6-2-3:** Running Time: Mercy rule 5-goal difference

- Rationale: Stopping the clock after goals will end when a team is losing by 5 or more goals. Stopping the clock will resume when the difference falls to less than 5 goals. Extra time adds unnecessary exposure.

**Rule 7-3-1:** Eliminate Overtime for Regular Season Games

- Rationale: Extra time adds unnecessary exposure.

**Rule 12-8-1a:** Prolonged injuries – Teams may be dismissed to the benches.

- Rationale: be able to handle their own water bottle, as opposed to teammates handing them onto field, and can make unlimited subs on injuries regardless.