

Central Athletic League

Return to Competition Health & Safety Plan



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INTRODUCTION

The Central League offers athletic opportunities for over 12,000 athletes each year. While our schools are competitive on a local, regional, and state level, our programs also value sportsmanship and safety. Additionally, participating in athletics promotes teamwork, social interaction, a fun experience, and an opportunity to exercise and be well. These are critical components of our programs, especially during a time of isolation and uncertainty.

This handbook is intended to guide members of Central League on recommendations, mandates, and expectations for our schools during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We believe that our students can enjoy the benefits of being on a team while successfully adhering to our mitigation strategies and expectations. We also believe that our coaches, athletic trainers, and school administrators are committed to implementing our plan so that we can best serve our student-athletes.

PRIMARY POINT OF CONTACT

The athletic administrator at each school is the primary point of contact for all questions and concerns related to COVID-19 as it pertains to athletics.

ATHLETIC OPPORTUNITIES

The PIAA has announced that they are moving forward with sports starting on August 24, 2020, but participation is based on local school decisions. As a league, our schools postponed fall sports based on Chester County and Montgomery County Health Department recommendations. In light of recent guidance changes, we believe that we can still have a safe and meaningful season this fall.

The Central League will adopt PIAA [sport-specific rule modifications](#). Interscholastic competition between schools will occur in accordance with this Health & Safety Plan. And, we recognize that the ultimate measure of accomplishment this year will be excellent teamwork. A good teammate will stay home when they're sick, wear a mask, practice social distancing, wash their hands, use good judgement, and make responsible decisions for the health and safety of their teammates, classmates, coaches, and the entire community.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STAFF, COACHES & ATHLETES

- There is an inherent risk of infection for those participating. Therefore, it is critical that everybody is actively working towards decreasing the risk of transmission to others, on and off the field.
- All staff, coaches, and athletes are expected to remain vigilant in monitoring their health, especially if they've traveled to and from any of the identified states on the Department of Health's recommended [quarantine list](#).
- All coaches, student-athletes, and officials/event workers use face coverings in accordance with the most recent recommendations of the [Department of Health Facial Coverings Order](#) & [PIAA Press Release re: Facial Coverings](#).



- Health conditions and guidance from the health department will be monitored and adjustments will be made when necessary.
- Continuously collaborate with school nurses and/or athletic trainers on risk mitigation and educational strategies for student-athletes.
- Clean all team/shared equipment after every use.
- Coaches must maintain accurate attendance of each competition and submit an attendance list to the athletics department.
- Design procedures for before/during/after contests that promote risk mitigation.
 - Avoid congregating before games; leave at the conclusion of games
- Communicate all health concerns to school nurses and/or athletic trainers immediately.
- Activities that increase the risk of exposure to saliva will not be permitted including chewing gum, spitting, licking fingers, and eating sunflower seeds.
- All athletes should clean individual equipment (personal and school-issued) and clothing after every use.
- No unnecessary physical contact including hand shaking, fist bumps, or high-fives.

SPORTS MEDICINE CONSIDERATIONS

- Athletes receiving care in the athletic training room must wear facial coverings in accordance with the Health & Safety Plan.
- Hydration- Each athlete must have their own personal water bottle. No shared hydration stations or shared water bottles.
- Weather considerations- In the event there is a high probability of inclement weather, competitions will be cancelled to avoid the need for congregating inside for lightning shelter. In the event athletes are required to seek shelter due to unexpected inclement weather (i.e. lightning), coaching staffs, administrators, and athletic trainers will work with the school's facility and custodial staffs to ensure that athletes, coaches and officials are sheltered in a safe manner that allows for social distancing.

FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS

- Cleaning, sanitizing, disinfecting, and ventilating will occur as detailed in each school's HSP.
- Locker rooms will not be available for visiting teams.
- Each school will review any health & safety plans that are established by our off-site facilities. Athletes and coaches will be required to follow all guidance in this plan, as well as any requirements in our off-site facilities' plans.

OFFICIALS/EVENT WORKERS/VOLUNTEERS

- Student Athletes, Coaches, and School Staff should follow the screening procedure outlined in each school's respective HSP. Visiting athletes might be requested to complete a host school's screening survey.
- Officials and event workers will be required to complete a screening survey based upon CCHD guidance on school attendance. This screening should be completed no sooner than two hours prior to arrival on campus. A member of the host-school's athletics department will call all officials and event workers the morning of a competition and ask them if they anticipate answering yes to any of the screening questions. In the event they do, they will be allowed to attend, and a suitable replacement will be found or the event will be canceled or rescheduled. This would avoid unnecessary travel in the event an official fails an on-site health screening.



- Media and video-streaming personnel will be allowed with additional precautions. Media members will be asked to complete the screening survey within 2 hours of arriving on campus, and will be required to wear masks and socially distance at all times. Post-game interviews will be allowed but should be done via teleconferencing, telephone, or at an appropriate social distance outside.

GATHERING SIZE/SPECTATORS

- Competitions must adhere to the current gathering occupancy limits set by Governor Wolf and the PA Department of Health in accordance with the [Process to Reopen Pennsylvania](#) Guidance.

PLAN OF ACTION IF A PARTICIPANT FALLS ILL

- If a participant (athlete, coach, or official) presents with illness, schools will follow the guidelines outlined by the CCHD and MCHD. During school hours, these should be supervised by the school nurse. After school athletic trainers and/or athletic administrators should work in consultation with school nurses to ensure these plans are followed.
- Athletes, coaches, and staff must notify the school if an absence is due to COVID-19.
- Coaches, Administrators, Athletic Trainers, and Officials are empowered to send athletes home who they believe are exhibiting symptoms. If it is a visiting athlete, they will be isolated in accordance with the guidance listed above until a parent can pick them up.
- Athletes who previously were diagnosed with COVID-19 and have since recovered should receive clearance from the treating health care provider and notify school nurses, athletic trainers, and coaches so an appropriate return to play plan can be established as outlined under the Sports Medicine Header above.
- In the case that any school in the league has a probable or confirmed case, that school should notify all league member schools in addition to the CCHD and MCHD. Any schools who had a recent competition against that school should submit attendance to the CCHD or MCHD to assist with contact tracing.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/COMMUNICATION

- Each school is responsible for educating staff, athletes and coaches on the expectations of the league plan and each individual school's health and safety plan.
- Event workers & Officials will be briefed on pertinent plan information by the Game Manager and/or Athletic Trainer on the day of a competition in which they are scheduled to work.



PROPOSED START DATES

SPORT	FIRST PRACTICE	FIRST CONTEST	LAST CONTEST
GOLF	9/29	10/2	10/26
TENNIS	9/29	10/6	10/31
CROSS COUNTRY	9/29	10/17	11/7
FOOTBALL/CHEER	10/5	10/23	11/28
SOCCER, FIELD HOCKEY, VOLLEYBALL	9/29	10/17	11/21

REFERENCES/RESOURCES

1. [UPMC Sports Medicine Playbook: Returning to Sports During COVID-19 Minimum Guidelines \(High School\)- May 28, 2020](#)
2. [CDC COVID-19 Considerations for Youth Sports- May 29, 2020](#)
3. [NATA COVID-19 Return to Sport Considerations for Secondary School Athletic Trainers- May 2020](#)
4. [NFHS Guide for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities- May 2020](#)
5. [PA Guidance for All Sports Permitted to Operate During the COVID-19 Disaster Emergency to Ensure the Safety and Health of Employees, Athletes, and the Public- June 10, 2020](#)
6. [Guidance for Chester County Organized Sports during the Green Phase- June 25, 2020](#)
7. [PIAA Press Release re: Information on Masks During Out of Season Activities- July 3, 2020](#)
8. [PA Departments of Health & Education Public Health Guidance Regarding COVID-19 for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools- July 16, 2020](#)
9. [PA Department of Health Universal Face Covering Order FAQs- July 17, 2020](#)
10. [CHOP Returning to Youth Sports- July 22, 2020](#)
11. [PA Department of Health COVID-19 Information for Travelers- July 24, 2020](#)
12. [Process to Reopen Pennsylvania- July 28, 2020](#)
13. [PIAA Press Release- July 29, 2020](#)
14. [BISM Graduated Return to Play Guidance Following COVID-19 Infection- July 2020](#)
15. [CHOP Policy Lab Evidence & Considerations for School Reopenings- August 19, 2020](#)
16. [CCHD Public & Private School Guidance- September 14, 2020](#)
17. [PIAA Return to Competition: Individual Sport Considerations- September 8, 2020](#)

