



2020 Fall Competition Plan

Official Press Release:

The Ohio Heritage Conference (OHC) Board of Directors recently met to discuss the upcoming fall athletic season. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the OHC will make necessary modifications for the fall athletic season. One important area to note, the OHC is not electing to play conference games only. Members are encouraged to compete against non-conference opponents when possible and member schools are welcome to add additional games versus conference opponents (both in and out of division) to make up for cancelled non-conference contests. Any contests versus conference opponents that were not part of the original schedule will be considered non-conference games and will not count in conference standings or for individual awards. We recognize that all decisions are subject to change and that, as a conference, we will need to be flexible and adapt to changes that occur. We are committed to making a fall season possible for all of our students. This plan is aligned to the **Health Director's Order that Provides Mandatory Requirements for Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club and Professional Sports** (effective at 11:59pm on August 19, 2020).

Details:

The OHC will follow all orders and directives per the Governor, CDC, OHSSA and both state and local health departments. Other guidance and recommendations will be discussed and considered as policy decisions are made. Please note that orders or directives per any of the above could result in necessary or mandatory changes to these guidelines, protocols and policies.

Spectators

- The OHC will allow fall sports to have spectators. Admission to any OHC event will be limited by the capacity of the indoor or outdoor facility. The host school will calculate capacity that maintains social distancing between family groups with a maximum limit of the lesser of 1500 (outdoor events) or 300 (indoor events) or 15% of fixed, seated capacity. Schools will submit facility capacity (both home and away when applicable) to the Commissioner who will then compile a list that will be sent to all member schools. When possible, home and guest spectator seating areas should be clearly marked, and efforts should be made to limit home and visitor seating to designated areas. Maximum capacity in home section shall be 15% and maximum capacity in visitor seating should also be 15% of the fixed, seated capacity.
- General admission (eg, lawns, standing room, in-fields) is allowable only to the extent six feet of distance between groups of patrons can be clearly marked and strictly maintained.
- Spectators must wear a mask at all times when attending an OHC event. Masks are mandatory at indoor and outdoor events (unless seated and actively eating or drinking).
- The Athletic Directors will facilitate the sale of tickets to both home and away spectators for the sports of volleyball, football and soccer, as necessary, in a manner that limits seating to each facility's reduced capacity numbers.
- The primary purpose of permitting Sports spectators is to allow and encourage the family and household members and loved ones of players, coaches, team staff members, officials and other event participants (band, cheerleaders, etc.) to observe and share in the experience.
- Seating must be assigned in groups of no more than four people who know one another, but members of the same household may be seated together even if there are more than four people.
- Each seating group must be separated from the next group by at least six feet in each direction.
- Spectators must conduct daily symptom checks and anyone experiencing symptoms must stay home.

Student-Athlete & Adult Screening, Travel, Locker Rooms and Benches

- Each individual student-athlete and staff member must receive a pre-travel symptom and temperature check immediately prior to departure for visitors and at some point pre-game for hosts.
- Mask/face coverings are to be worn by players, coaches, volunteers and athletic trainers when travelling to and from buses and while on the bus to an away contest. Mask/face coverings are to be worn when entering host facilities and on the field/court of play during any pre-warm up walkthrough which does not require increased demand on the student-athletes' cardiorespiratory system. Mask/face coverings are to be worn in the locker room.
- Locker rooms will continue to be used by both host and visiting schools. Locker rooms will be sanitized before and after use. Both home and away teams are encouraged to spend minimal time in the locker room and teams should consider minimizing this time by having athletes arrive at the contest in full or partial uniform. Teams should consider a rotating schedule for using locker rooms in reduced-size groups to minimize congestion.
- Mask/face coverings are to be worn by student-athletes while on the sidelines/benches and not actively engaged in competition – and six feet social distancing should be observed when possible.
- The host school will furnish each sideline/bench with adequate hand sanitizing stations.
- Teams should not share water bottles. Bench water should be provided by the host site, but the traveling team should supply its own coolers and water bottles unless agreed upon by the host school.

Ticketing

- For the fall 2020 season, the OHC has adopted a flat ticketing price policy. Entrance to all varsity contests will be \$7 per person. Entrance to all middle school contests and any contest that is a freshman or JV only contest will be \$5 per person.

Arrival Times

- Visiting teams are to arrive at venues no earlier than 45 minutes before the scheduled start of the contest and no sooner than 5:30pm for Varsity Football contests.

Concessions

- Local school administrators, in consultation with local health departments, should determine what items should be available for purchase at concession stands. Schools should consider selling only unopened, pre-packaged food and drink items.
- Food concessions operations must adhere to Ohio's guidance for Restaurants, Bars, Banquet & Catering Facilities/Services available at coronavirus.ohio.gov.
- Concession workers must wear masks in accordance with state mandates.
- Individuals in line for concessions are to practice social distancing. Host sites should provide clear and visible ground or floor markings to designate line configuration and physical distancing requirements for individuals waiting for concessions.

Suspected and Confirmed Cases

- Immediately isolate, and seek medical care for, any individual who becomes ill or develops symptoms. Contact the local health department about suspected COVID-19 cases or exposure.
- The affected person should seek COVID-19 testing as soon as possible. Teams, schools, and clubs should work with parents to ensure they have access to testing through their healthcare providers or direct them to testing options. Coaches/administrators must work with the local health department to identify individuals who were potentially exposed to help facilitate contact tracing. This includes, but is not limited to, athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, parents and other support personnel.
- A team, school, or club must notify all athletes and parents/ guardians associated with the affected team regarding a positive test. Athletes and families must be reminded of proper daily health screening protocols. If the affected individual participated in competitive play, the team is responsible for notifying any opponents played between the date of the positive test and 2 days prior to the onset of symptoms. If the teams, schools, or clubs reside in different counties, the health departments in each county should be notified to help facilitate effective contact tracing.
- An individual who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, must not return to sport activities until (1) Meeting the CDC requirements for ending self-isolation using either a symptom-based or test-based strategy** and (2) A documented medical exam is performed clearing the

individual to return to play. The documented medical exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart risk of high-intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis occurring in COVID-19 patients. More information on this issue can be found at <https://www.acc.org/latest-in-cardiology/articles/2020/07/13/13/37/returning-to-play-after-coronavirus-infection>.

- Players, coaches, officials or other individuals who had close contact (within six feet of an infected individual for at least 15 minutes), or who had direct physical contact with the person, or who were coughed or sneezed on by the infected person, must self-quarantine for 14 days following exposure based on CDC guidance.*** Individuals may return to play afterward if they have not had any COVID-19 symptoms.

Other Items of Note:

All Sports

- In general, and whenever possible, the no touch rule is in effect. All student athletes and coaches should avoid physical contact with others including high fives, huddles, or other close contact occurring before, during, and after the events. This would include pre-game handshake or fist bumps, post-game handshake or high-five lines and exchange of gifts or physical contact between cheerleading squads pre or post-game.
- OHSAA requirements, based on guidance from the Governor's Office, is for schools to limit the number of players dressing for contests. The limits are 60 in football, 22 in soccer and 15 in volleyball. Participating athletes at a cross country race are limited to a total of 150 (or less if possible) per race.

Volleyball

- The OHC will suspend the practice of teams switching benches and courts between sets. In the event there is a clear and distinct disadvantage, teams may switch sides, observing all social distancing protocols. Officials will determine if a disadvantage is present and communicate such at the beginning of the match. Sanitizing chairs in between a switch is recommended if a switch is deemed necessary.
- Due to seating limitations in some OHC gymnasiums, all seating will be made available in the gym when possible (meaning bleachers on both sides of the gym will be utilized).
- When possible and necessary, middle school volleyball contests will be played in the high school gymnasium in order to maximize available seating for spectators and provide as much social distancing as possible. If necessary, MS volleyball games will be rescheduled for Saturdays in order to utilize the high school gymnasium. Host schools will determine which gym will be used and will communicate such to the visiting school in a timely manner.
- If MS volleyball games must be played in a smaller gym with inadequate seating capacity, the host school may make the determination that no spectators are permitted at those contests. This decision must be communicated to the visiting school as early as possible.

Football

- Halftime for Varsity Football games will be 15 minutes in length.
- Visiting school marching bands will not travel to away football games.
- Coaches should take steps to manage the number of individuals on the sideline. Only essential team personnel are permitted on the sideline and coaches should consider limiting the size of the game roster if the overall number of players on the roster makes social distancing on the sideline problematic.

Cheerleading

- Cheerleaders would continue to travel to away games at both the high school and middle school level.
- The annual OHC Cheer Competition will not take place during the fall of 2020. This competition will be rescheduled for the winter or spring if possible.

Golf, Tennis and Cross Country

- Mask/facial covering and social distance requirements for spectators apply for these sports as well.
- The OHC plans to hold all end-of-season conference tournaments as previously scheduled.

Communication

- Member schools will communicate suspected and confirmed COVID-19 issues involving athletes, both prior to a contest and in the days immediately following a contest, with the other member schools involved in that contest.

Impact of the County Designation of a Participating School

Ohio Public Health Advisory System: *The Public Health Advisory Alert System is a color-coded system designed to supplement existing statewide orders through a data-driven framework to assess the degree of the virus' spread and to engage and empower individuals, businesses, communities, local governments, and others in their response and actions.*

Level 1: Yellow = Active exposure and spread.

Level 2: Orange = Increased exposure and spread. Exercise high degree of caution.

Level 3: Red = Very high exposure and spread. Limit activities as much as possible

Level 4: Purple = Severe exposure and spread. Only leave home for supplies and services.

- **Red Status:** If either member school participating in a contest is from a county identified as Level 3/Red (meaning their school building is in that county), then the contest MAY still take place. Participating schools should discuss relocating the contest if one participant's county is at a level 1 or 2. Also, host school may consider more screening actions for participants/spectators as well as increased limitations on seating capacity.
- **Purple Status:** If either member school participating in a contest is from a county identified as Level 4/Purple, then the contest is cancelled. This rule applies to teams traveling to or from the county identified as Purple status. Every effort should be made to postpone and reschedule this contest.

*No game cancelled or postponed and unable to be rescheduled due to any COVID-19-related issue will be considered a forfeit. It will be a non-contest.