RETURN TO PLAY
GUIDELINES, PROTOCOLS
AND
PROCEDURES
IN RESPONSE TO
COVID-19

AUGUST 24, 2020
Introduction
It is the goal of the Mid-South Conference to focus on three areas for the safety and health of all participants (coaches, student-athletes, and staff) when competing within. These areas focus on (1) Education, (2) Participation, and (3) Communication. The guidelines, protocols, and procedures are put together for all Mid-South institutions for use during all competitions.

Due to the footprint of the MSC, this document outlines minimum guidelines, protocols, and procedures. If a state, local, or institutional requirements go above and beyond this document, the state, local, and institutional requirements will take precedence. It is the responsibility of the host institution to create further requirements based on those authorities and communicate any added requirements efficiently and timely to all visiting teams.

Current MSC guidelines, protocols, and procedures have been developed from the most up-to-date documents for practice by the Center for Disease Control (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA), and the National Athletic Trainers’ Association (NATA). This document will be reevaluated and updated as needed.

Education
Proper education is vital to the prevention of injuries and/or illnesses associated with intercollegiate athletics. COVID-19 education will include the definition, signs and symptoms, routes of transmission, prevention, and communication.
1. All student-athletes must complete an educational session specific to participation as an athlete
   a. Must provide documentation that this was completed
   b. A PowerPoint presentation has been developed to guide each institution in this requirement
   c. Institutions may add specific content as needed
2. All athletic department personnel must complete and educational session specific to participation as coaches and staff
   a. Must provide documentation that this was completed
   b. A PowerPoint presentation has been developed to guide each institution in this requirement
   c. Institutions may add specific content as needed
3. All student-athletes must sign the MSC Assumption of Risk and Shared Information Document
4. Infographics have been created to be used and disseminated throughout athletic facilities
   a. Strongly recommended
   b. Follow institutional guidelines for appropriate signage

Participation
Participation within the MSC will require both student-athletes and institutional staff to observe guidelines, protocols, and procedures. Student-athletes and institutional staff are responsible for their actions and failure to observe the proper guidelines, protocols, and procedures could result in the suspension of participation in MSC sponsored events.
1. Each institution shall have the autonomy to implement COVID-19 testing procedures consistent with Federal, State, Local, and Institutional authorities.
   a. Testing is not required for participation in MSC events
   b. It is recognized that testing is a form of recognition and prevention of COVID-19

2. Face masks and face coverings
   a. Teams are expected to wear to, during, and from temperature/symptoms check screenings
   b. Expected to adhere to host institutions local and state requirements
   c. Are not mandatory but are strongly encouraged
   d. There shall be no disciplinary actions taken for individuals who wish to wear a face mask/face covering at all times

3. Cleanliness and Sanitation
   a. Each institution should take appropriate measures to provide applicable cleaning
   b. Facility:
      i. Cleaned minimum of 30 minutes before visiting team arrives
      • Once cleaned no one can enter except for the visiting team
      • Visiting team regulates the entry of team members before, during, and after competition
      ii. Must allow a minimum of 30 minutes between use of shared facilities
   c. Equipment
      i. Cleaned prior to each competition
      ii. Not used until competition begins
   d. See sport specific guidelines for additional expectations (attached)

4. Athletic Training Facilities
   a. Host institutions will determine the treatments/equipment available for use pre-game and/or post-game and guidelines for using them
   b. Must be communicated in a timely manner to visiting teams

5. Pre-game walk-throughs, shoot arounds, practices, etc are at the discretion of the host institution
   a. Desire to use a facility must be communicated within a timely manner
   b. If available must follow MSC guidelines for participation (temperature/symptoms screen, cleanliness, etc)

6. Travel Rosters
   a. Roster is set/completed after first temperature/symptoms screening before departure
   b. Official temperature/symptoms check form must be completed using the set travel roster and submitted to the designated game/event official after venue arrival
   c. If someone is disqualified from the travel roster they cannot be replaced upon arrival at the venue site
   d. Team travel party is expected to travel together

7. Officials/Game Day Personnel
   a. Must follow NAIA guidelines for competition screening
   b. Must pass temperature/symptoms checks before competitions
   c. Wear masks to, during, and from temperature/symptoms checks
   d. Must follow mask rules for specific venues
8. Equipment Use:
   a. Expected to be cleaned using local, state, and national guidelines
   b. Institutions are expected to provide their own water bottles and towels
   c. The host institution is expected to provide coolers for water and ice.
      i. Must be sealed on the spout and lid
         • Only removed by team/institution it is designated for
      ii. Must stay with designated team/institution throughout entire competition
      iii. No community water stations will be provided
      iv. Expected to provide cups (1 sleeve (100 cups/sleeve) per 10 gallon cooler)
         • ie. Football would be minimum of 6 sleeves
   d. See specific sport guidelines for additional expectations (attached)

9. Temperature and Symptoms Check Screening is Required
   a. May be completed by a non-healthcare professional
      i. May be any University or professional staff/contractors
      ii. May not be an undergraduate student
      iii. May not be a coach within the sport being tested
      iv. Must complete a standardized screener training through the NAIA (not yet active)
      v. A member of the Athletic Training/Sports Medicine staff must be on-call for potential referrals
   b. All temperature screens should use a non-contact thermometer
      i. Should be in a temperature-controlled environment when possible
      ii. If a non-contact thermometer is not available, the use of an oral thermometer should occur
   c. Self-reported symptoms should be referenced within the last 14 days and are determined to be outside of a student-athletes normal health
   d. Day Trips
      i. Screening must occur before leaving institution for travel
      ii. If the initial travel screen has occurred more than 6 hours before the start of the scheduled competition, rescreen as soon as the team unloads from the vehicle
   e. Overnight Trips
      i. Screening must occur before leaving institution for travel
      ii. Competition day screening must occur:
         • Before leaving the hotel for competition
         • As soon as the teams unloads from vehicle at the venue site
         • Must occur within six (6) hours of the start of the scheduled competition
   f. Positive Screening
      i. Only a medical professional confirms a positive screen
      ii. The host institution can consult with their Medical Director and/or team physician(s) as needed for clarification re: positive screening
      iii. Must follow guidelines within the risk category of the screening document
iv. Quarantine areas must be available for visiting teams
   - Communicated prior to and/or upon arrival
   - Cannot be in proximity of general public
     a. Near team
     b. Safe social distance
     c. If institutional guidelines for the positive screened athlete are more strict, follow your institutional guidelines
      i. “used to keep someone who might have been exposed to COVID-19 away from others”
      ii. Expected to adhere to social distance guidelines
         1. 6 ft apart
         2. Use of face coverings

v. Guidelines for elevated readings and/or signs and symptoms prior to competition(s) re: game status have not yet been determined by governing bodies and will not be addressed until appropriate requirements/recommendations are presented for adoption and implementation by the conference

   g. Documentation of Screenings
      i. Non-Healthcare Professional
         - Will follow NAIA guidelines for a non-healthcare professional screener
           a. May not be an undergraduate student
           b. May not be a coach for the team that is competing
           c. May be a
         - Must complete athletics COVID screening Pre-Participation Questionnaire for the Non-Healthcare Professional (attached)
         - Utilize Yes-No document
         - Complete spreadsheet for verification
         - Any “YES” answer or a temperature over 100.4° must be sent for referral to Athletic Trainer or Sports Medicine staff
           a. If traveling with an AT, referral evaluation may be performed by them
           b. If not traveling with an AT, referral evaluation will be performed by host institution Athletic Trainer or Sports Medicine staff
         - Must be signed by off for competition clearance
           a. Screener
           b. Host Game/Event Official
      ii. Healthcare Professional
         - Will follow NAIA guidelines for healthcare professional screener
         - Must complete athletics COVID-19 Screening Pre-Participation Questionnaire for the Healthcare Professional (attached)
         - Utilize the Scored document
         - Complete spreadsheet for verification
         - Follow “RISK” categories listed on document
• Must be signed off for competition clearance
  a. Screener
  b. Host Game/Event Official

iii. Each institution will receive the original screening spreadsheet for their team to maintain for their records

Communication
If during any of the steps for participation a student-athlete or team personnel present with a positive screening, they are disqualified (DQ) from that event. Once someone is determined to be DQ’d, follow the communication protocol provided. It is imperative that appropriate terminology is used during communication for HIPAA requirements. Communications flow charts are attached to this document.

1. NAIA Requirements
   a. Each institution is required to submit verification of screening for days of competition per NAIA protocol
   b. The host institution will not submit this verification for a visiting institution

2. MSC Requirements
   a. Days of Competition
      i. Identify DQ individual(s) at screenings by official screener
         • Include name of institution
         • Only include “disqualification/DQ”
      ii. Notify Host Athletic Director and/or designated game day official(s)
         • If not the same person, host athletic director must be notified immediately
      iii. Notify the Head Coach and Head Athletic Trainer for both teams, if available
      iv. Notify the MSC Commissioner
      v. Head Coach, Athletic Trainer, and/or Athletic Director follow their institution protocol for communication to their institution and testing
      vi. See communication flow chart below
   b. Individual Institutions
      i. Member institutions are responsible for appropriate testing of individuals with elevated temperature/symptoms screening
      ii. If a member institution has a positive COVID-19 test
         • Notify MSC commissioner of the positive test immediately with specific sport played and the teams competed against with the two to three days from onset of symptoms, per CDC and Johns Hopkins Contact Tracing Course
            a. No Name is needed
            b. Positive test is DQ until clearance from physician
               i. Must have appropriate documentation
               ii. Only provide when needed
         • MSC Commissioner will communicate to exposed institutions
Sport Specific Guidelines

All Sports – General
✓ No handshaking/unnecessary contact prior, during, or after the game
✓ Teams are responsible for appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) items at all events
✓ Teams are expected to bring their equipment (responsible for cleaning prior to use)
  • Contact host institution for equipment that will be provided
✓ No shared water bottles, PowerFlos (coolers on wheels), towels, etc.
✓ Water coolers stay with the assigned team through the entirety of competition
  • No community water stations
✓ All student-athletes must be clean (showered) before using the athletic training facilities
✓ Must follow venue specific guidelines
✓ Official Competition Day Rosters are not submitted to officials, game day administration, sports information personnel, etc. until after completion of pre-competition/event temperature/symptoms checks
✓ Coaches are expected at a minimum to wear a neck gaiter or have a mask on their person during competition and use PPE correctly when having close (less than six feet) conversation with game officials and/or game administrators

Football
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ Follow NAIA sport specific adaptations, such as sideline changes

Men’s and Women’s Soccer
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ Do not go to bench after the first game of a double header until given clearance
  • Must be cleaned between games
✓ Water coolers must be changed between games

Men’s and Women’s Cross Country
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own cooler and the host institution will fill

Men’s and Women’s Volleyball
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ Do not switch benches between sets
✓ Expected to clean balls between sets
✓ Tournaments must give ample time for cleaning between matches
✓ Follow NAIA sport specific adaptations, such as bench changes

Men’s and Women’s Golf
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own cooler and the host institution will fill
**Men’s and Women’s Basketball**
- Follow general guidelines
- Expected to clean balls
  - Men: at halftime
  - Women: at the end of each quarter
- Provide 30 minutes between games for cleaning (10 minutes cleaning – 20 minutes warm-up)
- Do not go to the bench after the first game until given clearance
  - Must be cleaned between games
- Water coolers must be changed between games

**Baseball and Softball**
- Follow general guidelines
- Baseball:
  - Maximum of 24 people in the dugout at all times
    - 20 Players
    - 3 coaches
    - 1 medical personnel
    - Base coaches are not included in the dugout number if not entering dugout area
- Softball:
  - Maximum total of 18 people in the dugout at all times
    - 14 players
    - 3 coaches
    - 1 medical personnel
    - Base coaches are not included in the dugout number if not entering dugout area
- When weather permits and able, relief pitchers and bullpen catchers should be in the bullpen area during play
  - Does not count towards the dugout number
- Any members that are on the active roster but not part of the dugout may be in the stands wearing a face mask/face covering
- If a shelter is set up outside of playing field, only participants should be within and social distancing must occur

**Men’s and Women’s Wrestling**
- Follow general guidelines
- Provide two (2) mats at dual meets to allow cleaning after each weight class
- Tournaments must clean mat after each bout and allow it to dry
  - Recommend capping tournament numbers to allow for appropriate cleaning
  - No community water stations
  - Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill

**Men’s and Women’s Swimming**
- Follow Personnel performing skin checks must wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)
- general guidelines
- No community water stations
  - Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill
Men’s and Women’s Track (Indoor and Outdoor)
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill

Men’s and Women’s Tennis
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill

Men’s and Women’s Bowling
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill

Women’s Lacrosse
✓ Follow general guidelines

Archery
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill

Cheerleading and Dance
✓ Follow general guidelines
✓ No community water stations
  • Each team must bring their own water cooler and the host institution will fill