

NCHSAA to allow phase one of resumption of high school sports on June 15, some districts will wait

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— High school sports in North Carolina will be allowed to resume on a limited basis beginning June 15, the N.C. High School Athletic Association announced on Monday.

The announcement will end a 94-day dead period for high school sports caused by the coronavirus pandemic, and comes as the NCHSAA releases strict guidelines for returning to play. However, individual school districts can implement their own guidelines that are stricter than the NCHSAA's, and could even implement a later start date.

Guidelines from the NCHSAA largely fall in line with guidelines previously released by the [N.C. Department of Health and Human Services](#) and the [National Federation of State High School Associations](#).

All sports will be allowed to resume limited workouts on June 15, but restrictions will be in place to prevent physical contact and shared equipment. Schools will also need to provide hand sanitizer and regular cleaning of high-touch surfaces.

Some school districts will not allow their schools to resume sports activities on June 15 though, including the largest two school districts

in the state. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and Wake County Schools will both wait until at least July 6 to resume high school sports, [the districts announced on Monday afternoon](#).

Phase 1: NCHSAA return to play guidelines during coronavirus

The plan is a phased resumption, and guidelines have only been released for phase one. The guidelines apply to all sports and students must complete a physical examination form, initial screening questions, and a daily monitoring form in able to participate. Plans for phase two and three will be released in coming weeks, the NCHSAA said.

Here are some of the key points from phase one:

- **Facilities Cleaning:** Cleaning schedules for all used areas must be created; All equipment and high-touch areas sanitized before and after use; Hand sanitizer must be plentiful and available; Any exposed foam on equipment must be covered; Showers should be done at home; Wash hands for at least 20 seconds after cleaning is done.
- **Entrance/Exit:** Develop a plan to prevent groups from gathering at entrances and exist to facilities, including staggered starting and ending times.
- **Limitations on Gatherings:** Workouts are limited to 90 minutes; No more than 25 people outside, no more than 10 people inside – including coaches, managers, trainers, etc. Workouts should be conducted in pods of athletes with the same 5-10 students working out together each day. There must be a minimum of 6 feet of distance between people at all times. If distance is not possible, the number of people participating must be reduced to

maintain social distance.

- **Pre-Workout Monitoring:** All coaches and students must be screened daily for symptoms of COVID-19, including a temperature check. Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 degrees or higher or who reports any symptoms will not be allowed to participate. Responses to questions must be recorded for each person. The head coach is responsible for the collection of the data each day. Students or coaches who have positive symptoms cannot return without a note from a doctor.
- **Exposure or Positive Test:** If a person on the team or staff member on a team tests positive for COVID-19, all members of that pod and those who had close contact should: (1) Quarantine until 14 days past last exposure unless a COVID-19 test comes back negative; (2) Check temperature twice daily; (3) If possible, stay away from people who are higher risk.
- **Returning After Positive Test:** To return after a positive test, an athlete or coach must meet all of these criteria: (1) No fever of 72 hours without any fever-reducing medications; (2) Resolution of respiratory symptoms; (3) At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; (4) A note of clearance from a licensed medical provider
- **Face Coverings:** State, local, or district guidelines for face coverings must be followed. Coaches, managers, and staff are strongly encouraged to wear coverings at all times; Athletes are strongly recommended to wear face coverings when not engaged in physical activity; Face coverings cannot be shared; Plastic shields covering the face will not be allowed during participation due to risk of injury; Artificial noisemakers can be used instead of whistles.
- **Hygiene:** Wash hands for at least 20 seconds; Sneeze or cough

into a tissue or inside of elbow; Avoid touching face, eyes, nose;
No spitting.

- **Hydration/Food:** No sharing of water bottles; All students must bring their own water bottle; Hydration stations cannot be used by individuals; Designate one person to refill water bottles; Food cannot be shared.
- **Team Travel:** No team travel permitted.

The NCHSAA will keep in place the dead period the week of July 4, but the dead period surrounding the N.C. Coaches Association clinic has been canceled for one year.

NCHSAA guidelines include breaking sports down in lower risk and higher risk categories, with specific guidelines for each sport. Lower risk sports include:

- **Baseball:** Conditioning and "tee" or pitching machine are acceptable. Players must not share gloves or bats, or throw a single ball that will be tossed among the team. A single player may hit in cages, throwing batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). Prior to another athlete using the same balls, the must be collected in disinfected individually. Dugouts are closed in phase one.
- **Cross Country:** Runners must maintain at least six feet of distance between individuals, no grouping at starts or finishes.
- **Golf:** Maintain appropriate physical distancing of at least six feet.
- **Softball:** Conditioning and "tee" or pitching machine are acceptable. Players must not share gloves or bats, or throw a single ball that will be tossed among the team. A single player may hit in cages, throwing batting practice (with netting as backstop, no catcher). Prior to another athlete using the same

balls, they must be collected and disinfected individually. Dugouts are closed in phase one.

- **Swimming & Diving:** Maintain appropriate distance of at least six feet.
- **Tennis:** Conditioning; No sharing of balls. Each player may use their own can of balls to serve. Ball machine use by individuals only. Players may do individual drills, wall volleys, and serves. Disinfect rackets & balls after use.
- **Track & Field:** Runners must maintain at least six feet of distance with no grouping, such as at starts and finishes. No sharing of implements or equipment. Padded equipment, landing pits, and poles must be disinfected between each use.

High risk sports include:

- **Basketball:** Conditioning and individual basketball skill drills are permitted. No contact or sharing of balls. A player may practice shooting and must retrieve their own ball. A player must not participate in drills with a single ball that will be handed off or passed to other teammates.
- **Cheerleading:** Conditioning and individual technique or choreography work is permitted. Students cannot practice or perform partner or group stunts. Chants, jumps, dance, tumbling without contact are permissible with six feet of distance.
- **Football:** Wearing protective equipment is prohibited during phase one. Conditioning and individual skill drills are permitted. A player must not participate in drills with a single ball that will be handed off or passed to other teammates. Contact with other players is not allowed. Tackling dummies, donuts, and sleds must be disinfected after each use.

- **Lacrosse:** Wearing protective equipment is prohibited during phase one. Conditioning and individual drills are allowed. Contact with other players is not allowed. There can be no sharing of equipment.
- **Soccer:** Conditioning, individual ball skills are permitted. Each player has their own ball which is disinfected at the end of workout. Use feet only, no heading or use of hands. No contact allowed.
- **Volleyball:** Conditioning and individual skills permitted. Each player must have their own ball. A player must not participate in drills with a single ball that will be bumped, served, or passed to other teammates.
- **Wrestling:** Mat room is closed in phase one. Conditioning, mirror drills with spacing are permitted. No contact allowed. Wrestlers may skill and drill, without touching a teammate, with six feet of distance.

The NCHSAA coronavirus dead period began on Mar. 13 and has been extended three times. The pandemic caused the cancellation of the spring sports season and the basketball state championship games, but the board of directors [voted to crown co-state champions](#) for the first time in the association's history.



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