



# **Soccer Officials Considerations for COVID-19 Soccer Guidelines**

September 14, 2020

Included below are considerations for contest officials within the guidelines for returning to school sports. They include general expectations for schools in relation to officials, provisions specific to officials in the sport, rules and mechanics modifications and protocols for when a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 is identified.

**Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as physical distancing, hand washing, symptoms of illnesses and other such issues. This monitoring remains the responsibility of the coaching staff and school personnel.**

## **General Expectations for Schools**

- School athletic directors and officials should communicate with one another well in advance of the contest so that there is a clear understanding as to what is expected from each. Failure to discuss the details may create greater conflicts at the date/time of the contest.
- Officials should be provided a designated parking area apart from the public.
- An adult host should meet the officials at a single, designated location and time for arrival. They should be escorted all together to an open and ventilated meeting area before the start of the contest, to and from the contest during any intermissions and to the parking areas following the conclusion of the contest.
- Officials should bring their own beverages and snacks to limit contact and interaction.
- It is recommended that officials' fees are paid using an electronic payment method.

## **Protocols for Suspected Cases of COVID-19**

### **Suspected Cases at Contest**

- If an official becomes symptomatic at a contest, he or she should be moved to a designated quarantine area with a mask in place until they are transported from the facility. If the symptoms are severe, the official should be picked up by an emergency contact or by ambulance (if clinically unstable) for off-site testing. If an ambulance is called, or someone is being transported to the hospital, there should be an attempt to call the hospital first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.



## Officials' Sport-Specific Provisions

It is incumbent of FHSAA officials to take necessary precautions to ensure a safe working/playing environment. This is especially important for those considered “vulnerable individuals” – people 65 years and older and others with serious underlying health conditions. Individual circumstances, proximity to others while officiating and overall risk level will determine for many the extent of precautions taken.

Provisions are listed in categories described below. As independent contractors, FHSAA officials can choose or decline assignments as they see fit. Likewise, because officials are hired by the schools, districts and their administrators may require additional precautions be taken by officials that work their contests beyond those mandated in this document. Officials should check with the schools as to any additional precautions or requirements before accepting an assignment and/or arriving to contest.

### Provision Categories

**Permitted** – Precautions and safety measures which officials can take during FHSAA contests. This list is not exhaustive and officials should contact the host school for guidance if they wish to take further precautions not listed in this document.

**Highly Suggested** – Best practices for FHSAA officials based on the recommendations of health professionals. Not required, but should be followed if possible.

**NOTE:** “Physical distancing” refers to a separation of individuals of at least six feet, except for momentary interactions.

### Permitted Provisions:

- Officials may use electronic whistles.
- Long sleeves are permissible.
- Other accommodations will be considered. Associations are asked to reach out to the FHSAA staff to present accommodations.
- Officials may wear gloves – including medical latex gloves, work gloves or gloves designed specifically for officiating.
- Officials may wear plastic face shields which connect to a hat, wrap around the forehead or that hang around the neck.

### Highly Suggested Provisions:

- Each official should check his/her temperature on game days. Officials displaying COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, or shortness of breath), or with temperatures of 100.3F or greater, should stay home and consider coronavirus testing if symptoms persist.
- Officials should bring their own marked beverage(s) and snacks.



- Upon arrival at the site/facility and throughout the contest, officials should wash and sanitize their hands frequently.
- Officials should not share uniforms, towels, apparel or equipment.
- Cloth or surgical face coverings, which cover the mouth and nose are recommended for individuals that can wear them without significant impact upon breathing.
- Officials should sanitize their hands before and after inspecting soccer balls.
- Officials will arrive to the site or facility dressed in their uniforms (uniform tops may be put on at the facility).
- Officials will arrange to arrive to the site/facility at a single location and time. Unless unavoidable, officials will enter the facility as a group, maintaining proper physical distancing.
- Officials' pregame meetings shall be conducted while practicing proper physical distancing.
- Officials shall not engage in pregame/postgame handshakes or fist bumps with players, coaches, or administrators.
- Officials shall not physically contact players during the contest, including players that appear to be injured or ill.
- Officials will maintain physical distancing with each other unless conferencing about a call or ruling. In those cases, the officials should avoid speaking face-to-face.

## **Rules Modifications (Soccer)**

- ***Pregame Conference (5-2-2d)***
  - Limit attendees to head referee 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. All individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet.
  - Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Conference.
- ***Ball Holders (6-1)***
  - Encourage social distancing of 6 feet
- ***Team Benches (1-5-1)***
  - Encourage bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet.



- ***Substitution Procedures (3-4)***
  - Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the center line.
  
- ***Officials Table (6-2; 6-3)***
  - Limit to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommend 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.