



2020-21 CAA Wrestling Recommendations for Practice and Competition

This document provides guidance and recommendations for schools, administrators, coaches and athletes to follow in accordance with the NFHS, NWCA, USA Wrestling, State and Local restrictions and recommendations. Wrestling, as is true of any sport, cannot eliminate risk from the training and competitive environment. The focus for everyone involved in athletics is to manage risk and reduce known factors that increase exposure to risks. Prevention has always been paramount to wrestling programs at all levels and proper protocols have historically been a part of a comprehensive training and competition plan. Among high school and college sports, wrestling has implemented rigorous prevention and control measures to reduce risk of common sports infections such as Ringworm, Impetigo, Herpes Gladiatorum, Scabies and MRSA. There are several strategies that can be implemented to reduce risk to the wrestler and to make the wrestling environment as safe as possible. Wrestling is considered the highest risk athletic activity thus it is imperative that these recommendations are followed in order for the student/athletes to have the best opportunity for a season and competition.

PRACTICE/SCREENING AND ASSESSMENT

- Daily screening of symptoms
- If the athlete has any signs or symptoms of COVID-19, they should be sent home and instructed to contact their healthcare provider.
- All participants must self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19 daily. Additionally, athletes should monitor whether they have been in contact with people who are suspected of having COVID-19. If any signs or symptoms of infection are present, the participant should not attend the practice, should notify parents and coaches, and should contact their healthcare provider.
- Coaches should also perform skin checks and possibly ask of any ongoing injuries to familiarize themselves with each athlete's current health status.
- Recommend practicing by group (ie. Lower weight class together; higher weight class together).
- Open doors/windows for ventilation, when possible.
- Move mats outside, to larger area to allow appropriate ventilation, when possible.

The implementation of the above core principals will allow COVID-19 risk to be managed in the wrestling environment, thus increasing the likelihood of wrestling being favorably reviewed and restarted. This is another opportunity for coaches to provide feedback.

PROMOTING/MAINTAINING BEHAVIORS THAT REDUCE SPREAD

- There should be no shared athletic towels, clothing, headgear or shoes.
- Shoes should be put on in the wrestling facility or a shoe cleaning station should be provided at entry. Example: wet towel or shoe tray.
- Individuals should wear their own appropriate workout clothes and use clean clothes daily including sanitizing shoes and headgear before and after practice.

- Individuals should bring their own water bottle and it should not be shared.
- Implement and maintain all existing recommendations for a clean and sanitized training and competition environment.
- Hand sanitizer and towelettes should be readily available in the practice and competition environments.
- Rigorously clean wrestling mats and any used equipment before and after use.
- All athletes should immediately shower upon conclusion of practice.

PRACTICE

- Rigorously clean wrestling mats and any used equipment before and after use.
- Coaches must consider new ways to operate practice to best meet our current circumstances.
- Limit the number of athletes practicing at one time. Consider separating varsity and junior high teams. By doing this you may salvage losing an entire program.
- Avoid switching wrestlers from one group to another group during a given practice.
- Keep groups similar during all sessions.
- When a coach demonstrates technique, they should use the same partner as often as possible.
- Limit team gatherings before and after practice. Example: announcements, after practice talks.
- Team personnel should be the only people allowed into a wrestling facility during practice times to minimize risk of spread.
- Maintain social distancing of six feet whenever possible.
- RECONDITIONING/ACCLIMATIZATION? 10 Days (line drills, flexibility, strength and conditioning, shadow drilling/individual drills) it is strongly recommended that every coach consider how to recondition all athletes in the wrestling room. Some may have been working out all summer, some may be coming from another sport and some may have done nothing for the past 8 months. Whether it is one preseason or the first two weeks of the season a thought-out plan should be utilized to insure best practices.

COMPETITION

- The competition environment should implement strict screening and assessment guidelines for teams with special attention to minimizing team interactions between opposing teams.
- Consider LIVE STREAMING or TRACKCAST to limit fan congestion in the competition facility.
- Online ticket purchase suggested, such as Ticket Spicket
- Face coverings are required upon arrival to the competition site for everyone except wrestler when they are warming up or competing. MANDATORY; do not attend if you don't feel you will be able to abide by this requirement.
- Only bring wrestlers that will be competing.
- Only opposing individual wrestlers should come into direct contact with one another.

Sports at all levels from novice to professional have been under tremendous scrutiny as they restart and this is especially true for wrestling. The COVID-19 pandemic has abruptly changed the way we conduct our everyday life. With many changes occurring to other sports it is incumbent upon wrestling coaches to involve themselves in advocating for the sport to safely return to high school athletic programs for the 2020-2021 competitive season and beyond. Use the resources in this guide to inform yourself about COVID-19 and what you can do to implement safer training and competition conditions.