



2020-2021

MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Cross Country, Girls and Boys

Note that the resumption of all activities and athletics are subject to change based on the most current information, directives from state government and health department officials, and member school feedback.

Cross Country, Boys and Girls:

Start date: August 17

First competition date: August 27

Last date of regular season competition: October 10

End date: October 24

Total weeks including postseason: 10

Maximum number of contests: 7

Maximum number of contests per week: 2

Dual or Tri meets only (No invites)

Opponents: Conference, Section, local teams only

- All aspects of athletics including meetings, practices, competitions, transportation and facility usage must align with the requirements of the Minnesota Department of Education plan for return to learning, must follow the requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health's Guidance on Youth Sports, and must include the required actions identified in the Governor's Executive Orders.
- The first week of practice should focus on implementing effective protocols and routines for pre-participation screenings, effective social distancing, compliance with all health recommendations, establishment of pod limits of 25 or less, and additional actions that mitigate the spread of disease and enhance safety of students and coaches.
- Athletic programs must follow the identified protocols for students or coaches who have tested positive, are experiencing symptoms consistent with a COVID-19 diagnosis or have had exposure to an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- For schools that are required by localized metrics to be in a distance learning mode, practices are limited to virtual contact only.
- Interscholastic scrimmages will not be allowed.
- No captain's practices should be held.
- Competitions with opponents from bordering states are allowed when less than 50 miles one way and when determined as local. Competitions of greater distances may be approved by the MSHSL with supporting rationale. Any out of state competition must follow MSHSL guidelines for competition types.
- Sportsmanship should have a constant presence in all school-based athletics.
 - Teams are encouraged to find appropriate methods of demonstrating good sportsmanship and respect towards others within the physical distance guidance.
 - Additional care should be taken when addressing contest officials with questions or seeking interpretations. At no time, other than in the natural course of competition, should a coach or player violate the required physical distance with an official. Any coach or player verbally interacts with an official must do so with a mask on and at a safe distance.



COVID-19 NOTICE
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

In accordance with governmental directives, the MSHSL will offer certain activities subject to compliance with local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and guidelines. The Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Department of Education and the MSHSL have developed guidance and requirements related to youth sports, use of school facilities and modifications of MSHSL activities designed to keep participants safe and reduce the spread of COVID-19. Even with these measures, the MSHSL cannot guarantee that students or other individuals participating in organized athletic activities (“Participants”) will not be exposed to COVID-19. Participants and their parents/legal guardians should consider the risks before participating in any MSHSL activities. It is a shared responsibility to protect everyone from COVID-19 and Participants should follow MDH/CDC guidelines to reduce the risk of exposure, including but not limited to the following:

- Stay home as much as possible;
- Stay at least 6 feet from other people if you are in public places;
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick;
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water. Wash for at least 20 seconds;
- Always wash your hands after being in a public place;
- Always wash your hands after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
- If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that is at least 60% alcohol;
- Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze. Cough or sneeze into your elbow or a tissue. Throw used tissues in the trash;
- Wear face coverings/masks that cover your nose and mouth and fit snugly against the sides of your face.

In recognizing the serious nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and the positive impact that participation in MSHSL fine arts activities and athletics has on student participants, it is imperative that students and families know and understand the following:

1. Participating in MSHSL activities is **voluntary**.
2. While participating in MSHSL activities, all laws as well as MSHSL and school rules, guidelines, and protocols related to COVID-19 must be followed.
3. Participant acknowledges the contagious nature of COVID-19, and the Participant understands that there is risk of injury and/or illness from participating in MSHSL activities, including the risk to have direct or indirect contact with individuals who have been exposed to and/or diagnosed with COVID-19.
4. Participant agrees that if he/she is exposed to, or infected by, COVID-19 during the period of participation, they will immediately cease participation and follow Minnesota Department of Health protocols for schools and activities and MSHSL guidelines for notification and return to participation.
5. Participant has signed a separate Eligibility Statement connected to general participation in MSHSL athletics/activities and agrees that the terms of that statement are wholly incorporated into this document and that the terms of this document are incorporated into the Eligibility Statement.

Additional information regarding Activity Participation and COVID can be found at:

- health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sportsguide.pdf,
- health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf
- www.mshsl.org
- www.nfhs.org

General COVID Safety:

1. Educate athletes about physical distancing, handwashing and sanitizer use, and other immune system protocols.
2. Any person who has had a fever or cold symptoms in the previous 24 hours should not be allowed to take part in workouts and should contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.
3. Individually or as a team, participants should confirm that they are symptom free. These confirmations can be aligned with the CDC's "Coronavirus Self-Checker" or current MDH recommendations.
4. A record should be kept of all individuals present at practices and competitions (contact tracing).
5. It is recommended that personal prep areas are to be set up prior to practice - Cones or other markers should be set up at least 6 feet apart so players have a specific place for their own bag, water bottle, etc. One cone or marker should be assigned per player.
6. Avoid grouping of athletes at start and end of practice or during transitions Staggered start times for practices and team meetings are recommended, when possible and when field space does not allow players to come and go from separate areas.
7. Workouts should be conducted in "pods" – following current MDH Return-to-Play guidelines. Pods are small groups of students always working out together. This will ensure limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
8. Whenever possible, players should maintain the recommended six feet of distancing between individuals and should not be in contact with each other. In addition, there is to be no sharing of equipment to the extent that it is possible.
9. Officials are not expected to monitor physical distancing: each person is responsible to provide space between themselves and others. Coaches should provide direction to their students regarding social distancing and other safety protocols.
10. Team celebrations or congratulations should be no-touch and should be done with appropriate social distancing.
11. When spectators are allowed at outside events, they should not have access to student athletes during the competition. Social distancing should be practiced throughout the entire event and spectators may connect with participants following the completion of the event.

MSHSL Cross Country Guidance and Information

Practice	
Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Runners must maintain the recommended six feet of distancing between individuals and must not be in contact with each other,
Recommendations and Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks are strongly recommended for student-athletes and coaches before and after practice Masks not recommended while running. Recommended that all activities occur outdoors. Clean frequently touched areas and provide ample hand sanitizer.
Equipment	
Recommendations and Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual student equipment / Personal Items.
Competition	
Masks/Face Coverings	
Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All participants, including student-athletes, coaches, officials, and meet personnel, must wear masks if they cannot socially distance at 6 feet from others, unless actively participating in the meet. This includes coming and going from the venue.
Recommendations and Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks may be worn by competitors during a race if desired.
Equipment	
Recommendations And Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No touch distribution and collection methods are strongly encouraged.
Site Set Up	
Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When spectators are allowed, they must NOT have access to athletes and must be restricted to areas outside of the course width. Design start area with boxes of 6' in width, with an empty 10' box between each school/team. If unable to accommodate in a straight line, consider use of a staggered/wave or interval start. Team camps areas, if permitted, should be isolated from spectators or other non-essential personnel. Team camps must be only available to members of that specific team, and

	<p>not a shared/common space. Social distancing requirements of 6 feet must be maintained in these areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host schools must work with timing company to set up timing system that works for the type of meet. • There must be a restricted area at the finish that keeps spectators away, so they do not interfere with the "quick exit" of each athlete. • There must be a restricted area at the finish that maintains distance between spectators, athletes, and officials. Spectators should not interfere with the "quick exit" of each athlete.
Recommendations and Considerations:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host schools may add course monitors / marshals to the course in multiple key spots to monitor social distancing. • Additional flagging or signage may be necessary to identify restricted spectator areas. • Clean frequently touched areas and provide ample hand sanitizer.
Pre-competition	
Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 25 participants may be on the start line. • Entries by teams: Triangular: 8 or less Dual: 12 or less. Coaches should consider grouping athletes from the same training pod together. • Runners shall arrive at the starting line 15 minutes before the race begins. There shall be no clerking at the start line. • Team run outs need to be done straight out from the team box, maintain physical distancing from other teams. • No pre-race handshakes or fist bumps.
Recommendations and Considerations:	
Competition	
Required:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A race is a specific gender and specific level event that is timed. A meet is the entirety of the event between two or three teams. • A meet is multiple teams with multiple levels of races. A race is a single event within the meet. • Varsity and JV races may be held on the same course. Meet management must allow time for competitors (teams) in the first race to clear the course before the next group of teams enter the start area. • JV Races: staggered/wave starts are required if there are more than 25 runners competing in a JV race. This can be done multiple ways as determined by meet management (i.e.

	<p>starting each teams’ runners together based upon ability, times, position on team, etc.). Wave start groupings must be coordinated with the finish timer to ensure: 1) appropriate timing between each wave start; 2) proper timing of runners in each wave; and 3) minimizing the mixing of multiple waves. JV runners may be placed in waves of 25. Meet Management shall determine the number of waves for each race. Social distancing required of all attendees including participants, coaches, officials, and spectators.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No collection of warmups at the start area. Runners will return to the start area to retrieve their own warmups. • If shoe chips are used, then the coach of each school must collect and turn in following the meet.
<p>Recommendations and Considerations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The use of an open finish corral is recommended to allow runners to immediately exit the finish area. • It is strongly recommended that each team is asked to provide a representative in the finish corral to assist each of their team's athletes to quickly exit the corral. Each representative must be wearing a mask, gloves, and social distancing from individuals not of their team. • Inclement weather: PRE-RACE: The Games Committee and/or Meet Management would decide if it was safe to start a race based on weather information that can be gathered (i.e. lighting detector) and following the MSHSL severe weather protocol. If a delay occurred causing the race start time to be altered, the newly established start time should also include a warm-up period for all competitors. If there is a need to suspend the meet, then all in attendance at the site should seek shelter in their own car and/or bus. The race will be contested when conditions are safe and warranted. • Clean frequently touched areas and provide ample hand sanitizer.
<p>Post-Competition</p>	
<p>Required:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No post-race handshakes or fist bumps. • No award ceremonies following meet.
<p>Recommendations and Considerations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that athletes, coaches, and team personnel leave the site of competition as soon as possible.

NFHS Official Rules Considerations:

Rule 8-1-3a: Consider widening the course to at least 6’ of width at its most narrow point.

Rule 8-13d: Finish Corral/Chute: Removal of the “Chute” as an option for the finish area, and instead all meets must establish a “Corral” of over 100’ in length and 12’ in width to accommodate finishers.

Rule 8.2: Individual finishes are ranked by time after races finish and team results are merged.