



BH-BL Return to Interscholastic Athletics Standard Operating Procedures for Winter High Risk Sports 2021

INTRODUCTION

The BH-BL Central School District recognizes the extraordinary nature of the precautions that must be taken to keep students and staff safe during this COVID-19 pandemic of 2020-21. At the same time, the district is keenly aware of the importance of providing, to the greatest extent practicable, opportunities for students who have been deprived of extra curricular activities of all types for nearly a year.

On Friday, January 22, 2021 Governor Andrew Cuomo [announced](#) that school-sponsored “high risk” sports in all regions may begin to practice and play beginning February 1st with local county health department approval. Subsequently, the Saratoga County Department of Health created a [detailed set of guidelines](#) (released January 29, 2021) under which individual school districts could gain the needed approval.

According to the Saratoga County DOH Guidelines and requirements, a plan must be developed and approved by both the District Medical Director (School Physician) and the BH-BL Board of Education. To that end, the district has developed the following plan to offer a limited season for the four high-risk winter sports (basketball, cheerleading, hockey, and wrestling) in a manner that addresses all aspects of the Saratoga County Department of Health *Guidance and Requirements For Resumption of K-12 Higher-Risk Sports Activities*.

HEALTH-RELATED REQUIREMENTS

Baseline For Return to Athletics: In compliance with the DOH recommendations, the 7-day rolling average percent positivity in Saratoga county, [as calculated by NYSDOH](#), must be at or below 4.0%. If the 7-day rolling average percent positivity is above 4.0%, then activities will be restricted to individual or distanced group training or organized no/low-contact group training. In addition, we will abide by the following metrics:

- The region's hospital capacity (percent of hospital beds available) must be above 15%, as calculated by NYSDOH.
- The region's rate of hospital admissions must not be unacceptably high or require additional interventions to control the rate of growth, as determined by NYSDOH.
- The absence of other emerging epidemiological data, information or factors as determined or identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) or Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCPHS) that impact COVID-19 control or mitigation.

Testing- The district will cooperate with all testing protocols for athletes, coaches, and officials that will be released by the Saratoga County DOH next week.

Health Screening- The NYSED has extended the validity of school sport physicals through the end of the 2021 school year. Any student-athlete who had a physical in the 2018-19 or 2019-20 sport seasons can get medically cleared for Winter 2021 with an updated Interval Health History form to be submitted within 30 days of the start of the season. Any student-athlete who did not have a sport physical during that time frame MUST obtain a new one.

Health History - Beginning with the Fall 2020 season, member schools should update their health history **documents to include questions regarding Covid-19 infections and diagnosis**. These questions will be used by the school health care providers to identify those student-athletes who may require additional medical screening before being cleared for sports. Recommendations for these changes can be found in the NYSPHSAA "Return to Athletics" document.

Informed Consent- All parents will sign an informed consent for emailed to them through the athletic parent portal (Family ID). In addition, each parent/guardian, student-athlete, and school official, coach, referee, and manager will agree to fully

cooperate with case investigations and contact elicitation and to adhere to isolation and quarantine orders.

LOGISTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Definition of Winter High Risk Sports Season - The Winter 2021 sports season for High Risk sports will commence on Monday, February 1st and will conclude on March 13, 2021. Seasons will conclude with a Suburban Council championship tournament in each sport, if applicable. ***Section 2 Athletics has determined that during the Winter 2021 sports season, no sectionals will be conducted.***

BH-BL Guidance for Coaches- This document is a part of the BH-BL Return to Athletics plan. It contains specific guidance for coaches regarding dates, schedules, transportation, coaching requirements, student athlete requirements, screening, mask policy, locker room/bathroom policy, athletic placement, athletic trainer guidelines, equipment cleaning, practice guidelines, booster clubs and concessions.

Schedules - as part of the return the play protocols for the Winter 2021 High Risk sports season, the Suburban Council has reduced league schedules to the following number of scheduled contests:

Boys and Girls Basketball - max of 14 league games plus tournament

Ice Hockey - max of 12 league games plus tournament

Cheerleading - 4 competitions max

Wrestling - TBD

Sub-Varsity Competition - for the Winter 2021 High Risk sports season, the Suburban Council will only offer junior varsity schedules in addition to varsity. The scheduling of freshmen and modified games has been suspended for the Winter 2021 season. Member schools may offer freshmen and modified sports, but will not be provided league schedules.

Play Dates - league schedules will focus on having member schools play 3 days a week for boys and girls basketball, 2 days in hockey, 2 days in wrestling and 1 day in cheerleading.

Standardized start times will be:

Boys and Girls Basketball: Weekday start times will be 4:30 for Junior Varsity and 6:15 pm for Varsity. Saturday game times will be standardized as 11am and 12:45pm for Junior Varsity and Varsity Games

Wrestling - 4:30 pm for JV and 6 pm for Varsity

Ice Hockey - TBD depending on availability of rink time.

Cheerleading - Saturdays

Games times can be changed by mutual agreement of member schools.

The Seven Day Rule has been waived by NYSPHSAA for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.

Out of Section Games - For the Winter 2021 season, Suburban Council member schools have agreed all games to be played inside the boundaries of Section 2.

Roster Size - For the Winter 2021 season, member schools are responsible for their team roster size and should consider limiting the travel party for each sport. Each school agrees that only 3 non athletes or coaches (scorekeeper, statisticians) will be allowed to accompany teams.

COMPETITIONS

Transportation - Outlined in the [BH-BL Guidance for Coaches](#) above

Arrival at Facility - Teams should arrive at a visiting facility no earlier than 30 minutes prior to the scheduled contest. All visiting players, coaches and team personnel should be wearing masks and adhering to proper social distancing guidelines. To the best of their ability, teams should come ready to play and in uniform.

Hosting a Competition: Each School/Athletic Office/ Coach needs to make sure to have an administrative contact (cell number and email address) for all events. Each school should communicate ahead of time with the incoming schools and officials about procedures, policies and guidelines.

Examples to be covered include but not limited to, the following:

- Parking

- Where to enter facility;
- What equipment should the visiting team bring;
- Water availability
- Bench area seating (how many players can be accommodated to maintain social distancing);
- Locker room availability and resources;
- Emergency action plans;
- How will game day paperwork be handled (electronic exchange of information is preferred).

The coach of the home team should walk their facility to ensure that it has been properly sanitized before the visiting team has arrived. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment. Hand sanitizer and disposable masks is the responsibility of each team.

Exchange of rosters should be done electronically prior to the contest. Each athlete should have their own water bottle.

Limit the table to essential personnel, including the home team scorer and timer, with a recommended distance of 6 feet between individuals. Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc.) are not deemed essential and may need to find an alternative location. Space availability at the table is a variable in determining the number of individuals permitted at the officials' table. ***Visiting Team managers must follow the NYSPHSAA Guidelines.***

Pregame and postgame- There will be no shaking hands during introductions. Traditional pre-game introductions should be altered to ensure social distancing occurs. There shall be no postgame game hand shakes.

Bench Setup - All accommodations should be made for social distancing while athletes are in the bench area.

Officials - a member of the home team should greet officials and inform them of any individual's school procedures or policies. Officials are encouraged to come dressed to officiate. Officials are not responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines such as social distancing and mask wearing. Officials will be required to self certify per the requirements of the host school. Within the self certify officials will need to agree with

full cooperation in case investigations and contact elicitation and adherence to isolation and quarantine orders.

Spectators - Schools must follow the Department of Health's guidance for the conduct of their school sports as it pertains to spectators. Schools agree to follow Suburban Council school district and county health department protocols regarding spectators.

As of January 26th, all Suburban Council athletic contests held indoors will be conducted without spectators. The issue of allowing limited spectators will be reviewed at a later date

Exception: Each team in each high risk sport will be allowed to conduct one senior recognition ceremony prior to February 21st. The structure of the senior recognition ceremony should follow established SC Athletics Guidelines. All social distancing guidelines will be in effect for these ceremonies. Only senior parents/guardians of the home team may attend.

Promotion: For the Winter 2021 season, it is recommended that once the first league game starts, coaches at each school track all promotions to ensure proper contact tracing should it be needed. ***The Suburban Council Promotion rule is suspended for the Winter 2021 season.***

OTHER

Reporting Concerns or Violations

The district will establish a phone line and email address where any Covid-19 related questions or concerns can be confidentially reported.

[2021 January NYSPHSAA Return to Interscholastic Athletics](#)

Coach Training (see [BH-BL Guidance for Coaches](#))

All Coaches in the Suburban Council will be required to attend a pre-season meeting to review sport specific safety protocols as well as consistent game day procedures.

SPORT-SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

Winter 2021 Sports - Rules and Regulations during COVID-19:

For the following sports please see the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Return to Interscholastic Athletics for individual consideration for running a contest in each of the following sports. The Suburban Council added additional considerations (some highlighted in red) on the documents below.

- [Boys and Girls Basketball](#)
- [Wrestling](#)
- [Ice Hockey](#)
- [Cheerleading](#)

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

See Page 5 of the [NYS Interim Guidance for Sport and Recreation](#) for further details.

[2021 January NYSPHSAA Return to Interscholastic Athletics](#)

[Official Saratoga County DOH Guidance](#)

[Saratoga County DOH Guidance Compliance Analysis](#)