



MPA Cross Country Committee Recommendation for Return to Participation

Referencing Orders and Guidelines from the Following Resources

National Federation of State High School Associations
Governor's Office - State of Maine
Maine Department of Education
Maine Department of Economic & Community Development
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Maine Principals' Association Sports Medicine Committee

The NFHS, along with the Maine Guidelines for Community Based Sports, has labeled the sport of cross country as “Level 5” or a “Lower Risk” activity. “Lower Risk” activities are those that can be done with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors. The following recommendations are being made in accordance with NFHS and the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development guidelines.

Coaches and School Administrator(s) should hold a team educational session prior to the first contest to educate student-athletes of all rules related to competitive competition with other school districts and the requirements outlined below. In addition, each coach, paid and volunteer, must complete the free Covid-19 course called Covid-19 for Coaches and Administrators currently available on the NFHS Learn platform at <https://nfhslearn.com/>.

CROSS COUNTRY RULE CONSIDERATIONS

- **PRE-RACE**

- Widen courses to 6 feet at their narrowest point.
- Course sections where runners potentially overlap should maintain enough width for 6 feet of spacing between athletes.
- Meet directors should designate areas for team tents that are at least 20 feet apart. Participants should not congregate under the tent and should maintain appropriate 6 foot spacing.
- Runners should wear face coverings to the start line of the race. Runners should wear a disposable mask that can be discarded prior to starting or wear a cloth mask that they can carry with them throughout the race. Trash receptacles should be available at the starting line for athletes to discard face coverings, preventing having to pick them up off the ground by another individual. Athletes should not wear warm up clothing to the starting line; they should come to the starting line ready to run.
- Divide the starting line to accommodate spacing based on the number of runners. Waves should be stationed 6 feet apart.

- Coaches are responsible for picking up race packets prior to race. Face coverings should be worn when picking up packets.
- **RACE**
 - Cross country meets should consider using staggered, wave, or interval starts.
 - Pack running should be discouraged and runners should strive to maintain 6 feet of social distance throughout the race.
 - The finish corral should be widened to encourage distancing. Runners should try not to collapse at the finish line. Runners should disperse immediately after they finish and return to their team site.
 - Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the [Governor's Executive Order](#) on gathering size limits, currently set at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors, or fewer if distancing rules cannot be accommodated. (Updated 9/1/20)
 - Players, coaches, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
 - If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
- **POST-RACE**
 - Runners should disperse immediately after they finish and return to their team area and put on a face mask.
 - Eliminate hugs, handshakes, high fives, and fist bumps after the meet.
- **DISTANCING**
 - Social distancing of at least 6 feet should always be maintained. No hugging, hand shaking, high fives, or fist bumps are allowed.
 - Race officials should identify staff members or volunteers to help maintain physical distancing among runners.
- **FACE COVERINGS**
 - Require individuals to wear a face covering when physical distancing is difficult to maintain, per CDC recommendations and pertinent Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor.
 - Face coverings are not currently recommended for athletes during high intensity practice or competition.
 - Athletes must wear face coverings when not engaged in the race.
 - Face coverings must be worn by coaches, staff, officials, and spectators.
 - To facilitate the use of a face covering, coaches and officials should consider using an artificial noisemaker such as an air horn or electronic whistle in place of a whistle.
- **SCHEDULING**
 - Schools are encouraged to schedule meets that will keep participants under the gathering limit guidelines.
 - As a Level 5 activity, competition between teams from the same geographic area (e.g. the same county and in some cases adjacent counties) is recommended.
 - Competition between teams from different geographic areas within Maine is permitted (except for counties classified by yellow or red in DOE guidance) and may allow for end of season meets.
- **FACILITY**
 - When possible, schools should provide separate entrance and exit for teams and spectators to separate the teams from spectators.
 - Medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space for if an athlete becomes sick during the meet.

- Home teams shall provide hand sanitizer/sanitizing stations.

- **VISITING TEAM**

- Visiting teams should arrive in a self-sufficient manner
 - Come ready to compete dressed in uniform
 - Medical kit with necessary athletic training supplies
 - This should include back up face coverings and gloves.
 - Visiting teams should plan to bring their own water jug for their student-athletes to refill their water vessels.
 - These jugs/refill station should be clearly marked with the team name and purpose of only for use by such school when possible.
 - Home team medical staff must brief visiting coaches of protocols and isolation space if an athlete becomes sick during competition.

- **SCREENING**

- It should be the understanding of all teams involved in the race that student-athletes have completed a self-screening for signs and symptoms of COVID-19, prior to participation or entrance into an opposing school's facilities.
- All game day staff/officials will be asked to complete self-screening questions prior to arriving at the event.

- **STUDENTS**

- Students are responsible for their own supplies.
- Athletes should wear their own appropriate workout clothing - they should not share clothing. All workout clothing should be washed immediately upon returning home.
- Athletes should immediately tell coaches when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted.
- Athletes must bring their own water bottles.

- **SPECTATORS**

The approval of spectators, if allowed, must follow the guidelines below.

- Organizers of community sports activities are responsible for limiting the number of individuals that can gather in a shared space, in accordance with the [Governor's Executive Order](#) on gathering size limits, currently set at 50 people indoors and 100 people outdoors, or fewer if distancing rules cannot be accommodated. (Updated 9/1/20)
 - Players, coaches, race officials/workers, volunteers, and spectators count toward the gathering limit.
 - If a space cannot accommodate the gathering limit without complying with the 6-foot distancing requirement, occupancy in that space must be limited to allow for such compliance.
- Masks should always be worn by coaches, staff, race officials/workers, and spectators.
- Spectators must maintain 6 feet of physical distance between each other and runners.

- **OFFICIALS**

- Bring hand sanitizer and wash hands regularly.
- Follow social distancing guidelines:
 - Pre and post meet conferences
 - Clerking at the start line
 - Tabulations and posting of results

- Do not shake hands.
- Official personnel should always wear cloth face coverings.
- Social distancing guidelines should be employed during the meet for officials when interacting with coaches and student-athletes.