

Football

Every school district/program should consult with their local health department to determine which risk level to start this program safely. Continued consultation with local health department should be used to determine when progression to the next risk level can be initiated.

Pre-Workout/Pre-Contest Screening:

- Athletes and coaches should check their temperature at home before attending practices or games. If a student-athlete or a coaching staff member has a temperature of 100.4 degrees or above, they should not attend practices or games.
- Ensure that individual(s) with symptoms do not return to practice until:
 - They are free of fever (less than 100.4°F) **AND** respiratory symptoms (for example, cough, shortness of breath) for at least three days (72 hours) without the use of fever-reducing medicine; **AND**
 - Ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
- Any person with symptoms of respiratory illness should not be allowed to take part in workouts until they are free of fever and respiratory symptoms for at least three days without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND ten days have passed since symptoms first appeared. They should contact their primary care provider or other appropriate health-care professional for guidance. **Written medical clearance is required to return to activity.**
- A record should be kept of all individuals present at team activities.
- Vulnerable individuals can resume public interactions, but should practice social distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.

Sport Specific Information

Social distancing:

- **Practice** – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This means additional spacing between players while playing, chatting, or changing drills so that players remain spaced out, and no congregating of players while waiting during drills. Workouts should be conducted in ‘pods’ of students, with the same 5-10 students always working out together. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- **Sidelines** – Players’ items should be lined up outside at least six feet apart. Players should maintain social distancing unless they are actively participating in the practice.
- **Field of Play** – Only essential personnel are permitted on the field of play. These are defined as players, coaches, athletic trainers, and officials. All others, i.e., ball shaggers, managers, video people, media photographers, etc. are considered non-essential personnel and are to be on the sideline, maintaining social distance of 6 feet apart.
- **Spectators** – Spectators should practice social distancing between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines.
- **Media** – All local social distancing and hygiene guidelines for spectators should be followed by media members planning to attend games. Media members should contact host school administrators prior to arriving.
- **Concession stands** – Concession stands are not recommended.
- **Coach conferences/Coin toss** – Encourage limiting the number of individuals in a conference and/or huddle to those who must be in close proximity for these discussions. It is encouraged that coaches wear a mask. Pre-game coin toss at mid-field may consist of the referee, umpire and not more than four team captains from each team, maintaining social distancing.
- **Team handshakes** – Teams shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during, or following the practice.
- **Press box** – Local schools shall determine which personnel should be in the press box considering Wisconsin DHS guidelines.

Practice and Game Protocols:

- **Masks** – Players are not required to wear cloth face coverings, but may do so if they desire. Coaches and others are encouraged to wear masks, especially when not able to maintain social distancing. If an individual would like to wear a mask on the playing field or in a meeting, they may do so. There is no prohibition on the color of the mask.

Spectators, workers, and others are encouraged to wear masks and they are expected to follow social distancing guidelines.

- **Players licking fingers** – If a quarterback touches their mouth, practice is stopped and the quarterback must sanitize their hands. If they touch the ball after going to their mouth, stop practice, remove the ball from play to be sanitized and the quarterback/player sanitize their hands. Mouthguards should remain in their mouth. If a player touches their mouthguard, they must immediately sanitize their hands. Players are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- **Player habits** – Coaches should now work to create new habits including staying away from touching their face, not allowing sunflower seeds and not spitting.
- **Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes** – Players, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes. The WIAA SMAC recommends using hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) before and after each at play or series of plays and when going out to, and coming in from, the field. Additionally, emphasize to all to avoid touching their face.

Equipment:

- **Football helmet** – Players should use their own helmet.
- **Football equipment** – Players should use their own equipment such as shoulder pads.
- **Footballs need to be sanitized** – Coaches must sanitize shared equipment before and after each practice.
- **Maintenance equipment (tackling dummies, sleds, shields, etc.)** – Daily cleaning and disinfection are recommended.
- **What kinds or brands of sanitizer should we be using** – The WIAA SMAC recommends referencing and utilizing [EPA-registered disinfectants](#). Balls and equipment may be wiped with listed disinfectants and a damp cloth.

Hydration:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized.

COVID-19 Coach:

- Designate a coach to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns.
- All coaches, staff, officials, and families should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Train coaches, officials, and staff on all safety protocols. Conduct training virtually, or ensure that [social distancing](#) is maintained during training.

Considerations for Football Practice:

Note: The focus here should be getting back to normal football while still maintaining social distancing when not playing. Sanitation guidelines must also be followed to maintain consistent cleanliness for all. The use of equipment and footballs are allowed but they must be cleaned at an adequate schedule. All drills from High and Moderate Risk Levels can be conducted at this level.

- **High Risk Level** – Drills that can be done during the High risk level to reduce exposure with social distancing or individually with no sharing of equipment or the ability to clean the equipment between use by competitors.
Note: The focus here is on individual skill development such as stance, footwork, first steps, ball handling with own ball, football conditioning, non-contact with other players, no football exchanges or use of shared equipment, and follow social distancing with continuous sanitation.
 - Positional Groups: Quarterbacks, Running Backs, Wide Receivers
 - Footwork drills for all positions. Individual ball security drills without sharing a ball (ball disinfected before anyone else uses)
 - Individual cutting drills using cones, stationary dummies, or lines (WR – route running, RB – running paths and routes, QB – drop backs, sprint outs, and option paths)
 - QB can work on footwork progression for handoffs and for passing game route progression
 - QB can throw to stationary dummy for warm up and retrieve own ball
 - WR/RB work on blocking footwork and steps
 - RB agilities for footwork drills, cuts, and step-overs
 - Positional Group: Offensive Lineman
 - Stance and start with cadence work
 - Run blocking steps/handsets
 - Pass blocking steps/handsets

- Footwork drills
 - Run blocking drills with chutes
- Positional Group: Defensive Lineman
 - Stance and start with get off drills
 - Footwork drills (ex: Circle Drill)
 - Hand and arm work drills with no player contact (ex: Speed Ladder)
 - Run stopping drills with chutes
 - Full movement drills (ex: Pursuit Drill or Directional Bear Crawling)
- Positional Group: Linebackers, Defensive Backs
 - Stance and footwork drills (ex: backpedal, weave, breaks/cuts, etc.)
 - Footwork and read step drills (ex: Shuffle and Alley Run Drills)
 - Partner tackle tracking and mirror steps drills with no player contact
 - Pass drop drills
 - Run/Reaction drills (ex: Battle Chute Movement Drills)
- Advanced Detail Drill Examples in High Risk Level (Positional Group: Linebackers)
 - Stance and footwork drills (ex: Read Steps, Shuffle, Alley runs). Go two or three at a time spaced out by 10 yards using field lines. Respond to verbal or visual cues of coach to work on movement skills. Coach is in front of the group.
 - Stagger width starting point so that players can see.
 - Partner tackle tracking and mirror steps drills. Players align on yard lines 10 yards apart – one is designate as O scout, the other D. Offensive player players runs, jogs, changes direction on his line. D player mirror staying on his line. If coach wants to close the vertical distance have players move 10 yards apart and O player stays on his line while D players closes to the next 5-yard line.
- **Moderate Risk Level** – Drills that can be done during the Moderate risk level to reduce exposure, which involve close, sustained contact, with protective equipment in place that may reduce the likelihood of respiratory particle transmission between participants OR intermittent close contact OR group drills OR sports that use equipment that can be cleaned between participants.
 - Positional Groups: Quarterbacks, Running Backs, Wide Receivers
 - Mesh or shell drills vs. air (ex: QB-RB practice exchanges)
 - Passing and catching drills (ex: Route Running; QBs throws to same WRs)
 - Throwing progression and passing techniques drills with one partner
 - Offense can be run against air or stationary dummies not held by another player or coach)
 - Positional Group: Offensive Lineman
 - Run blocking drills with sleds
 - Run/Pass blocking assignment drills (ex: individually or in small group; keep consistent pods)
 - Run/Pass blocking drills with use of pads, chutes, etc.
 - Positional Group: Defensive Lineman
 - Run stopping drills (ex: use of pad or sled)
 - Pass rush drills with partner handwork
 - Movement drills (ex: Twist, Slant, Angle Drills with partner and pad)
 - Stunt Drill with obstacle in front
 - Positional Group: Linebackers, Defensive Backs
 - Pass drop drills (ex: include ball but clean after each use)
 - Battle chute movement drills (ex: Key Read Drills)
 - Delivery of blow on a sled/pad
 - Tackle drills with bag/donuts (note: not held at time of contact by another athlete)
 - Defeat block/pass drills (ex: Rush vs. Pop Up Drills)
 - Advanced Detail Drill Examples in Moderate Risk Level (Positional Group: Defensive Backs)
 - Run/Pass read and react drill (ex: Crack, Stalk, Route Recognition Drills). Set up scout players using cones on yard line to ensure social distancing. DB aligns on yard line 10 yards depth, 5 yards width. Scout executes blocking pattern or route designated by coach but stays 5 yards width away. LB reacts to offensive movement and gain ground to the 5-yard mark between the groups.
 - Partner tackle tracking drill (ex: backpedal tempo, and cushion drill). Players align on yard lines 10 yards apart – one is designate as O scout, the other D. Offensive player players runs, jogs, changes direction on his line. D

player mirror staying on his line. If coach wants to close the vertical distance have players move 10 yards apart and O player stays on his line while D players closes to the next 5-yard line.

- **Low Risk Level** – Drills that can be done during the Low risk level to reduce exposure, which involve close, sustained contact between participants, lack of significant protective barriers, and high probability that respiratory particles will be transmitted between participants.
 - Positional Groups: Quarterbacks, Running Backs, Wide Receivers, Offensive Lineman, Defensive Lineman, Linebackers, Defensive Backs
 - All drills previously stated from High Risk Level and Moderate Risk Level
 - One-on-one, small group, and large group development allowed (Inside and Outside)
 - No use of close huddle (ex: must be spaced out or “loose”)
 - Maintain social distancing when not in a drill (ex: use cones, tape, or paint for markings)