

## Southwest Christian Athletic Conference COVID-19 Protocols - VOLLEYBALL

**Please distribute this to all high school and middle school (junior high) volleyball coaches (head and assistant coaches), as well as all participating families (both athletes and their parents must receive the information).**

In accord with the decision of the PIAA to return to play for the fall sport season, the SWCAC has chosen to do the same – and to follow the protocols that the PIAA has released. These protocols were created based on input and guidelines from the National Federation of State High School Associations, Pennsylvania Department of Education, Pennsylvania Department of Health, and PIAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee.

The governor’s guidelines for re-opening K-12 school sports states that “the decision to [resume in-person sports-related activities in the Yellow and Green phases] is at the discretion of a school entity’s governing body. Each school must develop and adopt an Athletics Health and Safety Plan aligning to the PDE Preliminary Guidance for Phased Reopening of Pre-K to 12 Schools prior to conducting sports-related activities with students.” PIAA has done the tedious work of putting together a plan that complies with that document, which also references various other CDC documents.

Our conference has chosen to follow the PIAA’s protocols. This document is a summary of some of the important parts of the protocols, as they apply to your volleyball program (both high school and middle school / junior high levels must follow these protocols).

Based on currently known information, the PIAA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee believes that “STRICT ADHERENCE by schools and teams to their school-adopted plans and the Governor’s School Sports Guidance should provide a reasonably safe environment for student-athletes to participate in interscholastic athletics as currently scheduled”.

In adopting these protocols, the SWCAC is similarly asking all of its member schools, athletic directors, coaches, families, and athletes to adhere strictly to these protocols. Being unified in this commitment will hopefully allow for a healthy and encouraging sports season – and will promote a mode of participation in which we all help to protect one another’s opportunity to complete the season. (Each school, each family, each athlete will be making choices that positively or negatively impact their own team’s ability to continue to participate. Each team’s choices will then impact the other teams in the league. We can only do this with complete commitment together!)

### **Gathering Limitations and Spectators:**

**PIAA’s protocol regarding gatherings and spectators is taken directly from the governor’s guidelines for re-opening sports participation. As PIAA puts it, “This is not a PIAA decision. PIAA is following the sports guidance put out by the Wolf administration.”**

At this time spectators for K-12 events are not allowed.

**During the Yellow and Green phases of reopening, sports-related activities at the PK-12 level are limited**

**to student-athletes, coaches, officials, and staff only.** The addition of visitors and spectators will be contingent upon future health conditions within the state and local communities.

*Should spectators eventually be allowed to attend contests,* we anticipate that such attendance will be subject to some important limitations that were also included in the Preliminary School Sports Guidance, such as:

- Seating areas, including the bleachers, must adhere to social distancing requirements of at least 6 feet of spacing for anyone not in the same household. To assist with proper distancing, areas should be clearly marked.
- Adults must wear face coverings (masks or face shields) at all times.
- Spectators should not enter the field of play or bench area.
- Any sports-related activities in Yellow or Green phased counties must adhere to the gathering limitations set forth by the Governor's Plan for Phased Reopening (25 in yellow, 250 outdoors and 25 indoors in green).

### **General Protocols:**

**Individuals (student-athletes, coaches, officials, and other athletic personnel) should complete a personal health assessment daily. If your temperature is 100.4 or higher, individual is showing symptoms or is sick, stay home.**

Make sure to emphasize to all participants the importance of washing hands or using hand sanitizer before, during, and after competitions.

Ensure that your facilities have been properly sanitized.

Have hand sanitizer and disposable masks readily available for practices and contests.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment, including balls.

Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained at all times, where feasible.

**No hugging, high fives, shaking hands, or fist bumps for support / encouragement.**

**Social distancing should be maintained during the National Anthem and on sidelines.** The players on your bench should be a minimum of six feet apart. Please extend your bench area to make this possible. *Consider using your bleachers as an additional bench area to provide space for players to maintain distancing.* Coaches should regularly monitor the activity on their bench to be sure that social distancing is maintained.

Individuals are required to wear face coverings, unless they fall under an exception listed in Section 3 of the governor's order. ***Coaches and athletes must wear face coverings.*** Athletes are not required to wear face coverings while actively engaged in workouts and competition that prevent the wearing of face coverings, but must wear face coverings when on the sidelines.

Have a hydration plan and ability to provide water to student-athletes and coaches in a safe manner. Coordinate with visiting teams to ensure that they have safe access to water for their participants.

If a positive COVID-19 case is determined, teams must follow their school safety plans, Department of Health, CDC, and local health guidelines in determining the plan of action. – ***CDC guidelines state that an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 should self-quarantine for 10 days from the date of the positive test, and anyone who has been in close contact with that person should stay home for 14 days after their last exposure to that person.***

The SWCAC asks all teams to follow the CDC guidelines reference above, meaning that:

- If one of your players or coaches tests positive, your team should cease competition for 10 days from the date of that individual's positive test.
- If you have competed against another team within a timeframe of three days before the test date of the individual who tested positive, you should contact that team immediately – so that they can be aware of their exposure and determine any necessary testing or self-quarantine needs.
- Please be faithful in communicating with the league and with opposing teams about any individuals that test positive with or many have COVID-19. We need to be vigilant in protecting one another's health and ability to continue to play.

### **Considerations for Student-Athletes and Families:**

Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing and not share clothing. Individual clothing / towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout. *(SWCAC suggestion – Do not share pinnies, practice jerseys, etc. If needed, consider presenting each player with individual pinnies at the beginning of the season so that players don't have to share / switch throughout practice.)*

Bring and use your own water bottle.

Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.

Be prepared with face coverings for members of your family (if permitted to attend events – ***spectators are not currently permitted***).

**Parents / guardians should monitor their children of any symptoms prior to any sporting activities. Children who are sick or showing symptoms must stay home. (If there is doubt, stay home).**

Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.

Parents should inform coaches if your student-athlete has been exposed to someone who is known to have COVID-19.

Parents/guardians and coaches should assess levels of risk based on individual athletes on the team who may be at a higher risk for severe illness (or whose families may be at higher risk).

### **Considerations for Coaches:**

Coaches must wear face coverings during practices and games.

Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to ensure more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.

Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.

Coaches should bring their own water bottle(s) and follow established guidelines for hydration.

### **Considerations When Traveling to a Competition:**

**Make sure to communicate with the host school prior to every competition to discuss plans.**

Follow all policies and guidelines the host school has communicated.

Make sure your team is bringing its own medical supplies and emergency action plans.

Have a plan in place if someone begins to show symptoms.

### **Considerations When Hosting a Competition:**

Make sure to have an administrative contact (cell and email address) for all events.

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 – *SWCAC recommends that you do not use locker rooms for team gatherings, and that you ask opposing teams to come to the facility already dressed in their game uniforms – as social distancing is difficult in locker rooms, and COVID-19 lingers in the air longer in an indoor setting.*
- Emergency action plans
- How will game day paperwork be handled (electronic exchange of information is preferred)

Make sure facilities have been properly sanitized before the visiting team has arrived.

Have hand sanitizer and disposable masks readily available.

Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment, including balls.

Have a plan in place if someone begins to show symptoms.

If your school will require anyone to execute a liability waiver before entering the premises, that requirement and document should be provided to all persons in advance so that it may be reviewed.

### **Specific Protocols for Volleyball:**

Pre-Match Conference – should only include the head referee, the head coach of each team, and one captain from each team. Move the location to the center of the court. All individuals should maintain a social distance of at least six feet. Suspend roster submission at the pre-match conference; rosters should be submitted directly to the officials' table before the 10-minute mark. **No handshakes prior to and following the pre-match conference.**

Officials' / Scorers' Table – Limit to essential personnel only (which includes home team scorer, libero tracker, and timer). Maintain social distance of at least six feet between individuals. ***(Consider adding an additional table or two, if necessary.)*** Visiting team personnel (scorer, statisticians, etc) are not deemed essential personnel and will need to find an alternative socially distanced location.

Team Benches – Suspend the protocol of teams switching sides / benches between sets. (Home team will select their bench prior to the match and remain on the same side for the duration of the match.) Set up your bench area in a way to observe social distancing of at least six feet between all individuals. Team benches may be expanded to promote social distancing. ***Consider using your bleachers as an additional bench area to provide space for players to maintain distancing.***

Deciding Set Procedures – Move the location of the deciding set coin toss to center court with team captains and official maintaining social distance of at least six feet. A coin toss, called by the home team, will decide serve / receive. Suspend the protocol of teams switching sides / benches before a deciding set.

Substitution Procedures – Maintain social distancing of at least six feet between the second official and the player and substitute by encouraging substitutions to occur within the substitution zone closer to the attack line. *(SWCAC suggestion – When possible, substitute only one player at a time, to help with social distancing.)*

Three-Ball System – Use of a three-ball system should be considered for matches. This would allow for periodic sanitation of the balls.

Work with the opposing team and the officials in order to maintain social distancing during warm-ups.

**No pre-half, in-match, or post-match team huddles.** *Practice social distancing when meeting with your team.*

Coaches are encouraged to hold pre-match, in-match, and post-match meetings socially distant and away from the officials and scorer's table. Coaches and players should be wearing masks during these meetings.

**No post-match shaking hands, etc.** – *(SWCAC suggestion – After the match, teams should stay in their bench areas, remaining social distanced. A coach or player from the home team should step out onto the court, at the mid-court line – and pray to end the contest. Encourage the teams to clap or cheer for one another, to show sportsmanship.)*

**Officials:**

***Though most of the officials' protocols are their responsibility, some of these things will be helpful for athletic directors and coaches to know – in order to be aware of what is required. Some of these things will likely need to be incorporated into your routines / protocols / expectations.***

Officials are NOT responsible for monitoring activities on the sidelines, such as social distancing, symptoms of illness, and other such issues. *This monitoring obligation is the responsibility of the coaching staff and school personnel.*

Officials should contact the host school in the days leading up to the contest, to discuss school expectations, where they should enter the facility, to request separate and secure parking away from other participants, etc.

Officials must be prepared to have their temperature taken and a health screening conducted upon arrival at the facility.

Officials should issue reminders for situations that involve hygiene (spitting, etc).

Officials should maintain distance from players if an altercation occurs and minimize the amount of time they are within six feet of others.

Officials should avoid conversations within six feet with coaches.

Officials should limit the exchanging of documents between themselves and others.

Officials are not required to wear face coverings while officiating a contest, but they are permitted (and highly encouraged). Officials are required to wear face coverings when entering the host site and while inspecting the field / court (if maintaining proper social distance is difficult)...and are required to wear a mask during the coin toss and when communicating within six feet of others.

Officials must conduct a personal health assessment (temperature, feeling sick, etc) on game days. If they have a temperature or feel sick, they must stay home and contact the host school to let them know.