AACPS Athletics

Fall Semester Out-of-Season Plan
2020-2021

AACPS Athletics looks forward to offering participation opportunities, a sense of school-community engagement, and social-emotional support to student-athletes across the county this semester. After more than six months since spring season practices and scrimmages abruptly ended last March, we are honored to safely re-engage with staff and students, both on our campuses and virtually. We are transitioning to a return to high school athletics in a way that may not feel “normal,” but that excites us to move forward. We will be following MPSSAA approved “out-of-season” procedures and protocols that have been vetted by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. We want to be clear that there is no pressure for anyone to participate in these sessions. Participation in our fall semester plans is voluntary and independent of the MPSSAA-sponsored, competitive seasons. We look forward to safely welcoming students back to AACPS Athletics!

FRAMEWORK

- The goal of the in-person sessions is to create safe, sport-specific, “practice-like” environments with conditioning and drills/activities. No games or contests will be held.
- The goal of the virtual sessions is to further support students through team building, sport-specific teaching/analysis, and mental and physical health activities that can be accomplished at home.
- Our county schedule is structured such that all 23 sports will be given an opportunity to participate.
- Sports will be grouped based on traditional seasons (except volleyball, which has been moved to the spring season), starting with fall, then spring, then winter.
- In alignment with the county plan, each school will create their own plan and schedule based on registration numbers, staffing, and facilities.
- For in-person sessions:
  - Groups will be limited to 50 students and kept together.
  - Attendance and tracking will follow a health department approved process, to include attendees self-reporting on temperature, exposure to confirmed cases of COVID-19, and current symptoms.
  - Everyone involved will maintain social distance of least 6 feet whenever feasible.
  - Everyone involved will wear masks whenever they are not engaged in physical exertion.
  - Everyone will bring their own water bottles, towels, and equipment whenever feasible.
  - Every attempt will be made to minimize the need for sharing equipment. Any equipment that is shared will be sanitized between use by different groups.
  - Parents, guardians, and/or fans will not be allowed to congregate at the practice sites. They are asked to stay in their vehicles while waiting for student athletes.
  - Intrasquad scrimmages (within groups) may occur
- In the event of a positive COVID-19 case, AACPS will follow a set of protocols and procedures vetted and approved by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health.
DATES & REGISTRATION
Spring sports have been purposefully placed in the middle. This is the least disruptive in terms of when sports seasons typically occur and it also allows the most time before the winter season starts with the hope that we may be able to go indoors with those sports if conditions allow for that in the county.

- **Fall Sports** = October 19th through November 14th
  - Registration opens by October 9th and closes at 5 pm October 15th (through FamilyID; physicals required)
- **Spring Sports** = November 16th through December 19th
  - Registration opens by November 6th and closes at 5pm on November 12th (through FamilyID; physicals required)
- **Winter Sports** = January 4th through January 30th
  - Registration opens by December 15th and closes at 5pm on December 22nd (through FamilyID; physicals required)

*Note: In the event these plans are impacted by the MPSSAA competitive seasons we will modify and adjust accordingly.*

**Participation Numbers.** Our county goal is to accommodate every student who successfully registers with their school. Each coaching staff will facilitate a minimum of two groups of 50 (or 100 total). The exception is football, where up to 3 groups (or 150 total) will be accommodated.

- In the event more than 100 students register for a sport (or 150 for football), schools may work with coaches to add sessions (if feasible).
- In the event that extra sessions are not feasible, schools will include returning student-athletes first and then select students for the remaining available slots using a fair lottery system. In this scenario the lottery system will be managed by the athletic department and school administration, using an unbiased, randomized process that provides each student in the lottery an equal opportunity to be chosen.

**SPORTS INFORMATION – WEEKS, LOCATIONS & EQUIPMENT, SAMPLE FOR SCHOOLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Wk 1: Oct 19th – 24th (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 2: Oct 26th – 31st (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 3: Nov 2nd – 7th (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 4: Nov 9th – 14th (Mon-Sat) | Fall sports | Unified Tennis, Cheerleading, Field Hockey, Soccer (B&G), Cross Country, Football, Volleyball, Golf |
| Wk 1: Nov 16th – 21st (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 2: Nov 30th – Dec 4th (Mon-Fri)  
Wk 3: Dec 7th – Dec 12th (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 4: Dec 14th – 19th (Mon-Sat) | Spring sports | Unified Bocce, Tennis, Lacrosse (B&G), Baseball, Softball, Outdoor Track & Field |
| Wk 1: Jan 4th – 9th (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 2: Jan 11th – 16th (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 3: Jan 18th – 23rd (Mon-Sat)  
Wk 4: Jan 25th – 30th (Mon-Sat) | Winter sports | Unified Bowling, Wrestling, Swimming, Basketball (B&G), Cheerleading, Indoor Track & Field |
* shared equipment will be sanitized between uses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Locations</th>
<th>Shared Equipment as needed *</th>
<th>Individual Equipment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golf</td>
<td>Golf courses</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, clubs, bags, balls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Tennis</td>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>Nets, tennis rackets and balls</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, rackets &amp; balls (if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall Cheer</td>
<td>Gymnasiums</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross Country</td>
<td>Running routes</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>Multipurpose Fields</td>
<td>Goals, balls</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, balls (if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Hockey</td>
<td>Multipurpose Fields</td>
<td>Goals, goalie gear, balls</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, sticks &amp; balls (if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Football (note: not using helmets; full gear)</td>
<td>Multipurpose Fields</td>
<td>Sleds, hand shields, tackling dummies, footballs</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, balls (if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>Gymnasiums</td>
<td>Nets, volleyballs</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, balls (if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Bocce</td>
<td>Multipurpose Fields</td>
<td>Courts; bocce balls</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis</td>
<td>Tennis Courts</td>
<td>Tennis rackets and balls</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, rackets &amp; balls (if possible)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Track</td>
<td>Stadium Tracks (+ field event areas)</td>
<td>Pits, batons, hurdles, poles, shots</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lacrosse (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>Multipurpose Fields</td>
<td>Helmets; lacrosse balls</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, helmets, pads, sticks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>Baseball Fields</td>
<td>Helmets, bats, baseballs</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, helmets, bats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>Softball Fields</td>
<td>Helmets, bats, softballs</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, helmets, bats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unified Bowling</td>
<td>Bowling Alleys</td>
<td>Bowling balls and shoes</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, balls, and shoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swim</td>
<td>Swimming Pools</td>
<td>Kickboard and floats</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, goggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball (B&amp;G)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Basketballs</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels, basketballs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrestling</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Mats</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Cheer</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Mats</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Track</td>
<td>Stadium Tracks (+ field event areas)</td>
<td>Pits, batons, hurdles, poles, shots</td>
<td>Masks, water, towels</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Sample schedule with 90-minute sessions. Schedules will not be the same across the county. They will be created at the school level, following the guidelines below.
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR PLANNING
In creating their school-based plans and schedules, athletic directors will:

- Work with their staff, registration numbers, and facilities to develop plans with these restrictions:
  - Student-athletes will only be on campus twice per week and will be kept with the same group
  - Sessions will be no longer than 2 hours (may be shorter)
- Purposely space out days and times as much as possible.
- Purposefully maximize space/use of all fields on campus.
- Purposefully minimize the number of groups on campus at one time, while offering equitable access to all programs.
  - Four groups at one time is a recommended threshold/maximum. However, individual circumstances with each campus/facility will dictate specifics.
- Collaborate with music and dance departments to coordinate scheduling as needed.
- Consider leaving open slots in their base schedule (for make-ups as needed).

LOGISTICS

- **Purpose.** The goal of these sessions is to create a safe environment that will support the physical and social-emotional well-being of students through general and sport-specific drills/activities. No games or contests will be held.

- **Group size.**
  - Groups will stay together throughout the entire workout/practice. This ensures limited exposure if someone were to become infected.
  - Groups will be capped at 50 students per clearly defined space with distinctly separate entrance/exit plans (such as a multipurpose field or set of at least 4 tennis courts).
  - ADs have discretion on how many spaces are used at once (based on registration and facilities) but are asked to minimize the number of groups at any one time to the best of their ability.

- **Participation Numbers.** Our county goal is to accommodate every student who successfully registers with their school. Each coaching staff will facilitate a minimum of two groups of 50 (or 100 total). The exception is football, where up to 3 groups (or 150 total) will be accommodated.
  - In the event more than 100 students register for a sport (or 150 for football), schools may work with coaches to add sessions (if feasible).
  - In the event that extra sessions are not feasible, schools will include returning student-athletes first and then select students for the remaining available slots using a fair lottery system. In this scenario the lottery system will be managed by the athletic department and school administration, using an unbiased, randomized process that provides each student in the lottery an equal opportunity to be chosen.

- **Attendance and tracking form.** Coaches/athletic staff will take attendance at each in-person session using an AACPS-approved form. This form will include self-reported temperature, exposure and symptom checks.

- **Face coverings – coaches/staff.** AACPS coaches and staff will always wear a mask/face covering while interacting with student-athletes.

- **Face coverings – student-athletes.** Student-athletes will wear a mask/face covering when they are not engaged in physical exertion. Examples include but are not limited to when they are entering and exiting the facility, when they are on the sideline, when they use the bathroom, and when they are receiving treatment from a trainer.

- **Distancing.** Whenever possible, everyone in a group/pod should maintain at least six feet of distance from all sides when not actively exercising.

- **Session timing.** Athletic directors will purposefully schedule sessions with gaps of at least 30 minutes to allow groups/pods to enter and exit with minimal interaction, especially when the same field or area is being used, and to allow for appropriate cleaning to occur as needed. Student-athletes are asked to wait in cars until at least 10 minutes before the beginning of their session to prevent formation of groups in the parking lot or designated entrance areas.

- **Restrooms.** Restrooms will be made available at all times. To the extent possible, only one person at a time will use each restroom. AACPS operations staff will clean restrooms between sessions, working work with ADs based on a specific schedule for each facility.
• **Gear/attire.** Student-athletes will report to workouts in proper gear and immediately return home to shower at the end of the workout. Shirts must be worn at all times - no exceptions.

• **Locker rooms.** There will be no access to locker rooms until further notice. This includes outside facilities, such as field houses and other facilities we attend such as bowling alleys and swim centers.

• **Benches/bleachers.** If possible, schools are asked to avoid the use of benches/bleachers. If they are used, they must be sanitized between sessions.

• **Rides.** If a parent or guardian is staying on campus during a practice they are asked to stay in their car.

• **Bad Weather Scenarios.** In the event of dangerous weather scenarios that occur after a session starts (ex: lightning strikes), staff and student-athletes who can’t leave campus immediately will move indoors to the largest indoor space that is located close to or has its own exterior entrance/exit point (typically a gymnasium/cafeteria/auditorium) while maintaining social distance and wearing masks until their rides arrive. ADs will ensure there is a plan in place to guarantee access to these spaces is always available while students are on campus. Additionally, in order to help reduce the likelihood of having to house large numbers of staff and students indoors, the county and or individual schools may proactively cancel practice sessions based on weather forecasts.

• **Athletics Handbook.** The guidelines outlined in the AACPS Athletic Handbook apply during these sessions. Any exception or modification to those guidelines that are needed during these unique circumstances will be documented and communicated.

• **Removal.** Student-athletes may be removed from these out-of-season opportunities for health/safety concerns or for discipline issues. Being removed from these out-of-season opportunities during the fall semester does not necessarily impact eligibility for sport seasons during the spring semester.

• **Failure to Adhere to Guidelines.** In the event that members of a group fail to adhere to the guidelines in this document, the group will be given a verbal warning and must take corrective action. A second violation will result in another warning and that group session ending immediately. A third violation will result in that group being pulled from the schedule and appropriate discipline issued to the coaching staff.

**HYDRATION**

• Coaches, staff, and student-athletes are required to bring their own water bottles and towels. They may not be shared.

• Water bottles should have a lid or way to seal.

• For safety reasons, normal hydration/refilling stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) will not be used.
  - New refilling stations structures/concepts may possibly be provided in the future (by AACPS staff), but student-athletes and families should not count on that as an option.

• Athletes should bring enough fluid to last their entire workout. 8 ounces of water per half hour is recommended.

• Athletic directors will also maintain a supply of water bottles and make them available to all teams as needed.
COVID-19

Health department officials note that it is difficult to make blanket statements and policies regarding quarantines. There are nuances to every scenario. When a case is reported the health department will provide further guidance.

- All coaches, student-athletes, and parents/guardians are expected to continually self-monitor for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 prior to a workout. Signs/symptoms of COVID-19 to be aware of include:
  - Fever (over 101.4)
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Shaking chills
  - Chest pain, pressure, or tightness with exercise
  - Fatigue or difficulty with exercise
  - Racing heart rate
- When a student-athlete or coach is diagnosed with and/or receives a positive notice of COVID-19 the school system and the Anne Arundel County Health Department will be notified immediately.
- Upon a confirmed positive notice of COVID-19, appropriate communication steps will be taken. This will include the affected students, athletic department staff, custodial and logistics staff, school administration, and central office.
- The Anne Arundel County Health Department is responsible for conducting contact tracing in the county and in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health and the school system. When someone tests positive for COVID-19, they will be contacted by a public health worker to get more information about where they have been and who they have been with. A public health worker will contact these exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible.
- Schools must be prepared to provide contact tracing information from an AACPS approved attendance form/procedure.
- Upon screening or during an in-person session, any student-athlete or coach with COVID-19 symptoms (as outlined above in the Health and Safety section) shall not be allowed to take part in workouts and should be immediately sent home, and parents contacted. Prior to returning to an in-person session, a physician’s diagnosis (viral infection is not acceptable) and/or negative COVID-19 test result documentation must be submitted by the parent/guardian to the athletic department.
- Immediately upon learning that a student-athlete or coach tests positive for COVID-19, that group/team’s in-person activities will cease for 14 days. Everyone involved with the group in question will be asked to quarantine at home for 14 days from the date of the positive test, monitor for symptoms, and let their health care provider know if symptoms develop. The staff at the school will work with the athletics office to follow the established AACPS communication procedures, as outlined at this website: https://www.aacps.org/coronavirus.
  - This plan is not based specifically on the level of direct contact with the positive person, but instead, out of an abundance of caution, is based on everyone with whom that person had any contact in the group setting. At the conclusion of the 14-day quarantine period the group may resume in-person activities with all those who show no symptoms of COVID-19.

Additional information
- In cases of student-athletes who have had a previous COVID-19 related illness, the NFHS-AMSSM task force suggests the following:
  - Student-athletes with a prior confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis should undergo an evaluation by their medical provider. Written medical clearance is required prior to participation.
  - Student-athletes who had mild COVID-19 symptoms that were managed at home should be seen by their medical provider for any persisting symptoms. An electrocardiogram (ECG) may be considered prior to sports participation.
  - Student-athletes who were hospitalized with severe illness from COVID-19 have a higher risk for heart or lung complications. A comprehensive cardiac evaluation is recommended in consultation with a cardiology specialist.
  - Student-athletes with ongoing symptoms from diagnosed COVID-19 illness require a comprehensive evaluation to exclude heart and lung disorders that carry a risk of arrhythmia, respiratory compromise, sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) or sudden death. These individuals should not return to sports until medically cleared by a physician.
  - In addition, student-athletes should be evaluated by their medical provider if they have knowingly had close contact with family members with confirmed COVID-19 cases, if they have underlying medical conditions that place them at a higher risk of COVID-19 or if they had previous symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.