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**To:** Local School System Supervisors of Athletics

**From:** R. Andrew Warner, Executive Director, MPSSAA

**Date:** June 11, 2020

**Subject:** Interscholastic Athletics Update

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The State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Karen Salmon has announced the availability of member schools to re-engage student-athletes in outdoor participation. Dr. Salmon, in her remarks on June 10, 2020, was indicating that school practices may begin in accordance with the appropriate timeline for high school sports as described in COMAR 13A.06.03, which is currently August 12, 2020. The re-engagement of students for the mental, physical, and social-emotional well-being, is extremely important. All school systems who chose to operate summer out-of-season school-based open conditioning, exercise, weight training, and non-sport specific student gatherings must be done in a safe and controlled environment.

Local school systems in allowing any form of student-athlete reconditioning must ensure students have an updated pre-participation physical (COMAR 13A.06.03.02I). Schools must also be in compliance with the size of gatherings. Please refer to the latest guidance from the [Maryland Health Department](#) for indoor and outdoor sport related facilities.

Athletes have had a prolonged break from organized sports and conditioning. Although some athletes may have continued independent strength and conditioning and cardiovascular training, some athletes may return deconditioned. Coaches need to reassess the physical conditioning status of all athletes on their return and plan for a graduated return in duration, frequency, and intensity of athletics. Please reference the National Federation of High Schools joint statement with other appropriate health and sport national organizations on the [Return to Sports and Exercise during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Guidance for High School and Collegiate Athletic Programs](#). In addition all policies of the [MPSSAA regarding heat acclimatization and heat related illnesses](#) must be followed. Duration and heat indexes must be monitored during non-season conditioning sessions.

It is highly recommended that schools ensure appropriate compliance with local and state health regulations, proper Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended signage at all facilities, and proper CDC recommended disinfection of facilities and equipment. As stated in the *Maryland Together: Maryland's Recovery Plan for Education*, under the direction of the Maryland Department of Education (MSDE), the

MPSSAA will be providing guidance regarding the safe return of in-person operations appropriate for interscholastic athletic programs. The MPSSAA strongly recommends that local school systems incorporate this guidance into any summer out-of-season operations plans. The guidance will include considerations and recommendations from the CDC, NFHS, MSDE, and the Maryland Department of Health. The MPSSAA remains committed to promoting the safe return of interscholastic athletics for student-athletes and stakeholders across the state of Maryland.