



BIG SKY CONFERENCE COVID-19 PROTOCOL KEY ITEMS

Application of Protocols

These protocols are applicable to member institutions, as well as student-athletes and individuals who participate in close contact activities with student-athletes where social distancing cannot take place, and/or those individuals who travel with the team. It is recommended that the [NCAA Resocialization of Collegiate Sport: 2021 Fall Training and Competition](#) and any future publications by the NCAA be used as a guide when Big Sky Conference member institutions are developing return to play protocols for their student-athletes.

General Minimum Expectations of Institutions

It is important to have transparency and consistency throughout the Big Sky institutions regarding protocols being followed to ensure the health and safety of participants in competition. Institutions, at a minimum, must follow the Big Sky Return-To-Play Protocol whether hosting or traveling to a competition.

Testing

These protocols are applicable to member institution's student-athletes and staff, beginning at least two weeks prior to a team's first Conference competition. Institutions may determine if additional testing is appropriate based on institutional need. These protocols remain subject to further revision as available data and information in this space continues to emerge and evolve.

- a. Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
 - i. Test via PCR once per week (*72 hours prior to travel to competition*) or via antigen three times per week on non-consecutive days.
- b. Fully Vaccinated Or Within 90 Days of Confirmed Infection
 - i. Do not need to COVID test regularly.
 - Development of any potential COVID-19 symptoms requires isolation, reporting and testing immediately, regardless of previous documented infection or vaccination.
- c. High Risk
 - i. Continue to test based on institutional and medical recommendations.
 - If there is evidence of substantial or high transmission in the community, or if there are COVID-19 variants that escape vaccine mediated immunity, then testing *may* need to resume for all student-athletes and staff. Such decisions will be made in conjunction with local public health authorities and/or federal guidance.

Close Contact Exposures

Institutions should follow any applicable federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations. It is recommended that institutions follow CDC guidelines related to face coverings for individuals who have close contact exposures as summarized below:

- a. Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
 - i. Isolation for 10 days (*or 7 days if test on Day 5 is negative*).
- b. Fully Vaccinated Or Within 90 Days of Confirmed Infection
 - i. Test 3-5 days after the date of exposure and wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days after exposure *or* until a negative test result.
 - ii. Isolate if test is positive or individual becomes symptomatic.

Face Coverings

With the prevalence of the Delta variant and yet unknown future variants, institutions should follow local health authority protocols related to masking and other mitigation strategies. However, it is strongly recommended that individuals who are not fully vaccinated continue to wear face coverings when around other people.

Spectator Policies

Spectators are permitted in accordance with institutional policies. Institutions must follow NCAA, local and state guidelines for fan placement near the playing area.

Confirmation of Results

- a. Unvaccinated or Partially Vaccinated
 - i. Asymptomatic individuals who test positive via antigen and a false positive is suspected, a PCR test should be administered.
 - ii. Symptomatic individuals who test positive via antigen do not need a PCR confirmation.
- b. Fully Vaccinated Or Within 90 Days of Confirmed Infection
 - i. Symptomatic individuals who test positive via antigen do not need a PCR confirmation.

Positive Test Following Competition

- a. If a student-athlete, coach, official or personnel that comes into contact with a team during a game tests positive following the competition, the opposing team and Big Sky Conference must be notified within 24 hours.
 - i. The Conference will work to determine next steps with regard to future competitions for all teams impacted by the exposure.
- b. Institutions must follow CDC recommendations for contact tracing and isolation following any exposure to COVID-19.

Locker Room Accommodations

Locker rooms must be cleaned and sanitized after use and only essential game personnel and student-athletes may be allowed to access locker rooms.

Officials

All Big Sky officials must provide proof of vaccination to the Conference Office at a specified date for each sport. If an official cannot or will not provide proof of vaccination, that official will not work in the Big Sky for the 2021-22 season.

- a. Institutions must create a plan related to game management of officials and share with officials prior to their arrival. This information should include directions on how to enter the play area.
- b. Locker room space must be big enough for all officials to maintain appropriate social distancing.