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2020-21 Football COVID Calendar and Update

[Full PDF](#)





2020 UIL Football Season Update

General Operational Guidelines

TEA requires all school systems to develop a plan for mitigating COVID-19 spread in schools. UIL guidelines *require* schools to include UIL activities for the 2020-2021 school year as part of this plan and carefully plan for mitigating risk of spread as students and staff participate in them. Schools must post these plans on the homepage of the school website or other easily accessible area of the school website. These plans do not require UIL or TEA approval. All 2020-2021 UIL COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines can be found at <https://www.uiltexas.org/policy/covid-19>

Face Coverings- Executive Order GA-29

Executive Order GA-29, regarding face coverings, applies to all UIL activities effective July 3, 2020. This includes the 2020-2021 school year. As the public health situation changes, and/or if subsequent Executive Orders are issued by Governor Greg Abbott, these guidelines may be further modified.

1. For the purposes of this document, face coverings include non-medical grade disposable face masks, cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth), or full-face shields to protect eyes, nose, and mouth. Face shields may be superior to cloth face coverings in many circumstances, given improved ability to see mouth movements and improved air circulation.
2. All employees, parents, visitors and students ten years of age or older must wear face coverings or face shields upon entry to an area where UIL activities are being conducted and when not actively practicing or playing in the contest, unless an exception listed below applies.
3. The face coverings requirements do not apply to a school in a county that meets the requirements of paragraph 11 of [Executive Order GA-29](#), unless the local school system chooses to implement these requirements locally. Even in these circumstances, the wearing of face coverings or face shields is strongly encouraged.

Exceptions to the wearing of face coverings or face shields include:

- a. Any person with a medical condition or disability that prevents wearing a face covering;
- b. While a person is consuming food or drink;
- c. While the person is in a swimming pool, lake, or similar body of water.
- d. When a congregating group of persons maintains at least 6 feet of social distancing; or
- e. Any other reason or circumstance indicated under [Executive Order GA-29](#).

***Competitive drills involving one or more students on offense against one or more students on defense may be conducted. While conducting these drills, schools must require all students not actively exercising and staff to wear face coverings as described above.**

Remote Learning

Students participating in remote learning offered by their school district, whether synchronous or asynchronous (as defined by TEA), may participate in UIL activities if they meet all other UIL eligibility requirements. Students must be enrolled in remote learning options through the school the student will represent. Schools may develop local policies with additional requirements for participation. You can find more information related to the full-time student rule in Section 406 UIL Constitution and Contest Rules <https://www.uiltexas.org/policy/constitution/general/eligibility>

Academic Eligibility-Credit Requirements

For the 2020-2021 school year, UIL eligibility requirements for the first six weeks of school have been modified to allow a student to be eligible for the first six weeks if they accumulated at least two and a half credits since the start of the 2019-2020 school year. Schools may impose additional requirements.

<https://www.uiltexas.org/covid-19-information>

District Executive Committee (DEC) Concerns and Game Schedules

- Schools who cannot play non-district games for COVID-19 related reasons will not be required to forfeit those non-district games. These games will not be reflected in season records.
- The DEC should meet to confirm Fall Sport (FB, VB, Team Tennis, XC) schedules, playoff qualifiers, and safety protocols concerning the 2020-2021 school year.
- The DEC shall arrange a schedule to determine district representatives prior to the posted district certification date.
- The DEC shall determine the place and/or time of district games in case of disagreement between two schools for both the regular season, games postponed due to weather, or disruptions in scheduled games due to COVID-19. The DEC should strongly consider schedules that allow for disruptions and for certifying district representatives in the event games cannot be made up. The DEC should develop policies to address games that cannot be played for reasons related to COVID-19 before district play begins.

- The DEC may consider a district schedule that would allow district play to be completed prior to the District Certification Deadline. This consideration may include playing district contests in place of non-district games and/or building in open dates to account for season disruptions.
- The DEC should prepare policies to address tie-breakers as well as certifying the district representatives in the event of incomplete district seasons.

Practice Regulations

- Summer Activities

Conference 1A-4A

- Schools may allow students to continue strength and conditioning and sport specific instruction until the first day of instruction, whether in-person or remote, or the first day of in-season activities, whichever is earlier. Students who have not started in-season activities may continue summer workouts until the first day of instruction.

Conference 5A-6A

- For football and volleyball, schools may allow students to continue strength and conditioning and sport specific instruction through September 4, 2020, whether or not the instructional school year has started.
- For activities other than football and volleyball, students who have not started in-season activities may continue summer workouts until the first day of instruction.
- Beginning August 3, the time for sport specific activities will increase from sixty minutes per day to two hours per day.
- If the school year begins prior to September 7, 2020, students may continue to engage in sport specific instruction for two hours per day. The time in the athletic period counts as part of that two hour total.

Offseason Activities During the School Year

- Athletics periods may not exceed 60 minutes per day, or 300 minutes per week. Local school policy will determine the students who may attend.
- For the 2020-2021 school year only, students may participate in a maximum of 60 minutes per day of strength and conditioning activities outside the school day. Local school policy will determine the students who may attend.

In-Season Activities During the School Year

- Schools may have athletics periods as described above plus a maximum of eight hours of practice outside the school day during the school week.
- Schools utilizing an instructional model other than a traditional in-person model may hold the athletics period any time during the day. The athletics period is ***not*** required to be held during normal school hours.

FOOTBALL Specific Protocols

- Note – For schools that have not offered Summer Strength & Conditioning activities since July 20th (1A-4A) and August 24th (5A & 6A) leading up to the first day allowable for practice (August 3rd for 1A-4A; September 7th for 5A & 6A) will only be allowed to do Summer Strength & Conditioning/Sport Specific activities for the first week (2 hours of S&C and 2 hours of sport specific skill), Monday - Saturday.
- **Face Coverings**
 - Face coverings do not have to be worn while actively exercising or competing. Face coverings must be worn by all team personnel (coaches, managers, players not in the match) while on the bench or not actively participating.

- UIL staff has received questions about students wearing neck gaiters during football games. UIL plays football following NCAA playing rules which currently do not include any rule against wearing a neck gaiter while participating in a game. This is a local school decision.
- When considering whether to allow students to wear neck gaiters during a game to mitigate the risk of spread of COVID-19, schools should be aware of the safety concern of potential injury if the gaiter is grabbed by another player during a play.
- **Performance Areas, Locker Rooms and Other Congregate Settings**
 1. Schools should make hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, soap and water, or similar disinfectant readily available in these areas.
 2. All congregate areas should be regularly and frequently cleaned and disinfected including all frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, tables, chairs, lockers, and restrooms.
 3. Any equipment that will be kept in student lockers and/or in these areas should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected each day prior to students accessing these areas. Schools should develop a plan for managing the storage, cleaning and disinfecting, and redistribution of student equipment.
 4. Schools should consider identifying staff to monitor locker rooms and other areas where students may congregate to ensure effective use of school protocols. When possible, schools should open windows and/or doors or otherwise work to improve air flow by allowing outside air to circulate in these areas.
 5. Schools must require staff and students to wear face coverings while inside locker rooms, meeting rooms, training rooms, band halls and other areas where students may congregate other than shower facilities.
 6. As part of their overall plan, schools should develop a plan for mitigating risk of spreading COVID-19 when disinfecting, cleaning, and laundering items such as towels, practice clothes, and uniforms. This plan should include protocols for redistributing these items to students. Involved staff should be trained specifically on these protocols.
- **Practice Activities**

In addition to the above general guidelines and rules in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules and UIL manuals and handbooks, the following applies to practice activities during the 2020-2021 school year.

1. All surfaces in practice areas should be thoroughly disinfected throughout and at the end of each day.
2. Any equipment should be regularly disinfected before, during, and after practice sessions.
3. Schools may provide food, water or other drinks. If they provide these items, schools should do so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.

- **Game, Contest, and Event Management**

In addition to the above guidelines and rules in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules and UIL manuals and handbooks, the following applies to games, scrimmages, and events:

1. TEAM BOX – Recommended for school teams with large player participation to ensure enough space for social distancing. The extended team box may be agreed upon prior to any contest and may be put into district policy by the DEC. *NOTE: Officials must be contacted prior to the game if the game will be played with an extended Team Box.*

- The team box may be extended on both sides of the field to the 10-yard lines in order for more social-distancing space for the teams.
- For the extended team box, a back limit, 6' from the front limit line should be added.
- Only players and coaches are allowed in the extended team box. Cheerleaders and other auxiliary team members and spectators are not to be in the extended team box.
- Enforcement of the extended team box is the responsibility of game management.
- Social distancing of 6 feet should be maintained at all times while in the team box.
- Players, coaches, and auxiliary team members should maintain social distancing of 6 feet from all game officials and chain crew members.

Teams and Participants

1. If the school is planning to offer transportation for students, schools should follow [TEA guidance](#) related to such transportation.
2. Teams and participants are required to wear face coverings as described in [Executive Order GA-29](#).
3. The host site should designate a cleaned and disinfected area for teams to unload and load buses separate from fans, spectators, and other individuals not essential to the team or group.
4. Visiting team /group locker rooms should be cleaned and sanitized by the host site before the visiting team arrives. Visiting teams/groups are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting equipment once it is unloaded. Schools should limit access to these facilities to only students and staff essential for the game, contest, or event.
5. Before each game, contest, or event, schools should follow the screening protocols described above to screen all staff members, contractors, volunteers, sports officials, contest judges, and any individuals otherwise involved in working the event. These individuals should also self-screen as described in these screening protocols.
6. Fan and spectator areas including bleachers, stands, walkways, and other spectator areas should be at least six feet from team /group areas such as team benches or performance areas. Where distancing is not feasible, other methods should be utilized to slow the spread of COVID-19, such as face coverings, implementing engineered controls such as physical barriers, or other risk mitigation efforts the school deems appropriate.
7. As previously indicated, water or other drinks and/or food may be provided. Schools or host sites should consider doing so in a manner that ensures students are not sharing these items.
8. Other areas used by participants, such as press box areas, should be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after use. Sites should develop plans for providing access to these areas that limit or remove potential contact between participants and non-participants.
9. The host site should provide sports and contest officials an area to enter and exit separate from fans when possible. Officials should be provided a dressing and meeting area, if applicable, that has been cleaned and disinfected prior to their arrival.
10. Pregame or pre-event meetings between teams and/or sports and contest officials should be planned to allow appropriate distancing between individuals.
11. Pregame and post-game gestures of sportsmanship should be conducted between teams and sports and contest officials in ways planned to help reduce the risk of spread of COVID-19.
12. All participants should be provided with entry and exit plans for contest areas that maintain separation from non-participants and fans. Individuals not essential to the team or group should not be given access to contest areas, performance areas, courts, or fields at all before, during, or after contests and events.
13. The pregame officials/head coach conference will take place on the field where social distancing of 6 feet can be maintained. This conference should be 1 hour to 1.5 hours before the scheduled game time.
14. For the coin toss, limit attendees to the referee, umpire and one designated representative from each team (head coach or 1 captain). All remaining team members must remain in the team area. Coin toss should take place in the center of the field with designated individuals maintaining social distancing of 6 feet.
15. The ball should be cleaned and sanitized throughout the contest as recommended by the ball manufacturer.
16. There shall be NO postgame handshake between teams following the game.

• Student Groups not directly involved in the game or contest

Student groups such as marching bands, cheerleaders, drill teams, and other groups approved by the school district may attend and perform at games or contests in which they are not competing. Schools should consider limiting the number of participants to those essential to the performance.

1. These student groups should remain separate from the game or contest participants at all times. These student groups should avoid mixing with fans or non-group members throughout the game or contest.
2. Student groups are required to wear face coverings as described in [Executive Order GA-29](#).
3. Schools should consider limiting the number of students and staff given access to the playing areas and ensure protocols for entering and exiting the playing areas are in place.

4. Fans and spectators should be located to provide at least 10 feet of distance from bands playing wind instruments from the stands.
5. These students should maintain appropriate distancing from game or contest participants at all times, including when on the sideline.

Junior High Football:

Schools may schedule junior high football anytime during the fall semester within the game limits listed in the UIL Constitution and Contest Rules. All other practice regulations and limitations remain in effect. We will continue to monitor the public health situation and announce any further modifications as they are available.

UNIVERSITY INTERSCHOLASTIC LEAGUE





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