

GOLF



2020-21 Golf Considerations

In support of the Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities, this document provides guidelines for state associations to consider for golf practice and competition for the 2020-21 season. The considerations outlined in this document are meant to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets by encouraging social distancing, limiting participation in administrative tasks to essential personnel and allowing for appropriate protective equipment.

Social distancing:

- **Practice Range and Greens** – Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players as much as possible. This means additional spacing between players while playing, chatting, or changing drills so that players remain spaced out, and no congregating of players while waiting to hit. Workouts should be conducted in ‘pods’ of students, with the same 5-10 students always working out together. This ensures more limited exposure if someone develops an infection.
- **On Course Play** – Only essential personnel are permitted on the course. These are defined as players, coaches, athletic trainers, and officials. All others, i.e., managers, video people, media photographers, etc. are considered non-essential personnel and are to be in the gallery remaining by the cart path (when present) or remaining at least 15 yards from the players.
- **Spectators** – Spectators should practice social distancing between different household units and accept personal responsibility for public health guidelines and remain at least 15 yards from the players.
- **Media** – All local social distancing and hygiene guidelines for spectators should be followed by media members planning to attend meets. Media members should contact host school administrators prior to arriving.
- **Concession stands** – Concession stands are not recommended.
- **Coach conferences** – Encourage limiting the number of individuals in a conference and/or huddle to those who must be in close proximity for these discussions. It is encouraged that coaches wear a mask.
- **Team handshakes** – Teams and individuals shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during, or following the practice or meet.
- **Press area** – Local schools shall determine which personnel should be in the designated press area.

Practice and Game Protocols:

- **Masks** – Players are not required to wear cloth face coverings, but may do so if they desire. Coaches and others are encouraged to wear masks, especially when not able to maintain social distancing. If an individual would like to wear a mask on the playing course or in a meeting, they may do so. There is no prohibition on the color of the mask. Spectators, workers, and others are encouraged to wear masks and they are expected to follow social distancing guidelines.
- **Players licking fingers** – If a golfer touches their mouth, practice is stopped and the player must sanitize their hands. Players should only touch and use their own golf ball and not touch other players golf ball or equipment. Players are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- **Player habits** – Coaches should now work to create new habits including staying away from touching their face, not allowing sunflower seeds and not spitting. Do not touch the flagstick or bunker rakes, nor other player's equipment or golf balls.
- **Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes** – Players, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and/or sanitizing wipes. It is recommended that players use hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) before and after each at round and when going out to, and coming in from, the course. Additionally, emphasize to all to avoid touching their face.

Equipment:

- **Golf equipment** – Players should use their own equipment and golf balls. Players should not touch other players equipment or golf balls.
- **Course equipment** – Players should not touch the flagstick, bunker rakes or ball cleaning devices on the course.
- **Hydration** – All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared. Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized.

(Source: Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association)

Back2Golf

Guidelines for Opening Up Golf
May 15, 2020





WHY BACK2GOLF NOW?

- **OBJECTIVE** - To work as Allied Golf Organizations in building a comprehensive and medically approved plan that allows golf to be played as a social distancing compatible recreational activity in the United States as we begin recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. This plan has been developed to help open golf where it is currently closed and keep golf open responsibly.
- **KEY STRATEGIES:**
 1. Developed the operational underpinnings of the plan off the White House and CDC “Guidelines Opening Up America Again” including a specific, three-phased approach to golf that aligns with the broader plan to reopen the economy.
 2. Built a corresponding “Back2Golf Operational Playbook” that provides medically reviewed recommended practices for use at facilities across the country. [LINK HERE](#)
 3. Adhere to all state/county/local health official’s guidelines and regulations when operators are building implementation plans which may differ from the Back2Golf Guidelines and Operational Playbook.
 4. Promote aggressively the necessary social distance guidelines specific to golf that lead to good behavior by golfers in every phase.

* Please note the “Back2Golf Operational Playbook” will be updated in a real-time basis based on interim guidance from the CDC as it becomes available.

GOLF IS A VALUABLE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY

1. SOCIAL DISTANCING

- a. The essence of the game inherently allows its participants to practice proper social distancing

2. BURNS CALORIES, PREVENTS CHRONIC ILLNESSES

- a. A round of golf averages 12,000 steps. Exercise helps prevent heart disease and other chronic illnesses and produces mood-boosting endorphins

3. BOOSTS MENTAL WELL-BEING

- a. Fresh air, greenery, and sunshine boosts the already powerful esteem-enhancing and anxiety-busting effects of exercise

4. ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE

- a. Golf is not just for a few people. More than 24.3 Million people played a round of golf last year and another 9 Million participated in off course golf activities.

5. PROVIDES JOBS

- a. Employer of nearly 2 Million individuals in the United States, including 350,000 maintenance staff workers

6. STIMULATES THE ECONOMY

- a. \$84.1 Billion Industry that also delivered \$4B+ in charitable donations



PROPOSED PHASED-IN APPROACH

- As communities open-up, this plan may be implemented on a statewide or county-by-county basis where state/county/municipal laws and regulations may differ from these recommendations
- Based on up-to-date data & readiness
- Mitigates risk of resurgence
- Details responsibilities of individuals & employers
- Follows the three phases of CDC's "Opening Up America Again."



THREE PHASES OF OPENINGS

PHASE 1 (INDIVIDUAL)

- **VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS** should continue to shelter in place. Members of households with vulnerable residents should be aware that by returning to work or other environments where distancing is not practical, they could carry the virus back home. Precautions should be taken to isolate from vulnerable residents.
- All individuals, **WHEN PLAYING GOLF**, should maximize physical distance from others. Social settings of more than 10 people, where appropriate distancing may not be practical, should be avoided unless precautionary measures are observed.
- Avoid **SOCIALIZING** in groups of more than 10 people in circumstances that do not readily allow for appropriate physical distancing (e.g., golf leagues, golf events, club meetings).

PHASE 2 (RESTRICTED)

- **VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS** should continue to shelter in place. Members of households with vulnerable residents should be aware that by returning to work or other environments where distancing is not practical, they could carry the virus back home. Precautions should be taken to isolate from vulnerable residents.
- All individuals, **WHEN PLAYING GOLF**, should maximize physical distance from others. Social settings of more than 50 people, where appropriate physical distancing may not be practical, should be avoided unless precautionary measures are observed.

PHASE 3 (NEW NORMAL)

- **VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS** can resume public interactions, but should practice physical distancing, minimizing exposure to social settings where distancing may not be practical, unless precautionary measures are observed.
- **LOW-RISK POPULATIONS** should consider minimizing time spent in crowded environments.
- All **GOLF OPERATIONS** may resume as normal including **UNRESTRICTED STAFFING** of worksites.



COURSES & FACILITIES OPERATIONS

PHASE 1 (INDIVIDUAL)

- Golf course **SET UP** should be restrictive (no bunker rakes, cups modified for no contact and no on course amenities).
- **INDIVIDUAL PLAY** can be permitted with no more than 4 players per group that either walk or ride alone in properly sanitized golf carts (two riders from the same family also permissible, if clearly identified).
- **PRACTICE FACILITIES** may open but are restricted to 10 or less people practicing strict social distancing.
- **GOLF INSTRUCTION AND CLUB FITTING** in person may be conducted on an individual basis where strict social distancing requirements can be met. Group teaching and coaching programming is conducted virtually.
- **CLUBHOUSES** should remain closed however **RESTAURANTS** may provide take out food.
- Standalone **GYMS** and outdoor physical activity permitted if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols and are monitored closely.
- **GOLF SHOPS** should remain closed and remote check in procedures should be enacted.
- **VIRTUAL EVENTS** are permitted based on appropriately spaced tee times. No staff administration of events and no pre or post gatherings. All scoring is done digitally.
- No **YOUTH** activities in person but virtual activities are encouraged.



COURSES & FACILITIES OPERATIONS

PHASE 2 (RESTRICTED)

- Golf course **SET UP** continues to be restrictive (no bunker rakes, cups modified for no contact and no on course amenities).
- **SMALLER GROUP ACTIVITY** (outings & league play) may be resumed if gatherings are kept under 50 people with strict social distancing. It is important to note that the 50 player limitation refers to gatherings (ex. Scoreboard area, Clubhouse, Registration, etc.). As long as an event organizer can have protocols in place to ensure that people do not have gatherings of 50 or more, then these groups can conduct a golf event with a larger field size as long as it is via tee times.
- Normal **GOLF GROUPS** are permitted and walking or riding in golf carts are permitted while adhering to social distancing practices.
- **PRACTICE FACILITIES** remain open but are restricted to 50 or less people practicing strict social distancing.
- **GOLF INSTRUCTION AND CLUB FITTING** conducted with adherence to strict social distancing guidelines. Small Group clinics may be resumed based upon the practice facility space available to abide by the social distancing guidelines.
- **CLUBHOUSES** may open but should operate at limited capacity as to adhere to social distancing policies.
- **RESTAURANTS AND BARS** may operate with diminished standing-room occupancy, where applicable and appropriate.
- Standalone **GYMS** and outdoor physical activity allowed if they adhere to strict physical distancing and sanitation protocols.
- Other **FACILITY AMENITIES** (locker room, tennis, pool, etc.) may open based on adherence to State and Local health authority guidelines.
- **GOLF SHOPS** may open at limited capacity as to adhere to social distancing policies and should continue to use remote check in procedures.
- Certain **LEAGUE, CLINICS, CAMPS AND ORGANIZED ACTIVITIES** may resume with strict social distancing guidelines.
- Certain **YOUTH** activities may be resumed with strict adherence to gathering restrictions and social distancing. Family members recommended to stay away.



COURSES & FACILITIES OPERATIONS

PHASE 3 (NEW NORMAL)

- Golf courses and clubs may return to **NORMAL OPERATIONS** while practicing enhanced sanitation and social distancing protocols.
- **CLUBHOUSES, RESTAURANTS AND BARS** may operate with increased standing room occupancy, where applicable.
- **LARGE GATHERINGS** (e.g., sit-down dining, charity events, weddings, etc.) operate under social distancing.



THREE PHASED APPROACH

PHASE 1

Individual Golf



- Gatherings of no more than 10 people
- Strict social distancing
- Walking the course or single cart riders
- Restricted golf course set up
- Clubhouses, golf shops and other amenities closed

PHASE 2

Restricted Programming



- Gatherings of no more than 50 people
- Social distancing maintained
- Normal groups of golfers may play together with social distancing
- Restricted golf course set up maintained
- Clubhouse operations are limited
- Restrictions on leagues, events and youth activities

PHASE 3

New Normal



- Unrestricted gatherings with social distancing
- Comprehensive sanitization procedures
- New Normal golf operations
- New Normal golf course maintenance
- Full Clubhouse operations and events
- Unrestricted leagues and youth activities



COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

- Industry collaboration to coordinate messaging and consistency
 - Golf Course Facilities
 - State/Local Organizations
 - OEMs
- As communities open up, golf offers an opportunity for healthy exercise
- Timing and tone are key
- Back2Golf communications playbook
 - Provide communications recommendations for each phase (aligned w/industry-adopted “Operational Guidelines”)



DISCLAIMER

Allied Golf Organizations note the following:

- Information contained in this document and the corresponding operational playbook are for the general education and knowledge of the recipient. It is not designed to be, and should not be used as, the sole source of information when analyzing reopening plans and ongoing operations.
- As the situation surrounding COVID-19 is evolving quickly and the subject matter contained herein may be subject to federal, state and local laws and regulations, we urge you to consult legal counsel to assist in developing your specific operational plans and determining whether additional measures are warranted or appropriate.
- Please note that while the intent is to move forward through each phase, it may be necessary based on health conditions or poor behavior by golfers to take a step backwards.