



# COVID-19 Return to Racing Guidelines for the Minnesota High School Cycling League

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With practices underway in Minnesota we look to cautiously resume racing. We are fortunate that our sport is naturally socially distant but precautions must still be taken. Team-based time trials keep the practice pods together, reduce the exposure from other individuals, and still allow individuals and teams to measure their progress over a season against student-athletes from across the state. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes the benefits of physical activity particularly in this time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The challenge is to reintroduce events in a manner that follows federal, state and county public health guidelines to reduce the spread of illness. This document provides guidance for the first phase of return to racing following the direction of the county and state health department recommendations. As a living document, this may be updated as new information and recommendations become available.

## PLANNING AND COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

### Practice Planning Will Be Essential This Year

- Head coaches will need to plan how to communicate the changes for the event format this year to coaches, student-athletes and their families. It will not be possible to observe and teach prior to participation as has traditionally been done in the past.

### Communication with Coaches

- Hold a coaches meeting to think through the plans and new considerations due to COVID-19 restrictions within time trials. The teams will be responsible for managing student-athletes and their parents during the racing window assigned to the team.

### Communication with Student-Athletes and Families

- Embrace the ability to have an event that allows student-athletes to measure progress.
- Reset expectations for racing. These events will feel different, but the experience can still be awesome.
- Help student-athletes and families reassess the goals for the season, help them focus on controllables, and avoid focusing on the uncontrollables.
- This year's events will be much more structured and time sensitive. Communicate why these time windows—and strict adherence to them—is important. Without them, events cannot happen.

### Consider Having a Preseason Meeting to Discuss Expectations and Protocols

- Hold a virtual student-athlete and parent meeting.
  - Communicate how excited you are to be able to have a season.
    - Remind your team what makes your team special.
    - Reestablish the positive team culture you've been cultivating.
    - Consider hosting a post-race event at another venue that follows the league's return to play guidelines (ex. pre-ride another course in the area).
  - Explain the safety procedures that the league and the team are putting in place.
  - Explain expectations for anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19.
    - Check yourself for COVID-19 symptoms and stay home for 14 days if you or any member of the household has symptoms.



- Explain how events will be different.
  - Registration cut-off
  - Arrival time
  - Pre-assigned team meeting area
  - Staging procedure
  - Time trial format
  - Passing etiquette
- Remind all families and student-athletes about the assumed risk involved with events and remind them that no one is required to attend events if they don't feel comfortable.
  - Decisions should incorporate personal circumstances such as family members with whom they live or have contact, being at higher risk for severe illness and/or other personal considerations.
- Plan for if someone tests positive for COVID-19.
  - Immediately let the head coach or team director know if a participant or a family member of a participant tests positive.
  - Head coach or team director should immediately let the league director know.

## RETURN TO RACING

### Team Time Trials

- Each team will be assigned a specific day/time for each event. The scheduled time includes high school and middle school student-athletes.
- Student-athletes will race a single lap on a traditional course (~4 miles).
- Coaches will start the student-athletes in an order most likely to not require passing.
- Riders will be staged on a false starting grid by their coaches that maintain social distancing.
- Each rider will enter the course at a consistent, pre-determined interval between all riders (10-15 seconds).
- Riders will be released via starting mechanism (assigned starter or digital display).
- The elapsed time from the release to crossing the finish line, plus any time penalties will be used as the rider's total time for the event.
- Upon completion and cool down, the rider must leave the venue. Coaches must leave once all riders are accounted for.
- Teams will be separated by a time buffer to manage total number of people at a venue and reduce the likelihood of passing between teams (15-20 minutes).
- All student-athletes and coaches must be symptom-free for at least 14 days and not exposed to anyone who is sick within that 14-day period before participating in group training.
- All student-athletes, coaches and support staff who are in a [high-risk category](#) or live at home with anyone who is in a high-risk category are encouraged to follow the guidance of health care providers and state and federal agencies in determining their level of participation in training sessions.
- All student-athletes, coaches and support staff should [screen for signs/systems](#) of COVID-19, including a temperature check prior to attending practice/event each day.
  - Any person with symptoms should not attend activities and contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional.

- Unless directed otherwise by healthcare professionals or the state Department of Health, individuals who experience any of these symptoms may not participate at in-person activities until they meet the requirements stated in [publicly available guidance](#). Currently, MDH recommends that individuals stay home for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms plus a period of at least 3 days with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) and improvement of other symptoms. A different time frame may apply for individuals who receive an alternate diagnosis that explains the symptoms (i.e. norovirus, strep throat). Coaches and student-athletes should not take part in team/league activities for 14 days if exposed to an individual who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- Coaches should ask all student-athletes, coaches and support staff if they are experiencing any of the [signs or symptoms](#) of COVID-19 prior to the start of all team practices and events. To the extent possible, these questions should be asked upon arrival to practice and before student-athletes, coaches, and support staff join the rest of the team. Asking these questions before individuals join the group maximizes the chance for practice to continue even with a positive report.
  - Any person with positive symptoms reported should not be allowed to take part in activities, should be sent home for the day, and should be directed to contact his or her primary care provider or other appropriate healthcare professional. Individuals with positive symptoms should be isolated from the rest of the group while awaiting transportation home, when applicable.
  - Unless directed otherwise by healthcare professionals or the state Department of Health, individuals who experience any of these symptoms may not participate at in-person activities until they meet the requirements stated in [publicly available guidance](#). Currently, MDH recommends that individuals stay home for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms plus a period of at least 3 days with no fever (without fever-reducing medication) and improvement of other symptoms. A different time frame may apply for individuals who receive an alternate diagnosis that explains the symptoms (i.e. norovirus, strep throat). Coaches and student-athletes should not take part in team activities for 14 days if exposed to an individual who has a confirmed case of COVID-19.

## WHAT DOES A TIME TRIAL LOOK LIKE?

### Registration

- All registration will be conducted online through the PitZone. No onsite registration will be available this year.
- **Riders must register for all races by August 7th.**
- Lost plates will be managed through a contactless process.

### Arriving at the Venue

- Parking lots will be designated for student-athletes and coaches at each venue.
- If you arrive early, wait in your car until your scheduled meeting time.
- At the assigned time for your team (unless told otherwise by your coaches), head to the designated meeting location. These will be marked on the venue maps and with signs on site. Follow the posted routes and maintain social distancing.
- Be ready to ride upon arrival at the team meeting area. Your coaches will then be ready for a warm-up ride.

### **Warm Up/Pre-Ride**

- There are no designated pre-ride times for the course. No pre-riding is allowed on an event weekend (Friday–Sunday). Riders are responsible to pre-ride the course prior to the event weekend. A course map, GPS file and video will be shared by the league in advance. If allowed by the land manager, venues will be marked prior to the event weekend.
- Coaches will warm up student-athletes. This may include trainers or riding around pre-determined routes by the coaches.
- Once warm up is complete, teams will wait in their designated meeting location until a race official escorts the team to the staging area.

### **Staging**

- Coaches will line up student-athletes, in racing order, on the start grid. The order should be designed to reduce the likelihood of passing between riders.
- A maximum of 20 students will be allowed on a start grid at one time. Multiple false grids (mirrors of the start grid) will be in the starting area to accommodate the largest team.
- The start grid and false grid(s) will be single file with a minimum of 6' between each rider.
- Teams will be allowed up to 15 minutes for staging. Riders must be staged at least 5 minutes before their start time.
- Riders must remain in the team meeting area until staged.

### **Start**

- The rider in the first position on the start grid is in the "starting position". A line will indicate the start line, which the rider's wheel may not cross.
- Once indicated to by a starter or video display, the rider may start on course and their timing begins.
- Each rider will then move 1 position forward on the start grid and a new rider will enter the starting position.

### **Race Course**

- The course will be of similar length and difficulty as a standard NICA race course. Course signage and course marshals shall remain consistent.
- A rider being overtaken on course should yield to the faster rider as soon as it is safe. Riders must announce the intent to pass while maintaining a distance of at least 20 feet and the rider being passed should acknowledge prior to the pass being attempted.
- Riders should be prepared for mechanicals and not rely on outside assistance. A rider that has a mechanical that they are unable to fix should continue down course until the next course marshal point for instruction. A rider walking on course must yield to a student-athlete riding their bike.
- There will be no Feed Zone on course.

### **Finish**

- A finish line, with overhead finish truss will indicate the end of the time trial.
- A finish chute will allow riders to safely slow down after the finish line.
- Riders should cool down appropriately in the finish area.
- Once cooled down, riders must exit the race venue. They should not spectate or return to the team staging area, except to retrieve left equipment/clothing.

## Results/Awards

- Results will be posted via social media and e-mailed each day.
- Awards will be issued for individuals in each category, by day (Saturday and Sunday have different awards), using the medal matrix in the 2020 Minnesota High School Cycling League Rulebook.
- There were be no division structure for awards (D1/D2).
- Protests must be sent to referee@minnesotamt.org within 24 hours of the results e-mail. Protests can only be filed by the head coach of the protesting team.
- Awards will be bundled by team and available for pick up the week following a team's race. Only the head coach, or a designee of the head coach should pick up the medals. Individual medal pickups are not allowed.
- There will not be an accumulative points total for individual student-athletes, leader's jerseys or team scoring.

## Spectators

- No spectators will be allowed in the racing venue. This includes the infield (start/finish area), team staging area or on course.
- Coaches will accompany all student-athletes should maintain proper coach to student-athlete ratios (6:1 or 8:2) when student-athletes are on premise.
- Coaches are encouraged to cheer on their team, but must remain socially distant from one another and stay at least 6' away from the edge of the race course.
- Coaches must wear league provided identification to be in the venue.
- Any person without a number plate or league coach identification will be asked to leave the race venue. Attendees waiting for student-athletes may wait in the parking lot.

## Venue Information

- The following will not be at league time trial events:
  - Hydration Zone
  - Neutral Support
  - Vendors
  - Merchandise Sales
  - Volunteer Coordinator
  - GRIT Tent
  - Skills Challenge
  - Food Vendor

## Rain Out

- The league's standard weather policy will remain in place. Notifications for weather delays or cancelations will be done via the RainedOut application and social media.

## Event Considerations

- Set clear expectations about social distancing.
  - What does 6 feet look like - two bike lengths.
    - Model and remind student-athletes and coaches to maintain distance.
  - What does 20 feet look like when riding behind other riders.
    - Model and remind student-athletes and coaches to maintain distance.
  - No high fives or hugs, but words are GREAT ways to encourage and give affirmation to your riders. This one is going to be hard for many of us.
- Student-athletes and coaches should not share equipment, water or food.

- All coaches and student-athletes should come prepared:
  - Student-athletes wear team uniform
  - Tube, tools, pump.
  - Water and food.
  - Extra clothes.
  - Hand sanitizer.
  - Disposable gloves in case you need to touch someone else's equipment.
  - Mask, bandana or buff.
- Consider sending student-athletes home if they come unprepared to help them build self-reliance.
- Coaches should take and archive attendance of student-athletes and coaches.
  - Attendance records will help with contact tracing in the event of a positive COVID-19 test.
- Student-athletes should check their own bikes and coaches should avoid touching student-athletes' bikes.
- Remind student-athletes and coaches to ride within their limits at this time.
  - Avoid pushing the limits of your student-athletes.
  - In your safety talk, remember to restate expectations to maintain social distancing and how to pass other trail users.

### **First Aid Considerations**

- Add Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to your first-aid kit.
  - You may not be able to maintain social distancing in the event of an injury. Make sure to wear PPE when providing aid to a student-athlete or coach.
  - Add hand sanitizer to your pack.
- If a student-athlete, coach, or support staff reports symptoms of COVID-19 before the event has begun and before the individual has joined the rest of the group:
  - Isolate that individual and send the person home.
  - Communicate with the individual's family.
  - Notify your head coach and coaching staff.
  - Notify the league director.
  - Make sure that the individual follows the required protocol before returning to any event or practice.
- If a student-athlete, coach or support staff reports symptoms of COVID-19 after the event has begun:
  - Have all parties wear masks and maintain social distance.
  - Isolate the individual and notify the event safety director.
  - Communicate with the student-athlete's or coach's family.
  - Notify your head coach and coaching staff.
  - Notify the league director.
  - Make sure that the individual follows the required protocol before returning to practice or events.
- Depending on the circumstances and level of contact between the student-athlete, coach, or support staff reporting symptoms, the rest of the group's families may need to be notified. This decision will be made in coordination with the league director.

### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

The following resources are intended to supplement - not replace – league, local, state and federal health and safety laws, rules and regulations.

- [Minnesota Department of Health: COVID 19 Website](#)
- [Minnesota High School League COVID 19 Announcements](#)
- [Aspen Institute Return to Play COVID 19 Risk Assessment Tool](#)
- [CDC Considerations for Youth Sports](#)
- [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#)
- [NFHS Guidance for Opening Up High School Athletics and Activities](#)
- [United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee: Return to Training Considerations Post-COVID-19](#)
- [USA Cycling Rider Recommendations](#)