

## **Extracurricular and Intracurricular Activities North Central Thunder for Fall 2020**

Practices for students involved in school sports and activities are already in full swing and many different guidelines have been put into place to ensure that player safety is kept in mind. The South Dakota High School Activities Association (SDHSAA) has released guidance for all K-12 schools in the state and many schools are following the protocols for athletes. If you want to read the full plan, please visit the SDHSAA Fall Sports/Activities Task Force Recommendations to learn more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y54q7dur>

The guidelines for sports from the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) have been released to the SDHSAA, which offer recommendations to schools as mandatory, optional, and impermissible. The NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory committee also released recommendations for classification of sports and fine arts activities in regards to contact and risk. The categories are Low, Moderate, and High. This guidance was to first and foremost keep the safety of athletes in mind.

Schools are taking the necessary precautions to screen student athletes for COVID-19, including the screening of officials and judges at games. This is all as a means of identifying students with the virus and making sure close contacts are determined to continue to mitigate the virus and keep safe play a priority. Students are also asked to maintain good personal hygiene and social distance.

In addition, the promotion of sports and activities is a part of keeping students active and involved. Students across the country have experienced statistically significant negative impacts on their physical health, mental health, and overall health from school closures and lack of activities. This continues to be a focus for schools.

### **Attending Sports and Activities as a Fan**

The North Central Thunder Sports Cooperative and its administration and boards were given the opportunity by the SDHSAA to determine what protocols would be taken to protect the safety of the players, coaches, referees and judges, and everyone involved. It is a complex and difficult challenge to promote activities, but in addition to protect the safety of everyone involved. It should be known to all fans that there is an assumption of risk involved with attending sports in person at our facilities. The North Central Thunder will take preventative measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19, there can be no guarantee that individuals will not be at risk in attending games and events at our facilities.

The following is a list of precautions that will be taken this school year:

### **Indoor Games and Activities**

- First of all, if you have any symptoms or a fever-like temperature then you need to stay home and not attend the event.
- We expect everyone to practice social distancing at all events and be mindful of scenarios where social distance may not be appropriate. This is to help minimize the transmission of COVID-19.
- All individuals will be subjected to a temperature scan. Any individual refusing the temperature scan will not be admitted. If an individual scans higher than 100.4, they would be isolated and rescanned two more times to make sure we are getting a correct reading.
- Water fountains will be turned off. Fans may bring a refillable water bottle and use the hydration stations if a refill is needed.
- Fans are highly encouraged to wear a face mask, even more so if you are considered immunocompromised. With individuals coming from several surrounding communities, this helps minimize COVID-19 transmission.
- We encourage fans to sit by household if possible, which will allow more people to social distance in the gym. Also, we ask that all parents keep their children with them in the stands to watch the game and ensure that the safety of their children and reduce the need for additional supervision by school staff.

- All spectators should head to their assign seating area such Home “Thunder” or Away “Visitors”.
- All spectators should exit the gym immediately after a match/games are over and have any conversations that are needed afterwards to take place outside with the use of social distancing.

### **Outdoor Games and Activities**

- Fans in attendance will be encouraged to practice social distancing at all times to minimize transmission of COVID-19.
- Fans are not required to wear a mask or face covering at outdoor events; however, social distancing should be maintained at all times and fans should understand the assumed risk of not doing so. Fans should proceed with caution when sitting close to fans from other school districts, especially if the school has moderate to significant community spread of COVID-19.
- All concessions should be consumed away from bleacher areas and close to concessions stands as much as possible to reduce the need for sanitization in the bleachers.

### **Conclusion**

It will be important when you travel to any contest outside of our school district, that you determine the protocols that will be taken in each school district. Some schools are limiting attendance to just four guests per athlete, some may not allow fans at all. Each school district or cooperative will run under their own set of rules. For those of you who do not attend, are unable to do so, or don't feel safe doing so, the North Central Sports Cooperative are looking at no-hands stream options such as Pixellot. It will be a school year of sports and activities unlike any other we have experienced. We hope that our parents and community will support the North Central Thunder in its effort to provide sports for our students and protect the safety of all who participate and who are involved in our sports and activities this school year.

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