

GHSWPA – Covid Return to Play Protocol

Spring 2021

The league cannot eliminate risk, so the goal is to implement practical risk mitigation procedures for those willing to accept the risk of normal water polo play.

We want to provide players and parents with transparency about what we can do so that they can make informed decision about participation.

Players & parents choosing to participate must provide written, legal assumption of risk and waiver to GHSWPA, along with player and parent contact information. An online portal will be set up for this purpose.

Member clubs must agree to enforce the protocols below and to encourage maximum compliance by players and parents. We recommend that these protocols be reflected in each member club's safety plan.

This topic will be discussed at the coaches preseason meeting, which will be held via Zoom.

Player Participation

Member clubs are responsible to keep players out of water polo play if any of the following apply:

-Player is experiencing any common covid symptoms including but not limited to fever, dry cough, shortness of breath, loss of smell or taste, headache or fatigue.

-Player has tested covid positive within 14 days of play (unless after 10 days the player remains asymptomatic and has a negative covid test.)

-Player has had close contact exposure to a known covid positive person within 14 days of play, (unless after 10 days the player remains asymptomatic and has a negative covid test). This reason to exclude a player does not apply if the player has fully recovered from covid within the past 3 months and exhibits no covid symptoms.

Close contact exposure is currently defined by the CDC as 15 minutes of intermittent or continuous exposure to a covid positive person within a 48 hour period, where the physical proximity was less than 6 feet.

To reduce the necessity to cancel, reschedule or forfeit games, it is strongly recommended that coaches organize practices in such a way as the players avoid 15 minutes of close contact in case a player at practice later tests positive.

Game Day

Temperature screening upon facility entry

Player masks and social distancing enforced while in the facility, other than in the pool itself

Coaches wear masks and maintain social distancing (airhorn may be needed to call time out)

Distancing of player bench seating will be 6 feet apart.

Time outs – players maintain distance while gathered

During the game, the referee may wear a mask at his/her discretion due to need to frequently whistle; but must wear mask and socially distance between games.

Since pools are all-deep, eliminate switching sides at halftime to avoid having to disinfect bench areas. Coin flip for side if sunshine is expected to be a factor.

Eliminate post-game handshakes.

Teams must exit pool area immediately after the game to allow time for facility to disinfect before the next game.

Players arriving for next game must stay off pool deck until previous teams exit.

This changeover will result in less in-pool warmup time.

Post game meetings between players and coaches should be moved outside with social distancing maintained.

Per facility requirements, locker rooms available are available for bathroom use only, but are closed to changing and showering. Players should arrive and leave in their suits. No deck changing.

Players must bring their own water bottles. Only water is allowed on the deck.

Team equipment & swim bags should be placed on the pool deck with sufficient distance such that when they are retrieved, social distancing will not be violated.

Scoring table

Persons running the clock and keeping the book should sit on opposite side of a 6 foot table; the caller should be 6 feet from either.

All table workers must wear masks.

Disposable gloves and hand sanitizer will be provided so that equipment does not have to be disinfected between games.

Next game's table workers should not approach the table until the previous table workers have exited.

Spectators

We presently believe a limited number of spectators will be allowed in the viewing galleries at both our venues for this season: Cherokee Aquatic and Cumming Aquatic, in both cases subject to temperature screening, capacity limitation, mask wearing and social distancing. We are currently clarifying each facility's specific requirements and socially distanced capacity info that will likely be in effect during the season.

It is currently GHSWPA's plan to disallow spectators on opening weekend in order to focus on executing on the player protocols, and to limit spectators thereafter to 1 spectator per player. Table workers will not count toward the 1 spectator limit.

Spectators will only be able to watch their own team's games, and must exit after games to allow disinfection of the seating area before the next games' spectators can enter the viewing gallery.

If the pool facility ever cannot or will not accommodate spectators, we will explore live streaming games, and would need volunteers for that purpose. We will follow facility guidelines for spectators as they may evolve over time.