



## SEC MEDICAL GUIDANCE TASK FORCE

### REQUIREMENTS FOR COVID-19 MANAGEMENT: WINTER SPORTS

*(Revised: March 19, 2021)*

The Southeastern Conference (SEC) continues to closely monitor COVID-19 and associated public health information related to the resulting pandemic. Since April 21, 2020 the SEC Return to Activity and Medical Guidance Task Force (Task Force) has met weekly to provide guidance to the SEC, with a priority placed on the health, safety and wellness of student-athletes (SAs), coaches and staff members, as it prepares for membership decisions related to the return of athletics activities, including team gatherings, practices, conditioning and competition.

The members of the SEC Return to Activity and Medical Guidance Task Force include:

- Dr. Jimmy Robinson, University of Alabama, Head Team Physician and Medical Director
- Dr. Ramon Ylanan, University of Arkansas, Sports Medicine/Team Physician
- Dr. Mike Goodlett, Auburn University, Chief Medical Officer/Team Physician
- Dr. Jay Clugston, University of Florida, Team Physician
- Ron Courson, University of Georgia, Senior Associate Athletics Director/Sports Medicine
- Jim Madaleno, University of Kentucky, Executive Associate Athletics Director/Sports Medicine and Performance
- Dr. Catherine O’Neal, LSU Health Sciences Center Assistant Professor of Medicine, Infectious Diseases
- Dr. Marshall Crowther, University of Mississippi, Medical Director/Sports Medicine Physician
- Dr. Cliff Story, Mississippi State University, Director of University Health Services
- Dr. Stevan Whitt, University of Missouri, Associate Professor of Medicine, Divisions of Pulmonary and Critical Care Medicine and Infectious Diseases; Senior Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs, University of Missouri School of Medicine, Chief Clinical Officer
- Dr. Zoë Foster, University of South Carolina, Program Director, Primary Care Sports Medicine Fellowship
- Dr. Chris Klenck, University of Tennessee, Head Team Physician
- Dr. Shawn Gibbs, Texas A&M University, Dean of School of Public Health
- Dr. Warne Fitch, Vanderbilt University, Associate Professor of Emergency Medicine, Associate Professor of Orthopedics



The SEC, in consultation with the other Autonomy Five (A5) conferences, has relied on the advice and counsel of medical experts to determine a responsible approach for a safe return to athletics should the current status of the pandemic allow for such activity. While we recognize there is no way to eliminate the risk of transmission of the virus at this time, these standards are intended to increase the likelihood of early identification and help mitigate the potential impact of the virus.

As such, these requirements have been developed in consultation with representatives from each SEC university, including infectious disease specialists, public health experts, team physicians and athletic trainers, in concert with medical representatives from each member of the A5 conferences. These policies are intended to guide institutions in the minimum necessary requirements needed to participate in SEC athletics during the 2020-2021 academic year. Previous advisory recommendations released on May 20, 2020, from the SEC Return to Activity and Medical Guidance Task Force focused on the safe return to sport training and activity. The requirements described herein supersede the previous advisory recommendations and extend to competition settings for winter sports. This document will be updated as needed and to include spring sports.

**These requirements are based on currently available information. Given the fluid nature of this pandemic, the requirements and testing strategies within are likely to change and will be updated as information evolves. This plan is based on risk mitigation strategies and is contingent upon supply chain availability.**

Ultimately, each institution is responsible for managing individuals within athletics programs and is subject to requirements imposed by its state, campus and/or local health departments, as well as state law. Institutions should report their positive results directly to their university-wide COVID-19 public health management operations for notification, tracing, isolation/quarantine, and follow-up support.



**Consistent with NCAA Constitution Bylaw 3.2.4.19, each institution’s medical staff must have unchallengeable autonomous authority to determine medical management and return-to-play decisions related to student-athletes.**

The SEC Medical Guidance Task Force unanimously recommends that individuals who participate in intercollegiate athletics, including coaches, staff, and student-athletes, receive COVID-19 vaccine when it is available to them. Each SEC member institution should provide education to these individuals and to parents / guardians of student-athletes with regards to various vaccine preparations, the risks and benefits of vaccination, and the coordination of the vaccination schedule with training and competition.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic can have a significant impact on mental health and wellness. In addition to the outlined requirements, the SEC Return to Activity and Medical Guidance Task Force recommends all universities be aware of and attend to the mental health needs of its individuals within athletics programs.

## ***GENERAL REQUIREMENTS***

### **Testing**

Polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is the current standard testing method and unless otherwise stated, references to “testing” in this document refer to PCR. Alternative testing methods may be considered if sufficient data to support their use develops.

### **Surveillance**

- For high risk sports, PCR surveillance is required weekly during practice and three times weekly during competition periods. Intermediate and low risk sports (See Table 1) may be tested at less frequent intervals. Each sport may be subject to additional testing requirements as detailed in the applicable section below. Surveillance testing of someone who previously tested positive for the virus, subsequently recovered and has returned to



play will not be required within a 150-day period of a confirmed infection.

- In-competition student-athletes, coaches and support staff who travel away from campus during a holiday break will be required to receive a PCR test upon return to campus and self-quarantine until results are obtained. Results must be received prior to any team activity.
- **The Team Travel Party should be limited to only the team, coaches and essential personnel who undergo similar surveillance as student-athletes and coaching staff. All others should travel separately to and from competitions (e.g., families, boosters, administrators, etc.).**

**Table 1: Risk Level for SEC Sponsored Sports**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Sports</b>
<b>High Transmission Risk Sports</b>	<b>Basketball, Football, Volleyball</b>
<b>Intermediate Transmission Risk Sports</b>	<b>Baseball, Indoor Track &amp; Field, Soccer, Softball, Swimming &amp; Diving</b>
<b>Low Transmission Risk Sports</b>	<b>Cross Country, Equestrian, Golf, Gymnastics, Outdoor Track &amp; Field, Tennis</b>

*\*Note: The NCAA COVID-19 Advisory Group placed swimming & diving in the low transmission risk category. The SEC Medical Guidance Task Force upgraded swimming and diving to the intermediate transmission risk category as the SEC is one of few conferences left who compete with both genders. The squad size of both groups creates a large gathering of individuals within the allotted deck space and creates a greater risk to the participants.*

### **Cardiac Screening and Return-to-Play following COVID-19 Infection**

Based on CDC guidance, all student-athletes diagnosed with a COVID-19 (SARS-CoV-2) infection, will require isolation for at least 10 full days with day 0 starting at the onset of symptoms or the day of testing, if asymptomatic. No exercise should be undertaken during the isolation period. After the isolation period is completed, each student-athlete will undergo a medical evaluation



by a team physician. Given the concern for possible cardiac complications from COVID-19 infections (i.e. acute myocarditis), cardiac testing and a period of re-acclimation to exercise will be required prior to returning to full participation in sport.

**The required cardiac testing will include:**

1. Electrocardiogram (EKG)
2. Serum Troponin level
3. Echocardiogram (ECHO)

The results of these tests, medical evaluation findings, or the clinical course of the student-athlete (i.e. moderate to severe infections requiring hospitalization) may warrant further testing (such as cardiac MRI) based on the discretion of the team physician.

In addition to cardiac testing, a minimum of a 4-day period of re-acclimation to exercise will be required to monitor for any signs or symptoms of cardiac complications (i.e. chest pain, shortness of breath, presyncope, syncope). Day 1 of re-acclimation should be approximately 25% of a normal practice or conditioning session, with Day 2 being 50%, Day 3 being 75% and Day 4 being full participation. Prior to starting Day 1 of re-acclimation a medical evaluation, and EKG should be completed and deemed normal by the team physician. A troponin must be obtained on day 1 prior to exercise and results must be available prior to beginning day 2. An echocardiogram should be completed prior to final clearance for full participation.

A potential timeline for return to full participation after a new confirmed **COVID-19 infection** may resemble:

**Isolation:** No exercise

**Re-acclimation:**

**Day 1:** Medical evaluation, EKG, Troponin level, ECHO (if possible). May proceed



with Day 1 of re-acclimation (25% intensity) if medical evaluation and EKG are completed and normal. Troponin must be obtained on day 1 prior to exercise and results must be available prior to beginning day 2.

**Day 2:** Day 2 of re-acclimation (50% intensity).

**Day 3:** Day 3 of re-acclimation (75% intensity).

**Day 4:** Day 4 of re-acclimation (100% intensity; full practice or game; ECHO must be completed and be read as normal prior to this activity).

\*Practice and conditioning activities during the period of re-acclimation to exercise should be determined collaboratively by medical staff, strength and conditioning staff, athletics trainers and coaching staff.

Student-athletes who have a suspected past infection with positive antibody test but negative PCR test, should also undergo a medical evaluation and cardiac testing including EKG, troponin and echocardiogram. Further cardiac evaluation may be indicated based on results of medical evaluation, cardiac testing, or clinical course of past illness at the discretion of the team physician. A period of re-acclimation may not be indicated if the student-athlete has not had any interruption in training but monitoring for any signs or symptoms of cardiac complications from a suspected prior infection is advised.

### Clinical

- In addition to routine surveillance and pre-competition testing, if individuals develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 at any point, they must undergo clinical evaluation including testing for presence of the virus. This recommendation applies to those individuals who have received the COVID-19 vaccine. PCR testing is preferred, if available. If a SA or staff becomes symptomatic between the surveillance testing period and competition, rapid diagnostic testing may be utilized for testing purposes as available.



- Individuals with a previous diagnosis of COVID-19, who develop new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 may require retesting if an alternative etiology is not identified; consultation with infectious disease or infection control experts is recommended in this situation.
- See Medical Response Plan section for management of positive cases.
- Adjustments to testing frequency and alternative testing methods may be considered if sufficient data to support their use develops. This should include consultation with Conference medical experts and local health officials before implementation.

### **Medical Response Plan**

- **Confirmed Infection**

- Asymptomatic Infection

- Isolate for at least 10 days from the date of the positive test. If the individual becomes symptomatic, implement symptomatic infection recommendations below. When returning to activity following isolation, student-athletes will need 1) cardiac evaluation; 2) clearance from a team physician; and 3) must adhere to an appropriate period of acclimatization following the period of inactivity.

- Symptomatic Infection

- Isolate for at least 10 days from onset of symptoms. At least 24 hours must have passed since last fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and symptom improvement (e.g., cough, shortness of breath, etc.) has occurred, in accordance with current CDC guidance for isolation to end. When returning from isolation, student-athletes will need 1) cardiac evaluation; 2) clearance from a team physician; and 3) must adhere to an appropriate period of acclimatization following the period of inactivity.

- Management of Individuals Following Confirmed Positive COVID Infection

- Individuals within a 150-day period of a confirmed positive test on COVID surveillance testing or a confirmed symptomatic COVID infection, will not be required to participate



in a surveillance testing. However, those individuals will be required to quarantine after 90 days if they are deemed to be a close contact following high risk exposure. This is an evolving area of research and this policy may need to be adjusted as new information arises.

- **Presumed Infection:** Isolate individuals with suspected infection; if in the athletic facility, provide a mask, isolate and refer to a medical professional for evaluation and management.
  - Pre-competition patient under investigation (PUI) or confirmed case: For cases that arise after pre-competition testing but before competition begins, the individual needs to be promptly isolated and tested. Preliminary contact tracing for PUIs and full contact tracing for confirmed cases to identify and quarantine close contacts should occur.
  - In-competition PUI: For potential cases that arise during competition, the individual needs to be promptly evaluated. Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) will be available for both competing teams at each member institution for symptomatic individuals who are suspected to have COVID-19.
  - Post-competition confirmed case: For cases that arise after competition is completed, the individual needs to be promptly isolated and tested. Contact tracing to identify and quarantine close contacts should occur. For COVID-19, a close contact is defined as any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

### **Quarantine Protocol**

- Close contacts are defined as someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period\* starting from 2 days before





illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

*\* Individual exposures added together over a 24-hour period (e.g., three 5-minute exposures for a total of 15 minutes). Data are limited, making it difficult to precisely define “close contact;” however, 15 cumulative minutes of exposure at a distance of 6 feet or less can be used as an operational definition for contact investigation. Factors to consider when defining close contact include proximity (closer distance likely increases exposure risk), the duration of exposure (longer exposure time likely increases exposure risk), whether the infected individual has symptoms (the period around onset of symptoms is associated with the highest levels of viral shedding), if the infected person was likely to generate respiratory aerosols (e.g., was coughing, singing, shouting), and other environmental factors (crowding, adequacy of ventilation, whether exposure was indoors or outdoors). Because the general public has not received training on proper selection and use of respiratory PPE, such as an N95, the determination of close contact should generally be made irrespective of whether the contact was wearing respiratory PPE. At this time, differential determination of close contact for those using fabric face coverings is not recommended.*

- Quarantine: Local public health authorities determine and establish the quarantine options for their jurisdictions. The Center for Disease Control currently recommends a quarantine period of 14 days. However, based on local circumstances and resources, the following options to shorten quarantine are acceptable alternatives: 1) if adequate testing resources are available, the quarantine can end after seven days if an individual tests negative for the virus at some point on days 5, 6, or 7 of quarantine and no symptoms were reported during daily monitoring (for clarity the individual is out on day 8); or 2) the quarantine can end after 10 days without a test if no symptoms have been reported during daily monitoring. Continued symptom monitoring and mitigation guidance, as advised by the CDC, should continue through Day 14.
- Athletics activity while in Quarantine: Asymptomatic student-athletes in quarantine are permitted to exercise alone, including in athletics facilities, if permitted by campus guidelines and local/state policies. Strict social distancing must be enforced.
- Return to play after Quarantine: Allowable if no symptoms develop while quarantined and if the individual is quarantined for the recommended time or followed acceptable guidelines for a shortened quarantine period.



- Fully vaccinated persons who meet the following criteria and have approval from their local health authority will no longer be required to quarantine following an exposure to someone with COVID-19.
  - It's been at least two weeks since the individual had their final vaccine dose;
  - It's been within three months or 90 days of the final vaccine dose; and
  - The individual is asymptomatic.

### **Isolation Protocol**

- Pre-Travel: If an individual(s) tests positive prior to travel, the positive individual(s) will not travel and will be isolated according to the policies established by their institution.
- During Travel: If an individual(s) tests positive while traveling, the positive individual(s) will not participate in any elements of the competition and will be isolated according to the policies established by their institution.
  - The local health authorities that govern the home team, visiting team, and the individual's physical location when the test was administered will be notified. Institutions should report their positive results directly to their university-wide COVID-19 public health management operations for notification, tracing, isolation/quarantine, and follow-up support.
  - The team with the individual who tested positive will return the individual to his/her campus community as soon as it can arrange to do so using appropriate infection control and physical distancing processes.
  - Each institution should have designated and dedicated isolation rooms for each of the home and visiting teams.
- Post-Travel: If an individual(s) tests positive after traveling, the positive individual(s) will be



isolated according to the policies established by their institution.

### **Considerations for Handling Asymptomatic Positive Tests**

Asymptomatic individuals with a positive COVID-19 RT-PCR test will be placed immediately into isolation. Within 24 hours of receiving the results of the positive PCR test, the individual may receive confirmatory testing at the direction of team medical personnel.

There are two options available for the confirmatory tests:

#### **Option 1**

The individual shall receive a second bilateral mid-turbinate collection within 24 hours of receiving the results of the initial positive PCR test. If the 2nd PCR test is positive, this will confirm an active COVID-19 infection. If the 2nd PCR test is negative, the individual should receive a third bilateral mid-turbinate collection within 24 hours of receiving the results of the second test. If the individual has two (2) successive negative PCR tests, and remains asymptomatic, the individual may be released from isolation and medically cleared to return to athletics activities, pursuant to guidance from each institution's local health authority.

#### **Option 2**

Within 24 hours of receiving the results of the first/initial positive PCR test, the individual shall receive a second and third swab at the same sitting. The first swab shall be a single nostril nasopharyngeal swab (test 2) and the second a bilateral mid-turbinate collection (test 3). If either test is positive, this will confirm an active COVID-19 infection. Both PCR tests are negative, and the individual remains asymptomatic, they may be released from isolation and medically cleared to return to athletics activities, pursuant to guidance from each institution's local health authority.

If at an NCAA Championship, confirmatory testing for asymptomatic individuals who test positive shall be administered in accordance with protocol established for that NCAA event.



In the event an individual is subjected to a Rapid Antigen Test during non-conference competition, asymptomatic individuals with a positive Rapid Antigen Test will be placed immediately into isolation. A confirmatory PCR test should be taken immediately following the Rapid Antigen Test. The PCR test is definitive, including when ruling out a false positive antigen test.

### **Response to a Potential Quality Assurance/Control Error Involving Testing**

- If there is reason to suspect a quality assurance or quality control error involving a subset of test results from a surveillance screening session, the PAE Medical Director will work with the appropriate parties to conduct a review of the testing process which may, as indicated, include repeat testing of the affected samples or individuals.
- During the period of review, individuals for whom the tests were initially reported as positive will remain in isolation.
- At the conclusion of the review, the PAE Medical Director will present the data to the SEC Medical Task Force for final review and update the final test results.

### **Considerations for Individuals who Have Been Vaccinated**

Individuals who have been fully vaccinated and meet the criteria below are not required to continue in the surveillance testing program but should continue with mitigation strategies.

Fully vaccinated persons who meet the criteria below and have approval from their local health authority will no longer be required to quarantine following an exposure to someone with COVID-19.

- It's been at least two weeks since the individual had their final vaccine dose; and
- The individual is asymptomatic.

This is an evolving area of research and this policy may need to be adjusted as new information arises.



### **Face Coverings**

All individuals who access the competition area shall be required to wear a face covering, other than student-athletes and the officials who are engaged in competition. Student-athletes and game officials shall wear face coverings as outlined in the sport-specific guidelines addressed later in this document. The proper use of a mask/neck gaiter as a mitigation strategy requires that the mask/neck gaiter must completely cover both the nose and mouth such that neither nostrils nor the tip of the nose is visible.

### **Game Balls**

Other than the game officials and participants, any individuals who will or may touch the game balls (i.e., footballs, soccer balls, volleyballs, or basketballs) during competition shall be PCR tested weekly, adhere to appropriate handwashing/hand sanitizing protocols and wear a face covering. Game balls that leave the competition area must be disinfected according to the ball manufacturer's guidelines prior to re-entering play.

### **COVID-19 Protocol Oversight Officer**

Each institution shall designate a COVID-19 Protocol Oversight Officer who shall be responsible for education and ensuring compliance with the SEC's COVID-19 Management Plan. The COVID-19 Protocol Oversight Officer, or his/her designee, will ensure compliance with management protocols by teams, staff and essential personnel at each competition (both home and away).

### **Game Discontinuation Considerations**

- Inability to isolate new positive cases, or quarantine high-risk contacts of cases of university students.
- Unavailability or inability to perform symptomatic, surveillance or pre-competition testing when warranted.
- Campus-wide or local community positivity test rates that are considered unsafe by local



public health officials.

- Inability to perform adequate contact tracing consistent with local, state or federal requirements or recommendations.
- Local public health officials indicate an inability for the hospital infrastructure to accommodate a surge in COVID-19 related hospitalizations.

### **Post-Game Contact Tracing**

Contact tracing is an important part of reducing the spread of COVID-19. The combination of an enhanced testing protocol undertaken by the SEC for all student-athletes, staff and essential personnel and the use of personal tracking devices to determine close proximity encounters for a period of time greater than 15 minutes (where available), can help reduce the risk of exposure during competition. This mitigation strategy also aids in identifying individuals that may be deemed a High-Risk contact and determine if additional testing or quarantine is required. While no process will reduce the risk to zero and the process of contact tracing is still evolving as applied to athletics activities, the SEC's strategy to minimize exposure and spread of COVID-19 serves as a model for other sports organizations.

### **Objectives**

- To ensure a consistently high standard of reporting and identification of close direct contacts with COVID-19 cases within all SEC sports;
- To develop a monitoring system that will identify close direct contacts that will aid in determining which individuals need to be quarantined after an exposure;
- To ensure a standardization of case management and close contact isolation procedures across the SEC in all sports; and



- To assist public health officials with clinical decision making related to the athletic population/sports and the potential exposure to positive cases and the subsequent case management.

### **Potential Close Contact Identification Process**

In the event that an individual tests positive for COVID-19 in the 48 hours after a contest, the process for determining whether other student-athletes, coaches, or officials may be considered as “direct contacts” is outlined below. The process for identifying close contacts may involve review of game film or the use of personal tracking devices.

1. If a team member tests positive for COVID-19 within 48 hours of a game, the COVID-19 Administrator of the reporting institution shall notify the COVID-19 Administrator of the opposing institution as well as the SEC Office. The positive test result will be either an SEC administered PCR test or a Rapid Antigen COVID-19 test. The SEC or its designee will serve as the process coordinator. Institutions should report their positive results directly to their university-wide COVID-19 public health management operations for notification, tracing, isolation/quarantine, and follow-up support.
2. Each institution will coordinate the analysis of the student-athlete’s involvement in the contest using data from personal tracking devices (if available) and video footage of the game, if necessary. If personal tracking devices are not available, institutions may rely on game statistics and full review of video footage as the primary determinate of close contacts.

### **Modalities**

#### **Personal Tracking Devices**

- The personal tracking device (KINEXON®) will serve as a source for defining a close contact in conjunction with game video footage for confirmation. The game footage will be used to



verify the data from the tracking device or if there is some question of accuracy or failure of the tracking device.

- Should an individual test positive within 48 hours of a contest, the data from the personal tracking device will be utilized to identify suspected close direct contacts.
- This data will be reviewed by an independent reviewer appointed by the SEC to identify any high-risk exposures on both teams.
- Individuals identified by the independent reviewer will be notified along with the institution's COVID-19 Administrator.
- Individuals with a cumulative direct exposure of 15 minutes or greater to a positive student-athlete(s) will be considered a direct close contact and placed in quarantine.

#### **Video analysis**

- Game footage may be used in conjunction with the personal tracking devices and serve as a back-up should there be a malfunction of the tracking devices.

#### **Close Contacts during competition shall be defined as:**

- Individuals within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes or longer during competition:
  - Student-athletes on either side of positive student-athletes
  - Student-athletes directly across from positive student-athletes
  - Sideline/courtside/team bench area
  - Position/unit meeting areas
- Any student-athlete who comes into direct contact with secretions of an infected student-athletes through oral, nasal, or eye mucosa.





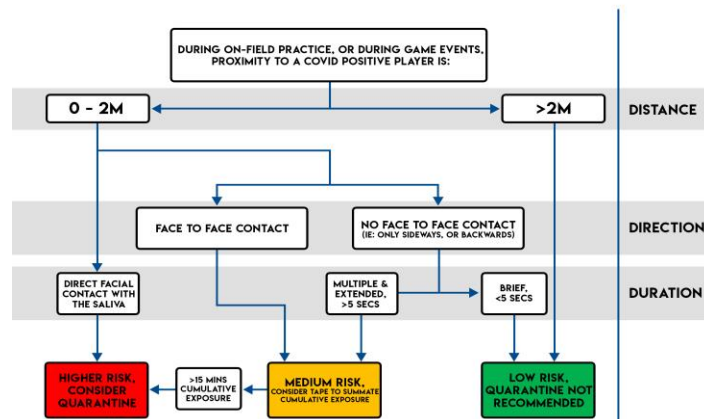
- Any student-athlete identified through proximity monitoring devices, if utilized.
- Close contacts do not include brief encounters such as high fives and walking past someone.

**Definitions:**

The following definitions will be used, applying the approved Team Sport Risk Exposure Framework:

- According to the current CDC definition, a close contact is anyone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 cumulative minutes over 24 hours. An infected person can spread COVID-19 starting 48 hours (or 2 days) before the person had any symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19
- Proximity and duration, as per the Team Sport Risk Exposure Framework (Figure 1).

**Figure 1**





## MEN'S AND WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

**Risk Category: High**

### Testing Plan Pre-Competition

Weekly PCR surveillance is necessary during practice for high risk sports. Alternative testing methods may be considered if sufficient data to support the use develops.

### Testing Plan for Competition (to begin the week of November 15, 2020)

- Student-Athletes shall receive a PCR test three times weekly, with one test to occur no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- Coaches/Support Staff (e.g. operations director, athletic trainers, team managers, etc.) shall receive a PCR test three times weekly, with one test to occur no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- The testing schedule should be as follows:

#### Women's Basketball

- Test Tuesday and Friday and either on Saturday or Monday (see below)
  - If a team plays Monday test on Saturday (as well as Tuesday and Friday)
  - If team plays on Sunday test on Monday (as well as Tuesday and Friday)

#### Men's Basketball

- Test Thursday and Sunday and either Wednesday or Monday (see below)
  - If a team plays on Tuesday, test on Wednesday (as well as Thursday and Sunday)
  - If team plays on Wednesday, test on Monday (as well as Thursday and Sunday)



- Officials shall be PCR tested three times weekly, with one test to occur no more than 3 days prior to competition. Should an official have an inconclusive test result or delayed test result, the official may present verifiable PCR test results obtained from another NCAA conference including a test taken no more than 3 days prior to competition in lieu of SEC arranged testing.
- All other individuals within the 12-foot buffer zone shall receive a PCR test no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- Individuals who produce the team radio broadcasts on the road may travel with the team, if and only if, those individuals are PCR tested three times weekly in the team's testing protocol. If radio personnel is unable to participate in the team's testing protocol, the individuals will not be allowed to travel with the team.
- Alternative testing methods may be considered if sufficient data to support the use develops.

### **Testing Contingency Plan**

The following plans are subject to change and address the most likely scenarios that will be encountered within competition surveillance testing:

- If an error occurs at the lab, including lost samples or inconclusive results, for a test performed during the competition week, the individual(s) involved will have a presumed negative result if and only if 1) the individual participates in the three times per week surveillance testing; 2) the results of the two previous weekly PCR tests were negative; and 3) the individual is asymptomatic.
- If the results of a test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition are not finalized prior to a traveling team's scheduled departure time on the day before competition, the



traveling team will be allowed to travel at the institution's discretion if the team is traveling via ground or via charter flight. Isolation and contact tracing will still apply if an individual in the traveling team's party receives a positive test result on the test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition. All student-athletes, coaches and support personnel in the competition area must have finalized test results of the most recent test performed in order to participate in the competition.

### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible. At this time, face shields are not a suitable replacement for a face mask/neck gaiter for non-competing student-athletes, coaches and other staff.
- All officials are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter pre- and post- competition. Officials should have access to a face mask/neck gaiter during competition in order to properly adjudicate monitor reviews and facilitate any special dead ball communication. Officials shall utilize a cover/bag/shield on the whistle for competition.
- All individuals at the scorers' table are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times. Scorers' table personnel should be physically distanced ( $\geq 6$  feet) to the extent possible. Should the venue configuration preclude physical distancing of the scorers' table personnel, then all remaining scorers' table personnel must be tested no more than 3 days prior to each competition.
- All other individuals within the 12-foot buffer zone, who are not allowed in the team bench area, whether PCR tested or not, must remain at least 6 feet away from the team bench area and must wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.



### **Bench Area and Scorers' Table Setup**

- The bench area shall be set to allow physical distancing ( $\geq 6$  feet) of the bench chairs. The bench area shall have at least 12 feet between the last row of the bench area and the first row of spectator seating.
- The scorers' table seating should be set to allow physical distancing ( $\geq 6$  feet).

### **Competition**

- Non-conference opponents must be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition or Rapid Antigen tested within one day of competition. Results must be received prior to completing the SEC attestation form.
- During the non-conference competition segment, every effort should be made to limit competition to no more than two contests per week (excludes an approved multi-team event). Multi-team event and tournament safety protocols must be submitted and reviewed by the SEC Medical Task Force if the protocols do not meet the minimum standards as outlined in this document. In the event an institution cannot meet the testing cadence as outlined in this document during the non-competition segment, the variance in the testing cadence must be reviewed with the institution's Medical Task Force member in conjunction with the team physician.
- Every effort should be made to reduce the number of travel days during the non-conference competition segment to no more than five consecutive days on the road. The three times per week testing cadence is required during travel. Each institution should work with the competition host(s) to ensure the minimum testing requirements can be achieved.



## GYMNASTICS

### Risk Category: Low

#### Testing Plan Pre-Competition

- PCR surveillance testing should be conducted; the cadence shall be set at the institution's discretion.

#### Testing Plan for Competition Season

- All gymnastics student-athletes, coaches and essential staff shall undergo PCR testing no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- Judges, scoring assistants, and runners shall be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- All other individuals within the 12-foot buffer zone shall receive a PCR test no more than 3 days prior to competition.

#### Masking

- All non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a face mask. All competing student-athletes are required to wear a mask pre- and post-competition within each event rotation. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible particularly within the competition corrals.
- All coaches and staff are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible particularly within the competition corrals.
- All gymnastics judges are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter in the competition area at all times.



- All other individuals provided with access to the competition area are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.

### **Competition**

- Equipment shall be cleaned and disinfected following the initial set-up.
- Student-Athletes, Coaches and Support Staff should hand sanitize or wash hands before and after each event.
- It is recommended that each team is provided their own chalk tray/buckets, spray bottles and water coolers.
- Post performance celebrations should be limited.
- Opening and closing ceremonies shall be conducted in a manner that allows for physical distancing. If physical distancing cannot be achieved, gymnasts shall not gather on the floor apparatus post meet for the closing ceremony.
- The head table, judges' tables and team corrals shall be set in a manner that allows for physical distancing.



## SWIMMING AND DIVING

**Risk Category: Intermediate**

### **Testing Plan Pre-Competition**

PCR surveillance testing should be conducted; the cadence shall be set at the institution's discretion.

### **Testing Plan for Competition Season**

- All swimming and diving student-athletes, coaches and essential staff shall undergo PCR testing each week. Testing administered during the week of competition shall be administered no more than 3 days prior to each competition. If multiple competitions take place in one week, institutions should adjust the testing schedule accordingly to ensure testing occurs prior to each competition. If competition is scheduled over multiple days, testing must occur no more than 3 days prior to the last day of competition.
- Non-conference opponents must be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition or Rapid Antigen tested within one day of competition. Results must be received prior to completing the attestation form.

### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible.
- All competing student-athletes are required to wear a mask pre- and post-competition. Each team should have available clean, dry replacement masks if a mask becomes wet.
- All swimming and diving officials are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter in the competition area at all times.





- All other individuals provided with access to the competition area are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.

### **Competition**

- Regular season competition shall be limited to a dual-meet format unless alternative strategies to limit the overall number of participants to ensure appropriate distancing are developed.
- Teams and individuals shall be physically distanced on the pool deck to the extent possible. Spectator seating should be utilized to achieve physical distancing, if necessary.



## EQUESTRIAN

### **Risk Category: Low**

#### **Testing Plan Pre-Competition**

PCR surveillance testing should be conducted; the cadence shall be set at the institution's discretion.

#### **Testing Plan for Competition Season**

- All equestrian student-athletes, coaches and essential staff shall undergo PCR testing no more than 3 days prior to each competition of the week. If multiple competitions take place in one week, institutions should adjust the testing schedule accordingly to ensure testing occurs prior to each competition. If competition is scheduled over multiple days, testing must occur no more than 3 days prior to the last day of competition.
- Non-conference opponents must be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition or Rapid Antigen tested within one day of competition. Results must be received prior to completing the attestation form.

#### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and student-athletes are required to have a mask/neck gaiter that must be worn when physical distancing cannot be achieved when competition is conducted outdoors. In the event the competition moves indoors, all coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter at all times. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible.
- All equestrian judges and scribes shall have a face mask/neck gaiter in the competition area that must be worn in the event physical distancing cannot be achieved when competition is



conducted outdoors. In the event the competition moves indoors, all equestrian officials are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter at all times.

- All other individuals provided with access to the competition area must have a face mask/neck gaiter that must be worn in the event physical distancing cannot be achieved when competition is conducted outdoors. In the event the competition moves indoors, all other individuals are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter at all times.

### **Competition**

- **Barns:** The barns, stalls, tack rooms, wash racks, round pens and the like shall not be used as congregation space. Individuals feeding/tacking/untacking/washing/lunging horses shall follow the physical distancing and masking protocols.
- **The Draw:** A space that is conducive to social distancing shall be utilized for The Draw and similar meetings. If the activity is held in an indoor facility, participants must wear a face mask/neck gaiter. If the activity is held outdoors, participants must have a face mask/neck gaiter that must be worn in the event physical distancing cannot be achieved.
- **Home/Visiting Student-Athlete & Parent Areas:** It is recommended the team and parent areas be adjusted to a “grab and go” area stocked with only individually pre-packaged food items and drinks. The team and parent areas shall not be a congregating area. Masks/neck gaiters shall be worn in these areas.
- **Team Cheering:** Teams may cheer from a designated area away from the judges and entrance/exit of the arena(s). Student-athletes shall maintain physical distancing and must wear masks/neck gaiters when physical distancing cannot be achieved.



## INDOOR TRACK AND FIELD

**Risk Category: Intermediate**

### **Testing Plan Pre-Competition**

PCR surveillance testing should be conducted; the cadence shall be set at the institution's discretion.

### **Testing Plan for Competition Season**

- All indoor track and field student-athletes, coaches and essential staff shall undergo PCR testing each week. Testing during the week of a competition shall be administered no more than 3 days prior to competition. If multiple competitions take place in one week, institutions should adjust the testing schedule accordingly to ensure testing occurs prior to each competition.
- Non-conference opponents must be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition or Rapid Antigen tested within one day of competition. Results must be received prior to completing the attestation form.

### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible.
- All competing student-athletes are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter during warm-ups and at the starting line which may be removed just prior to the start of a race.
- All track and field officials are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter in the competition area at all times.



- All other individuals provided with access to the competition area are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.

**Competition (Applies to SEC hosted contests only)**

- Event organizers must adhere to local/state guidelines regarding facility capacity for indoor venues. Adjustments to event schedule, number of heats, etc. should account for reduced facility capacity.
- Consideration should be given to reduce the number of heats in each race to minimize the number of individuals gathering for competition on the warm-up track, in the student-athlete area and in the medical area.
- Venue attendance should be limited to essential personnel to allow coaches, support staff and non-competing student-athletes to achieve physical distancing. If the facility is such that the presence of spectators does not allow for appropriate distancing measures for participants and spectators, spectators may not attend.
- Only competing student-athletes and track officials are allowed in the competition area. Medical personnel are allowed to enter the competition area in the event of an injury or illness to provide medical assistance.
- Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible in the medical and warm-up areas as these are typically the most congested sites.
- Institutions shall be limited to no more than twelve (12) coaches and support staff per institution (e.g. athletic trainers, managers, operations staff).
- To the extent possible, institutions should arrange to have student-athletes arrive to the competition facility no more than two (2) hours prior to his/her scheduled event.



Consideration should also be given to transport student-athletes who have completed competition away from the facility following their last event.



## **CROSS COUNTRY (WINTER/SPRING ONLY)**

**Risk Category: Low**

### **Testing Plan Pre-Competition**

PCR surveillance testing should be conducted; the cadence shall be set at the institution's discretion.

### **Testing Plan for Competition Season**

- All cross-country student-athletes, coaches and essential staff shall undergo PCR testing no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- Non-conference opponents must be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition or Rapid Antigen tested within one day of competition. Results must be received prior to completing the attestation form.

### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a mask/neck gaiter. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible.
- All competing student-athletes are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter at the starting line which may be removed just prior to the start of a race.
- All cross-country officials shall wear a face mask/neck gaiter in the competition area at all times.
- All other individuals provided with access to the competition area must wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.



### **Competition**

- Starting line areas must be adapted to provide a minimum of 3 meters between each team's starting box.
- Student-Athletes are not allowed in the starting area until five minutes prior to the commencement of a competition.
- Apparatuses to contain or funnel contestants after the finish line are prohibited. Athletes should be encouraged to disperse forward in multiple directions immediately after crossing the finish line.
- Limit regular season competitions to a maximum of 140 competitors per race/heat.





## VOLLEYBALL (WINTER/SPRING ONLY)

**Risk Category: High**

### Testing Plan Pre-Competition

Weekly PCR surveillance is necessary during practice for high transmission risk sports.

### Testing Plan for Competition

- Student-Athletes shall receive a PCR test three times weekly, with one test to occur no more than 3 days prior to the first competition of the week.
- Coaches/Support Staff shall receive a PCR test three times weekly with one test to occur no more than 3 days prior to the first competition of the week.
- Officials shall be PCR tested once per week in their local area prior to the assigned competition. Results must be received prior to travel to the competition city.

### Testing Contingency Plans

The following plans are subject to change and address the most likely scenarios that will be encountered within competition surveillance testing.

- If an error occurs at the lab, including lost samples or inconclusive results, for a test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition, the individual(s) involved will have a presumed negative result if and only if 1) the individual participates in the three times per week surveillance testing, 2) the results of the two previous weekly PCR tests were negative and 3) the individual is asymptomatic.
- If the results of a test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition are not finalized



prior to a traveling team's scheduled departure time on the day before competition, the traveling team will be allowed to travel at the institution's discretion if the team is traveling via ground or via charter flight. Isolation and contact tracing will still apply if an individual in the traveling team's party receives a positive test result on the test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition.

- All student-athletes, coaches and support personnel in the competition area must have finalized test results of the test performed 3 days prior to competition to participate in the competition.

### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter on the sideline. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible.
- All volleyball officials shall wear a face mask/neck gaiter in the competition area.
- All individuals at the scorer's table in volleyball will be required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times. Scorer's table personnel should be physically distant to the extent possible. Should the venue configuration preclude physical distancing of the scorer's table personnel, all scorer's table personnel must be tested three days prior to each competition.
- All other individuals provided with competition area access, whether PCR tested or not must remain at least 6 feet away from the team box and must wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.



### **Bench Area and Scorer's Table Setup**

- The bench area shall be set to allow physical distancing of the bench chairs. The bench area shall have at least 9 feet between the last row of the bench area and the first row of spectator seating.
- The scorer's table seating should be set to allow physical distancing.



## **SOCCER (WINTER/SPRING ONLY)**

**Risk Category: Intermediate**

### **Testing Plan Pre-Competition**

PCR surveillance testing should be conducted; the cadence shall be set at the institution's discretion.

### **Testing Plan for Competition Season**

- All soccer student-athletes, coaches and essential staff shall undergo PCR testing each week. Testing during the week of a competition shall be administered no more than 3 days prior to competition. If multiple competitions take place in one week, institutions should adjust the testing schedule accordingly to ensure testing occurs prior to each competition.
- Non-conference opponents must be PCR tested no more than 3 days prior to competition or Rapid Antigen tested within one day of competition. Results must be received prior to completing the attestation form.
- The "4<sup>th</sup> Official", located on the sideline within the team bench area, shall be PCR tested once per week in their local area prior to the assigned competition. Results must be received prior to travel to the competition city.

### **Testing Contingency Plans**

The following plans are subject to change and address the most likely scenarios that will be encountered within competition surveillance testing.

- If an error occurs at the lab, including lost samples or inconclusive results, for a test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition, the individual(s) involved will have a



presumed negative result if and only if 1) the individual participates in the three times per week surveillance testing, 2) the results of the two previous weekly PCR tests were negative and 3) the individual is asymptomatic.

- If the results of a test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition are not finalized prior to a traveling team's scheduled departure time on the day before competition, the traveling team will be allowed to travel at the institution's discretion if the team is traveling via ground or via charter flight. Isolation and contact tracing will still apply if an individual in the traveling team's party receives a positive test result on the test performed no more than 3 days prior to competition.
- All student-athletes, coaches and support personnel in the competition area must have finalized test results of the test performed 3 days prior to competition to participate in the competition.

### **Masking**

- All coaches, staff and non-competing student-athletes are required to wear a face mask/neck gaiter on the sideline. Physical distancing should be employed to the extent possible.
- Soccer officials shall wear a face mask/neck gaiter that will be used when physical distancing cannot be achieved (this excludes during active play).
- Scorer's table personnel should be physically distant to the extent possible.
- All other individuals provided with sideline access who are not allowed in the team box, whether PCR tested or not must remain at least 6 feet away from the team box and must wear a face mask/neck gaiter at all times.