

Saint Vincent College Return to Sports During COVID-19

REVISED August 11, 2021

Introduction

This document is a guideline of standards to be followed by the athletic department in order to permit the resumption of collegiate athletic participation in the fall of 2021. These recommendations are based on the updated NCAA Resocialization of College Sport:2021 Fall Training and Competition (August 4, 2021) which is based on information from the NCAA COVID-19 Medical Advisory Group, the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine Working Group and the Autonomy 5 Medical Advisory Group and takes into consideration available recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. However, even with such expert backing, we cannot guarantee the prevention of COVID-19 nor any other illness or infection. Playing contact sports and participating in activities with numerous people does increase the risk of contracting COVID-19.

All state and federal guidelines that are in effect for COVID-19 must still be followed. As the COVID-19 pandemic is constantly changing with scientific discovery and education, these guidelines are subject to updates. Continuation of knowledge released by the CDC and PA Health Department must be followed closely and these recommendations updated as needed. In addition, these guidelines are consistent with the guidance put together by the Saint Vincent College Forward Together Committee, are in addition to the provisions of the Saint Vincent College Health and Safety plan and in collaboration of the team physician.

These recommendations are in place to decrease the chance of contracting COVID-19 while promoting social distancing, personal hygiene, and personal protective equipment (PPE). Saint Vincent College is not liable for any student-athlete (S-A) that contracts COVID-19 or any other illness or infection while participating in any Saint Vincent College related athletic activity. By participating in varsity athletics at Saint Vincent College, all S-As, support staff, and coaches agree to do their part and abide by the provisions in this document. This is extremely important as unlike the original COVID-19 virus, the delta variant is affecting the younger, unvaccinated population specifically those under the age of 50 with the highest case rate in 18-29 years old (CDC covid data tracker demographics overtime).

Fully Vaccinated vs Unvaccinated Definition

Fully Vaccinated Student Athletes

- Student-Athletes who are at least 14 days past their final COVID-19 vaccine dose AND have submitted their vaccine card to the athletic training staff and immunization@stvincent.edu

Unvaccinated Student Athletes

- Student-Athletes who have not received a COVID-19 vaccine, are less than 14 days past their final vaccine dose, or who have not submitted proof of the COVID-19 vaccine card to the athletic training staff and immunization@stvincent.edu.

Student-Athletes Returning to Campus

For returning to campus for the Fall 2021 semester, the following guidelines are in place for S-As.

Fully Vaccinated Student Athletes

- Exempt from any return-to-campus testing.

Unvaccinated Student Athletes

- Should self-quarantine as much as possible in the two weeks before returning to campus.
- Will be required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test result (either PCR or rapid test) performed within 72-hours prior to coming to campus for fall camps or moving into the residence halls for winter and spring athletes.
- All students are expected to arrange their own testing prior to coming to campus.
- Student-athletes that do not show proof of a negative COVID-19 test within the 72-hour timeframe, will NOT be admitted to screenings or able to participate in any team activities until testing is completed.
- FALL SPORTS ONLY: Once on campus with proof of a negative test within the 72-hour timeframe, the unvaccinated S-A will be again tested. This test must also be negative to continue with the move in process.

Athletic Participation COVID-19 Policies

This information will be updated according to the CDC and NCAA guidelines. Please check frequently for these updates.

Testing and Management

The following information is directly from NCAA COVID-19 Management Considerations and adopted by the Presidents' Athletic Conference.

Table 1. COVID-19 Management Considerations for Tier 1 Individuals.

		NOT FULLY VACCINATED	FULLY VACCINATED OR DOCUMENTED INFECTION IN THE PAST 90 DAYS (or more than 90 days if allowed by local authorities)
TESTING	Upon Arrival to Campus, or Return to Campus from a Summer Break	<p>Single polymerase chain reaction/nucleic acid amplification test within three to five days of arrival, or two antigen tests on non-consecutive days within three to five days of arrival.</p> <p>No team training or competition until single PCR/NAAT or both antigen tests are negative.</p>	No testing unless symptomatic, or based on a risk assessment of a documented close contact with COVID-19.
	Surveillance Testing	<p>Based on level of community immunity, community spread, and local public health official recommendations.</p> <p>If community spread is <u>substantial</u> or <u>high</u>, weekly PCR/NAAT testing or three-times-week antigen testing.</p>	No testing unless symptomatic, or based on a risk assessment of a documented close contact with COVID-19.
	During Competition Season	<p>Weekly PCR/NAAT testing or three-times-a-week antigen testing when no competition is scheduled.</p> <p>PCR/NAAT test within three days of first competition of the week or antigen test within one day of each competition.</p>	No testing unless symptomatic, or based on a risk assessment of a documented close contact with COVID-19.
	Sustained Increased Transmission	<p>If sustained increased transmission on a team, test all symptomatic individuals or individuals with close contacts, or apply a similar risk mitigation strategy.</p> <p>Sustained increased transmission is likely occurring if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team of ≤ 50: Concurrent positive cases of three or more. • Team of > 50: Concurrent positive cases of five percent or more. 	

		NOT FULLY VACCINATED	FULLY VACCINATED OR DOCUMENTED INFECTION IN THE PAST 90 DAYS (or more than 90 days if allowed by local authorities)
QUARANTINE & ISOLATION	Close Contacts	Quarantine in accordance with local public health authority guidance for close contact with another individual with confirmed positive COVID-19. <u>Previous considerations</u> regarding activity during quarantine (e.g., individual exercise if it does not cause cardiopulmonary symptoms) continue to apply.	Masking in public indoor settings for 14 days with discontinuation if a COVID-19 test is performed three to five days after exposure and is negative, or if assessment does not reveal high risk.
	Positive Test Protocol	Isolation for 10 days and at least 24 hours have passed since resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications and other symptoms have improved. No exercise during isolation. Post-isolation exercise consistent with <u>previous recommendations</u> , including <u>cardiac considerations</u> .	
ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES	Training and Competition	No restrictions.	
	Team Travel**	Masking during travel.	
	Other Athletic Activities (e.g., team meetings)**	Universal masking and physical distancing.	Masking in indoor settings.
NONATHLETIC	Nonathletic Activities	Universal masking and physical distancing.	Masking in public indoor settings. Large crowd avoidance or masking where community immunity is unknown or vaccination status cannot be determined.
	In-Person Interactions	Universal masking and physical distancing.	Masking in indoor settings.

**Set guideline according to institutional campus and athletic policies

Social Distancing

Limiting face-to-face interaction with people reduces not only the transmission of COVID-19 but most respiratory viruses and infections. Distancing yourself from others is known as social distancing or physical distancing. To successfully social distance everyone should follow these simple steps:

- Stay at least six (6) feet or two arms' length away from other people
- Do not gather in groups, especially while indoors
- Stay away from crowded places
- Avoid mass gatherings
- Staying home or in room when you are sick
- Consider the capacity of rooms/buildings and consider a reduction in this number
- Consider spacing in the cafeterias, weight rooms, athletic training rooms, locker rooms, and other on-campus venues
- Place locker room use on a group schedule for vaccinated and unvaccinated groups
- Require appointments for use of athletic training rooms and weight rooms
- House no more than two S-As together on overnight trips
- Hold team meetings virtually when possible or in smaller position groups
- Any unnecessary contact should be avoided

Fully Vaccinated

- When possible, during all indoor situation (classrooms, cafeteria, lounges, etc.)

Unvaccinated

- While in all indoor spaces
- Outdoors during practices and competition except when actively participating
- When on sidelines or not participating currently in a drill
- During all team meetings regardless of inside or outside

Personal Protective Equipment

Currently face coverings must be worn indoors regardless of vaccination status as stated by the Saint Vincent College COVID-19 Health and Safety Information. All S-As must follow campus policy.

Student-Athletes regardless of vaccination status will be required to mask in the athletic training room and in locker rooms.

Fully Vaccinated (Currently)

- While participating in practices or training in all indoor spaces
- In athletic training room, weight rooms and locker rooms
- In team meetings except for those held outside
- If a team reaches 100% vaccination rate, masking will not be needed for this team except for in athletic training room
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Fully Vaccinated (Without SVC Mandated Indoor Masking)

- In athletic training room and locker rooms

- In team meetings except for those held outside
- If a team reaches 100% vaccination rate, masking will not be needed for this team except for in athletic training room

Unvaccinated

- While in all indoor spaces
- Outdoors during practices and competition except when actively participating
- When on sidelines or not participating currently in a drill
- During all team meetings regardless of inside or outside

Signs and Messages

Friendly reminders and educational signage will be highly visible in all athletic locations where possible. Signs will promote everyday precautionary measures, social distancing, proper hygiene, how to use PPE, and symptoms.

Hydration and Sanitization

Each S-A will be provided his or her own water bottle. Student-Athletes will be responsible for filling their own hydration device prior to and at practices. Sanitation items will be available at water coolers to sanitize spout prior to and after filling the device. This may require additional and/or longer water breaks.

Each sport will have a cooler marked with their sport. This is the only cooler they are to use unless given permission by ATC. When S-A bring coolers back to ATR, they must be cleaned with Clorox Clean-Up and rinsed thoroughly prior to putting on the shelf. For away trips, teams will be required to take their own water bottles or cups. Host teams will not be providing water bottles and/or cups. The coach will need to communicate with their ATC when cups are needed.

Daily Screenings

Student-Athletes will be asked to self-monitor for symptoms of COVID-19. Symptoms include but are not limited to fever, body aches, sore throat, headache, etc. The COVID-19 screening on SWOL will remain available for S-As to access.

If the S-As believes they are symptomatic, they are to contact the Wellness Center at (724) 805-2115 and speak to a nurse. If symptomatic on weekend, contact coach or athletic trainer. Symptomatic S-A is to wear a cloth mask over nose and mouth until cleared.

Illness Protocol

The positively tested S-A may not return to play without team physician evaluation. The evaluation will take place after a minimum of 10 days of isolation from onset of symptoms along with nonfebrile for 24 hours.

If a S-A who is referred for a COVID-19 test from outside Saint Vincent College or who undergo testing on their own, must notify the College of the results of the test. A copy of a positive or negative test result must be presented to the athletic training staff.

Competition and Travel Considerations

Competition and traveling are high-risk activities due to the difficulty of social distancing. Additional buses for larger teams will permit social distancing and decrease the spread if someone is infected. Standing or sitting on the sideline or bench at six feet apart will also decrease the spread. Having an entire team dressed or not dressed and present on the sideline or bench could be a danger.

The use of minivans and 15 passenger vans are prohibited for teams unless teams reach a 100% vaccination rate. When traveling on a charter bus, PPE must be utilized regardless of vaccination status. All must be masked and seated as far apart as possible. All travel party members are encouraged to wash hands prior to loading and after departing the vehicle.

Athletic Training Room

There will only be one point of entry into the athletic training room (ATR). A hand sanitation station will be made available prior to entry of the ATR. Everyone will be instructed to use. All individuals must enter the facility with a face mask on. They will then wait for the athletic trainer (ATC) to instruct them where to go. Athletic trainers are to wear face masks when in close contact with others in the ATR and outside when treating and/or evaluating a S-A.

1. Athletic Training Room Office

The office of the ATR will have restrictions to reduce risk. Athletic trainers will socially distance when possible. Schedules will be staggered when possible. No S-As will be permitted to enter the office of the ATR. If privacy is needed for a confidential discussion, the physician's office is available for use.

2. Student-Athlete Scheduling Treatment/Rehabilitation/Evaluation Times

Student-Athletes must schedule an appointment for any type of treatment, rehabilitation, evaluation, and taping. All appointments must schedule the day before. This will be done via email (athletic.training@stvincent.edu) to ensure guidelines for social gatherings and distances can be followed.

Student-athletes are no longer permitted to just "drop-in" for taping or stretching. If rehabilitation due to a surgery/injury is required, they will have precedence to scheduling the necessary appointment. Maintenance treatments of taping and modalities may not be available or at the least limited. Student-athletes will be encouraged to wear bracing and do preventative treatment (heating pad, stretching, foam rolling) on their own, in their rooms.

The number of treatments during a specific timeframe will be limited in number, depending on the type of treatment needed, availability of the ATC, and social gathering limitations. The ATR will not run at maximum capacity and all individuals being treated are expected to social distance if possible. Once practices start, no additional treatments will be administered to anyone.

Self-service of items from the ATR is discontinued for the time being. Student-athletes needing items must seek permission from the ATC.

All S-As are expected to be on time. If S-As are late, they may be asked to leave. This is to prevent overcrowding in the athletic training room areas and fairness to those that are on time. If S-As are early, they will be directed to wait in the Carey Center lounge area or outside, social distancing must be always observed. No food or drinks are permitted in the ATR unless directed for a medical condition. Once treatment session is over, the S-A will be mandated to leave the facility immediately.

Intense cardio workouts in ATR will be minimal during rehabilitation due to fact of an increase in forced air intake and exhalation during intense workouts. These cardio workouts should be done outdoors.

Use of modalities including whirlpools many be limited depending on community and campus spread.

3. Student Workers

Student workers will follow the same guidelines as S-A. Student workers must be masked at all times in the ATR. Masking is also required if unvaccinated when covering practices and/or competitions. Hand sanitizer will be given to each student worker at the beginning of the year. They are to be responsible to ask for more when supply is depleted.

Saint Scholastica Weight Room

There will only be one point of entry into the Student Activity Center Weight Room (SACWR). This will monitor traffic in and out of the SACWR. This will reduce the risk of someone that is symptomatic of entering the facility. Total occupancy will be reduced to a manageable and safe number. This may require the reconfiguration of the space, which may involve blocking off or removing equipment. Visible signage should be present to remind all about social distancing and hand washing. A hand sanitation station will be made available at the entry of the SACWR that all individuals will be instructed to use. All individuals must enter the facility with a face mask on. Unless the S-A is doing high impact cardio activities, face mask should always remain on for all S-As. All staff and coaches are to always wear face masks.

Fully Vaccinated (Currently)

- While in the SSWR

Fully Vaccinated (Without SVC Mandated Indoor Masking)

- Mask will not be required

Unvaccinated

- While in the SSWR, unless the S-A is doing high impact cardio activities

Locker Rooms

Locker room use is limited to in-season sports only. You may begin to use your locker room one month prior to your first game. This does not include scrimmages. Masking is mandatory for all, regardless of vaccination status. Masks are not required in the shower. Social distancing should always be practiced in the locker rooms. LOCKERS CANNOT BE SHARED.

The locker room floors must be free of clothing, shoes, and debris. All personal items are to be kept in lockers. All practice clothing must be washed daily. All equipment should be wiped down after practice. Coaches are to monitor locker rooms for cleanliness. If teams repeatedly leave locker room dirty, locker room privileges will be revoked.

Fully Vaccinated

- Mask will be required at all times except when showering

Unvaccinated

- Mask will be required at all times except when showering

Sports Practice Procedures

When reporting to practice, it is imperative that all social gathering/distance guidelines, all self-hygiene protocols, masking protocols and rules submitted by the Saint Vincent College Athletic COVID-19 Protocol be followed. The main goal is to provide the highest quality of care possible to the S-A while maintaining safe practices. **This is very important for everyone – from the S-A to staff members.** **If you are sick, do not come to practice or work.**

The following restrictions will be followed:

- Preventative taping will not be done. Wearing a brace is a better option to provide support for prevention of non-significant injuries.
- Injury taping will only be done by appointment, which is made the day prior. Social distancing will be performed during any waiting period during taping or treatment sessions.
- It is expected that the S-A must be punctual for their allotted time slot.
- Student-athlete must wear a face mask and abide by all athletic training room rules.
- Treatments will **NOT** be given once practices have begun.
- If S-A requires other treatments using modalities (stim, ultrasound, probe, etc.) they must schedule an appointment following the guidelines. These will be provided at the discretion of the athletic trainer. No maintenance modalities will be permitted.
- Post practice treatments will be limited to a “grab and go” style format. This means that ice bags will be placed in a cooler in a designated area for S-A to take with them as they leave. They must sign in prior to taking ice. This will alleviate over-crowding issues of S-A coming in ATR after practice to get iced and congregate.
- Student-athletes must limit all close proximity treatments to injury only status. This means S-As must stretch on their own when possible.
- **AFTER ALL PRACTICES AND HOME COMPETITIONS, ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST** shower before entering the athletic training room, going to eat, or going to class.

If these policies and procedures are repeatedly violated by same individual(s), the individual(s) will be removed from practice and directed to the Athletic Administrators and/or other appropriate College officials for possible disciplinary action.

On the Field Protocols

Once practices start, treatments will not be available to S-A during this time. Ice will be available. The following restrictions are to be followed:

- All coaches, staff, and S-A should abide by the closing period rule mentioned above.
- Hand sanitizer stations should be placed in areas that are out of play at each venue.
- Hydration is a very large concern for controlling contamination. **WATER BOTTLES CANNOT BE SHARED.**

With respect to water bottles:

1. Every S-A will be responsible to fill their own bottle and carry it with them when moving to different areas on the field of play.
2. All bottles must be marked with the S-A last name, their number, and sport so that it can be easily identified.
3. If permitted by state, there may be water coolers on site for the purpose of refill only. No one should be drinking directly out of the cooler. This will cause contamination.
4. After practice, the S-A will be responsible for dumping out their water bottle, cleaning it and storing it in a safe location. Student-athletes may want to store their water bottles in a sealed plastic bag in order to prevent possible contamination.
5. Again, it is the responsibility of the S-A to maintain a clean water bottle and to NOT share water bottles with others.
6. On warm, humid days, water breaks should occur more frequently.
7. Coaches may want to consider adjusting the time for practice since the S-A may have to run to a location further than normal to get his/her bottle.

Miscellaneous Considerations

The following are recommendations and issues that should be considered:

- Installing signage as a reminder to wear a mask, as well as where masks are recommended and required
- Host teams should be contacted 24 hours prior to game or competition to determine needs and availability of facilities
- Officials are to provide documentation of vaccination or testing to host institution prior to competitions. Host institutions are NOT responsible for testing of officials.