

COVID-19 Testing in Pilot Schools: Frequently Asked Questions

Participants

Who is involved in the pilot?

Approximately 7,000 student athletes at 201 schools who qualified for finals, play-offs, or state meet competitions in three sports (11-player and 8-player boys football, girls volleyball, girls swimming and diving) that were unable to complete their Fall 2020 seasons due to COVID-19 cancellation of competitions. In order for these students to complete their playoff matches, the student athletes, coaches, and athletics department staff involved in playoffs and championships will be offered the opportunity to participate in a school testing pilot program that will allow them to compete despite state epidemic orders that otherwise suspend all indoor and contact sports.

*Athletes in other sports at the same schools are **NOT** involved. This pilot program is being used to wrap up the Fall 2020 season only, not to start the Winter or Spring seasons.*

How will I know if our teams will be tested, if I/my child/my school is part of the pilot?

MHSAA will be contacting teams that qualify for testing. MDHHS will be posting a list of eligible schools and sports on our website.

What if I don't want my child to be tested? Can they still play?

No.

What if I'm still not comfortable with my child playing in this sport?

Participation in the pilot is completely voluntary for student athletes and their parents. If they do not wish to participate, they will not be required to play.

Do all students in eligible schools and sports automatically have a right to participate in this program?

No. This pilot is being run at the discretion of school leadership, local athletics programs, local public health, and MDHHS. If any of these parties do not wish to proceed with the pilot, the school may not participate, and students cannot individually opt in without school sponsorship and management of the program.

How can I/my child/my school join the pilot?

Participation in the pilot is limited to specific schools and sports, so affected schools, student athletes, and their parents will be notified about the opportunity to participate and requirements. It is not open for other student athletes or schools.

Does this mean that other sports can also start?

No, organized sports, other than outdoor, non-contact sports, are still not permitted under the epidemic order. Other sports at pilot schools are also not permitted.

Pilot Requirements

What are the requirements to participate in the pilot?

Schools, student athletes, coaches, and other sports staff must all agree to participate in the pilot. Once in the pilot, they must adhere to a three times a week testing protocol and strict process for managing players with symptoms or who test positive; wear face masks during practice and play (except for swimming and diving); and [follow detailed guidance for infection control](#) (except for face mask exemptions) for as long as they continue to practice and compete.

Must athletes in this pilot still wear masks during practice and play?

Yes, except for swimming and diving, where it is unsafe to wear masks. Additionally, masks are required off the field, in locker rooms, while sharing any transportation to and from competitions, and at any team meetings.

Pilot logistics

Has the pilot already started? May schools already be competing or practicing?

Outdoor, non-contact practice may be held at any time under the current epidemic order. A Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendment (CLIA) waiver allowing schools to perform rapid testing has been obtained for the purposes of this pilot. Indoor, contact practice, and competitions for the purposes of this pilot may only begin once a school has opted into the pilot, submitted their plans and other required paperwork (including participant consent forms) to MHSAA and their local health department, trained staff, and begun the testing cadence.

Does the pilot account for practice needed in preparation for championship competitions?

Yes. The pilot includes sufficient supplies to account for 1 week of practice in advance of competitions.

Where will practices be held? Where will competitions be played? May spectators attend?

Practices and competitions may be held at school facilities or at other stadiums or arenas.

At the discretion of MHSAA and any hosting venues, a limited number of spectators may attend competitions. Spectators and any venues hosting spectators must agree to the following rules:

- immediate family members of participants only
- households are spaced out by 6 feet and maintain distancing from others at all times (spaced out at arrival, no areas open for mingling)
- total venue capacity is limited to the lesser of 250 people or 20% of seating capacity
- masks are worn at all times by spectators (no eating or drinking)

- someone at the venue or MHSAA takes responsibility for supervising compliance with these rules for each competition

If MDHHS or a local health department receives reports that these rules were violated, spectators will be suspended for all remaining pilot competitions.

Who's paying for this?

MDHHS is providing test supplies to schools at no cost, as well as limited amounts of masks as needed. Any staff time, additional PPE, or other costs to run the pilot are the responsibility of the school/athletics department.

Testing Protocol

How will testing work?

Trained school personnel will administer the tests on-site at school, using point of care (rapid) antigen tests.

What kind of tests will be used?

All pilot participants (student athletes, coaches, and other athletics staff) will use BinaxNOW antigen tests. BinaxNOW tests are a 15-minute card-based test that can be performed without special equipment. They can be administered by trained school staff.

How frequently will testing occur?

Participants must be tested three times a week, on non-consecutive days, for as long as that participant continues to practice and compete. Testing will begin after staff are trained and supplies are secured. Practices and competitions may not begin until routine testing is in place and a CLIA waiver has been secured.

How will teams get access to tests?

MDHHS will ship kits to MHSAA. MHSAA will then allocate tests to the qualifying teams. Schools or athletic departments will store and administer tests on site.

Who is responsible for administering the rapid tests and how will they be trained?

Anyone who is trained can administer these tests. Staff must complete two online training videos [here](#) and [here](#).

How are test results reported?

All tests conducted for COVID-19 must be reported to MDHHS. That means all positive and negative tests must be reported. Use the following link to report all antigen tests: https://newmibridges.michigan.gov/s/isd-antigen-testing-results?language=en_US

Can practices be held if student athletes are tested on their own?

No. Pilot participants must be tested at the recommended cadence of three times a week on non-consecutive days by the school staff, at school. Outside test results may not be used.

How soon after schools begin testing may practice or competitions commence?

Practices or competitions may begin on the day that participants receive their first negative antigen test result. To continue playing or practicing after that day, they will need to be tested three times a week on non-consecutive days so long as they are continuing in the competition.

Will participants who have already had COVID-19 but recovered still be required to participate in testing?

If the participant has recovered from COVID-19 within the last 90 days (with a confirmed diagnostic test), they can produce a doctor’s note and will be exempt from testing. An antibody test result is insufficient. Other requirements, such as wearing a mask during play, still apply. Participants who have had COVID-19 greater than 90 days ago must still be tested. For all participants, if they display COVID-19 symptoms, they must not attend practice or a competition, and must stay home and self-isolate until their symptoms resolve.

What happens if someone tests positive?

The person is immediately sent home, cannot participate in athletics, and should get a PCR test to confirm their test result. If the person can show proof of a negative PCR test taken within 48 hours after the positive antigen test, they may return to play. If they have a positive PCR test or do not obtain a test within 48 hours, they may not return to play for 10 days.

What if that person later tests negative with a lab-based test? What happens if someone is told they were a close contact of someone with COVID-19 and has to quarantine, but they have had a negative antigen test?

Scenario (player or coach)	May not participate in athletic practice or play until:
Asymptomatic close contact of a person with COVID-19	LHD quarantine requirements have been met (usually 10-14 days). Under no circumstances may a negative test result be used to return to play sooner than 7 days.
Symptoms including fever, cough, other respiratory symptoms, or those symptoms outlined by the CDC	Symptoms have resolved for more than 24 hours, and they have a negative molecular/PCR (not antigen) test
Asymptomatic, with positive antigen test	They may resume play if they have a subsequent negative molecular test within 48 hrs. Otherwise, isolate for 10 days from date of first positive test, or as per CDC guidelines
Asymptomatic, with positive PCR/ molecular test	Isolate for 10 days from date of first positive test, or as per CDC guidelines

Students or coaches with symptoms or a positive antigen test result should be evaluated by their physician as soon as possible, and should receive a molecular/PCR test immediately.

Decisions about returning to play must not supersede the guidance given above.

If an individual tests positive, who are schools required to notify?

All tests results must be reported to MDHHS. The team must notify the school and the local health department. The result is also counted as a probable case for school mandated public reporting.

What happens to a team if one person has a positive rapid test?

Any team members with close contacts to that person will need to quarantine as if the person is positive, unless and until the person obtains a negative PCR test result. If a pilot participant does test positive, that person must cooperate with contact tracing, and any team members who have had close contact will need to quarantine (per the table above).

Pilot design and future plans

How is this pilot being monitored?

Participating schools must document their compliance with all requirements and submit that plan to MHSAA and their local health department. These plans must be made available to MDHHS upon request.

Is this a path forward for reopening other sports?

The focus of this pilot is to assess a testing protocol that can be used to reopen K-12 schools. Resuming in-person education is the Department's top priority. We will continue to gauge the feasibility of resuming other sports in the winter, but this is a lower priority for state-sourced testing supplies.

Why now?

Until recently, Michigan did not have sufficient testing supplies available to make this possible. In light of vaccination beginning (which will reduce the need for testing in long term care facilities) and expanding test supply access, we now are in a position to exploring options to use testing more widely to open up K-12 and athletics.

Who can I contact if I have additional questions?

Please send an email to MDHHS-Binaxnowrequest@michigan.gov.