



## Frequently Asked Questions

Updated: February 10, 2021

### **How can we expect students to wear a mask while playing sports? Won't that be damaging to their health?**

In the summer of 2020, an ICU doctor in the UK, Dr. Tom Lawton, ran nearly 22 miles while wearing a cotton mask and monitoring his oxygen levels.

Dr. Lawton found his blood oxygen levels -- which should be 95% or higher for healthy individuals, were consistently 98%. Lawton used the experiment to prove that face masks, while sometimes uncomfortable, don't impair oxygen intake. ([RunnersConnect, 2020](#))

Doctors in Arizona believe this as an example that it's safe to wear a face mask when participating in high-intensity training and competition.

Some athletes insist that wearing a mask while running decreases their oxygen levels, restricts airflow, or results in oral infections. However, there have been no studies or proof that face masks decrease oxygen levels in the blood or affect running performance.

Here in Arizona, Salpointe Catholic won the 4A volleyball title in the Fall while wearing facemasks all season. No facemask related issues occurred.

### **What kind of masks are permitted?**

There are many types of permissible sports masks. Some may be more comfortable for students than others. Non-medical disposable masks, cloth masks and facemasks designed for sports are permissible. Some parents whose students have competed using facemasks have recommended the following:

[Addix](#) - As an AIA partner, Addix is offering a discount using Promo code **AIA**. Custom face masks with school colors and logos are available.

[Underarmour](#)

[Helmetfitting](#)

[Snapmasksport](#)

Face shields made of plastic or masks with hard plastic pieces or valves are not permitted.

## Masks increase carbon dioxide. Isn't this scientifically unsafe for our children?

There is no risk of hypoxia, which is lower oxygen levels, in healthy teens or adults. Carbon dioxide will freely diffuse through a mask as you breathe. [Also, new research studies contradict statements linking wearing face masks to carbon dioxide poisoning.](#) A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention representative stated that carbon dioxide, indeed, will collect between the mask and face but not in dangerous amounts and certainly not enough to cause hypercapnia ([Reuters, 2020](#)).

## The CDC doesn't even recommend wearing masks while exercising. Why is this being required?

 COVID-19 alert

### Common question

#### Should a mask be worn while exercising in public during the COVID-19 pandemic?

This likely depends on the type of exercise and the nature of the location. The CDC recommends not wearing a mask during high intensity activities, like running, if it causes breathing difficulty. Sweat can also make the mask become wet, making it even more difficult to breathe through and could promote the growth of bacteria. If unable to wear a cloth face covering, consider conducting the activity in a location with better ventilation (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where you can maintain physical distance from others. Gyms and other fitness sites may have their own additional requirements for mask usage. You can see more of the CDC's considerations for wearing cloth face coverings [here](#).

The CDC has modified its recommendations throughout the past ten months based on the latest guidance from medical experts and scientists. As of 12/31/20, the [CDC recommends wearing masks for youth sports for the entirety of competition.](#)

**My student-athlete has a medical condition. With a doctor's note, can my student play without a mask?**

Since participation is voluntary, there are no exceptions regarding mask-wearing at AIA officiated competitions. If a student finds themselves having extreme difficulty wearing a mask, it might be in the child's best interest to be seen by their doctor for evaluation and avoid engaging in strenuous sports during this time.

**What if my student is having difficulty during a competition?**

An official's timeout may be taken if a student needs attention. Prior to competition, coaches and officials may also agree upon implementing added time out periods. These additional periods can be used to allow students to practice social distancing while masks are removed for a water break.

**Are masks required during practice?**

Schools and coaches are encouraged to adhere to the latest [CDC recommendations](#) for youth sports. Wearing masks during practice is at the discretion of individual schools.

**Are visiting parents allowed by AIA, or is that a local school decision?**

This is now a home school decision based on the school or district's position and local and state guidelines. If permitted to attend, all spectators are required to wear a mask covering nose and mouth. Permissible masks are solid cloth masks, disposable non-surgical masks and gaiters.

**If we allow our Spiritline to cheer at home games, can we allow two parents/guardians to attend on their behalf as well?**

Yes. Each participating Spiritline student is allowed two parents or guardians to attend each home game.