



# **Returning to Campus**

Spring 2021 COVID-19 Guide:  
Athletic Resocialization Policy

**\*This is a working document and subject to change without notice\***

The Department of Intercollegiate Athletics at Virginia Wesleyan University will resume competition play for winter, fall and spring sports beginning in late January and continuing through mid-May 2021. All conference sport schedules will be approved by the Old Dominion Athletic Conference Board of Directors in partnership with each conference institution. All non-conference events in which VWU athletes participate must be approved by the athletic director before being added to the official schedule.

Until further notice, strict protocols will be in place involving adherence to University policy related to return to campus and athletic resocialization to include testing procedures, game day and travel considerations, game management policies and sports information capabilities. Detailed information related to each sport is being disseminated by athletic administration to multiple constituencies and will be shared through numerous communiques. Only official game personnel, University officials, University security, credentialed media and approved recruits and their families will be allowed in or around the athletic venues during any sanctioned practice or competition. **No spectators or fans will be allowed for any reason at this time.**

#### **JANUARY 3, 2021- JANUARY 24, 2021**

**Sunday, January 3, 2021-** Basketball and swimming move in between 1-2 p.m. Residence Life and Intercollegiate Athletics coordinate. The four teams begin practice on January 4 and basketball will begin their preseason testing protocols as recommended by the NCAA.

**Sunday, January 10, 2021-** Cross country, indoor track and field, outdoor track and field, field hockey and soccer move in between 1-2 p.m. Residence Life and Intercollegiate Athletics coordinate. The four teams begin practice on January 11 and begin their testing protocols as recommended by the NCAA.

**Sunday, January 17, 2021-** Baseball, softball, women's lacrosse, golf and volleyball move in between 1-2 p.m. Residence Life and Intercollegiate Athletics coordinate. The six teams begin practice on January 18 and begin their testing protocols as recommended by the NCAA.

**Sunday, January 24, 2021-** Tennis and men's lacrosse move in between 1-2 p.m. Residence Life and Intercollegiate Athletics coordinate. The teams will tentatively begin practice the week of January 25 and begin their testing protocols as recommended by the NCAA.

#### **PRACTICE PREPARATION**

Student-athletes returning to campus for the spring semester and athletic activity will be afforded a transition period in training. The training matrix will be communicated to the coaches and follow the latest guidance from the conference and the NCAA. VWU athletics understands the importance of establishing this initial transition period during which student-athletes are allowed the time to properly and safely progress to competition status.

## COMPETITION PREPARATION

### Testing Procedures

Virginia Wesleyan University Department of Intercollegiate Athletics COVID testing protocol will be in line with the testing recommendations outlined in the NCAA *Resocialization of Collegiate Sport: Developing Standards for Practice and Competition, Second Edition*.

VWU athletic department's testing procedure will include testing criteria for each competing ODAC sport and testing criteria for Tier 1, 2, and 3 personnel for the institution. Testing procedures will not be less than the recommendations listed in the approved NCAA recommendations and still compete within the ODAC competitive season. All institutional procedures will need to be submitted to the ODAC office for documentation purposes and available to all conference members through the conference secure administrative website.

The following minimum testing protocols will be followed by all Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) institutions. Testing levels required for out of season, preseason, competition and post season competition.

#### **Low transmission risk:**

- Testing is performed in conjunction with a school plan for all students, plus additional testing for symptomatic and high infection risk individuals as warranted. There are no specific levels of testing required through the NCAA/conference policies.
- The following sports are categorized as low transmission:
  - Cross Country
  - Golf
  - Swimming
  - Tennis
  - Outdoor Track and Field

#### **Intermediate transmission risk:**

- Out-of-season athletic activities: Testing is performed in conjunction with a school plan for all students, plus additional testing for symptomatic and high infection risk individuals as warranted.
- In-season: Surveillance PCR or antigen testing, at a rate of no less than 25% of athletes and Tier 1 non-athlete personnel every week, plus additional testing for symptomatic and high infection risk individuals as warranted according to institutional policy.
- The following sports are categorized as intermediate transmission:
  - Baseball
  - Field Hockey
  - Lacrosse
  - Soccer
  - Softball
  - Indoor Track and Field
  - Volleyball (masked)

#### **High transmission risk:**

- Out-of-season athletic activities: Surveillance PCR testing, for example, 25% of athletes and Tier 1 non-athlete personnel every one week if physical distancing, masking and other protective features are not maintained, plus additional testing for symptomatic and high infection risk individuals as warranted.

- Preseason: Testing once weekly by PCR testing, or three times weekly by antigen testing.
- Regular and postseason, indoor sports: Testing (PCR/antigen/rapid PCR testing) of athletes and Tier 1 non-athlete personnel three times weekly on nonconsecutive days, beginning one week before the first competition.
- The following sports are categorized as high transmission:
  - Basketball

### **72 hours prior to competition**

Each institution will create and distribute written communication from the hosting institution on details on Institutional COVID policy for campus events and athletics.

### **HOME CONTEST PROCEDURE**

All individuals necessary to host an athletic event should be divided into three tiers, as described below. Tiers are based on the ability to wear masks/face coverings, the ability to practice physical distancing (6 feet or greater) and the role played in connection with the competition. All individuals should wear masks/face coverings and physically distance whenever possible. **Only individuals assigned to Tiers 1 and 2 will be permitted access to the inner bubble (e.g., locker rooms, athletic training room, court area).**

**Tier 1** — This tier consists of individuals for whom physical distancing and face coverings are not possible or effective during athletic training or competition. Examples of relevant individuals include student-athletes, coaches, athletic trainers and physical therapists, medical staff, equipment staff and officials. Tier 1 individuals should be limited to essential personnel. All Tier 1 individuals should wear masks/face coverings, except for student-athletes and officials (depending on the sport specs) on the playing surface. Physical distancing should be adhered to whenever possible.

**Tier 2** — This tier consists of individuals who come into close contact with Tier 1 individuals but can reasonably maintain physical distance and use face coverings during their interaction. Examples of relevant individuals include certain team staff (e.g., athletic department staff) and certain operational staff (e.g., security, event staff and league staff). Tier 2 individuals will maintain physical distance and universal masking while performing their jobs, and any interaction with Tier 1 individuals must be approved by the designated event organizer or athletics healthcare administrator (or designee), and both parties must maintain physical distance and wear face coverings.

**Tier 3** — This tier includes individuals who provide event services but are not in the same vicinity with Tier 1 individuals (and should closer contact become necessary, would be reclassified into Tier 2). Tier 3 individuals should minimize contact with Tier 2 individuals and observe masking and physical distancing at all times. Examples of relevant individuals include certain operational staff (e.g., housekeeping, catering, sanitation and transportation) and media/broadcast.

***At this time spectators are not allowed in or around athletic venues.***

## **Game Operations**

### *Face Coverings*

Face coverings will be required for game personnel, non-participating athletes, coaches, additional bench personnel, officials and athletic training staff. The host institution will provide details of their institutional policy to visiting institutions via template letter/email prior to the competition. It is the visiting institution's responsibility to ensure the travel party has enough face coverings to fulfill the host's policy. If required, all face coverings should be worn correctly (covering nose and mouth). Any individual not in compliance with the hosting institution's policy will be asked to leave the venue.

### *Locker Rooms*

Locker room/changing area with shower access for visiting teams only will be provided for high risk of transmission sports. Any visiting team that chooses not to use the provided visitor locker room facility should let the hosting head coach or administrator know no later than 24 hours prior to the start of the contest. Moderate and low risk transmission sports will not have access to locker rooms at this time.

### *Bench Areas*

All bench and sideline areas should be arranged based on the principles listed in the NCAA [Guidance and Recommendations for Game Day Operations-Basketball](#). At all times social distancing and universal masking should be emphasized for all student athletes, coaches and game personnel for athletic contests.

### *Athletic Training*

### *Pregame treatment*

Pregame treatment will be available for visiting teams. The details of the location of treatment and treatments available will be in a pre-competition informational email and will vary depending on the host institution.

### *Hydration*

- Host institution will provide coolers of water for each bench area.
- Team members should drink only out of their own cup/personal water bottle.
- Single-use cups with proper disposal are preferred.
- Water bottles should be labeled for individual use. Visiting team should provide water bottles or enough cups for each athlete for the entire length of the competition.
- Each team should have its own set of hydration coolers (by host institution), water bottles/carriers and cups (by visiting institutions). Cooler carts may remain behind the benches, but coolers shall be replaced once competition concludes.

### *Hand Sanitizing Stations*

- Hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol concentration) will be available at home and visiting team bench areas, scorer's table/field administrative table, and press box.
- Depending on the best practices for the sport, ball handlers should have access to disposable gloves and disposable disinfectant wipes. During breaks in play, if needed, ball handlers may wipe the ball with disinfectant wipes/solution (i.e. timeouts, quarter breaks, halftime, etc.). Ball disinfection should occur at the end of the game or event and should align with sport specific guidelines (if applicable).

*Responsible parties: Athletic Director, Event or Game Manager(s), and Athletic Trainers*

Hosting institution will complete template letter/email communication and this information will be sent to the visiting institution's Athletic Director, Head Coach, and Head Athletic Trainer. Template will include but is not limited to:

- On-campus/facility access for team and bus/contact for arrival
- Which entrance to use to enter/exit the athletic facility (field, court, locker rooms etc.)
- Requests for locker rooms prior to the game can be made within 24 hours, otherwise the visiting team will arrive at the venue dressed for competition and will only have locker room access post game.
- Location of and type of athletic training services will be available to the visiting team and any protocol for use of the athletic training facility, if needed.
- Location of emergency medical facilities.
- COVID-19 testing area location and prescribed testing procedures for game officials.
- Contact information for local rental vehicle companies.
- Face coverings will be required for game personnel, non-participating athletes, coaches, additional bench personnel and athletic training staff. The host institution will provide details of their institutional policy to visiting institutions.
- Information on safe shelters during inclement weather for visiting team to utilize (venue specific).
- Any restrictions on fan attendance/school policies for indoor and outdoor facilities.

Visiting travel parties should take into account additional time may be required for team pre-game preparation including taping/treatment, team meetings, changing, additional locker room time (if numbers are restricted, etc.).

## **COVID-19 OFF-CAMPUS STUDENT ATHLETE AND TEAM TRAVEL PROTOCOL**

To protect University students and staff during transportation to and from campus for activities related to sports competition and other activities the University deems necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic, the University has established these requirements for travel. At this time, the University does not authorize group trips using ridesharing or mass transit for athletic events. **All participants (staff or students) must download and utilize the LiveSafe app prior to departure.**

### *Overnight Travel*

At this time, overnight travel for athletic events is not recommended.

### *Day Trip Travel*

#### *Pre-Travel Requirements*

- On the day of travel, all individuals intending to participate must have successfully completed the LiveSafe daily symptom monitoring survey within 2 hours prior to departure
- Before boarding the vehicle for the trip, the University host/coach for the trip must verify individuals have no symptoms including using a contactless thermometer
- Within 10 minutes prior to boarding the vehicle for each portion of the trip, all participants must wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- All participants must maintain physical distancing (6 feet) while waiting for the transportation and while loading the vehicle.

*The University host/coach for the trip must:*

1. Verify that all individuals intending to participate on the trip have successfully completed the daily symptom monitoring survey for the day of travel
2. Verify each individual intending to participate have no symptoms including temperature below 100.4F
3. Maintain a roster and seating chart of all participants for each travel event for 21 days. This procedure is extremely important to facilitate accurate contact tracing, if necessary.

## **Transportation Requirements**

*Personal vehicles or carpooling*

In the rare occurrence personal vehicles are utilized as transportation for participants, the following guidelines must be followed:

- Faculty and staff are prohibited from transporting students in personal vehicles to any University competition.
- The University discourages carpooling when travelling individually in personal vehicles is feasible. (Carpooling is permitted if the carpool group constitutes an existing cohort, such as roommates, suitemates or otherwise living in same household, **but must be approved by Head Coach, Director of Athletics**)
- Individuals who are carpooling must:
  - Wear cloth face coverings or masks (no buffs or bandanas) at all times while in the vehicle;
  - Improve ventilation by keeping all windows open throughout the drive except in inclement weather and, in inclement weather, setting the air ventilation/air conditioning on non-recirculation mode
  - Not exceed 50% of the vehicle's occupancy, including the driver, as measured by the number of available and functional seat belts.

*University provided transportation*

- The University will provide hand sanitizer for use in the vehicle.
- While in the vehicle, all passengers must:
  - Wear cloth face coverings or masks (no buffs or bandanas) at all times;
  - When possible, not sit directly next to another person;
  - Maintain a physical distance of 6 feet where possible;
  - When possible, sit in every other row of the vehicle; and
  - Stay in their designated seat
- Follow transportation service approved COVID-19 health and safety measures
- **A University faculty, staff member, or administrator must be present on the vehicle at all times during travel to monitor compliance with protocols**
- Food consumption while traveling is prohibited. Drinking for hydration is permissible.

*Food Service Requirements*

- Participants must consume all food outdoors and not inside restaurants.
- Consuming food inside any vehicle is not permitted unless an individual is traveling alone in a personal vehicle.

- Food from restaurants must be obtained via the drive through, curbside pickup, or takeout, and individually packaged for single servings.
- Participants may also consume individually packaged purchased items.

#### *Requirements throughout the trip*

- As soon as possible after arriving at the destination, all participants must wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer.
- All participants must follow all applicable VWU COVID-19 Protocols, including but not limited to symptom monitoring, wearing face coverings, and maintain social distancing throughout the trip.

#### *Plan for Symptomatic Participants*

If a student-athlete reports COVID-19 symptoms to their athletic trainer, coaching staff, or hosting athletic trainer the symptomatic athlete will wear a mask and be isolated. The isolation area will be determined by where the student-athletes report symptoms and can be assessed with the ODAC COVID-19 questionnaire. COVID-19 isolation areas should/will be a part of each athletic venue Emergency Action Plan (EAP) and will be pre-determined by the host institution. If an ill student-athlete presents with COVID-19 symptoms, the assessing athletic trainer will hold the ill student athlete from the remainder of team activity.

If the competition has not started or is in the process of being played, game officials, both head coaches, host athletics director or designee (game manager), hosting athletic trainer, and visiting athletic trainer (if applicable) will meet and assess exposure risk. Group will determine if competition can be completed safely.

Transportation of the ill student-athlete will be determined by the head coach and the visiting institution's athletic training staff (either on-site or via phone conversation). The following are transportations options:

1. The ill student athlete's parents/guardians if they are in attendance.
2. Car or van rental from the local area with coaching staff responsible for driving (passengers should be limited to only those with symptoms and an institutional staff member driving. All passengers in the vehicle should wear masks during the trip).
3. Create an isolation area on the bus, all travel party members must wear masks.
4. An institutional vehicle from the visiting institution can return for ill student-athlete and institutional personnel.