



CSA COVID-19 Return to Competition Guidelines & Match Protocols

Written as of February 4, 2021

As CSA teams consider plans to play matches during the Spring 2021 term, there are many factors to consider. This document will outline the recommended measures designed to prevent the community spread of COVID-19 at college squash matches. The information included herein was developed in consultation with [US Squash's Return to Competition](#) guidelines and the [Resocialization of Collegiate Sport](#) resources published by the NCAA.

Current Environment

While some squash facilities across the country are opening, they are doing so in geographic locations where it is permitted and in accordance with US Squash's minimum operational standards. US Squash provides [extensive guidelines](#) concerning the ventilation, cleaning, and accredited use of squash facilities, which institutions should consult as they prepare for any intercollegiate squash competition this season.

The CDC continues to refine its understanding of the modes and likelihood of transmission of COVID-19 from one person to another. Extended close contact between people continues to be the primary mode of transmission of the virus, but transmission has also occurred in enclosed spaces with inadequate ventilation, even when close contact was not established. Squash facility managers should examine their buildings' ventilation capabilities to ensure that they meet expected standards.

Now more than ever, it is imperative that all CSA member institutions and teams follow federal, state, and local health guidelines related to COVID-19. The information provided here is meant to be consistent with scientific and medical guidance available at the time of print and should not be a substitute for medical or legal advice. This document also remains subject to revision as more information becomes available over time.

Mitigating Risk with Face Coverings and Physical Distancing

Physical distancing and universal masking are two of the most effective methods for preventing COVID-19 spread. Some states mandate that a face mask must be worn inside at all times. COVID-19 cases that have arisen from interactions on a squash court all occurred when players were not wearing masks during play. *CSA strongly recommends that teams implement universal masking and physical distancing strategies during practice and competition.*

Wearing a cloth face mask during college-level play may be difficult due to cardiovascular needs and the introduction of moisture from sweat. Even so, mask-wearing on court is highly recommended, especially throughout the playing facility and during low-stress activities like warm-ups, cool-downs, and drills. Using a phased-in approach to return to training is encouraged, including the active use of functional groups to promote physical distancing and to prevent wider spread throughout a team.

In line with CDC guidelines, CSA does not currently recommend the use of "face shields" as a direct substitute for face masks which directly cover the nose and mouth. It is also noted that masks with exhalation valves do not adequately prevent the spread of COVID-19, according to research.



Testing and Masking Strategies for Competition

Testing strategies should align with institutional and local/state public health guidance and take into consideration factors specific to transmission risk.

For the purposes of this communication, based on current evidence and standards, polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing or point-of-care antigen testing performed with a regular cadence should be considered the standard testing methods used by CSA member programs.

Team Travel

So far during the 2020-2021 academic year, the number of spreader events traced back to prolonged team travel in a bus or van exceeds the number of events occurring on planes. Since almost all CSA teams travel via bus or van to matches, precautions like universal masking, physical distancing, and open windows should be implemented when feasible.

Additionally, schools should aim to travel and play the same day to avoid overnight stays. For all travel, prepackaged meals or room service should be considered. If restaurant dining is the only option, consider take-out food or outdoor eating as preferable alternatives.

Additional precautions for travel include:

- Place individuals strategically for all travel, e.g. players sitting in pods or tiers that are used during practice.
- Avoid un-masked time by limiting unnecessary meals and/or food.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Limit group meals and use outdoor locations for group meals, if possible.
- Using “grab and go” meals where possible.
- Limit time in locker rooms and other highly trafficked spaces.
- Adhere to social activity safety measures at all times.

Testing Strategies

Shown below are the recommended testing strategies for CSA student-athletes and coaches who are preparing to play another team in an intercollegiate competition. Teams’ final testing implementation should be devised in accordance with local and state guidelines and with consideration for other factors impacting member institutions’ decision-making. Chosen strategies must account for the necessary return time for test results prior to team travel.

With Universal Masking: If all training and competition are done with universal masking and infection risk mitigation strategies (physical distancing, washing hands regularly, etc.) in place, student-athletes and staff should be tested once weekly by PCR testing within 3 days of a competition or three times weekly on nonconsecutive days by antigen or rapid PCR testing.

Without Universal Masking: If training and competition do not take place with universal masking and physical distancing, all athletes and staff should be tested three times weekly – using any test format – on nonconsecutive days beginning one week prior to competition. Ideally, a PCR test will be administered within three days before travel departure.



When discussing competition between schools, coaches should openly share the testing strategies they are using, their risk mitigation plans, and testing results leading up to competition in a way that adheres to public health privacy laws. If there is a disagreement between teams on the sufficiency of the testing and mitigation strategies being used, the policies of the host institution shall be the prevailing standards for that contest.

Should any players test positive within 48 hours after competition with another team, local health authorities and contact tracers should be informed to help facilitate communication with the opposing team.

Match Officials

CSA recommends that teams do not use outside squash referees to officiate matches during this season. The players on the competing teams should be well-versed enough in the rules to handle refereeing and marking responsibilities. The referee and marker should sit at least six feet apart when the match is active. Alternatively, teams should also consider having only one player complete the refereeing and marking duties for each match.

If it is necessary to hire outside referees for the matches, the hired referees should take every precaution to limit COVID-19 exposure starting three days prior to the match. A referee who has reliable access to testing should seek a test within three days of the match date.

The outside referee should wear a mask during the entire time that they are on site in the squash venue, including during the matches that they officiate. The match referee should handle all refereeing and marking responsibilities, and all team members should physically distance from the referee during competition.

Spectators

CSA strongly recommends that member institutions prohibit spectators from attending matches in person during this season. CSA will work with competing teams to publicize web streaming and live scoring options for their fans. Livestreaming equipment can also be rented from US Squash, if needed.

Any attempt to welcome spectators to the squash venue for a competition must be made according to local and state health guidelines and institutional policies regarding gathering limits.

Match Protocols

The protocols for hosting a match will be different in a world impacted by COVID-19 compared to match-day operations implemented previously. Teams should take the following steps to limit contact between members of opposing teams:

- Access to the playing venue during competition should be limited to players, essential coaching staff members, an administrator from the host school, an athletic trainer, and other essential operations staff members (custodians, maintenance staff, etc.).
- All individuals present should wear a mask throughout the venue at all times.
- Each team should have a designated team room or space within the facility, ideally near or adjacent to the competition courts. Players who need to eat or drink before, during, or after a match should retreat their team's area before removing their mask.



- The host venue should offer hand sanitizer distribution points throughout the facility, especially near the competition courts where players can use it when they step on and off court.
- Teams should not perform pre-match introductions with more than two opponents on a single court. Methods such as team scoreboards, announcements over a public address system, or pre-recorded video introductions should be used to introduce the individual matches for the contest.
- A new ball should be used for each individual match. The host team should designate a specific place where used balls can be deposited by the winning player of each match.
- All physical contact between opposing players on court, other than regular contact during play, is discouraged. Pre- and post-match handshakes should be replaced by sporting taps of the racquet or other distanced acknowledgements.
- The host team should provide two small storage bins at the front of each competition court for the players to store their belongings during play. Players are encouraged to store their own towels and additional equipment items like racquets, shirts, and masks in the on-court bins to limit the number of times that a player would need to leave court during a match.
- No equipment should be shared, particularly across teams.
- Players should enter the court wearing their mask, store the mask on-court if it will not be worn during play, and leave the court wearing a mask.
- Players must not wipe their hands or arms on the court's walls during the match. A towel stored on court should be used to wipe excess sweat. Teams can designate an appropriate interval – for example, 20 seconds after every 10 rallies – when players can access their towels.
- Player-coach conferences between games should take place off court in a specifically designated area that is separated from other individuals in the venue or outside if it is accessible and feasible in the limited time available.
- A base level cleaning and disinfecting of the courts should take place between each match. Allowing at least 15 minutes between matches for cleaning and air exchange on court is highly recommended.
- Teams should refrain from using locker rooms, if possible, due generally to tight quarters and low ventilation. Visiting teams should plan accordingly.

All questions and concerns related to testing strategies and match protocols should be directed to the CSA League Commissioner. The Commissioner will consult with the US Squash Medical Advisory Panel to ensure that guidance and future decisions are grounded in vigilance and safety.