



**USCSA COVID-19
WINTER OPERATIONS GUIDE**
September 15, 2020





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USCSA COVID-19 Information

Generally, skiing and snowboarding are considered sports that have a lower risk of transmission. Participants are outdoors, distanced from each other, generally wear gloves, goggles/sunglasses and face coverings while engaged in the sport.

Outdoor recreation, including skiing and snowboarding, is proven to improve mental and physical health of participants. “Research is showing that being outside in a mountain environment can boost our immune systems as well as our mental health and well-being,” says Florence Williams, author of *The Nature Fix: How Being in Nature Can Make us Happier, Healthier, and More Creative*.

The United States Collegiate Ski & Snowboard Association has developed the following information for our members, athletes and volunteers. We will be updating this information on a regular basis.

We have developed these recommendations in accordance with current information from these sources: CDC, OSHA, NCAA, USASA, National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), US Skiing & Snowboarding (USSS). They are intended to help ensure USCSA events have the lowest risk of transmission possible.

Safety First! It's Everyone's Responsibility

As an organization, we are encouraging all members, athletes, spectators and volunteers to practice physical distancing and follow all local health guidelines. In accordance with NSAA recommendations all USCSA participants will be required to wear face coverings. Competition Organizers will ensure venue specific information is shared with team leaders on a regular basis.





What to Expect this Winter

The experience this winter at Ski Areas will be different!

- Members, athletes, spectators and volunteers can expect the ski areas will follow all current best practices on physical distancing and cleaning. Because of these practices, there may be additional lines during peak times.
- Expect changes to the experience in base lodges and chalets. There will be changes to onsite registration, lift ticket distribution, bib distribution & where you will be able to change & store gear.
- Expect a reduction in table space available in the base lodges and chalets and changes to food courts and restaurants. Expect changes to rules about outside food and please be sure to check with the host area prior to arrival
- Lift Lines will be physically distanced this winter; areas will develop plans specific to their areas. It may take more time to reach the competition venue.
- These changes will also affect Ski Patrol. The National Ski Patrol has developed policies and training for its members to ensure the highest level of care is offered.
- There will be changes to how the Start & Finish areas are managed.
- There will be changes in gate keeping and judging as well the numbers allowed at each station.
- Spectators may be limited & will be required to physically distance.
- We are looking forward to getting back on the slopes and are excited to see you this winter.





The health and well-being of our student athletes, volunteers, coaches, industry partners and families is the number one priority to the USCSA Board of Directors. We made the decision to end the 2020 USCSA National Championships early to allow participants to return home before much of the country went into a stay at home order. Learning from that process, a COVID-19 Task Force was established in July 2020 and this group has been meeting regularly.

The Task Force has been reviewing issues related to the organization's operations and how competitions may look this winter. We are using recommendations from the CDC, OSHA, USASA, National Ski Areas Association (NSAA), US Ski & Snowboard (USSS), NCAA and other industry partners. These recommendations are intended to help ensure everyone participating with the USCSA experiences the lowest possible risk of COVID-19 transmission.

At this point, the one thing we know for sure is the upcoming season will be different. As an organization we are encouraging all members, athletes, coaches, spectators and volunteers to practice physical distancing, wear a face covering in public, and follow all local health guidelines. Competition Organizers will ensure venue specific information is shared with team leaders on a regular basis. We are all in this together and we all have to take responsibility for ourselves, teammates and other members of our conferences & divisions.

The Task Force will continue to meet on a regular basis for the foreseeable future and will continue to stay abreast of the latest health information, ski industry information. We will be publishing standards for our events, the publication date will be established once NSAA, USASA & USSS release their recommendations. We will work with the Board of Directors and Executive Director to ensure everyone is up to date on best practices.

The USCSA COVID-19 Task Force

Chris Shumeyko - President

Bo Bigelow - Executive Vice President

Sarah Geiger - Vice President of Conferences

Doug Grayson - Vice President of Sport

Brittney Jackson - Executive-at-Large

Jay Moyer - Executive-at-Large

Collin Casper - Executive-at-Large

Eric Plausteiner - McBryne Division Coordinator

Luke Dykowski - Student Athlete Representative

Charlie Naples - Student Athlete Representative





USCSA COVID-19 Registration Protection Program

Understanding the uncertainty created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the USCSA is offering a Registration Protection Program for the 20-21 Competition Season. Athletes and teams can request a full refund of National Office registration dues for any reason until January 4th, 2021. Requests made after January 4th will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If requesting refunds for multiple products and/or team members, please make a single request with all listed registrations to refund for faster processing.

Refunded registrations will be marked inactive for the duration of the 20-21 season. Reinstatements may be permitted on a case-by-case basis if circumstances around original refund request can be shown to have been resolved.





Preface

The following protocols have been adopted by the United States Collegiate Ski and Snowboard Association (USCSA) help keep their members, guests, employees and partners healthy. All recommendations included in this document are intended to align with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), state and local requirements and/or recommendations.

This document will be updated as guidelines are revised and may be subject to frequent changes. Furthermore, in the event of any changes in state requirements such as percentage or maximum occupancy levels, or other specific standards, the requirements of this document will automatically be revised to reflect the specific state requirements in effect at that time. The USCSA have taken precautions to limit transmission of COVID-19 by following federal, state, and local regulations along with industry best practices.

Generally, skiing and snowboarding are considered sports that have a lower risk of transmission. Participants are outdoors, distanced from each other, generally wear gloves, goggles/sunglasses and face coverings while engaged in the sport.

These guidelines were established in accordance with current information from the following sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
National Ski Areas Association (NSAA)
US Ski & Snowboard (USSS)
State and Regional Ski Associations





General Guidelines

The USCSA recommends that everyone participating in its sanctioned events wear face coverings and practice physical distancing. Our goal is hold events where the risk of transmission is as low as possible. We need everyone's help to achieve that goal.

Communication will be critical this season as many of our normal practices will be changing on a regular basis.

USCSA National Office – will regularly update Conference Coordinators about changes to regulations that may impact their events. The National Office needs to update the full membership on a regular basis as to activities within the organization to help reduce the rate of transmission.

COVID-19 Task Force – will remain in contact with industry partners and share best practices within the organization. They will also make recommendations to the USCSA Board of Directors as warranted.

Conference & Division Coordinators – need to remain in close contact with their venues, volunteers and team leaders. It will be critical to share all relevant event information electronically prior to the event to ensure smooth operations.

We know each State is approaching the response to COVID-19 differently and in some cases the responsibility has been granted to a local authority. We suggest each Conference appoint a COVID-19 lead who would stay abreast of local & regional COVID-19 restrictions and or requirements. This person would assist the Conference Coordinator in disseminating the information and potential updates.

Health Screenings

It is our recommendation that teams engage in health screenings prior to departing their campus. If an athlete begins to feel sick while traveling, we ask that the entire team or travel group not attend the events and return to their campus and follow CDC recommendations for a close contact event. If any athlete receives a positive test result during the season they must notify the Conference Coordinator who then will notify the other athletes and the National Office. Health information will remain confidential and details limited to those necessary for contact tracing (if applicable). Conference Coordinators will need to include a Health Screening request into the event competition announcement. It is suggested that CCs ask each team to state they have completed a health screening following CDC recommendations, team leadership must update their CC if anything changes in the status of their team. Failure to comply will result in sanctions under sections 2.7.14 & 2.7.15 of the USCSA Bylaws. USCSA will follow the Return to Competition Guidelines established by US Ski & Snowboard.





Timed Events General Guidelines

- Face Coverings must be worn by anyone in the competition area
- Ensure physical distance at start areas
- Limit spectators and gathering at the finish area
- Close course to only necessary event staff and officials
- Eliminate scoreboards & announcing - use Live Timing to share results
- Timing Room is closed to all but timers and pre-determined officials.
- Communicate via radios, texting, social media
- Assign roles to event staff that are spread out, minimize face-to-face conversation where possible

Judged Events General Guidelines

- Face Coverings must be worn by anyone in the competition area
- Ensure physical distance at start areas
- Limit spectators and gathering at the finish area
- Close course to only necessary event staff and officials
- Eliminate scoreboards & announcing - use Live Timing to share results
- Distance judges and use technology where possible for scoring in freestyle events.
- Ensure venue is closed to general public
- Communicate via radios, texting, social media
- Assign roles to event staff that are spread out, minimize face-to-face conversation where possible





Event Operation Guidelines

Registration

- Wear face coverings and limit interaction & time
- Limit registration desk staff to 1 person
- Only allow 1 person per team to register
- Pre-package bibs & lift tickets
- Allow pre-payments
- Encourage roster changes to be submitted via email or text
- Expect lodge space to be limited
- Work with venue to open registration early and have it broken down before lodge volume increases
- Work with venues ahead of the weekend on where teams can change, store gear
- Don't be surprised if changing & gear storage will be in vehicles

Meetings

- Wear face coverings and limit interaction & time
- Use video conferencing for draws or predefined system
- Use physical media or video platform for team / captains meetings
- If in person meetings – make all attempts to limit the time and hold them outdoors
- Limit meetings to 1 person per team
- Consider purchasing a bulletin board (white erase, push pin, chalkboard, etc.) to allow for non-verbal communication.

Awards

- Wear face coverings and limit interaction & time
- Make all attempts to only have those receiving the award at the award site
- Can broadcast on physical media
- Do not shake hands or have physical contact during the presentation
- Make all attempts to present the awards outdoors

Officials and Event Staff

- Face coverings and hand sanitizer should be purchased and provided by each conference and distributed prior to each event
- Empower officials with disqualification, possible team disqualification for inability to follow new protocols. USCSA will follow guidance from USSS for officials. USCSA will rely on bylaw sections 2.7.14 & 2.7.15 for sanctions.
- Assign roles to event staff that are spread out, minimize face-to-face conversation where possible





First Aid & Safety Personnel

- Ski Patrol will be the sole first aid provider at USCSA events.
- Face coverings must be worn when approaching patient
- Be active in limiting access to injured athletes until a time when they are cleared by patrol. Communicate prior to the event that access to injured athlete and patrol rooms will be extremely restricted.

Mountain Staff

- Be aware of each venue's policies prior to each event and include in the competition announcements.

Bibs

- Consider the use of disposable bibs where possible
- Consider using one bib per athlete for the entire season or issuing a team a set of bibs for the season. If issuing teams bibs for the season, they would need to be educated on proper care.

Inspection

- Consider that longer inspection times will most likely need to take place.
- Consider a team-based dispatch system with times for inspection distributed prior to the event
- There shall be no passing teams immediately downhill of each team.





Alpine / Snowboard SL & GS & Slopestyle

The Start

- Attempt to separate athletes by gender or teams where possible in the start corrals
- Communication is key, utilize wireless communication and technology where possible to alert the next group of athletes to the start
- Create 6 foot markers utilizing gates in snow, cones, markers, brush gates, dye
- Everyone in the start area must be wearing a mask
- Starters must maintain 6 feet where possible

The Finish

- Dissuade people from gathering in finish area
- Use brush gates or dye to mark 6 feet area in the snow for spectators/teammates to gather
- Eliminate announcing if possible & utilize online resources
- Essential personnel only will be allowed in timing shack
- Create a protest text message account or designate a protest meeting area
- Expect larger than normal finish areas

Athletes on Course

- Athlete must have mask on prior to leaving the competition arena

Gatekeepers

- Face coverings will be required
- Gatekeeper meeting and training online, possibility of making online training mandatory for each team. Team will have to designate gatekeepers prior to event
- Gatekeepers should stay in place so they have only 1-on-1 contact with head gatekeeper at the conclusion of each competition run
- Gatekeepers should minimize contact with athletes where possible
- We should utilize our event staff where possible





Snowboard/Free Ski Specific Operations

- Face coverings must be worn by all competitors prior to leaving the competition venue.
- Distance judges and use technology where possible for scoring in freestyle events.
- Make sure that the general public does not have access to venues and ensure that it will be enforced by the venue.

Jams should consider the following adjustments:

- Create markers for six-feet of separation within the start area
- Designate areas for coaches along the arena boundary and make athletes approach coaches instead of vice versa
- Have a starter at the top of the venue
- Drop in start order the first time through the heat and then in order of arrival thereafter
- Create uphill lanes with space for distance between athletes in case of passing
- Consider extending heat times from normal due to best practices for physical distancing
- Only approved coaches, volunteers and officials are the only people within the competition arena during each heat (no spectators)

Cross formats should consider the following adjustments:

- Create markers for six-feet of separation within the start area
- Designate areas for coaches along the arena boundary and make athletes approach coaches instead of vice versa
- Until further improvement of the COVID-19 pandemic, score utilizing a time trial only for Cross events
- Only approved coaches, volunteers and officials are the only people within the competition arena during each heat (no spectators)





Nordic

Coaches' Meeting:

Limit of one delegate per team at meetings;
Assigned seats 6 feet apart and mandatory masking for all in attendance
Email with competition packet sent 48 hours before competition start to limit attendance necessity
Bibs pre-assigned for season, or pickup piles / drive-by pickup (if possible at venue)

DAY OF:

Team arrivals:

Aim for venue closure to the public if possible.
Encourage teams to provide their own warming areas (car space, easy-ups)
limit indoor availability

On-Site Waxing Facilities:

Encourage advance waxing.
Close all on-site waxing facilities, teams must bring own wax and waxing tools

Course open for preview / wax testing:

Teams inspect and test wax together as a team
Inspections and wax testing times assigned to each team
Teams must maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other teams during inspection and wax testing

Competition Start:

Athletes must wear face coverings in starting grid up until their start.
Competitions with individual starts are preferred
Racing 'pods' of 5 - 10 (particularly if bibs are issued throughout season) dispersed at 1mn intervals could be used in place of mass starts.
Athletes must maintain 6 feet of distance between each other in the starting area.
Cull qualifying to less than 30,
Use Blink Skifestival format for sprints (reduce heats to 2 - 4)

On-Course:

Eliminate lap competitions, even at risk of reducing course lengths
Limit number of coaches per team on course to 2 - 3.
Coaches may not provide nutrition.
Coaches must remain 6 feet from trail and mask when athletes approach and observe physical distancing with each other and officials.
No non-coach spectators allowed on course

Finish:

Athletes crossing finish line congregate in finishing pen; chips / bibs are removed by officials
Nutrition / congratulations from other athletes, coaches
Athletes must mask immediately after finishing if unable to do so within 1k of finish
Athletes must self de-chip and clear finishing pen as soon as possible.
6 feet of physical distancing must be observed in pen





On-paper re-organization only. Bibs and chips do not change:
Hold events as close to one another as possible to avoid lag times and ease burden on teams without indoor seating
Awards must be outdoors; face coverings required for attendance, observe physical distancing. Teams must disperse after awards





Academic Affairs Information

- The Academic Affairs Committee in conjunction with the COVID-19 Task Force has reviewed and updated necessary guidelines for eligibility based on current NCAA DII guidance.
- If you have a specific question please contact Collin Casper - ccasper@uscsa.org
- If you are impacted by COVID, you should be able to recapture a year of eligibility without undue hardship. (Treated much like a standard medical hardship and will require proof of hardship by a medical provider.)
- Due to limited on-campus interactions this fall due to COVID-19, the USCSA has created a Release Form for each individual athlete to complete and sign during registration.

Should a university not offer enrollment during this academic year, are you and your team members eligible to still compete within the USCSA?

Unfortunately, No. - You must be enrolled in university, meeting proper NCAA DII Academic Status, as defined by the NCAA Academic Eligibility Rules. There is no sponsoring institution in this scenario. In a scenario where this would impact eligibility in future years, granting hardship for the missed period of time would be granted. (Since the student-athlete is not enrolled in school, it does not impact their years of eligibility, unless they are freshman and this impacts the number of years between high school and starting university.)

My university is not in session for the Fall, but it will be in session for Winter/Spring term (during competition). I would like to compete, but the eligibility rules reference that I needed to be enrolled in the Fall. Will I be able to compete?

Yes, if you are a full-time student during the spring term. NCAA DII does offer an exception to this rule when you are not enrolled in full-time session during the Fall Term of the academic year. The USCSA Academic Affairs Committee acts as the "Management Council" to make this determination. This exception should be granted unilaterally for any student-athlete where this impacts eligibility - no waiver request would be required for the 2020-2021 season of competition.

My university is not in session for the winter/spring term (during competition), but I still want to compete. Am I eligible/is my team eligible?

Unfortunately, No. You must be enrolled in university, meeting proper NCAA DII Academic Status, as defined by the NCAA Academic Eligibility Rules. There is no sponsoring institution in this scenario.





My university is in session for the Winter/Spring but has decided to not permit any intercollegiate competition. Can I ski as an individual within the USCSA?

Unfortunately, No. While the USCSA really would like for every athlete to be able to compete, the USCSA does need to abide by the policies of each member institution. If the institution specifically is not allowing intercollegiate competition, the athletes are therefore no longer representing their university. Choosing to permit student-athletes to participate, even if the institution does not permit competition could open the USCSA to undue risk/liability and therefore the USCSA must abide by the policies of each member institution.

My university is in session for virtual learning only and I am now living geographically in another conference. Am I permitted to compete in another conference?

Unfortunately, No. This goes against the USCSA "team" mission, potentially creates a "First Team" and "Second Team" structure, and the institution would need to allow for students to compete in multiple geographic areas. If there are multiple athletes from the same institution competing in multiple conferences, it is no longer a team sport. There are also issues with which sub-set of that team's athletes would be eligible for Regional and National Championships? Would it be the conference where the university normally participates? Would it be the conference where the team performs the best in the ranking of teams?

