

VIRTUAL CONDITIONING PRACTICE (VCP)
(Allowance for Quarantined Athletes and Spirit Groups)

The MSHSAA staff recently deliberated regarding the topic of virtual practices in this Covid-19 environment, in order to determine if the long-standing precedent of not allowing virtual or independent practices to count toward the 14-day conditioning practice requirement (By-Laws 3.9.1 and 4.5.5) should continue to be in place under these new and challenging circumstances. MSHSAA has determined that a virtual conditioning practice may, **under the following mandatory requirements**, be counted toward the 14-day conditioning practice requirement:

- A VCP allowance can only be used for students who are in quarantine due to being in defined close contact with a positive case of Covid-19. The VCP allowance **CANNOT BE USED FOR STUDENTS WHO HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 OR FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE SHOWING SIGNS/SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19.**
- Students must receive written clearance/permission from an MD/DO/PAC/ARNP to participate in VCP(s).
- Schools must receive a copy of the written clearance/permission from an MD/DO/PAC/ARNP for the student to participate in a VCP(s). Furthermore, written permission from the parent/guardian for a student to participate in a VCP(s) is also required.
- Students and parents/guardians must acknowledge that VCP(s) does not provide the same level of supervision as traditional practice environments; therefore, students and parents/guardians are encouraged to have an individual at the site of the VCP supervising the conditioning activities.
- A VCP must be LIVE, it cannot be recorded.
- The VCP must be approved by school administration and supervised by a school approved coach.
- If the number of student athletes participating in a VCP results in the school approved coach not being able to visually monitor ALL student athletes at the same time, then a second school approved coach must coordinate a separate VCP so that ALL students are monitored for the duration of the VCP.
- The school approved coach supervising the VCP MUST document the location/address of each participant prior the VCP occurring, in the event the coach needs to report an emergency.
- Only cardiovascular exercises and calisthenics shall occur during VCP(s). (Example: jogging, running, stationary bicycling, up/downs, push-ups, sit-ups, crunches, planks, lunges, etc.). All protective equipment, sport related equipment or weightlifting equipment shall **not** be used for VCP(s), even if available.
- A VCP will only count toward the 14-day conditioning practice requirement, it WILL NOT count toward any required equipment acclimatization requirements. Example: The sport of football requires two practice days in helmet only and three practice days with helmet/shoulder pads before a student can participate in full pads and full contact. A football player CANNOT use protective equipment during a VCP; therefore, upon return to regular practice(s) a football player must meet the stages of equipment acclimatization requirements prior to participating in full pads with full contact. (See Q and A #7 Specific to Football).
- Only one conditioning practice may count each day (whether it is a traditional practice setting or a virtual practice setting).

Virtual Conditioning Practice (VCP) - Questions/Answers

Q1- Now that the MSHSAA office has outlined the parameters of a Virtual Conditioning Practice (VCP) and stated that a VCP can be counted toward the 14-day conditioning practice requirement, will schools be able to use VCP's in future years for students to meet the 14-day conditioning practice requirement if they are going to miss practices for reasons unrelated to Covid-19 situations?

A1- No, the VCP allowance has only been approved for students in quarantine due to close contact with a positive case. The VCP allowance is an effort to help schools and students navigate through the hurdles of being quarantined due to Covid-19, it is not in place to promote students missing traditional practice(s) for other planned or unplanned reasons. The MSHSAA office will only permit VCP(s) during the Covid-19 pandemic for the 2020-2021 school year.

Q2- We have a student who is currently serving a 14-day quarantine due to testing positive for Covid-19. Should we allow the student to participate in VCP?

A2- No, if you have a student who has tested positive, for the safety of the student they CANNOT participate in VCP(s) during the 14-day quarantine. Furthermore, after completion of the quarantine the student must have a completed Covid-19 Return To Play form prior to returning to team practice settings AND the five stage re-entry protocol for returning to practice must be followed.

Q3- We have a student who is showing signs/symptoms of Covid-19 but has not been tested for Covid-19? Should we allow the student to participate in VCP(s)?

A3- No, if you have a student who is showing signs and symptoms you must error on the side of caution and safety for the student and not facilitate a VCP for the student. If an athlete does experience symptoms of COVID, it is also STRONGLY recommended that the athlete get tested for COVID. There are safety precautions that must be followed and a return to play protocol that is necessary to complete if COVID positive out of concern for the potential of rare cardiac complications that may arise following COVID infection.

Q4- We have a student who is currently serving a 14-day quarantine due to being in close contact with a family member who has tested positive. The student is not showing any signs or symptoms and has even tested negative for Covid-19. Can the student participate in VCP(s) and count those VCP(s) toward the 14-day conditioning practice requirement?

A4- Yes, the student can participate so long as all requirements, including a written release/clearance from an MD/DO/PAC/ARNP, are being met. For purposes of safety and risk management, schools MUST make absolutely sure that all coaches know and understand the mandatory requirements for facilitating a VCP.

Q5- We have a student starting a 14-day quarantine due to having close contact with a positive case of Covid-19. Our local health department has communicated to the student and parent that the student does not need to get tested or seek medical attention unless they start showing symptoms. How do we secure a written release/clearance from a physician in order for this student to participate in VCP(s).

A5- If a student desires to participate in a VCP then the student/parent has the responsibility to seek out what possibilities there are for securing the necessary written release/clearance from an MD/DO/PAC/ARNP to participate in a VCP. Communication directly with a medical provider regarding the student's current situation and the necessity of a written release/clearance from a MD/DO/PAC/ARNP would be the best place to start. This will allow the medical provider to suggest what avenues may be possible for getting a written release/clearance from the MD/DO/PAC/ARNP for

the student to participate in VCP(s). If a written release/clearance from a MD/DO/PAC/ARNP cannot be secured, then there cannot be a VCP take place for the student.

Q6- The MSHSAA office just released guidance regarding VCP's on August 19, 2020. What if our school has already been implementing VCP's prior to this date? Do those dates of VCP's count?

A6- The VCP(s) that have already occurred can only count "if" the school received a written release/clearance from an MD/DO/PAC/ARNP for the student to participate in a VCP. Any VCP(s) that occurred simply on the suggestion of coach and agreement from student/parent without approval from a MD/DO/PAC/ARNP CANNOT be counted as a VCP; therefore, it WOULD NOT count toward the 14-day conditioning practice requirement.

Q7- We have a football player currently serving a 14-day quarantine due to exposure or close contact to a positive case of Covid-19. Prior to quarantine the player had participated in three conditioning practices (two days with helmet only, 1 day with helmet and shoulder pads. The player has received written release/clearance from an MD/DO/PAC/ARNP to participate in VCP(s). When the quarantine is completed the player will have participated in 10 VCP(s). How many conditioning practices does the player now have toward the required 14-days conditioning practices? When the player returns to normal practices with the team what equipment can be worn.

A7- The player has completed 13 of the required 14 conditioning practices; HOWEVER, the player has not met the required equipment acclimatization requirement. Even though the player does not have to start over in securing the 14 days of conditioning practices, the player DOES have to start over with the equipment acclimatization requirement. So, when the player returns to team practices they must use helmet only for two days, helmet/shoulder pads for three days and may then use full pads with full contact on their sixth day back with the team.

Note: If a player had already meet the full five-day equipment acclimatization requirement prior to going into quarantine, the five-day equipment acclimatization does not have to be repeated; HOWEVER, schools are encouraged to have the player return to practice using helmet only for one day, using helmet/shoulder pads only for one day, prior to use of full pads/full contact.