



MEET DIRECTOR CONSIDERATIONS

RETURNING TO COMPETITION

As gymnastics clubs begin to re-open their doors and athletes begin to return to practice, we recognize that some may be beginning to consider when and how to return to the competition floor.

Providing a competitive environment is crucial to the athlete experience, but in these challenging times meet directors must ensure that these competitions are conducted in the safest environment possible.

Meet directors and clubs will be permitted to host sanctioned events this season, provided that the event can be conducted in a manner that is permitted by, and in compliance with, their local government guidelines.

To help, we have developed a list of meet director considerations that should be evaluated to determine when and how to host a sanctioned event.

However, we first want to clarify:

- While we intend for this information to be helpful as meet directors consider hosting an event, it is **not** intended to encourage meet directors or clubs to host or participate in a sanctioned event if local COVID-19 guidelines cannot be followed.
- In planning and holding a competition, meet directors and club owners should follow all applicable laws, rules and regulations in their state/county/city to ensure any meet is in compliance with relevant laws, and consider the risk affecting their local area. This determination will be highly location- and situation-specific for every gym, and we urge meet directors to make the call with caution.
- USA Gymnastics cannot offer legal advice or guidance specific to any particular location. Please refer to any federal, state, and local directives and guidance on hosting gatherings safely.
- The hosting considerations laid out below are not an exhaustive list. There may be other steps a meet director and clubs can (or must) take to help prevent the spread of viruses in the gym or at an event, including additional laws, rules, and regulations that must be followed depending on the meet's location.
- Of course, even when taking all precautions, there will still be a risk of transmitting illnesses. Everyone must stay vigilant about the health of members and be ready for potential additional business interruptions.
- The COVID-19 situation is rapidly changing. Because of that, these suggestions may quickly become outdated. Always review the latest information published by the CDC and applicable state and local governments and health authorities.

GENERAL INFORMATION

CDC: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html

WHO: www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

OSHA: www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/



HOSTING CONSIDERATIONS:

Type of events and hosting facilities:

- Evaluate size of the event, both in participants and spectators, to determine if event should be hosted in an in-gym or rented facility.
- There are several ways to reduce the health risks to participants. Suggestions include:
 - Smaller events, or smaller sessions over several days to allow for appropriate cleaning and social distancing requirements.
 - In-gym sanctioned events and invite a cohort of athletes from the same gym, and/or in conjunction with a gymnastics facility in close proximity to attend in-gym events.
 - Host a sanctioned event in a rented facility, if financially feasible, to provide a more socially distanced environment.

When to host:

- Evaluate the local area's COVID-19 related phases of reopening and determine when it may be realistic to host the event.
- Evaluate the conditions of surrounding communities or states to determine when others may be able to attend.
- Consideration should be given to determine if athletes have returned to their gyms, have had the appropriate training time, and are prepared to attend a competition. Review the USAG Physical & Mental Health Guidance for Safe Re-Integration of Gymnastics for guidance. [Click here](#) to view.
- Review the return to school modifications in the state to assist with your decision.

Financial Management:

- Consider if the event is cost effective and be mindful of the financial risk of cancellation.
- Consider and plan for lower than expected registration/ticket sales to accommodate social distancing protocol.
- Develop late registration and refund policies and clearly communicate such policies at the time of registration.
- Consider ancillary event orders timelines, such as awards, programs, marketing, etc.
- Consider state/county/city COVID-19 restrictions, requirements, cleaning protocols and the impact this has to your staffing requirements, both bottom line and volunteer needs.

Travel:

- Thoughtful consideration should be given to events that rely heavily on participants traveling long distances.
- Participants traveling by air may encounter travel delays or other unexpected incidents which may, at the last-minute, impact their ability to attend the event and may pose a greater risk to other participants.

CLEANING/SANITATION CONSIDERATIONS:



- Follow CDC guidance on proper cleaning and disinfecting (see www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html).
- Review guidelines established in the [USA Gymnastics Club Re-Opening Considerations](#).
- Consider a HEPA filter for all AC units in the facility.
- Contact equipment manufacturers for specifics on proper cleaning protocols.
 - AAI: [Click here](#) to view.
 - Spieth: [Click here](#) to view.
- Ensure that all equipment is properly disinfected after each rotation.
- Provide hand sanitizer at entry/exit of the facility and at each station; require use at entry and before each rotation.
- Remove chalk bowls; participants should bring and use their own chalk, bucket and/or bag.
- Require and provide face coverings, and mandate face coverings be worn when required by state or local law.
 - Non-coaching staff: must use mask or facial covering at all times while in the facility.
 - Coaches: must use mask or facial covering at all times unless deemed a hazard during spotting.
 - Judges: must use facial covering (mask, shield, both) at all times; if you do not feel you can judge with a facial covering, do not accept the contract. If you have already accepted a contract, contact your assigner so a replacement can be found.
 - Spectators: require the use of masks or facial coverings at all times while in the facility.
 - Athletes: require all athletes/students wear masks or facial coverings while entering the facility. Once arriving at their initial physically-distanced station, the athlete can then remove the mask or facial coverings, place it into a paper/plastic bag, and keep it isolated with their personal items throughout the competition. The mask or facial coverings should be worn while using other areas of the facility (i.e. bathrooms), and while exiting the facility after competition.
- Adopt policies to ensure social distancing in bathrooms.
- Emphasize proper hand-washing for anyone using the restroom.
- Post signage at all entrances prohibiting entry by individuals who are sick or at risk of spreading COVID-19 from entering the competition. This signage should prohibit entry by an individual (including an athlete) who:
 - Has been diagnosed with COVID-19 (and remains infectious according to CDC guidance),
 - Has symptoms of COVID-19 (including fever, cough, shortness of breath, loss of taste or smell) or has those symptoms within 72 hours of the competition

- Has otherwise been sick, or
- In the past 14 days, has been in close contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or who has symptoms of COVID-19.
- Post signage at the event from the CDC on protective measures individuals should take to stop the spread of COVID-19. The CDC has many signs available on its website for free (found [here](#)). Examples of posters to place at the competition are available [here](#) and [here](#).
- Consider conducting temperature screenings for all individuals entering the meet if feasible.
- Isolate and then safely and promptly escort out individuals who may appear or become ill during the event.
- Consider removing or covering/isolating all non-essential and loose equipment.
- Consider designating a person to be assigned specifically to this duty (not the Meet Director or judge);
 - This person is to liaise with medical staff regarding any process as necessary.



COMPETITION FORMAT CONSIDERATIONS:

- Consider reducing the number of athletes per session/squad to ensure social distancing.
- Schedule longer breaks between rotations to allow for cleaning and orderly entry and exit of individuals.
- When possible, keep athletes from each club in the same squad.
- Keeping clubs grouped together may help facilitate rotating spectators, parents, and athletes in and out of the competition area together.
- Rotate everyone together and in one direction. Wipe down chairs in corrals during rotations.
- Allow for additional time during competition and warm-up rotations for disinfecting/cleaning/sanitizing.
- Consider allowing modified meet formats to conform to social distancing guidelines.
- Consider holding the awards ceremony in an open and separate area from competition. Brief athletes in staging not to shake hands or hug.
- Consider splitting awards ceremonies into several smaller ones, or have a table designated for award pickup and with a backdrop for photo opportunities.

COACHES/ATHLETE CHECK-IN MANAGEMENT:



- Do not hold group coaches meeting and instead host virtual coaches meeting prior to the event to relay important information. If not possible, socially distance during the group coach meeting, require masks be worn, and keep the meeting as brief as possible.
- Communicate any pertinent information to coaches prior to the event via email or provide paper overview provided at check in.
- Stagger athlete/club check in so that all participants are not checking in at once. Consider assigning check in times to each club.



JUDGES CONSIDERATIONS:

- Provide separate/more tables to maintain social distancing protocols.
- Limit volunteers/staff that may customarily sit at judges table.
- Provide cleaning supplies for frequent cleaning of electronic scoring devices, such as iPads.
- Provide a one-page list of competition order to each judge to reduce the need to pass multiple papers from person to person.
- Consider using plexiglass partition between/in front of officials for two judge panels if space within a facility/gym layout makes social distancing challenging.
- Provide judges hospitality area that provides social distancing and grab and go options. Consider avoiding buffet-style meals for hospitality and instead provide individually boxed meals with utensils.
- Consider the transportation and hotel accommodation needs of judges. Reduce the need for overnight stays.
 - If hotel rooms are required, consider how to provide social distancing e.g., suite-type rooms with separate sleeping areas or individual rooms.
- Consider eliminating judges' meetings and report straight to judging positions or report in via technology.
- Submit the Ten for 10.00 Checklist to assigners as soon as possible so that judges can make informed decisions about accepting/keeping a contract. [Click here](#) to view.
- Consult with the Meet Referee if a judge becomes ill during a meet to discuss the process to inform the judge that she/he needs to leave the meet or move to an isolation area. The Meet Director is responsible for the final decision and informing the judge. The Meet Referee is responsible for identifying replacement options and should notify the State Chair.



VOLUNTEERS CONSIDERATIONS

- Evaluate the needs of volunteers and reduce the number whenever possible.
- Be mindful of the need to create physical distancing for volunteers.
- Provide masks/hand sanitizer to all volunteers.
- Be prepared for individuals to be less willing to volunteer due to safety concerns.

TEAM (ATHLETE/COACH) CONSIDERATIONS:

- Consider asking each club to be responsible for their team's own supplies, including bringing and maintaining their personal gym bag, water bottles, hand sanitizer, chalk etc.
- Teams should be made aware of safety protocols and their role in maintaining safety guidelines for themselves and others prior to arriving at the meet.
- Encourage athletes/coaches to keep 6-foot distance from other teammates/coaches (*when feasible*), use hand sanitizer; wash hands frequently, not to share water bottles or other personal items; tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Teams should consider the use of masks or face coverings consistent with above recommendations (*see section: Cleaning/Sanitation Considerations*)
- If athletes need to chalk their feet, the inclusion of boot trays should be the responsibility of the athlete/attending gym.
- Athletes should refrain from "spitting" in grips to cut down on the transmission of germs on the apparatus.
 - Coaches should remind athletes frequently not to spit in their grips.
- When spotting of athletes is necessary, coaches should utilize proper protective equipment (masks, gloves, etc.) and use hand sanitizer before and after, if possible.



EVENT ENTRANCE & SPECTATORS CONSIDERATIONS:

- Meet Directors should consider limiting spectators to one parent per family to ensure that social distancing protocols are maintained.
- Consider online ticket sales.
- Consider using standing plastic divider at admission for those accepting payment.
- Consider suspending food/concessions sales or offer grab and go.
- Utilize separate entrance and exit doors for all participants and spectators.

- Mark 6 feet separations in viewing areas; consider using walk-in or standing areas instead of seating or mark off seating.
- Consider modifying the sales to cashless or prepaid tickets only.
- Communicate to spectators the safety protocols and expectations, including maintaining social distancing and face covering requirements.
- Spectators should refrain from gathering in groups.
- Spectators should use hand sanitizer and use masks or face coverings at all times while in the facility.
- Spectator should be reminded that they should only attend if they or any immediate household members are free from illness (when in doubt, stay home!).
- Consider providing masks or facial coverings.
- Encourage those in high-risk categories to not attend.
- Consider virtual instead of on-site vendors and opt for digital or printed marketing.

COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS:

- In pre-event and onsite communications include a description of how the event will be conducted to allow for social distancing of athletes/coaches/judges/spectators.
- Provide overview of cleanliness practices and procedures.
- Provide expectations of participants and spectators.
- Create signage to remind of safe distance protocols,
 - Keep 6 feet of distance
 - Only one parent as a spectator
 - Must wear a mask
 - Entrance and exit
 - Water fountain closed/concessions closed
 - Spectator expectations



SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR EACH DISCIPLINE:

Women's

- Consider utilizing one judge panels if enough judges are not available for two-judge panels or if judges become ill shortly before or during the meet.
- Flashing Vault start values – consider verbal notification of vault number to the officials to eliminate this contact point, or have a sanitizing station located at the SV flasher.
- Eliminate athlete check-in altogether. Have athletes check in with their coaches and have one coach per club communicate scratches, to head table.

- State Chairs should ask assigners to assign officials with cost efficiency as a high priority, e.g., geographic proximity, rating, necessity for overnight accommodations. At the same time, some judges should be assigned who have enough experience to serve on a one-judge panel if needed due to last minute cancellations or illness.
- Suspend for one year the rule 2 (a) 1 on page 43 of the R&P requiring Meet Directors to pay a 2-hour honorarium if a meet is canceled less than 14 days prior to the meet. Likewise, suspend 2 (b) 1—we will want judges to cancel on short notice if they are sick.
- Consider using judging-Meet Referees instead of walking-Meet Referees.
- Consider delaying the report time for judges:
 - If you will not have a judge's meeting,
 - If the first-session stretch/warm-up period is being extended to allow for social distancing.
- If the meet is in an arena, consider paying judges per diem for breakfast and lunch in lieu of meals assuming refrigerator and microwaves are available at the venue. Judges can bring their own food for at least some meals.
- Assigning fees will not be charged for assigning alternate judges or replacement judges.

Men

- The use of honey, substances or sandpaper on PB and PH. Consider either not allowing foreign substances on equipment, or if possible, use multiple pieces of each apparatus and have athletes alternate on each piece to allow for the unused piece to be cleaned while the other is in-use.
- Coaches should wear masks when lifting athletes to HB or Rings and sanitize before and after, if possible.

T&T

- Consider competing in team-based flights rather than by level. This may mean awards may be better by score rather than by rank.
- Consider using flash card scoring again rather than iPads or provide styluses for judges.

Rhythmic:

- Run 2 events/apparatus only meets, smaller groups less time in the gym.
- Judges use iPads to enter scores when possible.
- Consider not returning D forms to coaches.
- Consider eliminating line judges.
- Athletes should use their own replacement apparatus.



USA GYMNASTICS.

USA Gymnastics cares about your safety and the safety of all of our gymnastics community. We urge you to consult federal, state, and local directives and guidance, including guidance from the CDC and WHO, as you plan for your re-opening.

A special thank you to, Michelle Archer, Cookie Batsche, Amanda Borden Cocharan, Patti Conner, Bob Meier, Al & Cindy Scharns, and USA Gymnastics program staff for their time and contribution to the development of these re-return to competition.