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The following is a statement from the Alaska School Activities Association with consultation from the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services:

ASAA would like to notify Alaska school districts that the Department of Health and Social Services has clarified their recommendation regarding mask to match the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) language.

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/id/Pages/COVID-19/blog/20201009.aspx>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/playing-sports.html>

**As a result, ASAA will no longer require masks to be worn while actively participating, but rather recommends a mask be worn “if feasible”.** ASAA’s other mask recommendations stay in place. For example: People sitting on the bench during games should wear a mask. Additionally, ASAA would like to remind the schools, students and families much research shows masks are an important measure in stopping the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, the wearing of mask even while vigorously engaged in an activity is allowed. ASAA will be working with the various sports official’s groups on how to manage this during competitions.

Among the CDC’s guidelines are the following statements:

- “to wear a mask if feasible, especially when it is difficult to stay less than 6 feet apart from other people or indoors, for example in close contact sports such as basketball.”
- “People who are engaged in high intensity activities, like running, may not be able to wear a mask if it causes difficulty breathing. If unable to wear a mask, consider conducting the activity in a location with greater ventilation and air exchange (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where it is possible to maintain physical distance from others.”

ASAA’s mitigation recommendations for practices and competitions are aimed to reduce risks, however mitigation of all risk associated with activities is not possible. Schools are allowed the flexibility to tailor recommendations to their individual needs and circumstances. DHSS is available on request to consult with schools on their mitigation plans and to help schools and districts better clarify the risks associated to their athletes, staff and communities.