



2021 NVSL UPDATED DUAL MEET GUIDELINES

Updated 6/6/2021

The Northern Virginia Swimming League is pleased to welcome back all of our 102 teams, their families, and our sponsors as we return to our pools this season. The patience, thoughtful discussion and planning by the teams, and consideration for a safe return to competition is appreciated by all across the League. Thanks to the members of the Return to Competition Committee who contributed significantly to the development of this Guidance document. As part of the ongoing discussion on a safe return to the pool and the incredible experience of summer swimming, the NVSL board continues to meet regularly to put plans in place that fit with the changing State and Local guidance and restrictions related to COVID-19.

We look forward to seeing many of you on the pool deck competing, officiating, and volunteering this summer! Thank you for your continued support of the NVSL.

-The NVSL Executive Board

UPDATED FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL HEALTH GUIDELINES

Safety remains the NVSL's highest priority in returning to competition this season. The NVSL rules apply to league-sanctioned meets, which include Saturday dual meets, Divisionals, Divisional Relays, All-Star Relays, and Individual All-Stars. Swim practices, lessons, developmental meets, and team social activities are not governed by the NVSL; however, teams should be aware of the updated government guidance for these activities.

There have been several developments since the first dual meet guidelines were issued by the League on May 4, 2021. The most recent development in Virginia is an Executive Order issued by Governor Northam that took effect on May 28, 2021.

[https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-79-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Ten-Ending-of-Commonsense-Public-Health-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorvirginiagov/executive-actions/EO-79-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Ten-Ending-of-Commonsense-Public-Health-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf)

Effective May 28, 2021, "commonsense public health restrictions" were lifted. This includes requirements for physical distancing for vaccinated individuals, the removal of capacity restrictions, and the elimination of daily health screenings for recreational and youth sports.

Key points from the May 13, 2021 updated CDC guidance include the following:

- *Update that fully vaccinated people no longer need to wear a mask or physically distance in any setting, except where required by federal, state, local, tribal, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations, including local business and workplace guidance*
- *Update that fully vaccinated people can refrain from testing following a known exposure unless they are residents or employees of a correctional or detention facility or a homeless shelter*
- *Prevention measures are still recommended for unvaccinated people. These measures include the following: Everyone over age two should wear a mask in public. Masks should be worn in addition to staying at least 6 feet apart, especially around people who do not live with you. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>*

Based on the updated guidance explained above and recent virtual meetings held with team reps from all 17 divisions, the NVSL has updated its dual meet guidelines. Details about these updated guidelines can be found in this document. Key updates include:

- Three timers per lane will be permitted. Teams may choose to use fewer than three timers per lane if individual pool restrictions require them to do so. Teams should make their division aware of this requirement in advance of the first dual meet.
- Backstroke legs will be permitted. Teams may choose to ask athletes serving as “legs” to remain outside of the clerk of course area to minimize crowding.
- Masks should be worn by all unvaccinated individuals including swimmers 11 and under and coaches, officials and volunteers while in team areas.
- Social distancing, while not required, is strongly recommended in crowded areas like team areas and the clerk of course.

MEET FORMAT

Based on feedback from the 102 teams in the league, it is the expectation that most meets will be run as in-person dual meets with both teams present at the same pool. Should circumstances prevent an in-person dual meet, there are other options. Teams need to determine the format of Saturday dual meets they are permitted to host this season. Teams should report this information to the Division Coordinator (DC) and other teams in their division at the season kickoff meeting, or as soon as possible should conditions change throughout the season. If circumstances arise during the season and an alternative meet format is necessary, the teams involved should communicate with the Division Coordinator for approval. Virtual meets must be swum on the same weekend by both teams. Regardless of format, all meets should follow health and safety guidelines established by state and local governments in addition to those of the host pool’s board/HOA.

- **Dual meet:** Two teams swimming at one pool in one session, 52 events, with a single heat per event.
- **Multi-session dual meet:** Two teams swimming at one pool over multiple sessions. Those sessions can be broken up by gender, age group, or any other split that teams agree upon though gender is the most even split. For example, 26 Boys events in one session and 26 Girls events in another session.
- **Virtual meet:** Two teams swimming at their respective pools in one session of 52 events.
- **Multi-session virtual meet:** Two teams swimming at their respective pools over multiple sessions. Those sessions can be broken up by gender, age group, or any other split.

PRE-MEET TEAM REPRESENTATIVES (REPS) MEETING

It is very important that each team knows their pool’s health and safety requirements for hosting meets. Team reps should prepare to share this information at their Division kickoff meetings, and as soon as possible should conditions change throughout the season. Each week during the season, team reps should meet virtually or at the host pool at least two days prior to the meet to discuss entry/exit protocols, traffic flow, and any particulars of that pool that would be helpful to communicate ahead of arrival. This should occur no later than Thursday night at the time of the data exchange. If an in-person meeting is not possible, the host pool should share video so the visiting team rep can see the space.

Communication between teams within a division is vital this summer. Team reps should be in regular communication with one another and their Division Coordinator.

MASK GUIDANCE IN EFFECT FOR THE 2021 SEASON

The NVSL is excited to be able to conduct nearly normal swim meets this summer. While CDC guidance has relaxed outdoor masks requirements for those who are fully vaccinated, the majority of our swimmers will be unvaccinated or incompletely vaccinated this season. Please note that in order to be considered “fully vaccinated” by the CDC, it should be more than two weeks since receiving the second or final (J&J is a single dose) dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Mask guidance: The full NVSL Board (Executive Board and Division Coordinators) recently met to vote on a proposed mask mandate for the 2021 season. The motion to develop strict rules for masking did not pass, but comments gathered from all the teams through the Division Coordinators demonstrated interest in helping our swimmers, coaches, officials, and volunteers have a safe summer swim experience as it relates to COVID awareness. As a result, the Board has developed recommendations for teams to consider this summer.

Everyone should follow the federal, state, local, and individual pool COVID-related guidance. Consistent with CDC, state, and local guidance, unvaccinated people should continue to wear a mask and social distance. While those who are vaccinated do not have to wear masks, it is recommended that all swimmers (especially unvaccinated swimmers – with special attention to swimmers under 12 who are not able to be vaccinated) wear a mask in the designated team areas at dual meets.

Link to CDC Guidance for Vaccinated People <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

Link to CDC Guidance for Large Events and Gatherings <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

NVSL pools are governed by their own member Pool Boards, and we recognize that the decisions of those various bodies may not be uniform. To the extent that there are different views related to the use of masks among the various Teams and Divisions, the two teams competing in a dual meet should comply with the rules and procedures set by the home team’s Pool Board or HOA. Team reps should communicate any pool-specific COVID protocol with their Division Coordinator as soon as possible, and with the Team Rep from their upcoming opponent at least a few days before each meet to make sure everyone is aware of, and prepared to comply with, the host pool’s standards. Even though the Governor has stated that vaccinated people do not need to wear masks or social distance, both teams are encouraged to do so if the host pool says these protocols are required.

Pool layouts within the NVSL vary widely. Some pool facilities are large, and thus have more room to allow for natural social distancing. Other pools do not have as much available space, and the NVSL recommends that pools should be more creative this year if they want to create additional room for team areas, Clerk of Course areas, spectators, etc.

MEET LAYOUT/TRAFFIC FLOW

Teams should create an electronic layout of their pool to share with visiting teams in their division prior to the kickoff meeting. The layout should be annotated with key features such as team areas; Clerk of Course area; competition pool; starting end for 25 meter/yard races; starting area for 50 meter/yard races; table administration area; concession (if applicable); and traffic flow for officials, spectators (if permitted), volunteers, and swimmers. *While physical distancing is no longer required for vaccinated individuals, it is strongly recommended that the layout maximizes distancing among swimmers, volunteers, and spectators (if spectators are permitted by host pool).* If possible, teams should minimize two-way traffic flow and provide a separate entrance and exit for all meet attendees.

SWIMMERS

The average number of swimmers participating in a dual meet varies. If each team brings 6 swimmers per gender in each age group, this will total 120 swimmers (60 per team). This number assumes each swimmer competes in two individual events and there are no single-event swimmers.

Safety Protocols for Swimmers

Masks

For meets, swimmers should wear masks in the team areas while not actively swimming, eating, or drinking in compliance with CDC and NVSL guidance (see above).

Distancing

While distancing is not required for vaccinated individuals under federal, state, or local guidance, the League strongly recommends physical distancing among swimmers and volunteers to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. This recommendation pertains to areas of the pool deck and team area in which large numbers of people congregate together including the clerk of course/heat staging area, the start end, and among table workers. Some Pool Boards and HOAs may impose additional distancing requirements. Teams should notify the other teams in their division if these restrictions apply at their pool.

Bathroom/Locker Room Use

While not required, it is highly recommended that athletes shall arrive and depart in their suits. This was the requirement for high school and PVS meets this year. Teams should share bathroom/locker room use rules with visiting teams at the season kickoff meeting.

TEAM AREAS

Swimmers aged 11 and younger are not eligible for the COVID vaccine, therefore it is recommended that team areas should be larger than normal this year to maximize the ability to distance. Teams may consider reducing, relocating, or eliminating spectators to give more space to swimmers. Get creative, your team areas do not need to be in the same place they have been in years past.

The Team Areas may be located anywhere on the pool grounds; however, all team areas should have adequate space. All athletes should remain in their designated Team Area until they are called for warm-ups or their event.

SPECTATORS

Under Executive Order 79, capacity restrictions for sporting events are lifted. Team reps should continue to check with their Pool Board to determine if capacity restrictions remain at their pool or will be adjusted throughout the season. Spectators are encouraged to follow the updated CDC guidance regarding mask wearing and distancing.

VOLUNTEERS

Based on recently announced updates to federal, state, and local guidelines, teams are permitted to use the full number of volunteers to run the meet. Please refer to the mask guidance listed earlier in this document.

Certified Officials

Each meet will have one referee, one starter and four stroke and turn judges (two per team).

Timers

Three timers per lane are permitted. If a host pool is unable to have three timers in each lane, a minimum of one may be used. Team reps should notify their Division Coordinators if fewer than three timers will be used at their home meets. Please note that per League rule 19c, League records require at least “three timing devices.” For meets with fewer than three timers per lane, team reps should be mindful of potential League records and provide extra timers for the lane(s) in these events.

Briefings

Officials and timers briefings can be held at the meet, but distancing is recommended as not all adults are vaccinated. An alternative is to hold virtual briefings one or two days prior to the meet.

Position	Number Required*
Referee	1
Starter	1
Stroke & Turn	4
Lane Timer	18* (3 per lane permitted, but fewer can be used per pool restrictions and with DC approval)
Head Timers (Host Team)	1
Relay Take-off Judges	4 (Can be timers from lanes not used for relays)
Place Recorder	1
Marshals (2 per team for dual meets)	4
Position	Final Number Determined by Teams
Table Chief	1
Timecard Runners	1-2
Verifier	1
Announcer	1-2
Live Stream (optional)	1
Photographer (optional)	1-2
Head Coach (1 per team for dual meets)	2
Assistant Head Coach	2-4
Additional Coaches/Volunteers	2 -4
Team Rep	2-4
Data Entry	1-2
Clerk of Course	2

MEET WARM UP

Meets may take more time this summer to allow for adequate movement between heats of swimmers coming from team areas and Clerk of Course areas that may not be typical. Teams should consider starting earlier if possible and allowable by a team's Pool Board/HOA. Teams may also consider having extra warm-up sessions to reduce the number of swimmers in the pool at one time. For example, team A could begin their first of two 15-minute warm-ups at 7:15am. Team B could have two 15-minute warm-ups beginning at 7:45am. Warm-up concludes at 8:15am and the meet begins at 8:30am.

Both teams' reps should agree on any change in start time and report the start time to the DC. Securing the President or Vice President's approval is **not required** this season provided the DC is informed.

CLERK OF COURSE

A staging area shall be set aside for the Clerk of Course with sufficient space to hold the athletes entered in the next two events/heats being readied to move to the starting end of the pool. The Clerk of Course area should allow for adequate distancing between athletes, officials, timers, or volunteers during the meet.

CONCESSIONS

Concessions are regulated by the host team's Pool Board/HOA. Teams selling concessions should comply with local health department guidelines. Please consider the location of concessions to encourage distancing among attendees buying and consuming food and drink. Consider concessions areas off the pool deck and in places where people consuming food can distance adequately.

INCLEMENT WEATHER PLAN

Since teams will not be able to assemble all team members, coaches, and volunteers in a central place in case of inclement weather during a practice or meet, teams should have an emergency plan that will provide all swimmers, coaches, and volunteers a place to get under cover off the deck and transportation home from the pool at any point during your practices or meets.

DEVELOPMENTAL MEETS

Developmental meets (B-Meets) are not sanctioned NVSL meets, which means they are not governed by the rules of the League. Each team is responsible for deciding if and how they run their B-meets. Talk to your fellow team reps and B-meet leagues. Make sure your Dual meet team rep and B-meet team rep (if they are different) are staying in sync, consistency makes it easier for kids to follow new rules. The team rep chat group is an excellent place for B-meet ideas and alternatives. https://mynvsl.com/file/33622/Chat_group_flyer_pdf

COVID WAIVER

Teams must collect and maintain the NVSL Participation Waiver which includes a COVID clause. The waiver provides a summary and the assumption of the risks associated with COVID-19 and participating on your team and in the NVSL. The waiver can be found on the NVSL website in the "Team Rep Folder 2021" under the Documents tab here: https://mynvsl.com/documents?folder_id=33615

COVID SCREENING

Effective May 28th, EO 79 removed the requirement for daily health screenings for youth and recreational sports. Teams should encourage swimmers and their parents to be mindful of any new health symptoms. Swimmers, coaches, volunteers, and spectators should be reminded not to attend any events if they feel ill.

COVID EXPOSURE AND NOTIFICATION

What to do if a swimmer on your team tests positive for COVID-19?

If you have ONE swimmer who tests positive for COVID it is recommended you contact the local Health Department where your pool is located.

If you have TWO or more linked cases of COVID in a 14-day period (this is considered an outbreak) you are REQUIRED by the state of Virginia to notify the local health department.

If an attendee (swimmer, coach, volunteer, spectator) tests positive for COVID-19 after attending a practice or meet, the attendee shall notify their team's representative, who shall notify the DC and the other team that the attendee's team swam that week, as soon as possible. The team representative also shall notify their pool board so that any required notifications to local health department are made.

To report COVID case(s):

Arlington County:

Please call 703-228-5200, Option 1 or email: CovidLocations@arlingtonva.us

Fairfax County:

Please use the following link: <https://redcap.vdh.virginia.gov/redcap/surveys/?s=XXNP8LMKD7>

This link will bring you to a form to complete. You need to include all requested information including team roster, coach's information, swimmer information including parent contact information and address of the pool.

Once contacted, the local health department will then investigate within 24-72 hours. During the investigation, it is possible that all team activities will be paused (practices/meets will be put on hold). The pause in activities allows the health dept to complete the investigation and further limit exposure. Once the investigation is complete, the health department will advise teams when activities can resume and which swimmers must be quarantined. Individual quarantine is based on the local health department's investigation. Vaccinated individuals will not be required to quarantine unless they are symptomatic.

The local Health Department conducts its investigation. Coaches, Team Reps, Parents and Swimmers should not be conducting investigations.

Things you can do to help should an investigation of the team need to take place:

- Keep your roster up to date and ensure all contact information is correct.
- Know who is at practice/meets each day. Consider asking the coach to do a "roll call" or have a volunteer check in swimmers before they come on deck.
- Consider having lane assignments or ask the coach to keep a record of who swam in what lane each day.
- If you are allowing parents/caregivers on deck during practice, consider asking them to sign in before entering the pool. You may want to ask for contact information to be include on the sign-in sheet as the caregiver may not be the parent.
- If you allow spectators on deck during meets, consider using a sign-in sheet and request contact information (i.e., name, phone #, email).
- Save your volunteer sign-up sheets and update any last-minute changes.
- Ensure that you can easily access the meet entries/line up including last minute adjustments.

DIVISION AND ALL STAR MEETS

We are excited to be able to start returning to a more normal season, however, there will be some changes to our typical summer as we determine how best to enjoy our sport while keeping everyone safe.

At its recent meeting on May 23rd, The NVSL Board, made the difficult decision to cancel the All Star Relay meet due to the size of the meet, space requirements, and the number of unvaccinated swimmers participating. Decisions about Divisional Relay Carnivals, Individual Championships (Divisionals), and the Individual All Star meet will be made shortly. We will share this information as soon as decisions are made.