

CHANGES TO THE TNCS ATHLETIC CALENDAR

July 28, 2020

Last week, we sent you “A Return to Saber Sports” that explained the four potential levels of participation for TNCS athletics this fall:

- 4 – Interscholastic Athletics
- 3 – Intramural Athletics
- 2 – Extracurricular Athletic Activities
- 1 – Curricular Athletic Activities

In that document, we emphasized that TNCS would continue to stay abreast of all new information and would inform our families of changes and plans as they are made. In the short time since we sent that to you, numerous athletic governing bodies at the high school and college levels have canceled their activities for this fall. This includes the two state organizations that govern Virginia school sports. Neither the Virginia Independent School Athletic Association (VISAA) nor the Virginia High School League (VHSL) are sanctioning sports in the fall.

Keeping the health and safety of our school community as our highest priority, and considering the decisions of those governing athletic bodies, TNCS will not begin its highest level of participation, 4 – Interscholastic Athletics, in the fall. Cross country, girls volleyball, and boys soccer will not compete at the middle school or upper school level during the fall season. As a result, there will not be summer Saber Strong or August preseason practices on campus. Campus will remain closed to students until New Student Orientation on August 24.

We know this is very disappointing news to students and coaches who have dreamed of, and worked toward, a successful athletic season this fall. And, we know that a return to physical activity and eventual athletic competition are essential to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of our community. While we will not compete with other schools this fall, we remain committed to creating a robust yet safe athletic program that continues to develop and prepare our student athletes. We will continue to work closely with the best available information and directives provided by the Governor, the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Council on Private Education, and the sports medicine advisory committee of VISAA. If we open the school year on campus, our hope is that some form of athletics (intramural, extracurricular, curricular) can begin as soon as the second week of classes.

We have not made any decisions regarding the winter and spring seasons, or even whether the lost fall sports can somehow be fit into different points on the calendar. There are too many unknowns regarding the virus and the opening of schools at this time. We are fortunate that TNCS has such an incredible group of dedicated and energetic coaches who both understand our community’s health and safety concerns, and are committed to providing our students with a meaningful and fun Saber Sports experience.

KEY POINTS

- TNCS will not compete in interscholastic sports in the fall season.
 - Decisions regarding play in the winter and spring will be made by early November.
 - Traditional fall sports could potentially be played in the second semester.
- Campus will remain closed to students until New Student Orientation on August 24.
 - No Saber Strong or August preseason practices.
- Some form of athletic activities may begin as soon as the second week of classes on campus.
 - Students need a TNCS athletic physical form on file dated 5/1/20 or later to participate in athletics.

GO SABERS!

Eric Gobble, Director of Athletics and Wellness



A Return to Saber Sports

July 17, 2020

At TNCS, we believe it is essential to the physical, mental, and social emotional well-being of students to return to physical activity and athletic competition. We understand that there will be variation from traditional athletic activity from years past. There will also likely be variation in what sports and activities are allowed over the next several months. Permitted activities may fluctuate based on which phase the school is in. Permitted activities could include: skill-building drills at home or on campus, team practice, within-team competition, competition with teams from a specific area, or full competition from different areas.

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

Limited testing availability, lack of resources for contact tracing, and expanding knowledge of COVID-19 transmission could all result in significant changes to education-based athletics in Virginia. TNCS will continue to stay abreast of all new information, and will inform our families of changes and plans as they are made.

Daily screening and temperature checks will be necessary before coming to campus for any reason – workouts and practices included.

Current students' 2019-20 Athletic Participation & Physical Form expired on June 30, 2020. Therefore, any student-athlete must obtain a physical prior to any athletic participation moving forward. The new physical must be dated on or after May 1, 2020. These pre-participation exams do not take the place of annual pediatric exams, but are an important way to screen student athletes for conditions that may expose them to risk of injury, illness, or death due to athletic activity. TNCS requires current athletic physicals prior to any athletic activity.

Current pre-season conditioning and acclimatization models assume that athletes have deconditioned during the stay-at-home orders. The current pandemic may result in our students being deconditioned for several months. The intensity and duration of the TNCS Summer Saber Strong strength and conditioning training will be moderated upon return. The coaches at TNCS are currently involved with several organizations in developing consensus guidelines for the resumption of workouts and practices.

Due to the possibility of recurrent outbreaks in the coming months, TNCS will be prepared for periodic school closures and the possibility of some teams having to isolate for two or more weeks while in-season. TNCS will implement policies regarding practice and/or competition during temporary school closures, the cancellation of contests during the regular season, and parameters for the cancellation or premature ending to athletic seasons.

Our athletic "stages" are in accordance with guidelines published by the Commonwealth of Virginia and are subject to change. Criteria must be met to advance from one stage to the next. These criteria will be determined by the phases announced by the Governor's office and/or VDH/VDOE and will be strictly followed.

POTENTIAL LEVELS OF PARTICIPATION

Depending on the risk level and the guidance of governing bodies, the TNCS 2020 fall sports season could take four different forms – interscholastic, intramural, extracurricular, curricular.

Interscholastic Athletics

TNCS would practice fall sports “as usual,” with afterschool practices combined with competitions against other schools.

There is a possibility that the fall calendar season would remain as scheduled, but the sports played within the fall season could change. For example, golf (because of the potential for social distancing) could move from the spring to the fall, or even be played in both seasons in the 2020-21 school year.

Intramural Athletics

TNCS would practice fall sports “as usual,” with afterschool practices combined with intra-squad competitions on campus.

Extracurricular Athletics

TNCS would offer students an afterschool strength and conditioning program that maintains distance, mitigates risk, and prepares students for an eventual resumption of sport-specific activities.

Steps are being taken to begin on-campus strength and conditioning sessions on July 27.

Curricular Athletics

TNCS would incorporate specific health-enhancing fitness and wellness activities into the physical education curriculum delivered in the course of the academic school day. For example, the Girls on The Run program will be incorporated into the middle school PE curriculum for the fall semester.

