



Coaches Guide to Virtual Team Interaction

Hello you amazing coaches,

We would first like to acknowledge your dedication, creativity, and enthusiasm to continue to serve your student-athletes during the disruption of your season and/or preseason. We understand that a lot of you have been forced to get comfortable with online/virtual meetings for work and social relationships. It is very tempting to jump on the virtual meeting bandwagon and start scheduling virtual NICA team meetings. The coach licensing staff has prepared some virtual meeting guidance as well as other things that you could be working on as coaches while we sit tight and ride out the coronavirus.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and stay active,
NICA Coach Licensing Staff

Guidance for VIRTUAL MEETINGS/FACETIME/ZOOM/GOOGLE HANGOUT, ETC.

Generally, NICA doesn't recommend or expect coaches to host virtual meetings or practices. However, NICA also recognizes a virtual meeting may help student-athletes and coaches stay connected with teammates if in-person practices or events cannot happen.

All the NICA policies, standards and rules still apply to team activities - this includes virtual team activities.

- Before introducing new virtual interactions, ensure existing student-athlete, parent and coach compliance with the [NICA's Electronic and Virtual Communication Guidelines](#) (Updated 8/5)
- NICA Team Practice is defined by the presence of appropriate coaching ratios whether meeting online or in-person.
- All coaches need to be registered in Pit Zone
- All student-athletes need to be registered in Pit Zone or have signed a waiver
- League limited preseason activities per team from April 1st - June 30th for Fall Leagues.
- Preseason activities need to be shared with your league director

Guiding Questions when considering virtual team meetings: Updated 12/15/2020

- Will a virtual team meeting add value to my team or team culture
 - Is a virtual team meeting necessary?
 - What would the objective of the virtual team meeting be?
 - Will we be excluding some student-athletes that don't have access to computers or smartphones?
- Would I be having team meetings at this time of year?
 - There is no need to hold extra meetings just because virtual meetings are a thing now. If you weren't having team meetings and training sessions last year at this time, don't do it this year.
- Will a virtual team meeting add stress to your student-athletes and families?
 - Avoid making virtual meetings mandatory

- For Leagues in the Pre-Season, know when practices under normal circumstances begin and plan accordingly.
- For Leagues in the Off Season, Student-athletes and families may be dealing with a lot of stressors. Make sure that you are helping alleviate that stress and not adding to it.
- Recognize that your student-athletes are balancing many things going on in their lives--- school, friends, family, other sports or activities.
- What should I make sure to avoid in the virtual space: **Updated 12/15/2020**
 - Offering anything outside of your NICA training
- If you are going to promote something outside of your NICA training, ensure:
 - it is developmentally appropriate to all of your student-athletes.
 - Remember what is appropriate for a senior in high school is not usually appropriate for a middle school student.
 - provided by trusted professionals including yourself.
 - to communicate it is not a NICA activity, but one lead by trusted professionals

What else could you be working on as a team and as individual coaches?

- Team
 - Season and Session planning
 - Fundraising Plan
 - Sponsorship
 - Thank you letters
 - Social Media posts of support
 - Tend to sponsorship relationships
 - Recruit New Coaches
 - Online recruitment
 - Current Coach networking
 - Virtual Parent Meeting
 - Use this to recruit coaches and new student-athletes
 - Send out a Coach Goal Setting Worksheet
 - Ask Coaches to identify a S.M.A.R.T (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Timely) goal for their season
- Coaches
 - Complete coach licensing annual requirements
 - Participate in a NICA National led Leaders Summit
 - Work on the online requirements to level up to a level 2 or level 3 coach.
 - Seek out CEU opportunities through NICA partners
 - [TrueSport](#)
 - [Positive Coaching Alliance](#)
 - [Changing the Game Project](#)
- Student-Athletes
 - Talk with your parents about skills you can practice at home
 - Taking an online course from Positive Coaching Alliance for athletes
 - [Triple Impact Competitor](#)
 - Staying positive and completing school work

- Teen Trail Corp Advocacy Badge Activities

Anytime NICA Community members connect online, our primary safety concern is one-on-one contact between coaches and student-athletes. 1:1 is not allowed as it presents an opportunity for grooming and abuse of an athlete by a coach. Having a 1:1 video/facetime chat with a student-athlete is a violation of NICA policies. Virtual meetings are no different than in person practices, meetings and events and must comply with normal NICA in season, preseason and offseason rules.

If a coach hosts an online meeting, all the same abuse prevention rules apply. Meetings should always have more than 2 coaches on the call and coaches should log in 5 minutes before the meeting. Parents should also be invited to attend or at the minimum get an invite to the meeting. No meeting should occur before 8 AM or after 8 PM and all interaction should be Transparent, Accessible and Professional.