



The IHSA governs the equitable participation in interscholastic athletics and activities that enrich the educational experience.

IHSA 2020-21 SOCCER CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting games during the 2020-21 IHSA Soccer season. The guidelines explained in this document are intended to decrease potential exposure to respiratory droplets and potential for illness through safe practices such as social distancing, proper hygiene, and appropriate protective equipment. This is not an exhaustive list, and school officials may take additional measures based on requirements set forth by their school district and/or local health officials. Please understand that even with this guidance, there is still risk of transmitting an illness at Soccer practice and contests. Additionally, with the changing nature of the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, these guidelines may be modified.

Modified Season

- On January 27, 2021, the IHSA Board of Directors modified the IHSA Soccer seasons along with all other sport seasons in response to the circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The modified boys and girls soccer seasons are as follows:

The modified Boys Soccer season is as follows:

- March 1 – Practice May Begin**
 - After 7 days of practice – First Contest May be Held**
 - April 17 – End of Season**
- At the January meeting, the IHSA Board of Directors determined that there would be no post season in boys' soccer this school year.
 - Currently, schools can compete against other schools within their region with respect to their COVID-19 regional status of Phase 4. For further guidance please refer to <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/sports-safety-guidance>
 - Teams still must follow IHSA By-laws 5.110 and 5.250 Contest Limitations https://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/IHSA_Section5.pdf

The modified Girls Soccer season is as follows:

- April 5 – Practice May Begin**
 - After 7 days of practice – First Contest May be Held**
 - June 19 – End of Season (with or without a state series)**
- Note: Avoid scheduling regular season games after May 31st to allow open dates for potential postseason events.
 - If your varsity Girls Soccer team has difficulty meeting the 6-contest IHSA By-law requirement due to circumstances surrounding the pandemic, you may contact IHSA Executive Director, Craig Anderson (canderson@ihsa.org), to inquire about a waiver.
 - Currently, schools can compete against other schools within their region with respect to their COVID-19 regional status of Phase 4. For further guidance please refer to <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/sports-safety-guidance> .



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General Requirements and Considerations

- All teams must adhere to guidelines of IHSA Return to Play Phase 4.

Social distancing of at least 6 feet between individuals must be maintained at all times. Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible.

Facility Capacity

- Refer to the latest IDPH All-Sports Policy Spectator Guidelines chart at www.ihsa.org/Resources/COVID-19.

Team Benches

- If possible, both team benches shall be placed on the same side of the field, opposite the spectator seating.
- Consider limiting the number of bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Additional chairs or rows may be added to allow bench personnel (coaches and players) to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- Create separation between the team bench and spectator seating behind the bench.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the center line.
- Players not in game must wear a mask and **MUST** be separated by 6 feet in bench area. Players in the game **MUST** wear a mask.

Spectators

- Refer to the latest IDPH All-Sports Policy Spectator Guidelines chart at www.ihsa.org/Resources/COVID-19.

Multiple contests on the same night/day

- JV and Varsity games are permitted with these limitations:

Tournaments/ Shootouts at one Host Site –

- Multiple team events can be scheduled but must follow the guidance for limited gatherings as outlined by IDPH.
- Time for cleaning and sanitation of all used spaces and equipment must occur between games.
- Participating teams from the previous contest must exit a facility followed by sanitization of the bench areas before the next contest participating teams enter a facility.
- Participating teams must be eligible in accordance with their IDPH COVID-19 region status to participate in any tournament event.



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- Team benches should be placed on the same side of the field as the mid field table. If fans are allowed to attend any game, they should be seated opposite the bench area at least 12' from the touch line.
- Team benches shall be spaced out to allow for appropriate distance between players and coaches (minimum of 6' between individuals).

Competition:

- Per IDPH guidelines, schools may play contests against other schools as outlined by IDPH.

Transportation

- For transportation to and from extracurricular events, schools may adhere to the same guidance provided by ISBE regarding transporting students to and from school.

Practices - Practices are solely intra-team.

Equipment and Accessories

- Prior to a contest, the game ball should be sanitized according to instructions from the ball manufacturer and set aside on top of the midfield table. The game ball must not be used for warm-ups.
- The host school should ensure that the ball is sanitized during half time and before over-time period.
 - Sanitizer should be provided by the host team at the table.
 - Face coverings are required for all players, coaches, and team personnel.

Mid Field Table

- The host should sanitize the table before the game and at half time.
- Place officials table sufficiently away from the sideline (if possible, at least 12') to allow for additional space for substitutes.
- Limit seats at the table to essential personnel which includes home team scorer and timer with a recommend distance of 6 feet or greater between individuals. Other personnel (visiting scorer, statisticians, media, etc.) are not considered essential personnel, and an alternate location for them should be considered.
- Table personnel are required to wear face covering requirements.
- Have sanitation materials (disinfecting wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer, etc.) in prime locations for game personnel to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment

<h4>Requirements and Considerations for Coaches</h4>

- Communicate practice and all competition guidelines in a clear manner to student participants and their parents.
- For practices, consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students who consistently train and rotate together. This will ensure help limit the exposure if someone develops an infection.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.



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- Always have a plan to maintain social distancing amongst your team and coaching staff.
- Require athletes to arrive at the competition venue dressed in competitive attire. If locker rooms must be used, ensure athletes can maintain social distancing.
- It is recommended to always have sanitation materials available (i.e., hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc.) for the team and coaching staff.
- Educate your student athletes on proper hand washing and sanitation.
- Coaches must wear face coverings at all practices and contests.

Requirements and Consideration for Officials

- Officials **are not required to wear a mask** when they are able to maintain social distance.
 - Officials must wear masks when entering/exiting the field, before/after the game and during the pregame meeting. If officials need to have a close conversation with a coach, player, team personnel, or crew members at any time during the game, they must wear a mask.
 - Face coverings must be solid black.
 - Gloves may be worn.
 - If a traditional whistle is used, officials must keep it always covered using a cover or pouch.
 - If an electronic whistle is used, officials should use one whose tone will carry outside.

Pregame Officials and Coaches Meeting

- Limit Pregame meeting attendees to the referee and both head coaches. Each coach shall stand on each side of the mid field line.
- All individuals maintain a social distance of 6 feet or greater.
- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Conference.

Ball Holders

- Encourage social distancing of at least 6 feet.
- Wear a mask at all times.

Requirements and Considerations for Student Athletes

- Student athletes should be responsible for their own supplies such as a water bottle.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing and not share clothing with anyone. All equipment and clothing should be washed immediately upon returning home.
- Hand washing and the use of hand sanitizer should be frequent at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Face coverings are always required.
- Players should bring multiple masks to replace sweat soaked masks throughout games and practices.
- Any mask modification requests, due to a documented medical condition, must be submitted on an Accommodation Request form found on the IHSA School Center.

Team Benches

- **Social distancing should be practiced. Below are some considerations.**



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- Consider limiting the number of bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater.
- If possible, place team benches opposite the spectator seating.
- Additional chairs or rows may be added to allow bench personnel to observe social distancing of 6 feet or greater between bench personnel (coaches and players).
- Create separation between the team bench and spectator seating behind the bench.
- Maintain social distancing of 6 feet between the substitute, officials and/or teammate(s) by encouraging substitutions to occur closer to the center line.
- Players not in game must wear a mask and MUST be separated by 6 feet in bench area.

Requirements and Considerations for Parents

Make sure your child and immediate household members are free from illness before participating in practice and competition (if there is any doubt, stay home).

- Provide personal items for your child and clearly label them.
- Help make sure that your child is washing/cleaning clothing and personal items after each use.
- Know facility/venue limitations on capacity/attendance prior to attending a meet. Always maintain social distance and wear a face covering while in attendance at an event.

Eating and drinking:

- Ensure 6-foot distance whenever athletes are eating or drinking.
- Replace face coverings immediately after eating or drinking.

Questions?

- Questions may be addressed to IHSAA Soccer Administrator Beth Sauser (bsauser@ihssa.org).

Resources:

IDPH Sport Safety Guidance -

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/sports-safety-guidance>

IDPH COVID-19 EMS-Regions Map -

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics?regionID=4>

IDPH Phase 4 Mitigation Guidelines -

<https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois/restore-illinois-phase-4/>

IDPH Tier 1 Mitigation Guidelines -

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/IL%20Tier%201%20Resurgence%20Mitigations%20-%20January%2018%2C%202021%20Update.pdf>

IDPH Tier 2 Mitigation Guidelines -



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<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/IL%20Tier%20%20Resurgence%20Mitigations%20-%20January%2018%2C%202021%20Update.pdf>