



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

## IHSA 2020-21 CROSS COUNTRY CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting meets during the 2020 IHSA Cross Country 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 illness at events such as cross-country meets. Additionally, with the changing nature of the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, these guidelines may change.

### Modified Season:

- On July 29, the IHSA Board of Directors modified the IHSA cross-country season along with all other sport seasons in response to the circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The modified girls and boys cross country seasons are as follows:
  - **August 10 – Practice May Begin**
  - **August 24 – First Contest May be Held**
  - **October 24 – End of Season**
- For the fall of 2020, the IHSA State Series will consist of a one round event which will be held on October 24, 2020.
- If your school had difficulty meeting the 6 contest requirement as outlined in IHSA By-laws as a result of circumstances surrounding the pandemic, you may contact IHSA Executive Director, Craig Anderson ([canderson@ihsa.org](mailto:canderson@ihsa.org)), to inquire about a waiver.

### General Requirements and Considerations:

- All guidelines of IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 must be adhered to.
- **Social distancing** between individuals of at least 6 feet must be maintained at all times. Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible.
- **Race Capacity** - Student participants, coaches, timers, and paid/volunteer meet officials are restricted to a combined total of 50 per race.
- **Spectators** If meet hosts allow spectators, they must maintain 6 feet social distance when possible. Facial coverings are optional only if social distancing can be maintained. In situations where social distancing is difficult to maintain, then facial coverings are required.
- **Small meets** (i.e. duals and triangulars) are most effective in maintaining fewer competitors, school personnel, officials, and spectators. Small meets make it easier to space runners out at the start and finish of a race to ensure for appropriate social distancing. Small meets must adhere to the event capacity guidelines outlined in IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 as well as those outlined in this document.
- **Multi-team Meets** - If schools have scheduled large meets such as invitationals or anything larger than a triangular, then again, hosts must ensure that ALL event attendees are held to the



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capacity guidelines outlined in IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 as well as this document (i.e. combined total of no more than 50 student participants, coaches, officials, and timers per race).

- **Multiple Races** - If multiple races will occur at a site, then those participating in the race can only be in the vicinity of the racecourse during their scheduled time specified by the meet manager. Once that time expires, participants must vacate the racecourse area to allow the next scheduled group of participants to compete. Vacating the racecourse area means that student participants have either left the premises or are in a location that is completely removed from the event.
- **Competition:** Per IDPH guidelines, competition is limited to intra-conference or intra-EMS-region (See IDPH COVID EMS-Region Map link below in resources).
- **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.

### Requirements and Considerations for Meet Managers.

- **Course:**
  - Rule 8-1-3a may need to be modified so that the narrowest point of the course is 6 feet wide as opposed to 3 feet wide.
- **Meet Entries:**
  - Consider limiting meet entries to the maximum number of competitors to represent a team in a cross-country race (7 runners) plus one alternate runner per race.
- **Team Headquarters at Meets:**
  - Hosts should establish team headquarter areas that allow for teams to space at least 30 feet apart while maintaining social distancing within their own team's headquarters.
  - Face coverings must be worn by anyone in a team's headquarter.
  - Food and tailgating should be discouraged at all cross country events in order to get teams in and out.
- **Coaches Packet Pick-up:**
  - Transmit as much information as possible electronically prior to the meet.
  - For any information that cannot be submitted electronically, organize a method for the packet pick up that keeps coaches socially distanced (i.e. time slots for small numbers of coaches to pick up packets, marks on the ground that are 6 feet apart for coaches lines formed at packet pick-up, etc.)
  - Face coverings must be worn by coaches and packet pick-up personnel at all times.
- **Pre-meet coaches' meetings:**
  - Consider using methods to keep coaches socially distanced during coaches' meetings.
    - Electronic or virtual meetings are encouraged when possible.
    - Multiple smaller meetings with a smaller number of attendees at a time is also a way to allow for social distancing.
    - Face coverings for all officials and coaches are required at pre-meet coaches' meetings.



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- **Clerking:**
  - Officials must conduct clerking at the starting line to avoid competitors congregating in a separate location prior to their race.
- **Starts:**
  - If single race start is possible for a race, participants must be lined up in a way that allows for social distancing (6 feet apart)
  - If a race cannot maintain social distancing in a single start, hosts may need to use staggered, wave or interval starts to ensure that social distancing requirements can be met at the starting line ([see link in resources section](#)).
  - Team run outs need to be done straight out from the team box, maintain physical distancing from other teams.
  - Teams should not mass collect warm-up apparel at the start area.
- **Finish:**
  - Keep competitors socially distanced at the finish of a race. Finish corrals and FAT timing are the best way to accomplish this at larger meets ([see link in resource section](#)).
  - With no FAT timing system, consider alternative means of finish place and time to address congestion at the finish line.
  - Image based equipment is an effective way to pick place at the finish while avoiding congestion at the finish line. This equipment could be as simple as a smartphone or iPad.
- **Crowding:**
  - Avoid meet protocols that cause coaches, participants, and spectators to congregate closely together (results boards, awards ceremonies, water stations, etc.).
    - Consider using an online platform for results.
    - Consider using general PA announcements or an online platform for award recognitions.
    - Ask athletes to bring their own water and have their own plan for retrieving their water after competition.
- **Sanitation:**
  - Have sanitation materials (disinfecting wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer, etc.) in prime locations for meet personnel to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and meet equipment.

### **Requirements and Considerations for Coaches:**

- 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 are always training and rotating together. This will ensure more limited 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 at all times.
- Always require use of facial coverings when not engaged in training, competing, or other strenuous physical activity.
- Require athletes to arrive at the competition venue already 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 should wear face coverings at all times when not running with athletes.

#### **Requirements and Consideration for Officials:**

- Use of electronic whistle is required.
- Bring personal hand sanitizer and wash your hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines (refer to meet manager section for pre-meet coaches meeting, clerking, and posting of results).
  - Work with the timing system operator to conduct video review and tabulate results while maintaining appropriate social distance.
  - Communication with coaches, participants, meet personnel, or spectators must be done at the appropriate social distance.
- Refrain from shaking hands.
- Wear a face covering when communicating with others and when social distancing is not possible.

#### **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 required at all times when not engaged in training, competing or other strenuous activity.

#### **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.



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- 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 IHSA Cross Country Administrator, Kraig Garber ([kgarber@ihsa.org](mailto:kgarber@ihsa.org)).

#### **Resources:**

IHSA Return to Activities 1.0 -

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:33115455-89ef-4f93-bdc7-86bbf7a6fd7d>

IDPH Sport Safety Guidance - <http://dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/sports-safety-guidance>

IDPH COVID-19 Regions Map -

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:37ae0de3-609b-4853-8622-b3b9c6d41781>

Staggered/Interval/Wave Start Guidance: [https://ihsaorg-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/kraig\\_ihsa\\_org1/ERnE14FSaFZEgt1QlvqdYysBtiR-RHRzBPOd1ro3V2YrNg?e=5IHjcV](https://ihsaorg-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/kraig_ihsa_org1/ERnE14FSaFZEgt1QlvqdYysBtiR-RHRzBPOd1ro3V2YrNg?e=5IHjcV)

Finish Guidance: [https://ihsaorg-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/kraig\\_ihsa\\_org1/EXZGq62E8m5Ch1Uik5mc9oBdoe8W-Gbh6w1otiVj4gXXg?e=IYI2EP](https://ihsaorg-my.sharepoint.com/:w/g/personal/kraig_ihsa_org1/EXZGq62E8m5Ch1Uik5mc9oBdoe8W-Gbh6w1otiVj4gXXg?e=IYI2EP)