



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

## IHSA 2020-21 CHESS CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting matches in-person and online during the 2020-21 IHSA Chess 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 chess practices and competitions. Additionally, with the changing nature of the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, these guidelines may change.

### Tentative IHSA Chess Season:

January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – Sectionals

February 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup>, 2021 – State

- Currently, State Series events are “*To Be Determined*” to ensure that the events can be conducted safely and in accordance with the Governor’s Restore Illinois Guidelines. The IHSA will make every effort to conduct some form of State Series event and will announce decisions by the IHSA Board of Directors related to this as they become available.
- It is recommended to keep the current scheduled state series dates open on your calendars for the purpose of potential State Series events as noted above.
- Currently, live competition must only occur with schools in your IDPH COVID-19 region and conference schools: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:37ae0de3-609b-4853-8622-b3b9c6d41781>
- Throughout the regular season, schools can participate in matches virtually, in-person, or in a combination of both formats.
- If a State Series is conducted and your school had difficulty meeting the 6-contest requirement or tournament requirement as outlined in the Chess Terms & Conditions as a result of circumstances surrounding the pandemic, please contact IHSA Executive Director, Craig Anderson ([canderson@ihsa.org](mailto:canderson@ihsa.org)) to inquire about a waiver.

## Requirements and Considerations

### In-Person Events

Schools may determine if live activity events can be safely conducted.

**IDPH** - All current Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) guidelines must be followed.



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**Social Distancing** - Distancing between individuals of at least 6 feet must always be maintained. Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible at any time.

**Capacity** - Student participants, coaches, volunteers, stewards, and media are considered a group of 50 people.

**Spectators** - Spectators are at the discretion of local school districts. If hosts allow spectators, they must always wear facial coverings and maintain 6-ft. social distancing throughout the entire event. NOTE: Some sites may not permit spectators. Please see the IHSA Winter Guidelines for Spectators as guide to activity events.

## General Guidelines

- All guidelines of IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 must be followed.
- Local school districts COVID-19 policies and procedures may be followed.
- Per IDPH guidelines, competition is limited to conference or IDPH COVID-19 health regions/intra-EMS-regions. <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:37ae0de3-609b-4853-8622-b3b9c6d41781>
- Student participants, coaches, media, and volunteers are considered a group of 50 people.
- Hosts can have multiple groups at an event as long as the groups are completely spaced out so that they don't intermingle or wait in queue in common areas.
- Small events are most effective in maintaining fewer competitors, school personnel, volunteers, and spectators. Small events make it easier to space out competitors to ensure for appropriate social distancing. Small events must adhere to the event capacity guidelines outlined in IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 as well as those outlined in this document.

## Requirements and Considerations for Managers/Hosts:

- **Face Coverings**
  - Face covering must be worn by all participants, school personnel, coaches, stewards, volunteers, and spectators at all times during chess competitions.
- **Competition Set-up**
  - Ensure that the competition tables (including chess board, pieces, and clock) are set up in the "middle" of the playing space, with room for each player to sit 6 feet back from the table when it is not their turn.
  - Players will take turns approaching the chess board. On their turn, they will approach the board, make their move, and then return to their socially distanced seat. The opposing player may not approach the board until the other player is seated.
  - Ensure that the coaches and stewards are placed in a location that provides at least 6 feet of distance from all those in attendance in the competition room.
  - Stewards may temporarily waive 6 foot rule if called over by a player – however, please keep as distanced as possible when tending to the issue.
  - Ensure that score keepers are set up in a location that provides at least 6 feet of distance from all those in attendance in the competition room.
  - Ensure that spectators are provided enough space to maintain social distancing of 6 feet. If there are too many spectators or a competition room does not permit appropriate social distancing among spectators, then spectators shall not be allowed entry into the competition room.



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- Each competition table must be equipped with hand sanitizer and disinfecting spray/wipes. Competition rooms and tables must be disinfected between each match.
- Do not provide pencils/pens, scratch paper, etc. Outside of the scoresheet, competitors must supply their own equipment.
- **Competition Entries**
  - Consider limiting the number of competitors to the minimum number of participants to represent a team in a chess match (5 participants) plus as minimal a number of substitutes as possible.
- **Team Headquarters at Competitions**
  - Hosts should establish team headquarter areas that allow for participants to socially distance from their teammates as well as other teams. Remember there cannot be more than 50 people in any one location.
- **Match Information**
  - Transmit as much information as possible electronically prior to the competition.
  - 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.)
- **Pre-Competition Coaches' Meetings**
  - Consider using the following methods to keep coaches socially distanced during coaches' meetings:
    - Electronic or virtual meetings are encouraged when possible.
    - Instead of a large meeting (at a tournament, for example) hold multiple smaller meetings with a smaller number of attendees (meet with each team separately or meet with just the coaches and have them relay the information to their respective teams) while still maintaining social distancing.
- **Award Ceremonies/Results Boards**
  - Avoid competition protocols that cause coaches, participants, and spectators to congregate closely together (results boards, opening/awards ceremonies, etc.).
  - Consider using an online platform for results or multiple score boards for each team in a designated area
  - Consider using an online platform for award recognitions.
- **Multi-Room Competitions**
  - Stagger start times of larger competitions that utilize multiple rooms. This will keep people from crowding in corridors or common areas in groups of larger than 50 at any one time.
- **Competition Personnel Volunteers**
  - In addition to volunteers assisting with the competition itself, consider having volunteers assist in common areas and corridors to ensure that there is no overcrowding or congregating in these areas.
  - Volunteers should be assigned to the doors of the competition rooms to keep each room at or below the 50 person capacity or social distancing capacity.
  - Have sanitation materials (disinfecting wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer, etc.) in prime locations for match personnel to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and competition equipment.

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

- Coaches must wear face coverings at all times.



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- Educate your student athletes on proper hand washing and sanitation.
- Follow all applicable guidelines to the IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 Guidelines.
- Communicate practice and all competition guidelines in a clear manner to student participants and their parents/guardians.
- Keep accurate records of those students and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Always require use of facial coverings.
- It is recommended to always have sanitation materials available (i.e. hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, etc.) for the team and coaching staff.
- Communicate with your local school administrators to understand protocols for lines of communication and responses to a student participant or coach contracting COVID-19 or having direct exposure to someone with the virus.
- Group coaching at practices should take place only where full social distancing is possible. Group coaching should be limited to small groups.
- Coaches are responsible for educating all attendees and ensuring social distancing is maintained between students. This means additional spacing between student while competing, coaching, or changing locations so that students remain spaced out, and no congregating of students occur. Always have a plan to maintain social distancing amongst your team and coaching staff.
- Require students to arrive at the competition venue already in competitive attire.

#### **Requirements and Consideration for Stewards:**

- Bring personal hand sanitizer and wash your hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines
  - Communication with coaches, participants, match personnel, or spectators must be done at the appropriate social distance.
- Refrain from shaking hands.
- Always wear a face covering.

#### **Requirements and Considerations for Participants:**

- Student participants should be responsible for their own supplies such as water bottles, face coverings, pens/pencils, notebooks, etc..
- Participants should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Face coverings are required at all times.
- All participants must refrain from touching other participants in any way, unless they are from the same household, including shaking hands prior to and following the match.
- Participants must not touch, handle, or share each other's equipment.
- Participants should wash hands as frequently as possible and bring hand sanitizer to use during the round.
- Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes – Players are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes, but coaches must have sanitizer available at practices and competitions.



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### **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 an event. Always maintain social distance and wear a face covering while in attendance at an event.

### **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.

## **Virtual Contests**

### **Using Virtual Chess Platforms**

- Lichess.org
  - Lichess.org is the preferred platform for regular season virtual matches
  - Other sites like chess.com may also be used; however, lichess.org will be the platform used for any postseason competition so please familiarize yourself with it.
- Things to consider
  - Lichess (and most other online chess platforms) use increment time control
  - Lichess will block a student's account if they are caught cheating
  - Be aware that most platforms record online games
  - Make sure players are aware of how the online platforms work and how to move pieces so they don't have accidental drops

### **Requirements and Considerations for Virtual Competition:**

- Teams may play virtual competitions remotely at home, or together as a team
  - If playing together as a team, students must still be masked and socially distanced on their respective computers
- No other windows or tabs should be open during play
- Players may use a physical board in addition to the virtual board, but the virtual board is the official board
- Though online platforms use increment time control, please note that face-to-face competition will still use delay
- Webcams are not required but are permitted
  - Webcams are encouraged so students are still able to interact with opponents



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- Virtual matches should be treated like a face-to-face match – eating, use of cell phones, and any other outside distractions are strongly prohibited

**Resources:**

- Tips for Online Chess [Just the Rules: New Internet Chess Rules - Essential Player Tips](#)
- US Chess Federation Downloadable Rule Book Chapters (Includes New Chapter on Virtual Chess) [7th Edition Rule Book Chapters Now Available for Download](#)