

IHSA 2020-21 GIRLS TENNIS CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting events during the 2020 IHSA Girls Tennis 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 the risk of transmitting illness at events. Additionally, with the changing nature of the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic, these guidelines may be subject to change.

Modified Season:

- On July 29, the IHSA Board of Directors modified the IHSA Girls Tennis season along with all other sport seasons in response to the circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The modified Girls Tennis season is as follows:
 - August 10th - Practice May Begin
(Note: The IHSA 7-Day acclimatization period will apply to girl's tennis)
 - August 20th - First Contest May be Held
 - October 24 - End of Season (Note: Potentially with or without a State Series).
- There is no limit on the number of events that students can compete in during a week, however, the IHSA 20 dates By-law 5.300 still applies.
https://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/IHSA_Section5.pdf
- Currently, 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>
- 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 a State Series event and will announce decisions related to this as they become available.
- It is recommended to keep Friday & Saturday, October 16 & 17th and 23rd & 24th as open dates on your schedules for the purpose of a potential date for some form of State Series event (Regionals, Sectionals, etc....).
- If a State Series is conducted and your school has difficulty meeting the 6 contest requirement as outlined in IHSA By-laws as a result of circumstances surrounding the pandemic, please contact IHSA Executive Director, Craig Anderson (canderson@ihsa.org) to inquire about a waiver.

General Requirements and Considerations:

- Schools must comply with the IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 Guidelines.
- Social distancing between individuals of at least 6 feet must always be maintained. Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible.
- Student participants, coaches, and athletic trainers, managers, officials if applicable, etc... are restricted to a combined total of 50 participants per event.

- Spectators are permitted at events provided they maintain social distancing throughout the entire event as outlined in the IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 Guidelines.
- Small events are most effective in maintaining fewer competitors, school personnel, officials, and spectators. Small tennis events make it easier to space out competitors to ensure for appropriate social distancing. Small tennis contests/meets must adhere to the event capacity guidelines outlined in IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 as well as those outlined in this document.
- If schools have scheduled large meets such as invitationals, hosts must ensure that ALL event attendees are held to the 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, athletic trainers, managers, officials if applicable per event).

Requirements and Considerations for Contest Managers:

- Entries:
 - Limit event entries to the maximum number of competitors to represent a team to follow the IDPH Current Phase Guidelines (Phase 4 – 50 participants). There is no limit on the number of teams; only the number of TOTAL people in a group.
- Teams:
 - Hosts should establish team areas that allow for teams to space at least 30 feet apart while maintaining social distancing within their own team's area.
 - Face coverings must be worn by anyone not actively competing.
- Coaches:
 - Transmit as much information as possible electronically prior to competition. Coaches can use [tennisreporting.com](https://www.tennisreporting.com) free of charge to organize events and submit scores electronically.
 - For any information that cannot be submitted electronically, organize a method for information to get to coaches where they can remain socially distanced (i.e. time slots for small numbers of coaches to pick up information, signage, marks on the ground that identify 6 feet apart for common areas where lines may be formed etc...)
 - Face coverings must always be worn by coaches and competition personnel.
- 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 competition officials and coaches are required at pre-meet coaches' meetings.
- Courts:
 - Gates should be roped off or left open to avoid touching.
 - If possible, alternating courts should be reserved for play if there is no barrier, such as fencing, between the courts.
- Tennis equipment:
 - Tennis Balls - Practice caution with the tennis balls and avoid letting the participants touch them. Try to restrict balls to a certain group, court, or day of the week by labeling them with a permanent marker.
 - Replace all balls if someone suspected to have COVID-19 is in contact with them.

- Consider spraying tennis balls briefly with a disinfectant spray (e.g., Lysol or Clorox) at the conclusion of play.
 - Using new balls on a very regular basis is highly encouraged.
 - Match play - If possible, tennis players should each use a new can of balls for a match, different brands or same brand/different numbers and only serve with your tennis balls.
 - Other Tennis Equipment – Items should be touched only by the specific coach or specific player and should be cleaned frequently. Hand hygiene should be performed before and after use of equipment. Avoid using unnecessary equipment. Live ball drills and game-based play is recommended. If using ball tubes and basket pickups to pick up loose balls after a practice/ball machine rotation be aware to limit contact and sanitize accordingly. Use alcohol-based disinfectant to clean all tennis gear, including racquets, towels, target cones, ball machines, etc. Rackets and towels should not be shared.
 - If possible, avoid players handling any coaching equipment.
 - Encourage players to use their racquet/foot to push balls back and/or hit them to their opponent to avoid using hands and touching balls.
- Before Play: Ease competitive players back into play prior to competition.
 - Given the layoff from competing, players will be more susceptible to under-training, over-use, and potential other injuries.
 - Do not play if you are exhibiting any symptoms of the coronavirus: mild to severe respiratory illness with fever, cough and difficulty breathing, or other symptoms identified by the CDC; or have been in contact with someone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
 - Ask athletes to bring their own water and have their own plan for retrieving their water after competition.
 - Arrive at the court no more than 10 minutes prior to play.
 - Players should not congregate in groups prior to playing tennis.
 - Have alcohol based hand sanitizer available for players to disinfect their hands before play.
- Match Starts:
 - When playing doubles, coordinate with your partner to maintain physical distancing. Avoid physical and close contact such as strategizing with doubles partner, high fives etc...
 - Avoid touching your face.
 - If a ball from another court comes to you, send it back with a kick or with your racket.
- After Play:
 - Leave the court as soon as reasonably possible.
 - Wash your hands thoroughly or use a hand sanitizer after coming off the court.
 - Avoid using shared locker rooms or changing area. Shower at home.
 - No group celebration, extra-curricular or social activity should take place. No congregation after playing. All players should leave the facility immediately after competition is over.
- Adjust to avoid protocols that cause coaches, participants, and spectators to congregate closely together (brackets, leader boards, 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.
- Have sanitation materials (disinfecting wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer, etc.) in prime locations for meet personnel to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment.

Court gates, stair rails, common areas should be wiped down before, during and after events.

Common areas (benches, chairs, etc...) should be spaced 6-ft. apart.

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.
- Always have a plan to maintain social distancing amongst your team and coaching staff.
- Always require use of facial coverings when not actively engaged in training, competing, or other strenuous physical activity.
- Coaches should wear face coverings at all competitions and when not engaged in strenuous activity during practices.
- 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.
 - COACHING
 - Group coaching at practices should take place only where full social distancing is possible. Group coaching should be limited to small groups.
 - Players/Coaches should be assigned specific courts—and possibly specific days and times. Position the players at well-spaced stations.

Requirements and Consideration for Tournament Management Officials:

- 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 and posting of results).
 - Communication with coaches, participants, meet personnel, or spectators must be done at the appropriate social distance.
- Refrain from shaking hands.
- Always wear a face covering.

Requirements and Considerations for Student Athletes:

- Student athletes should be responsible for their own equipment and supplies such as rackets, water bottle, etc....
- 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 performed before and after play and at frequent times at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Face coverings are always required 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.
- 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:

- Schools may follow ISBE guidance for transporting students to athletic events.

Eating and drinking:

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

NOTE: These guidelines apply to outdoor spectator sports only. Currently, outdoor tennis facilities are highly recommended. For indoor tennis facilities, please refer to the Phase 4: Revitalization Tennis Guidelines provided in the Restore Illinois document:

<https://dceocovid19resources.com/assets/Restore-Illinois/businessguidelines4/tennis.pdf>

RESOURCES:

- NFHS & USTA COVID-19 PLAYING TENNIS SAFELY PLAYER TIPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812224/usta_covid19_playingtennissafely-players-1.pdf
- NFHS & USTA COVID-19 PLAYING TENNIS SAFELY FACILITY AND PROGRAMMING RECOMMENDATIONS: https://www.nfhs.org/media/3812223/usta_covid19_playingtennissafely-facilityandprogramming-1.pdf
- USTA PLAYING TENNIS SAFELY: <https://www.usta.com/en/home/stay-current/national/usta-statement-on-safety-of-playing-tennis-during-the-covid-19-v.html>
- NFHS & USTA FRIENDS AT COURT: <https://www.nfhs.org/media/3609820/2020-friend-at-court.pdf>
- 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 REGION MAPS: <https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn:aaid:scds:US:37ae0de3-609b-4853-8622-b3b9c6d41781>
- NFHS TENNIS: <https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/tennis/>
- IHSA TENNIS: <https://www.ihsa.org/Sports-Activities/Girls-Tennis>

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