



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

IHSA 2020-21 WATER POLO CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting meets during the 2021 IHSA Water Polo seasons. 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 Water Polo practice and contests events. 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 Water Polo seasons along with all other sport seasons in response to the circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The modified boys and girls water polo season is as follows:
 - **March 15 – Practice May Begin**
 - **After 7 days of practice – First Contest May be Held**
 - **May 29 – End of Season (with or without a state series)**
- Note: Avoid scheduling regular season games after May 17 in order to allow open dates for potential postseason events.
- If your varsity water polo 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. In addition, schools may compete against non-conference opponents within a 30-mile radius of their facility and whose region is also in Phase 4. For further guidance refer to <https://www.dph.illinois.gov/covid19/community-guidance/sports-safety-guidance>
- Teams still must follow IHSA By-laws 5.160 and 5.330 Contest Limitations https://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/IHSA_Section5.pdf

General Requirements and Considerations:

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

Social distancing between individuals of at least 6 feet must be maintained at all times.

- Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible.



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Spectators

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

Contests

- Dual contests are most effective at maintaining fewer competitors, school personnel, officials, and spectators. Dual contests make it easier to space those in attendance to the appropriate social distancing. Contests must adhere to the event capacity guidelines outlined in IHSAA Return to Play mitigations.

Multi-team Contests

- If schools have scheduled larger meets than a dual, or invitational, hosts must ensure that ALL event attendees are held to the capacity guidelines outlined in IHSAA Return to Play Phase 4.

Competition

- Per IDPH guidelines, competition is limited Phase 4 or Tier 1 mitigations. (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.

Practices

- Practices are solely intra-team.

Requirements and Considerations for Game Managers and Officials.

Pool Facilities:

- Consider increasing water sanitation level, i.e., keep chlorine closer to 2.0 PPM.

Team Benches (2-2-1, 2-2-2, 4-2)

- Teams should be seated on opposite sides of the pool and away from the officials' table.
- Suspend the protocol of teams changing ends. 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.



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- Players not in game must wear a mask and MUST be separated by 6 feet in bench area.
- During time outs, players and coaches should maintain social distance.
- To promote social distancing, substitute players may be in the water behind the goal line outside the re-entry area, at least 2 meters from the goal, provided this is possible on both ends of the field of play.
- Head coaches shall sit or stand behind the goal line in the team area when the team is on defense and shall maintain 6 feet of distance from players and officials.
- Players not in game must wear a mask and MUST be separated by 6 feet in bench area.
- During time outs, players and coaches should maintain social distance.

Pre-game Captains Meeting (2-5-2)

- Decrease number of participants or hold one conference with officials and coaches and one meeting with officials and captains. The referee can use P.A. system or starting-system microphone to allow participants to hear but keep them properly separated.

Game Officials (3-1-1, 3-1-2, 3-14, 3-17, 3-18, 3-20, 3-21)

- The officials include two referees, a scorekeeper, exclusion secretary, game timer and shot clock timer.
- The use of goal judges is optional.
- The score table of the home team must accommodate a minimum of one observer from the visiting team and up to two additional observers as space permits.
- Require a distance of 6 feet between individuals seated at the desk/table.
- The re-entry areas should be set up on the opposite side from the score table with the goal judges situated on the same side as the score table, each on the goal line at the end of the field of play. If facility constraints make this difficult, configure the deck set-up in a way that promotes 6 feet of social distancing.
- The game timer can also act as shot clock timer, consolidating working positions at the table.
- The duties of the exclusion secretary can be combined with the scorekeeper to consolidate working positions at the table.

Referees Control Over Conduct (3-6-2)

- After the pre-game captains meeting, the head coach and captain(s) are the only individuals authorized to address the referees. This may occur during time-outs, during the interval between periods, with the permission of the referee or, in the case of the head coach, when filing a protest. Alternative methods of communications should be established to encourage 6 feet of social distancing.



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Referees – Checking and Signing Scoresheet (3-10)

- The referees must verify the score and sign the scoresheet and inform coaches of reportable fouls at the conclusion of the game. Alternative methods of communications should be established to encourage 6 feet of social distancing.

Submission of Entries to Referee (3-20-2a)

- Teams must provide a pre-printed roster for all levels prior to the game so that only the game secretary is handling the game book and writing utensils.

Start of the Game – Coin Toss (4-15-1)

- If there are not pre-assigned starting ends of the pool for a game, the referee, in the presence of the captains, shall perform the coin toss at least 10 minutes before the start of the game. The winner will have the choice of ends. Require a distance of 6 feet between coin toss participants.

Sanitation:

- Have sanitation materials (disinfecting wipes, sprays, hand sanitizer, etc.) in prime locations for meet personnel to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment.
 - Score Table - recommend hand sanitizer at the desk.

Requirements and Considerations for Game Managers and Officials.

Locker Rooms –

- Require athletes to arrive at the venue already in competitive attire or provide alternative accommodations for participants to change that allows for 6 feet of social distancing.

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Score Table

- Recommend hand sanitizer at the desk.

Requirements and Considerations for Coaches:

- Coaches should wear face coverings at all practices and contests.
- Always require players to use of facial coverings when not engaged in training or competing.
- Communicate practice and all competition guidelines in a clear manner to student participants and their parents.
- Keep accurate records of those athletes and staff who attend each practice in case contact tracing is needed.
- Always have a plan to always maintain social distancing amongst your team and coaching staff.



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- 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.

Requirements and Consideration for Officials:

- Officials are required to wear face coverings at all times.
- Face coverings must be solid black
- Traditional or electronic whistles may be used. If an electronic whistle is used, officials should use one whose tone will carry inside.
- Bring personal hand sanitizer and wash your hands frequently.
- Do not share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines. Communication with coaches, participants, meet personnel, or spectators must be done at the appropriate social distance.
- Suspend handshakes prior to and following the Pregame Meeting.
- Gloves may be worn.

Requirements and Considerations for Student Athletes:

- Student athletes should be responsible for their own supplies such as a water bottle.
- Ensure 6-foot distance whenever athletes are eating or drinking.
- Replace face coverings immediately after eating or drinking.
- 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 in the water.

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 contest.
- 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 Water Polo Administrator, Beth Sauser (bsauser@ihsa.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 -

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19/IL%20Tier%202%20Resurgence%20Mitigations%20-%20January%2018%2C%202021%20Update.pdf>