



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

IHSA 2020-21 GOLF CONSIDERATIONS

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting meets during the 2020 IHSA Golf 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 golf events. 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 golf season along with all other sport seasons in response to the circumstances surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The modified girls' and boys' golf seasons are as follows:
 - August 10 – Practice May Begin
 - August 13– First Contest May be Held
 - October 24 – End of Season (with or without a State Series)
- Currently, State Series events are To Be Determined in order 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 related to this as they become available.
- It is recommended to keep the currently scheduled state series dates open on your schedules for the purpose of a potential State Series events.
- If a State Series is conducted and your school had 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:

- All guidelines of IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 must be adhered to.
- Per IDPH guidelines, competition is limited to intra-conference or intra-EMS-region.
- Social distancing between individuals of at least 6 feet must be maintained at all times. Handshakes, fist bumps, hugging, etc. are not permissible.
- Student participants, coaches, and officials are restricted to a combined total of 50 per wave. A wave is defined as an individual group of 50 (golfers, coaches, officials, and volunteers). Waves should be clearly spaced so that multiple groups of 50 aren't congregating waiting for their tee time.
- Hosts can have multiple waves at an event as long as the waves are completely spaced out so that they don't intermingle or wait in queue in common areas.
- Spectators are permitted at events as long as they maintain social distancing throughout the event as outlined in the IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 Guidelines. Spectators are required to wear a face covering when attending an event.

- Small events are most effective in maintaining fewer competitors, school personnel, officials, and spectators. Small events make it easier to space golfers out at the start and finish of a match 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.
- If schools have scheduled large tournaments or 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, and officials per wave).

Requirements and Considerations for Managers.

- **Prior to the Event**
 - Consider either emailing event information one week in advance to participating schools or host a virtual coaches meeting in lieu of a traditional in-person one.
 - Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between players. This means additional spacing between players while playing, chatting, or changing drills so that players remain spaced out, and no congregating of players while waiting to hit.
- **Arrival/Warm-Up**
 - Establish firm arrival times for participants no earlier than 45 minutes prior to a participant's/school's first starting time. When a player arrives in a personal vehicle, he/she should remain there until the appointed arrival time while players arriving in a school vehicle should be allowed to stay outside in the waiting area.
 - Warm-up groups are limited to no more than 50 people in one space at a time.
 - Look to group participants from the same school in successive groups to minimize the gap between the first and last participants from a school.
 - If practice facilities will be available (practice tee, short game area, putting green), and the spacing of those is such that a socially-distant warm-up period is possible, establish a flow that participants will follow to ensure everyone has a fair and equitable opportunity to warm up prior to play
 - A suggested flow or pattern for participants should try to keep teams together and ensure that no more than 50 participants will be in any one practice area at one time. For example, this could mean having some teams use the short game area/putting green first while other teams are on the range and then switch locations after 20 minutes.
 - Hosts should ensure that 50 participants are able to fit in the practice area and maintain social distance prior to participant arrival. If social distance cannot be maintained, hosts should designate an area for participants to wait.
 - Only participants and coaches should be allowed on any practice facility and must maintain social distancing.
- **Starting**
 - Participants should check in at their starting tee immediately after the group preceding them has left the teeing area.
 - If traditional scorecards will be used, they should be bagged and given to participants by a tournament volunteer/manager. Participants will keep score for all players in their group
 - Any tournament volunteers/managers at the starting tee(s) must wear a mask.
 - Participants shall maintain social distancing at all times.
- **On Course Play** – Only essential personnel are permitted on the course. These are defined as players, coaches, athletic trainers, and officials. All others, i.e., managers, video people, media photographers, etc. are

considered nonessential personnel and are to be in the gallery remaining by the cart path (when present) or remaining at least 15 yards from the players. (Spectators will be resolved below)

- Local Rules

- Consider adopting local rules for the following:
 - Bunkers
 - Flagstick
 - Holed ball
 - Scorecard Verification

- Spectators

- Consider whether spectators will be allowed or not. If allowed, consider placing a limit on the number of spectators per participant.
- No spectator carts should be permitted.
- If allowed, spectators must maintain social distancing regardless of the position on the golf course. Spectators must wear masks at all times.
- If allowed, spectators should be discouraged from giving participants objects like food, water, umbrellas, etc. If they do give a participant such an object, they should do so quickly and then return to social distancing.

- Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes – Players, coaches, and officials are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes. It is recommended to use hand sanitizer before and after each hole and after a round and when going out to, and coming in from, the course. Additionally, emphasize to all to avoid touching their face.

- Media – All local social distancing, mask wearing, and hygiene guidelines for spectators must be followed by media members planning to attend meets. Media members should contact host school administrators prior to arriving.

- Concession stands – Concession stands are allowed, using IDPH Guidelines.
- Coach conferences – Encourage limiting the number of individuals in a conference and/or huddle to those who must be in close proximity for these discussions. Coaches must wear a mask.
- Team handshakes – Teams and individuals shall NOT exchange handshakes before, during, or following the practice or meet.
- Press area – Local schools shall determine which personnel should be in the designated press area considering IDPH guidelines.

- Delays

- Inform participants that in the event of a horn blast signaling a discontinuance of play for a dangerous situation, all participants must proceed directly to their car/team bus.
- Communication regarding resumption of play should be sent by email or text message.

- Scoring

- Consider using online scoring platforms in lieu of traditional scorecards. A number of available apps exist that allow for scoring to be done using cell phones.
- Either all participants in a group could keep score for one another, or one participant could be charged with keeping score for the entire group.
- After completion of a round, ONE group at a time should be allowed to enter the scoring area. While in the scoring area, participants should maintain social distancing.

- A participant's scorecard is considered returned and final after all participants in the group have verbally agreed to the hole-by-hole scores while in the scoring area with tournament management. No signature needs to be required.
- Once participants exit the scoring area, no additional changes can be made.
- Once scoring is finished, participants are prohibited from practicing in the practice area or returning to the course. Participants must return to their car/team bus.
- Awards
 - Awards ceremonies should not be held.
 - Awards can be sent via mail following the event.

Requirements and Considerations for Coaches:

- Communicate practice and all competition guidelines in a clear manner to student participants and their 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Coaches should wear face coverings at all times except when in active play (striking a ball).
- 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 practice and tee 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 Participants:

- All participants must maintain social distancing. This means, regardless of a player's position on the golf course, players and coaches must maintain 6 feet of distance between themselves and other players/coaches.
 - 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 round.
 - 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.
 - Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
 - Schools hosting events should consider having sanitizer and disinfectant for starting and scoring areas.
- Masks – Players should wear masks whenever not actively playing (striking a ball). All players should be masked while walking the course and not in actively play. If an individual would like to wear a mask while actively playing, they may do so. There is no prohibition on the color of the mask.
- Players licking fingers – If a golfer touches their mouth, practice is stopped and the player must sanitize their hands. Players should only touch and use their own golf ball and not touch other players golf ball or equipment. Players are encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer, but coaches must have sanitizer available at practices and competitions.
- Player habits – Coaches should now work to create new habits including staying away from touching their face, not allowing sunflower seeds and not spitting. Do not touch the flagstick or bunker rakes, nor other player's equipment or golf balls.
- Hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes – Players are encouraged to provide their own hand sanitizer and/or sanitizing wipes. It is recommended to use hand sanitizer before and after each hole and when going out to, and coming in from, the course. Additionally, emphasize to all to avoid touching their face.

Local Rules (developed in consultation with the Chicago District Golf Association):

- Bunkers – Any area disturbed in a bunker is deemed an Abnormal Course Condition (Ground Under Repair). The player may take full relief or maximum available relief under **Rule 16.1c**, but the player must drop inside the bunker for free relief.

NOTE: Rule 16.1 shall be modified as follows: interference exists only if the disturbed area in the bunker interferes with the player's lie or area of intended swing (such as a ridge in front of or behind the ball). There is no relief for interference with stance.

- Disturbed areas include (but are not limited to) footprints and other disturbances that may have been caused by players, animals, or other sources (this does not include a disturbance created as a result of a previous stroke). When confronted with this situation, the player has the following options:
 - The player has the option to play the ball as it lies.
 - If the player takes free relief under **Rule 16.1c**, the player must drop the ball (from knee height) within one club length of the nearest point of relief or maximum available relief with the bunker, no nearer to the hole. The player is not permitted to place the ball unless the ball fails to stay within the relief area after two drops (**Rule 14.3c**). If a drop creates a new disturbance (such as a plugged lie), the player is not entitled to relief from that disturbance or to take a second drop because of that disturbance.
 - As an added option under **Rule 16.1c**, for a penalty of one stroke, the player may elect to use back-on-line relief by dropping behind the bunker along the line formed by the hold and the spot where the ball was at rest in the bunker, going back as far as the player wishes.

- Flagstick – For the safety and well-being of all, the flagstick is not to be touched and is to remain in the hole at all times. Rule 13.2 is modified as follows: A player is prohibited from making a stroke with the flagstick removed from the hole. (NOTE: touching the flagstick inadvertently and the subsequent replacement of the flagstick is not of itself a penalty. Should a player inadvertently touch the flagstick, the player should take appropriate precautions and use hand sanitizer. If a player needs to re-center the flagstick, he/she may do so using a club.)

Penalty for Breach of Local Rule:

- First Breach – General Penalty
 - Subsequent Breach – Disqualification
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- Ball holed – The traditional definition of *holed* has been modified to say: *If any part of the ball is in the hole below the surface of the putting green, the ball is treated as holed even if the entire ball is not below the surface.* This definition will be used for hole inserts (such as plastic piping, pool noodles, etc.) NOTE: If the ball does bounce out of the hole, the ball is NOT considered holed.
 - Scoring/Scorecard Verification – Players are encouraged to keep score using cell phones or some other means in lieu of a traditional scorecard. At the conclusion of a round, a player's scorecard is considered returned and final after all players in the group have verbally agreed to the hole-by-hole scores while at the scoring table following the conclusion of a round. Once a player leaves the scoring area, no additional change to the player's score can be made. Failure of a player to return to the scoring area immediately following a round will result in the player's disqualification.

Equipment:

- Golf equipment – Players should use their own equipment and golf balls. Players should not touch other players equipment or golf balls.
- Course equipment – Players should not touch the flagstick, bunker rakes or ball cleaning devices on the course.
- What kinds or brands of sanitizer should we be using – The IHSA SMAC recommends referencing and utilizing EPA registered disinfectants. Balls and equipment may be wiped with listed disinfectants and a damp cloth.

Hydration:

- All students shall bring their own water bottle. Water bottles must not be shared.
- Hydration stations (water cows, water trough, water fountains, etc.) should NOT be utilized.

Transportation:

- If busses or vans are used for transport capacity must ensure 6 foot distancing on the bus. If a team must return to the bus in inclement weather there needs to be distancing for possible prolonged periods. Masks must be worn while on the bus at all times.

Eating and drinking:

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

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

PGA BACK2GOLF: <https://www.pga.org/coronavirus-resources/Back2Golf>