

SIJHSAA RETURN TO PLAY

(CROSS-COUNTRY)

As of 8-11-20

This document is intended to provide guidance for schools conducting practices and hosting meets during the 2020 SIJHSAA Cross Country Season. The guidelines 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 by their school district and or local health officials. Please understand that even with this guidance, there is still a 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.

Season Dates

*Contests May Start August 15

*Regular season play should be limited to within conference, or other schools in the same general geographical area (approximately 30 miles), or COVID-19 region only. (Conference includes conference schools from another COVID-19 Region) (Geographical area includes schools within 30 miles of each other is to assist schools scheduling on borders of different COVID-19 regions.).

*State Series: No State Series will take place.

Eligibility

*Students must be meeting all eligibility requirements.

*Students must have a current physical on file prior to practice.

*E-Learning students would be eligible provided the local district allows their participation.

Team Limitations

*Schools limited to a maximum of 2 meets per week.

*Meets can't exceed 3 teams (triangular) One exception to this is if schools only have individual runners, they may be added to a triangular in order for those athletes to compete. No race may exceed 50 participants.

*Schools with multiple teams (i.e. Varsity (8th) and JV (7th) may allow each team/division the maximum number of contests per week. No runner may compete in more than 2 races per week.

Spectators:

*Spectators and group gatherings subject to IDPH guidelines during this time.

*Outdoors, multiple groups of 50 are allowed if thirty feet of space is maintained between groups, up to a maximum 20% of the capacity of the space. Face coverings must be worn unless social distancing of 6 feet can be maintained. It is suggested that schools should designate areas for fans to sit in to adhere to IDPH guidelines.

*Adhere to all CDC guidelines regarding hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

*It is suggested that spectators be limited to immediate household members or guardians of participants.

*Spectators are urged to bring their own lawn chairs to enable social distancing.

*Spectators must wear face coverings at all times. Face coverings may also be removed while eating or drinking, however, strict adherence to social distancing must be maintained during these activities.

Safety

*Individuals should not congregate in common areas prior to or following the event.

*Schools must have information posted at entrances and around facilities explaining the transmission as well as symptoms of COVID-19, encouraging all visitors to maintain social distance, reminding people to stay home if they feel sick or have any of the symptoms of COVID-19. (temperature above 100.4/38c, fever, chills, cough, muscle aches, headache, sore throat, runny nose, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or loss of taste or smell.

It is suggested parents remain in cars for drop off and pick up of athletes after practice.

*Coaches and or school administration are responsible for temperature checks of players and coaches before practices or meets. In addition the COVID-19 Athlete/Coach Monitoring Form should be filled out before practices and meets and kept on record. Anyone with symptoms or illness is not allowed to participate.

*If an Illinois COVID Region or County is placed in Phase 3 or lower of the Governors Restore Illinois Plan, all sports for schools in that region or county will be suspended or canceled.

*Concessions stands are up to each school, but should be approved by their public health department. If concession stands are permitted, pre-packaged items would be the best option.

Masks

*Runners must wear face coverings but they may be removed outdoors while actively exercising or participating in practices or competition, as long as social distancing can be maintained. Face coverings may also be removed while eating or drinking; however, strict adherence to social distancing must be maintained during these activities.

*Spectators must wear face coverings at all times.

*Coaches must wear face coverings during practices and meets.

*It is recommended that programs require physician's notes for individuals who have a medical condition that prohibits the use of face covering. Face coverings must fully cover the mouth and nose, and that must fit snugly against the sides of the face with no gaps. Reusable face coverings should be machine washed or washed by hand and allowed to dry completely after each use.

Coaches and Runners

- *Coaches are responsible for keeping records of attendance at meets and practices.
- *Coaches should be knowledgeable of their runners with pre-existing conditions and work with the school nurse or other health officials to take additional precautions as needed.
- *Coaches are responsible for ensuring social distancing is maintained between runners as much as possible.
- *No pre-race or post-race hand shakes or fist bumps should take place
- *Coaches should wear face coverings at all times when not running with athletes.

Confirmed Team Cases

- *Create a notification process for all athletes, coaches, event staff, officials and spectators if the school learns of suspected or confirmed cases at practices or a contest.

IHSA Cross Country Considerations

- *The SIJHSAA generally follows IHSA guidelines with some exceptions.
(2 meets per week / no more than 3 schools per meet)
- *The IHSA Cross Country Considerations is included in this document.



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

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** are permitted at meets as long as they maintain social distancing throughout the event as outlined in the IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 Guidelines. Spectators must wear face coverings at all times.
- **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
- **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 events, schools must consider social distancing requirements when scheduling contests and events for the fall. Social distancing (as required by state or local health department) will need to be maintained on buses/vans. Thus, multiple buses/vans and/or parental/guardian transportation could likely be needed. In addition if the team needs to return to a bus in inclement weather capacity should allow for 6 feet distancing of athletes and coaches. Masks must be worn while on the bus.

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:**
 - Limit 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

- o coaches to pick up packets, marks on the ground that are 6 feet apart for coaches lines formed at packet pick-up, etc.)
- o Face coverings must be worn by coaches and packet pick-up personnel at all times.
- **Pre-meet coaches' meetings:**
 - o 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.
- **Clerking:**
 - o Officials must conduct clerking at the starting line to avoid competitors congregating in a separate location prior to their race.
- **Starts:**
 - o 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)
 - o 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).
 - o Team run outs need to be done straight out from the team box, maintain physical distancing from other teams. Teams need to maintain 6 feet within the box as well.
 - o Teams should not mass collect warm-up apparel at the start area.
- **Finish:**
 - o 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).
 - o With no FAT timing system, consider alternative means of finish place and time to address congestion at the finish line.
 - o 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:**
 - o 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:**

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- 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.
- 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 at all times during the competition.

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.



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- 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.
- 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).

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

Finish Guidance: https://ihsaorg-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/kraig_ihsa_org1/EXZGq62E8m5Ch1Uik5mc9oBdoe8W-Gbh6w1otiVj4gXXg?e=IYI2EP