



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.
- 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)
- Hosts can have multiple waves at an invitational as long as the waves are completely spaced out so that they don't intermingle.
- 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.
- Media are permitted at events provided they maintain social distancing throughout the event as outlined in the IHSA Return to Play Phase 4 Guidelines. It is important that media RSVP with host school athletic administration prior to attending any event so they can be educated on the school's protocols for entering/exiting the venue,

covering the game/meet, and post-game/meet procedures. Media must adhere to host venue protocols at all times.

- 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 as much as possible. 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. Participants who arrive early must stay in their vehicle until the appointed time.
 - 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), 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.
 - 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. If a spectator is in an area where he/she cannot maintain social distancing, the spectator must wear a mask around anyone not in their household.
 - 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 at 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 should 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 should 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.
 - Participants must wear masks if social distancing cannot be maintained while exiting the course.
 - 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 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.
- Schools hosting events should consider having sanitizer and disinfectant for starting and scoring areas.
- Masks – Players are not required to wear cloth face coverings, but may do so if they desire, particularly when not able to maintain social distancing. If an individual would like to wear a mask on the playing course or in a meeting, 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
- 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 round 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 hole 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

- 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.

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>