

As it relates to education-based activities, we recognize the many benefits of us being able to provide these safely with your support. We will continue to push for direction to provide activity participation opportunities for students. However, we recently posted the press release below to share publicly the importance of having the medical experts (IDPH) provide us the guidance we need to move forward. We are happy to be the decision makers if given that opportunity, but it's presently not been provided to us.

The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) announced on July 14, 2020 that it will defer to the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the Governor's Office on all of its Return To Play Guidelines moving forward.

"There is an unprecedented level of planning for this school year due to COVID-19, and we have come to understand that there needs to be a greater consistency between the guidelines for returning to learn and returning to interscholastic athletics," said IHSA Executive Director Craig Anderson. "Some of the recommendations by the IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and directives from IDPH have come into direct conflict with each other, especially as it relates to the use of masks by student-athletes. As a result, we feel it is important to let IDPH and ISBE provide a consistent direction for our membership moving forward. We will wait on direction from these organizations for further guidance on Return to Play plans for the 2020-21 school year."

The IHSA's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee had previously developed its own Return To Play Guidelines, which were then collaboratively amended, and then approved, by IDPH. The Phase 4 Return To Play Guidelines were then amended at IDPH's request to include a greater emphasis on masks, and also eliminated scrimmages in sports that require physical contact. IHSA teams can currently conduct limited summer contact workouts within the Phase 4 Return To Play Guidelines as directed by IDPH and ISBE. Final approval on the revised Phase 4 Return To Play Guidelines from IDPH are forthcoming.

"We still believe there is a path to conducting high school athletics in the fall, like the majority of states surrounding Illinois plan to do," said Anderson. "To make that happen, it's important that we allow IDPH, ISBE and the Governor's Office to take the lead on ensuring the safest and most consistent protocols."

We have an IHSA Board of Directors meeting scheduled for July 22, 2020. This meeting is tentative on the association receiving confirmation from IDPH, the Governor's office, or ISBE of the outlook for the start of the fall seasons. We appreciate the shared information from many of you on options for us to resume activities for the 2020-21 school year. We continue to review and consider all options presented.

As a follow up to a number to our Phase 4 Return to Play Guidelines, I want to provide the following interpretations:

- Adults (coaches) who are outside and social distancing may remove their masks. This is an ISBE interpretation that we are using.
- Swimmers are not required to wear masks in the water.
- Using sleds, bags or hand shields that would prevent person to person physical contact is permitted.