



2021 Return to Competition Soccer Guidelines

Todd Tharp, IHSAA

Lisa Brinkmeyer, IGHSAU

Overview

- **Please submit questions through the Q&A feature-we will attempt to answer them live.**
- **Once presentation is over, we will also answer questions or review information in more detail.**
- **Zoom is recorded and a link will be provided for later viewing on both the IGHSAU and IHSAA websites.**



Overview

- Recommendations are from IGHSAU/IHSAA for its member schools and should not supersede guidelines, mandates, requirements, and/or orders put into place by:
 - Iowa Governor's Office
 - Iowa Department of Public Health
 - Iowa Department of Education
 - Federal, local or county government entities
 - Federal, local or county health departments
 - Local School Districts



Supervision

- It is the responsibility of the home team to provide proper administrative supervision (not the coach) at meets to assure compliance with the guidelines set forth by the Governor's office, the Department of Education, the Department of Public Health, the Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union.



Possible/Positive COVID-19 Cases

- The Iowa Department of Public Health has developed guidance for county health departments and schools regarding protocols when a student and/or student-athlete reports COVID-19 symptoms, a positive COVID-19 test result or contact with a person with a positive COVID-19 test result.



Possible/Positive COVID-19 Cases

- Each school should identify a point of contact for athletes, coaches, and other personnel to report to when he/she experiences COVID-19 symptoms, a positive COVID-19 test result or contact with a person with a positive COVID-19 test result. This identified person will be responsible to report such situations to local public health.
- Each school should develop a communication plan to notify relevant persons (players, coaches, spectators) when contact-tracing indicates the need to.



Health Screening

- Schools should implement health screening for practices and matches similar to methods used during summer, fall, and winter seasons.
- Self-screening and reporting to the school representative (AD/Coach/Trainer, etc.) is permissible



General Considerations

- Social distancing of at least 6 feet should be maintained as much as possible. No hugging, shaking hands, high fives, or fist bumps for support/encouragement.
- Attendees for pre-match conference must maintain a social distance of 3 to 6 feet. Face coverings are strongly encouraged to be worn by all pre-match conference attendees.
- It is recommended that all coaches and participants wear masks except during competition.



Hand Sanitizing

- Student-athletes should be encouraged to frequently sanitize their hands before, during and after practice and competition. Non-touch hand sanitizers may be used.
- Student-athletes should have their own personal hand sanitizer. Individuals should especially sanitize before touching “common” equipment or other items.



Equipment Sanitizing

- Any equipment that is shared by student-athletes should be sanitized before and after practice as well as before and after competition.
- Individuals should never share towels. Each individual should bring or be issued his/her own clean towel at the beginning of practice or competition. Towels should be laundered after each practice and game.



Pregame Conference

- Head referee or center referee
- Head coach from each team
- Single captain from each team
- Location should be in the middle of the field
- Encourage all participants to wear masks
- No handshakes after the meeting



Team Bench Area

- It is permissible to extend the team box area an additional 15 yards towards the goalbox area to enhance social distancing in this area, however, the area should not be moved any closer to the touchline. The front of the team box area is to be 10 feet from touch line.
- It is permissible to place teams on opposite sides of the field to enhance social distancing. It would be permissible to extend the team box area as well.



Equipment and Accessories

- Cloth face coverings and neck gaiters/buffs are permissible for athletes to wear during play
- Gloves are permissible to be worn.
- Sanitize cones after each use.
- Recommend assigning bibs or pennies to a specific player to avoid the equipment being worn by multiple players.
- Sanitize soccer balls before and after each game.
- Have multiple game balls available, so if touched by spectators or other non-essential personnel, a new game ball can be used and the old ball sanitized.



Locker Rooms

- Locker rooms may be used and should be sanitized every day and after use by each and every group. Schools should coordinate with their maintenance departments regarding sanitizing.
- All school-issued and personal clothing, equipment and other items should be taken home following practices and/or contests. Locker rooms should not be used as a storage area for clothing and/or equipment.
- Players, coaches and others using locker rooms should maintain 6 feet of social distancing. This may require a rotating schedule for use of locker rooms to avoid congestion. A record of individuals in each rotation should be kept to facilitate contact-tracing if necessary.
- Players, coaches and others using locker rooms are strongly encouraged to wear masks while in the locker room.



Training Rooms

- Masks are recommended for all individuals utilizing the training room.
- Host site athletic training room should not be available for visiting team pregame and postgame treatments.
- If a team travels without an athletic trainer, all pre-meet taping, bracing, etc., should be completed before departure to the meet. Host site athletic trainer should be contacted prior to the trip to plan for any requested accommodations.
- All taping/exam tables should be disinfected before and after each use.
- All taping/exam tables should be distanced at least 6 feet apart.
- Cold and hot tubs should only be used by one individual at a time.
- Cold and hot tubs should be drained, cleaned and disinfected between individual use and at the beginning and end of every day.



Press Box

- These areas should be limited to:
- Essential personnel – scoreboard operator, scorer, announcer
- Media (as per guidelines below)
- Individuals in the press box should practice 6 feet social distancing and are recommended to wear masks.



Considerations for Coaches

- Communicate your guidelines in a clear manner to students and parents.
- Consider conducting workouts in “pods” of same students always training and rotating together in practice to 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.

Considerations for Students

- Consider making each student responsible for their own supplies.
- Students should wear their own appropriate workout clothing (do not share clothing), and individual clothing/towels should be washed and cleaned after every workout immediately upon returning home.
- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Athletes should tell coaches immediately when they are not feeling well.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted and encouraged to be worn when not participating in competition.
- Athletes should bring their own labeled water bottle.

Considerations for Coaches

- Hand sanitizer should be plentiful at all contests and practices.
- Cloth face coverings are permitted and encouraged to be worn during practices and competitions.

Considerations for Officials

- Bring personal hand sanitizer. Wash hands frequently.
- Don't share equipment.
- Follow social distancing guidelines during the meet.
- Consider using electronic whistle.
- Do not shake hands and follow pre- and post-game ceremony guidelines established by state associations.
- Officials are recommended to wear cloth face coverings at all times during the pre-game activities.
- Officials are not required to wear masks during the match.

Spectators

- Schools should implement spectator protocols by following CDC and local department of health guidelines regarding size of gatherings and social distancing.
- Spectators should use 6 feet social distancing. Families may sit/stand together but should social distance from others. Frequent reminders should be made via public address.
- Masks are recommended for all spectators.



Considerations for Administration

- Facility Sanitization – Consideration should be given to which facilities are going to need sanitization, how often will sanitization be needed, who will be doing the sanitizing
- Post-season – Potential options may be considered regarding the state qualifying matches and the state tournament depending upon the status of Covid-19. Further communication will occur as the season progresses.
- Concession stands may be opened provided they have been inspected and licensed.
- Limit the outside food brought in by teams/spectators.
- Admission may be taken using sanitization practices or a free-will donation container is an option as well.
- The DOE Transportation guidelines should be followed when travelling as a team.
- Administration should consider the number of teams participating in the contest and the levels participating in the contest.

Media

- Schools should communicate with media regarding protocols for practices and games. It is recommended that:
 - Space be provided for media game coverage that takes into consideration:
 - 6 feet of social distancing and masks required.
 - Procedure be established regarding interview requests prior to/after practices and meets, including
 - Identifying an area where interviews will be conducted.
 - Establishing a required advanced notice timeframe.



Participation Levels

- This guidance is intended for high school varsity, sub-varsity and junior high school activities as overseen by the IGHSAU/IHSAA.

