

IESA Update

Last evening, Nicole and I participated in a Zoom meeting with Craig Anderson and Kurt Gibson from the IHSA, Dr. Ezike, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, and Jesse Ruiz, Deputy Governor. I want to share with you that discussion and keep you informed of any plans for the resumption of school sports.

First and foremost, as of January 7, 2021, the Illinois Department of Public Health has made no changes to the current COVID-19 mitigations tier status. Illinois remains in Tier 3 status until at least January 15. As a result, IESA sports remain on pause. We were not given a date when interscholastic games would be allowed to start. We were told that if any region of the state meets the guidelines to move to Tier 2 mitigations, they may do so starting January 15. Please keep in mind that Tier 2 mitigations do not allow contests to be played. Volleyball teams would be allowed to practice as a medium risk sport, but games would not be allowed. If basketball is not moved from high risk to at least medium risk, basketball teams will still not be allowed to practice regardless of the Tier status. If a given region does not move to Tier 2 and remains in Tier 3, then the sports for the schools in those regions would remain paused.

For a given region to move back to Tier 2 mitigations, a region must experience less than 12 percent test positivity rate for three consecutive days AND greater than 20 percent available intensive care unit (ICU) and hospital bed availability, AND declining COVID hospitalizations in 7 out of the last 10 days. We encourage you to inform your community members as to what it will take to move to Tier 2 and how important it is to follow all COVID safety protocols so we can have a chance to resume our sport seasons. If the positivity rate continues to drop and would get below 6.5% we could then be looking at a return to Phase 4 which could mean contests would be allowed.

Again, the meeting did not produce any real new information. We are still paused, certainly through January 15. Please monitor the metrics in your region for your mitigation status.