



The CIAC Board of Control met on September 29, 2020 to review the latest sport guidance issued by the State Department of Health and took action to establish an alternative season in the second semester for sports that do not complete at least 40% of games during their regularly scheduled season. The start and end dates of the winter and spring seasons will be adjusted to accommodate the alternative season with minimal impact to winter and spring sports. The following dates were suggested with the understanding that all plans remain fluid and subject to the latest COVID metrics and information.

CIAC Potential Alternative 2020-2021 Winter Season

Conditioning – November 23 – December 5
First date of winter contests – December 7
Last date to count toward CIAC State Tournament – February 5
CIAC State Tournament – February 8 – February 21

CIAC 2021 Second Semester Alternative Season

Conditioning—February 22 –February 26
First day of Full Pads (Football only)—February 27
Scrimmage Dates—March 6 and March 12 or 13
First date of special season contests – March 19
Last date of special season contests – April 17

CIAC 2021 Spring Sports Season

Conditioning – April 11 – April 22 (for student-athletes not playing a sport in the special season)
First date of spring contests – April 23
Last date to count toward CIAC State Tournament – June 8
CIAC State Tournament – June 14 – June 27

Football

With the establishment of a second semester alternative season in which full contact 11v11 football can be played, any football activity outside of that season would be considered out-of-season. Given that the alternative season is still subject to supportive COVID metrics, the CIAC Board of Control waived the out-of-season rule for football coaches on a limited basis. Through November 21, football coaches will be permitted to have contact with their student-athletes to conduct low to moderate risk ***school-sponsored football activities***. This may include any low to moderate risk football activities as provided by the member school or member school league.

Position Statement on 11v11 Football:

The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the CIAC, and the CT DPH have all deemed football to be a “higher risk” activity for reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CT DPH has recommended that 11v11 full contact football not be played this fall and the CIAC, after attempting to lower football’s risk level through COVID mitigating strategies, has aligned with DPH’s

recommendation in deciding to not play 11v11 full contact football this fall. Therefore, the CIAC does not recommend 11v11 full contact football be played in any capacity by member schools this fall. Additionally, the CIAC cautions that school districts may assume a liability risk if a district merely loans equipment to student-athletes for play in an independent 11v11 full contact league. Liability is especially possible if the school district is loaning equipment that it knows will be used to perform activities that DPH has expressly advised against (e.g., equipment that is designed for use in connection with 11-on-11 football and/or football that includes tackling and line play).

The CIAC requested legal guidance from Shipman and Goodwin in development of its position on 11v11 football. That legal guidance can be accessed at the following link:

<http://www.casciac.org/pdfs/PotentialLiabilityofSchoolDistrictsRelatedtoFootballPrograms.PDF>

Application of Out-of-Season Rule for School Coaches Coaching Independent Football League Teams

Currently, football is out-of-season. Per the legal guidance of Shipman and Goodwin, the CIAC recommends that football coaches' access to their student athletes during the fall season be limited to school sponsored low to moderate activities. Given the latest sport guidance from the DPH, which extends to youth and independent league football, it is recommended that member schools adhere to CIAC's out-of-season coaching rules for non-school based football teams and activities.

Concern of Simultaneous Participation of Football Players in School-based and Non-School Based Activities

It is important to note that there has never been a scenario in the sport of football where a student-athletes could have the option of playing for an outside team during the fall season. In every CIAC sanctioned sport an athlete may not participate on a school team and outside team in the same sport during the same season. With the postponement of football until later in the 2020-2021 school year, the CIAC will offer two football opportunities. The first will be a fall season ending November 21st in which teams may participate in low to moderate risk school-based activities. A school team participating in higher risk activities does so against the recommendation of the CIAC and DPH. The CIAC is aware of independent football teams that are forming to offer a limited number of high school aged players a full contact fall league. The CIAC does not endorse play in such in leagues. In the interest of student-athlete safety, the CIAC recommends the following guidance to member schools for players who may participate on an independent football team this fall:

- A school should be aware of the potential for overuse injury if a student-athlete is participating in both school-based low to moderate risk football activities and non-school based high-risk independent leagues. The CIAC does not endorse simultaneous participation, however, the ultimate decision to allow dual participation is at the discretion of the school/district. To avoid the potential for overuse injuries a student-athlete should not exceed the training that is experienced during a "normal" fall football season.
 - It is recommended that football experiences not exceed a schedule of 5 practice days per week with a duration of 2 hours per practice, 1 game per week, and one recovery/conditioning day per week. If a student-athlete is participating in both school-based activities and independent experiences, the school should monitor the student's activities as a preventative measure against overuse injuries.

- Due to CIAC's postponement of high-risk full contact football this fall, student-athletes have not participated in the "normal" training progression of heat acclimatization while wearing helmets and pads, nor have they engaged in the "normal" progression of skill work leading up to game speed full contact play. Therefore, it is recommended that student-athletes and their parents be advised that the likelihood of overuse injuries from participation in high risk full contact football, or at least those to some extent caused by not having had a preseason, occurring this fall are high.