



A Review of the CIAC Fall 2020 Interscholastic Athletics Sport Season (January 8, 2021)

Playing youth sports during the COVID-19 pandemic has been and continues to be a challenging endeavor. In fall of 2021, the Connecticut State Department of Health released data on all sports. That report demonstrates that youth sports have had an impact on K to 12 in-person instruction. In its findings, DPH reported that 17 school closures, 235 teacher quarantines, 1,500 student quarantines, and 29 outbreaks were linked to sports.

The CIAC shares the goal of our state and school leaders to place a return to in-person instruction as a priority as we continue to navigate our way through this pandemic. As new challenges emerge in the fight against COVID-19, the CIAC remains committed to the health, safety, and well-being of all our member school students and communities. We understand the importance and value of education-based interscholastic athletics in addressing our students' physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and mental health.

As we continue to plan for meaningful education-based interscholastic athletic experiences for Connecticut student-athletes, it is important that we reflect on experiences from the fall 2020 season and identify strategies to limit the impact to in-person instruction as identified through DPH's report.

In the fall 2020 scholastic semester, the CIAC successfully sanctioned interscholastic play in boys and girls cross country, boys and girls soccer, girls field hockey, girls swimming, and girls volleyball, while also endorsing low to moderate activities in football. Since the completion of that season, many athletic directors, principals, coaches, and student-athletes have expressed appreciation for the positive experience in which they were able to engage.

Prior to resuming interscholastic athletic conditioning, practice, and competition, the CIAC published and provided its member schools with guidelines containing COVID mitigating strategies for each sport. To assess the effectiveness of implementation of these strategies, the CIAC surveyed its member schools to gather data on their COVID experiences and reviewed game and participant data. One hundred thirty-three (133) of CIAC's 186 member schools responded to the survey. Limitations to these findings include that 29% of CIAC member schools did not respond to the survey and that response came from member schools and not directly from local health departments. An assumption is made that schools not responding to the survey did not have any data to report. Game and participant data were retrieved from scheduling and roster information submitted to CIAC.

Based on the overall review and analysis of fall 2020 data, the CIAC has concluded that its COVID mitigating strategies were effective in engaging 28,842 CIAC member school student-athletes in education-based interscholastic athletics while minimizing the spread of COVID through its events. The CIAC recognizes its member school principals, athletic directors, coaches, officials, and athletic trainers for their commitment to the health, well-being, and engagement of Connecticut’s high school student-athletes.

A total of 8,296 games were played by CIAC member schools in the fall 2020 season. Conservatively, the CIAC assumes that each team participating in a contest held 2 practices that coincided with each game. As each game included 2 teams, a total of 4 practices is assumed to be held for each game played. As such, 8,296 games multiplied by 4 practices per game results in an estimated total of 33,184 CIAC member school games/practices held in the fall 2020 season.

As reported through the CIAC member schools survey, local DPH contact tracing identified 5 cases in which a total of 7 individual CIAC member school student-athletes contracted COVID-19 as a result of participation in a school sport event. Seven (7) individual positive cases out of 33,184 total events produces an estimated transmission rate of 0.021% in CIAC sanctioned events.

During the fall 2020 CIAC sports season, an average of 15.39% of scheduled games were changed from the originally scheduled date. The schedule changes could have been for many reasons including, but not limited to, weather, field conditions, COVID quarantine, etc. An average of 2.32% of scheduled games were canceled this past fall. Cancellations could have been for many reasons, including, but not limited to, COVID quarantine.

The percentage of fall 2020 CIAC member school sport teams which included a player that tested positive for COVID-19. In the overwhelming majority of cases, contact tracing identified the source of transmission as outside of the sport event.

Sport	Percent of CIAC Member School Teams with a Positive COVID-19 Case	NFHS/CIAC/CT DPH Risk Level Category
Boys Cross Country	4.09%	Low
Girls Cross Country	2.94%	Low
Field Hockey	6.33%	Moderate
Boys Soccer	13.56%	Moderate
Girls Soccer	10.43%	Moderate
Girls Swimming	2.35%	Low
Girls Volleyball	9.62%	Moderate
Football (Low/Moderate Risk)	14.69%	Modified to Low to Moderate

The percentage of fall 2020 CIAC member school teams where either individual teams or a portion or the full team was required to quarantine due to COVID-19 exposure.

Sport	Percent of Teams Required to Quarantine	NFHS/CIAC/CT DPH Risk Level Category
Boys Cross Country	11.11%	Low
Girls Cross Country	10.59%	Low
Field Hockey	18.99%	Moderate
Boys Soccer	22.03%	Moderate
Girls Soccer	22.09%	Moderate
Girls Swimming	8.24%	Low
Girls Volleyball	18.59%	Moderate
Football (Low/Moderate Risk)	21.68%	Modified to Low to Moderate