



CIAC COVID-19 Update

The CIAC is proud of our membership's principals, athletic directors, and assistant principals for your resilience in meeting the challenges of distance learning while keeping our students encouraged. While we adjust to social distancing, many are feeling a sense of urgency to establish a new normal for your student-athletes. As expected, this experience has raised a few questions from our school leaders. The purpose of this update is to address some of those questions and provide an opportunity for ADs, principals, and superintendents to speak directly with CIAC leadership.

Planned Meetings

Formally, the CIAC Board of Control's next meeting is scheduled for April 2nd. Following that Board meeting, we will discuss holding another larger group meeting when we know more about the April 20th return to school possibility. The CIAC executive director continues to participate in weekly calls with the Commissioner of Education and the Governor's staff.

Informally, the CIAC staff would like to offer an open meeting/discussion opportunity for athletic directors. Principals and superintendents are welcome to join as well, however, the intent of this meeting is for CIAC to provide support to our member school ADs. *Beginning tomorrow, Friday, March 27th, at 9:00AM, CIAC will host a weekly Zoom open forum for ADs. An invitation to this Zoom meeting was in the body of the email to which this update was attached.*

Additionally, CIAC staff is very willing to attend any virtual league meetings that you are planning to answer questions and listen to your ideas.

Virtual Coaching

We have received several inquiries from our member schools about coaches sending out virtual workouts to their student-athletes or holding virtual meetings with their teams. Although the CIAC has suspended the start of the spring season, we appreciate the social-emotional comfort that athletes may feel by having voluntary virtual contact with their coach while processing this global pandemic. As such, the CIAC will not prohibit virtual contact between coaches and athletes. The following points of emphasis should be adhered to for coaches engaging in virtual contact:

- This is voluntary. As the CIAC has suspended the start of the spring season, all virtual contact should be considered out-of-season. In no way should virtual contact with kids be mandatory, nor should a coach assume it is part of their duty/responsibility as coach to

provide. It is voluntary for the coach as well as the student-athlete and should not be considered part of any coaches paid responsibility. Coaches should seek permission from their ADs prior to engaging virtual contact.

- Social distancing standards must be maintained. Coaches and student-athletes should not interpret this as an invitation to get together in groups. Remember, our fastest road back to regular season and tournament play is to engage in social distancing, get back into school, and then on the field of play.
- Virtual contact should focus on conditioning and keeping student-athletes active while practicing social distancing. Keep in mind that the spring season is suspended, and you have not yet conducted tryouts for your team. Understanding the uniqueness of this situation, the CIAC will allow coaches to provide students workouts that are skill specific, at this time. For example, a softball or baseball coach may provide a throwing workout to build a player's arm-strength.
- Consider equity, within your own team as well as across Connecticut. We are all experiencing the same pandemic, however the resources available to cope with social distancing can vary greatly within your own community and certainly around the state. Your efforts as a CIAC member school should be on providing encouragement and healthy activity choices for kids with the knowledge and understanding that each student-athletes circumstance may be different. Consider providing hard copies of workouts for kids that may not have internet access. Share programs with fellow coaches in your league and around the state. Keep the experience fair for all kids. If you are providing coaching tips with one student-athlete but not all, your efforts are likely to have the adverse impact that you are intending to provide.

We greatly appreciate the effort made by our members schools to discourage our student-athletes from getting together for workouts. We are asking you to continue being vigilant about monitoring your facilities.

We at CIAC understand that the future holds many unanswered questions about transfer rules, eligibility rules, etc., but we will work together to answer your questions.

Together, we will persevere. Stay safe. Stay home. When the time is right, Connecticut will play again!

Sincerely,

CIAC Staff