



## CIAC COVID-19 Update (April 23)

The CIAC appreciates and respects the efforts made by Governor Lamont and Commissioner Cardona to keep our school communities safe. All potential spring sport opportunities are contingent upon the governor's office and the state department of education declaring that it is safe to return to school campuses and for athletic competition to resume. If it is determined that school buildings will remain closed, and distance learning will continue through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, then the CIAC will cancel all spring sport experiences.

After much consideration, the CIAC has decided that any potential spring sports experiences will be limited to the month of June. Carrying spring sport experiences from the current school year into July presents significant challenges for school districts and student-athletes.

The CIAC has also decided that we will not run any spring state championship events. It is our position that any spring sports experience should maximize opportunities for student-athletes within individual schools and leagues.

In considering these decisions, the CIAC surveyed superintendents, principals, and athletic directors. In addition, we consulted with the Connecticut State Medical Society, Sports Medicine Committee. We also collaborated with Commissioner Cardona, sought input from the Department of Public Health, and received numerous communications from student-athletes and parents. As we prepare for our May 7<sup>th</sup> CIAC Board of Control meeting, we will continue collaboration with all stakeholder groups. We anticipate further guidance from the Commissioner Cardona and Governor Lamont on the status of school closures, as well as criteria for safely returning to community events and activities.

In addition to spring sport experience, the following topics were also discussed:

- Sports Physicals – In consultation with the Connecticut State Medical Society, Sports Medicine Committee, the standard of physicals being valid for a 13-month period will remain.
- Mandatory Practice Days – In consultation with the Connecticut State Medical Society, Sports Medicine Committee, 10 days of practice/conditioning prior to competition will remain. However, 5 days may be conducted at home, by individual student-athletes. The remaining 5 days must be with a coach.

- Academic Eligibility for Students with Incomplete – Discussion on this topic will continue at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Out-of-Season Coaching and Rostered Students - Discussion on this topic will continue at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Transfer Rule Eligibility for Fall Sports - Discussion on this topic will continue at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting.
- Criteria for Reopening Interscholastic Athletic Competition - Discussion on this topic will continue at the May 7<sup>th</sup> meeting, pending guidance from the governor's office, state department of education, and the department of public health.



## CIAC COVID-19 Update of April 2

On April 2, 2020, the CIAC Board of Control held its regularly scheduled meeting. The Board's discussion focused on the current state of our member schools and spring sports.

The CIAC Board of Control continues to emphasize the importance of social distancing. We recognize how difficult the abrupt move to online instruction and life without extracurricular activities has been for our students, teachers, parents, administrators, and coaches. By engaging in the social distancing guidelines and mandates provided through the Governor and the State Department of Education, we can collectively flatten the curve and get back to our schools sooner.

We appreciate that our student-athletes miss their teammates and coaches. It is in the arena of athletics and physical fitness that our communities face the greatest challenge in enforcing social distancing. Social distancing standards must be maintained. Coaches and student-athletes must join the voices of school leaders in promoting the enforcement of social distancing. 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.

### Spring Sports

At its April 2, 2020 meeting, the CIAC Board of Control maintained its position that spring sports are indefinitely suspended. The CIAC has intentionally not issued the constraint of deadline date to make any decision. Given the number of unknowns, we feel it is our responsibility to become as informed as possible before making any decision. Through our discussion with students, they have expressed their desire for CIAC and education decision-makers to hold off as long as possible before cancelling all spring sport experiences or graduation. CIAC leadership has learned from our students, especially our seniors, the need for closure that traditions such as senior night and graduation provide. It is with that understanding that the CIAC will explore every possibility for providing student-athletes a spring sports experience, if it is safe.

During this unprecedented time, the best interest of our kids remains at the center of our decision-making, which is informed by collaboration with the State Department of Education, governmental leaders, athletic leagues, member principals, superintendents, athletic directors, coaches, and students. We will make every effort to provide student-athletes experiences that bring closure to their high school sports careers, if it is safe. This will include consideration of activities beyond graduation and into July. All CIAC rules and regulations will be considered for a one-time exception, given the extreme impact of this pandemic, so we can do the best we can for our kids, if it is safe.

We at CIAC understand that the future holds many unanswered questions. Please take comfort in knowing that we are here to support you and will continue to lead in a positive and responsible manner. The next regularly scheduled CIAC Board of Control meeting is set for May 7, 2020. At that meeting, we expect to have more information regarding school closures and will provide an additional update, with more specific details, about spring sports.

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

Sincerely,

CIAC Staff



## CIAC COVID-19 Update of March 26

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 2<sup>nd</sup>. Following that Board meeting, we will discuss holding another larger group meeting when we know more about the April 20<sup>th</sup> 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 27<sup>th</sup>, 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