

## **IESA Member School Publicity Policy**

Each member school acknowledges that athletic contests and interscholastic competition take place in the public. As such, there is no expectation of privacy in the images of student athletes, coaches or other participants at such events. The IESA and/or its agents or designees may take, distribute and use photographs of student athletes, coaches, officials and other participants at such events and use the same for publicity, marketing and other appropriate purposes, including event programs. The member school will take appropriate actions to notify its student athletes, coaches and participants of this provision.

## **IESA E-mail Policy**

E-mail can be an efficient method to exchange information, request services, ask questions or transfer data 24 hours a day. That is the upside. The downside is an overwhelming demand to get immediate responses to questions e-mailed at all hours of the day and night.

Please note that due to the volume of e-mail messages received on a daily basis, our first priority is to respond to our member schools and contest officials. E-mails from member schools and contest officials will be answered as quickly and as efficiently as possible. E-mails from all other parties will be answered as time permits.

General public e-mail messages regarding the performance of contest officials will not receive a response.

E-mails from the general public requesting eligibility rulings or rule interpretations should be directed to the principal or athletic director of your local school before contacting the IESA. PLEASE NOTE: The IESA member school is our constituent -- we may share your correspondence with the school administration. E-mails must include the full name, mailing address and telephone number of the sender within the message.

For inquiries of a general nature, sport, or program/service, please use our general e-mail address: [general@iesa.org](mailto:general@iesa.org)

# IESA Severe Weather Safety Guidelines

When thunder is heard, or a cloud-to-ground lightning bolt is seen, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike your location with lightning. Take shelter immediately.

Lightning is one of the most consistent and underrated causes of weather-related deaths or injury in the United States. Nearly all lightning-related injuries occur between the months of May and September and between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Therefore, the greatest concern for injuries in an outdoor contest appears to be during that time, though it can happen any time of year.

It is essential that host schools, competing schools, and contest officials establish dialogue in advance of the contest or event to ensure that all involved are aware of what the plan will be in determining whether or when to suspend play. Host schools are encouraged to share their plan with competing schools and officials prior to the start of the tournament.

## Advance Planning

Local Managers should have a documented plan in place, designated people who are responsible for monitoring the weather and a qualified person (typically a trained manager and/or officials) to make the decision to suspend play. In state series competitions, the host school administrator or official(s), if assigned, can make the decision to suspend play.

## Monitoring Weather

Local Managers during the contest should be aware of any potential thunderstorms that may form during the competition; if an evacuation is needed, managers should also know how long it would take teams to get to their safest location. Monitoring the weather with a weather alert radio, or with lightning detection systems, or any other available means, is recommended.

If competing schools have portable devices they will be bringing to a contest and have specific policy or directions from their administration that they must follow, the school must communicate those policies with the host school. Host schools must know the policies of each school assigned to their tournament prior to its start.

## Lightning Awareness

Generally speaking, it is felt that anytime a cloud-to-ground strike of lightning can be seen, or thunder heard, risk is already present. It is time to seek shelter.

## Criteria for Suspending Play

If the local management does not have commercial weather warning equipment at the site or an efficient method of making an accurate, timely decision on location, listening for thunder is the best way to mitigate the danger. If thunder is heard, or lightning is seen hitting the ground, the thunderstorm is close enough to strike in your location. According to the National Weather Service, lightning can strike 10 miles away from the parent thunderstorm. When thunder roars, go indoors! It is important that the local manager(s) monitor not only how far away the lightning is but also how fast it is approaching. Thunderstorms can form and move quickly and danger can arrive quickly.

Either host school administration or assigned contest officials have the authority to suspend or cancel interscholastic contests. It is recommended that those groups work together in making such determination and use any and all available information in doing so. Participating schools with concerns at particular events should direct those to the host school management or assigned contest official.

The following guidelines should be followed in determining when to suspend an event:

1. Anytime a cloud-to-ground strike of lightning can be seen, or thunder heard, risk is present, and a contest should be suspended. At that point, the 30 minute rule for resumption should go into effect.

**NOTE:** Due to the layout of some outdoor facilities, contest officials or tournament managers may not be able to see lightning actually "strike the ground." However, whenever lightning is seen moving out of clouds towards the ground, it can be assumed that the lightning is striking the ground somewhere, and as a result, the contest should be suspended.

2. If lightning or thunder is not present but the weather is starting to become ominous, tournament management and/or contest officials should use all available information to determine if and when a contest should be suspended. Care for both participants and spectators should be taken into account at this point. If in doubt, contest officials or tournament managers are encouraged to exercise caution and suspend play. Tournament officials should be ready to implement their emergency plans. However, competing schools who pull their teams or athletes off the field of competition prior to a contest or event suspension do so at the risk of forfeiture or disqualification from the game or event.
3. Suspended contest or events should be resumed at a time when the weather and/or field conditions allow for resumption.

## **Evacuation Plan**

**Safe Areas:** All personnel, athletes and spectators should be clearly informed of available safe structures or shelters in the event a thunderstorm approaches. A safe structure is any fully enclosed building frequently used by people. In absence of that - athletes and spectators should go to any vehicle with a hard metal roof. Roll up the windows and do not touch the sides of the vehicle. If no safe structure or vehicle is available, find a thick grove of small trees surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch. Assume a crouched position on the ground with only the balls of your feet touching the ground. Wrap your arms around your knees and lower your head. Minimize contact to the ground since lightning often travels through the ground.

**Avoid:** Tall trees or objects like light poles or flagpoles, individual trees, standing pools of water and open fields. Also avoid being the highest object on the field. Do not take shelter under trees. Avoid bathrooms if another building is available, and do not use a land-line telephone. A cellular phone or portable phone is a safe alternative if in a secure shelter or vehicle.

## **Resuming Activity**

The NSSL (National Severe Storms Laboratory) recommends that everyone should wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning or sound of thunder before returning to the field or activity.

# Policy and School Recommendations for Transgender Participation

The Illinois Elementary School Association approves this policy and process to address the participation of transgender students in all IESA state series in athletics and activities. The IESA allows participation by students consistent with their gender identity subject to applicable federal and state laws.

For the purpose of this policy, the following definitions will be in place:

- **Transgender:** a person whose gender identity is different than the sex assigned to them at birth.
- **Gender Identity:** a person's internal sense of being of a certain gender. Note – Although an individual may sense that they are gender fluid, non-binary, gender nonconforming, pangender, gender neutral, etc., or maybe intersex (i.e., born with reproductive or sexual anatomy and /or chromosome pattern that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male), for purposes of this policy pertaining to participation in gender-specific athletics or activities, the individual's gender identity must be either male or female.
- **Gender Expression:** The external expression of a person's gender identity, typically reflected through behavior, clothing, body characteristics, voice, mannerisms, social interactions, speech, and other characteristics and behaviors, which may or may not conform to behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either male or female.

## Procedure

Students wishing to participate in gender-specific state series athletic events or activities with a gender identity different from the sex assigned to them at birth shall receive an eligibility ruling from the IESA prior to participating in a state series event aligned with their gender identity.

Schools shall notify all students who wish to participate in state series athletic events or activities that any student who wishes to participate in gender-specific state series athletic events or activities under a gender identity different from the sex assigned to the student at birth shall be required to obtain an eligibility ruling from the IESA prior to participation.

1. Students requiring a ruling shall be advised to contact the school's official representative to the IESA (or their designee) on a confidential basis to facilitate the ruling, notifying them that their gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth and that the student wishes to participate in state series athletic events or activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity.
2. Following the receipt of the request for an eligibility ruling, the school shall submit a written request to the IESA for an eligibility ruling, indicating that the student would like the opportunity to participate in state series athletics or activities if they are selected through the team try-out process (if any) and accompanied by such of the following information as the student, their parent(s) and/or the school deem appropriate:
  - a. Current transcript and school registration records, including gender identity used for school registration records (if any).
  - b. Documentation of consistent gender identity, including but not limited to statements of parent(s), school personnel, clergy, or other individuals familiar with the student's gender identity, and other evidence of gender expression.
  - c. Medical documentation relating to the student's gender identity (i.e. hormone supplementation or suppression treatments, sexual re-assignment surgery, other medical treatment, counseling, statements of medical or mental health personnel, etc.).
  - d. Student statement affirming their gender identity.
  - e. Records of past participation in athletics or activities.
  - f. Such other information as the student, their parents, or the school (if involved) deem relevant.
3. IESA will make final rulings on student participation. The Executive Director shall make the eligibility ruling, subject to appeal to the IESA Board of Directors as set forth in Section 1.440. The IESA will establish a panel of medical personnel to act in an advisory role, as necessary, when making eligibility rulings. In ruling on the eligibility of a student to participate in athletics or activities consistent with a gender identity which differs from the sex assigned to them at birth, the IESA shall consider:
  - Whether the claimed gender identity is bona fide and/or for the purpose of gaining competitive advantage; and
  - Whether allowing eligibility would be inconsistent with concepts of fairness in competition or present a risk of injury to the participants.

In considering the ruling, the IESA may request additional information from the student, their parent(s), or the school. While the determination of what information to submit shall be left to the student, their parent(s), and the school, the IESA shall not be required to presume that any information not provided would weigh in favor of the student's eligibility consistent with their gender identity. The student, parent(s), and school are therefore encouraged to provide complete information when requesting a ruling.

The IESA shall make its ruling based on the individual circumstances presented, not on preconceived notions or assumptions. The IESA will seek to minimize harm to students whose opportunity to participate on a team consistent with their gender identity would be limited or denied.

The IESA will notify the member school in writing of its decision on the eligibility ruling. Once the student is ruled eligible under this Policy, participation consistent with the student's gender identity shall be allowed through the duration of the student's junior high school career and does not need to be annually renewed unless the student, parent(s), or school report that there has been a change in the medical circumstances or documentation submitted (if any) or a further change in the student's gender identity. At that time, the school shall contact the IESA in writing, advise the IESA of the changes, and request an updated ruling.

A student to whom eligibility is allowed under this Policy shall only be permitted to participate in athletics or activities consistent with their gender identity unless a subsequent ruling has been obtained. A student who is denied eligibility to participate in an athletic event or activity consistent with their gender identity shall be permitted to participate in athletic events or activities consistent with the sex assigned to them at birth.

Privacy and Confidentiality: All discussions and documents at all levels of the process, either by a member school, appeals panel, and/or IESA, shall be kept strictly confidential unless specifically requested by the student and/or their parent(s). Only those individuals at the school and IESA with a "need to know" shall be privy to the request for ruling, the information provided in support thereof, and the ruling.

### **Areas of Awareness:**

- Have a plan in place
- Use correct names/pronouns according to student's self-identification
- Allow gender-appropriate restroom and locker room accessibility
  - Provide educational training for teachers, counselors, coaches, administrators, and students on transgender sensitivity in relation to student
- Permit and be sensitive to students' gender expression according to their gender identity
- Provide access to resources and accurate information

# Emerging Activities Policy

The IESA Board of Directors may consider recommendations to add a new state series/championship when a recommendation is brought forward by the Emerging Activities advisory committee.

The IESA will utilize the information provided by member school as detailed in Steps 1 and 2 below to monitor the development of new and emerging activities in member schools and to assist in determining when a new state series/championship should be considered.

1. Interest Step: Schools interested in an emerging activity shall indicate their interest with the Association in the IESA Member Center. Indicating the school's interest means the school does not currently offer interscholastic competition in a given activity(ies) but is interested in having this as an option for students in the future.
2. Registration Step: Schools currently participating in an emerging activity shall register their participation with the IESA Office. Registering the school's participation means that even though the IESA does not offer a state series/championship at this point, the member school conducts interscholastic competition throughout the school year in a given activity(ies).
3. The IESA's Emerging Activities administrator will gather the following additional information:
  - a. The number of schools in a geographical area to complete a schedule
  - b. Feasibility and scheduling of state series and its impact on existing IESA programs
  - c. Pre-existing community-based programs
  - d. Availability of certified officials
  - e. Growth potential of the activity
  - f. Consider gender equity criteria
  - g. Financial and staffing impact to the Association
4. Once the information in Step 3 has been gathered, the Emerging Activities advisory committee will make a recommendation to the Board on next steps to take.

## Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (Drone) Policy

The use of unmanned aerial vehicles ("UAV") also known as drones, is prohibited for any purpose by any persons at IESA tournament venues. Tournament management shall refuse admission or entry to anyone attempting to use a UAV; and if necessary, tournament management shall remove anyone attempting to use a UAV and/or confiscate the UAV until the event has been completed.

For purposes of this policy, a UAV is any aircraft without a human pilot aboard the device.

An exception to this policy may be made in specific cases for IESA broadcast partners, provided the management of the tournament facility permits the presence of UAV's for broadcast purposes under the control of the IESA.

## Varsity/Non-Varsity Definitions and Policy

### Both Varsity and Non-varsity

- **Designation of contest:** The level of competition for a contest is regularly specified on the contract which schools enter into for a given contest. Unless otherwise mutually agreed upon by the principals/official representatives of all competing schools prior to the contest, the level of competition specified on the contract designates the level of the competition.
- **Season limitations:** Season limitations apply to varsity and non-varsity teams. The school season ends for varsity athletes and non-varsity athletes on the date of the school's last contest at their level in the particular sport.
- **Team limitations:** Team limitations apply to varsity and non-varsity teams.
- **Individual player limitations:** Individual player limitations apply to both varsity and non-varsity teams (per day limitations).
- **Eligibility Requirements:** Eligibility standards and requirements apply to both varsity and non-varsity athletes.

### Varsity Only

- **Officials:** A varsity contest may be played only if licensed officials can be obtained.
- **Schedule:** Only varsity contests count toward a teams required minimum and maximum number of contests.
- Varsity team is identified by the school at the start of the season. That team fulfills a schedule of contests arranged for the varsity team. This team is considered to be the team which comprises the most skilled competitors in the sport and is the team which is the school's representative at its highest level of competition, including the state series.

### Non-Varsity Only

- **Officials:** A below varsity level contest may be officiated by members of the coaching staff, faculty and/or administrative staff from any of the competing schools if the contracted official does not show or the school could not obtain a licensed official for the contest.
- **Format:** By agreement of the participating schools, the format of the contest may be altered.

# Policy for Accommodation Request

## Purpose

It is the policy of the IESA to provide students with disabilities full and equal opportunities to be integrated in IESA interscholastic sports and activities whenever possible. IESA recognizes and adopts the definition of disability as provided within the Americans with Disabilities Act. The IESA will not discriminate against students with disabilities based on disability in its services, programs, or activities.

## Procedure for Requesting an Accommodation

Students who need accommodations are encouraged to work with their member schools to complete and submit the Request for Accommodation Form. A disability is an impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity. Disability includes, but is not limited to, physical impairments, mental impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual impairments, learning disabilities. A request for an accommodation should be submitted prior to the start of the applicable athletic or activity season, or as soon as is practically possible in light of the accommodation being sought.

The IESA recognizes that it cannot anticipate all potential accommodations necessary and that providing accommodations to students with disabilities will require an individualized review and assessment. Accordingly, a request for an accommodation shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. The IESA will engage in an interactive process to the extent necessary for each request for accommodation. The IESA may work with the student, his/her parent or guardian, coaches or other staff from the student's member school, or outside consultants, if necessary, in the interactive process. A request should be in writing, but a request can be made in an alternative format such as an audio recording or video. All requests for accommodations shall be sent to the Executive Director of the IESA.

## Process for Submitting a Request

The process for submitting a request for an accommodation (available in the IESA Member Center) is as follows:

- The student, his/her parent/guardian are responsible for completion of Part 1 of the Request for Accommodation.
- The Request for Accommodation should be submitted prior to the start of the applicable athletic or activity season, or as soon as is practically possible, in light of the accommodation being sought.
- The student and his/her parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining the school principal's or athletic director's completion of Part 2.
- The request can be submitted by email to the IESA, fax or mail. The request is deemed submitted on the date emailed or faxed, or, if mailed, three days after the postmark.

Once the IESA receives a request for an accommodation, the following activity will occur:

- After receiving the request, the Executive Director will conduct a review, which can be informal, but will be interactive to the extent necessary. The student, his/her parent/guardian, and personnel from the student's school shall be given the opportunity to submit additional evidence or engage in discussions with the Executive Director, as they may deem necessary. The IESA reserves the right to request more information, including medical records, to better understand the request being sought. Furthermore, the IESA will consult with outside consultants as necessary. The interactive process can be done by telephone, videoconference, or in-person.
- The Executive Director will complete Part 3 of the Request for Accommodation and will provide a letter explaining the accommodation within 10 days after the request for accommodation is submitted to the IESA. If a request for accommodation is denied by the Executive Director, the student, parent/guardian and/or member school may pursue an appeal pursuant by submitting a written request for a hearing to the Board of Directors.

# Developing a Rationale for Grouping and Seeding State Tournament Series

The cornerstone of IESA state tournaments has long been geographic assignments to the state series leading to geographic representation at State Final tournaments. The geographical concept was developed to ensure that interscholastic participation was compatible with a school's educational objectives. The geographic concept helped maintain a "reasonableness" to competition and safeguarded key resources such as time and money, while, at the same time, providing for a structure that was equitable to all member schools.

It is important to note that the interscholastic programs of a school are designed to enrich the educational process. The establishment of sound standards and procedures for the regulation and control of interscholastic programs not only provides for fairness and equity, but they also keep the programs in an educational context. The geographic principle is essential to regulating the character of interscholastic competition.

## The Geographic Principle of IESA State Tournament Series

1. The State Series is designed to determine a State Champion. The State Series is not intended to necessarily advance the best teams in the state to the State Final.
2. Representation in an IESA State Final Tournament is determined on a geographic basis — that is, schools advancing to the State Final Finals qualify from given geographical areas of the state. In bracketed activities, pairings for the State Final Tournament are determined a year in advance in a random drawing that is conducted by the activity Advisory Committee.
3. Schools are assigned to first level tournaments/meets on a geographical basis so that there is a reasonable balance in the number of schools assigned at each first level site.
  - A. Factors considered in assigning schools to first level tournaments include:
    1. Number of schools entered in state series and their locations; and,
    2. Classification of schools in the state series.
    3. The number of schools assigned to the beginning competition is balanced as much as possible. Travel distance to the tournament/meet site could justify an imbalance in the number of schools assigned to a site.
  - B. Factors considered in assigning schools to first level tournaments do not include:
    1. Won-lost records of the schools;
    2. Strengths or weaknesses of the schools in a geographic area;
    3. Anticipated or potential revenue; and
    4. Individual, private requests of schools and/or coaches.