

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. Emails from member schools and contest officials will be answered as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Emails from all other parties will be answered as time permits.

General public email 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. Emails 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 email address: 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 local manager 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 transgendered students in all IESA state final series in athletics and activities.

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

- Transgendered: a person whose gender identity doesn't match the sex assigned to him or her at birth.
- Intersex: a person who is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy and /or chromosome pattern that doesn't seem to fit the typical definitions of female or male.
- Gender Identity: a person's deeply-felt internal sense of being male or female.
- Gender Expression: a person's external characteristics and behaviors that are socially defined as either masculine or feminine (dress, speech, mannerisms, social interactions, etc.)

Privacy Statement: All discussions and documents at all levels of the process either by a member school, appeals panel, and/or IESA shall be kept confidential unless specifically requested by the student and family.

School Procedure:

1) The student and/or parents shall contact the school administrator or athletic director at their member school notifying them that the student has a different gender identity than listed on the student's school registration card or birth certificate and that the student wishes to participate in athletics/activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity. The school shall collect the following for the participation ruling:

- a. Gender identity used for school registration records
- b. Medical documentation (hormonal treatments, sexual re-assignment surgery, counseling, medical personnel, etc.)
- c. Gender Identity related advantages for approved participation

2) Once the school administrator has collected the relevant information, the member school shall contact the IESA office in writing of the request for the ruling, the student's gender identity, and the selected athletics/activities that the student would like the opportunity to participate in if they are selected through the team try-out process.

- a. Once the student is approved, participation is granted through the duration of their junior high/middle school career, it does not need to be annually renewed.

IESA Procedure:

IESA will make final rulings on student participation. The IESA may establish a group of medical personnel to act in an advisory role when reviewing rulings. Appealing parties should provide the following documentation:

- 1) A current transcript and school registration information
- 2) Documentation of the student's consistent gender identification (e.g. affirmation statements from student, parent/guardian, and/or health care provider.
- 3) Any other pertinent documentation or information

The IESA will respond to the member school in writing the decision of the participation ruling. If the request is not approved, Section 5.050 of the IESA Handbook shall govern all appeals.

Areas of Awareness:

- Have a plan in place
- Use correct names/pronouns – according to student's self-identification
- Gender appropriate restroom accessibility
- Locker room accessibility
- Educational training for teachers, counselors, coaches, administrator and students on transgender sensitivity in relation to student
- Manner of dress according to gender identity
- Access to resources and accurate information

Emerging Activity State Series Policy

The IESA Board of Directors may consider recommendations to add a new state series when a sufficient number of the member schools express an interest in participating in the activity as an IESA state series.

1. Interest Step: Schools facilitating an emerging activity shall register their interest with the Association in the IESA Member Center. The IESA will utilize the interest reports to monitor the development of new activities in member schools and assist in determining when a new state championship should be considered.
2. Registration Step: Schools facilitating an emerging sport shall register their participation with the Association by registering the activity with the IESA office. The IESA will utilize the registration reports to monitor the development of new sport activities in member schools and assist in determining when a new state series should be considered. The registration forms may be found online and does require a principal's signature.
3. When the minimum required participation level is demonstrated, the Board shall consider:
 - a. Adequate 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. When an activity is sanctioned by the Board of Directors as being eligible for official state series championship competition, the IESA office will mail an Emerging Activity Commitment Form to all member schools on which to record an intention to participate in an official state championship in the activity.
5. A sanctioned activity, in which an official state championship is implemented, shall be fully supervised and regulated by the Association. All Association bylaws, policies, rules and contest regulations shall apply to the activity.

Emerging Activity Championship Policy

The IESA Board of Directors may consider recommendations to add a new state championship when a sufficient number of the member schools express an interest in participating in the activity as an IESA state tournament.

1. Interest Step: Schools facilitating an emerging activity shall register their interest with the Association in the IESA Member Center. The IESA will utilize the interest reports to monitor the development of new activities in member schools and assist in determining when a new state championship should be considered.
2. When the minimum required participation level is demonstrated, the Board shall consider:
 - a. Growth potential of the activity
 - b. Consider gender equity criteria
 - c. Financial and staffing impact to the Association
3. A sanctioned activity, in which an official state championship is implemented, shall be fully supervised and regulated by the Association. All Association bylaws, policies, rules and contest regulations shall apply to the activity.

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.