

The Illinois Basketball Coaches Association Releases Statement Concerning Basketball Season

by Chris Rhodes, Reporter
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SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Basketball Coaches Association is very disappointed to learn of today's decision by the governor and IDPH regarding the movement of basketball in Illinois to the "High Risk" category, thus postponing the season for our student-athletes and coaches. The National Federation of High School Sports currently has basketball classified as a "Medium Risk" sport. The majority of other states around the country have allowed fall sports to take place and are moving forward with basketball during their winter seasons.

While we are not medical professionals, the recent “Return To Play” survey conducted by the IBCA provided us with data that demonstrated that our coaches successfully followed necessary mitigations with our student-athletes during both the summer and fall Contact Days as allowed by the IHSA, resulting in a safe and beneficial experience for the vast majority of those involved. Our data suggest that the spread of this virus has been minimal inside our gyms among our student-athletes and coaches. Given that, we believe we deserve an opportunity to continue to work with our young people in this safe and highly monitored way.

The health and safety of our student-athletes will always be the primary consideration of our coaches. We know that the virus has caused a recent increase in cases, but we have not been given specific information as to why basketball has been elevated to “High Risk” in Illinois. When so many of our players currently drive across state lines to freely compete with travel teams, this lack of transparency is incredibly frustrating for all of us who simply want to enjoy playing the game of basketball together in our home state of Illinois.

There is a risk involved with almost everything we do. We balance those risks daily to make the best decisions we can to live our lives as fully as possible. For the physical, mental, social, and emotional health of all involved, can we please be given the metrics that must be met to give us a chance to participate in the game that means so much to us all? Don't our young people deserve this?

The IBCA has, and always will be, advocates for student-athletes and coaches in our state. We strongly urge the governor and IDPH to re-evaluate their decision to move basketball to the “High Risk” category and to provide clarity with the metrics used to drive these decisions.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted our lives and forced us to sacrifice in so many ways. We all have had opportunities taken from us that we will never get back. We believe that we, as coaches, have the responsibility to provide for our student-athletes a safe and positive space. Allowing basketball to be played in Illinois provides this opportunity for them!