

FAQ'S REGARDING THE YOUTH SPORTS CONCUSSION SAFETY ACT: CONCUSSION EDUCATION REQUIREMENT

The required concussion education program for athletic/activity coaches and licensed officials that is included as a part of the Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act is now available for coaches and officials in the IHSA Schools Center and the IHSA Officials Center. The law can be accessed at:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?GAID=13&SessionID=88&GA=99&DocTypeID=SB&DocNum=219&LegID=84179&SpecSess=&Session=>

The debut of the new course has generated many questions. The most frequently asked have been included below.

1. Coaches of which athletic/activity teams or groups are required to complete this program by the law's required completion date of September 1, 2016?

The legislation lists the following activities: Baseball, basketball, cheerleading (sideline), cross country track, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, marching band, rugby, soccer, skating, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track (indoor and outdoor), ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling. In addition to these specifically-mentioned activities, competitive cheerleading, competitive dance, drill team and poms are also included. All coaches and marching band directors, and athletic directors (as required by HB 5431), whether those individuals are head coaches, assistant coaches, paid coaches or volunteers, who direct students in any of these activities must complete the training.

2. Does the law require other individuals besides athletic/activity coaches to complete this education program?

Yes. The law requires that all licensed officials of an interscholastic athletic activity as outlined above must complete an approved concussion education program by September 1, 2016. In addition, members of a school's Concussion Oversight Team who aren't coaches must complete a concussion education program. Finally, the individuals listed below need to complete some training (either the IHSA/IESA course, an education program approved by IHSA, or a continuing education course offered by the individual's professional department) in order to serve on a school's Concussion Oversight Team:

- *physicians* licensed to practice medicine in all its branches under the Medical Practice Act of 1987
- *athletic trainers* licensed under the Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act
- *nurses* licensed under the Nurse Practice Act as a registered nurse, practical nurse, or advanced practice nurse

3. Do athletic/activity coaches who coach at both the middle school/junior high level and the high school level have to complete the program twice?

Athletic/activity coaches who coach at both the middle school/junior high school level and the high school level are **not** required to complete the program twice. For athletic/activity coaches in this situation, it is recommended that they complete the program through the IHSA Schools Center, particularly in cases where the individual coaches at an IHSA-member high school and at a non-IESA member school.

Please keep in mind that at this time the coach and his/her school administration at the school under which the coach completes the program will need to notify the other school's administration of the individual's successful passage of the program.

4. If I am both a licensed official and an athletic/activity coach, do I have to complete the program twice?

No. If a person is both a licensed IHSA official and a high school coach, there are instructions located on the individual's IHSA Schools Center home page that explains how the individual can link completion of the program as a coach to his/her IHSA Officials Center home page. If the individual does not yet have log in credentials through the IHSA Schools Center, he/she will need to have their administration first enter him/her into the Schools Center under the individual's appropriate title (Head Coach, Assistant Coach, etc.). After linking the two, it is necessary that the individual complete the program through his/her's IHSA Schools Center site.

5. How does completion of the concussion program that debuted prior to the start of the 2014-15 school year fit in with the new requirement of the Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act?

All those individuals listed in question 1 of this document are required to complete the new program by September 1, 2016. Any course taken prior to April 5, 2016 will not count toward compliance with the legislation. Once an individual completes the training for this cycle, he/she will then be required to complete an approved training program every 2 years. The requirements of the Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act take precedence over previous legislation, resulting in the need for this new round of training. This means that all of the 33,122 individuals who completed the first round of training between August of 2014 and April 4, 2016, will need to complete the new training, unless, of course, that individual is no longer coaching.

6. My school only enters one IESA activity- cross country. Is this the only coach that needs to take the concussion course?

The Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act requires ALL interscholastic athletic/activity coaches as listed in Question #1 to successfully complete an approved concussion training program. Regardless of whether your team is entered into the IESA State Series, coaches of all of your school's interscholastic athletic/activity programs as listed in Question #1 must be in compliance with the legislation.