

Wednesday, August 19, 2020  
Administrator Update

# Ohio High School Athletic Association

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**TO:** OHSAA Member Schools' Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators  
**FR:** Bob Goldring, Interim Executive Director

As we have done throughout the pandemic, below are some further updates following the announcement yesterday by Governor DeWine that we are moving forward with our plans to begin our fall sports seasons as scheduled.

## **COVID-19 General Guidance (Including Mandates and Recommended Best Practices)**

The Governor's Office and Department of Health have finalized a new Health Director's Order. It was received in our office just before 6:00 tonight. Here is a link to the new Order:

[https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHOOD/2020/08/19/file\\_attachments/1521949/Sports%20Order%2008.19.20.pdf](https://content.govdelivery.com/attachments/OHOOD/2020/08/19/file_attachments/1521949/Sports%20Order%2008.19.20.pdf)

With that comes a separate **mandates and recommended best practices document** for schools to follow for competitions. The mandates and recommended best practices are related to many of the same mandates and protocols already in place for many other sectors as they relate to symptom assessments; facial coverings; social distancing; cleaning and sanitizing, and confirmed COVID-19 cases/exposure to the virus.

The Governor understands that interscholastic sports are different than other forms of competition because we are education-based and are able to implement best safety practices and have structure in place for dealing with COVID-19 restrictions. So, if we want our students to have the privilege of competing in interscholastic athletics, it's going to be up to all of us to make sure all mandates and protocols are being followed.

Here the link to the document that contain the **mandates and recommended best practices:**

**Youth, Collegiate, Amateur and Professional Sports:**

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>

## **Additional Requirements, Recommendations and Modifications**

The OHSAA staff has also developed sport-specific requirements, recommendations and modifications for schools when conducting interscholastic competition. Links to these sport-specific documents were

originally included in the July 22 memo when we released the *Return to Play Recommendations* document. Links to **updated sport-specific requirements, recommendations and modifications** are here:

**Cross Country:** <https://bit.ly/CovidXCRecs>

**Field Hockey:** <https://bit.ly/FHRecs>

**Football:** <https://bit.ly/FBRecs>

**Golf:** <https://bit.ly/CovidGOREcs>

**Soccer:** <https://bit.ly/SOREcs>

**Girls Tennis:** <https://bit.ly/TERecs>

**Volleyball:** <https://bit.ly/CovidVBRecs>

### **Inspector's Program; Compliance Officers; Requirements for Schools**

In conjunction with the Governor's Office, the OHSAA is launching an **"inspector's program"** this fall where designated individuals will be attending contests throughout the state to ensure mandates are being followed. These inspectors will be asked to make contact with a school's **compliance officer** (see the Health Director's Order for more on compliance officers) prior to the contest, they will be provided an official OHSAA pass to enter your contest and they will work with schools to ensure mandates are being followed. The purpose of this program is educational in nature . . . we want your student-athletes to be able to continue to compete and, in order for that to continue, we all need to do our part to help stop anyone from contracting and/or spreading COVID-19.

The inspectors will be filing reports with the OHSAA, and violators of the mandates – depending upon the severity of the situation – would result in the OHSAA issuing consequences for these violation as prescribed in Bylaw 11, Penalties.

In addition, the OHSAA will be developing a document for school administrators and/or the public to file when concerns over following the mandates are discovered. Copies of these forms and further details on the inspector's program will be forwarded to the membership very soon.

### **Capacity Limitations/Students Dressing for Contests Limitations/Bands Restrictions**

Spectator capacity for our events are limited, with outdoor venues limited to the lesser or 1,500 or 15 percent of fixed, seated capacity and indoor venues limited to the lesser of 300 or 15 percent of fixed seating capacity.

In addition, OHSAA requirements, based on guidance from the Governor's Office, is for schools to limit the number of players dressing for contests. The limits are 60 in football; 22 in soccer and field hockey, and 15 in volleyball. For schools that have more players on their rosters than the maximum number permitted to be dressed, they are permitted to consider having these student-athletes wear jerseys and stand on the sidelines or sit in the grandstands. However, all of these additional players – just like those dressed in game uniforms and equipment – must wear facial coverings and must be socially distanced. It is recommended that home teams NOT have these additional players enter locker rooms and that schools NOT travel more than the maximum number of players dressing for contests to road games. Additionally, the OHSAA, based on guidance from the Governor's Office, is limiting marching and/or pep bands to performing only at home contests (e.g. NOT traveling to road contests).

### **Additional Information on "Spring Seasons"**

As we indicated in our update yesterday, the OHSAA is prepared to provide an opportunity and provide a window for our schools to play fall sports in the spring. What does that mean? First, consider that the OHSAA has stayed the course on opening the fall 2020 sport season because a.) we have been advised

that in most districts, this can be done safely with the proper management of the risks associated with COVID-19; b.) the positive impact sports participation has on children (mental, physical and emotional) and the need/desire to play, and c.) the desires expressed by the member schools.

Notwithstanding this, we recognize that in some areas of the state, managing the risks associated with the virus are much more difficult than in other areas of the state and, therefore, some programs have been shut down or are on a delayed start. The OHSAA commitment to the Governor – and now to its member schools – is to eliminate any impediments in the bylaws and regulations of the OHSAA that would preclude and/or prohibit participation in these “fall sports” in the spring for those schools who did not participate in those sports in the fall due to the virus. Therefore, schools will have an opportunity to play their contact sports in the spring. As of today, that is merely saying there will be a suspension of bylaws and regulations so that students can compete interscholastically in the contact sports and, as of now, the OHSAA has no intentions of conducting any tournaments for these sports in the spring. Time will dictate what the spring structure will look like and, if we have learned anything during the pandemic, it is that the landscape changes daily. We will be discussing this situation further and hope to share answers with you soon.

### **Basketball Reminders**

Here is the list of regulation changes that will affect how your basketball coaches can coach from **June 1-August 31**:

1.) The 10-day rule has been eliminated; 2.) The 50% limitation has been eliminated, and 3.) The August no-contact period has been eliminated.

If your school permits, schools may move forward with INTER-squad (not just INTRA-squad) scrimmages during the remainder of August. ALL Covid-19 mandates must be followed. Just as in the summer, these events cannot be mandatory, and coaches may not use a student-athlete’s performance as an indicator of which team they will make in the winter. **Beginning September 1**, regular out-of-season regulations are back in place: 1.) Coaches may only work with four of their student-athletes in individual skill workouts; 2.) athletes may participate together in non-interscholastic play, and 3.) Open gyms may occur.

Thank you for what you are doing to make **#IWantASeason** become a reality for your student-athletes, coaches and communities, and thanks also for your attention to this information!