

The following are the preliminary minutes from the October 23, 2025, OHSAA Board of Directors Meeting. The Board is expected to officially approve them at its January 15, 2026, meeting.

OHSAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES (October 23, 2025)

The Ohio High School Athletic Association Board of Directors held a regularly scheduled meeting on Thursday, October 23, 2025, at the OHSAA Offices in Columbus. President Walt Skaggs called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance and introductions of guests in attendance.

Board Members In Attendance: Walt Skaggs, president; Stephanie Evans, vice president; John Carter; Ray Hibbs; Matt Hutchinson; Tom Nerl; Mark Rose; Randy Tevepaugh; Lane Warner, and Glen Gillespie (ex-officio).

Staff Members In Attendance: Doug Ute, executive director; Kristin Ronai, associate executive director; directors Bob Goldring, John Kronour, Beau Rugg and Tim Stried; Laura Vermilya, senior director of finance, and staff members Charles Anderson, Monroe Britton, Michael Cornathan, BJ Duckworth (participated virtually), Amanda Harding, Alexis Holderman, Michelle Kern, Claudia Markoff, Emily Mason, Ronald Sayers, Kelly Schoenly and Lizzy Wilson.

Others In Attendance: Joe Fraley, OHSAA legal counsel; Frank Gamble, Ohio High School Baseball Coaches Association; Joe Balogh, Ohio High School Basketball Coaches Association; Steve Hale, Ohio High School Football Coaches Association; Dugan Hill, Ohio Association of Track & Cross Country Coaches; Dale McVey, Dawn Anderson Butcher, Kyle Ault-Baker and Samantha Bates, The Ohio State University LiFEsports' Coach Beyond Program; Anne Lynn Winfrey, Columbus Dispatch; Kiyerra Lake and Carl Todhunter, WBNS-TV, Columbus; El Jay Richards, WCMH-TV, Columbus, and Chris Mazivanhanga, WSYX-TV/Fox 28, Columbus.

I. PRESENTATION

Dale McVey, Dawn Anderson Butcher, Kyle Ault-Baker and Samantha Bates from LiFEsports at The Ohio State University updated the Board on the Coach Beyond Program, a partner of the OHSAA whose team has trained over 50,000 coaches in Ohio since 2021 by empowering coaches to support youth mental health, positive team culture, leadership and life skill development. Seventeen Ohio schools have helped develop the curriculum for Coach Beyond, which has now expanded into Indiana, Maryland and Kansas.

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Ray Hibbs, second by Stephanie Evans to **adopt** the agenda as amended for the October 23, 2025, Board of Directors meeting.

Motion passed 9-0.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Matt Hutchinson, second by Tom Nerl to **approve** the minutes from the September 26, 2025, Board of Directors Meeting.

Motion passed 9-0.

IV. FINANCIAL ITEMS

A. Recommendation to Approve the OHSAA Financial Report through September 30, 2025

Senior Director of Finance Laura Vermilya provided the financial report through September 30, 2025. She said there was not much revenue in September since tournaments had not begun in earnest, and the overall finances are right around budget. She said the OHSAA has over \$5 million of operating cash and nearly \$16 million in total cash when including investments and board-designated funds. That amount can cover 7.8 months of expenses. The financial report is summarized as follows:

OHSAA Financial Report (Through September 30, 2025)

District	Total Cash	Year to Date	Year to Date	Year to Date
		Gross Revenue	Gross Expenses	Net Profit/Loss
OHSAA Office	\$9,290,219	\$1,052,134	\$1,353,505	— \$301,371
Central	\$1,048,249	\$5,617	— \$13,370	\$18,987
East	\$978,729	\$5,244	— \$13,358	\$18,602
Northeast	\$679,140	\$3,639	— \$3,692	\$7,331
Northwest	\$1,695,740	\$9,086	— \$22,967	\$32,053
Southeast	\$821,438	\$4,401	— \$8,787	\$13,188
Southwest	\$1,410,551	\$7,558	\$24,902	— \$17,344
Totals	\$15,924,066	\$1,087,679	\$1,316,233	— \$228,554

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	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Prior Month</u>	<u>Prior Year</u>
Checking	\$4,026,997	\$5,320,888	\$6,420,861
Savings	\$1,039,623	\$1,037,309	\$1,009,508
Total Operating Cash	\$5,066,620	\$6,358,197	\$7,430,369
Months on Hand	2.5	3.1	3.7
Board Designated Funds	\$1,021,805	\$1,018,756	\$490,552
Investments - Morgan Stanley	\$9,835,640	\$9,711,404	\$9,147,968
Total Investments	\$10,857,445	\$10,730,160	\$9,638,520
Months on Hand	5.3	5.3	4.8
Total Cash & Investments on Hand	\$15,924,065	\$17,088,357	\$17,068,889
Months on Hand (Cash & Investments)	7.8	8.4	8.4
Athletic Enrichment Fund	\$2,177,982	\$2,170,580	\$2,579,416

Motion by Mark Rose second by John Carter to **approve** the financial report as presented.

Motion passed 9-0.

V. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Updates on OHSAA Fall Sports

OHSAA sport administrators provided brief updates to the Board on their respective fall sports tournaments. The state **golf** tournaments have been completed, and all went well except Division II boys and girls, where rain forced the cancellation of the second day and scores from the 18-hole first day were used to determine placements. In **girls tennis**, the state tournament was successful, and everyone enjoyed playing at the renovated Lindner Family Tennis Center in Mason. In **cross country**, last week's district tournaments went well, and there was positive feedback on the expanded divisions. The OHSAA 7th-8th Grade Post-Season Invitational was also held last weekend and, despite rainy weather, saw over 2,300 students from 215 schools participate. This coming weekend are high school regional tournaments, while the state tournament will be held on Saturday, Nov. 1, at Fortress Obetz in suburban Columbus. Tournament manager Dugan Hill was thanked for his work for both the 7th-8th grade and high school championships. In **field hockey**, regional finals will be held this weekend at Gates Mills Hawken, Cincinnati Mount Notre Dame and Olentangy Liberty high schools, with the latter site hosting two finals. The state tournament will return to Thomas Worthington High School Thursday, Oct. 30, and Saturday, Nov. 1. The **girls volleyball** regional tournaments take place next week, with state semifinals to follow at Wright State University, Wittenberg University and Vandalia Butler High School on Nov. 6, 7 and 8 and the finals Saturday and Sunday, Nov. 8 and 9, at Wright State. Regional **soccer** tournaments also take place next week, and the state finals will again be held at Historic Crew Stadium in Columbus over a four-day period starting Friday, Nov. 7. The staff thanked those schools that hosted sectional and district soccer and girls volleyball contests. In **football**, this is the final week of the regular season with 224 of the 336 tournament qualifiers beginning play Friday, Oct. 31. The division assignments for the state finals have been announced, and those games will be held Thursday through Saturday, Dec. 4-6, at Tom Benson Hall of Fame Stadium in Canton.

B. Review of OHSAA Student Leadership Conference at Akron Firestone

Executive Director Doug Ute said approximately 300 students attended the annual OHSAA Student Leadership Conference that was held Tuesday, Oct. 7, at Akron Firestone High School. The conference featured R.J. Nemer, president of the University of Akron; Kemp Boyd, executive director of Love Akron and head football coach at Akron Garfield High School; Julie Jones, a mental health and performance coach who founded SSB Performance, LLC, and is a former collegiate softball coach; Shawn Harper, a national motivational speaker and former NFL offensive lineman; Sue Ramsey, also a motivational speaker who led Ashland University to the 2013 NCAA Division II women's basketball national championship, and Carla Chapman, Ed.D., chief of community relations and strategic engagement, Akron Public Schools. Mr. Ute thanked Joe Vassalotti, coordinator of athletics and secondary education for the Akron Public Schools, for serving as the host, the students at Firestone for their leadership and Harvey Alston for organizing and planning the event. Next year's OHSAA Student Leadership Conference will be held in Mansfield.

C. Update on Appeals, Legislative Issues and Legal Cases

Staff member Lizzy Wilson provided the Board with a list of schools that have recently violated OHSAA bylaws or sports regulations. **North Olmsted High School** had a student-athlete who was eligible to qualify for full eligibility under Bylaw 4-7-2, Transfer, Exception 1, Bona Fide Change of Residence. However, the school failed to submit the request for eligibility to the Executive Director's Office prior to the student participating in a regular season competition. The Executive Director's Office restored the student-athlete's eligibility retroactively and prospectively, but, in accordance with Bylaw 4-1-1, Administrative Error, the school was fined \$100. **Ironton Rock Hill High School** had a student-athlete who was eligible to qualify for full eligibility under Bylaw 4-7-5, Transfer, Provision 2, Return to Local Residential School. However, the school failed to submit the request for eligibility to the Executive Director's Office prior to the student participating in a regular season competition. The Executive Director's Office restored the student-athlete's eligibility retroactively and prospectively, but, in accordance with Bylaw 4-1-1, Administrative Error, the school was fined \$100. **Gates Mills Gilmour Academy High School** had a student-athlete who was eligible

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qualify for full eligibility under Bylaw 4-7-7, Intra-System Transfer. However, the school failed to submit the request for eligibility to the Executive Director's Office prior to the 15th day of the 2025-26 school year. The Executive Director's Office restored the student-athlete's eligibility retroactively and prospectively, but, in accordance with Bylaw 4-1-1, Administrative Error, the school was fined \$100. **Cuyahoga Falls High School** had a student-athlete in girl's soccer violate Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, when she participated in regular season contests without being enrolled in and attending the school full time. Further, the student did not meet the requirements of any of the enumerated exceptions codified within Bylaw 4-3-1. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, Cuyahoga Falls was required to forfeit any victorious contests in which the ineligible student participated. **Sylvania Southview High School** had a student-athlete in boy's soccer violate Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, when he participated in regular season contests without being enrolled in and attending the school full time. Further, the student did not meet the requirements of any of the enumerated exceptions codified within Bylaw 4-3-1. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, Southview was required to forfeit any victorious contests in which the ineligible student participated. **Sylvania Northview High School** had a student-athlete in boy's soccer violate Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, when he participated in regular season contests without being enrolled in and attending the school full time. Further, the student did not meet the requirements of any of the enumerated exceptions codified within Bylaw 4-3-1. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, Northview was required to forfeit any victorious contests in which the ineligible student participated. **Solon High School** had a student-athlete in football violate Bylaw 4-3-1, Enrollment and Attendance, when he participated in seven regular season contests without being enrolled in and attending the school full time. Further, the student did not meet the requirements of any of the enumerated exceptions codified within Bylaw 4-3-1. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, Solon was required to forfeit any victorious contests in which the ineligible student participated. **Cincinnati Seton High School** had a student-athlete violate General Sports Regulation 7.2.1 when she participated in a non-interscholastic contest after establishing herself as a member of the school's girl's soccer program. In accordance with Bylaw 11, Penalties, the student was suspended for one regular season contest. **Milford Center Fairbanks High School** had a student-athlete in girls volleyball violate Volleyball Regulation 6, Sets Limitation, when she exceeded the maximum of six sets per day per common opponent. In accordance with Bylaw 10-2-1, Forfeitures, the school was required to forfeit the victorious contest in which the ineligible student participated.

Staff member Alexis Holderman provided the Board with an update on appeals. She said the OHSAA Appeals Panel has made 58 rulings on 56 appeals held during nine hearings this school year, and 13 appeals were either granted or the penalties modified. Most of the rulings dealt with the transfer bylaw. Associate Executive Director Kristin Ronai also provided the Board with an update on current legislative issues. In addition, Legal Counsel Joe Fraley provided the Board with an update on current OHSAA legal cases.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Recommendation to Approve Additional 2026 Referendum Items

Associate Executive Director Kristin Ronai said the OHSAA's eligibility team and legal counsels have been reviewing potential changes to the OHSAA Constitution and Bylaws that would be placed before the membership for referendum if approved by the Board of Directors. The Board approved an initial item for referendum at its September 26, 2025, meeting. At this meeting, Ms. Ronai reviewed additional 2026 proposed items (both bylaws), and recommended that they be approved by the Board to place on the referendum ballot. If approved by the Board for referendum, member school principals would vote on the proposed modifications between May 1 and 15, 2026. The recommendations are as follows:

Bylaw 4-4-5, 7th-8th Grade Academic Hardship Exception (Modification)

This proposed modification to the bylaw's exception would permit the Executive Director's Office to waive the four-subject standard for 7th-8th grade students from the immediately preceding grading period if the student continued to attend school, but the student experienced a personal accident, illness or family hardship that was contemporaneously created at the time of the hardship. A principal would need to request the exception and provide documentation. If placed before the membership, this proposal would be voted upon by 7th-8th grade principals.

Bylaw 4-4-1, High School Academic Hardship Exception (Modification)

Similar to the proposed modification above for 7th-8th grade students, this proposed modification to the bylaw's exception would permit the Executive Director's Office to waive the five-credit standard for high school students from the immediately preceding grading period if the student continued to attend school, but the student experienced a personal accident, illness or family hardship that was contemporaneously created at the time of the hardship. A principal would need to request the exception and provide documentation. If placed before the membership, this proposal would be voted upon by high school principals.

Motion by Lane Warner, second by Stephanie Evans to **approve** placing the proposed modified bylaw exceptions up for referendum vote by the membership as presented.

Motion passed 9-0.

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It was noted that the Executive Director's Office will recommend additional items to be placed before the membership for referendum at upcoming Board of Director's meetings.

B. Recommendation to Approve Modifying the Season Start Dates for Golf, Soccer, Girls Volleyball and Basketball

Director John Kronour said the Executive Director's Office has reviewed the start dates for regular competition in various sports and has recommended that changes be approved for the 2026-27 and/or 2027-28 seasons in the sports of golf, soccer, girls volleyball and basketball. Many of these start dates would move to the Mondays of the weeks where Fridays were previously approved, giving schools and leagues/conferences more flexibility in their scheduling. The proposed changes (in ***BOLD ITALICS***) are:

<u>GOLF</u>		<u>Season</u>			
<u>Year</u>	<u>Coaching</u>	<u>Starts</u>			
2026	<i>7/29 (Wed.)</i>	<i>7/29 (Wed.)</i>			
2027	8/1 (Sun.)	8/1 (Sun.)			

<u>SOCCER</u>		<u>Season</u>	<u>GIRLS VOLLEYBALL</u>		<u>Season</u>
<u>Year</u>	<u>Coaching</u>	<u>Starts</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Coaching</u>	<u>Starts</u>
2026	8/1 (Sat.)	8/14 (Fri.)	2026	8/1 (Sat.)	<i>8/17 (Mon.)</i>
2027	8/1 (Sun.)	<i>8/16 (Mon.)</i>	2027	8/1 (Sun.)	<i>8/16 (Mon.)</i>

<u>GIRLS BASKETBALL</u>		<u>Season</u>	<u>BOYS BASKETBALL</u>		<u>Season</u>
<u>Year</u>	<u>Coaching</u>	<u>Starts</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Coaching</u>	<u>Starts</u>
2026	10/30 (Fri.)	<i>11/23 (Mon.)</i>	2026	11/6 (Fri.)	<i>11/30 (Mon.)</i>
2027	10/29 (Fri.)	<i>11/22 (Mon.)</i>	2027	11/5 (Fri.)	<i>11/29 (Mon.)</i>

Motion by Lane Warner, second by Stephanie Evans to **approve** the recommendation as presented.

Motion passed 9-0.

VII. NEW BUSINESS (CONSENT)

A. Recommendation to Approve Modifying the Pitching Rubber Distance for 7th-8th Grade Softball

Staff member Kelly Schoenly said the Executive Director's Office recommended moving the distance for the pitching rubber in 7th-8th grade softball to 43 feet, the same distance that is used for high schools. Ms. Schoenly said surveys of Ohio coaches indicated that 76 percent of the 7th-8th grade coaches were in favor of the change and 77 percent of the high school coaches were in favor of the change.

Motion by Randy Tevepaugh, second by Ray Hibbs to **approve** the recommendation.

Motion passed 9-0.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS (OTHER)

A. Recommendation to Approve Circulating an Emergency Petition for Referendum Vote

Executive Director Doug Ute said that in response to a lawsuit filed by a student-athlete on October 15 against the OHSAA regarding Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) and a Franklin County judge issuing a 45-day Temporary Restraining Order (TRO) against the OHSAA, he recommended the Association utilize Constitution Article 8-1-1 and circulate an emergency referendum vote regarding NIL. Mr. Ute said the membership would vote on the proposed new bylaw on NIL between November 17 and 21 and, if approved, this would allow the membership to shape the language for the bylaw.

At their regularly scheduled September meeting, the Board of Directors approved language for the newly proposed bylaw, which would permit student-athletes to receive benefits through appearances, licensing, social media, endorsements and/or use of branding related to the student's promotional and marketing efforts that are based on their public recognition (athletic fame) or notoriety. The bylaw would require the student-athlete to meet numerous requirements, including the condition that they inform the OHSAA of their agreement(s). The proposed new bylaw has no connection to Bylaw 5, which permits a student to accept awards, gifts and prizes resulting from their participation/finish in athletic competitions, and would also establish limitations so that students do not jeopardize their eligibility as it relates to the OHSAA's recruiting and amateur bylaws.

Motion by John Carter, second by Randy Tevepaugh to **approve** circulating an emergency petition for referendum vote as outlined by Mr. Ute.

Motion passed 9-0.

Notes on the NIL Emergency Referendum Vote: During the OHSAA Regional Update Meetings around Ohio in August and September, administrators in attendance were informed that a proposal on NIL was likely coming. Feedback from a committee of school administrators that met on this issue at the OHSAA also provided beneficial feedback. To help schools make an informed decision in the upcoming emergency vote, the OHSAA will send information and conduct webinars November 4 and 12, hosted in partnership with

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Influential Athlete, to clarify the proposal and outline the next steps should the vote pass.

NIL at the high school level has spread rapidly across the country in the last several years since it became permitted at the college level. Currently, the OHSAA is one of only six state associations that does not allow NIL by student-athletes at its member schools.

IX. ONCE AROUND

Board members thanked the OHSAA staff, tournament managers and schools for all of their great work in preparing for and hosting OHSAA tournaments this fall. They added that it is great our student-athletes and their communities are able to experience so many great facilities across the state, and they look forward to passing out trophies to state runners-up and champions at upcoming state tournaments. The OHSAA eligibility and legal teams were also thanked for their efforts in what has turned out to be a very busy fall.

Glen Gillespie, Board ex-officio and executive director of the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (OIAAA), noted that the annual OIAAA State Conference will be held Nov. 9-11 at the Hilton Easton in Columbus. He said roughly 400 athletic administrators will be attending the conference.

Board member Lane Warner noted that high school sports are not just about learning opportunities on the field or court, but it is great that the OHSAA is also providing learning opportunities off the field and court as noted at today's meeting with the LiFEsport Coach Beyond program and the OHSAA Student Leadership Conference.

Board President Walt Skaggs thanked Executive Director Doug Ute and his team and for all their work, a lot of which occurs behind the scenes.

Motion by Ray Hibbs, second by Stephanie Evans to adjourn the meeting at 9:35 a.m.

Motion passed 9-0.

Bob Goldring, recorder.

FUTURE MEETINGS

(Unless noted, all meetings are on Thursdays and begin at 9:00 but are subject to change.)

2025-26 School Year: January 15, 2026; February 19, 2026; April 23, 2026; June 11, 2026 (8:30 at Canal Park in Akron).