



# Ohio High School Athletic Association

Tuesday, September 1, 2020

## Administrator Update

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

Below are general updates and reminders to share related to our fall sports seasons. Please disseminate this information to the appropriate personnel on your staff.

### COVID-19 Observer's Program; Compliance Officers

As you no doubt have seen in previous Administrator Updates, the OHSAA has launched a COVID-19 **Observer's Program** at the strong recommendation of the Governor's Office. Observers are designated individuals who are attending contests throughout the state to ensure mandates in the Ohio Health Director's Order are being followed. These observers are asked to make contact with a school's athletic administrator and/or **Compliance Officer\*** prior to the contest and will work throughout to provide feedback to the school contact regarding any violations they observe. **The observers are not in attendance to police the requirements set forth by the Governor's Office.** Again, they are simply there to report on what they find. Further, while many schools have expressed concerns about the program, please remember that the purpose of this program is **educational** in nature . . . the Governor and the OHSAA **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 slow the contracting and/or spreading of COVID-19. The observers will file reports with the OHSAA. We will review each report and use them as a tool to help schools maintain the mandates to provide a safe atmosphere and continue to provide opportunities.

\*According to the Health Director's Order, each school must designate a **Compliance Officer** who is responsible for the compliance of the Director's Order. Whether that person is also your athletic administrator is up to each school.

### Highlights/Key Reminders of the Concerns Raised by Observers During Week 1 of the Football Season

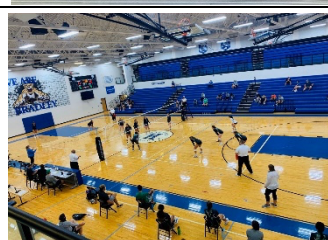
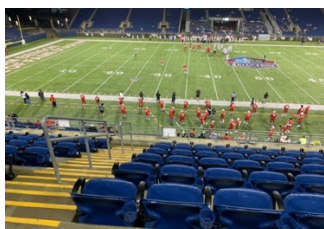
- 1.) No players, coaches, officials or spectators are to be congregated before, during or after the contest.
- 2.) Six-foot social distancing must be maintained at all times other than those on the field (or court in volleyball) – including those on the sidelines and benches – and including spectators not part of a family group.
- 3.) Hand sanitizer shall be made available throughout the venue.
- 4.) One-way ingress and egress for admission/entrance, exits, aisles, concessions and restrooms must be maintained at the venue.
- 5.) Facial coverings by everyone associated with the team must be worn at all times when not on the field (or court in volleyball), including the bench and sideline.
- 6.) No physical contacting is permitted outside of the contest including, but not limited to, high fives, handshakes, etc.

Here is a link to the checklist that the observers are provided:

[https://ohsaa-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/tbrooks\\_ohsaa\\_org/ERndq1Jcq1dNk-ihpQ5bmNoBx2rFohOXx30SJQXOUFVM2g?e=DwXBrH](https://ohsaa-my.sharepoint.com/:b:/g/personal/tbrooks_ohsaa_org/ERndq1Jcq1dNk-ihpQ5bmNoBx2rFohOXx30SJQXOUFVM2g?e=DwXBrH)

Here is a link to the overall summary of results provided by the observers from Week 1 of the football season:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/2020/20200831SummaryData.pdf>



## **Common Questions Regarding the Health Director's Order – Football and Other Sports**

**Are Required to Wear Facial Coverings on the Sidelines:** Yes. The only players NOT required to wear facial coverings are those players on the field during game action (that's 22 in the sport of football). All other players on the sidelines must wear facial coverings. In football, wearing a football helmet will NOT substitute for wearing a facial covering (the exception is if the helmet has the special shield made specifically for COVID). If you need a tip for participating players, you could have each player bring their own plastic bag with their name written on it. When they head to the field, they can simply put the facial covering in the plastic bag. Neck gaiters are also permissible, but users should be sure the material of which the gaiter is made is appropriate.

**Are Players Required to be Socially Distanced on the Sidelines:** Yes. That is why in the sport of football the team box has been extended from the 10-yard-line to the 10-yard line. And in volleyball, players are permitted to stand.

**Who Should be Prioritized in Admitting to the Contest:** Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Husted have been consistent in saying that parents and family members of the participants should be given priority for access to the contest. As best as you can, please try to be mindful of this for both home and visiting parents and family members. As for the variance section of the Health Director's Order, the local health department has to clear your variance plans, and those plans then have to be cleared by the Ohio Department of Health.

**What Does the 15% Capacity Limitation Entail:** The 15% capacity limitation includes those who sit in fixed, permanent seats in grandstands or bleachers and any other patrons that may have been approved via variance. Participants, coaches, officials, medical staff, game-day personnel and media do not need to count in that total. Remember, everyone must wear facial coverings and be socially distanced, and the intent is to help slow the contracting and/or spreading of COVID-19.

**Do Coaches Need to Wear Facial Coverings:** While the information in the Ohio Health Director's latest Order is not definitive, the OHSAA highly recommends that coaches wear facial coverings at all times other than when they are conducting drills while using a whistle. More often than not, this would occur during practices. During contests, this would likely only occur for limited staff during warmups. Coaches are also permitted to remove facial coverings for a short period of time to provide instruction or call plays for participants. The Order is not intended to be punitive but instead to help slow the contracting and/or spreading of COVID-19.

**Do Cheerleaders Need to Wear Facial Coverings:** Similar to participations wearing facial coverings except when on the field or court, cheerleaders should wear facial coverings at all times other than when they are actually participating in a cheer.

**Why Are There Limits on Dressing Students for Contests:** Again, this is not to be punitive but to help slow the contracting and/or spreading of COVID-19. Yes, this makes it difficult for coaches to determine who should and should not be in full uniform with equipment. If schools are over the roster limit, one suggestion to help with the situation is to develop a rotation system for your players. As has been mentioned before, students not in full uniform with equipment are permitted on the sidelines in jerseys so long as they wear facial coverings and are socially distanced. It is highly recommended that these students simply show up to home contests and report to the sidelines and do not congregate in schools, hallways, locker rooms or athletic training rooms. It is also highly recommended that these students not travel to road contests.

**Who Is Permitted to be on Team Sidelines:** This decision is up to the host facility administrator or Compliance Officer. The OHSAA highly recommends that sidelines be limited to participants, coaches, medical staff, game-day personnel and media, with media members located outside the team boxes in football, which run from the 10-yard-line to the 10-yard-line. As much as possible, any other personnel should be in the fixed, permanent grandstands. Everyone must wear facial coverings and be socially distanced, and the intent is to help slow the contracting and/or spreading of COVID-19.

**Are There Special Regulations in Place for Cross Country, Golf and Girls Tennis:** The Health Director's Order has been modified to provide more clarity and reads: "To limit exposure of players, participants shall not compete in more than one contest or game in any calendar day unless it is against the same team(s) or player(s) as in the initial game or contest. For purposes of this Order, 'contest' means a meet or match in which multiple teams engage in a single competition. Examples include cross country meets, golf matches and tennis matches." Therefore, since most competitions in these sports are regarded as one "event," one-day "events" are permitted. What would not be permitted is tennis School A. playing School B. in a dual match at 10:00, then School A. playing School C. in another dual match at 4:00. But Schools A., B. and C. could compete in a tournament format competition together.

**Can A Student Participate in Contests in Two Separate Sports on the Same Day:** No. See the response in the previous question.

## **Common Questions Regarding the Health Director's Order – Volleyball Specific**

**What is the Regulation for Volleyball Teams Playing Multiple Opponents on the Same Day:** Volleyball teams are limited to playing one opponent in a single day. This includes all levels. For example, School A has JV and varsity matches against School B. A player from School A could play in both the JV and varsity matches since they are playing School B in both matches.

**Using the Same Scenario as Above, Can School A Host School B in JV and Varsity Matches on the Same Day and Can School A's Freshmen Host School C Earlier if the Gym is Cleared Before that Match?** This would be permitted ONLY if School A's freshman team and School C's freshman team exit the facility and the facility is disinfected before both School A's and School B's JV and varsity

teams arrive for their matches. In addition, no freshman from School A who played in the freshman match against School C can play in either the JV or varsity match against School B.

**Using the Same Scenario as the First Question, Can School A Host School B in JV and Varsity Matches on the Same Day and Can School A's Freshmen Host School C at the Same Time that the JV or Varsity Match is Taking Place in an Auxiliary Gym?** This would likely be very difficult to do. The only way this would be permitted is if School A's freshman team and School C's freshman team, plus spectators, administrators and game-day staff, were completely isolated from School A's and School B's JV and varsity teams. So as the JV and/or varsity matches are going on, the freshmen (plus spectators, administrators and game-day staff) could not use the same entrance, enter both gymnasiums and School A's varsity, JV and freshmen could not share the same locker room. Plus, no freshman competing for School A in either the JV or varsity matches could go to the auxiliary gym and also participate in the freshman match against School C. Please remember that the reasoning is to limit exposure.

**Can School A Host School B in JV and Varsity Matches on the Same Day while School A's freshman team travels to School C for a separate match?** This is permitted as well, but this can also become tricky. Team A's freshman team should NOT congregate in the hallways, locker room or athletic training room with any of Team A's JV or varsity players both before leaving for the match at School C or returning from the match at School C. To avoid the scenario in the previous question, it would also be best to check with School C to ensure School C has not also scheduled a match(es) with School D at its facility.

### **COVID-19 Public Address Announcements**

As a service to the member schools, the OHSAA is sharing the following public address announcements that you are welcome to utilize during contests as it relates to staying safe and following all protocols:

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*"Ladies and Gentlemen . . . this year, our season depends on the cooperation and support from everyone to follow the safety guidelines set by the Ohio Department of Health, the Governor's Office and the Ohio High School Athletic Association. As we have seen, the opportunity to play sports can be taken away by the spread of COVID-19. We ask that everyone in attendance wear a facial covering, use proper hygiene and keep yourself and your family or group six feet apart from other families or groups. Our ability to follow these guidelines will go a long way in determining how much of a season our student-athletes will have. Thank you for your cooperation."*

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*"Good afternoon/evening everyone and thank you for attending today's/tonight's contest. Fans from both schools, please remember that all spectators are required to follow state requirements for your own health and safety as well as the safety of others. Please be sure you are wearing a face covering at all times. Make sure you and your family maintain social distancing of at least six feet from others. Do not gather before, during or after the contest. And, be sure to follow all safety markings for entering and leaving this venue. We hope you enjoy today's/tonight's event, and thank you for your continued support of interscholastic athletics."*

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*"Attention fans . . . during these most unusual times, we'd like to thank the many individuals and volunteers who have made today's/tonight's event possible. We want to continue making these activities open to spectators, so please be sure to adhere to all established rules, follow any directions given by event staff and be respectful while interacting with those who are working today's/tonight's event. By working together, we can continue bringing (School Name and Sport) to our fans to enjoy."*

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*"Fans, please remember that spectators are required to follow state requirements for their own health and safety as well as the safety of others. Please be sure you are wearing a face covering at all times. Thank you again for your commitment so that the student-athletes can continue with their season!"*

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### **Senior Nights**

If your school chooses to have a 'Senior Night' celebration, please let the opposing team know ahead of time and ensure that student-athletes and parents/family members wear a face covering and maintain social distancing from others on the playing surface. There is a short window of time that will allow for an exception during which a photo can be taken of the student-athlete and their family members. Once the senior has been recognized, the family will need to exit the sidelines and follow all other gameday protocols.

Thank you for your attention to this information!