



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Thursday, September 17, 2020
Administrator Update

TO: Member Schools' Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators
FR: OHSAA Executive Director's Office

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.

Tips for Helping Your School Follow the Ohio Health Director's Order

We continue to give a huge thank you to all school administrators for your tremendous efforts in trying to help ensure that all mandates which are part of the Ohio Health Director's Order are being followed when hosting a contest. As we move into the fourth full week of regular season competition for the sports of football, soccer, volleyball and field hockey, here are some suggestions that the OHSAA Office has heard that you might consider utilizing while hosting a contest in order to help ensure the mandates are being followed:

- **Enlist the assistance of the visiting school athletic administrator** (or representative) to help oversee mandates that impact that visiting school. This can be organized by the host school's Compliance Officer, whether that is the athletic administrator or another person. Don't forget that OHSAA Bylaw 3-3-1 requires the principal, or a person designated to represent the principal, is present for road football contests, and it is highly recommended that this also occur in the sport of soccer. The most successful sites we have observed through three weeks have shown collaboration between the home site's Compliance Officer and the visiting school's representative.
- **Assign and/or hire coaches from sports** that are out of season to assist during home contests. These coaches can be assigned to the sidelines to ensure players and coaches are wearing facial coverings and are socially distanced and to monitor the grandstands or bleachers to ensure spectators are also wearing facial coverings and are socially distanced.
- Continue to **utilize public address announcements** (see samples later in this Update) **and signage** within your facilities. Here is a link to the Ohio Department of Health site where signage and posters can be downloaded:
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Posters-and-Signs/>

Views from Week 3 of the Observer's Program

As you are no doubt aware by now, the OHSAA 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, throughout the contest, they may provide feedback to the school contact regarding any violations they observe. However, in general, the observers are not in attendance to police the requirements set forth by the Governor's Office . . . they are simply there to report on what they find. The observers 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. Please note that the Observer's Program this week expanded to include the sports of boys and girls soccer and volleyball.

The OHSAA sent Observers to 74 varsity football contests last weekend. Here is a compilation of some of the conclusions from the Observers that show areas in which improvements are needed:

- 1.) **Home team participants maintained six-foot social distancing at all times unless on the field.**
52 passed (70.3 percent); 22 failed (29.7 percent)
- 2.) **Visiting team participants maintained six-foot social distancing at all times unless on the field.**
41 passed (55.4 percent); 33 failed (44.6 percent)
Note: Two weeks ago when combining both the home and visiting participants, 44 failed and 43 passed. Great to see improvement!
- 3.) **Home team participants wore facial coverings unless on the field.**
55 passed (74.3 percent); 19 failed (25.7 percent)
- 4.) **Visiting team participants wore facial coverings unless on the field.**
50 passed (68.5 percent); 23 failed (31.5 percent)
- 5.) **No players, coaches, officials or spectators are congregated before, during or after the contest.**
54 passed (73 percent); 20 failed (27 percent)

- 6.) **Home team participants had no physical contacting of other participants unless part of the on-field play (examples: handshakes, high fives).**
62 passed (83.8 percent); 12 failed (16.2 percent)
- 7.) **Visiting team participants had no physical contacting of other participants unless part of the on-field play (examples: handshakes, high fives).**
56 passed (75.7 percent); 18 failed (24.3 percent)
- 8.) **Home team spectators wore facial coverings in a manner consistent with ODH orders.**
57 passed (77 percent); 17 failed (23 percent)
- 9.) **Visiting team spectators wore facial coverings in a manner consistent with ODH orders.**
58 passed (78.4 percent); 16 failed (21.6 percent)
- 10.) **Home team sideline/bench personnel were socially distanced and wore facial coverings in a manner consistent with ODH orders.**
60 passed (81.1 percent); 14 failed (18.9 percent)
- 11.) **Visiting team sideline/bench personnel were socially distanced and wore facial coverings in a manner consistent with ODH orders.**
58 passed (79.5 percent); 15 failed (20.5 percent)

Ohio Governor Signs House Bill 606

On Monday, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine signed into law House Bill 606, which temporarily gives civil immunity to individuals, schools, health care providers, businesses and other entities from lawsuits arising from exposure, transmission or contraction of COVID-19, or any mutation of the virus, as long as they were not showing reckless, intentional or willful misconduct. The bill takes effect in 90 days and lasts through September 2021. More information can be found here:

<https://www.legislature.ohio.gov/legislation/legislation-summary?id=GA133-HB-606>

Winter Sports Notes

The OHSAA has had conversations with the Governor's Office and Ohio Department of Health to try to determine whether there are any potential modifications expected for the upcoming winter sports seasons. While we do not expect any changes at this time, dialogue will continue in the near future and we will obviously keep the membership updated in the event of any adjustments. In the meantime, please remember that all of the Ohio Health Director's Orders must be followed. This would include:

- Teams are limited to playing one opponent in a single day. For more information, see the **Common Questions Regarding the Health Director's Order – Volleyball Specific** section in the September 1 OHSAA Administrator Update:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/BulletinBoard/20200901AdministratorUpdate.pdf>

There currently are no COVID-19-related additional restrictions on team interstate travel both to and from Ohio. However, as with nearly everything else with the pandemic, the Governor's Office could modify this in an instant. Currently, the Governor's Office issues weekly recommendations for individuals to quarantine for 14 days if they are returning to Ohio from "hot spot" states. Other states may have further restrictions regarding travel from Ohio into their states. The OHSAA has been advising schools to proceed with caution and recommend you compete within your geographical area.

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:

"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."

"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."

“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.”

“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!”

Thank you for your attention to this information and for the service you are providing our student-athletes!