



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Thursday, October 22, 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 and winter sports seasons. Please disseminate this information to the appropriate personnel on your staff.

Views from Week 8 of the Observer's Program; Tips for Helping Ensure the Mandates are Followed

The OHSAA sent Observers to a combined 93 football, boys soccer, girls soccer and volleyball contests last week. There continue to be some areas that need improvement. Schools are reminded of the following:

- Players not in the contest **ARE REQUIRED** to wear facial coverings on the sidelines. In football, wearing helmets while on the sidelines is **not** a substitute for wearing a facial covering.
- Players not in the contest and on the sidelines **ARE REQUIRED** to be socially distanced (as close to six feet apart as possible).
- Outside of game play, players are **NOT PERMITTED** to have physical contact with their teammates (such as high-fives and handshakes). Coaches and other team personnel are also not permitted to have physical contact with players.
- Spectators **ARE REQUIRED** to wear facial coverings.

With Ohio recently showing an increase in the number of COVID cases, we again send 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 Sports Order are being followed when hosting a contest. However, to help slow the spread and ensure that our seasons continue, here are some suggestions 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.
- **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** and **signage** within your facilities.

OHSAA Football Playoffs on Spectrum News 1; Football and Other Tournaments on NFHS Network

Spectrum News 1 will provide exclusive television and streaming play-by-play coverage of the OHSAA football state championship games and other selected football playoff games each week. Football games not televised or streamed by Spectrum are available for live video streaming or tape-delayed television with payment of a rights fee. The fee structure is posted at:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/News/Media/TournamentBroadcastRates.pdf>. Spectrum's weekly game selections are posted at: <https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Football/Football-2020/2020-OHSAA-Football-on-Spectrum>. Live audio broadcasts in all sports are permitted with payment of a rights fee (see link above) if a host site can accommodate the request.

In addition to Spectrum's football coverage, the NFHS Network will provide live video streaming of selected OHSAA postseason tournament contests, including the cross country and soccer state championships, the volleyball and field hockey state tournaments and other selected tournament contests during the sectional, district and regional tournaments. Contests not selected by the NFHS Network are available for live video streaming, live television or tape-delayed television with payment of a rights fee. The fee structure is posted at the link shown above.

Please inform your fans that there are several fraudulent websites advertising live pay-per-view streaming of OHSAA football playoff games. If a game isn't being streamed by Spectrum News 1 at OHSAA.tv or the NFHS Network, please advise your fans to check with you for verification of their 'official' video streaming source.

Football Playoffs Continue

The 2020 OHSAA Football Playoffs continue Friday and Saturday, Oct. 23 and 24. Divisions I, II, III and VII will play on Friday nights and Divisions IV, V and VI will play on Saturday nights. Each division will have seven playoff rounds with the exception of Division I, which will have six. Division I will hold its championship game on Friday, Nov. 13, while Divisions II through VII will be played the following week.

For the Regional Finals, the higher seeded team will have the choice to host the contest and may choose to host the contest at a site other than their home site. For the State Semifinals, contests will be played at neutral sites and will be based on the best site available (equal travel distance is not a consideration). Visit the OHSAA website at <https://www.ohsaa.org/Sports-Tournaments/Football/Football-2020/2020-OHSAA-Football-Playoffs-Coverage> for this year's brackets.

As a reminder, schools eliminated from the OHSAA playoffs or that choose not to enter the OHSAA playoffs have the option to schedule additional regular season contests through Saturday, Nov. 14 (maximum of 10 regular season contests permitted).

Other Fall Sports State Tournament Schedules

Here is the schedule for the OHSAA's other fall sports state tournaments:

Friday-Saturday, Oct. 23-24

Boys Division I State Golf Tournament, The Ohio State University Scarlet Course, Columbus, 9:00 a.m.

Girls Division I State Golf Tournament, The Ohio State University Gray Course, Columbus, 9:00 a.m.

Girls State Tennis Tournament, Lindner Family Tennis Center, Mason, 9:00 a.m.

Thursday, Nov. 5, and Saturday Nov. 7

State Field Hockey Semifinals (Thursday at 5:00 and 7:00) and Final (Saturday, time TBA), Thomas Worthington High School

Saturday, Nov. 7

State Cross Country Tournaments, Fortress Obetz, First Race at 9:00 a.m.

Thursday-Sunday, Nov. 12-15 (Exact Dates TBA)

State Volleyball Semifinals and Finals, Site and Times TBA

Friday-Sunday, Nov. 13-15 (Exact Dates TBA)

State Soccer Finals, Site and Times TBA

Playoffs/Tournament Ticketing

All ticketing for the football playoffs and all other OHSAA tournaments is being handled digitally by the OHSAA's digital ticketing partner, HomeTown Ticketing, and information has been shared with the participating schools by OHSAA Assistant Director of Operations Jacki Windon. The OHSAA has received additional correspondence from the Ohio Department of Health, and we wanted to share it with you to help clarify some of the questions surrounding the sale of general admission tickets. Here is the correspondence:

As you know, the Sports Order states "the primary purpose of permitting spectators at school sports events is to allow and encourage family/household members and loved ones of players, coaches, team staff members, officials, and other event participants (band, honor guard, cheerleaders, etc.) to observe and share in the experience." We have also said the goal is to allow two (2), and up to four (4), family members and loved ones of participants to attend their sports event.

For any remaining regular season sports events and during the playoffs, schools may allow more than four (4) family members and their guests to attend sports events if the school has surplus tickets after an initial offering to the families of participants.

Please note that even if a sports venue still has surplus tickets after an expanded offering to family members and guests of participants, the extra tickets cannot be offered to the general public. Moreover, a sports venue must remain within its spectator limit under Ohio's Sports Order:

- *Outdoor sports venues – Lesser of 1,500 spectators or 15% of fixed seating capacity.*
- *Indoor sports venues – Lesser of 300 spectators or 15% of fixed seating capacity.*
- *Spectator variance approved by the local health department and the Ohio Department of Health.*

Given the above and to again reiterate:

- All spectators will need a passcode to be able to purchase a ticket
- Only competing schools have passcodes to their event
- Schools may only distribute these codes through their traditional methods of ticket distribution
 - Players, coaches, band, cheerleader's families
- If one of the competing schools has not met its allotment, work with your opponent and mutually decide if you would like to give your codes to your opponent so they can sell more to their families. This is the ONLY instance in which you would share codes. Note that if you decide to do this, codes will only be valid until the allotment of tickets has been reached.

Reminder on Sideline Personnel

Schools are reminded that OHSAA sideline requirements for host facilities says **limit sideline personnel to participants, coaches, medical staff and game-day staff**. Our office has been made aware that an inordinate number of ejections and/or the berating of contest officials this fall has been by those who do NOT fit into any of those categories, with many appearing to be individuals who are non-licensed coaches and have not been approved by the Board of Education or similar governing board. Please be aware that

this requirement applies to both regular season and tournament contests and will be strictly enforced during OHSAA tournament contests.

Winter Sports Requirements, Recommendations and Modifications

As occurred for fall sports, the OHSAA staff has developed sport-specific requirements, recommendations and modifications for schools when conducting interscholastic competition in winter sports. Links to the sport-specific requirements, recommendations and modifications for winter sports are available here:

Basketball: <http://bit.ly/BKRecs>

Bowling: <http://bit.ly/BORecs>

Gymnastics: <http://bit.ly/GYMRecs>

Ice Hockey: <http://bit.ly/IHRecs>

Swimming & Diving: <http://bit.ly/SDRecs>

Wrestling: <http://bit.ly/WRRecs>

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

Like the current fall sports that are on-going, all mandates in the Ohio Department of Health Director's Sports Order must continue to be followed for winter sports. Here is a link to the Health Director's Sports Order: <https://bit.ly/2RWa1jh>. In addition, here is a link to the Health Department's Responsible RestartOhio guidance document for sports:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>, and here is a link to the ODH's Responsible RestartOhio guidance document for sports venues:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Sports-Venues.pdf>.

Additional Winter Sports Guidance – Athletes/Participants Counting in Capacity; Cheerleaders & Pep Bands

The OHSAA has received additional guidance from the Ohio Department of Health on various winter (indoor) sports concerns. First, contest participants (athletes waiting to play and athletes completing play, plus cheerleaders, pep band members, etc.) do not count toward a sports venue's allowable number of spectators under Ohio's Sports Order or any variance that has been approved for your facility. However, school administrators are cautioned to use good judgement in this area. If, for example, auxiliary areas are available for athletes waiting to play or having completed play, including cheerleaders, pep band members, etc., consider placing these students in that area. No matter where these students are placed, six-foot social distancing mandates must be followed, and facial coverings are required. Consideration should also be given to sending freshman, junior varsity and/or varsity teams on separate transportation to away contests and having those groups depart after their specific contests are completed.

Secondly, cheerleaders and pep band members are considered to be participants in the sports event and consequently subject to the Sports Order and guidance (links to both are provided in the previous section). Administrators should take caution on where they place cheerleaders (consider having them cheer as far away from players and contest officials on the court as possible and potentially in bleacher areas if room is available). Cheerleaders and pep band members must wear facial coverings when not performing and must maintain six-foot social distancing. For additional "recommended best practices" for pep bands, go to: <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Collegiate-Band-Choir-Dance.pdf>.

Winter Sports Schedules

With tournament season just beginning for some fall sports and other sports concluding regular seasons, it won't be long before winter sports will be starting. Here is the schedule for the beginning of practices and contests for the OHSAA's winter sports:

Girls Basketball

First Day of Practice – Friday, Oct. 23

Scrimmages with Other Schools – Can begin when practice begins

First Contest – Friday, Nov. 20

Boys Basketball

First Day of Practice – Friday, Oct. 30

Scrimmages with Other Schools – Can begin when practice begins

First Contest – Wednesday, Nov. 25

Bowling

First Day of Practice – Friday, Oct. 30

Scrimmages with Other Schools – None permitted

First Contest – Friday, Nov. 13

Ice Hockey

First Day of Practice – Friday, Oct. 30

Scrimmages with Other Schools – Tuesday, Nov. 3

First Contest – Friday, Nov. 20

Swimming & Diving

First Day of Practice – Friday, Oct. 30

Scrimmages with Other Schools – None permitted

First Contest – Monday, Nov. 30

Gymnastics

First Day of Practice – Friday, Nov. 6

Scrimmages with Other Schools – None permitted

First Contest – Monday, Dec. 7

Wrestling

First Day of Practice – Friday, Nov. 13

Scrimmages with Other Schools – Can begin when practice begins

First Contest – Thursday, Dec. 3

Winter Sports State Online Rules Meetings Now Live

This is a reminder that 2020-21 OHSAA state rules meetings for each winter sport (basketball, bowling, gymnastics, ice hockey, swimming & diving and wrestling) are now live and that completion of these online meetings is required for tournament participation. Schools are encouraged to have either the head coach, an assistant coach or the athletic administrator complete the meeting prior to the final meeting date for each sport. The final meeting date coincides with the tournament entry/withdraw without penalty date. All state rules meetings are available through *myOHSAA* and can be accessed through the Rules Meeting icon. Athletic administrators have been emailed additional information regarding tracking state rules meeting attendance from the OHSAA Membership Services team. Please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org if you have any questions or need assistance.

Scholarship Bylaw Modified

As was shared with administrators last week, the OHSAA has utilized Constitution Article 6-1-9 and decided to waive the scholarship bylaws found in 4-4-1, 4-4-5 and 4-4-3 through the first semester of the 2020-21 school year. This decision came after much feedback and with the continued concerns about different schools' educational delivery methods as they relate to class sizes, building capacities and social distancing. Whether your school has a 6-week, 9-week, semester or other grading period, all schools will be required to determine their students' eligibility (using the 5-credit equivalency {high school}/4 class {7-8 grades} standard) at the conclusion of the first semester. However, in accordance with Bylaw 4-4-1 and 4-4-5, the grades used to determine eligibility at that time will be those earned during the immediately preceding grading period (i.e. 2nd 9 weeks; 3rd 6 weeks; 1st semester, etc.). Semester grades should only be used if your school operates on semester grading periods.

Obviously, the OHSAA Office will continue to study this issue as the school year progresses to see if any additional modifications need to be made. It is our hope to resume previously codified scholarship standards for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year. Please note that, regardless of this decision by the OHSAA Office, each school is still permitted to continue enforcing this scholarship bylaw, or any other modified version, if you believe your school/district has implemented effective educational delivery methods which would support a student's ability to meet the bylaw's requirements. Similarly, keep in mind that the OHSAA Office has no authority to waive ORC § 3313.535, which requires each district to set a minimum GPA standard for students to be afforded a participation opportunity.

Congratulations to Ohio's Award-Winning Athletic Administrators

Three current or former OHSAA member school athletic administrators have been selected for national awards by the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) and National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). Selected as an NFHS Citation Award winner is **Joe Kimling**, athletic administrator and dean of students at Cincinnati Madeira High School. Chosen to the NIAAA Hall of Fame were **Dave Bell**, retired athletic administrator of the Zanesville City Schools, and **James Rolfes**, retired athletic administrator at Springfield North High School. While recognized as 2020 winners, Kimling, Bell and Rolfes will officially be honored during the 2021 National Athletic Directors Conference (NADC) in Denver in December 2021 since the 2020 NADC will be not be held in-person but instead will take place virtually.

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