



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Thursday, December 17, 2020



Administrator Update



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

Before sharing some updates and reminders, we want to express our sincere **THANK YOU** for all the work school administrators are doing with your students and student-athletes. With COVID-19, it has no doubt been a challenging year for everyone, but we can't thank you enough and hope that you are able to take some much-deserved time off from your busy schedule to **ENJOY BEING WITH YOUR LOVED ONES DURING THE HOLIDAYS!**

OHSAA Office Holiday Hours

The OHSAA office will be closed Wednesday through Friday, December 23 through 25, and Thursday and Friday, December 31 and January 1. In addition, many staff members may have limited availability the next two weeks in order to recharge themselves for the upcoming winter tournaments. Therefore, if you require assistance during this time, we appreciate your patience and ask that you please email the appropriate staff member. Staff responsibilities and email addresses can be found here:
<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/About-the-OHSAA/Office-Information/WhoToContact.pdf>

Student-Athlete Quarantine Guidance

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has asked the OHSAA to share their guidance on student-athletes returning from quarantine, now that the timeframe for quarantine for the general population has been shortened. Here is the question and answer (note that many local and county health departments have faced this question, so the ODH has asked the OHSAA to share their guidance):

- Q. If a student-athlete ends quarantine in a shortened timeframe of seven or 10 days, are they permitted to resume sports such as basketball and wrestling?**
- A. To minimize the risk of coronavirus transmission, student-athletes should wait until 14 days of symptom monitoring have passed since they would not be able to social distance or wear a mask during active practice or play. Such student-athletes ARE permitted to return to class sooner since they can social distance (at least six feet) and wear a mask when around others in class.**

Winter Sports General Update

As we have said previously, the decision for schools to move forward with their winter sports seasons is strictly a local decision. Schools or school districts may certainly choose not to participate in a contest or to pause their season(s) for a period and should do what is in their best interest. While understanding that our focus is on the health, safety and well-being of our student-athletes and all participants in the interscholastic environment, **at this point we have no plans to change the dates for our upcoming winter tournaments.** However, we will continue to study the data on COVID-19 and continue in discussions with the Governor's Office to determine if we need to make any changes. If we do, we believe we have flexibility that would allow us to look at implementing other models for our winter and/or spring seasons and tournaments.

We also want to reemphasize that administrators should **do all that you can to keep crowds to a minimum**, even going below the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order that limits spectators to the lesser of 15 percent permanent, fixed seats or 300. **Our recommendation is that you limit your crowds to parents and immediate family members.** By not being cautious and reducing the number of spectators, we are putting our student-athletes at risk of not only contracting and/or spreading COVID-19 but also risking the possibility of losing the winter sports seasons.

Winter Sports Ideas to Consider

Please see the Dec. 4 OHSAA Administrator Update for some ideas for administrators to consider when hosting contests. These are merely ideas and an attempt to help mitigate exposure (**and we want to emphasize that these are strictly local school decisions and the OHSAA will not penalize schools that do not follow these suggestions**). The Dec. 4 Update can be found here:
<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/BulletinBoard/20201204administratorupdate.pdf>

Observer's Program Continues with Winter Sports

The OHSAA Observer's Program is continuing this winter, and observers attended 50 OHSAA contests last week. These designated individuals are attending contests throughout the state to ensure mandates in the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order are being followed. Observers are asked to make contact with a school's athletic administrator and/or the required Compliance Officer prior to the contest, and, throughout the contest, they may provide feedback to the school contact regarding any violations they observe. **Concerns expressed to the OHSAA about various sites not following protocols may prompt our office to assign or reassign an observer to your school.** 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. After observers file their reports with the OHSAA, we will review each report and share them as a tool to help schools maintain the mandates to provide a safe atmosphere and continue to provide opportunities. Here is a link to the checklist that the observers will be using for winter sports:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports/2020/ObserverChecklist-WinterSports.pdf>

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>.

Administrators are reminded of these mandates within the ODH Director's Sports Order **(please share these with your coaches)**:

- Participants not in the contest **ARE REQUIRED** to wear facial coverings on the sidelines.
- Participants 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.
- Players (and cheerleaders) whose level of participation is upcoming or has been completed **ARE REQUIRED** to be socially distanced and wear facial coverings wherever they sit before or after their contest.
- Any spectators in attendance **ARE REQUIRED** to wear facial coverings and to be socially distanced.
- Disinfect and clean competition and high contact areas frequently.

Winter Sports Requirements, Recommendations and Modifications

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 (please note that the OHSAA sport management staff sends periodic sport-specific memos to coaches and/or athletic administrators with additional updates):

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>

Governor's Curfew Order

The new Ohio curfew Order does not mean schools must be home from their competitions strictly at 10:00 p.m., but venues/gyms need to be vacated by 10:00 followed by transportation back home. While consideration by schools and conferences/leagues should be given to move starting times for contests earlier, the new Order DOES mean it is imperative that administrators work with student-athletes and coaches to emphasize that, **once the contest ends or participants and coaches return from road trips, everyone should go home and not congregate at someone's house or a local restaurant.** Those types of gatherings have proven to help spread the virus and may play a major role in pausing a school's season.

OHSAA Provides School Form for Students Returning to Play from COVID-19

As a reminder, the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order says that a student-athlete who tests positive for COVID-19, whether symptomatic or asymptomatic, shall not return to sports activities until a documented medical exam is performed clearing the individual prior to the individual returning to participate in practice or games. The exam must specifically include an assessment of the cardiac/heart of high intensity exercise due to the potential of myocarditis in COVID-19 patients. To assist the membership, the OHSAA has developed a form that schools are welcome to utilize for students who have had the medical exam to verify that the student can or cannot return to practices or games. The OHSAA form is not a requirement, **but it is required that a student who has tested positive be evaluated by a physician and cleared in writing before being permitted to return to participation.** If a student's physician is reticent to issue this clearance, please advise parents to seek a second opinion from another physician. This physician is not required to be a cardiologist but could be any qualified physician who is willing to conduct this evaluation. The form is also for use by the student and schools only and is not to be returned to the OHSAA. Administrators can access the form here:

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

Winter Sports State Online Rules Meetings in myOHSAA

2020-21 OHSAA state rules meetings for each winter sport (basketball, bowling, gymnastics, ice hockey, swimming & diving and wrestling) have been available through the Rules Meeting icon in myOHSAA since October 14. The head coach, an assistant coach or the athletic administrator is required to complete the meeting prior to the final meeting date for each sport which coincides with that sport's tournament entry/withdraw date (**Jan. 25, 2021**: girls basketball, bowling, swimming & diving, wrestling; **Feb. 1, 2021**: boys basketball, gymnastics, ice hockey). Athletic administrators are encouraged to use the "View State Rules Meeting Attendance" link on the school's myOHSAA account to ensure their school has received credit for these meetings prior to the final meeting dates listed above as completion of the state rules meeting is required for tournament participation. Please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org if you have any questions or need assistance.

As a reminder, a \$50 late fee will be charged to access each meeting since regular season contests in each winter sport are now permitted. If your school has not received credit for the meeting due to a late hire of the head coach, please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org regarding the late fee prior to the completion of the meeting.

Additional Resource Available to View State Rules Meetings

Throughout the course of a sports season, we receive a number of requests from individuals asking to view the state rules meeting through myOHSAA without paying the fine (if it is after the deadline). This typically occurs when a coach not on the school's account or a non-school affiliated individual would like to view the rules meeting simply for the sake of learning more about the rule changes. To remedy this situation, our office has created a public YouTube playlist that will house copies of each state rules meeting. **Please note, neither the individual nor any affiliated school(s) will receive credit for viewing the meeting through YouTube. Individuals seeking credit must still view this meeting through their myOHSAA account.** This note is also present at the start of each video within the playlist.

The playlist may be accessed through this link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFid40HixWrRNPxrXdZPAx4X7VXXphXzq>. If you have any questions, please contact membershipservices@ohsaa.org.

Bylaw 4-4 (Scholarship) Waived Through 2020-21 School Year Per Constitution Article 6-1-9

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and after much consideration, the Executive Director's Office has elected to utilize Constitution Article 6-1-9 and **waive the scholarship bylaws found in 4-4-1, 4-4-5 and 4-4-3 for the remainder of the 2020-21 school year.** We applaud the schools that have been able to uphold these standards thus far, and each school is still permitted to continue enforcing these scholarship bylaws, 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. However, this decision to waive the scholarship bylaw through the school year is being made because we recognize that quarantines, differing educational models, varying access to the internet, etc. have made this a very challenging school year for our STUDENT-athletes.

With this decision, all student-athletes will be eligible for the first grading period of the 2021-22 school year (unless your district elects to uphold the standard). After that time, students will then be required to pass the appropriate number of credits/classes in order to remain eligible for the second grading period of the 2021-22 school year. Please contact Kristin Ronai (kronai@ohsaa.org) in our compliance office if you have any questions or, through Dec. 24, Debbie Moore (dmoore@ohsaa.org).

NOTE: 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.

Thank you for your attention to this information and for the service you are providing our student-athletes! We wish you and your family a great holiday season and a happy and healthy New Year!