



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Friday, January 15, 2021

Administrator Update

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

Winter Tournaments Draw/Seed Dates Approaching

Draw/seed dates for the upcoming OHSAA winter tournaments are quickly approaching. Athletic administrators and coaches will receive specific instructions for seeding and meetings from your respective OHSAA District Athletic Boards. Here are the draw/seed dates:

Girls Basketball, Bowling, Swimming & Diving, Individual Wrestling	Sunday, Jan. 31
Boys Basketball, Gymnastics	Sunday, Feb. 7
Ice Hockey	Wednesday, Feb. 10

Winter Tournaments Start Dates, State Tournament Information

Here is a sport-by-sport look at the starting dates for the upcoming winter tournaments along with where we stand in regard to the location of regional and/or state tournaments. Updates on the latter will continue to be communicated with the membership.

- Basketball** Girls sectionals may begin Feb. 8; boys sectionals may begin Feb. 15. The regional and state tournament sites are all to be determined. It is not yet known which of the previously announced sites will permit events to be held at their venue, or which will allow spectators. The OHSAA intends to use neutral sites for the regional tournaments
- Bowling** Div. II sectionals may begin Feb. 7; Div. I sectionals may begin Feb. 14. The state tournaments will remain at Wayne Webb's Columbus Bowl February 26-27 (Division II) and March 5-6 (Division I). The number of bowlers on qualifying teams will be reduced from eight to six bowlers per the COVID-19 Guidelines established in the fall. The number of spectators permitted is still to be determined.
- Gymnastics** Sectionals/districts may begin Feb. 15. The state tournament will remain at Hilliard Bradley High School March 5-6, but the format and some traditional aspects of the state tournament will be adjusted along with a reduced number of spectators.
- Ice Hockey** Districts may begin Feb. 15. The state tournament venue is to be determined since it is not yet known if Nationwide Arena will be able to host the event. Also of note, the two district tournaments in Northeast Ohio will both be held at the Brooklyn Recreation Center instead of having one tournament at Kent State University, which is not able to host the event. Spectator limitations are to be determined.
- Swimming & Diving** Sectionals may begin Feb. 8. The state tournament will remain at C.T. Branin Natatorium in Canton Feb. 24-27, but the format will be adjusted to remove preliminary sessions in swimming and complete each division in one day (timed finals) and allow a minimal number of people on the pool deck. Div. II girls swimming & diving finals are Feb. 24; Div. II boys are Feb. 25; Div. I girls are Feb. 26, and Div. I boys are Feb. 27. Two spectators will be permitted for each diving state qualifier, while only one spectator will be permitted for each swimming state qualifier. Several sectional and district tournaments do not yet have a pool confirmed to host the event.
- Individual Wrestling** Sectionals may begin Feb. 22. The state tournament will not be held at the Schottenstein Center, which is not able to host the event this year. The OHSAA is seeking three high schools, preferably in Central Ohio due to travel considerations, to each host a division. The district and state tournaments will include split sessions, with seven weight classes competing at a time, followed by a break and then the other seven weight classes. Spectator limitations are to be determined.

OHSAA Authority to Mandate COVID-19 Protocols

The OHSAA continues to receive questions about the Association's responsibility and authority to mandate protocols and restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the health standards during the pandemic are expressed in orders from the government via the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), our role is simply to assist member schools in understanding their general responsibilities to comply with such mandates. OHSAA member schools are advised to work with their local health department when specific questions regarding orders and mandates arise. Should the local health department have questions, they should contact ODH for clarification. To read the OHSAA's position on our authority, go to:

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

Observer's Program Continues with Winter Sports

The OHSAA Observer's Program is continuing this winter, and observers are attending OHSAA contests each week. These designated individuals are attending contests throughout the state to ensure mandates in the Ohio Health Director's Sports Order are being followed. 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>

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 Hosts – Ideas to Consider

The Ohio Health Director's Sports Order 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.** Please see the Dec. 4 OHSAA Administrator Update for additional 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**). That update can be found here:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/BulletinBoard/20201204administratorupdate.pdf>

Student-Athlete Quarantine Guidance

OHSAA member school administrators and coaches should be aware that Governor DeWine announced Dec. 30 that Ohio is changing its guidance regarding quarantines following an in-classroom exposure in K-12 schools. Students and teachers exposed to a COVID-positive person in school are no longer required to quarantine as long as the exposure occurred in a classroom setting and all students/teachers were wearing masks and following other appropriate protocols. However, schools should continue to require quarantines for exposed students in situations where masking and distancing protocols were not followed. **The updated quarantine guidance does NOT apply to after-school activities, including sports.** For more information, go to:

<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/resources/news-releases-news-you-can-use/covid-19-update-12-30-20>

In addition, the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has asked the OHSAA to share its guidance for student-athletes who ARE 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 its guidance):

- Q. If a student-athlete ends a quarantine in a shortened timeframe of seven or 10 days, is she/he permitted to resume sports activities?**
- 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.**

Governor's Curfew Order

The Ohio curfew Order, extended by Governor DeWine on Dec. 30, 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 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

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. 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 or for general assistance.

If someone desires to simply review the rules meeting without receiving credit, a playlist of each meeting can be accessed through this link: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLFId40HlxWrRNPxrXdZPAx4X7VXXphXzq>

Approval Given for Spring Sports Identification Camp Waiver in Team Sports

The OHSAA has given approval for student-athletes in the sports of baseball and softball to be permitted to use a one-time waiver during spring 2021 to attend an Identification (I.D.) Camp AFTER the student-athlete has participated in an interscholastic scrimmage or contest. Identification Camp refers to an individual workout and/or camp being offered by colleges or universities and do NOT include any other type of team showcase or non-school competition or practice. All events must take place prior to the start of spring 2021 tournament play in that sport. The recommendation comes after changes were made to the NCAA recruiting periods. The waiver form will be posted on the OHSAA website (www.ohsaa.org) soon.

Compliance Reminders

The compliance department has created a "January Compliance Reminders" video with an update on department personnel changes and some reminders about the modifications which have been made to the transfer and scholarship bylaws. We encourage building-level administrators to review this five-minute YouTube video at your convenience: https://youtu.be/ivF3GnWr_iQ

OHSAA Continues Review of Finances

As was noted in the Jan. 8 OHSAA Administrator Update, the No. 1 goal of the OHSAA remains the same – to provide high quality services to our member schools and enrich interscholastic opportunities for students. While we were encouraged by the final revenue and expense numbers of the fall tournaments, we entered the 2020-21 academic year projecting a loss of \$1.3 million, and it is highly unlikely that winter tournaments – with limited spectator capacity – will generate much revenue. The Board of Directors, executive director, chief operating officer and our finance team continue to explore additional financial options for the Association, and we obviously will keep you informed of any changes.

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