



# Ohio High School Athletic Association

Doug Ute, Executive Director

Friday, August 27, 2021

## **Administrator Update**

**TO:** Member Schools' Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators

**FR:** OHSAA Executive Director's Office

The following updates and reminders are being sent electronically to member school superintendents, principals and athletic administrators. Please share this update with other interested administrators and coaches on your staff.

### **Emergency Referendum Vote to be Held September 1-15, 2021**

At yesterday's (August 26, 2021) OHSAA Board of Director's meeting, the Board approved a recommendation by the Executive Director's Office to conduct an emergency referendum vote of member school principals between September 1-15, 2021, in accordance with Constitution Article 8-1-1. The referendum item, if approved, would restore the bylaws/exceptions that were previously removed due to legislative action in August 2019 and are currently shown as "strike-throughs" in the current *OHSAA Handbook* under the Transfer Bylaws. The reason these rules are now allowed to be restored is due to additional legislative intervention reversing the 2019 Ohio Revised Code language. Though all these bylaws were previously voted upon and approved by the OHSAA member schools, the Executive Director's Office does not have the authority to restore them without a membership vote, which is why an emergency referendum is being proposed. While more instructions on how schools will be able to vote on this issue will be forthcoming, the complete text of the referendum item is here:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/SchoolResources/refvote/EmergencyReferendum-FINAL.pdf>

### **Administrators Asked to Remind Coaches to Take Heat Precautions**

With most areas of the state experiencing a combination of hot temperatures and high humidity, resulting in the heat index reaching between 95 and 100 degrees, administrators and coaches are reminded to please take the necessary precautions to protect student-athletes from heat related illnesses. Besides making sure student-athletes drink plenty of fluids, administrators and coaches are asked to review the heat acclimatization and exertional heat illness prevention section in the *OHSAA Handbook* prior to any interscholastic practices and contests. The section is on pages 81 and 82 of the handbook and can be found at:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/SchoolResources/Handbook.pdf>. The sport of football has a five-day required acclimatization period and cross country has a 10-day required acclimatization period, which also means all athletes joining the team at any point of the season must participate in the sport-specific acclimatization period prior to any contact drills (football) or competition (cross country). Visit the sports medicine section of the OHSAA website for additional resources at:

<https://www.ohsaa.org/medicine>.

Don't forget that in sports like football, contest officials are permitted to establish predetermined breaks during a contest, such as halfway through each period. At that time players can drink water and remove their equipment, which should also take place at halftime. NFHS football playing rules also allow the referee to shorten periods per mutual agreement by the opposing coaches. In addition, by mutual agreement a game may be terminated at any time.

### **Report Student Catastrophic Situations to OHSAA and NCCSIR**

The OHSAA reminds school administrators of their reporting obligations when an unforeseen catastrophic situation occurs with a student-athlete at your school. First, please report the incident to OHSAA Senior Sport Administrator Emily Mason ([emason@ohsaa.org](mailto:emason@ohsaa.org)), who oversees sports medicine/healthy lifestyles issues within the office. She will help ensure the proper OHSAA staff members involve the Association's catastrophic insurance carrier and will inform the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). School administrators are also asked to report their catastrophic situation with the National Center for Catastrophic Sport Injury Research (NCCSIR) at [www.sportinjuryreport.org](http://www.sportinjuryreport.org). The NCCSIR, a research center that has tracked fatalities and catastrophic high school sports injuries in the United States since 1982, is directed by Kristen Kucera, Ph.D., at the University of North Carolina. Catastrophic athletic injuries, illnesses and medical conditions are defined as: 1.) Fatalities; 2.) Permanent disability injuries; 3.) Serious injuries (fractured spine/neck or serious head injury), even though the athlete has full recovered; 4.) Temporary or transient paralysis (athlete has no movement for a short time but has a complete recovery); 5.) Heat stroke or exertional sickling due to exercise, and 6.) Sudden cardiac arrest or death in an athlete (even if not directly related to athletics).

For more information from the NFHS and NCCSIR, view a three-page handout here:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Sports-Medicine/2021-22NFHS-NCCSIR-CatastrophicInjuryReporting.pdf>

## **COVID-19 Testing Available for Schools at No Cost**

Battelle, the global science and technology research and development company headquartered in Columbus, is teaming up with Midwest Coordination Center (MCC) to provide COVID-19 testing in 16 Midwestern states, including Ohio, at no cost. With funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the program is designed to help K-12 schools safely reopen and remain open by implementing a free COVID-19 testing program. The goal is to make testing easy (requiring minimal time and becoming part of the weekly routine); effective (accurate and tailored to your school's needs) and accessible (simple to access for every region in the state). To do this, MCC connects schools with testing services at trusted labs to screen K-12 students. The testing program helps schools and communities reduce the spread of the virus, limit the need for other public health steps like widespread quarantine and control outbreaks. For more information, visit the MCC website at [www.testedandprotected.org](http://www.testedandprotected.org) and click on the Resources tab, or click the following link to learn more about the testing process: <https://testedandprotected.org/#/about/testing>.

## **Athletic Guidance for COVID-19**

Here are updates and/or recommendations the OHSAA is asking our member schools to please consider as they relate to COVID-19. School districts and local health departments may set their own requirements, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said that masks are required while using public transportation (e.g. school buses). Please remember that protocols set by a school district or local health department may be different for your participants and spectators at an away/neutral site than those in place at your home facilities.

- **There currently are NO state mandates regarding vaccinations, masks and social distancing. Due to the circulating and highly contagious Delta variant, however, the CDC and Ohio Department of Health recommend that:**
  - \* **Masks be worn at indoor events regardless of vaccination status and that social distancing of three feet be maintained when there are crowded situations.**
  - \* **For outdoor events, those who are not fully vaccinated should wear masks and remain socially distanced of at least three feet where there are crowded situations.**
  - \* **Regardless of vaccination status, wear masks while in any enclosed structure at outdoor facilities such as restrooms, concession stands, ticket offices and press boxes.**
- **Anyone demonstrating signs of any infectious illness should go home and contact their healthcare provider for testing and care.**
- **Continue to work with your local health department when a positive test is confirmed to ensure the proper individuals are notified and to facilitate appropriate quarantines and contact tracing.**
- **Continue to encourage student-athletes who test positive for COVID-19 to gain medical clearance before they are permitted to return to practices or contests, with an approval form from the medical professional to be kept on file at the school.**
- **Continue to practice proper sanitation of student-athlete equipment and personal belongings and of all facilities and venues.**
- **Continue to utilize signage and public address announcements at your facilities that encourage spectators to practice good hygiene and know the symptoms and that encourage spectators not fully vaccinated to wear masks and stay socially distanced.**

## **Resources for COVID-19**

In addition to the information above, other specific Ohio Department of Health guidance pieces and resources follows. Please have school administrators and coaches read and familiarize themselves with the documents in these links.

- **Guidance for K-12 Schools (includes some items related to athletics and activities):**  
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/schools/K-12-Schools-Guidance.pdf>
- **Social Distancing, Masking and Congregating:**  
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/main-guidance-21.pdf>
- **Youth, Collegiate, Amateur, Club and Professional Sports:**  
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Youth-Collegiate-Amateur-Club-Pro-Sports.pdf>
- **Sports Venues:**  
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/static/responsible/Sports-Venues.pdf>
- **Posters and Signs:**  
<https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/responsible-restart-ohio/Posters-and-Signs>

## **OHSAA Virtual Administrator Workshop Aug. 31**

The OHSAA Executive Director's Office is offering one more training session to start the school year for administrators that will cover some common topics and relevant issues. After hosting two in-person trainings earlier this month that were created specifically for first- and second-year athletic administrators, the virtual meeting is also geared for new administrators but also for returning administrator who would like a general refresher on important topics. The date/details of this training is as follows:

### **Tuesday, August 31 – Administrator Workshop (Virtual, Microsoft Teams)**

- 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.
- Virtual setting via Microsoft Teams
- Unlimited attendees
- Registration required: [www.ohsaa.org/meetings](http://www.ohsaa.org/meetings)

Included will be discussion on sport administration/COVID advice; *myOHSAA* management/tournament deadlines, etc.; compliance/student eligibility issues, and best practices by OIAAA. For questions, please contact Kristin Ronai at [kronai@ohsaa.org](mailto:kronai@ohsaa.org).

## **OHSAA August 3 Board of Directors Special Meeting Minutes**

Here is a link to the minutes from the August 3, 2021, OHSAA Board of Directors Special Meeting:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Board-of-Directors-Minutes/2021-22/20210803BoardMinutes-Special.pdf>

Please feel free to share this link with other staff members and coaches that you believe may have an interest in the board minutes.

## **Bylaw 4-4 (Scholarship) Important Reminders**

- All student-athletes are eligible, with respect to their OHSAA scholarship eligibility, for the first grading period of the 2021-22 school year (unless your school chose to enforce your own scholarship standard or unless the student-athlete failed to meet your self-established minimum GPA standard).
- Fall and winter athletes need to be certain they are scheduled for at least five (5) credits at the high school level or four (4) classes at the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade level.
- **If an athlete does not pass the five-credit/four-class standard in the first grading period this coming fall, then he/she will become ineligible at the start of the fifth school day of the second grading period.** For schools on quarters, this likely will fall toward the end of your fall season, rendering these athletes ineligible for the rest of the season. **Check your student-athlete schedules and work with your guidance counselor to ensure this does not happen!**
- An OHSAA memo has been created a member for your student-athletes to remind them to get scheduled for enough credits/classes during the first grading period of the 2021-22 school year. You are encouraged to post this memo to your school website and/or print copies and provide them to your athletes. The memo can be obtained at:  
<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/Eligibility/ExecDirectorScholarshipReminder.pdf>.
- For questions, please contact Kristin Ronai ([kronai@ohsaa.org](mailto:kronai@ohsaa.org)) or Ronald Sayers ([rsayers@ohsaa.org](mailto:rsayers@ohsaa.org)) of our compliance staff.

## **OHSAA Foundation Student Leadership Conference October 5**

The Ohio High School Athletic Association Foundation will present a virtual Student Leadership Conference on **Tuesday, October 5**. The virtual conference begins at 8:30 a.m. and will conclude at 12:45 p.m. This year's theme is "Back to the Future," and the focus is on civility, created to inspire students to re-think the win-at-all-costs mentality which is so prevalent in youth sports today and provide tools to create a transformational culture, one that builds strong character and leadership traits . . . traits that will benefit them (and their school and community) long after their playing days. **Online registration information will be available the week of September 13.** The virtual platform will feature nationally renowned motivational speaker and organizer of the OHSAA Foundation Student Leadership Conference **Harvey Alston; Javier Sanchez**, whose passion is to move audiences from inspiration to action through stand-up comedy, poetry and powerful story telling; **Jenny Oaks-Baker**, who will share her real life story while also displaying her Grammy-nominated talents as an accomplished violinist; **Brian Wagner**, a speaker and author whose brain surgery changed his life and he now inspires others to improve their leadership vision, and **Jason Michaels**, who overcame Tourette's Syndrome to become an award-winning sleight-of-hand artist and professional speaker. School administrators are asked to mark your calendars now and think of the best ways to include student leaders of your interscholastic athletics programs in this important opportunity.

## **Play-by-Play Announcing Course Launched by NFHS Learning Center**

The proliferation of online streaming of high school athletic events has put a new focus on the need for a qualified play-by-play announcer when broadcasting live games. With the release of the new, free online course "Play-by-Play Announcing," the National Federation of State High School Associations' Learning Center provides important training to properly announce a live game. The course instructs users how to use proper tone and inflection when delivering game action to the audience and how to determine the important and relevant information of the contest. An entire section is devoted to starting a broadcast, including planning the open, setting the scene and introducing the game's participants. Additionally, the course demonstrates how to professionally prepare for a game as a play-by-play announcer before arriving at the game and just prior to broadcast, and it also provides a chapter on developing team chemistry with an analyst or sideline reporter. For more information and to access "Play-by-Play Announcing," please visit: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/play-by-play-announcing>.

Thank you for your attention to this information. We hope you are off to a great start to your fall seasons!