



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Doug Ute, Executive Director



Monday, December 19, 2022

MID-YEAR UPDATE

2022-23 School Year, No. 11



Hello OHSAA Member School Administrators!

Wow — what a year it has been since I sent a mid-year update last December. I am here again to share some thoughts and provide a few important reminders.

If you recall, I started in my position as OHSAA executive director in fall 2020 – the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic – and, since that time, I cannot believe the tremendous amount of dedication, cooperation, teamwork, creativity, flexibility and compassion that has come forward from everyone within the OHSAA family, from our administrators, coaches, officials, tournament hosts, boards and staff to those that we ultimately serve, the student-athletes. While the pandemic is certainly something that I hope no one has to live through again, I am proud and humbled by everyone's efforts since that time and am amazed how we have all bounced back. If I haven't said so personally to you, I want to extend a huge and heartfelt THANK YOU to everybody for a job well done!

Like I did last year at this time, I want to remind you to please take time over the upcoming holiday break to do something for yourselves, and be sure to spend time with family members and friends. We only have one chance at life, so please take care of yourselves and make sure to recharge your batteries. Also, take time to reflect on the many blessings we have, with one of those being the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the young people with whom we work each day.

As we move to the second half of the 2022-23 school year, I would like to share some of the positives that are happening within the OHSAA. First, the feedback we receive on nearly a daily basis is indeed invaluable, so please don't hesitate to continue sharing your thoughts. As I have said many times, our goal is truly to be an organization that serves and puts students first, and we cannot do that unless we continue to partner with you and collaborate on issues. While we no doubt cannot make every change that is recommended, please know that your opinions are valued.

With the changes we have made in our financial structure since my tenure began combined with tournament attendance holding steady and the benefits of digital ticketing, I am pleased to inform you that the OHSAA Board of Directors approved a recommendation late last week to provide tournament travel stipends to schools that participated in our 2022 fall regional and state team tournaments that total over \$500,000. This comes after we provided approximately \$650,000 in tournament travel stipends for team regional and state tournaments for all three seasons of the 2021-22 school year. Part of our revised financial plan has included reduced priced tournament tickets for students, and I think everyone would agree that that has proved to be an overwhelming success. As always, we will continue to evaluate the best ways to responsibly manage the financial assets of the organization and assist our member schools.

Something else positive within the OHSAA has been the hard work and outstanding dedication of our Board of Directors. As you probably know, Board of Directors members come from our elected OHSAA District Athletic Board members, and many of their "day jobs" are to serve in the same capacities as you . . . superintendents, principals and athletic administrators. Our president this year is Bill Nye, Ph.D., superintendent of the Grand Valley Local Schools in Orwell, and Gina Franks, director of student services at Dover High School, is our vice president. Additional Board members include David Alvarado, principal at Tiffin Columbian High School; Bo Arnett, dean of students and athletic administrator at Waverly High School; Andy Bixler, superintendent of the Anna Local Schools; Molly Feesler, athletic administrator at Thomas Worthington High School; Jay Selgo, Ed.D., superintendent of the Archbold Area Local Schools; Paul Stone, athletic administrator at Dayton Oakwood Middle School, and Jeff Wheeler, assistant principal and athletic

administrator at Meadowbrook High School in Byesville. Ex-Officio members are Glen Gillespie, executive director of the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association, and Scott Hunt, Ed.D., executive director, field relations, at the Ohio Department of Education. I not only want to thank them, but their oversight of the OHSAA has also been tremendous; they are incredibly talented and creative, and you could not find a group any more professional and friendly. The good news is, with the recent change where Board of Directors' terms expand from two years to three, this same group will make up the OHSAA Board of Directors again next year!

Reminders

As many of you have heard from me when I have spoken publicly, I continue to discuss the important topic of the health and well-being of our student-athletes. We pride ourselves in the training our coaches undergo before interacting with their athletes, and we continually work to improve and streamline this training. Besides the current requirement for all coaches to have a Pupil Activity Permit from ODE, last year we partnered with The Ohio State University LiFEsports Alliance and became one of only two state associations in the country to be awarded a grant from the Susan Crown Exchange, which is a group that supports nonprofits who prepare youth to thrive in our world. Our goal in the LiFEsports' Coach Beyond program is to educate 15,000 Ohio coaches in the next few years and arm them with necessary skills to recognize, understand and address a student's socio-emotional well-being. This training continues to be implemented in 12 districts across the state – where to date we have trained 3,535 coaches and 2,256 student-athletes – and we have every expectation to expand this training in the future. To learn more about the Coach Beyond program, please go here: <https://lifesports.osu.edu/what-we-do/teaching-learning/coach-beyond/>.

I would like to end this message by reminding you of the importance of all of us working together to ensure everyone is displaying proper and appropriate sporting behavior at all times during contests and scrimmages. Winning is everyone's goal, but it is not our purpose in interscholastic athletics. Interscholastic athletics provide lessons that help prepare our students for the next level of life. As an administrator or coach, you contribute greatly to the quality of the lessons our young people are receiving, and a big part of that teaching means you are expected to display sporting behavior at all times. You can read my full message on the importance of displaying sporting behavior that appeared in the November 29 edition of the OHSAA *Administrator Update* here:

<https://ohsaaweb.blob.core.windows.net/files/BulletinBoard/11292022AdministratorUpdate.pdf>.

At the OHSAA, we are truly excited for the new year because it provides us with an opportunity for reflection and renewed commitment. We value your support and cannot thank you enough for helping make the first half of this school year a great one. Stay healthy, and best wishes for a happy and safe new year!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Doug's Ute". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Executive Director
Ohio High School Athletic Association