



Ohio High School Athletic Association

Doug Ute, Executive Director

Tuesday, June 13, 2023

ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE

2022-23 School Year, No. 23

Hello!

It's that time of the year when we can finally exhale that huge deep breath we've been holding for several months. Yes, the end of the school year hits all of us differently, but there's no question that the pace of our jobs can be overwhelming and unrelenting. As I've mentioned previously, I want to thank all administrators for the work you do with young people at your schools. As educational leaders, your jobs and the decisions you make impact our students daily. I continue to be honored to work for an association that emphasizes education-based programs for our students, but our programs are only as good as the tremendous efforts you provide at the local level. Thank you so much for the amazing work that you do!

With summer upon us, I also want to reemphasize the need for all of us to take time to recharge our batteries and spend time with our loved ones. Take a few minutes here and there to reflect on the year that just took place and start thinking about how you can do things even better next year, but don't neglect yourself. We only get one chance at life, so, as an old coach used to tell me, please take the right steps and measures to ensure that you will be mentally and physically ready to go next year!

Our OHSAA District Athletic Boards deserve tremendous praise for organizing and overseeing the sectional and district tournaments, and I can't thank the sport administrators on our staff enough for their efforts with our regional and state tournaments. Most of these opportunities would not be possible without many of you providing sites for our tournament events, so we also express our tremendous gratitude to you and the many community members you secure to help. As many of you are likely aware, we grew by two sports this year when we added girls wrestling and boys volleyball as emerging sports. This now makes it 28 total OHSAA sports (14 for boys and 14 for girls), in addition to two "sponsored events," sideline spirit and Esports, that are conducted by our corporate sponsorship arm, Teall Properties Group (TPG), in partnership with Varsity Spirit and Esports Ohio.

Besides thanking you all for a job well done, I also wanted to take a few minutes to reflect on the school year that just ended and look ahead to some changes and points of emphasis in 2023-24.

- The OHSAA Board of Directors gave approval for our office to establish an "athletic enrichment" fund for the purpose of providing an equal financial contribution to each member high school's athletic department to assist with costs of equipment, uniforms, game transportation, officials and improving sporting behavior. Schools that return their membership cards by June 30 and have no outstanding dues or fines will be receiving a \$1,250 check from our organization in August 2023. In addition, we will continue to provide travel stipends to schools that participate in OHSAA regional and state tournaments in team sports.
- We will be transitioning to DragonFly Athletics as a technology solution for the 2023-24 school year beginning July 1, 2023. DragonFly will connect schools and assigners with contest officials and in a single, robust platform that can handle game scheduling, officials' assignments and electronic payments and in the future will include additional features such as officials' registration and testing. We also will be expanding upon our existing partnership with FinalForms, which will include serving as our partner in the near future for member schools' athlete and coach forms, registration (e.g. school directory) and compliance. We are continuing talks with both FinalForms and DragonFly to determine the best course of action for transferring other activities currently located in *myOHSAA* to other platforms, with the goal of sunsetting *myOHSAA* over the next few years. I certainly realize changes are not easy, especially in a state the size of Ohio, but I have confidence that both companies and the OHSAA will team up to make the changes as seamless as possible. DragonFly training locations and dates, which will be continuously added, can be accessed here: www.ohsaa.org/meetings.
- A major concern we will be emphasizing with our school administrators for the 2023-24 school year is improvement of the environments at our contests (e.g. sportsmanship). After meeting recently with a large

group of school administrators, conference commissioners, contest officials, students and other professionals, we plan to develop and share some tools for schools to use in 2023-24 to help improve your environments. As administrators, we all contribute greatly to the quality of the lessons our student-athletes are receiving. Let's make it a goal to teach POSITIVE lessons by creating better environments at our events!

- It's important to 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. Since the 2021-22 school year, we have partnered with The Ohio State University LiFEsports Alliance's Coach Beyond program to provide Ohio coaches with necessary skills to recognize, understand and address a student's socio-emotional well-being. This curriculum continues to expand and has even evolved into a new program geared toward the student-athletes themselves. To learn more about the vitally important Coach Beyond program, please go here: <https://lifesports.osu.edu/what-we-do/teaching-learning/coach-beyond/>.

In closing, I want to again thank you for your tremendous work. As I've said before, my excitement is unwavering regarding the direction of the OHSAA, where providing students with meaningful participation opportunities and a platform to teach life lessons is the best way to create our leaders of tomorrow. Let's continue to work together to ensure that that occurs. All the best for a tremendous and relaxing summer!

Respectfully,

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

Doug Ute, Executive Director