



Oregon School Activities Association

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To: Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors
From: Peter Weber, Executive Director
Subject: OSAA COVID-19 Updates

The OSAA's two governing bodies each met this week to discuss a variety of topics related to the pandemic and the Association's continuing guidance for member schools. The Delegate Assembly held its annual Fall meeting Monday and representatives from each league/conference provided input via caucus discussions by classification. The delegates weighed in on scheduling and transportation issues facing member schools, along with culminating week priorities. The Executive Board met Wednesday in a closed work session, as it has been doing every couple of weeks during the pandemic. The Executive Board reviewed the Delegate Assembly feedback and updates from staff members regarding the Contingency Groups, plus recent communication with the Governor's Office, Oregon Health Authority (OHA), and Oregon Department of Education (ODE).

Based on input, conversations and action at those meetings, please see the following updates and clarifications:

Local/Regional Scheduling and Leagues/Special Districts

The OSAA Executive Board is directing schools to prioritize local/regional play when scheduling contests for the 2020-21 school year. Toward that end, and based on input from the Delegate Assembly, the Executive Board has determined that schools will not be required to participate in their assigned leagues/special districts for the 2020-21 school year. While current league/special district alignments may continue to work for some, many schools are forecasting significant travel and transportation issues that will impact current structures. Availability of buses and bus drivers, increased costs due to passenger limits and transportation guidelines, and concerns for lengthy trips in an enclosed bus environment were among the issues raised by the delegates. Schools will continue to determine their own schedules which will likely include more cross-classification contests. Both governing bodies were resolute in their belief that all schools in the state, regardless of classification, will need to work collaboratively to ensure that schools are able to fill their schedules. Schools are encouraged to begin scheduling sooner rather than later while awaiting final decisions on culminating week structures.

Use of Rankings System

The OSAA Executive Board has determined that the OSAA ranking system will not be used for the 2020-21 school year. In alignment with the previous directions regarding local/regional scheduling combined with the impact a reduced number of in-classification contests could have on the validity of the rankings, the Executive Board felt strongly that a corresponding move to remove the rankings as a scheduling consideration was imperative. This will allow schools to focus on scheduling contests based on proximity to an opponent rather than on the contest's potential impact, positive or negative, on a team's ranking. [OSAA Contingency Groups](#) have already discussed the potential formation of committees involving ADs and coaches to help determine culminating week matchups when necessary.

Prohibited Sports

Per the OHA's [Statewide Reopening Guidance – K-12 School Sports, Limited Return to Play](#), full-contact sports continue to be prohibited at this time. Full-contact sports include wrestling, basketball, football, dance/drill (contact) and cheerleading (contact). Remember that training and conditioning may take place in these sports but no competitions or contact between participants of any kind is permitted by the OHA's directive. These restrictions cannot be waived by the OSAA Executive Board or staff. OSAA staff is in regular communication with the Governor's Office and OHA

regarding the timeline for possible reconsideration of these policies but thus far has received no indication of any pending reconsideration.

Comprehensive Distance Learning and Indoor Competitions

Many schools have contacted the OSAA regarding what is allowed for competitions while the school is in a Comprehensive Distance Learning format (CDL). Per the OHA's [Statewide Reopening Guidance – K-12 School Sports, Limited Return to Play](#), indoor competitions are not allowed when a school is in CDL. Therefore, schools must be in a hybrid or on-site instructional method in order to hold indoor competitions. These restrictions cannot be waived by the OSAA Executive Board or staff. OSAA staff is in regular communication with the Governor's Office and OHA regarding the timeline for possible reconsideration of this policy but thus far has received no indication of any pending reconsideration.

Music Guidance

While sports guidance comes from the Governor's Office and OHA, guidance related to music activities comes from ODE. OSAA staff has been working directly with ODE regarding clarifications for what is allowed in afterschool settings regarding practices and rehearsals. Please see the most recent music information released [here](#). Current ODE guidance states that schools are to follow the guidance for limited in-person instruction for these afterschool events and limit groups to 10 or less. The OSAA is seeking further clarification on topics such as but not limited to: the number of cohorts a director/instructor meet with daily/weekly, the total number of students (absolute number) for an after school model for those in limited in person instruction, time limitations for students on campus, and the maximum number of cohorts if practice is conducted outdoors. As we await further guidance from ODE, music groups should follow the restrictions stated in the Limited in Person Instruction which can be found [here](#).

Culminating Week Events

While no definitive decisions were made this week regarding culminating week event formats and structures, there was tremendous feedback from the governing bodies at this week's meetings. Feedback was centered on maximizing participation opportunities and providing a meaningful event for students when possible. This will hopefully include state championship-like events but depending on gathering restrictions, travel constraints and financial considerations for schools and the association, a traditional state championship event may not be possible in many activities. A concept that schools may be able to opt in for culminating week events was also discussed. A regional approach has been suggested as an option and OSAA staff will continue to work with the [Contingency Groups](#) on that approach, plus multiple other options for consideration. Considering the directive to prioritize local/regional regular season play it will be imperative that [Contingency Groups](#) in all sports/activities concentrate efforts on developing flexible qualifying models that can accommodate events that could potentially include multiple classifications.

Deadline for Season 2 Decisions

As the state looks to re-examine school opening metrics and school districts make decisions regarding timelines for returning to in-person instruction, the Executive Board will continue to meet regularly to discuss upcoming decisions. Executive Board members plan to make decisions regarding Season 2 activities and culminating week events on or before their December 7 meeting if possible. Decisions about Season 3 and 4 culminating week events will be made once those seasons are closer to commencing. The Board remains committed to providing opportunities for students provided it can be done safely in accordance with guidance from our state educational and medical partners.

End of the Association Year

In light of the changes to the 2020-21 OSAA Calendar, the Executive Board has taken action to change the end of the Association Year. The 2020-21 Association Year will end on Sunday, June 13 with summer activities able to begin on Monday, June 14. The Executive Board wanted the date to be late enough into Season 4 to promote participation in Season 4 activities but didn't want to wait until the end of June.

For the latest OSAA information regarding the Coronavirus pandemic, please visit: <http://www.osaa.org/coronavirus>.

Thank you for all your efforts on behalf of the students and families in our state. Stay safe and be well.