

MINUTES OF THE IHSA SPORTS MEDICINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

September 16, 2020

The IHSA Sports Medicine Advisory Committee conducted an online meeting on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, beginning at 11:30 a.m. Committee members present were: Amanda Baugher, Collinsville; Greg Gaa; Dr. Cynthia LaBella; Ryan Hornaday, Tuscola; Chris Murphy, Lombard (Glenbard East); Dennis Piron, Batavia; Dustin Fink, Mt. Zion; Sara Flanigan, Wauconda; Dr. Preston Wolin; Dr. Darr Leutz; Dr. Darren Hancock; Aaron Kremmel, Belleville (East); and Eric Benson, Somonauk. Also present were IHSA Assistant Executive Director, Stacey Lambert and IESA Associate Executive Director, Nicole Schaeftbauer.

General Items of Discussion

1) The Committee discussed the change to the upcoming season limitations. The Committee understands that each sport coach is going to want to maximize their already limited season. They are encouraging coaches and school administrators to proceed with caution and have prepared the following statement:

Sports Medicine Advisory Committee recommends that athletic directors and coaches work to build rest time into their schedules to protect their student-athletes. With the shortened season, keep in mind that maxing out your season limitation may not be in the best interest of your student-athletes in terms of health and safety in the long run.

2) The Committee discussed the conflict between the upcoming high school and club seasons. With the IHSA Board of Directors adjusting the season limitation to allow more high school competitions SMAC felt caution should be taken. While they understand this will force some families and coaches to make a difficult decision they felt, "The job of the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee is to protect the athlete. From an orthopedic standpoint, to prevent overuse injuries it is important to limit same sport, high school and club participation, in the same season."

3) The Committee discussed winter sports return to play. They heard an update from Dr. LaBella about her conversation with Dr. Ezike from the Illinois Department of Public Health. The Committee discussed looking for creative ways for sports to happen as positivity rates are not the same across the state. We are in this for the long haul, need to establish how can this work in the long run and be sustainable.

The Committee felt as a state association, coaches will be great ambassadors of the rules to keep positivity rate low and keep contests available if rates stay reasonable.

The Committee talked about gatherings and what defines a group of 50. Will fans be allowed at contests or a limited number of fans? They felt this was to be determined as we move forward with capacity regulations.

The Committee discussed the upcoming winter sports offerings of, basketball, bowling, cheer and dance, gymnastics, swimming and diving, and wrestling. They discussed how to keep athletes safe wearing masks during contests and if that was always safe based on the sport. The prevailing question is if it can't be done safely in a mask, should it be done? They also talked about the liability if a student contracts COVID when not wearing a mask during competition

4) The Committee discussed wrestling and the recommendation to move the season to May. They hope to see action on this soon so schools and participants can plan accordingly.

5) The Committee discussed football players transferring out of state and playing football this fall then transferring back to play a spring season in Illinois. SMAC understands there are currently no rules preventing an athlete from playing the same sport twice in a school year as long as their transfer is legal and meets all IHSA by-law requirements.

6) The Committee discussed spring football and how that season change will impact summer contact days for football as well as football starting in August of 2021. They questioned how to allow summer contact days with full contact and eventually landed on the potential need for some modifications to football summer contact for summer 2021.