

NEW YORK STATE PUBLIC
HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION



Education Through Interscholastic Athletics

NEWS ANNOUNCEMENT

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NYSPHSAA To Delay Fall Sports Start Date & Cancel Fall Championships

Latham, NY – The Officers of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA), voted to delay the official start date of the Fall 2020 sports season, cancel the Fall 2020 Regional and State Championships and prepare to implement a condensed season schedule in January 2021 if high school sports remain prohibited throughout 2020 due to COVID-19. This decision comes at the recommendation of the NYSPHSAA COVID-19 Task Force when they convened as a working group for the third time this morning.

“As the state considers reopening, it is unrealistic to believe athletic seasons can start on August 24th as originally scheduled,” said Paul Harrica, NYSPHSAA President. “The priority will continue to be on the educational process and a return to learning in the safest way possible.”

The NYSPHSAA Officers’ decision includes:

- Delay Fall sports start date until Monday, September 21st (*NYSPHSAA PAUSE*)
- Cancel Fall Regional and State Championship events
- Waive seven-day practice rule
- Maintain current practice requirements
- Encourage geographic scheduling for games & contests
- Schools would have the option, if permitted by state officials, to offer off-season conditioning workouts.

“We recognize this is challenging for everyone, but the decisions made at the State level are based upon data and statewide infection rates all in an effort to stop the spread of COVID and reopen responsibly,” said Dr. Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA Executive Director. “At this time, Department of Health guidance presented on July 13th prohibits interscholastic athletics across the state. The Association will continue to follow state guidance and will work collectively with State officials to ensure high school athletics will start up responsibly in the future. As an association, we must be willing to be flexible and continue to explore all options with students’ safety as our main focus,” Zayas concluded.

With regional differences, schools and areas will be impacted differently by the COVID-19 crisis. At the discretion of the NYSPHSAA Officers and authorization from state officials, if the Fall sports seasons are interrupted or impacted by COVID-19 crisis (i.e. state official guidance, school closings, cancelation of high-risk sports, etc.) then a condensed seasons plan will be implemented.

The Condensed Season plan would entail the following, with the stipulated dates being tentative.

Season I (*Winter Sports*)

Dates: Jan. 4-Mar. 13 (Week 27-36) 10 Weeks *Note: tentative dates

Sports: basketball (girls & boys), bowling (girls & boys), gymnastics, ice hockey (girls & boys), indoor track & field (girls & boys), skiing (girls & boys), swimming (boys), *wrestling, *competitive cheer.

* Because of high risk nature of wrestling and competitive cheer, sports may have to be moved to Season II or season III.

Season II (*Fall Sports*)

Dates: Mar. 1-May 8 (Week 35-44) 10 Weeks *Note: tentative dates

Sports: football, cross country (girls & boys), field hockey, soccer (girls & boys), swimming (girls), volleyball (girls & boys), Unified bowling.

Note: Weather will have an impact upon outdoor sports in some parts of the state in March and potentially early April. Girls Tennis moved to Season III.

Season III (*Spring Sports*)

Dates: Apr. 5-Jun. 12 (Week 40-49) 10 Weeks *Note: tentative dates

Sports: baseball, softball, golf (girls & boys), lacrosse (girls & boys), tennis (girls & boys), outdoor track & field (girls & boys), Unified basketball.

The NYSPHSAA Officers have the ability to adjust seasons with the authority granted within the NYSPHSAA Constitution which states: *"Article IV, 2: A committee of officers in consultation with the staff shall have the authority to act on all matters not provided for in this constitution and bylaws, and on such emergency business as may arise between regular meetings of the Executive Committee."*

In an effort to assist schools in complying with recently released NYSDOH guidance, the NYSPHSAA COVID-19 Task Force is supportive of the use of the ezSCRN application. The ezSCRN application provides a unique online tool for schools to utilize if screening is part of their reopening plan as it complies with New York state and national restrictions and guidelines (i.e. Ed 2D Law, etc.). The EzScrn application allows a school or team to easily screen, trace and track students/ staff and immediately notify school administrators and health care officials of anyone exhibits COVID-19 symptoms.

A full report, including meeting minutes, will be released later this week. The next meeting of the COVID-19 Task Force has not been determined. Dr. Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA Executive Director, will be available to the media, via a zoom press conference, at 3:00 PM today. To be invited to this press conference, media are asked to contact Chris Watson, NYSPHSAA Director of Communications, at cwatson@nysphsaa.org.

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About NYSPHSAA (Twitter: @NYSPHSAA | Facebook: NYSPHSAA | YouTube: [NYSPHSAA Sports](#))

The New York State Public High School Athletic Association Inc. is a non-profit, voluntary, educational service organization composed of public, parochial, and private schools dedicated to providing equitable and safe competition for the students of its member schools. The organization conducts 32 championship events and governs the rules and regulations of high school athletics in New York State. Membership is open to secondary schools providing interschool athletic activities for boys and girls in grades 7-12.