



michigan high school athletic association

Mark Uyl, Executive Director

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TO: MHSAA Member Schools  
FROM: Mark Uyl, Executive Director  
DATE: July 17, 2020  
SUBJECT: MHSAA Summer Update

Allow us to provide the following update.

Our current plan is MHSAA member schools will begin the 2020-21 school year playing Fall sports as traditionally scheduled, but with contingency concepts for potential interruptions due to the spread of COVID-19.

The Representative Council, our 19-member legislative body, met virtually with MHSAA staff Wednesday (July 15) to discuss a series of ideas for playing sports beginning in August. The Council will meet again July 29 for further discussion on Fall sports. Currently, high school football practices are scheduled to begin Aug. 10, with all other Fall sports to start practice Aug. 12.

The MHSAA is moving forward with a return-to-play plan for fall sports that follows this progression:

1. Play Fall sports in the Fall, as scheduled.
2. If conditions deem it necessary, delay the start of some or all Fall sports practices and competitions.
3. If conditions only allow some sports, play lower-risk Fall sports with higher-risk Fall sports postponed until later in the school year.
4. If any Fall sport is postponed or suspended, resume the season using a reconfigured calendar that would see a completion of Winter sports, followed by the Fall and Spring seasons potentially extending into July 2021.

Additionally, the Council considered a concept that would swap traditional Fall and Spring sports, but determined that was not a feasible plan. Football, girls volleyball, girls swimming & diving and boys soccer during the Fall are considered moderate- or high-risk sports because they include athletes in close contact or are played indoors; they were considered the impetus for potentially switching all Fall sports to Spring. But traditional Spring sports – girls soccer and girls and boys lacrosse – carry similar risk, negating the value of making that full-season switch. Moving only selected sports, like all low-risk sports, to Fall was not considered sound because it would force student-athletes to pick between sports they have previously played and would have created new problems for many students.

Plans remain reliant on progression by schools and regions across the state according to Governor Gretchen Whitmer's MI Safe Start Plan. Currently, two regions are in Phase 5, which allow for limited indoor activity, while the rest are in Phase 4 and unable to host indoor training, practice or competition. "MHSAA Summer Guidance #2" issued on June 9 continues to be the regulations for all summer activity for member schools and coaching staff personnel.

Our student-athletes just want to play, and we have gone far too long without them playing. Remember that doing so safely, of course, remains the priority. Our plan moving forward is Fall in the Fall, starting on time. We are excited to continue moving forward to bring back sports safely. It is important for keeping students in our schools and keeping students in our sports programs. We remain grateful to the Governor for the opportunity to build the schedule and policies for returning sports to schools. We will continue to support her directives and those of the state and local health departments as we work to create the safest environment for all involved in our activities.

The MHSAA staff is building COVID-related policies for all Fall sports and will make those guidelines and precautions available to member schools by July 24. Those policies will follow up what was presented to schools for summer offseason training, which began June 1 across the state and has seen thousands of student-athletes participate.

Please look for our next update on Fall sports to be provided following the July 29 Representative Council meeting.

As we heard from the head coaches at the University of Michigan and Michigan State University during the Governor's Wednesday press conference, we ALL need to continue to do our part NOW for sports to return in the coming weeks and months.

Thank you.