2020 Fall Sports Voted to Begin on August 24th

On August 21st PIAA Board of Directors voted to permit the start of Fall Sports to begin on Monday, August 24th by local school decisions. The Board believes that the decision to compete in athletics should be made locally, allowing for each school entity to decide whether to compete or not and it which sports.

When starting athletics, schools must keep strict adherence to the health and safety plans they created, as well as the PIAA Return to Competition Guidelines created by the PIAA.

PIAA is committed to attempting to provide a season for all sports and student-athletes. The Board also voted on August 21st, that based on local school decisions, the PIAA will monitor school participation in fall sports and may pursue alternate solutions, if needed.

PIAA has worked diligently with its Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and developed the following general policy statement:

Based on currently known information, the SMAC believes that STRICT ADHERENCE by schools and teams to their school-adopted plans and the Governor’s School Sports Guidance should provide a reasonably safe environment for student athletes to participate in interscholastic athletics as currently scheduled.

We remind those individuals who have strongly advocated for athletics that they must keep strict adherence to school health and safety plans. All individuals involved in interscholastic athletic communities have a role in the health and wellness of all participants.
Rule Interpretation Meetings
The deadline to complete the online rules interpretation meetings at no cost for officials and coaches is extended through September 4th. Officials will then be charged $50.00 and coaches $75.00 to complete the meeting until Sept. 15th when access closes. For step by step directions on how to complete the meeting, please click here. As a reminder schools whose coaches do not attend or complete the online rules interpretation meetings of those fall sports offered by the PIAA must pay a $100.00 fine for non-attendance.

Event Capacities and Spectators
The PIAA continues to receive numerous questions regarding event capacities and allowing spectators. This is not a PIAA rule but is stated in the Governor’s target mitigation order FAQ’s, see below, or click here for the entire document:

“Does the Governor’s Targeted Mitigation Order apply to school sports?
Yes, the Order applies to school sports.

- Indoor sporting events and gatherings of more than 25 persons are prohibited.
- Outdoor sporting events and gatherings of more than 250 persons are prohibited.

Sports-related activities at the PK-12 level are limited to student-athletes, coaches, officials, and staff only. Band and cheer are also allowed in a sports setting, but individuals involved in such activities count towards gathering limitations and must comply with face covering order and social distancing guidelines. Visitors and spectators are prohibited from attending in-person sports-related activities.

The document states that visitors and spectators are prohibited. The PIAA will continue to advocate to the Governor’s office the limits to the indoor event capacity is not favorable for girls’ volleyball and water polo. PIAA also believes spectators should be permitted to attend following safety guidelines.

COVID-19 Information
Schools are encouraged to post signage notifying the general public of the risks related to possible exposure. As many member schools have already done, schools may utilize COVID-19 waivers for student-athletes.

Best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19:
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover any coughs or sneezes with your elbow, not your hands.
- Clean surfaces frequently.
- If you are unwell, stay home to avoid spreading COVID-19.
- If you must go out, you are required to wear a mask when in a business or where it is difficult to maintain proper social distancing.

PIAA Football Sub-varsity Rule Modifications
(Junior Varsity OR Junior High/Middle School)
The Board of Directors approved a one year pilot program to permit football teams upon mutual agreement between them, and for sub-varsity contests only, to allow for a modification for timing and playing rules. Please see the three options listed below:

**Administration:** At the sub-varsity level, schools may mutually agree to hold an athletic event under the following three (3) conditions:

1. Play the event pursuant to NFHS Football Rules;
2. Play the event pursuant to NFHS Football Rules and agree to utilize the kicking game modifications below; or
3. Play the contest as a scrimmage utilizing the scrimmage modifications detailed in the link below.

Regardless of the method determined to play the event, PIAA-Registered officials must be present to conduct the event during the defined-regular season. Assigning of officials and payment of officials fees are to be agreed upon by the school and/or league and the registered official.

For a complete list of the modification that can be used, for sub-varsity football games, please click here.