



# Ohio High School Athletic Association

Jerry Snodgrass, Executive Director  
March 31, 2020  
Administrative Update

**To:** All OHSAA Member Schools' Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators  
**From:** Jerry Snodgrass, Executive Director

Good afternoon to each of you. In light of yesterday's announcement by Governor DeWine, I felt it important to communicate the following as quickly as possible. I applaud our Compliance Staff for their forward thinking and preparation while being in constant contact with the ODE and NCAA. Thank you for your continued efforts to educate students and in so many cases come together to support our health care workers and provide much needed meals to your students and families.

## **Guidance for Fall Scholarship Eligibility**

In response to many inquiries from OHSAA member school administrators, the Executive Director's Office provides this guidance as it pertains to Scholarship Eligibility for the fall of the 2020-2021 school year. Nothing in this guidance should be construed as indicating that the OHSAA has made any final decision relative to the suspension of Bylaw 4-4 as it applies to scholastic standards for student eligibility. If such a decision becomes necessary, it will be made and would be required to be made in accordance with duly adopted Constitutional provisions approved by the membership and authorized by the OHSAA's Board of Directors.

Bylaw 4-4-1 indicates that a student must receive **passing grades** in a minimum of five one-credit courses or the equivalent (or five classes in grades 7/8 – possibly four classes if a current referendum issue passes) during the "immediately preceding grading period" in order to be eligible for the 2020 fall season. To assist your school in decision making for the remainder of the school year, please consider the following:

- The "immediately preceding grading period" refers to the grading period of the school which immediately precedes the grading period in question. So, if your school elects to forego the 4<sup>th</sup> grading period for whatever policy reason, then the grades the students received at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period would be what you use to determine their eligibility for fall sports. This would essentially be turning your 3<sup>rd</sup> grading period into your 2nd semester or final grading period of the 2019-2020 school year.
- A "Pass," "Satisfactory," etc. is considered a passing grade. If your school elects to forego traditional letter grades in lieu of *Pass/Fail* or *Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory* for the remainder of the school year – which is permitted, that should have no impact on the eligibility of fall athletes if the student were scheduled for enough credits (or classes in grades 7/8). However, if choosing to provide grades for the final grading period on a Pass/Fail basis, please be advised that you will not be able to calculate a Grade Point Average (GPA) for that grading period. Keep in mind that OHSAA Bylaws do not consider GPA when determining compliance with the scholarship standards expressed in Bylaw 4-4.

## **Information Relative to NCAA Eligibility for Incoming Freshmen**

On Thursday, March 26, the NCAA Eligibility Center released the following statement:

*In response to closings, cancellations and changes related to COVID-19, the Eligibility Center is closely monitoring the impact on students and their ability to meet NCAA initial-eligibility requirements. The EC will be posting more information here in the coming days to assist our membership, prospective student-athletes and the high school community. For information on COVID-19, please visit [ncaa.org/COVID-19](https://www.ncaa.org/COVID-19) and continue to monitor for more information.*

- While the OHSAA does not provide interpretations on NCAA initial eligibility requirements or any other rule governing collegiate athletics participation, our Office wants you to have access to that information as soon as it is released by the NCAA.

## **Information Relative to CCP**

In accordance with guidance provided to the OHSAA by Dr. Larisa Harper, Director of CCP for the state of Ohio, the following statement is provided for our member schools:

*“Due to the closure of secondary schools and colleges changing to only remote/online courses, the colleges are giving the option to students to take a Pass/Fail grade instead of an ABCDF grade due to the extraordinary changes.”*

Nothing in this guidance should be construed as indicating that the OHSAA has made any final decision relative to the suspension of Bylaw 4-4 as it applies to scholastic standards for student eligibility. If such a decision becomes necessary, it will be made in accordance with duly adopted Constitutional provisions approved by the membership and authorized by the Board of Directors.

## **Information Relative to Spring Sports & Beyond**

Yesterday’s announcement by Governor DeWine extended mandatory school closures through May 1. As a result:

- The mandated No-Contact period has been extended through this date (May 1). This is to assist with the Governor’s ‘stay at home’ order, to prohibit coaches from privately meeting with student-athletes AND to put all schools on an equal level relative to future competitive opportunities.
  - It should be noted that the No-Contact Regulation was never intended to discourage or prohibit electronic communication with student-athletes. For the mental well-being of student-athletes, it is actually encouraged but is NOT intended for coaches to encourage any form of group gatherings or instruction.
- No practices or competitions may occur through this date (May 1).
- Since other events and activities are not permitted by the current Governor’s orders, we collectively believe we can continue looking at abbreviated schedules for spring sports. While cancellation remains on the table with all other options, there are many factors that enter into possibilities. Availability of venues for any events, Dept. of Health guidelines and Governor’s orders are all part of the equation. Under no circumstances will we compromise the safety of student-athletes, coaches, officials, game workers or fans. Everyone in the schools is aware of the extremely fluid situation and we will continue to update you as things change.
- Simply so we are prepared, we have begun looking at:
  - Off-Season Regulations. In the event activities are permitted to begin in June or July, we are looking at adjusting off-season regulations to expedite a return to school-based athletic programs.
  - Fall Sport Issues. Again, I feel it is incumbent for our staff to look at every ‘what if’ and be prepared. In a worst-case scenario, if events/practices/training are shut down during or through the summer, the reality exists that many of the thousands of student-athletes may lack any high-level physical training. We need to look at what serves our student-athletes best relative to acclimatization periods. I want to stress that we are PLANNING for worst-case scenarios by identifying all the challenges we could potentially face.
- We applaud all of you for helping with providing guidance and leadership to your coaches with the request they speak with their student-athletes (electronically of course) to convey to them the seriousness of the current crisis and an understanding that ALL of us are in this together and understand their emotions and desire to ‘get back.’