



Oregon School Activities Association

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January 8, 2021

TO: OSAA Executive Board

FROM: Kris Welch, Assistant Executive Director

SUBJECT: OSAA Baseball Contingency Group Meeting Summary

The OSAA Baseball Contingency Group met on January 7, 2021 via a Zoom meeting for the 4th time. Most members were present.

We began as a whole group of Season 3 sports with Baseball, Softball, Track & Field, Tennis, and Golf Contingency Groups together as the OSAA staff went over the current status as of January 7 for the 2020-21 Association year. It included the Executive Board's December 7th decision to shift the seasons and truncate each season to 5 weeks of competitions. This also included a summary of the OHA's latest directive of tying Indoor and Outdoor Recreational Activities to a County's Risk level instead of a school's instructional method. It also tied all groups together under the same guidance with the only exception being Professional and Division 1 sports. We continue to request the reclassification of the sports and potential loosening on the restrictions but have not heard back yet. After the completion of information and questions and answer session, the contingency groups broke off into their own break-out sessions.

The Baseball Contingency quickly reviewed our goal to develop a set of recommendations that we can present to the OSAA Executive Board, and to help our 204 membership schools who sponsor baseball during these unprecedented times of uncertainty.

Any regular season recommendations for the Board to consider?

There was some discussion on the frustration of baseball and ALL spring sports being cut from the original 7-weeks of the season to 5-weeks like all other sports when spring lost ALL of last year and there should have been more emphasis on protecting the spring sports when decisions were made. The baseball group had met three times and felt that the decisions made were not reflected from the ideas and thoughts from this group. The group was reminded that they are our "think tank" coming up with ideas, but the ultimate decision is being made by the Executive Board with the best possibility for ALL students in Oregon. The group encouraged the public that if they have ideas or suggestions or concerns, that they could direct them to the OSAA office. The first question/concern was on umpire coverage as in year's past there has been a challenge getting all contests covered and that parents or coaches in some areas had to umpire in order for the kids to play. This is a grass root effort to allow kids to play, so everyone involved may have to step up to help. We may even need to get to the point of only one umpire at the varsity level, while not ideal, it may need to be considered in order for kids to play. Another question came up about dugouts and their designation as indoor, it was concluded that dugouts are just a place for the kids to sit with no recreational activity, so they could be used during games,

but physical distancing must be maintained at all times and if that means the dugouts need to be extended further out, then that will need to take place. With the lowering from 7-weeks of competition to 5-weeks, this group is in support of allowing the sub-varsity teams to continue to play during the culminating week. The coaches felt that there needs to be some changes to the game at the sub-varsity level when it comes to defensive substitutions allowing open subs defensively as long as it keeps the integrity of the batting lineup. The umpires can support this alteration to the game especially since this takes place throughout the summer at most levels. There was also some concern with the length of time of only 3-weeks to get pitchers arms in shape that they would like an additional 2-weeks to allow for arm strength and conditioning to take place.

Culminating Activity – not all schools will opt in – likely some will create their own bubble because of travel restrictions/concerns impacting number of participating schools. Does this matter? Should it be an extra week of competitions or a culminating activity?

This group would like to know what the culminating week looks like and the timeline for decisions. There was discussion of potentially extending the baseball season, this group would like to know how much could it be extended (one week, two weeks, or three weeks) as there are other factors involved in the decisions of these baseball coaches with their baseball programs. This group also felt that there needs to be something more than just playing additional games, the teams want to be playing “for something of meaning.” In previous meetings this group discussed different possibilities for each classification during that culminating week to mimic as much of a possibility of a state championship as it can. There are some areas in the state that already have a backup plan in place if there is no guidance from the state. Baseball can easily play at home sites as they have done in the past and could play up to 3 games during that week. They feel as if a committee could be formed at each classification to determine who (top 8 teams) could qualify for their culminating week. There could be a survey done at the beginning of the year to see where schools are at with opting into a culminating week. There could be some different options for schools during the culminating week (opt-out, opt in to just schedule 2 additional games, or Opt-in to playing for something). Schools could fill out a survey within the first week of competition so that a Committee could get together either regionally or state-wide, take that information from the survey and put a bracket together.

Practice Limitation “Rule of 2, or Pilot Program? What are your thoughts for the Board on practice limitations? Should the Board leave the seasons open so coaches can coach year around, or should the Board reinstate the practice limitations during Seasons 2-4?

After some discussions there were mixed feelings; the smaller schools would have huge concerns and creating problematic situations if we did not have the Rule of 2 in place; and the larger schools mostly wanting the season to be open and allow schools to be able to work things out within their coaches in sharing kids and having their own closed periods. There was some discussion on extending the “Rule of 8” for 4-weeks to allow kids to get their arms in shape and stay in shape the entire season.

The future meeting dates:

- TBD (6:00pm – 7:15pm)

Thank you for everyone’s willingness to be on this group and for your insight!