



Oregon School Activities Association

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To: Superintendents, Principals, Athletic Directors, and Fall Commissioners
From: Peter Weber, Executive Director
Subject: Officials Communication and the October 18 Vaccination Mandate

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) has determined that sports officials are considered contractors/service providers to member schools and as such, after October 18, 2021, will be required to be fully vaccinated or have provided documentation of a medical or religious exception to officiate school events, regardless of where the event is held.

The OSAA staff is working with all local officials' association Commissioners to collect and verify the vaccination status of their membership. This is an ongoing process with varying results depending on where the association is located. **It is imperative that your school communicates to your local associations any additional requirements in place regarding masks and/or for those who have a documented medical or religious exception.**

It is clear at this point that some areas of our state will see a potentially significant reduction in the number of certified officials working in Football, Volleyball, and Soccer after the October 18 mandate is in place. This is especially concerning given the fact that a downward trend in the number of people showing interest in becoming sports officials was a reality prior to the pandemic.

Member schools need to start preparing for this reality now. Strategies that include moving game dates, sites, and times may not be enough to offset the number of available officials which could lead to an increase in the number of games without coverage. Given this, it is critical that all conferences/leagues start thinking about prioritizing the contests after October 18 that must be played in order to advance teams into Fall OSAA State Championship brackets.

Frequent communication between schools and your local association Commissioner regarding transportation issues and/or cancellations due to quarantining has proven to be critical already this season. As we near October 18, it will be even more important in piecing together this complicated puzzle. Local associations will be working together to cover as many games as possible on any given day. However, schools should expect that all options are on the table for local assignors to get the games covered; any concerns from member schools regarding changing dates, times, and sites on short notice will be addressed on a first come, first served basis. If schools are unable to accommodate the options presented to solve scheduling problems, it is conceivable their contests may not have coverage.

Working together is the best option as the mandate approaches and is ultimately implemented. We can anticipate that there will be increased costs, increased frustration, and potential disappointment but the OSAA, the OAOA, and all local associations across the state are committed to providing the best coverage possible regardless of the number of officials that choose to remain within the ranks after October 18.

We encourage you to contact your local association Commissioner within the next few days to discuss strategy. Establishing clear lines of communication now will pay dividends as we all collaborate to navigate a pathway that maximizes participation opportunities for students.

Thanks to each of you for your ongoing efforts to provide impactful participation opportunities for students despite our many challenges. Please know that it is truly appreciated.