

Rhonda Blanford-Green  
Commissioner-CHSAA

As we move closer to receiving a final decision from the State's COVID Response Team, I wanted to personally "Thank" those that have elevated their leadership and communication skills to address your coaches and school communities especially in this time of uncertainty and more importantly, when you don't have all the answers.

Since March, athletic leaders have been facing prolonged challenges about starts, delays, resuming and planning centered on activities. We have had to wait on others to determine when, how and what our jobs would look like today, tomorrow, and next year. It is frustrating and our levels of anxiety continues to rise, but it is our reality. A reality we should all be willing to endure and accept to get back to the what we love and to serving our school communities at the highest levels of professionalism.

I'm not pointing fingers and criticizing the Governor or his Response Team because I don't know every detail or why they approved the RMAC and didn't rubber stamp the CHSAA cross country plan (we were asking for more runners than the current state guidelines). I don't feel entitled to be involved in their every decision, manage their timelines or dictate how and when they release information to the Association. I remain focused on the controllables and lead my team to be prepared to execute when those decisions are given. Getting our student-participants back to the court, course, field, track, pool, etc is the priority and we will make it happen when given the chance.

Our original plan was submitted in June to resume to all sports in their traditional season aligned with the Governor's transition to the next phase and superintendent's preparation for 100% return to classroom. The rise in reported cases and spikes in statewide outbreaks has caused state, health and educational organizations to hit pause and alter their plans. The Association has not been immune to the scrutiny. We were asked to re-submit plans justifying how CHSAA planned to resume athletics and activities within the current safety guidelines and aligned with the Return to Learn plans of 181 school districts and 53 local public health agencies. The revised plan includes a quadrant of four modified and shortened seasons, seasons A-D with an extension of the competitive season through June 28, 2021. This wasn't done with a disregard to the adjustments administrators will need to make at the local level but decisions made on behalf of your student-athletes and their opportunities. The plan as revised and submitted protects rural/small school programs and three/four sport athletes. In the past 48 hours, we have been asked to make additional modifications and respond to a series of concerns by state health advisors. We will continue to advocate for more traditional starts but with the recent data points and upward trajectory rate of COVID-19 transmission rates being discussed by state health officials, a less traditional plan for acceptance is more likely especially in regards to contact sports. We will share in collaboration and at the request of the COVID Response team, the Activities Calendar for 2020-2021 when it has been approved for public release. As always, CHSAA Assistant Commissioners will provide direction and next steps once I am given permission to proceed.

“We have to remain flexible knowing that these decisions could be modified or changed even after approval. We should celebrate the recent opportunities for our athletes and coaches and move optimistically knowing that more opportunities will come,” said Troy Baker, President of CHSAA. “We are grateful for the leadership and commitment of our Commissioner, CHSAA administrators and State officials who are doing their due diligence, in unprecedented times, to safely resume activities for the students of Colorado.”

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