

What concerns exist with reopening prep and youth sports this fall?

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Salem Statesman Journal
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Athletes, coaches and administrators want high school and youth sports to open as safely and as soon as possible after months of being shut down by the coronavirus.

If they resume action this fall, what will it look like?

There won't be an answer to that question until deeper into the summer, but officials are already discussing concerns and possible scenarios.

"We're just kind of getting into them," said Peter Weber, executive director of the Oregon Schools Activities Association. "It's just trying to figure out within the guidelines what things could look like."

Brainstorming ideas

The OSAA has put together contingency groups to brainstorm ideas for how to have a fall season while still adhering to the state's guidelines, whatever those might be in August and September.

Earlier in May, Gov. Kate Brown said large gatherings, such as sporting events, should be canceled or modified through the end of September.

"We're talking about what things could look like for the summer, what practices could look like come fall, what contests could look like," Weber said. "We're trying to use the expertise of some of the coaches and (athletic directors) who are familiar with those different sports."

State tournaments were canceled before completion.

High school sports in the fall include football, volleyball, boys and girls soccer, and boys and girls cross country.

No fans a possibility?

There has been discussion nationally for college and professional sports about competitions with no spectators, and that also is a possibility for high school sports.

But that can create issues financially for schools and school districts.

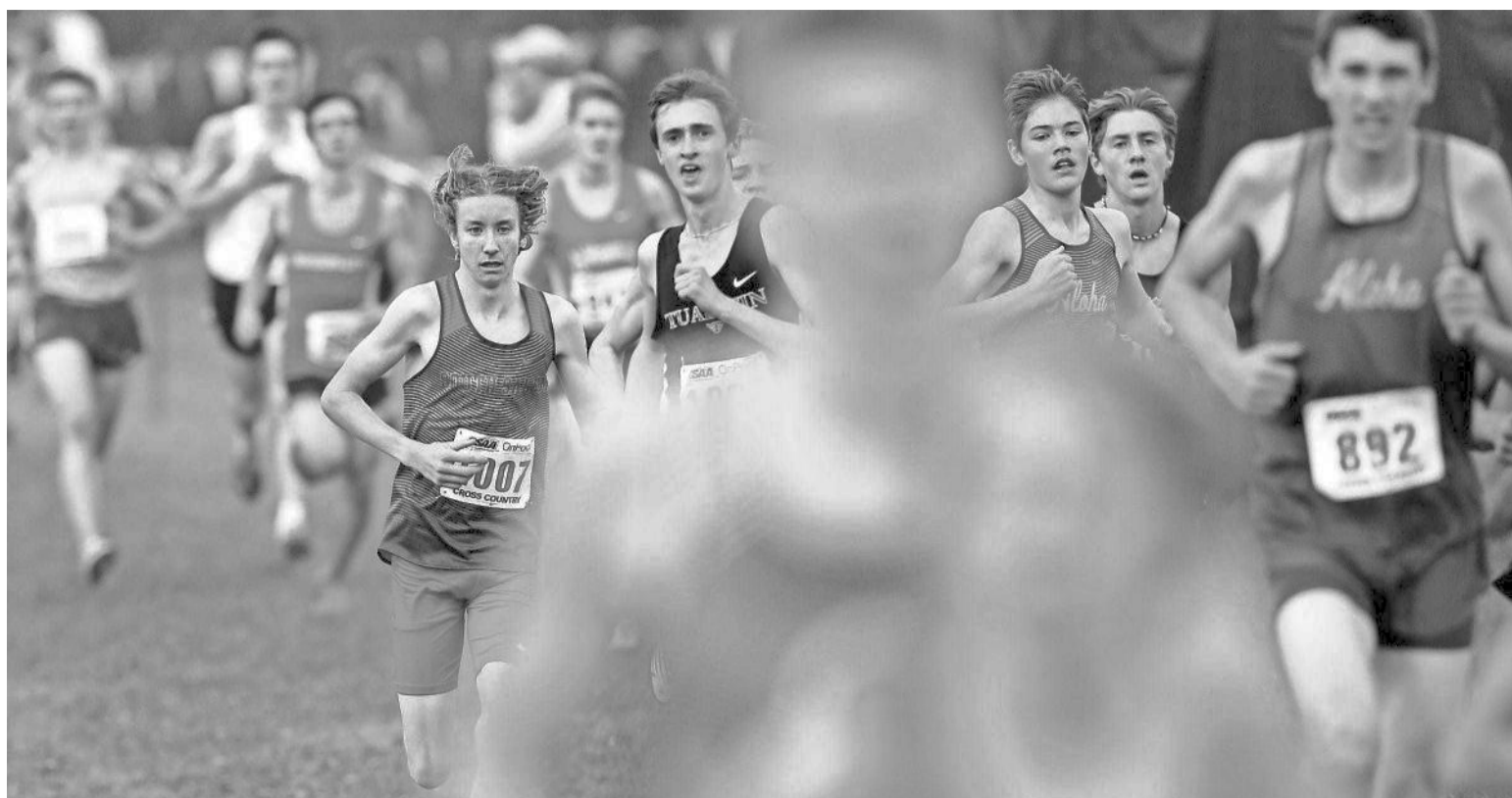
"If you have an event with all of the expenses, and none of the income, then that probably doesn't work very well from a financial standpoint," Weber said. "But with those conversations, there's still a lot to be learned about what the requirements could look like, and those types of things. At this point, we're just trying to figure out what ideas are out there."

West Salem Athletic Director Bill Wittman said the sports budget already has taken a hit with the cancellation of spring sports.

"We didn't get our spring participation revenue that we usually do, so we're already starting off a little bit behind," Wittman said. "Are we going to see a reduction in participation because families are nervous about coming back too soon?"

One of the significant duties of an athletic director is event management for high school sporting events, and with a number of possibilities, they need to think about how many people it will take to pull it off.

"Officials, transportation, game workers, concessions, ticket-takers, you name it," said Wittman. "If the guidelines are different than we're used to, and we assume



South Salem's Justin Saunders Tyquiengco, 1007, competes in the OSAA Class 6A boys cross country state championship at Lane Community College in Eugene on Nov. 9, 2019. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL



McNary's Ashlyn Lyda (4) and Liberty's Sophia Magdaleno (6) chase after the ball during the Liberty vs. McNary girls soccer game at McNary High School in Keizer on Sep. 10, 2019. ANNA REED / STATESMAN JOURNAL

they will be, then you've got crowd control, as far as lines and social distancing. Who's going to enforce it, how's it going to be enforced?"

The district is aware of the potential budget shortfall for high school sports in the fall, but it does not currently have a plan to address it.

"We have just convened a team to begin working on fall logistics," said Lillian Govus, director of community relations and communications for Salem-Keizer Public Schools. "Certainly, that's one piece to be considered."

Different counties in different stages?

One possible hurdle the OSAA will have to deal with is the fact that not all counties could be at the same stage of reopening.

It's possible the more densely populated areas in Portland, Salem and Eugene could have different state mandates than more rural areas in central and southern Oregon.

"Does that mean we play more regionally if we're able to play?" Weber said. "It could mean a lot of different things."

Transportation also could be an issue.

"Transportation is a big conversation as well. If we're needing to maintain some level of social distancing, what does that do to transportation and travel?" Weber said. "With more regional play, in some sports, probably not football, that could mean that you have schools in different classifications that normally wouldn't play each other, but if I needed to stay within my county, those

may be things that need to be looked at."

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Sprague, West Salem, South Salem and McNary are in the Mountain Valley Conference in football with the three Bend schools — Bend, Summit and Mountain View. And in all other sports, McKay is in that conference as well.

So there is a chance if transportation is limited, the conference could split into the Salem schools competing against each other, and the Bend schools competing against each other.

"Everybody is concerned a little bit about that," Wittman said. "They would rather play against themselves and regionally than not play at all."

Testing student-athletes?

During OSAA's planning for the fall, there have been conversations about possibly testing student-athletes at the start of fall camp.

"What does it look like when you're screening kids and coaches for a practice? How do you do it? Can you do it?" asked Weber. "Hopefully, everyone is good, but if somebody is not, then what do you do? And a lot of that will come from the medical community."

The OSAA has not set a specific date to have a plan in place.

"We'll have regular meetings with our board as we go into the summer," Weber said. "So much of it is going to be contingent on what's the plan for schools."

Youth sports

The Boys and Girls

Club of Salem, Marion and Polk Counties is starting to look at possibilities for having sports again in the fall.

"We know kids are going to need the positive interaction and guidance more than ever when our community begins to transition to pre-coronavirus times. Unfortunately, we're not sure when that will be," said Kyle Buse, athletics director for the Boys and Girls Club of Salem, Marion and Polk Counties.

The Boys and Girls Club is in constant communication with Salem-Keizer Public Schools and other youth sports providers to determine what sports might look like in the fall when they offer volleyball and flag football.

The Boys and Girls Club is planning to begin fall registration on July 1.

"(We're) using the next several weeks to closely monitor conditions in Marion County and the state of Oregon," Buse said. "And recommendations from Gov. Brown."

Bob Merwin, president of the Tualatin Valley Football League, a non-profit tackle-based football program for third-through eighth-graders in the Tualatin Valley, Portland and Salem, said they will likely mirror what OSAA does.

"If we do anything less than that, I don't think it speaks well to what we're doing," he said.

Even though they could have the discussion, Merwin doesn't think it will be worth having a season in the fall if parents and family can't attend the games.

"The way that we run our league is by a demo-

cratic system, and I'm not worth it." one vote of those, so I can tell you what my personal opinion is: No way," Merwin said. "Youth football is as much a family experience as it is a player experience. And if you eliminate the family from that, in my world, no it's

not worth it."

Pete Martini covers high school and college sports for the Statesman Journal. You can contact Pete at pmartini@StatesmanJournal.com, 503-399-6730 and follow @PeteMartiniSJ

Obituaries

Beverly (Norman) Myers

SILVERTON - Beverly Jean Norman was born in 1938 in Egeland, North Dakota.

She moved to Dufur, Oregon with her family in 1944. She also lived in Brownsville, Tillamook, and San Diego at various times where her father pioneered churches.

Bev married Lynwood Myers (deceased) in 1962. They were married for 54 years and made their family home in Silverton, Oregon.

In addition to being a loving mother and wife, Bev was generous with her time and gifted at serving. She volunteered in the accounting office at Christian Center of Salem for 30 years. Bev faithfully served with Christian Women's Club for most of her adult life. She loved to support missionaries and she served as "Camp Grandma" for many summers at Royal Family Kids Camp. Bev was also known to regularly buy and collect supplies for donation to the Union Gospel Mission, Simonka Place, and Hope Pregnancy Clinic.

Beverly is survived and lovingly remembered by her sister Darlene Wood, brother-in-law Ray Myers, brother-in-law Gordon (Nancy) Myers, son Mark Myers (Shelley), daughter Angie Hanson (Steve) and grandchildren Bryce Hanson, Kameryn Myers, Summer Hanson and Kendra Myers.

After a long battle with vascular dementia her spirit left her earthly body on May 24, 2020 at the age of 82.

The family would like to thank the caregivers and staff at The Woods at Willowcreek for their thoughtful care.

No service is scheduled at this time.





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