

OSAA gives guidance to schools on resuming sports

Schools will have some control of how they handle athletics beginning Tuesday

By Ronald Bond
The Observer

LA GRANDE — The Oregon School Activities Association announced last week that, beginning Tuesday, schools will be in control of what athletic activities they allow.

This means student-athletes may be able to begin summer activities and the process of moving back to a sense of normalcy.

But it won't be a carte blanche return to the way things were before the coronavirus shut down the sports world in March. Instead, the schools have received guidance from the OSAA, Oregon Health Authority and Oregon Department of Education on how they can begin the process.

OSAA also will be lifting this year's moratorium week, which would have been July 26-Aug. 1. The moratorium is a mandated seven-day period where coaches and administrators are prohibited from having contact with student-athletes, according to the OSAA website.

Schools in counties that have entered Phase 1 of Gov. Kate Brown's reopening criteria — this includes all of eastern and southern Oregon — are able to engage in summer activities, and school facilities can be reopened the day following the end of a district's school year.

Even with the easing of restrictions, the recommendations for schools put a limit on activities.

Gatherings, regardless if they are indoors or outdoors, are capped at 25 people.

OSAA recommends workouts are conducted in "pods" of five to 10 individuals. Pods should include the same individuals each time to reduce the risk of transmission. Social distancing is required at all times, and if that cannot be done indoors, then pod sizes should be reduced to allow

for the 6-foot minimum.

Coaches and students should be screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms, including a temperature check, and sent home if they have a temperature greater than 100.3 degrees.

Any student or coach who wishes to wear a cloth face covering should be allowed to do so, and personnel that may not be able to maintain distancing measures — coaches, officials or others — are "strongly encouraged" to wear a cloth face covering.

OSAA is discouraging the use of locker rooms in Phase 1, instead recommending students show up for activities in proper attire and immediately returning home to shower. Training clothing should also be washed immediately after use.

Any athletic equipment used, including weights or balls, should be cleaned between uses.

OSAA also has grouped its sports into three categories: low, moderate or high infection risk.

It names cross-country, track and field, swimming, golf and tennis as low risk activities; volleyball, soccer, baseball, softball and basketball as moderate risk; and football, wrestling, cheerleading and dance/drill as high risk.

Volleyball, baseball and softball could be labeled low risk with appropriate equipment cleaning and use of masks.

Conditioning and individual work are recom-

mended, and to be done in ways to maintain social distancing.

For running events, this means no running in groups.

For activities such as volleyball, soccer or basketball, it means individual ball-handling drills, one ball per individual, and not passing or hitting/kicking a ball between multiple people.

Contact is not allowed in any sport.

Tee work is suggested for baseball and softball, and cage work can be done by one player at a time. Bats and gloves should not be shared, and balls should be cleaned before they are used by another athlete.



Observer file photo

La Grande defensive back Blaine Shaw (3) intercepts a pass intended for Baker tight end Spencer Smith (32) during a game in 2019 in La Grande. The La Grande Tigers went on to defeat the Baker Bulldogs 34-0. The Oregon School Activities Association last week released plans to reawaken high school athletics in counties now in Phase 1 of reopening.



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