

Sports

Pac-12 athletes can resume workouts on campus June 15

By Tim Booth
AP Sports Writer

The Pac-12 Conference will allow voluntary workouts on campus for all sports beginning June 15, subject to the decision of each individual school and where allowed by local and state guidelines, the conference announced Tuesday.

The decision was made by the presidents and chancellors of the conference schools and followed the announcement last week by the NCAA that schools can reopen for voluntary activities beginning next Monday. The Pac-12's COVID-19 medical advisory committee created a series of guidelines and protocols for schools to follow once they decide to open for individual workouts.

"As states have either already opened or begin to open up access to parks, gyms and other training facilities, student-athletes should have the option at this time to be in, what for many, will be a much safer environment on campus, where they can have access to the best available health, well-being and training support," Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott said.

It's unlikely all 12 schools will open their doors at the same time. States with schools in the conference are reopening at difference paces and that will affect when athletes can return to campus

for workouts. Arizona has reopened many of its services and said professional sports can resume, while California, Washington and Oregon have been slower and more restrictive in allowing the resumption of small gatherings.

The biggest impact will be on the fall sports, most notably football. Several Pac-12 football coaches have said they would like six to eight weeks of preseason training and practice to be ready should the season begin as scheduled in late August and early September.

The guidelines created by the conference's medical advisory committee cover returning to campus; returning to an athletic facility; facility specific considerations; return to exercise and response to infection or presumed infection. The conference said each school will develop its own health and safety plan consistent with local public health guidance.

"As educational institutions, our highest obligation is to the health and welfare of our students, faculty, and staff," said Colorado chancellor Philip DiStefano, the chair of the Pac-12 CEO Group. "As we considered the pros and cons of taking steps that can pave a path to returning to play, those considerations were foremost, guided by the advice of our own medical experts along with public health officials."

PAVILION

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"We've already had a couple, two or three, plaques have been replaced already in another incident and now we have several broken ones again," Shollenberger said. "Some of them look like they were actually hit with a hammer or something because the same corner on every plaque was broken."

Councilor Lynette Perry, who started Baker City Events and was a member of the committee that worked to build the \$250,000 pavilion, said the 12-inch tiles were sold for \$1,000, large bricks for \$300 and smaller bricks for \$60.

Many of the bricks and plaques bear the names of people who have died, Shollenberger said.

There is no security system at the pavilion.

Police Chief Ray Duman said cameras "help tremendously," by potentially helping police identify vandals.

Mayor Loran Joseph said he and City Manager Fred Warner Jr. have discussed installing motion-activated cameras and lights at the pavilion.

Warner said Joyce Bornstedt, the city's technical administrative supervisor who oversees city parks, will look at options for solar-powered lights and cameras.

"They only come on at night," Warner said. "We believe that those plaques hit with a baseball or golf club or a hammer are done at night."

Shollenberger said she's also concerned about what happens at the pavilion during the day. She said lights and cameras could potentially be turned off during concerts and other events to avoid having the camera take unnecessary photos.

Joseph said city officials will continue looking into options for improving security around the pavilion.

Economic recovery update

Jeff Nelson, Baker County business adviser with Blue Mountain Community College's Small Business Development Center, is working as Baker County's liaison with businesses as they reopen during the coronavirus pandemic.



Jayson Jacoby / Baker City Herald

A damaged 12-inch commemorative tile at the Powder River Pavilion in Geiser-Pollman Park.

"My goal is to educate businesses on the requirements and recommendations set up by their industry," Nelson told councilors. "So, whether it's a restaurant or a tattoo artist or a retail shop, each one of them has different requirements and I work with them individually."

Nelson conveys concerns and questions from businesses to county and state leaders, as well as taking concerns from citizens on businesses with openings and businesses that might not be following guidelines such as for social distancing and employees wearing face masks.

Nelson has also helped businesses apply for financial aid through federal programs such as the Paycheck Protection Act.

"Right now I think I've calculated almost three million dollars that have come in to Baker County," Nelson said. "That'll help us at least get through this time, hopefully through June until we can really open up for business."

Nelson said a county task force is working on recommendations to send to state officials regarding further easing of restrictions during phase two of the reopening process, which Baker County could potentially start June 5.

"Overall it has been a nice reopening," Nelson said. "It was kind of rocky at first. I was worried about (Memorial Day) weekend because we had some tourists in, businesses were

open, and my phone only went off four times, so that was amazing."

In other matters before the Council Tuesday:

- Arthur Sappington suggested the City Council consider pursuing a certification as a Bee City USA — a city that promotes the health of bees and other pollinating insects.

"As I was looking around during the flowering season this year and doing an inventory on the potential pollination, we have more than abundant trees to support any and all recreational beekeepers that would choose to be within this area," Sappington said.

According to a handout Sappington provided, cities that are certified can improve their city or county's environment, eating habits, and economy by helping "to ensure the survival of vital animal species — hundreds of thousands of species of pollinators — crucial to our planet's complex food web."

Certified cities can also "raise community awareness of the dangers of non-native invasive plants to the local ecosystem and least toxic ways to deal with landscaping pest problems," according to the handout, and "raise community awareness of how our food grows and improve local food production through expanded pollination."

- Councilors appointed Brian Vegter to the city's Public Arts Commission.

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