



Section IX Athletics

Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

Section IX Re-opening Task Force June 15, 2020

- Greg Ransom welcomed and thanked everyone for participating in today's meeting. Greg's opening comments regarded what is currently taking place and the possibility that we could be as a group reacting to the actions of others.
- Goals: Dennis discussed alternatives and what happens if...
- How schools are going to deal with everything that is going on around them.
- Transportation – Officials – Spectators – Budgets were just a few of the topics discussed.
- Tom and Don stated that they were working on schedules to return to school.
- Ken mentioned that schools have to have a plan for reopening.
- Joe discussed the lack of information and direction that Superintendents were getting.
- The Governor's Office and SED need to inform the School Districts on what is going on.
- Robbie stated that everyone is waiting to hear about the Regional Task Force Meetings.
- Greg stated that the Governor's Office and NYSPHSAA will be providing direction but on what time table? We, Section IX, need to be prepared for conducting our Championships. Should we be having NYSPHSAA and/or Sectional Championships or just League contests? We need direction to be able to move forward. The Athletic Council makes the final decision.
- Robbie stated we should begin by starting with Dennis's list. We need real flexibility. Athletic Directors should be looking at things like their Code of Conduct. It would be helpful if the Department of Health was part of moving forward providing information and guidance.
- Chris talked about student-athletes getting back to school for practices and contests.
- Mike stated this meeting was good for starting the conversation and that more discussion needs to take place.
- Dom asked if everyone thought Athletics would begin on August 24, 2020. Is there a liability concern?
- Chris stated there are concerns with Coaching Certification that needs to be addressed by SED.
- Joe discussed that we have more questions than answers. In generating these questions we then can address the concerns.
- Greg noted that everyone could send their questions to him.
- Robbie thought we could start with Dennis's questions.
- Sue discussed the new protocols that Coaches will have to follow. The hygiene issues that will result with the transportation of athletes.
- Greg stated NYSPHSAA emphasis will be on keeping the Championships moving forward. He believes Section IX should be concerned with playing.
- Tom noted issues that need to be discussed such as staggering the start of certain sports. What happens if some schools are not allowed to travel?
- Greg ended the meeting with a concern that he will discuss with the Athletic Council regarding what coaches are now doing with the athletes.

Next Meeting Date: Monday, June 29, 2020 at 10:00 am

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Osborne



Section IX Athletics

Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

Section IX Re-opening Task Force Monday, June 29, 2020

- Greg Ransom introduced Dr. Robert Zayas, NYSPHSAA Executive Director and Chris Ericson, Orange County DOH
- Chris Ericson stated this is a challenging situation. The information is evolving all of the time. Hopefully we can take precautions and get things started.
- Greg Ransom – The chain of command on the issue will follow from the Governor and NYSPHSAA – Section IX – Leagues – School Districts. The decisions along the way will decide when and if sports are played this year.
- Dr. Robert Zayas – The NYSPHSAA has provided “Summer Guidance” when schools enter Phase 4. The Governor directed that Phase 4 opening does not apply to the schools. The quote that has been used is “Nothing is authorized until it is authorized.” Robert has contacted the NYSPHSAA Executive Directors.
- Chris Ericson was asked when he thought this situation would end. Chris stated his guess was that a vaccine would be required but that only was an assumption. A vaccine may be available through a primary care provider early next year. This is not definite and could change.
- Greg Ransom asked Chris if he had any suggestions regarding athletics starting in Section IX. Chris stated that social distancing is the key. We could focus on outdoor activities. We need to add safety measures, tracking, reducing contests, and possibly no spectators. Checks and balances need to be in place.
- Lori Hock asked when do we shift our plans. Dennis Burkett stated we are committed to play three seasons with adjustments.
- Greg Ransom stated as a reactionary group we need information to discuss and review. Greg asked Robert to discuss NYSPHSAA potential scenarios. Robert stated that what he is about to discuss were starting points and a framework to provide guidance. These potential scenarios were seasonal adjustments and Robert asked for comments from the Committee.
- Lori Hock stated that facility usage could be an issue as well as what sports are competing in that season.
- Dominic Zarrella stated that for smaller schools numbers could be an issue.
- Robert stated that the top priority was engaging students and getting back to school.
- Lori Hock stated that scenario #5 was well thought out and would provide for all the student athletes to participate.
- Joe Phelan stated that the scenarios are reasonable and most likely some tweaking will happen. There is equity in letting everybody participate. There are labor relation issues such as coaching stipends that need to be reviewed.
- Chris Mayo noted that Athletic Directors and Coaches need information to discuss and review in their school district.
- Robert Zayas said that after the NYSPHSAA Covid Task Force Meeting he will ask his Committee for feedback and ask that the scenarios be sent to the Athletic Directors, Principals, and Superintendents.
- Greg will send to the Section IX Committee the NYSPHSAA scenarios. Greg will be requesting feedback.
- Dennis Burkett stated we need to look at certain sports. The concept of large tournaments and invitationals may not be appropriate.

- Joe Phelan stated that the County DOH will be important in deciding how and when we move forward.
- Chris Ericson stated that the County DOH relies on the Governor and the State DOH for direction.
- Jim Osborne asked Chris to reach out to Sullivan, Ulster and Dutchess DOH Officials to let them know about the Committee.
- Greg Ransom asked when do we decide about the Fall season. Robert said we must be patient but his thoughts were late July.
- The Governor and SED plans should be out by July 15th.
- Greg also stated that we need to meet again soon to review and address different scenarios.
- Dominic Zarrella said we need to discuss Coaches overlapping positions and whether regional differences would be possible.
- Sections will have the flexibility to make accommodations.
- Chris Mayo asked Chris Ericson about CPR/AED and Coaching Certification. Chris said he would get details out.

Next Meeting Date: July 7th, 2020 at 9:00 am

If you have any scenarios please send them to Greg Ransom.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Osborne



Section IX Athletics

Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

Section IX Task Force Meeting Tuesday July 7, 2020

- Greg Ransom welcomed and thanked everyone for attending.
- Comments regarding NYSPHSAA Scenarios:
 - Lori Hock stated that the scenarios #1- #4 are unlikely but scenario #5 provides all students with opportunities, as well as coaches. Facilities could be an issue especially with Tennis and Girls and Boys playing at the same time.
 - Dominic Zarrella had similar concerns regarding athletes and coaches. Schools will have a problem fielding teams. Athletes participate on different teams, a lot of cross over.
- Dennis Burkett has concerns with having enough Officials. We should be looking at playing all three seasons.
- Chris Ericson, Orange County DOH, relayed that no new information has been presented. There has been some increases in Covid-19 cases and there are challenges. Providing a plan is showing positive movement.
- Robert Zayas – NYSPHSAA is waiting for new information and guidance. Education and Athletics is on lockdown waiting for a plan from SED and the Governor. School Districts are creating plans.
- Lori Hock – Scenario #6 provides flexibility, whereas scenario #5 provides framework.
- Dennis Burkett asked if we have a consensus on a date for cancelling the Fall Season. All levels might not be played.
- Chris Mayo stated unless we go back to regular class it will be hard to have athletics.
- Robbie Greene talked about transportation being a real issue. The CDC Guidelines regarding transportation should be reviewed.
- Joe Phelan stated any plan that Section IX recommends needs to follow Safety Guidelines and be consistent with the Governor, SED and DOH plans.
- Dr. Robert Zayas stated that we cannot create the perfect plan but we can create a plan for the school districts to review.
- Ken Hauck said we should not be putting a plan out in the public that we have to pull back.
- Greg Ransom asked “How do we want to get the information out to the Superintendents, Athletic Directors, Coaches and Community?”
- Greg said we need to do what is best for our school districts.
- Mike Bellarossa agreed we do not want to put something out we have to pull back.
- Dennis Burkett asked for Video Conference Meetings with the Athletic Directors and the OCIAA/MHAL as we become closer to a plan.
- Robbie Greene said we need to see the Governor and SED plans. We need to wait until we get Guidance.
- Joe Phelan agreed we needed to wait to set Guidance and we should continue to discuss different scenarios.
- Greg asked how we get the information to the Superintendents. It was noted that the Superintendents should get information before the other groups.
- Ken Hauck asked what about a Test Positive Plan and Greg asked Chris Ericson to answer. Chris said the DOH will put together a guidance working with the DOH of the other surrounding Counties.
- Tom Cassata stated School Districts will have concerns regarding the process when someone gets COVID-19.
- Chris Ericson stated everyone should review the Empire State Plan that is published.

Next Meeting Date: Thursday July 16, 2020 at 9:00 am

Respectfully submitted,
James M. Osborne



Section IX Athletics

Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

Section IX Task Force Meeting Thursday, July 16, 2020

- Greg Ransom stated documents were sent to the Committee and Dr. Robert Zayas reviewed the recommendation by the NYSPHSAA Task Force and approved by the NYSPHSAA Officers.
- Chris Mayo asked about options for School Districts. Dr. Zayas stated School Districts cannot do anything before September 21, 2020.
- Sections have the ability to work out which sports would be played during which season.
- Dominic Zarella asked about conditioning practices from Season 1 to 2 and Season 2 to 3.
- Section IX will make sure all information is distributed regarding changes to any regulations.
- Greg Ransom asked about how Section IX should respond, Chris Ericson stated based on the trend a September opening date is not happening. Maybe we should be looking past this date. The future will be challenging. It will be different.
- Robbie Greene stated that in the Regents report the use of non-traditional spaces for example gyms and other areas may be used.
- Greg Ransom said as a Section the question becomes if we are not in school in January 2021 will there be athletics. Everybody is looking for direction. Greg asked Joe Phelan what he thought the Superintendents are looking for.
- Joe Phelan said that the Superintendent's primary concern will be the Instruction of the students. What we do know is that nothing is going to happen until September 21, 2020. If we are able to start school and workout the issues that the pandemic has created then we will be able to move forward.
- Robbie Greene stated that we could see schools open by Region. The Governor report on August 7, 2020 will tell us a lot. Greg Ransom asked now that NYSPHSAA has released the Pause for Fall 2020 does Section IX need to make any statement to the School Districts. Do we want to add anything?
- Joe Phelan stated we should not get out in front of any announcement from the Governor's Office. We need to hear from the Governor.
- Greg Ransom will put together a statement to go with the release. Robbie and Joe will review the statement.
- Dennis Burkett stated the need for a MHAL/OCIAA Athletic Director's Meeting.
- Chris Mayo asked about what happens if some of the schools from the Leagues are not able to participate.
- Greg Ransom stated that would be a District decision. Joe Phelan said School Districts will have to deal with the pressures of either having Athletics or not having Athletics.
- Greg Ransom stated that September 21st is the drop date and if anything develops the Task Force will address all situations.
- Dom Zarella asked about Spectators at contests and if JV/Freshmen and Modified Sports will happen. Greg Ransom stated Spectators at contests are a School District decision.
- Jim Osborne stated School Districts need to decide about JV/Freshmen and Modified. If these levels are going to be played it will be based on the Governor, DOH Guidelines, Transportation and Official availability.
- Chris Mayo discussed scheduling and the impact that the Pause and the condensed season Plan would have.
- Greg Ransom said in summary a Memo will be attached to the NYSPHSAA Pause stating Section IX will follow the plan with any future decisions to be made after the August 7, 2020 Governor report.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, August 11, 2020 at 9:00 am

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Osborne



Section IX Athletics

Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

Section IX Athletic Council Meeting

Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Zoom Meeting – 9:00 am

Minutes

1. Greg Ransom welcomed everyone and thanked them for participating.
2. All members present except: Suzanne Lendzian, who was attending a School District Meeting.
3. Greg reviewed the Governor decision to reopen School Districts.
4. Robert Zayas – Athletics is an ongoing discussion, but we are still in a pause until September 21, 2020, as approved by NYSPHSAA. Robert has sent a letter to the Governor Office “requesting authorization to allow student athletes to participate in school-sponsored interscholastic workouts beginning August 24.” Robert has also sent a letter to the NYS Reimagine Advisory Council.
5. The Committee discussed the condensed season, Bona Fide Student regulation and the possibility of creating a “drop dead date” with regard to the September 21 date of beginning Athletics. The Committee also began discussion on what school districts will be doing regarding education learning using the hybrid, in person or remote only method.
6. Dennis Burkett stated, “Let’s embrace the pause date of September 21.”
7. Robert Zayas stated Athletics could be a Section by Section decision because of a lot of intangibles, such as transportation.
8. Robbie Greene stated she thinks we need a wait-and-see attitude on how things will develop.
9. Joe Phelan stated there is wisdom in waiting to make a decision right now.
10. The Committee was in agreement in waiting for a week, possibly two weeks, before making a decision about a “drop dead date.”
11. Chris Ericson, Orange County DOH, stated at this time there is no new information to report from the DOH. The COVID-19 testing has shown an up-tick in new cases but not an increase in the death rate. It’s possible that with regards to Athletics nothing could happen until January.
12. Lori Hock asked Robert about a timeline for NYSPHSAA and/or the Sections making a decision about when Athletics would start and what sports would be offered. Robert responded that we are in a wait-and-see decision-making procedure, with any decisions made on the best possible available information.
13. The Mandated Athletic Director Workshop has been postponed until October 2020 with the possibility of the Workshop being moved to January 2021.

Next Task Force Meeting Date will be on Monday, August 24, 2020, at 9 am.

Respectfully submitted,

James M. Osborne

Section IX Secretary/Treasurer



Section IX Athletics
Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

**Section IX
Task Force Meeting
Monday, August 31, 2020**

- All Members present – Greg Ransom reviewed the Governor announcement, low/moderate risk sports can start September 21, 2020. The sports of Football, Volleyball and Game Day Cheerleading (Section IX) can practice but not until authorized at a later date.
- Greg reviewed his e-mail discussion with Section IX Superintendent Representatives regarding the September 21, 2020 athletic start date.
- Robert Zayas stated if the Superintendents had expressed any concern in July regarding NYSPHSAA request to start Fall Sports September 21, 2020 NYSPHSAA would not have pushed the Governor's Office.
- Greg Ransom stated he would like to see the process slowed down so that the Section could review all issues. Many school districts will not have students in school therefore it is the Superintendent's concern to start athletics.
- Robert Zayas reported he is working on a "Return to Interscholastic Athletics." A NYSPHAAA Task Force had a meeting this morning (Monday, August 31).
- The following areas will be reviewed for approval:
 - o Practice requirements- 10 practices for all sports except football which will be 12 practices.
 - o 7-day practice rule waived starting October 12, 2020.
 - o Winter Sports date revised to Monday, November 30, 2020.
 - o NYSPHSAA will restrict play of low and moderate risk sports to their league and/or Section until October 19, 2020.
- NYSPHSAA has asked for clarification/interpretation on several other topics.
- Chris Ericson, Orange County DOH reported on the number of cases in Orange County. He stated the guidance can be confusing.
- Dennis Burkett stated a January start date should be an only "if plan", that is if we do not have another plan. We have time to work out any issue. If we could get it started it would give us momentum going into the Winter Season.
- The Task Force Committee discussed and reviewed a September or a January start date:
 - A few comments followed-
 - o Robbie Greene stated that we need to try and start things up with a phase in. The student/athletes have been playing all summer. We need to figure out how to manage things.
 - o Lori Hock stated participation is the most important thing we should be considering. Any plan has to include JV and Modified. If we phased these levels in that could work.
- Joe Phelan stated the Superintendents will have to deal with this situation. Phasing in and moving back our start dates for Varsity, JV and Modified might work.
- Greg Ransom suggested a meeting with the Sectional Superintendent Representatives with Robbie Greene and Joe Phelan.
- Robert Zayas stated NYSPHSAA plans to "Stay the Course" and conduct Winter and Spring NYSPHSAA Championships, if possible.
- Greg Ransom asked Lori Hock and Robbie Greene to put together their thoughts on starting Fall Sports.

The Section IX Task force Committee will meet Tuesday, September 1, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Respectfully submitted,
James M. Osborne



Section IX Athletics
Gregory Ransom, Executive Director

**Section IX
Task Force Meeting
Tuesday, September 1, 2020**

- The Committee met to discuss and recommend to the Superintendents and the Section IX Athletic Council an Athletic plan to begin sports in Section IX.
- The plans
 - (1) NYSPHSAA January 4, 2021 (2) November 30, 2020 Winter Start Date (3) September 21, 2020. The Superintendents have expressed to Greg Ransom that they are not ready to start on September 21, 2020 even though the Governor has said sports could start.
- (1) NYSPHSAA January 4, 2021 is a condensed 3 Season plan.
- (2) A November 30, 2020 Winter start date plan was presented. The issues haven't changed and it looks better on paper.
- (3) September 21, 2020 plan would be phased in with the Varsity followed by the JV, followed by Modified.
- The Task Force Committee discussed the plans presented. The models/plans should be presented to the Superintendent Representatives of the Section IX Athletic Council.
- Robert Zayas stated NYSPHSAA will publish a "Return to Interscholastic Athletics", Robert stated maybe the Committee should wait until the report is published before making a recommendation.
- The Committee discussed the pros and cons of each plan. The Governor has stated low/moderate sports may start to practice and play contests. High risk sports may only practice until authorized to play – Football, Volleyball and Game Day Cheerleading.
- The Committee needs to define the Proposal that will be presented. It was discussed that the current issues will be the same for September 21st or November 30th. The Committee stressed that Superintendents and Athletic Directors should be aware of the NYSPHSAA rules regarding off season workouts they are:
 - o Open to all students in the school district
 - o Attendance is not mandatory
- Motion by Ken Hack, seconded by Dom Zarrella to present and recommend to the Section IX Superintendent Representatives the November 30, 2020 plan. The September 21, 2020 plan will also be presented to the Superintendents for review and discussion. After a final discussion the Committee was unanimous to approve the motion.

Respectfully submitted,
James M. Osborne