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MEMORANDUM

To: LHSAA Member School / Principal / Athletic Director / Parish Athletic Director
Superintendent / Coach

Subject: Executive Director Update / Summer Activities

From: LHSAA Executive Director / Eddie Bonine 

Date: May 1, 2020

Over the course of the past couple of weeks I believe many if not all of us were hoping to have seen some of the Governor's mitigation measures relaxed as of May 1, 2020. As we all now know, that did not happen, so all we can hope for is a gate opens between Phase zero and Phase I of the multi-tiered Phase process at the middle of the upcoming month. Everyone is getting antsy, especially our coaches! We have received a small number of inquiries regarding if and/or when the LHSAA was going to release a statement on what schools can and cannot do this summer in preparation for LHSAA sanctioned fall sports. We all know this will hinge on what Phase the Governor prescribes. In the proclamation that shut down all public school facilities, the Governor stated for the remainder of the school year. For many, if not all of you, this date will be within the next 20 plus days. This brings forward the question I have been asked, "Does this mean at that time we can go back on our campuses and get into the weight room, gymnasiums and on our fields"? Good question ... yesterday I reached out to and spoke with the Governor's Education Policy Advisor and made him aware of this potential. He stated he will bring it to the Governor's attention. That said, in a "normal school year", LHSAA bylaws permits the start date for all sports' summer rules in the 46th week of the NFHS calendar. That date is May 17th 2020. Attached to this communication you will find pertinent LHSAA Bylaws Sections 4.0 **Sports Seasons** (inclusive) and 14.0 **Football**, respectively. I ask you draw your attention to 4.5 **Summer Activities**: sub-section; 4.5.1 specifically, where it states "*Summer activities in all LHSAA sports at the school's facilities, use of school equipment and sport specific apparatus are subject to the approval of the school principal*". In Section 14.0 **Football**, please draw your attention to sub-sections; 14.19 / 14.19.1 / 14.19.2 and 14.19.3 for guidance.

LHSAA... Beyond the Game

Another question we have been asked by football coaches is “will we be allowed to start football practice early”? The answer is “yes” ... 14.0 **Football** subsection 14.18 **Spring Practice** does state “Any school choosing not to participate in spring football at all, may start their fall practice on Monday of Week five of the NFHS calendar and start in full gear on Thursday of Week five”. As we all know, not a single school participated in spring football activities due to the virus, so all football playing schools will be granted the early start. In the grand scheme of things, the LHSAA has very limited authority as it relates to summer activities. The bulk of the responsibility for if and/or when people are allowed back on to school facilities will fall to the local education authority (LEA). My biggest concern, will be the potential of inconsistency of implementation for this allowance between private schools and public schools, as well as, parish to parish and campus to campus.

Another question we have been asked,” are athletes going to be given an extra year of eligibility due to circumstance surrounding the pandemic”? The answer is no. Any/all athletic eligibility moving forward, the LHSAA will adhere to any/all Constitution and Bylaws as prescribed to include but not limited to; academics, hold back, eight semester and fifth year eligibility. However, as prescribed, any/all eligibility ruling requests (*ERR*) submitted to our office will be taken on its own merit, but know cases related to COVID-19 as its merit, will not be entertained for eligibility purposes and/or for hardship appeals. On another but similar note, the NFHS Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) and approximately 300 high school team physicians nationwide recently met virtually to discuss the COVID-19 affects ... soon, the NFHS will be disseminating “strong recommendations” for state associations and their respective (SMAC’s) as it relates to athletes’ return to play timelines, additions to the pre-participation form (physicals) and the annual re-conditioning of and daily sanitizing of equipment.

In closing, the LHSAA will be extending our “work from home” status through May 15, 2020. During this time I am in the process of developing a *phase in* approach for bringing staff back to 12720 Old Hammond Highway. I and others have been going into the office once or twice a week to check snail mail, sign checks, pay bills etc. However, between now and then *and* until our Governor’s mitigation measures change, LHSAA staff will be encouraged to continue to work from home and minimize time in the office. Masks have been ordered for all staff upon their return and we are installing additional hand sanitizer stations around high traffic areas at the office and we will continue to adhere to social distancing.

In closing, please note, the June 3rd and June 4th LHSAA Executive Committee meeting has been moved to June 24th 2020 in the hope mitigation measures will permit an “in-person” meeting with committee and staff. As always your continued communication, cooperation and collaboration with our offices are greatly appreciated.