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To: MPSSAA Member Schools
From: R. Andrew Warner, MPSSAA Executive Director *RAW*
Subject: MPSSAA Spring State Championships

The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association (MPSSAA) commends the work of our local school systems (LSS) in the recent return of interscholastic athletics and activities in each one of our 24-member educational systems. The MPSSAA has developed the following plans with the input of its coaches and athletic directors on Spring Sport Committees, our State Sport Directors for Baseball, Softball, Lacrosse, Track & Field, and Tennis, local school system Supervisors of Athletics, and the MPSSAA Executive Council. On May 19, 2021, the MPSSAA Board of Control approved the below general policies for the administration of Spring State Championships. These collectively agreed upon procedures and policies will be adhered to through the course of state championship play.

POLICIES PERTAINING TO ALL SPORT TOURNAMENTS

- A. **Graduations:** The MPSSAA strives to promote an education-based athletics program in each local school system. In recognition of the importance of commencement exercises to each student and family, the MPSSAA is committed to prioritizing schools' commencement activities over its postseason schedule.

If the postseason schedule and graduation schedule for a student or school conflict, the school athletic directors and local supervisors of athletics will coordinate schedule alterations in conjunction with the regional directors, sport directors, and the MPSSAA office. These multiple layers of oversight will ensure students are not forced to make a decision between commencement and postseason athletics. The MPSSAA is currently aware of the dates of all commencement exercises in the 24 school systems. Accordingly, 140 of the member schools will have completed their graduation ceremonies prior to the start of any Spring Tournament.

- B. **Finances and Admission:** The MPSSAA will charge admission based on the spectator limitations for each venue during the State Semifinals and Finals. Tickets will only be available online with no box offices open on site. It is expected by the MPSSAA that each local school system, when able to do so,

shall charge admission at all regional and state quarterfinals in compliance with the local MPSSAA District policies.

- C. **Student Eligibility:** MPSSAA regulations allow graduates to participate in the remaining athletic contests of that semester in which they graduated (COMAR 13A.06.03.02K). NOTE: In a review of the scheduled final state championship dates in 2020, half of the states in the country finish state championships during the month of June.

In 2021, the tentative end date for the state championships in surrounding states includes Delaware on June 5, District of Columbia and Ohio on June 12, Pennsylvania on June 18, Kentucky on June 19, and West Virginia and Virginia on June 26, 2021.

- D. All participating schools shall abide by rules established by the tournament committee.
- E. A school or school system has the privilege and right to decide whether or not it will participate in a tournament.
- F. All information found in the MPSSAA Spring Bulletins for COVID-19 mitigation and the MPSSAA Return To Play Guidance are incorporated by reference into this document and shall be utilized to minimize the spread of COVID-19 during the State Tournaments.
- G. **Multi-Jurisdictional Competition** - Each local school system shall have implemented COVID-19 policies and procedures in place in accordance with Maryland Department of Health, MPSSAA, and local school and health department requirements. During any multi-jurisdictional competition, the policies and procedures of the hosting sites jurisdiction shall be followed by all competing schools. When conflicts arise in which representatives, including but not limited to coaches, participants, and spectators, are not following the mandated COVID-19 policies and procedures of the local school system, the site director in collaboration with school administration shall have the authority to:
- a. Initially provide a warning to those not in compliance to adhere to the local school system policies.
 - b. Suspend the competition and refer the conflict to Supervisors of Athletics for resolution.
 - c. The MPSSAA Executive Director shall be consulted.
- H. **Shared Responsibility** - Games and Events will be contested on the basis of shared responsibilities. Personnel from the visiting schools must accept their joint responsibilities with the persons in charge for supervision and maintenance of behavior on the part of students, spectators, and participants. This includes COVID-19 mitigation policies and procedures, good sportsmanship, exemplary behavior, and protection of property are of primary importance before, during and after each contest.
- I. **Point of Emphasis** - The MPSSAA would like to make a point of emphasis for coaches. Coaches are reminded that you set the tone for your team and are the foremost influential figures representing your

school. Your adherence and the adherence of your team and school to the mitigation requirements and recommendations will be a determining factor on the ability of these programs to continue operating within the modifications caused by COVID-19.

- J. **COVID-19 Exposure During the Tournament** - All local school system policies will be followed related to a COVID-19 positive case or exposure during the state tournament. The following procedures will be utilized for determining the continuity of participation if one of these situations occurs.
- a. If a team is unable to advance in the state tournament due to COVID-19 the following should occur.
 - i. If the teams have not played each other, the non-COVID team will advance to the next round of competition.
 - ii. If the teams have played each other and the advancing team cannot proceed due to COVID, the team scheduled to play next will receive a bye/forfeit and advance to the subsequent round.
 - b. If a school has difficulty after the state tournament begins and the school must withdraw from the tournament (Example: Team A advances to the state quarterfinals, but more than half the team leaves upon graduating).
 - i. If a team/individual has entered the state tournament and must withdraw for reasons other than COVID, leave the field of play before the completion of a contest, or fails to continue play when eligible to do so, it will be considered conduct detrimental to the state tournament and penalties may be imposed.
 - ii. When a team/individual competes and loses during the state tournament, the losing team/individual does not advance if the winning team/individual is unable to compete in the next round. The next round game will become a forfeit and the team scheduled to play will advance to the next round.
 - iii. Contest dates will only be altered if there is a conflict with graduation.