



# PENNSYLVANIA INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.

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August 11, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf  
Office of Governor  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf:

The purpose of this correspondence is to request an opportunity to discuss with your office possible options for fall sports at PIAA member schools. We recognize, understand and support the significant objective of your office to minimize the risk of a major COVID-19 outbreak this fall and further understand that reducing activities where people congregate supports that goal. We also believe, however, that sports are going to be played by youth, whether within the PIAA structure or otherwise and that doing so within the educational umbrella may provide the safest means for that to occur.

As you are likely aware, throughout this summer, numerous community and recreational programs have hosted countless activities for all different age groups. In the public domain, golf courses and tennis facilities have hosted numerous competitive tournaments. Many charitable organizations have hosted road races. The sports of field hockey, volleyball, basketball, baseball and soccer have had countless age group tournaments across the Commonwealth. To our knowledge, none have reported problems with coronavirus breakouts. Absent public perception of a substantial risk, parents and families have shown that they are willing to allow their children to continue to participate in sports wherever available. Come fall, if schools are unable to engage in sports, and absent another mandatory shutdown, families and students will not stop playing. They will simply find other outlets. Halting interscholastic athletics will not eliminate the risk, it will simply shift it to other venues that lack sufficient oversight.

We are requesting an opportunity to present to you and your staff with options that would permit many of our member schools to engage in fall sports in a reasonably safe environment. Our Sports Medicine Advisory Committee, in conjunction with our individual sport steering committees, have developed guidelines and practices that go even beyond those that your office has developed. One particular advantage of PIAA (versus recreational) sports is that school officials can ensure compliance with their locally adopted Athletic Health and Safety Planning Guide and enforcement of our comprehensive Return to Competition Guidelines, which have been shared with your office.

In planning for fall sports, our priority has been to advance the possibility of completing our seasons in good fall weather and stay away from the heart of flu season. While, due to outbreaks in different areas of the state, some schools may not be able to play some or all sports, we believe there remains a viable path to permit students in many schools the opportunity to participate in interscholastic athletics in a controlled, healthy and safe manner.

On August 7, 2020, our Board of Directors expressed a desire to proceed with the fall sports season but did suspend the start of the season for two weeks to hopefully have dialogue with your office and develop an approach that would be acceptable to you.

Thank you for the opportunity to address these issues.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert A. Lombardi  
Executive Director