



Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association

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April 30, 2020

To: NIAA Member Schools and Districts

From: Bart Thompson, Executive Director, NIAA

Re: Update 5, Spring and Summer 2020 Protocols

On March 13, 2020, this office issued a memo notifying NIAA member schools and districts of the suspension of NIAA sanctioned sports until further notice. As you are aware, on April 23, 2020 that suspension became a cancellation of regular season contests and post-season tournaments/meets based on a directive from the Governor's office to close all Nevada schools for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. The March 13 Memo was issued with the hope that Spring 2020 sports would resume at some point prior to the end of the school year. With that in mind, several restrictions were enumerated in the interest of maintaining a level playing field once schools re-opened and competition resumed. Those restrictions on activities associated with NIAA sanctioned sports were fairly broad but reflected the guidelines issued by government and health authorities in combatting the spread of COVID 19. With the cancellation of spring sports, it is necessary to enumerate in greater detail the restrictions in place regarding activities related to all NIAA sanctioned sports. These restrictions are intended to reflect the guidance of health officials and government directives currently in place. As the response to the pandemic moves forward, these measures may be modified, lifted or eased to coincide with adjustments in guidance from health officials and/or government orders.

Schools are currently closed to in-person instruction. That includes coaches and others associated with a school providing in-person instruction to student athletes. School facilities are closed. That includes athletic and training facilities. In the interest of following the recommendations of health and government officials and maintaining a level playing field for all NIAA member schools, the following are in place until further written notice from the NIAA office regardless of what may occur in a particular locality. Local schools and districts may keep restrictions in place beyond the lifting or easing of those restrictions by the NIAA but may not remove or ease them prior to the NIAA Executive Director providing written notice of the removal or easing of a restriction.

- Member schools are not to conduct practices for NIAA sanctioned sports at any location regardless of whether the activity is denominated as a practice or not. For purposes of this requirement, an individual associated with an NIAA member school together with a

prospective player or players engaged in any activity related in any way to an NIAA sanctioned sport is considered a practice. The only exception to this protocol is a student together with his/her own parent/legal guardian or member of the student's immediate family with whom they live. The fact that a coach may also be a coach of a student for a non-school activity, whether or not it is in the same sport, is irrelevant.

- Coaches shall not meet in-person with any student(s) or prospective student(s) at any location for any activity related to an NIAA sanctioned sport. This statement is to be interpreted broadly and includes, without limitation, in-person:
 - meetings, gatherings of any kind, practices, workouts, walk throughs, pick-up games, instruction/coaching, film/video sessions, camps, fund-raisers, etc.
- Member schools shall not allow students or coaches at any NIAA member school to use the school's athletic facilities for a meeting, workout, practice, game or contest in any NIAA sanctioned sport regardless of the affiliation (club or otherwise) of the group seeking to use the facilities.
- Coaches and prospective teams may meet remotely (internet, telephone, etc. NOT in-person) and may provide, among other things, instruction, film/video review, discussion of plays, assignments, etc. Participation in such meetings shall not be a requirement placed on the student/athlete to make the team. If meeting remotely is to take place, means must be provided for all students who wish to participate to have the opportunity without the necessity of meeting in-person with anyone outside their own home. It is expected that such communication is done within the guidelines and regulations of the school and/or district for such staff/pupil communication.
- Proper supervision must be the primary consideration in any remote athletic instruction.
- The holding of remote meetings of student athletes, coaches and others associated with a team must be approved by school administration. Before approving a meeting, the administration should at a minimum be apprised of the purpose of the meeting, the persons who will participate in the meeting and the means by which the meeting will take place.

These protocols do not replace the regulations of the Association and are intended to be temporary in light of the current COVID 19 pandemic. These measures are in addition to, and supplement the regulations of the Association. All regulations of the Association remain in place unless the regulation(s) contradicts these protocols.

The regulations of the Association are a part of the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC). NAC 385B.220 deals with the responsibilities of a member school principal as related to the enforcement of the policies of the Association. Subsection 2 of that section states, "If a principal of a member school delegates his or her authority pursuant to this chapter to a member of the staff of the member school, the principal remains responsible for any violation of those sections that is committed by the member of the staff during any period in which he or she exercises any

authority delegated to him or her pursuant to those sections.” The staff member to whom this statement refers is often thought to be the athletic administrator or director at the school. However, far more often it is the coach of an NIAA sanctioned sport.

Ultimately, the principal at each NIAA member school is responsible to see that strict adherence to the provisions listed herein occurs at their school with all teams and with all school personnel and students. School personnel, in this instance, includes anyone associated with the school, paid or volunteer, formal employee or informal associate.

NAC 385B.820 addresses reports of violations of NIAA regulations. It indicates that the principal of the school or their designee is to prepare and submit a written report to the Executive Director within 24 hours of becoming aware of a violation. The report is to include:

- The name of each person who is alleged to have committed the violation and any other person involved in the violation; and
- A statement indicating the disciplinary action, if any, the school will impose against the team, pupil, coach, administrator or faculty member for the violation.

NAC 385B.820 states that the Executive Director, following review of the report, may impose additional penalties. Penalties imposed by a school could include, without limitation, suspensions of coaches and/or students, eliminating the ability to practice and meet for an appropriate number of days after the beginning of the season, reduction in the number contests allowed or any combination of these. Penalties that may be imposed by the Executive Director include, without limitation, imposing any of those mentioned for a school and/or extending any of them, fines, ineligibility of a program for post-season competition or any combination thereof. (NAC 385B.960) See also, NAC 385B.920 through 385B.926 regarding the filing of reports of violations regarding one’s own or another school.

NAC 385B.806 deals with requirements for coaches. Subsection 1 states, “Each coach of a school shall comply with the regulations of the Association and the National Federation of State High School Associations or its successor organization for each sanctioned sport in which he or she participates as a coach.” In the current circumstance and until further notice, the provisions of this memorandum are in place as a part of the regulations of the Association. Subsection 6, paragraph (c) of the same section requires that each coach of a school shall support reasonable action that promotes the welfare of each participant in a sanctioned sport. Public health and government officials have determined that given the current pandemic, school closures are not only reasonable but a necessary action to protect students, their families and the community at large. Coaches at NIAA member schools shall support that closure by adhering to the measures spelled out in this document. School principals with the assistance of their staff are responsible to see that coaches and others associated with their schools comply with these measures.

As indicated above, restrictions will be lifted and/or eased as health and government officials determine it prudent to do so. We are all hoping that is sooner rather than later.