

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER

A MESSAGE OF HOPE



Today, the CIF State Office, in coordination with the 10 CIF Sections around the state, made the incredibly difficult decision to cancel the Spring Sports Championships at the state and section levels. In arriving at this decision, I know that my colleagues and I thought about our student-athletes first, as in everything we do and our entire organization does, each and every day. The health and safety of our student-athletes is always our highest priority, and it is with that in mind that we did what we believed we had to do, not only for them, but for all our stakeholders. These are unprecedented times for all of us and the most difficult situation I have faced in my 20 years working for the CIF Southern Section Office.

Decisions on the future of our Spring Sports Championships that faced our section, the other 9 sections in the state and the CIF State Office, are important decisions and we do not take them lightly. While I have the ultimate responsibility to make decisions that are in the best interests of our section, I do not do so in a vacuum. Specifically, the advice of the Centers of Disease Control, as well as other federal, state and local health authorities were vital toward helping us navigate our path forward. We have certainly relied on that advice and the recommendations of those entities to help guide us in that regard. The medical experts have been very clear that this situation is rapidly developing, and all indications are that it will not be under control for a significant period of time.

I realize that the goals, dreams and aspirations of student-athletes, coaches, Athletic Directors, Principals, parents, officials and fans have been dashed by this decision. There will be no way to replace the opportunities that a full and complete sport season would have afforded them, especially with all that they have invested in their efforts. That weighed very heavily on the ultimate decision that we had to make.

At the conclusion of this message, there are some Talking Points that I have prepared to address various bylaws and relevant issues related to this situation in the time ahead. Please be sure to thoroughly review them, and if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact our office.

Here is my hope for when we resume normal activities and get back to education-based athletics. It is my sincere hope that there will be a renewed appreciation for high school athletic programs and how truly special they are. Perhaps education-based athletics has been taken for granted at times, and now that it is temporarily gone, we will return to the fields, gymnasiums, pools, courts, etc., with a stronger commitment to teaching the life lessons that our student-athletes learn through their experiences participating in education-based athletics. Let us dedicate ourselves to having more compassion and understanding of the roles that coaches, administrators and officials play in helping make all of the games and matches happen and that we continue to emphasize the best qualities of excellent sportsmanship and great character for all involved. We now have the chance to reset our priorities and can utilize this opportunity to help us move forward in a positive way. It is my hope that you will join me in doing everything we can to try and make a difference for everyone involved in the time ahead.

I wish all of you, and your families, health, safety and security in these uncertain times. There will be better days ahead and I look forward to enjoying them with you when that time comes.

Thank you very much for your continued help and support, it is truly appreciated.

All the best,

Rob Wignol



TALKING POINTS – APRIL 3, 2020

As we transition to the next phase of the current situation we are in, I wanted to be sure to review some talking points related to various bylaws that are in place. This is not a complete list, as there will continue to be questions raised in the time ahead and I assure you that our staff and I stand ready to answer any and all questions you have, but it is hopefully a guide to help all of us begin to navigate through what we are facing in the near future.

Academic Eligibility – CIF Bylaw 205B – Continuing Scholastic Eligibility – Certifying students for academic eligibility has always been the responsibility of schools/school districts, per the requirements contained in CIF Bylaw 205B. We are hearing that some schools are moving to Pass/Fail grades for the rest of the school year, and if so, it will be up to schools/school districts as to how they evaluate a Pass grade, whether it equates to a C, a D, etc., and how they apply that Pass grade related to the CIF Bylaw requiring a minimum 2.0 grade point average in all courses attempted during the school's regular grading period. The same situation is involved with credits, in terms of how many credits are the Pass/Fail grade classes going to be worth and applying those Pass credits to the standard of students passing a minimum of 20 credits during the school's most recent regular grading period. I encourage all students to continue to participate in the distance learning programs being offered by their schools to ensure that they keep progressing academically and do not let their eligibility be affected once we return to competition.

Rule 600 – Now that our Spring Sports Championships are cancelled, CIF Bylaw 600 no longer applies. Students can play for outside teams whenever it is deemed safe for them to do so.

SOP – Now that Spring Sports Championships are cancelled, every Spring Sport student who was under CIF Bylaw 207 - Transfer Eligibility, Sit-Out Period, would now be a Non-Participation transfer if they choose to go to another school for the 2020-2021 school year. They would not get credit for having participated in a sport during the Spring, 2020 season because sports were cancelled before the SOP date happened. Non-Participation transfers would not apply to students who participated in Fall and/or Winter sports during the 2019-2020 school year.

Sports Participation – Students who played in any interscholastic competition this season, before the season was canceled, are still credited with participation in that sport for the Spring, 2020 season. While the season was not completed, that has never been the standard followed for sports participation. If students played in an interscholastic contest during the Spring, 2020 season, they have participated during that season. As mentioned above, this would not apply to SOP students who were waiting to play at the Varsity level because they would not have participated this season, but all other students who have played in a game during the Spring, 2020 season, including SOP students who participated at the non-varsity level, would be credited with participating this season.

Hardship Waiver Applications – CIF Bylaw 204 – Additional Semesters of Eligibility – Hardship Waiver Applications for additional semesters of eligibility can only be considered if two criteria are met...

1) Students must be out of school for 10 weeks or longer, due to an unforeseeable, unavoidable and uncorrectable act, condition or event, non-athletic in nature.

Students, while not being on campus, still have access to educational services through distance learning. Therefore, unless they could no longer be educated during the time they are away from the high school campus, due to a Hardship condition that exists, this situation does not open a new window into Hardship Waiver

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Hardship Waiver Applications – CIF Bylaw 204 – Additional Semesters of Eligibility (Cont):

Applications for additional semesters of eligibility.

2) Students cannot have participated in four seasons of a particular sport.

As mentioned above, the Spring, 2020 season had begun. Seniors who were participating in their fourth season of sport in Spring, 2020 would not be eligible to receive an additional semester of eligibility in that same sport.

Seniors need to focus on completing graduation requirements in the remaining weeks of the school year. This is not a time when students should stop their participation in distance learning education, in the hope that a current Senior can return to high school for the 2020-2021 school year.

Summer Dead Period – This situation does not have an effect on the Summer Dead Period Rule. The Summer Dead Period Rule was put in place by CIF Southern Section Council action. I do not have the authority to set that rule aside, even in unprecedented circumstances like these. Also, while schools are closed and students are home, they do not have the ability to spend normal family time together. If anything, once the opportunity to go outside is allowed again, I would think that there are many things families would like to do that they have not been able to do and if their entire summer is devoted to their high school athletic programs, they would not be able to do so. An argument could be made that the Summer Dead Period is needed this summer more than any other summer. Additionally, schools cannot choose their Summer Dead Period during school days, so while students are not on campus, they are still receiving educational services and there will still be a last day of school. Therefore, anyone asking about using Summer Dead Period dates when students are currently not on campus at this time, but still within the school year, would not be allowed. Finally, schools can choose to revise their Summer Dead Period dates, if they have already submitted them, and as long as they submit their revision prior to the actual dates of their Summer Dead Period beginning, they are permitted to do so.

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