

June 24, 2020

Dear Section 1 Member Schools,

On June 16th, Section 1 of the NYSPHSAA established a regional COVID-19 Athletics Task Force to provide guidance, examine resources, and assist in planning the return to interscholastic athletics across the Lower-Hudson Valley in Section 1. The Task Force met for the first time on Tuesday, June 23rd. Currently, the Task Force is composed of the Section 1 Officers and representatives from the Section 1 Athletic Council including Athletic Directors, Principals, and Superintendents. Additional representatives and consultants may be added to the committee as planning develops throughout the summer months.

As we await guidance from NYSED, NYSDOH, and NYSPHSAA, we have begun our planning regionally and want to share several reminders and points of emphasis:

- NYSPHSAA established a COVID-19 Task Force to discuss the impact COVID-19 has on high school sports. At the current time, NYSPHSAA has not adjusted the August 24th start date for the fall 2020 season.
- NYSED released a memo pertaining to health exams for athletic participation. The memo stated if a student had a physical in 2018-19 or 2019-20 school year with a health history update they are eligible to compete. It was also reported that the Athletic Placement Process has not been waived or revised.
- The NFHS and CDC have released guidance documents to help school districts and youth sports organizations around the country plan and prepare for their reopening. The Section 1 COVID-19 Task Force intends to reference these documents throughout their planning for fall 2020.
- In accordance with Governor Cuomo's Executive Order, school campuses remain closed throughout our region until phase four of the NY Forward reopening plan. Until that time, organized sport activities and interscholastic athletics are not permitted. As our region approaches phase four, the Section 1 Task Force intends to endorse specific parameters as part of the return to play protocol for all of our member schools.
- Coaches are encouraged to remain in virtual contact with their student-athletes and teams. However, coaches are not permitted to create workouts, conduct meetings, or facilitate practice sessions on or off campus that result in athletes gathering together in group settings.
- Governor Cuomo's announcement to allow "low-risk" youth sports to resume on July 6th as regions enter phase three of NY Forward applies to recreational sports only and does not include school-based sports or interscholastic athletic programs.

- Upon entering phase four of the NY Forward reopening plan, NYSPHSAA has released Summer Guidance Recommendations for on-campus summer conditioning workouts.

A safe return to interscholastic athletics is the primary function of the Section 1 COVID-19 Task Force. The Task Force is focused on providing student-athletes with the opportunity to participate this fall. We will continue to examine the guidance from local and state agencies, address concerns as they arise, and stay informed on best practices around interscholastic athletics and COVID-19 all while planning for the fall 2020 season.

The next meeting of the Section 1 COVID-19 Task Force will take place on July 7th.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Todd Santabarbara".

Todd Santabarbara