

Board of Directors approves plans for return to winter activities

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League's Board of Directors approves plans for a return to winter activities

For immediate release:

BROOKLYN CENTER, Minn. --- The Minnesota State High School League's Board of Directors today approved a flexible plan for the restart of winter activities when clearance is provided by state governmental leaders. Executive Order 20-99 is currently in place, a directive that mandates a four-week pause in activities designed to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. That is scheduled to expire on Dec. 18.

In preparation for the lifting of any order, the League's Return to Participation Task Force presented a comprehensive plan that included three models that may be modified to fit the timing of the expiration of Executive Order 20-99.

"With the dynamic nature of COVID-19, flexibility is going to be critical for our programs," said Erich Martens, Executive Director of the Minnesota State High School League. "We need to remain flexible in the start of seasons and in carrying them to conclusion."

Should League athletics be able to restart practice on Dec. 21, competitions could take place beginning on or after Jan. 4.

"We know that the state and our schools are facing extremely high case counts and that adjustments in the models may need to take place, and if so, we are ready to make those adjustments in our calendar," Martens said. "Should the winter season restart get pushed later, we may see shorter seasons and fewer games."

Moderate adjustments in the winter season are accounted for and are likely to result in minimal disruption to the spring sports seasons. Included in the scheduling models are weeks designated for section play and a potential state tournament.

All models presented by the Return to Participation Task Force were constructed with a focus on providing an experience in every one of the League's activities and sports. In addition, health and safety, recommendations from state organizations and agencies, and the unique aspects of each sport were a part of the planning.

"I want to acknowledge the work of the Return to Participation Task Force," said Blaine Novak, Board President and Superintendent of Schools in New York Mills. "As a League, we continue to work toward providing all education-based activities, in the safest manner possible, aligning with the guidance provided by our state agencies. In support of the Return to Participation Task Force, our board took action to provide the flexibility needed to offer the most extensive season possible under the current conditions for our member schools and student-athletes."

The models, which also included a projected view of spring activities, maintain a traditional number of spring season contests and an end date of no later than June 19, 2021.