

March 5, 2010

Welcome to March Madness!

As the calendar changed to March, I'm sure we are all looking forward to warmer weather, exciting tournament contests, and anticipating the conclusion of an outstanding school year.

I want to take this opportunity to follow up on the topics that were reviewed in my January update.

The OHSAA 7/8 grade committee met in Columbus on March 1 to continue the work undertaken earlier in the school year. The full committee has met three times (October, December, & March), with a final meeting having been scheduled for May 3. Also, as the 7/8 grade representative to the Board of Director's, I will be presenting a formal report to the Board at the April 1 meeting.

Here is a preview of the report to be presented to the Board of Directors:

- Members of the 7/8 grade committee and OHSAA staff met with a representative of the Ohio Athletic Committee (OAC). Discussions included awareness and understanding of existing OHSAA regulations by the OAC as well as student-athletes & parents. All agreed that school staff (coaches, AD's, & principals) must be better informed of sport regulations as they apply to participating in OAC sponsored events.
- An informational pamphlet, tentatively titled "Parent and Student Guide to Participation in Middle School Athletics," for incoming 7th grade parents & students should be published in early April. The guiding questions from incoming 7th grade parents were: "What do I need to know regarding interscholastic athletics?" and "What does my child need to know in order to participate in interscholastic athletics?" Topics to be included, but not limited to:
 - Public school/parochial school guidelines
 - Non-interscholastic participation
 - Eligibility, i.e., academic, age, residence, etc.
 - Promotion of healthy lifestyle choices

- A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document is also being crafted to address specific issues such as recruiting & contact with high school coaches and OHSAA sports seasons.
- To be included in the spring mailing of the Archie Griffin Sportsmanship Award will be topics for a meeting with incoming 7th grade parents & students. The OHSAA strongly recommends that all 7/8 grade schools conduct such a meeting as a service to their respective school communities.
- Further discussion of possible 7/8 grade state tournaments in cross country, wrestling, and track & field centered on a January, 2010 survey conducted by the Ohio Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (OIAAA). Over 80% of the AD's surveyed were NOT in favor of the concept of 7/8 grade state tournaments. The 7/8 grade committee agreed that no further discussion relative to this topic is anticipated.
- A reminder to 7/8 grade building principals: be on the lookout for the referendum ballot regarding the potential change in academic eligibility (change from passing 75% to 5 courses/grading period). Ballots will be mailed in early April and will be due in the OHSAA office by May 1.

If there are other topics regarding 7/8 grade interscholastic athletics that need to be addressed to the 7/8 grade committee, the SWDAB, or the OHSAA Board of Director's please do not hesitate to contact me. I continue to be honored to represent 7th & 8th grade schools in Southwest Ohio. As always, I welcome your comments.

Yours in Sport,

Steve Zimmerman

steve.zimmerman@foresthills.edu

(513) 474.5407 x2208