

# 2022 WIAA Area Meetings

## DISCUSSION TOPIC #1

### Spring Sports Update

# Discussion Questions:

- Annual Meeting Open Forum
- Reality of Calendar
  - Championship Dates/Venue Contracts
- Was 2022 a unique spring? Is this worthy of continuing a serious conversation about this topic?
- If so, please discuss these options:
  - Condense the Spring Season
  - Start it later and extend it into the summer
  - What is the impact on current game maximums

### Fox Valley Lutheran

- It was not a unique spring, should consider looking at the April 1 start date for spring sports with the exception of Track and Field. It would help avoid spring breaks.
- We could still save the same state tournament start dates, condense the year. Could open up moving basketball start date to after Thanksgiving. The game max could be reduced or leave it up to schools to decide if they can get 26 games in.
- Keep Track season the same because of the indoor season. Final vote was to shorten the season by one week by pushing the season back. Also looking at reducing the total number of games.
- 1) Need to be equitable with all sports if the start/end of the season is adjusted; can't just be spring
- 2) Looking at reducing game maximum is a necessary conversation (20 games would be a good number)
- 3) Allow 5 contact days during the school year.
- NIT series for those who don't make a playoff run. This would be able to shorten the season by a week or so.
- Game maximum. Keep them, but if you have to cancel a non-conference.
- Week off for state baseball is too much between sectional and state.
- Use the football format and only successful teams qualify.
- Don't extend later in the summer.
- **Competitive Balance**
- 1. Neutral
- 2. Yes, the schools should be able to appeal
- 3. What schools are they competing against? What are the factors under this process? Look at sectional and regional placement of teams. Why are we starting in 2024, and not going back the last 3 years?
- How will the process work for sports with Individual and team state tournaments?  
Tournaments where individual scores are counted towards team state tournaments?

## Greenfield

- Yes, last year was unique. There was a feeling that we should not have a conversation every three years on the topic of weather.
- The classic eight conference has intentionally pushed their spring sports conference schedule back
- Could the season be pushed back a week. Pushing back into the summer and end of June would be challenging and not favorable by many in the group.
- Spring break is a factor and when Easter falls later in the school district.
- If we condense spring then all seasons should be condensed, giving kids a break between seasons to rest
- Question about the comparable sports and length of the season fall vs spring.
- The unfavorable weather conditions is perhaps a factor with low participation seeing in the spring.
- Is there consideration for some spring sports to be played in the fall.
- Seems to be baseball and softball specific. Very few schools are playing the max games in this sport.
- Might be beneficial to have a natural break for the transition from winter sports to spring sports. Given the facility constraints it is challenging to start spring sports.
- Further you go into the summer, do you run the risk of reducing fall sport and/or multi-sport athletes?
- Reduce the opportunity for some schools to rent their facilities to the public (impact budgets) when you move later into the summer
- By reducing/condensing the season, the WIAA would have to adjust the # of games possibly
- If the season was reduced, do you increase the scrimmage opportunities for schools that are willing/able to offer more opportunities
- Concern will higher level players remaining with high school programs if season goes longer into the summer
- Never get 26 games in; problems with outdoor practice and finding facilities - pushing the date back allows more games.
- WBCA does not want to push the season back
- Is moving back a week worth it? Could we consider 2 weeks for some sports?
- Would that mean fewer games and then cause some kids to not play?
- The later you go into June in the city you would end up losing coaches.
- The weather issues early on also cause kids to not play though.
- Playing 4-6 games in a week is not ideal. That is commonplace with baseball and softball.
- Tennis should start in April.
- The weather in 2022 was NOT unique. There is a distinct weather trend over most of the past several years that is indeed different and makes it very difficult to conduct spring sports.
- Even the non-elite players are starting to veer towards club affiliation instead of HS sports.
- Later start will help. Keep teams together
- Eliminate idle time.
- SA have to choose between AAU and High school
- Extend indoor season have shorter outdoor season
- Some conferences voluntarily moved conference games to after Easter only. Didn't change start dates, just focused on moving the crucial games. All non-conference games prior to that.
- If we move championship games back one week for base and softball, really only impacting the season for 25% of the teams that are still in the tournament.
- More is not better (given weather, shortage of officials, busing issues)

## Mauston

- Push spring back a week. Small schools have multi-sport athletes. Give them a little break. Never get all games in and rarely play early spring outdoor events
- Some track athletes like indoor season
- No need for 26 for softball/baseball. Small schools don't have pitchers
- Don't want to extend too much into summer
- Basketball season is too long
- Will be difficult to get all to agree
- We as AD's have the capability to limit schedules.
- Cannot let "club" sports dictate WIAA priorities.
- In reverse effect, pushing back the spring season would be a struggle to retain senior athletes, as well as coaches.
- Don't push it back as numbers have been dropping already.
- Keeping seniors engaged after graduation is tough
- Maybe start later, but keep end date
- Shrinking maximums might help
- Keep the start date, but have more time at the beginning of the spring season for practice only
- More competition for officials the longer the season with clubs/legion
- We seem to paint ourselves into a corner with long-term contractual agreements. We recognize the need to secure facilities for longevity but 3-4 years should be max.
- Start dates can be difficult for our northern peers
  - 3rd Monday in April might be more appropriate for the whole state to participate
  - There is some parental pushback for Legion ball, but we shouldn't have to consider legion ball as a WIAA organization
  - Going beyond June is difficult for schools in the lens of coaches, officials, event workers etc
    - For these reasons a shortened season makes the most sense. The end dates are the best as is, but the start dates are not fair across the state

## Oconomowoc

- Spring sports start date- Pushing the starting dates back to the first week of April and reducing the number of games for example baseball and softball games by 2-4 games. We would suggest keeping the end of tournament games the same traditional weeks. Move track back a week.
- Considerations- Weather and consistency of district spring break dates at the end of March.
- Better players will chose to play for their clubs over the high school team
- Do we lessen the game maximum? If we end later you will lose students and coaches.
- Our group feels 20-22 for baseball/softball max.
- Start later and reduce the number of games for baseball/softball? Only a couple of ADs in our group currently schedule the maximum number of games.
- AAU and other club sports will make kids choose -- they will not adjust their schedules to meet our needs/desires.
- COVID was an exception -- doing that over a sustained period of time will be difficult
- Are we looking at all spring sports, or just select sports? Track has indoor venues in various places to get early-season events done. Other sports do not have ready indoor venues available.
- Some are concerned that the club will win if it's a competition between HS and club sports.
- Some ADs have agreements with coaches -- a certain number of games and certain start larger question is Susan Max games larger dates
- Summer is family time, time off, avoiding overuse
- Perhaps some wiggle room to allow kids to compete in travel baseball/softball on weekends (maybe soccer, too)
- Many officials are also either taking summers for time off or are moving right into full schedules with the club sports.
- Allows winter to potentially move back as well.

## Rice Lake

- April first and finish by June 30- just looking at Softball and Baseball. Track and Field, and soccer is also done. Should we still do a staggered start? What about playing 18-22 games for baseball and softball.
- Give Northern Schools (North of Hwy 8) an opportunity to come south to play; unrealistic that any schools that far north are able to start the season like the southern part of the state
  - Some schools fill the schedule, knowing they will cancel. Other schools don't fill the schedule
- Do we move the start date/end date back or not? - Some years are better than others, adjust the best that you can.
  - Concerns about athletes and travel ball if the dates are adjusted
- Larger question is Max games. This will create equity concerns for all sports.
- Breaks needed for multi-sport athletes.
- Interferes with student availability if later
- Maybe a week later
- Leave it the same for now, high risk high reward

## **Antigo**

- Starting later up north is smarter due to not pitching kids in 35 or lower degree weather
- Different spring breaks, makes season set-up easier
- Less club options up here
- Small break refreshed kids a bit more
- First round of spring baseball/softball first rounds are normally moved around or rescheduled
- Not really a "track issue" as there are in-door possibilities (more base/softball)
- golf/tennis moved back would likely have more venue issues
- Baseball—reality is can't play more than 4 games a week due to pitch-count
- Shortening season, create conflicts if remain game max at 26 (baseball)
- What happens with weather issues if season is shortening
- Start base/softball when golf starts may be a good idea to look at
- Separate statement was can't move end date as after Memorial Day will lose participants who "aren't going to state"
- Track could start the same, soccer could likely start the same, base/softball and golf
- could start at the same time
- Legion breaking into softball (slowly) but could lose more in to that area
- Collective agreement from AD's in our group that if the season is shortened the Max number of games must be reduced.
- Official issues, pitch count issues, soccer number of games per week and stress on athletes in that sport would be significant if 4-5 games per week became a norm.
- Academic issues with the max if not reduced.
- Possibly reduce the number of Spring teams automatically into the playoffs in order to shorten the playoffs to allow for more reg season games.

## **Mount Horeb**

### **Front Left Group**

- Not just a spring sport issue - should consider shortening all seasons
  - Look at the full calendar for the full year
- May lose coaches/athletes if the spring season was pushed further into June
  - There are already non-school opportunities taking place in June, so if this shifted, the allowance for non-school competitions would need to be revisited
- Less is more
- Schools who start prior to Sept. 1 end their school year before any spring sport playoffs starts
- Freeing up dates during the school year could allow for school year contact days - which in turn could allow more time in the summer for kids to be kids
- Starting fall sports later could possibly help with participation numbers as kids won't have to balance/give other things up
  - There are other opportunities that high school brings which this could allow
- No matter what the number is - some schools will fill their schedule to the maximum whereas others will not
  - Stats are sometimes used in seeding/All-Conference meetings and the arguments are sometimes used that X school played X less games than Y schools...so schools do use it in a negative light sometimes

### **Back Right Group**

- Extending post season play later into the summer poses more problems than solutions, especially with regards to senior retention for tournament play past the end of the school year.
- Backing track & field up by 1-2 weeks could serve to be beneficial with regards to indoor training but the state meet dates are good to remain as is.
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### **Back Center Group**

- Lower game maximum would be helpful beyond season window shift - pressure to play game maximum
- Shorten all seasons (including fall and winter) to have breaks between seasons be considered
- Impact on all seasons, look at by sport calendaring related to gym space and other scheduling concerns
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### **Back Left Group**

- Never getting in max # games
- Consider lowering max # for softball and baseball
- Considering later start date since early season track and field
- Condensing might not be bad idea knowing that AAU dates come into play as well
- How do different spring break affect schedules?
- Early spring practices are often indoor and then games start as soon as teams go outside. Temps, wind, etc.
- With shortage of officials, can we extend into summer and not have conflict with AAU programs?
- Transportation concerns: schools not leaving early and how does this affect JV programs and play on fields that do not have lights? Buses and drivers not available to drive during after school hours.
- With Covid delayed start spring, training seemed to work better which makes us think we back up two weeks and limit max # games allowed. Same for all sports.
- Our recommendation is to push all spring sports back two weeks start date, but keep end dates the same.