



TO: CIF SOUTHERN SECTION PRINCIPALS
CIF SOUTHERN SECTION ATHLETIC DIRECTORS

FROM: ROB WIGOD, COMMISSIONER OF ATHLETICS (RW)

SUBJECT: CIF SOUTHERN SECTION UPDATE

DATE: MARCH 22, 2021

I hope all is well with you and your families.

Today, we re-open our office and our staff no longer will be working remotely. We are happy to be back and gratified to know that this is another step forward in the progress that has been made over the last several weeks. As we return to our home away from home, it is a time for a look back and a time to look ahead.

Where We Have Been – In June/July, 2020, plans were formulated in the hope that all education-based athletic programs would be able to be conducted during the 2020-2021 school year and that no seasons of sport, or any individual sport, would have to be cancelled. We went from our traditional three seasons of sport: Fall, Winter and Spring, to two seasons of sport, referred to as Season 1 and Season 2, in an effort to have full regular seasons, Section and/or State Championship competition and provide for student-athletes and coaches to participate in more than one sport. As the days, weeks, and months went by, we experienced an ever-changing landscape, deadlines for the resumption of sports come and go, frustration levels rising higher and higher and a sense that the plans made last summer might never come to fruition.

Where Are We Now – Today, I can state that all our Season 1 sports were able to be played in some form. While we were not able to have full regular seasons or conduct Southern Section Championships for Season 1, the opportunities for student-athletes to participate in Boys/Girls Cross-Country, Field Hockey, Football, Girls Volleyball and Boys/Girls Water Polo have been able to happen. As of last weekend, all our Season 2 sports have started as originally planned and are on course to proceed through their regular seasons. While there are still some limitations in place, per California Department of Public Health guidelines, there is more work to do and we are continuing our dialogue with the CDPH and the Governor's Office toward revising current guidelines in our ongoing effort to move return to play forward for Season 2 sports.

Where We Are Going – Season 2 Section Championships – As before, with the decision we had to make related to Season 1 Section Championships, there are two necessary factors that will influence the decision on whether we can conduct Season 2 Section Championships or not. First, whether our leagues will be able to have viable league play to determine entries into playoff competition and the situation related to travel restrictions among the 8 counties within the Southern Section footprint.

1) Viable league Play – For our Outdoor Sports in Season 2, there is a strong possibility that this can be accomplished. For our Indoor Sports, it may not be as possible right now, but hopefully, the situation will improve in the time ahead and allow for those sports to complete league play. We will continue to monitor the situation with our leagues to see their progress in that regard.

2) Travel Restrictions – The current situation involving travel limitations within our section will be extremely important, in terms of our ability to conduct Section Championships for Season 2 sports. That issue manifests itself in two ways. One applies to team sports, such as Boys/Girls Soccer, Baseball, Softball, etc. Will schools be allowed to travel across county lines beyond their adjoining county? For example, will a school from Ventura County be permitted to travel to Orange County for a playoff contest or would a school from San Bernardino County be permitted to travel to Santa Barbara County for a game? The other situation with travel involves individual sports, such as Boys/Girls Swimming/Diving, Boys/Girls Track and Field, etc. Will a local health authority in a particular county approve a Southern Section Championship event, which would include student-athletes and coaches from all 8 counties within the Southern Section, travelling to one location for that championship? For example, will Los Angeles County permit El Camino College to host our Track and Field Championships at that venue? The questions regarding team sports and individual sports will have to be answered in the time ahead for us to make a definitive decision on Section Championships. I am committed to making an announcement regarding the status of our Section Championships for Season 2 sports no later than the next CIF Southern Section Council meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 13, 2021.

Final Thought – I cannot say enough about the incredible work done by our principals, athletic directors and coaches since we announced our 2020-2021 sports calendars on July 20, 2020. Since that date, the focus has always been on doing everything we could do to come through and deliver for our student-athletes so they would be able to do what they love to do and what we love watching them do. The dedication and commitment of our educational professionals to our student-athletes has never wavered throughout this challenging time we have experienced and are still experiencing. Their support of our shared mission promoting the values of education-based athletics must be acknowledged and will never be forgotten.

I hope this information is useful to you in the time ahead and if you have any questions, or I can help you in any way at all, do not hesitate to contact our office. My staff and I are ready, willing and able to assist you in any way we possibly can.

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