



Arizona Interscholastic Association

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WINTER SPORTS 2020/2021 SEASON MODIFICATION TO START JANUARY 18, 2021

PHOENIX, AZ (December 18, 2020) In an attempt to keep Arizona high school students in school and able to participate in winter sports, the Arizona Interscholastic Association, in partnership with its member schools and the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC), released a series of sport-specific modifications on December 2, 2020. While these modifications were designed to safely allow students to continue to play, there is an increasing concern that 90% of the state's Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds are full. Some are projecting that ICU beds may well exceed 100% in upcoming weeks. To support efforts to mitigate Covid-19 hospitalizations and improve the opportunity for a winter sports season to occur, the AIA Executive Board has decided to adjust the season start date to January 18th. This decision will allow schools to practice for 14 days prior to the start of competition after returning from winter breaks.

Joe Paddock, Associate Executive Director, explains, "Our focus continues to be on keeping students in school and on the playing field safely. We believe this decision will help us preserve the winter sports season."

- The Season of Competition begins on January 18, 2021. The only thing that could create a statewide delay or change to this date would be government prohibition or shutdown. March 5, will be the end of the regular season for winter sports.
- Conferences will be given the opportunity to decide the total number of weeks of competition, up to the maximum number of weeks allowed by the Executive Board.
- All modifications to Winter Sports established on December 2 remain in effect: schools are required to follow all modifications.
- Spring season will start March 1, 2021. Conferences will have the opportunity to modify the length of the Spring season.

"These measures will allow us to start the season and I hope, that as we see hospitalizations go down, some of the restrictions regarding spectators, be lifted," said Executive Director David Hines.

The Executive Board is hearing requests and suggestions from Conferences regarding how these modifications may impact Spring sports.

The AIA's primary goal is to maintain in-person learning and avoid further restrictions from another increase in hospitalizations. Let's keep Arizona High School students playing safely!

About the Arizona Interscholastic Association:

The AIA, is a voluntary association of public and private Arizona high schools. Since 1913, the organization has created and sustained interscholastic activities that encourage maximum student participation by providing AIA member schools with an even playing field to ensure fair and equitable competition. The AIA believes that providing interscholastic activities for Arizona high school students creates personal development opportunities with a balanced focus on academics and extracurricular activities.