

November 2020

Dear Fellow Members of the Board of Directors:

Full transparency – I have avoided sitting down and shaping this message. My predecessors have used the Winter Meeting message to recap that year's fall sports activities while forecasting the winter and spring. Stringing together words in mid-November that will be read in early December (a span of only 3 weeks) would not normally present much difficulty. However, in 2020, the word "normal" changes its context frequently and with little to no notice.

So, here's my hope. The first week of December finds us discussing the successes of volleyball and cross country thus far, with swimming and diving on deck. I trust that the latest news highlights the downward trend with COVID-19 cases in our state and country. Our member schools are doing well with remote learning and many have mastered a hybrid instructional delivery. We are finding that our decisions proved sound and all signs point to a strong start for basketball and our remaining slate of sports programs.

The brutal reality is we are more unsure now (mid-November) as leaders than ever before. And I worry that haze is still in place with no signs of lifting soon. One glaring reminder leaders have during the pandemic – failing to plan, with the expectation to refine and adjust after execution, which will stifle your organization more now than ever.

That brings us to this year's agenda. Yes, we will address the effects of the pandemic on our calendar and revisit items requiring attention. But we are also pressing forward with the more routine business of the Board (e.g. lighting standards, budget items, applications for new member schools and of course realignment). I believe the actions of our Board, finding a balance with today's issues and tomorrow's needs, will help to lessen the lasting impact of COVID-19 on our state.

In closing, I want to thank you for your sacrifices thus far this year. We have met far more than in the past; borrowing you on weekends and evenings. On behalf of our student-athletes, parents, coaches, athletic directors and administrators – your efforts are appreciated. Continue to stay safe. Continue to be optimistic and hopeful. Continue to lead!

Jerry