



SASKATCHEWAN HIGH SCHOOLS ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

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TO: SHSAA Districts, Members, and Schools

FROM: Lyle McKellar, Executive Director, SHSAA

DATE: January 25, 2021

RE: 2021 Badminton and Track & Field Championships

At the most recent SHSAA Executive Council meeting (Sunday, January 24, 2021) the Executive Council reviewed the upcoming SHSAA seasons of play for Badminton and Track & Field. Although the Executive remain hopeful that there will be an opportunity for student participation in educational athletics at some point in the spring, the possibility of conducting provincial championships in either of the activities is highly unlikely. As a result, the Executive Council passed a motion to cancel the 2021 Badminton and Track & Field Provincial Championships.

BADMINTON

With the earliest possible start for youth competitions in schools not likely until after the Easter Break, there will not be adequate time for student-athletes to prepare for the challenges of qualifying competitions and a provincial championship. Should competition in youth sport be possible during the spring, there remains an option for localized competition if SHSAA Members deem it safe to provide those opportunities. Without regional or provincial championships, districts may be able to conduct district championships within the season of play provided the public health measures and the education sector have established parameters for that to happen.

TRACK & FIELD

As Track & Field is an outdoor activity and can be conducted in a manner consistent with many of the health measures suggested for outside activities during the summer and fall of 2020, the Executive are hopeful that student-athletes will have an opportunity to train and compete during the spring of 2021. Once again, not knowing when that decision might occur, the preparation of student-athletes and the immense amount of planning and preparation required to conduct the SHSAA Provincial Track & Field championships led the Executive to believe that cancelling the provincial championship now would allow SHSAA Members to concentrate on localized competition should youth sport competitions be available in the spring.

Unfortunately, this means that the SHSAA was unable to conduct playoffs and provincial championships in any of the sanctioned activities for the 2020-21 school year. There was an opportunity, in localized settings, for student participation in educational athletics during the fall where permitted and it is hoped that there may be similar opportunities this spring but that will be determined by public health measures and SHSAA Members.

The Executive Council has provided direction to office staff to prepare scenarios for educational athletics during the 9-week period from April 12 – June 11. There are many things to consider in developing these scenarios including, but not limited to:

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- The response to the pandemic and unknowns which will continue to shape planning and preparation...Will spring weather allow a return to outdoor activities (with or without modification)? Will new variants of the virus impact the decisions regarding health orders and the education sector? Will vaccination show positive results toward a return to normalcy? Will indoor activities continue to pose a higher risk than outdoor activities?...
- Athlete preparation – many of our student-athletes will have gone months without training or competition. There will need to be a period of transition to ensure the health and safety of the student participants.
- Teacher-Coach demands – the education sector has had many demands placed on it over the past year. Those demands are not likely to ease as the end of the school year approaches and there will need to be a balance between volunteer and professional commitments.
- Balance in Seasons of Play – the opportunity to participate in educational athletics has been widely varied across the province. Depending on the geographical response to, and impact of, the pandemic, some areas of the province were able to offer fall activity seasons while others have not. SHSAA has often heard how important educational athletics are in the lives of student-athletes and teacher-coaches. For our graduating students (and potentially, retiring teacher-coaches) is there one last chance for training and competition before leaving high school?
- Competitive Balance – without school sport parameters for SHSAA Members, there exist scenarios where the competitive field of play for 2021 fall activities could be significantly altered due to localized decisions and/or areas of emphasis in April – June 2021.

The Executive has scheduled a provincial meeting of district representatives (Presidents and Athletic Commissioners) for the last week of March. With that timing in mind, the office will be preparing and presenting scenarios to the Executive Council for their consideration in late February and early March.

On behalf of the Executive Council, once again thank you to everyone for their continued support and advocacy for the role that educational athletics play in our schools and in the lives of our students and staff.

Sincerely,

Lyle McKellar
Executive Director, SHSAA

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