

Fate Of IHSA Spring Sports Season To Be Decided In Special Board Meeting On Tuesday Following Closure Of Schools For Remainder Of Year

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BLOOMINGTON - Following Friday's announcement that all Illinois public and private schools would remain closed for the remainder of the school year, the Illinois High School Association will decide the fate of the 2020 spring sports season in a special board meeting to be held on Tuesday via videoconferencing.

The announcement of schools being closed for the remainder of the school year was made by Governor J.B. Pritzker during his daily COVID-19 media briefing on Friday afternoon. Pritzker did say he understood that it would cause disruption for the students and their families, but cited the need to save the most number of lives during the pandemic. Schools have been closed statewide since Mar. 17, and have not reopened since.

On Friday, the Illinois Department of Public Health's latest statistics show a number of 27,535 confirmed cases of COVID-19, with 1,134 deaths caused by the disease that has spread around the state, the nation and the world.

In a press release, the IHSA said that a final determination on the spring sporting seasons would be made during the meeting. The decision would affect all spring sports --- baseball, softball, boys and girls track and field, boys tennis, boys volleyball, girls soccer and bass fishing.

"As we previously indicated, the cessation of in-person learning will make it difficult for the IHSA to conduct spring state tournaments this year," according to a statement in the press release. "More information will be provided following Tuesday's board meeting."

The pandemic has disrupted high school sports both throughout the state and nation. The IHSA had previously cancelled the Class 1A and 2A boys basketball finals, along with the remainder of the Class 3A and 4A boys basketball tournaments, on Mar. 8, due to fears about the pandemic and social distancing guidelines put out by the Center for Disease Control.

Previously, the Missouri State High School Activities Association had cancelled its entire spring sports season and playoffs on April 9, following the announcement of Missouri schools being closed for the remainder of the year by Gov. Mike Parson.

This would be the first time in the 120-year history of the IHSA that an entire sports season would be cancelled for any reason. The IHSA had cancelled the 1995 Class AA team wrestling tournament after a lawsuit filed by Chicago Mt. Carmel High School eventually allowed the team to participate in the series by court order after having been disqualified by the organization for having participated in too many invitational tournaments. It was the only time a specific tournament was cancelled for reasons other than wartime.

