

Edwardsville, Alton ADs Share Thoughts On Recent IHSA Decision To Forge Ahead With Basketball

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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EDWARDSVILLE/ALTON - Presently, it is a wait-and-see situation for area athletic directors in regard to the 2020-2021 girls and boys basketball season.

The Edwardsville and Alton Athletic Directors Alex Fox and Chris Kusnerick, M.S., CAA, are both planning as if the upcoming basketball season will take place in 2020-2021 after the IHSA Board of Directors decision to play the sport as planned with modifications with masks, altering of tournaments and post-season play because of the COVID-19 Pandemic. However, both Fox and Kusnerick know everything now is dependent on a ruling by the school administration and school board on whether not basketball can be played this winter.

Wrestling has been moved to the summer season because of the high contact involved.

The IHSA said in addition, as a part of the mitigation plan, masks will be worn by all players, coaches, and officials during play. Boys and girls basketball teams will follow team limitations allowing a maximum of 31 games. It will become a local school decision to determine if a school will allow their basketball teams to participate following the guidelines developed.

Fox and Kusnerick said last week they don't have a whole lot of answers in regard to basketball just yet, but the IHSA ruling did obviously clear some things for girls and boys basketball.

"This will require conversation with administration and the school board to get some things figured out," Fox said. "I was surprised in a sense that the IHSA went against what IDPH has recommended about moving basketball to later in year, but I wasn't shocked."

Kusnerick said the Redbirds have had no problems with COVID-19 during contact drills with masks on and proper precautions followed.

Kusnerick said it was a little surprising the IHSA would go against the governor and IDPH, but said there will still have to be some time if there is a completely definitive answer to the situation.

He too, agreed with Fox and said: "It will be given to the school administration and school board about basketball. "We are in times we hope we never see again because of COVID-19."

Kusnerick said after the interview he was planning to talk with Alton Schools Superintendent Kristie Baumgartner and the board of education.

Gov. Pritzker has said the school districts know the rules are that have been set.

"The IHSA may have their views but school districts know what the rules are," Pritzker said. "It is unfortunate they may be taking on legal liability if they moved ahead with what the state has previously set as mitigation standards."

Fox said there have been contact drills with masks and during that time there is no problem with COVID-19.

"We follow protocols and procedures and it has gone well," he said. "The season does sit right now with the superintendent and the board of education. There has been a little bit of a tug of war between the IHSA and IDPH. Hopefully, both the IHSA and Governor's Office can sit down everybody gets back on the same page."

Basketball practice is scheduled to begin Monday, Nov. 16.