

LOUISIANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



LARRY FRIEMAN
State Representative ~ District 74

August 29, 2020

Mr. Eddie Bonine
Executive Director LHSAA
12720 Old Hammond Highway
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

Re: Football Season

Dear Mr. Bonine:

Governor Edwards has decided not to move the state into Phase 3 on August 28th. In response, I am writing to you to express my concern about the viability of the high school football season. In your testimony before the House Education Committee, you provided us with the LHSAA's phase plan for high school sports. Specifically, the plan stated that for contact to begin at football practice and games to take place, Louisiana has to be in Phase 3 and then have 14 days of declining Covid cases. As of today, the season has a tentative start date of October 9th. Because Governor Edwards has kept the state in Phase 2 on August 28th, this would place the tentative start date in jeopardy and possibly jeopardize the entire season.

I am sure you are aware that Louisiana is the only state in our region that has not begun their high school football season. Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Alabama, and Mississippi have all started their season. Additionally, it is my understanding that LSU, LA Tech, and other universities in Louisiana are practicing in full gear, with full contact. While I understand that the LHSAA is listening to its medical advisors to make decisions, I do not believe that the medical advisors in our neighboring states, let alone our state universities, are being irresponsible and providing unsound medical advice.

I am requesting that the LHSAA reconsider its current plan and modify its criteria to allow the high school football season to begin as scheduled on October 9th regardless of what phase Governor Edwards decides the state is in. I do understand the LHSAA's trepidation concerning potential legal liability. However, participating in high school athletics, including football, is voluntary. I recommend strong consideration be given to utilizing a well-crafted, detailed waiver to be signed by every student-athlete's parent or guardian prior to participation in full contact. I believe you are well aware that even under normal circumstances, there is no way to completely insulate the LHSAA from any and all

potential lawsuits. However, coupling a signed waiver with the detailed Event Guidelines previously issued by the LHSAA should help to mitigate potential legal liability.

I have spoken to a number of high school football coaches in my area and they assured me that the athletes are safer and less likely to contract Covid at practice than they are outside of practice. The coaches have implemented all the safety precautions required of them and have minimized the chances of infection between players. The athletes have been working out all summer and are continuing to practice in preparation for an upcoming season. Let's not deprive these young men of the opportunity to play this year.

I am not asking the LHSAA to do something the other states in our region have refused to do. On the contrary, I am asking the LHSAA to follow the lead of the other states in our region. As the independent governing body for Louisiana High School athletics, it is time for the LHSAA to exercise its independence and allow the high school football season to begin on October 9th as scheduled.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Larry Frieman

Shane Hughes
A.D. Mandeville

Hutch Gonzales
Head Coach Mandeville

Greg Salter
Head Coach Covington

Ken Sears
Head Coach St. Paul's

Ross Currier
H. C. Jewel Sumner

Shane Smith
A.D. Washington Parish

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