



Section IX Athletics

Gregory P. Ransom, Executive Director

To: Section IX Track Community

Re: Regional Section IX Championships

Date: May 27, 2021

It became apparent in April of this year Track and Field Sectional Meets would not be possible under the traditional format. The Track and Field Chairman went to work and devised a regional concept that would provide a championship event acceptable to the schools and Section IX under our COVID-19 guidelines. The planning process for establishing eleven sites in a Regional format has been long, arduous, and with many hurdles. The focus during this entire process was, and continues to be, affording the kids the opportunity to compete for a Section IX championship.

After conferring with members of the Section IX Athletic Council, which consists of administrative representation including athletic directors, principals, and superintendents, it was decided at the May 11th Section IX meeting that the Regional Track Meets would be approved with a no spectator policy. There were numerous reasons why this policy was adopted. The traditional four class meets would each have more athletes in one place than was acceptable to our schools. There were concerns with the potential for large numbers of spectators which would exceed the maximum allowable number by NYS at that time. In Track & Field it is common for athletes not competing in their events to sit in the bleachers. This also presented a concern in how to keep teams and spectators separated and distant. There were also problems regarding securing the eleven venues needed to pull off this format. Some would only host if there were no spectators permitted. Other schools would not give permission to participate if spectators were permitted.

While it is easy to compare what was allowed during a regular season event and question why this is different, it is important to remember that each school can set their own policies during the regular season. This complex set of events is run under the umbrella of Section IX. There must be consistency for all thirty-eight schools participating and all eleven venues who are hosting.

We would all love nothing more than to welcome spectators to the events like we have had in years past, but it became very apparent through the long planning process that, for ALL athletes on the thirty-eight teams to have the opportunity to compete, the decision the Section IX Athletic Council made regarding spectators was the only way that would occur.

Matt Hemmer and Patrick Burkhardt
Section IX Track and Field Coordinators

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