



Spencer-Van Etten Central School District

Athletic Frequently Asked Questions

9/16/20

- **Why was the decision for the entire district made by 1 person and the community not asked for their input?** The decision was a collaborative effort involving the league and section requesting surveys to be filled out by those assuring mandates will be followed, meetings with the state asking for clarification, and input shared with our BOE. This decision was not made in isolation. Although we would have loved to involve the community in soliciting feedback, the feedback we were asked to provide was solely based on our ability to meet the mandates, safely reopen school and whether we could safely start sports on the 21st given those parameters.
- **Is it for just fall sports or all sports?** All sports will follow a consolidated schedule.
- **Where the coaches given an opportunity to be heard?** There was a survey from the state and from our athletic director given to our coaches. Our athletic director has been in constant communication with coaches.
- **Were the students given a voice?** During a pandemic, much of what we have had to implement has left us without flexibility to meet the mandates.
- **Would it not make more sense to give the students two weeks of class and see if there is a spike and then make a permanent decision?** Ultimately, that is what we were pushing for and there was no change in the contradictions, after asking the state.
- **It's like they are being punished for following the rules this whole time for being safe and compliant— no sports is stripping away their hope of normalcy. Whomever is speaking for my child -a senior- and this district I hope it is out of sound research, not fear, not “misguided guidance” from the state — I’ve worked the front line, I have been out in it this whole time - media has an agenda — it is our responsibility to our children to not be pawn in the downfall of society.** Just like reopening school, regardless of personal opinions, the only way to reopen athletics, we must follow the mandates.
- **Will other athletic opportunities be offered in place of IAC events? (Weight room, practices, etc.)** We want student athletes to have the option to stay active but are waiting for guidance from the Department of Health before we are able to move forward.
- **In 2004-2005 this community raised enough money to fully fund ALL sports. Why wasn't that offered to the community again?** Our district is presently at a 3.2 million-dollar deficit. This is certainly a possibility we may need to consider.
- **How is it not safe for our children to play when 15 minutes away all sports, including football are successfully being played?** Each state has different mandates. We are required to follow NYS mandates.
- **Travel and recreation leagues have been playing all summer, no COVID cases have been reported. How can they do this safely and SVE cannot?** The physician that oversees athletics, has mandates all through summer play, that students must be socially distanced and wearing masks. This is questionable as to whether this actually did occur this summer, but if this mandate is followed, you are correct in assuming that athletes would be safe per Dr. Zayas. This also contradicts our school mandates.
- **If families are uncomfortable, they have the option to not participate, why does that have to mean that my child is not given the opportunity to play?** Every family can choose what's comfortable for their student athlete; however, mandates must be followed adhering to the Section guidance.

- **The infection rate for the state has been below 1% for 36 days, at what point can sports continue without delay?** The mandate to remain open is that our region remain below 5% over 14 consecutive days, which, at the present moment, we meet; however, there are other hoops that are necessary to jump through in order for sports to continue, such as the mandates and the Section guidance.
- **Are the S-VE district managers setting precedent, in that now whenever there is an influenza outbreak either locally/nationally, or perhaps anywhere in the US has a pathogenic challenge, we as parents will be expected to intelligently attempt to advise our children that sports are being removed from their lives each time?** Should the district have to close, such as in March per the Governor, then unfortunately, athletics would be shut down until in-person instruction resumes. We would follow the guidance of the Department of Health.
- **Why were parents not told prior to it being announced in the news?** The media was made aware of this decision before the district was informed. Not only this communication, but every communication, was released to the community at the same time that it was released to the athletic directors.
- **What is the purpose of paying an athletic director when there are no athletics?** There will still be a lot of work to do in Athletics, even with seasons delayed. Every time something changes it is our job as Athletic Directors to communicate with student-athletes, families and the community. We also have to meeting regularly as a steering committee, prepare paperwork for our merged teams to be approved by our BOE, league and section, re-do game and practice schedules, enter them into Schedule Galaxy, arrange officials, organize transportation, ensure the fields are getting prepped, communicate start times with the ever changing schedules of other districts and their availability with transportation, continue to update our athletic sign-up page, strategize with our Athletic Trainer and Strength and Conditioning Coach for possibility of in-person workouts and/or virtual and update social media pages. All of these things are occurring prior to any season.
 In the background we are responsible for all coaches' certifications and ensuring that they comply with what is needed. This includes their mandatory trainings to begin coaching and their ongoing trainings such as CPR/First Aid and AED and concussion. They are also on a schedule to complete coaching courses as the years go on and we must keep track of those as well. We continue to schedule student-athletes wishing to move up in competition whether it be from Modified to JV or Modified to Varsity. This is a long process called Athletic Placement Process. Although we are in what I call COVID times, there is no waiver for this. Testing and paperwork must still occur. This process also includes Mixed Competition testing which we just conducted a test for last week. Although Athletics may be delayed in some respects there is never "down time".
- **Where will the extra money go that is allotted for sports in the budget if it isn't offered or if the season is shortened? Will you adjust salaries accordingly?** The budget and balancing the budget is an ongoing conversation that will occur throughout the year with the BOE. Due to the significant deficit, we project "extra money" will be used to balance the budget.
- **Was the full impact of not having a fall sports season considered when SVE voted to delay sports? Is this the right decision?** Not having in-person schooling is already affecting our children – emotionally, developmentally, socially, etc. Mental health remains a priority; however, we have to ensure safety upon the return to athletics. We understand the benefits around athletics, as well as other extra-curricular activities.

- **With the current plan for sports starting in March, our athletes now need to choose one sport over another sport that they normally would play. How is that fair to our athletes?** The proposal from the IAC presently involves condensed seasons for all sports, therefore, an athlete that plays multiple sports that don't overlap.
- **What is the plan to prevent future sports from being cancelled?** We have to review the current data pertinent to the timeframe when the sports are being played. We have to work in conjunction with the league and the state to determine ongoing future sports.
- **How do you have cross country in March?** The placement of the sport and the window of time is determined by the Section.
- **It would be nice if going forward a group of community members and specifically parents be consulted about risk levels or the potential to delay/cancel sports, further transparency is needed in this area at the very least we should be notified prior to the media.** While I get some issues are out of the control of the local district this was not and maybe others will have ideas that could be of benefit had others been at least notified. We have heard from parents that they would like more transparency and direct communication. We would like to work through our Booster Club to ensure open communication with parents/guardians of student athletes.