

Members of NVSUA,

It feels like we have been so much longer than it has but I will probably remember for a long time that on Thursday, Mar 12th shortly after 8pm while another member of the training committee and I were observing 3 of our rookie umpires work a JV game at Marshall, that I first got word that the softball season that was to start a mere 4 days later was suspended until April 12th. I look at the calendar and realize that was really only 16 days ago and of course as we know since that the entire season has been canceled. Since this started I promised I would keep you updated with the latest information as I get it as to whether or not we can expect to see any type of softball this year. Having said that, here are is the latest:

VHSL season: I understand there are some emails floating around that seemingly indicates VHSL hopes to have some type of season this year. While you can be optimistic as you read the VHSL press release https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DQ_BxX-gx8p-EwAXko59HLlgyUr2AJwQ/view from earlier this week, if you look at the caveats to conduct such a spring sport season I am very pessimistic that will be an option.

Working for you: over the past week or so, I have been engaged in and will continue to until resolution on some initiatives for the good of officials.

a. I previously reported that approximately 8-9 other associations are in conversation to create a path forward with our customers to see if we can get a unified position to present to the customers. For the most part I believe we will get a unified position with a majority of associations however, there are some that have either taken a "we want nothing for the season" to others that seemingly want payment for the entire season. Obviously, our stance is neither of those and somewhere in the middle. I remain optimistic that we can find some middle ground with the schools on your behalf. I have socialized a starting point both with our board and the other associations. I have heard back from a couple who have discussed our starting point with their board of directors and we believe we will get to a good position and hope it will be viewed as a win-win for all. No promises but working hard.

b. NASO initiated an effort to get sports officials included in any stimulus bill in Congress. Last Tuesday, I emailed a letter to both VA Senators (Warner and Kane) and Representatives Connelly and Beyer (available on nvsua.org under Presidents message). I know many other associations around the country did the same thing, as did many officials. As a result, on Friday, the President signed the CARES Act, which has a variety of programs to help workers and businesses. NVSUA Board member Mason Bishop is tracking the benefits

available to workers. Among the benefits is unemployment insurance for self-employed and contract workers. For those of you who relied on your umpire income as a major source of your living expenses, there may be a chance you can apply for benefits under the new federal law. Mason will be providing the Board continual updates, and as we have information, we will send to our members who might be able to take advantage of these financial programs designed to help people negatively impacted by COVID-19. Mason is also willing to help answer questions or assist individual members with how to apply for benefits or where to go online for information. Mason's email is masonbishop27@gmail.com. For those that don't know, Mason formerly worked for Dept of Labor and fully understands the intricacies of this situation. If you are a member of NASO, you should have received their update on this bill via email yesterday mid-day (it may be attached).

c. VHSL Registration fees: although it was on my mind as well as other associations, several of our members asked me about the status of those fees. I certainly had my opinion, first nobody gives money back in today's society, if you are lucky they will give you a credit to be used at a later date. I did inquire with VHSL, understanding there are probably more questions that answers right now I asked if a) a refund was on the discussion table b) could the 2019-2020 fees be rolled over for the 2020-2021 school year which starts on July 1, 2020. Here is the VHSL response:

"I can assure you that we have been in discussions regarding officials registration fees. Our \$45 fee goes towards NFHS insurance, fees for rules books(softball books were \$10.48 this year per official—this does not include shipping to you-while nominal in the grand scheme of things—adds up for our office), access to the NFHS rules tests and clinics, fees to have Whistle up and running, fees for paypal(for Whistle), and the list goes on. I have spoken to the people at the NFHS and we are not getting any of the fees back that we have paid them. We will have to pay these fees again next year as they are not going to transfer this year's fees to next year. They are aware that a lot of officials use their state certification when officiating little league, summer and fall travel ball, etc. so that they are covered by insurance. If your officials registered before February 28th- they have access to digital copies of the rules books and should be able to access the NFHS Central Hub on Arbiter. Carrie is sending in the updated list of officials in to the NFHS at the end of every month now.

You, along with all commissioners, of all spring sports, will receive an email in the next few days outlining what we will be doing with officials fees. We are aware that \$45 may mean a lot to some of your officials." (I have not received that guidance as of today, that response was sent to me on Thursday)

Those that know me better than others can probably figure out what my internal voice said to that response... suffice it to say, I thought it was a bit short-sighted and more about them than the officials they are there to support -- just my opinion.

USA Softball: latest update on that is all tournaments through the month of April have been canceled. They are monitoring the actions being taken by the governor of Virginia. With the current 30 day "shut-down" as it dwindles down and gets closer to expiring we should now move forward with those tournaments scheduled for May. USA Softball announced they will make a decision on National Championship tournaments NLT June 1st. Please continue to work your SafeSport course completion. Recreation leagues are at the mercy of the county parks and recreation, as long as the parks remain closed, the fields will remain closed.

The April general membership meeting scheduled for April 19th has been canceled as well. The June meeting as of now was moved from 21st (Sunday) June 22nd, Monday night but that has potential to change as well. Given this situation, it might be good to mark your calendar for our annual banquet on Dec 6th, if for no other reason to see each other and share some laughs, etc.

You now have what I have, probably nothing new if you are following the events. As always if you have any questions, please let me know. I will continue to keep you up to date with the latest to the best I can. Thanks

Bob

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