



# Weather forces state athletic association to waive rule, allowing wiggle room in schedules

**James Johnson**, @jjdandc Published 6:15 a.m. ET April 23, 2018 | Updated 7:12 a.m. ET April 23, 2018



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The jam-and-cram session, also known as the Section V high school spring sports season, has received a little wiggle room for scheduling from the state.

The New York State Public High School Athletic Association announced Thursday it is waiving the rule in Section V and other regions that forbids teams from a combination of playing games or practicing seven consecutive days.

Robert Zayas, executive director of the NYSPSHAA, said sections and schools are expressing concern about the impact a lingering winter and wet spring weather conditions are having on team schedules.

"This is one thing that can be done in order to help the schools," Zayas said. "If you play six days or practice, and it's a beautiful day on a Sunday, maybe you can get a game in.

"You have the ability to get more games in, as the season quickly winds to an end."

Aquinas athletic director Anthony Bianchi said that teams at his school, a large number of which are not affiliated with leagues, are starting to see games go from postponed to canceled.

"It's going to help, if people are thinking about backtracking out of games because they have to make up league games," Bianchi said.

Teams at Aquinas have taken part in athletic contests on Sundays. The girls lacrosse teams are playing a varsity-JV doubleheader on May 6, after the teams attend a Mass and share a breakfast.

The policy about playing on Sundays varies between districts and schools.

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Penfield vs. Penfield lacrosse at Penfield. (Photo: MAX SCHULTE/@maxrophoto/staff photographer)

"We would prefer to use Sundays as a last resort," McQuaid athletic director Matt Thomas said. "We're pretty fortunate. Our lacrosse and baseball teams have a high number of games in" because of trips during spring break to Maryland and Florida.

"Religious activities are very important. We prefer to have everyone spend time with their families or attend religious services on Sundays."

Penfield's track and field teams were able to start Monroe County league dual meet schedules last Thursday. Dave Hennessey, who has coached more than 40 seasons in Section V, said the weather in Webster was sunny with temperatures in the low 50s.

"Here it is April 20, and we're saying when it's 50 degrees at this date, it's wonderful. That's sad," Hennessey said, "... but we're getting to the stage where if it's a day without snow or rain, it's OK."

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The waiver is mostly to assist softball, baseball, golf and tennis since those sports rely on surfaces that must be dry.

Livonia coach Scott Gilman, coordinator of the Livingston County baseball league, said the NYSPHSAA will indeed provide a valve to help ease pressure on team schedules.

"We played a (postseason) tournament game on Sunday, but some schools won't allow it," Gilman said. "We don't make it a habit. Right now, we may have to (while three-games off pace).

"I like playing Saturdays and Sundays. That's baseball. You start at noon, 1 p.m. and it's sunny out. There is nothing better than that."

Kyle Crandall, East High's baseball coach and league coordinator of the Rochester City Athletic Conference, said while the NYSPHSAA's waiver is a good idea, Sundays may not be a viable option.

"No. 1, you still have kids who have work responsibility," Crandall said. "In general, for spring athletes, it's common not to work during the week and have to work on the weekend.

"Even if they take one day off during the weekend (to play in games), they are not going to take off two. Then you have the pitching rules and stuff."

Baseball pitchers are allowed to make a certain number of pitches in games within a time period. Postponements earlier in the season already have crowded some of the upcoming weeks with softball and baseball games.

"Who is going to want to play a game on Sunday to make it five games in four days?" Crandall said. "That doesn't make sense."

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Weather forces athletic association to waive rule on weekly limits

Neither does the criticism of the NYSPSHAA's waiver, according to Zayas.

"The rule is there so that there is not an overemphasis placed on athletics during the regular season," the executive director said. "We would not permit (seven consecutive days of activities) in the postseason."

Zayas said recently he returned from a meeting about high school sports where he sat with administrators from Illinois and South Dakota.

"Those two states are having the same problem," Zayas said.

*JAMESJ@Gannett.com*



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