

Jake's Take | Educate yourself before you talk ... or tweet

[Jake Furr](#) | Mansfield News Journal Updated 18 hours ago



I don't know how Ohio High School Athletic Association Commissioner Jerry Snodgrass does it.

I spent a few minutes of my day scrolling through his Twitter feed and read his responses to people calling him out for various issues in high school sports. Everything from how one team had a short drive to a tournament game while the other had a long drive, how people blame the OHSAA for different rules in high school sports, to how they believe the OHSAA just makes decisions on rule changes on its own like a dictatorship.

My advice for those tweeters: Educate yourself before you talk or

tweet.

My advice for Mr. Snodgrass: Teach me your patience, because I don't think I would be able to remain so calm when responding to people who turn things personal instead of flat out asking questions.

Let's see if I can help clear things up with the help of Mr. Snodgrass.

Tournament site advantage?

First up is the argument about the tournament site selections and how people believe that one team may have a bigger advantage over the other due to travel time. The simple fact of the matter is, the field dimensions are the same, the game is played the exact same way and there is no concrete advantage on the field of play.

The fact one team had to travel two hours and the other had to travel 20 minutes means nothing when it comes to playing the game.

But the biggest thing I saw was people thinking the OHSAA basically made these tournament sites to cater to one school over the other, and that is just insane thinking. The tournament sites are determined before the season even starts.

Let me repeat that: The tournament sites are determined before the season even starts. The coaches in those districts agree to the tournament sites before the season. The athletic departments of those schools participating in the district or regional tournament agree to the tournament site. So if you as a fan are unhappy about the difference in travel time and taking it out on the OHSAA, your anger is misdirected.

The other argument I saw was how one team would have more fans than the other because of travel time and that just isn't fair. Sure, it may be louder at the stadium or gym when one team scores versus when the other scores, but I fail to see how that gives one team a competitive advantage over the other on the field of play.

I will answer that for you: It doesn't. Having more fans at a game does not help a player hit a baseball or softball. It doesn't help a player make a 3-pointer or dive on the floor for a loose ball. A long bus ride (emphasis on the word *ride*) does not prevent a player from executing a perfect serve on the volleyball court or from making a perfect pass to a teammate in soccer.

Coaches and administrators have zero argument. If it isn't the tournament site they like, they have the right to challenge it before the season when it is voted into agreement. I won't even try to explain that logic. That is pretty clear.

How those rules changes happen

Next topic is the different rule changes in high school sports and the OHSAA's role in those changes. I saw a tweet that said, "... The OHSAA added an extra week to the season. (I) still don't know the thought process for doing that!"

This was in reference to the high school baseball season being extended a week during the 2019 season. Before this person tweeted this, maybe he or she should have educated themselves on the matter. The OHSAA has ZERO power to implement rule changes all by itself. This was a rule change proposed by the coaches association,

approved through a vote including every single school in Ohio, and passed via the democratic process.

This wasn't the OHSAA just saying, "Ah, heck, I feel like making someone mad today so lets extend the high school baseball season a week just for the fun of it."

It was an idea brought up by the coaches association and its member schools to try and combat the new pitch count rule (which we will get to in a second) and help their baseball programs and the arms of young pitchers. Ohio has the least amount of days to complete a high school baseball season in the country, even with the extra week. That puts a strain on pitching staffs in general and threatens the idea of a junior varsity and freshman team, but that is another thought for another column.

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The extra week helped baseball programs all over the state and saved a ton of pitching arms in the long run. But it ruined Mr. Tweeters' plans of attending the state tournament in Columbus instead of having to go to Akron. Sorry, but I would much rather save an arm than save you the drive time.

I also would rather have coaches associations and OHSAA member schools make those decisions about the well-being of athletic

programs and high school athletes than see the OHSAA make rule changes without consideration of anyone else.

That is how the season was extended. It was extended thanks to a vote by member schools through the most democratic process out there. This is true with any other rule change made, with the exception of playing rules, which is my next topic of discussion.

State follows national federation's rules

As I mentioned earlier, we would revisit the whole pitch count deal. That wasn't an OHSAA thing either. In the OHSAA constitution, it requires all Ohio high school athletics to follow the rules of the National Federation of High School Associations.

Two years ago, the NFHS passed legislation requiring every state that followed the NFHS guidelines to develop its own pitch count rule and implement it how they see necessary. So, the OHSAA developed a plan, pitched it to every member school, and those schools and their representatives voted on it. It passed and there is a very short version of how the rule came to be.

Many people are clamoring for a shot clock in high school basketball and are wondering why the OHSAA hasn't implemented that, and the easy answer is because it is not an NFHS rule yet.

But why is the OHSAA so reliant on the NFHS? That is a legit question. The answer is complicated, but here goes: The NFHS has the ability to make rule changes, also by a very democratic process. For those states that follow the NFHS rules, they get a vote and a say in those rule changes.

It is very important for the state of Ohio to have a vote in those rule changes that change the game for our high school athletes and programs. The states that do not follow the NFHS do not get a vote. That is why you see some states with a shot clock and most without.

The shot clock states do not get a vote in any other NFHS rule changes and are forced to have that extra responsibility of developing game play rule changes as well as changes that affect the bigger picture, like extending the high school baseball season a week.

Being compliant to the NFHS is better for all states involved.

Those were just three of the major themes I saw people complaining about, but there are plenty more and just not enough time in the day to address every single one of them. Yet, Mr. Snodgrass seems to find a way to positively respond to nearly every complaint and question.

I don't know how he does it.

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