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## Idaho High School Activities Association issues memo on winter state tourney protocol

Submitted information

Feb 6, 2021



Fruitland's Jonathon Fagen waves to the crowd after winning his fourth state championship at the Idaho Wrestling State Tournament in February of 2019. Officials are planning to hold this year's state tourney at the Idaho Ford Center in Nampa.

submitted photo

## **BOISE**

The Idaho High School Activities Association issued a memo to its member schools on Friday morning to clarify questions regarding upcoming state events.

Following is a full copy of the news release

“We know many of you have been fielding questions about the current attendance restrictions for IHSAA State Tournaments. This memo is to further explain how and why the IHSAA implemented these guidelines and hopefully help you answer questions from your coaches, students, parents and community.

“When COVID-19 pandemic hit last spring, IHSAA spring sports and activities were completely cancelled. That was a heartbreaking decision by our office and Board of Directors that affected thousands of Idaho students, coaches, administrators, families and communities. As we entered the 20-21 school year, this was something we did not want to see repeated. So, beginning this summer, the IHSAA put together COVID steering committees for each fall and winter sport comprised of coaches, AD’s, principals and superintendents. These committees unanimously voted to do whatever it took to allow students to participate, even if that meant no fans in the

stands. Thankfully, we’ve been able to do that so far. Our focus is, and always will be, the safety of the students, and to represent the schools of Idaho in a responsible manner.

“Flash forward to our current situation concerning our winter sports tournaments. Thankfully, some of the restrictions are being relaxed and schools are beginning to discuss moving back to full-time, in- person instruction. That has not been the current practice in many parts of the state. Because of that, our host schools have a very hard time making the decision to pack their gym to 40% capacity but still have remote or hybrid learning models for their students. We would also point out that the Governor’s

order of allowing 40% capacity is only applicable if social distancing can still be maintained. In many of our host sites, that is not possible. We must be respectful of our host sites/schools and hold our events under collaborative guidelines.



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“If the IHSAA agrees to move to 40% capacity, we will lose our basketball and wrestling sites. If we move venues to other areas of the state, we have schools who would not attend due to the lack of COVID restrictions in place.

“With the ability to host the 2021 State Wrestling Tournament at the Ford Idaho Center, we will be able to have a complete bracket of wrestlers while allowing two fans per participant. As with any wrestling tournament, the number of participants and essential personnel required in this unique sport will subtract from the overall percentage of people in a venue.

“One of the great things about the state basketball tournaments is that all championship games are played at the Ford Idaho Center - a beautiful facility and one many students strive to be able to play in. “Our State Tournament committee feels that denying students the opportunity to play and compete in such a venue outweighs the option to move to smaller venues.



“The responsibility of hosting schools and communities for a state event, from the vastly diverse corners of Idaho, is a challenge. This has been a difficult school year for all Idaho students. We will continue to focus on the priority the steering committees set forth – do whatever it takes give Idaho students an opportunity to play in a state tournament.

“The IHSAA Board of Directors will continue to work tirelessly for our member schools and their students. As lifelong educators, this is what we signed up for when we decided to pursue a career in education.