

Closings And Delays

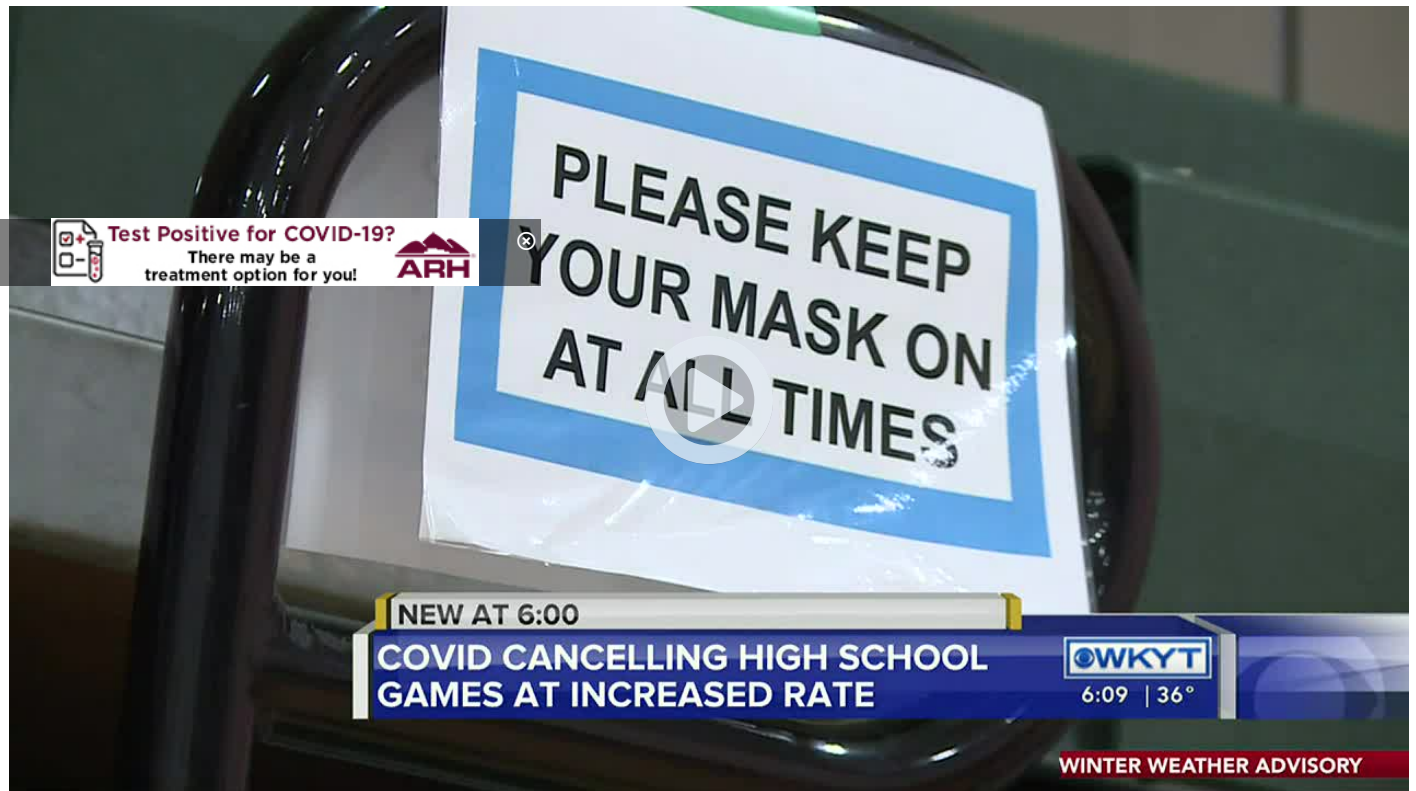
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COVID-19 wreaking havoc on Kentucky high school basketball schedules



By [Alex Walker](#)

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LEXINGTON, Ky. (WKYT) - Five weeks down, five weeks to go in the high school basketball season before the playoffs begin. However, as the season rolls along, COVID-19 is canceling games at a rate that is elevating in a hurry.

After 16% of scheduled games were canceled in week one, that percentage has increased from 24 to 35 to 37% in week four, and now it's back down to 29% in week five.



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Week 1: 16%
Week 4: 37%

COVID-19 is cancelling high school basketball games at a rate that is elevating in a hurry. My report tonight on [@WKYT](#) at 6.

Hear from KHSAA commissioner Julian Tackett plus [@BSHS_Defenders](#) and [@CoachRunyonPLD](#).



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“We knew we would see more games canceled more games postponed in indoor sports,” said KHSAA Commissioner Julian Tackett. “In reality, it’s gone about as we expected. Our partners at the Department of Public Health have told me all fall you better be ready for winter because when we go inside, air doesn’t circulate as well.”

Tackett says a vast majority of cancellations have been the result of quarantines following a positive test. Quarantines typically last 10 days for players or coaches that come in contact with COVID-19 but don’t contract it.

As for players or coaches that test positive, they’re required to sit out at least 16 days before returning to play.

“It has really been tough,” said Coach Robert “Nimbo” Hammons, Bryan Station basketball. “At first, I thought I could kind of weather it because we do have so many returning guys, but, even still, it has really knocked us off our feet.”

In Fayette County, Bryan Station has been hit the hardest by COVID-19. The Defenders have had not one, not two, but three full-team shutdowns this season.

“It wasn’t bad, but now that we have been hit again, now it starts wearing on you,” Hammons said. “One time maybe is good, you might rebound, but after that, it gets tougher and tougher.”

At this moment, multiple Bryan Station players are battling COVID-19 and that doesn’t include senior Myles Morones, who fought the virus earlier this season.

“When I first had it, I really thought I was going to die,” Morones said. “I was nauseous, I was dizzy, for basketball purposes, I was out of shape, so when I got back I had to fight and get back in shape and I am still fighting through it.”

Five weeks into the season, Bryan Station has only played five games.

On the other side of the spectrum, a handful of teams in Fayette County have avoided isolation periods entirely. That group includes the Lady Bulldogs of Dunbar High.

“We are being super careful with everything that we do,” said Nick Runyon. “I think the biggest thing that has helped us is we have had to completely rethink the way we practice. We only practice our varsity team an hour and fifteen minutes a day. Letting them have more time at home in their little bubble at the house has really helped.”

Runyon's approach to practice is clearly working. His Bulldogs are 9-0 and they are buying in.

"We have handled it really well. We made a lot of sacrifices as a team, said senior Elise Ellison-Coons. "We don't really hang out with a bunch of people. We have just been together."

As we inch closer to the postseason, keeping a tight bubble is a point of emphasis for Julian Tackett.

"The ability to be successful going forward is not going to depend on what the 12-15 athletes on a basketball team do," Tackett said. "It's going to be what the community does. Do they really buy into public health advice and other advice that will get this virus put away and if we want the fun stuff, we have to do the not-fun stuff for another little while."

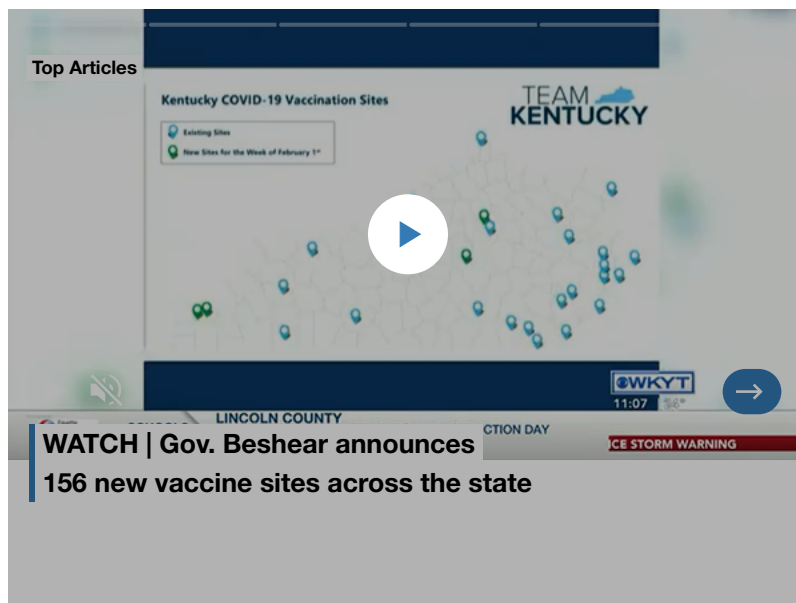
That fun stuff includes the Sweet 16.

The boys are scheduled to play March 31 through April 3 and the girls will play April 7-10. As for attendance, whether it's 15% or 30% capacity, Tackett says he's just thankful the Sweet 16 is taking place after canceling the event almost one year ago.

"It's going to be different but it's going to happen," Tackett said. "It's going to be two groups of five kids and three officials working their tails off. And that was our number one goal and we remain laser-focused on that happening."

The next scheduled KHSAA Board of Control meeting is set for February 17. We will get an update on the Sweet 16 and a look at the schedule for spring sports.

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