

LHSAA puts hold on wrestling until state meet

[Rodrick Anderson](#) 15 hrs ago

The Louisiana High School Athletic Association made a major decision this week to shut down the remainder of the wrestling regular season in hopes of preventing the state meet from suffering the same fate spring sports did last year in the early days of the coronavirus pandemic.

More than 50 percent of the wrestling programs throughout the state are in quarantine. The moratorium applies to in-state and out-of-state competition or any club competition until the state championships at the Raising Cane's River Center in Baton Rouge Feb. 26 and 27.

"This moratorium will also, hopefully, guarantee all of our wrestlers will not be put in a situation of potentially missing the state competition due to a positive case of COVID or being exposed to a positive case, continual rolling quarantines, or non-direct contact tracing," LHSAA Executive Director Eddie Bonine said in a virtual meeting with media Wednesday morning. "It puts them, for the most part, in a bubble so we can get this under control and not only try to be good citizens and neighbors and do what the state is asking us to do, but also it gives the athletes a time to heal injuries."

The major catalyst in the decision was an outbreak at the Louisiana Classic in Gonzales on Jan. 15 and 16.

Bonine said he received reports that five athletes from four schools had tested positive and the possibility that some had participated knowing

they were positive. Reports from other media sources have put the number at 20. Forty-six of the 93 teams in the state participated in the Louisiana Classic.

Bonine said there will be strict guidelines for social distancing, mask requirements and crowd control for the state tournament. About 1,800 tickets will be available each day of the tournament in the 8,900-seat arena.

Sulphur High was getting ready to host its annual Jesse James Southwest Shootout Saturday when head coach Jean Paul Duhon got the call Friday that all wrestling events had been canceled. Duhon said he supports the decision.

"It is about the kids going to the state tournament, and that is what we decided to do," Duhon said. "We will sacrifice a tournament here or there so the kids can go to the state meet. In the end, it is about the kids."