

OSSAA board approves one-time free transfer for high school athletes



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Mike Simons, Tulsa World file

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Tim Willert For the Tulsa World

OKLAHOMA CITY — OSSAA board members, looking to get out in front

of a growing trend, voted Wednesday to let student-athletes change high schools once without having to wait a year before competing.

Board members voted 12-1 to implement the one-time exception by July 1. Members also voted to approve a July 15 date for the transfers to become effective.



Said OSSAA executive director David Jackson (right): "We do feel like it is a proactive move with the climate of sports in general, especially with what's going on at the collegiate level in regards to transfers."

Oklahoman file photo

"We do feel like it is a proactive move with the climate of sports in general, especially with what's going on at the collegiate level in regards to transfers," Executive Director David Jackson said. "This is something that was inevitable, that was working its way down to the

high school level.”

With the exception of hardship waivers granted by the association, most student-athletes who transfer schools must wait one year to gain athletic eligibility.

The association met with and surveyed leaders from about 220 of its 482 member schools to determine whether they preferred an implementation date in June or July or did not want to change the existing policy. About 55% felt like the July 15 date would be a better deadline for transfers to be effective, Jackson said.

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Jackson said the exception is not intended to encourage transfers but to “control the narrative.”

“We do feel like something is going to be done, whether we like it or not,” he said. “The message is clear out of this office, we’re not promoting free transfers, that’s not what we’re doing. We’re trying to be proactive and come up with something that we feel is inevitable, to control the narrative, so to speak. If we don’t, who knows what will be given to us from legislation.

Kordell Gouldsby and his Bixby teammates spent the last night of the Class 6A football season in December doing exactly what they did on the opening night in August — dominating their opponent as they rolled to a 49-21 win over Jenks

Video courtesy of FOX23

“We feel like we can write it in a manner that doesn’t necessarily create the situation that the NCAA is dealing with,” he said. “This doesn’t create a portal in the same sense that the NCAA has a transfer portal.

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In other action Wednesday, board members voted unanimously to approve a contract extension with Hall of Fame Stadium to continue hosting OSSAA high school softball championships. Under the agreement, the terms of which were not disclosed, Hall of Fame Stadium will host slow-pitch championships in the spring and fast-pitch championships in the fall over the next three years, according to Jackson.

"We talked about and looked at those numbers back in August," he said. "We just knew that it was way more expensive than it had ever been before. So that's when we thought we either have to look at some other venues or try to negotiate. After we got together we were able to bring that (number) back down."

Asked by how much, Jackson said "a substantial amount."

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