

PEN CITY CURRENT

It's Black & White and Read all over

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GAME ON!

SUMMER SPORTS: Reynolds green lights Iowa high school sports for June 1

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – There'll be no spitting of sunflower seed shells and no hot dogs or walking tacos, but the games are on.

With the Wednesday announcement by Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds that Iowa's high schools were approved to start their summer sports programs June 1, area coaches and activities directors went to work formulating plans.



SWINK

The Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union issued a joint statement including guidance for schools, athletes and coaches after convening board meetings following Reynold's daily press conference.

The unions said practices can now start officially on June 1, with games approved to begin June 15. All other out-of-season sports contact between coaches and student athletes is prohibited until July 1.

Fort Madison Activities Director Jeremy Swink said a meeting with



Photo by Chuck Vandenberg

Dugouts are off limits for practice but starting June 15, the Bloodhounds baseball and softball teams will be back in action.

Southeast Conference coaches is set for 7 a.m. Thursday morning to start to hammering out schedules.

But Swink said he's not taking the philosophy of squeezing in as many games as he can.

"Even though it's a short season, that doesn't mean my philosophy will be to jam in as many games as we can,"

Swink said. "We've got pitchers and innings and players' health to consider. I think we've been given the opportunity to play and we should be grateful for that."

FMHS Head baseball coach Ron Walker also said players shouldn't be

See **SUMMER**, page 5



Nation will watch Iowa high schools

The decision by the Iowa High School Athletic Association and the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union to allow summer baseball and softball was bigger than what people realize.

It's not just a part of the state's re-opening that is occurring during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic.

The whole nation is watching.

The first games, set for June 15 around the state, will be the first high school sporting events since school districts around the nation closed in the spring because of the pandemic.

Which is why it's important that Iowa gets this right.

The season will be abbreviated — neither association has announced a games limit, but it figures to be somewhere around 25 games instead of the usual 40.

There will be fans, but the recommendation is for them to maintain social distancing. There will be sanitizing of equipment used by players. Sorry, no concession stands.

All of these guidelines were part of the National Federation of High Schools release earlier in the week, and they are reasonable to follow.

There is a chance being taken here. Any coronavirus outbreak ends the season, and then puts the fall seasons, and much more, in jeopardy.

Which is why everyone needs to be safe.

Which is why everyone needs to be smart.

And it's better that everyone understands that now.

See **BOHNENKAMP**, page 7

GOVERNOR

Reynolds sets up holiday weekend with more openings

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

JOHNSTON – Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds paved the way for the summer to take off in Iowa with a wide array of additional openings around the state with the Memorial Day holiday weekend just two days away.

At Wednesday's daily press conference, Reynolds announced that she is reopening all school-sponsored activities, including learning and summer sports, effective June 1. Announcements from the Iowa High School Athletic Association and Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union didn't have



REYNOLDS

immediate reactions on their websites.

Other openings include movie theaters at 50% capacity with health and safety measures in place including social distancing and no self-service food or beverages. Museums, aquariums and zoos are fully opened with reasonable measures in place and swimming pools are open for lap swimming and lessons only.

Wedding reception venues are also allowed to reopen under the guidance

See **STATE**, page 4



Bars like Sidelines in Fort Madison will have even more cars when bars open May 28.

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WEATHER

THU 21 May..... Light Rain, 64.4° F/ 60.3° F
FRI 22 May..... Heavy Intensity Rain, 72.9° F/ 64.2° F
SAT 23 May..... Scattered Clouds, 78.0° F/ 65.4° F

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Education News/Ag News

FM district concerned with kindergarten numbers

Pandemic gets in the way of registrations for school's two Kindergarten Round ups

BY CHUCK VANDENBERG
PCC EDITOR

FORT MADISON – A Fort Madison school official is concerned about the enrollment of kindergarten students for the upcoming school year.

Fort Madison Community School District's Director of Student Services and Curriculum Director, Kim Harmon said the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on kindergarten round-ups and screenings.

"I wish I could give you a better picture," Harmon told the board of Directors at Monday's board meeting. "But at this point we are a little unsure."

Harmon said the district had good numbers signed up for the district's round-ups, but are seeing a slow return of the registration packets.

She said the pandemic is creating some problems for families to get dental and medical screenings done, but she said the district at this point is just looking for confirmation the students will be



HARMON

attending.

"Lincoln had 55 registered at Kindergarten Round Up and Richardson at 68 and those numbers gave us a pretty good projection of class size for next fall, but once the closure occurred, we had to send out registration packets to families that would have received them at round up," she said.

Harmon said only 40 packets have been returned for Lincoln, and just 33 have been returned from Richardson, which is less than 50% of those signed up for the roundup.

Building secretaries have been reaching out to families in the district to make contact and find out what support the families need in getting the packets turned back in.

"We understand there may be some concerns about getting to the dentist or doctor, but right now we just need confirmation that they are planning on attending," Harmon said.

She said the district is planning on bringing the families in in early August to get through the screenings and finalize plans.

Board member Brad Menke questioned the district's plan for preschool with several area preschools closing due to the pandemic.

"We had a preschool close in West Point and

we're trying to find a spot, but it's few and far between and maybe the best choice won't be made because of the late screenings," Menke said.

Harmon said the district can't plan too far ahead without further guidance from the state.

"We don't even have a guarantee in the fall we're going to be enrolling kids as we normally do," Harmon said.

"Wish I had good answers. It's just one of those situations that we can't plan for and it's very frustrating for us as it has to be for families. But we're going to get through this together. We will make the best decision we can for our kiddos."

Board member Dianne Hope said it's hard to plan because not even the state knows what re-starting looks like.

Harmon said plans for the state's Return to Learn program mandate a continuous learning plan in case students can't come back in August. She said requirements of that plan, which has to be submitted to the state by July 1, also include an onsite learning program to accommodate health and safety measures for students and staff, and a hybrid program incorporating both.

She said the district has set up a leadership team of 24 people, that are being broken down into five subgroups to help formulate the Return to Learn plan for the state.

March ag margins trigger payments

WASHINGTON, May 20, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced this week that the March 2020 income over feed cost margin was \$9.15 per hundredweight (cwt.), triggering the first payment of 2020 for dairy producers who purchased the appropriate level of coverage under the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program.

"This payment comes at a critical time for many dairy producers," said FSA Administrator Richard Fordyce. "It is the first triggered DMC payment for 2020, and the first payment to dairy producers in seven months."

Current projections indicate that a DMC payment is likely to trigger every month for the remainder of 2020, a different expectation from last July when some market models had forecast no program payments for 18 months.

Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill, DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer. Over 13,000 operations enrolled in the program for the 2020 calendar year. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

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Sports/Iowa News



Courtesy photo

FMHS senior Dalyn Wondra signs a letter of intent Monday evening with her parents Drs. Tim and Lauri Wondra. Wondra signed to play softball at Cornell College in Cedar Rapids.

FM groups part of Alliant Energy spring grant cycle

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa – May 20, 2020 – A total of 21 area nonprofit organizations have received community grants totaling \$24,426 from Alliant Energy through its Foundation.

The grants fund projects in four key areas: Helping Families, Education, Environment and Public Safety.

“We know our nonprofit partners need our support now more than ever,” said Julie Bauer, Executive Director of the Alliant Energy Foundation. “In partnership with these organizations, we are supporting our customers and the communities we serve in creative ways and helping to make life better for others.”

These community grants are among 237 the Alliant Energy Foundation awarded for the spring grant cycle, total-

ing nearly \$550,000.

Local groups receiving funds included the Test Kitchen Education Foundation (Elliott Test Kitchen) for the Test Kitchen STEM Lounge and Fort Madison Beautification Foundation for Park Rehabilitation. The amounts of each grant were not provided.

Houghton/Cedar Township got a grant to help upgrade a thermal imaging camera and Denmark Fire Association, Inc received a grant to help with its “Hot Heads and a Brighter Future” program.

Burlington grants went to the Burlington Police Department for an AED power pack supply, Community Action of Southeast Iowa for home needs and Southeastern Community College of the CHAD Youth Mentoring Program.

Miller gets lowans part of subprime lender settlement

DES MOINES — Attorney General Tom Miller and 33 other attorneys general announced a settlement with Santander Consumer USA Inc. that includes approximately \$550 million in relief for consumers, with more loan forgiveness expected.

The settlement resolves allegations that Santander violated consumer protection laws by exposing subprime consumers to unnecessarily high levels of risk and knowingly placing these consumers into auto loans with a high probability of default.

“Santander committed some of the same offenses that we saw occur in the subprime mortgage market,” Miller said. “The company stuck consumers with unfair, unaffordable loans, and its failures allowed dealers to inflate borrowers’ incomes and falsify other information.”

More than 2,300 Iowa consumers could get relief under the settlement. Consumers can check the settlement website — <http://www.santandermultistateagsettlement.com> — for periodic updates on restitution and other relief.

Iowa’s petition and consent judgment were filed in Polk County District Court on Tuesday, and the settlement was approved by Polk County District Judge Robert B. Hanson. The settlement stems from a multistate investigation of the largest subprime auto financing company in the country. The investigation began in March 2015 after consumer complaints related to subprime auto

loans increased.

The coalition alleges that Santander, through its use of sophisticated credit scoring models to forecast default risk, knew that certain segments of its population were predicted to have a high likelihood of default. Santander exposed these borrowers to unnecessarily high levels of risk through high loan-to-value ratios, significant back-end fees, and high payment-to-income ratios.

The coalition also alleges that Santander’s aggressive pursuit of market share led it to underestimate the risk associated with loans by turning a blind eye to dealer abuse and failing to meaningfully monitor dealer behavior to minimize the risk of receiving falsified information, including the amounts specified for

consumers’ incomes and expenses.

Finally, the coalition alleges that Santander engaged in deceptive servicing practices and actively misled consumers about their rights, and risks of partial payments and loan extensions.

Under the settlement, Santander is required to provide relief to consum-

ers and, moving forward, is required to factor a consumer’s ability to pay the loan into its underwriting.

Santander will pay \$65 million to the 34 participating states for restitution for certain subprime consumers who defaulted on loans between Jan. 1, 2010 and Dec. 31, 2019. For consumers with the

lowest quality loans who defaulted as of Dec. 31, 2019, and have not had their cars repossessed, Santander is required to allow them to keep their car and waive any loan balance, up to a total value of \$45 million in loan forgiveness. Santander will also pay up to \$2 million for the settlement

administrator who will administer restitution claims, and pay an additional \$5 million to the states.


In Iowa, 2,155 consumers are eligible to receive restitution of \$484,534, or approximately \$225 each, depending on how many consumers respond to the claims process.

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Education News/From the Front

Pools open for lessons, lap swimming only

GOVERNOR - Continued from Page 1

and requirements applicable to restaurants, and auction services are allowed with no more than 25 people present in person while maintaining six feet distance between each person.

Reynolds also opened state bars with a 50% capacity effective Thursday May, 28 with guidance similar to the state's reopening of restaurants earlier this month.

State campgrounds were reopened under limitations of six people per campsite with no visitors, as well as cabin rental for only the capacity of the cabin and no visitors allowed. Public restrooms in state parks will also be open.

"Memorial Day is the official start of summer. Iowans look forward to camping, fishing, and other activities in our state parks. It's important Iowans get back to spending the summer in the great outdoors," Reynolds said.

With the state still seeing more than 12 deaths per day from the COVID-19 illness, Reynolds said the virus isn't going anywhere and Iowans need to start balancing normalcy with prevention.

"We have to move forward and recognize the fact

it's in our communities and navigate that until, or if, a vaccine is discovered," she said. "Iowans realize that and we're being responsible with that. I don't believe it has to be an either/or."

She said bars were one of the last to be reopened because the consumption of alcohol could reduce prevention, but she said the state has worked with business owners to make sure they understand the guidance from the Iowa Dept. of Public Health.

"We're going to move through this in a responsible manner and monitor data to make sure we don't see an uptick in virus activity as we do on a daily basis," Reynolds said.

State casinos and amusement parks were left out of the governor's new ordinance, however Reynolds said conversations are taking place between those organizations and the state to find guidelines to reopen.

Fort Madison YMCA director Ryan Wilson said he wasn't ready to make any commitments on pool usage. The YMCA not only has the facility pool, but also sets programming for the Fort Madison City Pool.

"Swim lessons initially looks like something we

could accommodate and provide, but doing it in the right manner. On the other hand is it cost prohibitive only for swim lessons. Those are things we have to work through," Wilson said.

He said YMCA officials across the state are lumping YMCA pools and outdoor pools together under the Governor's orders.

"That's how we've been over the past weeks - lumping all pools together. If that continues to be the case we would look at opening the pool assuming we could staff it, and then take reservations for lap swimming, while trying to schedule that with swim lessons," he said.

"But I'm not making any decision today until we get with the Y directors around the proclamation."

Lee County Health Department reported it's 20th confirmed case of the virus this week.. They are also showing 16 cases listed as recovered in the county, leaving four people battling the disease in the county.

Reynolds said the state has tested more than 60,000 Iowans since the start of May. The information comes on the heels of a request from Iowa's Democrats in the U.S. House to explain the progress of Test Iowa and the state's \$26 million investment.

SCC gets re-accreditation from NACEP

WEST BURLINGTON - Southeastern Community College received re-accreditation from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships (NACEP) Accreditation Commission.

Director of High School Relations Michelle Brown explains that concurrent enrollment programs allow high school students to take community college courses at no cost to them. Receiving NACEP accreditation means a school has met the nation's most rigorous standard in concurrent enrollment program development, management, and evaluation across many areas.

"NACEP accreditation shows a commitment to academic integrity and the delivery of an authentic college experience to the high school student and is a goal that every concurrent enrollment program should work towards," said NACEP Executive Director, Amy Williams.

Brown explains that the Iowa Department of Education requires community colleges to be accredited by NACEP for local school districts to receive funding that helps off-

set the cost of their community college programming.

"SCC works hard to make sure our high school students receive a quality college education that is on par with what we offer to regular campus students," says Brown. "This re-accreditation is a testament to parents and students that we're doing just that."

To earn accreditation from NACEP, concurrent enrollment programs undergo a rigorous peer-review process conducted by a team of representatives from NACEP-accredited programs as well as the NACEP Accreditation Commission.

SCC is one of 116 colleges in 24 states to receive NACEP accreditation. The college received its first accreditation with NACEP in 2013 and has actively worked on the re-accreditation process since the fall of 2018.

"This was no easy feat," Vice President of Academic Affairs Dr. Janet Shepherd notes. "This shows that our staff and faculty have built a quality, first-rate program. I'm really proud of them."

Griffin Muffler & Brake named CARFAX top shop

FORT MADISON - Griffin Muffler & Brake Center is being celebrated as a CARFAX Top-Rated Service Shop based on verified reviews from actual customers. The exclusive list of service shops being recognized in the inaugural CARFAX Top-Rated Service Shops received an average of 4.77 stars out of five on CARFAX Car Care (formerly myCAR-FAX).

"Our goal is help people make confident decisions," said Mike Liou, head of Service Marketing at CARFAX. "We have over 10 million active Car Care subscribers who use the program to help keep up with maintenance and recalls on their vehicles. We want to utilize this community to highlight the service shops who are going above and beyond when it comes to customer care, and we do so with verified reviews from actual customers."

"As always, Griffin Muffler owners and employees greet me with a smile and genuinely want to know how you're doing. It's always "how are YOU" and then "let's talk about your car". That's why I'm a life-long customer. Jennifer T."

Griffin Muffler & Brake Center's goal is to educate consumers regarding their vehicle maintenance and repairs by utilizing Auto Vitals Digital Inspections. The pictures and videos of your vehicle's health report are stored on the cloud to be accessed at any time. By reporting to CARFAX Service History, Griffin's can perform scheduled maintenance on your new vehicle WITHOUT voiding the warranty. This allows the consumer to have a choice as to where they take their vehicles.

In February, CARFAX also launched the first-ever Top-Rated Dealer award to car dealerships based on more than a million verified reviews.

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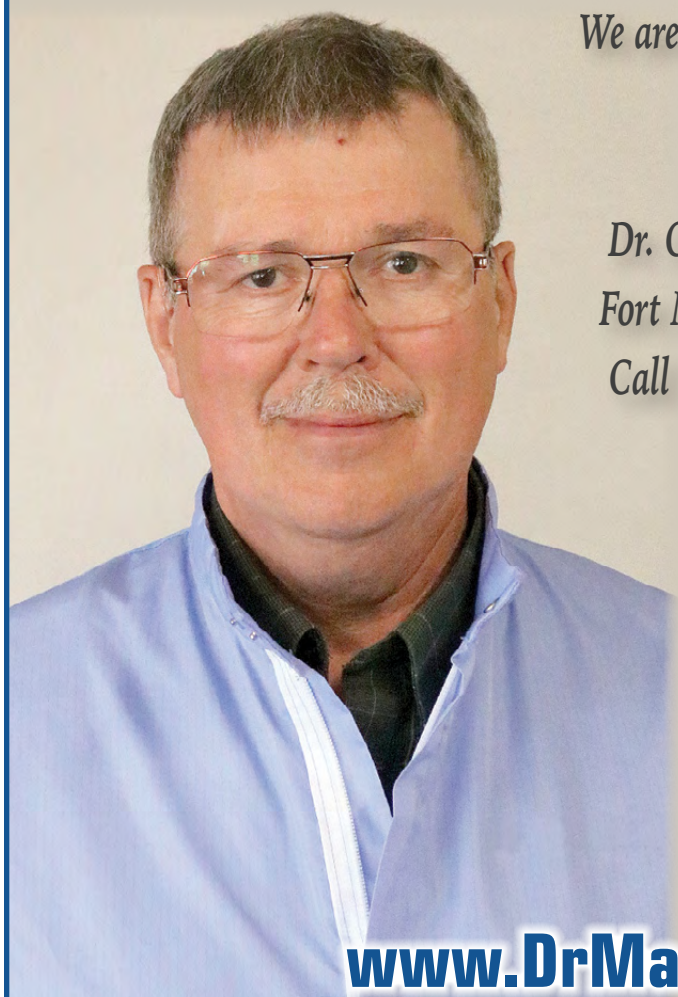
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From the Front

Bloodhound coaches have hands full next 10 days

SUMMER - Continued from Page 1

taking anything for granted.

"With COVID-19 we learned that we don't take anything from granted. Take every opportunity you get and cherish it," he said.

Walker said the next 10 days will be organizing and getting kids ready to get out of the house and play ball.

"Got a lot to do getting to the kids and parents. As of right now we can't get them all together in same room until June 1," he said.

"We're still waiting on guidance from state and administration to give me the OK to touch base them over the phone. We gotta get uniforms ordered and that's been on hold to see if we would even have a season."

Walker said he was thankful for the proactive approach to the season from Swink and the FMCSA administration, which should allow things to progress quickly now that everything has been approved at the state level.

According to the guidance provided, fans will be permitted at the games but are encouraged to sit in groups of less than six with limited bleacher seating available. Swink said the district is considering pulling all the bleachers from the fields.

No concession stands are allowed at the outset of the season and players are not allowed to spit sunflower seed shells. All players and coaches are encouraged to use their own equipment, and temperatures are required to be taken prior to starting any practice or games. Dugouts are off limits during practices, but can be used during games.

Coaches are required to sanitize all shared equipment after use and no team water fountains or hoses are allowed. All players are encouraged to bring their own water or drinks to the field for practices and games.

Any participant who's had contact with someone exposed to COVID-19, or showing symptoms themselves are not allowed to participate in practice or games.

Fort Madison Head Softball Coach Jared Rehm said he was surprised by the early announcement.

"Everyone was saying June 1 we'd know something, but this came early and when she said we were good to go on June 1, that was some good news. Otherwise would have had to wait on the union on June and it could have been June 3rd or so before we got onto the field," Rehm said.

The next 10 days will be spent going through the paperwork, checking physicals, and seeing what the roster looks like.

"I'm getting bombarded right now with emails which is good, I love it," he said.

"Then just preparing for day 1. How will day 1 look. In the past we'd have open gyms that somebody would run where the kids would be getting reps. But if they've been doing some of that on their own, we can get right into the game plan."

Rehm said he's anticipating between 20 and 25 games with most being double headers working through the Southeast Conference.

Swink said recommendations from a state baseball advisory committee are that the games should be played the way they are intended without changing much. But he said social distancing on the field is going to be a challenge.

"Let's face it. That's going to be close to impossible to be six feet apart," he said. "You got someone sliding into second and someone else making a tag, there's just no way."

Swink said he's also concerned about everyone finding qualified umpiring in the shortened season.

"There are umpires with underlying conditions that probably won't umpire this year. That will be tough on us because we have to put a schedule together really quick. So that's gonna be another layer of this."

IHSAA Executive Director Tom Keating said the season taking place is a result of coordinated efforts around the state.

"The IHSAA thanks Dr. Lebo, Governor Reynolds, Dr. Pedati, the IDPH and all who have worked diligently to develop these guidelines to help us conduct a baseball season for the young people in Iowa," IHSAA executive director Tom Keating said.

"We trust that our administrators, coaches, umpires and fans will responsibly follow the guidelines in place to keep themselves and each other safe. This is terrific news and is a step toward getting our student-athletes reconnected to the activities that mean so much to them."

IGHSAU Executive Director Jean Berger echoed the boys union statement.

"The guidelines laid out by the Department of

Education and the Department of Public Health will enable us to safely move forward with a softball season this summer," IGHSU executive director Jean Berger said. "We are grateful for their leadership and support."

"We know the games will have different circumstances and that we will all have to work together to keep everyone safe, but we are confident that we are up to this challenge."

The IGHSU and IHSAA plan to issue further sport-specific guidance and FAQ lists early next week.

Both organizations currently plan to conduct their state tournaments at their previously announced venues, with IGHSU softball at Harlan Rogers Sports Complex in Fort Dodge and IHSAA baseball at Principal Park in Des Moines.



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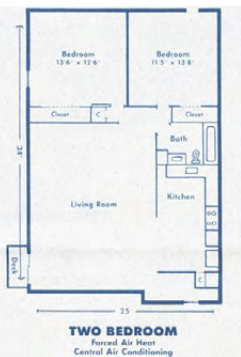
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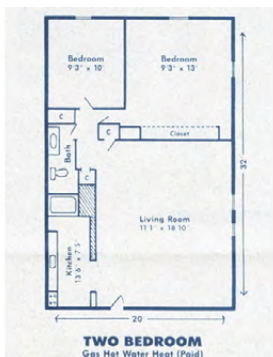


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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lee County Iowa
Sheriff's Office
Law Enforcement
Testing
Saturday, July 11, 2020
9 AM - 12 PM
Lee County Iowa
Sheriff's Office
2530 255th Street,
Montrose, Iowa 52639

Applications are available at the Lee County Sheriff's office or on the Lee County website at <https://www.lee-county.org/announcements.htm>

Application to test must be returned to the Lee County Sheriff's office by Thursday, July 2, 2020 at 3:30 PM.

Lee County
Sheriff's Office
C/O Detective Sgt.
Clint Wray
2530 255th Street
Montrose, IA 52639
(319) 372-1152



Iowans need to respect virus on and off the field

BOHNENKAMP - Continued from Page 1

This is going to be a summer season unlike any other. And that's how it needs to be treated. It's not going to be a season of games every night, tournaments on weekends, travel everywhere, etc.

It's easy, perhaps, to be comfortable with being outside in warm temperatures, but there is still a lot we don't know about this virus, and it's best that we still respect it.

The IHSAA and IGHSAU could have easily shut things down for the rest of the summer, and started fresh with the fall seasons. It might not have been a popular decision, but it would have been understandable.

Both associations have handled the pandemic well. They waited as long as possible to cancel the spring season, keeping some hope alive just because of the unpredictability of what was going on in the state and the nation.

By making this decision, they are granting a certain amount of trust in athletic directors, coaches, players and fans.

Be safe. Be smart. And you can still enjoy the games.

It's not that hard to do.

John Bohnenkamp is publisher of Hawkeye Maven and contributing sports writer for the Pen City Current. His writings can be found on Facebook at Hawkeye Maven or online at www.si.com/college/iowa/.

Got a news tip? Call Chuck (319)371.1670

It Takes a Community

- Wash your hands frequently with soap & water - 20 seconds or more
- Cover your coughs & sneezes with your elbow or a tissue
- Keep your hands away from your face - eyes, nose, mouth are doorways for germs
- Stay home when you are ill
- Avoid gatherings of more than 10 people
- Help protect our elderly or those with health conditions

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