

**Rich Hash**

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## SHEPHERD FALL SPORTS

Hello Shepherd Sports Fans:

As most of you already know, we are up and running with our fall sports. The Montana High School Association has allowed sports to be played in Montana, but it is up to county health departments to put together a plan to proceed with the season. All high school activity directors in Yellowstone County met with Mr. Felton, Director of the River Stone Health, and tried to share our opinions on what we would like it to look like and make a plan. The decision was to have “no fans” to start the season and move slowly into allowing fans. We are all trying to do what is right for our students and athletes during this trying time. There are a lot of protocols that have been placed on us by MHSA, as well as YCH, but the coaches and players are willing to do them so we can play. We are truly lucky that we are even getting a chance to play, as a lot of things have been cancelled due to Covid 19.

There is a lot of confusion and anger in our community as well as other communities about this decision, but it is what it is and we must follow the county order. If the county order is not followed by the school district and community, we will be shut down. It is not fair to our kids to have their season shut down due to parents not following the county order. I have had several questions as to how we are going to “keep us from coming to a game?” There are several answers to this question. First, we can have all of our games hosted by other schools, which might allow a few fans to attend but that is a disadvantage to our athletes who don’t get to play on their home court or field. Second, per the county order, individuals who show up to the games can be issued a ticket, and it will be determined by the County Attorney as to what the consequences are. This is not an option that we want to use. Third option, the games can be cancelled and we would have to take the forfeit which is a loss for the students. We will not start an event if parents are on school grounds, which can eventually be called off by the officials. Please do not take these options as threats, as I am just trying to be as honest as I can with everyone. This is where we are right now. We will have administrators as well as Yellowstone County deputies at the games as we always do, and we will ask parents politely to leave the school grounds. If people refuse to leave, then the deputies will be asked to discuss the issue further with them, and eventually will be issued a citation for not following the mandated order. As I mentioned earlier, we will not start the event until everyone is gone.

While we are working through these guidelines and no fans at our games, please contact the County Health Board or the County Commissioners with issues. It won’t help to contact school administrators or our school board, because it is out of our hands. We are following guidelines placed upon us through the county health department.

Thank You,  
Rich Hash  
Shepherd AD



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