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Spring sports suspended in Acalanes Union High School District

By Jon Kingdon

It was determined March 11 that the Contra Costa County schools would be allowed to continue to play their games but would have to do so without spectators. The official policy was that only athletes, coaches, officials and necessary volunteers should attend these games. It did not take long for that policy to become null and void.

Campolindo High School Athletic Director Raymond Meadows, along with the high school athletic directors, have been trying to adjust on the fly. "It's been changing and progressing every hour and we are doing our best to control what we can control within our areas and communities," said Meadows. "Obviously it's way bigger outside of our high school level."

On March 13 the Acalanes Union High School District announced that all sports activities (games and practices) have been suspended for the next three weeks. The North Coast Section commissioners planned to meet on Tuesday, March 17 to decide what to do next.

The suspension of spring sports was something that did not take Meadows by surprise. "With the cancellation of the professional and college sports, that seemed to be the precursor of where things were going. Everybody is going to be very responsive to the athletes and also to be cognizant that sometimes the issue may be bigger than what we can control. Our job is to protect our student-athletes and that's the best route for us to do so."

The Bentley School was in fact the first school to close their campus and suspend their athletic programs March 11. "We are in a video learning," said Athletic Director Rob Rafeh. "Our spring sports have been suspended at least through spring break which will end on April 13th and hopefully by that time it will be okay to resume our athletic activities. Obviously, things can change, but that is our hope right now."

It was not an easy decision for Rafeh and the administrative team at Bentley to make. "We have been meeting every day and considering every alternative, such as playing without fans and only playing league games, but in the interest of all the kids and with all the recommendations of social distancing, we just decided to suspend all of our athletic teams. It all kept coming back to the health and safety of everyone." Ironically, within an hour of Bentley's suspension of their athletic program, the NBA canceled the rest of its season. "So goes Bentley athletics, so goes the NBA," said Rafeh with more than a little irony and pride. What happens at the end of spring break for Bentley? "That hard to answer right now," said Rafeh. "We're waiting for direction from the governing bodies and listening to the health authorities and will see how things progress. We just all have to feel it's safe to get out there."

Rafeh's empathy was for the senior student-athletes. "For most of them, this is the end of their athletic careers and they won't get to play at the next level and beyond. A lot of our kids were stunned after having put in so much work for their sport. However, when the NBA canceled the rest of their season, our players seemed to see that it does make sense for us to put a pause on things."

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