



Executive Director
for Interscholastic Athletics

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Dear Parents/Guardians of Section VIII Student-Athletes:

As we begin the High School and Middle School spring sports season, the availability of game officials is once again a significant hurdle. Frankly, due to the extreme shortage of officials available to officiate all sports in general, Section VIII has a limited pool of officials to assign now not just in Middle School sports, but for ALL sports throughout the county, regardless of the level.

For example, to date, there are currently over 40% of JV baseball games that do NOT have an umpire scheduled. Additionally, at the High School level, more and more lacrosse games will be scheduled as JV/V doubleheaders so the same crew can officiate both games. While this is certainly not an ideal situation, I can assure you that Section VIII and its governing body are working diligently to have as many games as possible, regardless of the level, assigned game officials. This will continue to remain a fluid situation for the foreseeable future.

There will be games currently scheduled that will not be assigned game officials. In these instances, our coaches will do their best to both coach and maintain the safest possible playing environment for our student-athletes to participate in. These are considered "game scrimmages". Please remember that we are attempting to deal with a rather unique situation, one that is not exclusive to just Section VIII schools, but all schools in sections throughout New York State. Further, this is now considered a national issue.

We continue to ask that you remain patient and supportive of all players and coaches, whether we are home or away, as we again deal with this unusual situation. As always, we value your partnership and appreciate your continued support of our coaches and student-athletes in the Section VIII Athletic Community and beyond. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "P. Pizzarelli", is written over a horizontal line.

Patrick Pizzarelli, CAA
Executive Director
Section VIII Athletics