

**State Tournament Coverage Underway**

Softball: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/sb/girls/2015/2015SBcoverage.htm>

Baseball: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/bb/boys/2015/2015BBcoverage.htm>

Track & Field: <http://www.ohsaa.org/sports/track/2015/2015TFcoverage.htm>

## **NEWS RELEASE – Ohio High School Athletic Association**

**Commissioner Daniel B. Ross, Ph.D.**

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## **OHSAA to Sponsor Boys and Girls Lacrosse Beginning in 2016-17**

*First Statewide Tournament Series Will Begin in Spring 2017*

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** — The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) Board of Directors approved a recommendation from an OHSAA subcommittee that boys and girls lacrosse become sports sponsored by the OHSAA beginning with the 2016-17 school year, Commissioner Daniel B. Ross, Ph.D., has announced. Lacrosse will be a spring sport with the first OHSAA statewide tournament series beginning in 2017. The Board unanimously (8-0) approved the recommendation during its regularly scheduled meeting today at the OHSAA Office in Columbus.

“The members of the subcommittee did an outstanding job studying lacrosse in Ohio and researching the sport both statewide and nationally,” Ross said. “I know they also received tremendous assistance from Paul Balcerzak, commissioner of both the Ohio High School Lacrosse Association (OHSLA) and the Ohio Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association (OSLA). Lacrosse is definitely growing in our state at both the youth and high school levels, and it's exciting when schools want their sport to be part of our association and also exciting that more students will be able to complement their high school experience with another participation opportunity.

“It also should be pointed out that the both the boys and girls lacrosse associations have required their membership to adhere to OHSAA Bylaws and Sports Regulations for several years now, so the transition to the OHSAA should be smooth.”

Lacrosse will become the first sport in the OHSAA’s newly developed category called “emerging” sports, since lacrosse currently does not have the required 150 schools to become an OHSAA “recognized” sport per OHSAA bylaws. Currently organized by the OHSLA and OSLA, there were 122 boys schools and 118 girls schools that sponsored lacrosse in 2015, with an additional 18 boys club teams sponsored.

As an emerging sport, lacrosse will be handled very similarly as all OHSAA “recognized” sports, with the major exception being that the Board of Directors will conduct an annual assessment of lacrosse to review items such as growth and financial solvency to determine if it will continue as an “emerging” sport; be elevated to a “recognized” sport, or be suspended or discontinued as an “emerging” sport.

The Ohio High School Lacrosse Association has been conducting a statewide tournament series since the 1988-89 school year, and the Ohio Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association has had a statewide tournament series since 1999-2000. While both the boys and girls currently have two tournament divisions, the Board of Directors did not take action to determine how many tournament divisions there will be in

lacrosse when the OHSAA begins oversight in 2016-17.

“On behalf of the Ohio High School Lacrosse Association and the Ohio Schoolgirls Lacrosse Association, I would like to express sincere gratitude and excitement with the decision of the OHSAA Board of Directors to adopt boys and girls lacrosse as the newest OHSAA sports,” Balcerzak said. “It was quite a learning experience to work with the subcommittee, but I’m glad all of our efforts have paid off. Our associations are committed to making the transition to the OHSAA as smooth as possible, and we can’t wait to get started.”

The addition of boys and girls lacrosse increases the number of “recognized” and “emerging” sports sponsored by the OHSAA to 26, which includes 13 for boys and 13 for girls. The OHSAA last added sports in 2006-07 when boys and girls bowling were adopted.

— OHSAA —

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