

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

October 17, 2018

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education
From: Jack R. Smith, Superintendent of Schools
Subject: 2018 Weather Impact on High School Athletics

Mrs. Patricia B. O'Neill, member, Board of Education, requested the following information.

Question

Given that this has been the rainiest September in history, I would like to ask the administration how many high school athletic games have been cancelled, postponed or moved due to rain and poor field conditions since the fall season began? How many have been moved to fields with turf?

Response

The 2018 fall athletic season began with thunderstorms on opening night, resulting in nine varsity football games being postponed to the following day, five of which were moved to artificial turf fields due to poor field conditions. A heat wave followed, which caused several postponements during the first week of the season. As the high heat subsided, a record number of rainy days followed throughout September. As a result, there were multiple postponements and adjustments to the athletic schedule. Fortunately, a number of contests were moved to artificial turf fields, which allowed contests to be played and not cancelled.

To illustrate the impact of the weather, all 25 MCPS high school athletic directors responded to a survey that captured the number of contests that were postponed, moved to artificial turf fields, or cancelled. The results of the survey are summarized in the chart on page 2 of this memorandum. It should be noted that in addition to the severe weather during the fall season, five MCPS high schools do not have stadium fields due to ongoing construction projects. This shortage of playing fields caused an additional challenge, especially when affected schools played each other, resulting in contests needing to be played at an alternate location.

Furthermore, artificial turf fields were utilized to the maximum degree possible while at the same time honoring the contracts with our field partners. This resulted in Athletic Unit staff coining the new terms "pentaheader" and "hexaheader," which refer to playing five and six games, respectively, on the same field on the same day. Given the impact of the weather conditions,

pentaheaders and hexaheaders only were possible on artificial turf fields due to the increased playability of these fields. It also should be noted that more contests would have been located to artificial turf fields if there was more available time; with only six artificial turf fields systemwide, these fields were used to the extent possible.

Impact of Weather on the Fall 2018 Season for MCPS Athletics

Sport	Contests Postponed	Contests Moved to Artificial Turf	Contests Cancelled and Not Made Up
Varsity Football	25	15	0
JV Football	16	8	1
Varsity Boys' Soccer	37	15	1
JV Boys' Soccer	34	9	7
Varsity Girls' Soccer	35	13	1
JV Girls' Soccer	32	8	5
Varsity Field Hockey	30	7	2
JV Field Hockey	25	4	7
Cross Country	17	-	2
Golf	18	-	5
Totals	269	79*	31

Note: Totals reflect the time period of August 31 through September 30, 2018.

*The hours for artificial turf fields were maximized (only six fields countywide); more contests would have been moved to artificial turf fields if more time was available.

In addition to the field sports listed in the preceding chart, the weather also had a significant impact on cross country and golf. Trails and golf courses were saturated, rendering them unsafe or unplayable.

Additionally, while the chart captures the number of contests impacted, contest postponement affects two schools; therefore, the number of impacted school communities in regard to schedule adjustments actually is twice the numbers indicated. For instance, each contest involves a minimum of two schools; for each postponement, both schools need to coordinate the logistics of rescheduling the contests.

While the weather had a significant impact on the athletic schedule, the collective efforts of many stakeholders allowed the games to proceed. Athletic directors, coaches, student-athletes, school administrators and staff members, and parents/guardians all worked together to promote a positive experience for our students. From the changes in the bus transportation schedule, to the adjustments to the game officials, to the modifications to the concession stands, the positive outlook and energy displayed by many individuals allowed our athletics program to navigate record rainfall during the fall season. A large majority of the postponed games have been rescheduled this month.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Andrew M. Zuckerman, chief operating officer, at 240-740-3050 or Mr. Jeffrey K. Sullivan, director, Athletics Unit, at 240-453-2594.

JRS:AMZ:JKS:rtm

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Executive Staff

Mr. Sullivan