STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DEPARTMENT OF LAW AND PUBLIC SAFETY

DIVISION OF NEW JERSEY STATE POLICE

OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Administrative Order No. 2020-23

Outdoor High School Sporting Events

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, through Executive Order No. 103 (2020), the facts and circumstances of which are adopted by reference herein, the Governor declared both a Public Health Emergency and a State of Emergency throughout the State due to the public health hazard posed by Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19); and

WHEREAS, to further protect the health, safety, and welfare of New Jersey residents by, among other things, reducing the rate of community spread of COVID-19, the Governor issued Executive Order No. 107 (2020) on March 21, 2020, the facts and circumstances of which are also adopted by reference herein, which established enhanced social mitigation strategies for combatting COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, through Executive Order Nos. 119, 138, 151, 162, 186, and 191 (2020), issued on April 7, 2020, May 6, 2020, June 4, 2020, July 2, 2020, August 1, 2020, August 27, 2020, September 25, 2020, and October 24, 2020, respectively, the facts and circumstances of which are adopted by reference herein, the Governor declared that the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency continued to exist and declared that all Executive Orders and Administrative Orders adopted in whole or in part in response to the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency remained in full force and effect; and

WHEREAS, as part of those efforts, the Governor issued a series of Executive Orders first prohibiting the conduct of non-professional sports practices and competitions and then gradually loosening restrictions on such activities as the State's public health metrics improved; and

WHEREAS, Paragraph 7 of Executive Order No. 148 (2020) clarified that the limitations on gatherings do not impact the ability of professional athletes to fulfill their job duties; and

WHEREAS, Paragraph 13 of Executive Order No. 149 (2020) further clarified that limitations on contact sports activities shall be construed to restrict the ability of professional athletes to fulfill their job duties, or to restrict the ability of United States national team athletes or athletes training at United States National Team Training Centers to conduct their training activities; and

WHEREAS, colleges and universities with organized sports teams, much like leagues operating professional sports teams, are readily able to establish comprehensive protocols for participating student athletes, including by placing limitations on outside activities and requiring athletes to reside in a specified location; and

WHEREAS, I previously recognized in Administrative Order No. 2020-22 that the formal nature of collegiate sports competitions makes it easier to ensure that health and safety protocols are being appropriately followed; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 196 (2020), issued November 16, 2020, adjusted the limit on outdoor gatherings from 500 or fewer to 150 individuals or fewer and which takes effect at 6:00 a.m. on November 23, 2020, with exceptions for religious services or celebrations, political activities, wedding ceremonies, funerals, or memorial services; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order No. 196 (2020) also stated that athletes, coaches, referees, and trainers, and other individuals who are necessary for the competitive professional or collegiate sporting event are not included in the number of individuals present at a gathering for purposes of the limits on gatherings; and

WHEREAS, public or private high schools exercise close oversight over sporting activities engaged in by their students and are required to follow health and safety protocols by organizations such as the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association that comply with, and at times exceed, the baseline standards issued by the Department of Health for sporting activities; and

WHEREAS, as a result, these events should be subject to the same protocols as collegiate and professional activities; and

WHEREAS, because public health experts have identified that outdoor environments present reduced risks of transmission as compared to indoor environments, it is appropriate to adjust the restrictions relative to high school athletic events that happen outdoors; and

WHEREAS, high school-level outdoor sports seasons will be coming to a close in the near-term, so that permitting additional individuals to attend events will have limited practical impact after that time; and

WHEREAS, the Governor has granted the State Director of Emergency Management, who is the Superintendent of the State Police, the discretion to make additions, amendments, clarifications, exceptions, and exclusions related to the provisions within Executive Order No. 196 (2020);

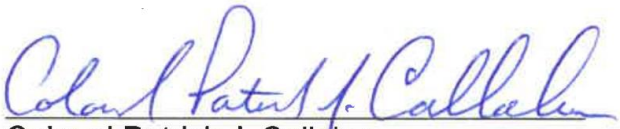
NOW, THEREFORE, I, Patrick J. Callahan, State Director of Emergency Management, hereby ORDER as follows:

1. It is hereby clarified that athletes, coaches, referees, trainers and other individuals necessary to the performance of an outdoor high school

competitive sporting event are not included in the number of individuals present at a gathering for purposes of the limits on gatherings. Such outdoor competitive sporting events otherwise remain subject to the limits on gatherings then in effect, which were most recently laid out in Executive Order No. 196 (2020).

2. This ORDER shall take effect immediately but shall terminate at 6:00 a.m. on Monday, November 30, 2020.

November 20, 2020



Colonel Patrick J. Callahan
State Director of Emergency Management