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Just hours after the NCAA and major sports organizations suspended or cancelled play because of the coronavirus, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association followed suit.

In an email on Thursday, the NCHSAA first postponed indefinitely the boy's and girl's basketball state championships, which were scheduled for Saturday at N.C. State University and the University of North Carolina, and then announced that all high school sporting events in the state of North Carolina would be suspended after Friday's scheduled games.

The high school sports ban includes all workouts, skill development, practices and contests and the ban will remain in effect until at least April 6. At that time, NCHSAA officials will assess the situation.

"As much as we would like this opportunity for our student-athletes, coaches, and their communities, we know that ultimately any decision we make must err on the side of caution," said NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker.

Randolph County Schools Superintendent Dr. Stephen Gainey said he agrees with the decision made by the NCHSAA.

"I certainly support the Association's decision," said Gainey, who is also on the NCHSAA Board of Directors. "I hate it for the kids and the staffs. We are in a very unusual time and dealing with something none of us have ever dealt with. You have to operate with safety first."

Prep sports teams were allowed to practice Thursday and play Friday, but all activities after Friday were postponed.

"I kinda expected it the way the NCAA was doing things," Asheboro High School Athletic Director Steve Luck said. "The dominoes started to fall and it was just a matter of time."

The NCAA cancelled league tournaments on Thursday morning and then cancelled the men's and women's NCAA Basketball Tournament later in the day. Some colleges have halted seasons and the Ivy League has cancelled all sporting events for the remainder of the season.

Gainey said the Randolph County Board of Education is addressing steps that at this time does not include shutting down local high schools.

"I have a wonderful Board of Education and we are taking steps in-between to maintain a safe environment for students and staff and parents," said Gainey, adding that all middle schools in Randolph County will follow the guidelines established by the NCHSAA. "We will try our best to keep school going, but we won't jeopardize safety."

Gainey said one reason prep sports in the state weren't immediately stopped was to allow for athletic directors and school personnel time to make adjustments.

"I don't think anyone was shocked that we were going to do something," Gainey said.

Randleman High School varsity baseball coach Jake Smith, who has one of the top programs in the state, said it is disappointing and he remains hopeful the season can be saved.

"It's obviously disappointing for all the kids, they work so hard and for it to come to a halt just when you are getting comfortable with routines is certainly tough," said Smith, whose team is 3-0 on the season with a Friday night game against Wheatmore still to play. "But this is a serious matter in terms of health. Safety first. Hopefully we can continue the season when this thing runs its course."

Smith said he would address his team Friday night after the game with the Warriors about how to handle this situation.

"You can't practice or have workouts and that's tough, especially from a baseball standpoint," Smith said. "Right now, we're going to focus on Wheatmore and get through (Friday) night and then we'll get a plan together and go from there."

Southwestern Randolph High School AD Chris Chapman said he understands postponing prep events.

"We can't allow our kids and their families to go somewhere and get sick and bring it home," Chapman said. "I hate it and hopefully it will all go away soon."

RHS AD Ryan Dobias said he was surprised how quickly everything took place.

"I'm not surprised by the ruling, just how quickly everything unfolded," Dobias said. "It seemed like we went from zero to a hundred. I think April 6 may be a little long term. I was thinking maybe they evaluate everything on a weekly basis."

Still, Dobias said he understood that safety is paramount in high school athletics.

"Safety first," he said.