



Should OGLA pursue being part of OSAA?

September 2024

1. Introduction

What is OSAA?

- The Oregon School Activities Association (OSAA) is a non-profit organization that regulates competitive activities at the High School level. They are dedicated to ensuring equitable competition for Oregon high school students through OSAA-sponsored events. Their mission is to provide standardized rules of eligibility and competition while supporting educational standards for interscholastic activities. OSAA's goal is to treat all schools and teams equally, promoting fair participation across the board. The OSAA Assembly is a body of 41 athletic directors as well as school and district administrators.

What is OGLA?

- The Oregon Girls Lacrosse Association (OGLA) is responsible for organizing and promoting girls' lacrosse across Oregon. As an independent entity, OGLA manages everything from league schedules to championships, playing a crucial role in sustaining the sport, especially in areas where it is still developing.

What is the "Emerging Sports" Opportunity?

- OSAA's "emerging sports" opportunity is designed to grow and support sports that have the potential to expand participation across the state, particularly for underrepresented groups, including girls. The aim is to provide equitable access to a variety of sports for all students in Oregon.
- For lacrosse to be approved as an emerging sport, it must demonstrate a clear potential to grow and provide opportunities across different regions and demographics.
- OSAA expects that lacrosse will show trending growth during the emerging period. There is no hard and fast rule, but the target is to reach 50 teams.
- If lacrosse does not meet growth expectations, OSAA may extend the emerging period based on demonstrated progress, rather than cutting the sport.

Why is this discussion happening now?

- OGLA is considering joining OSAA to address challenges related to growth, sustainability, and competitive balance in Oregon's girls' lacrosse.
- Girls' flag football is seeking emerging sport status, positioning itself as a strong competitor for recruiting female athletes in the spring season. This challenge underscores the urgency for us to pursue emerging sports status now, ensuring we stay competitive and continue to attract and retain top talent in girls' lacrosse.

- The Oregon High School Lacrosse Association (OHSLA), representing boys' lacrosse, has already made significant progress in pursuing OSAA membership. They conducted a survey with an 80% favorable response rate and have moved forward with plans to gain emerging sport status. Their next steps include formal presentations and gathering support from coaches and stakeholders. While OGLA is not required to move forward with OHSLA, OSAA has indicated a strong preference for a unified approach.

Collaboration with OHSLA:

- **OSAA Prefers a Unified Approach.** While OGLA and OHSLA can proceed independently, OSAA has strongly suggested that both organizations should come to the table together. A united approach could strengthen the case for both girls' and boys' lacrosse in Oregon and reduce redundancy of efforts.

2. Benefits and Risks of Joining OSAA

Benefits:

- **Growth and Legitimacy:** OSAA membership would elevate lacrosse's legitimacy and visibility in the school sports landscape. This could lead to enhanced support from Athletic Directors (ADs) and schools, addressing issues like field access, coaching, scheduling, and referees.
- **Support for Programs:** Joining OSAA could provide greater support for programs struggling with basic resources, though it won't solve all problems (there is a continued need for fundraising in all Varsity sports).
- **Opportunities for Smaller or Newer Programs:** OSAA membership could foster growth in smaller or newer programs by offering alternative formats like 8v8 or 10v10, allowing these programs to build over time while still participating in meaningful competition. Current programs that are co-ops could split and form new small sided teams thus increasing the overall number of programs in Oregon.

Risks and Concerns:

- **Loss of Control:** OGLA might lose some control over certain aspects of the sport, which could be a concern for programs used to operating independently. *OGLA will retain oversight of girls' lacrosse during the emerging period.*

- **Resistance from Programs or ADs:** Some programs or ADs might resist transitioning to Varsity status, potentially risking the loss of certain teams if the transition is not well-managed. Programs that do not transition to Varsity status may face challenges, but OSAA is open to flexible arrangements to ensure continued participation during the emerging period. *It is imperative that students and parents work actively to promote lacrosse in their community.*
- **Transition Challenges:** There could be challenges during the transition period, with some programs possibly suffering as they adapt to new structures and requirements. OSAA has indicated a willingness to work with OGLA to develop appropriate league structures, including maintaining geographical leagues until growth targets are met.

3. Process for Joining OSAA

Timeline and Steps:

- **October 2024:** Informational Meeting - OGLA to attend OSAA's Fall Delegate Assembly and present a brief 10 minute joint presentation with OHSLA
- **April 2025:** First Reading
October 2025: Second Reading - OSAA will vote on recognizing lacrosse as an emerging sport.
- **2026:** First season as a sanctioned emerging sport
- **April 2028:** Lacrosse is a sanctioned Varsity sport in Oregon and OSAA assumes operational management of lacrosse.

4. Conclusion

Final Recommendation:

- Joining OSAA offers significant benefits for the growth and sustainability of girls' lacrosse in Oregon. However, careful planning and ongoing collaboration with stakeholders will be essential to address concerns, mitigate potential risks, and present a strong case that the sport is poised for growth. Securing OSAA's support and ensuring a smooth transition will depend on this strategic approach.

5. Next Steps for OGLA

- **Formal Vote:** Conduct a formal vote of membership to determine whether to pursue OSAA emerging sport status.
 - **Foster Growth:** OSAA must see 50 lacrosse teams by the end of the emerging period for lacrosse to be sanctioned. OGLA and its members will need to work closely with ADs, principles and other stakeholders to ensure grow of lacrosse in Oregon.
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6. Additional Notes and Appendices

OGLA Survey Results and Coach Feedback:

- **Survey Results:** In an initial survey with coaches, there was a 71% response rate. Of the 27 replies:
 - 19 coaches (70%) said they would like to be part of OSAA.
 - 8 coaches (30%) were unsure.
 - 0 coaches opposed the idea.
 - **Common Concerns:** Impact on existing resources, potential loss of programs, financial implications, and changes to the current structure.
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7. Questions and Answers

A. Coaching Policy During the Emerging Period:

- *OGLA and OHSLA to follow the OSAA open and closed periods. The first 6 weeks of every season (fall, winter and spring) is the closed period. Coaches can supervise conditioning only (no lacrosse talk). After the 6 weeks, we are in the open period, coaches can have up to 6 hours of contact during the “open period”. There are no restrictions during the summer except for moratorium week (last week of July, first week of August).*

B. Player Eligibility and Transfers:

- *Students who play at other schools due to their home school not offering lacrosse can continue to do so. OSAA is flexible in supporting these arrangements during both the emerging and post-emerging periods.*

- *Transfer students will be managed according to OSAA rules, which are flexible during the emerging period to allow for co-ops and other arrangements.*

C. League and Competition Structure:

- *OSAA is flexible in organizing lacrosse leagues based on proximity rather than school size, especially during the emerging period and afterwards. If we were to get to 70 teams, they would be likely to encourage divisions by school size. OSAA has suggested that OGLA (as a representative body of the coaches) could continue to advise on such structures after the emerging period. OSAA has a similar relationship with other sports and their coaching representative organizations.*
- *OSAA supports a smaller division format (e.g., 9v9 or 10v10) for smaller or newer programs. These divisions are intended to help programs build and eventually transition to full 12v12 play.*

D. Scheduling, Rankings, and Management:

- *If lacrosse is approved as an OSAA emerging sport, scheduling will be hosted on the OSAA website, and OSAA will manage schedules and rosters in the first year (as part of the integration process).*

E. Co-op Policies:

- *Current co-op policies for 5A and 6A schools prevent them from co-oping together, but this policy is flexible during the emerging period, especially for 6A students co-oping with smaller schools (4A and below). This is currently in discussion within OSAA for a variety of sports, it is a rule that could evolve. But should not impact lacrosse in its current league format.*
- *The implications for smaller schools co-oping with larger schools are that they can continue to co-op, with OSAA providing flexibility during the first two years.*

F. Insurance and Financial Responsibilities:

- *Teams will continue to rely heavily on community support to meet the financial needs.*

G. Referees and Officiating:

- *OSAA will work closely with existing refereeing bodies like OWLUA, maintaining their functions while updating and setting new pay rates.*
- *OSAA will update and set new pay rates for lacrosse officials, which are expected to be approximately \$20 higher per game than current rates.*

H. School Support and Resources:

- *OSAA will encourage schools to support lacrosse programs.*

I. Impact on Current OGLA Operations:

- *Once lacrosse becomes an emerging sport, OGLA will continue to function similarly over the first two years, running championships and other activities.*
- *OSAA will take over scheduling, rosters, and coach certification in the first year (2026).*

J. Division Placement and Classifications:

- *Schools will not be required to play in divisions determined solely by size. OSAA is open to recommendations that align with the current competitive balance or geographical proximity.*

K. Additional Questions & Answers:

Question: What are the insurance implications for programs that join OSAA?

During the emerging status, schools will take on the responsibility of providing insurance coverage for their lacrosse teams. Currently, OGLA and OHSLA require each coach or club to provide documentation showing that they carry appropriate insurance, typically through US Lacrosse or another provider. This requirement will shift to the school once the program is part of OSAA.

Question: What costs will still need to be borne by the schools or booster clubs if they join OSAA?

OSAA provides the policy and governance but does not cover costs such as coaching fees, which are determined by school and district policies. Some schools and districts have a cap. Typically, only a portion of the head and assistant coaches' salaries are covered, so schools may still need to fundraise to cover additional costs. Fundraising limits may be set by a school district, if at all.

Question: Will OSAA dictate how many league games must be played, or will this be determined by the leagues?

During the emerging period, the decision on whether leagues or conferences require one or two games will be left to each league/conference. This should remain the policy until the total number of program reaches a mass that signals a need to break out by school size classifications. OSAA is also willing to consider input from coaches organizations relative to how and when different league or conference classifications are made.



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Question: Will there be any specific requirements for scheduling games against club teams during the early season?

A sanctioned program cannot play against a non-sanctioned program.

OHSLA and OGLA will need to work with parent groups to ensure that no club teams are dropped by ADs. This will be an individual school's decision. Parent, coach and player advocacy will be important to maintain these programs.

Question: Will OSAA provide additional resources, such as field access and funding, to schools that join during the emerging period?

No. It will be up to each school or school district to provide necessary resources. Typically, varsity programs have access to fields and other resources, but OSAA does not provide these directly.

Question: What is the role of OGLA & OHSLA during the emerging period?

Assuming OGLA decides to pursue OSAA emerging sport status and that OSAA votes to approve lacrosse as an emerging sport in Oregon in October 2025, the first emerging season will be a business as usual in partnership with OSAA. The first season (2026) under OSAA's emerging status will focus on maintaining current operations while planning for future growth. By the 2027 season, assuming the desired growth is in progress, a full transition to OSAA would occur, although the specifics of this handoff will evolve. OGLA and OHSLA will work closely with a designated OSAA representative.

Question: What are the next steps for OGLA and OHSLA to support the transition to OSAA?

Assuming OGLA decides to pursue OSAA emerging sport status, the next steps include distributing talking points to all teams, coaches, and parent groups to inform them of the potential transition and encourage them to advocate with their school's Athletic Director (AD). This is particularly important for programs at risk, such as those in the Salem and Beaverton School Districts.

Question: What is the purpose of the October meeting with OSAA?

The October meeting is an opportunity to introduce OGLA and OHSLA to OSAA, share our story, and outline our vision for the growth of lacrosse in Oregon. This meeting will include a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation and an executive summary explaining our organizations, our growth story, and the potential benefits of an OSAA partnership. This will be a collective opportunity to make our pitch and build excitement for the future of girls' lacrosse in the state.