

**Albert Lea High School Activities Office**

2000 Tiger Lane  
Albert Lea, MN 56007



Paul Durbahn, Activities Director

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*April 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

*Re: 2020 Spring MSHSL Season*

We regret to announce that the Spring 2020 MSHSL athletic season has officially been canceled. The MSHSL notified member schools yesterday afternoon after Governor Walz's press conference. The ALHS Activities Office would like to extend our sincere condolences to all spring student athletes and their families with a special consideration for our senior athletes. We would like to note that with the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, we agree with the decision of the MSHSL. It is our responsibility to protect those around us. We love our community and want to do what is best to protect it.

To our community: please remember that the cancelation is due to an international health crisis, not a factor within our control. We often reflect with our student athletes about the aspects of life that we can control and how to control our responses to those aspects that we can't control (a bad call, a fluke play, an injury, etc). How we respond is a testament to our character. We have a choice of how to respond to this situation whether or not we agree with the MSHSL's decision to cancel the spring season. I encourage our community to help us respond in a way that respects and honors the students of ALHS and our role as a member school of the MSHSL.

To our student athletes: we care about you, we understand the many different emotions that each of you may be experiencing, and we don't expect that you know how to respond immediately. There is no gameplan or script to fall back on. I ask that you reflect on your purpose, why you participate in activities. For most of us, our purpose, or why we participate, is for reasons bigger than the sport or activity itself. Let that same purpose and internal reflection guide you in your response to this news – who do you want to be as you respond? Also, please know that your spring coaches have been prepared well for this moment. As a department we have extended a distance coaching model and in every conversation our emphasis has been on our concern for the well-being of our students. Whether you're struggling with this news or not, I encourage you to please start there; talk to your spring coaches about your feelings. Your coaches care about you and want to help you process this information. Also, I encourage you to be leaders and look out for our community and help guide others to show their best response as they may react to this unfortunate news. Watch out for your peers and encourage them to reach out to a coach if they are struggling with this news. Be proud of what you've done to this point. Know that your sacrifice this spring was not for nothing. By doing our part, we are protecting others in our community that are at a higher risk from the COVID-19 virus. Please continue to do your part as we navigate this experience. Follow the guidelines set forth by Governor Walz and our local community.

This announcement doesn't mean we are looking past this group of graduates or that we're not disappointed. This is not closure. We look forward to celebrating our class of 2020, what that fully looks like is still to be determined but I promise we won't let this group move on to their next stage in their lives without proper recognition. We're proud of what the class of 2020 has brought to ALHS and we will always be in their corner. It's no consolation that everyone is going through this same situation, but it does provide a sense of togetherness. This is going to make our community stronger; we are in it together. We are very sorry to be the bearer of bad news today. Better days ahead.

*Work Ethic – Accountability – Love of Community*

*Sincerely,*

*Paul Durbahn  
Activities Director*