

TO: Superintendents, Principals and Athletic Administrators

FROM: Dr. Dan Ross, Commissioner, OHSAA

RE: Update on Bowling Balls in OHSAA Competitions

DATE: November 14, 2014

On November 4, 2014 an email was sent to the principals and athletic administrators of OHSAA member schools that sponsor boys and/or girls bowling. The email addressed bowling balls (and, by extension, towels and bowling bags) that have particular messages/phrases written or inscribed on the balls. While the OHSAA believes that school districts should address any sporting equipment that have words and/or phrases written or inscribed on them that would be deemed inappropriate or unsporting just as you would address inappropriate clothing worn in the classroom, we are going to continue to review bowling balls being manufactured, educate ourselves and the membership, research the extent of the use of these bowling balls and reevaluate the proper way to address the use of these bowling balls in OHSAA competition. Having reviewed a list that includes over 4500 bowling balls, we have found numerous ones to be of a questionable nature. We are particularly concerned with balls that display words and/or phrases that many would consider lewd, profane and/or racially insensitive and could potentially incite violence. Here is a link to examples of words and/or phrases that may not be appropriate on bowling balls:

For the 2014-15 school bowling season, the OHSAA is not going to restrict the use of any bowling ball that meets United States Bowling Congress (USBC) standards.

However, we are making you aware of the situation we described above, are informing you that we may develop restrictions on the use of such balls in the future and highly encourage you to monitor the use of bowling balls that many would deem displaying inappropriate language by your student-athletes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.