FALL SPORTS 2020 FAQ

What makes you confident you can do this safely?

Our top priority is to keep our student-athletes and coaches safe while also providing an opportunity to compete in their respective sports. These protocols were developed by public health experts with the safety of all in mind and were approved by state and local health officials. Each school has implemented their own safety protocols and we are confident that they align with one another in our efforts to do this safely.

Many of our student-athletes are already competing in their respective sports outside of school. By offering school-sponsored fall athletics, this will allow them to play in a more structured environment with stringent safety measures.

What is the Philadelphia Catholic League?

The Philadelphia Catholic League is an association of Catholic high schools that was founded in 1920. La Salle College High School and St. Joseph’s Prep were two of the five founding members along with Roman Catholic, Villanova Prep (now Malvern Prep), and West Catholic. The league is currently composed of 18 Catholic high schools in Philadelphia and the surrounding suburbs (3 schools playing only girls sports, 5 schools playing only boys sports, and 10 schools playing both). Devon Prep joined the PCL in 2018.

How does the Archdiocese of Philadelphia’s decision affect the Philadelphia Catholic League?

The Archdiocese of Philadelphia (AOP) is a local entity consisting of 17 Catholic high schools in the five-county region. The AOP is a system of secondary schools operating under the jurisdiction of the Office of Catholic Education and Faith in the Future and is recognized by the Pennsylvania Department of Education as a school district spanning several counties. The AOP has no official jurisdiction over the Philadelphia Catholic League nor does it govern Devon Prep, Holy Ghost Prep, La Salle College High School, or St. Joseph’s Prep. All four schools are independent Catholic schools under the authority of individual governing bodies. The decision on the part of the AOP to suspend fall sports essentially left Devon Prep, La Salle College High School, and St. Joseph’s Prep in league with 12 less opponents.

Why is Holy Ghost Prep being added to the group for the fall?

Playing as an independent, Holy Ghost Prep was able to make a decision of its own, based on the PIAA and by fulfilling the requirements of state and local Departments of Health. Although it is a Catholic school, it is also not under the direct direction of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia and operates independently.
After being a member of the Bicentennial Athletic League (BAL) since the 1970s, Holy Ghost Prep decided to become an independent in all sports beginning with this school year. The decision allowed Holy Ghost to remain in the PIAA while building stronger schedules in all sports.

For example, the Holy Ghost Prep soccer team, a traditional PIAA District One power, had put together a top-shelf schedule next fall—including four games vs. Inter-Ac teams, four against Philadelphia Catholic League teams, and three vs. Central League teams.

But when those three aforementioned leagues postponed their fall seasons, Holy Ghost Prep had to find opponents to schedule soccer games, golf matches, and cross-country meets against, so they reached out to La Salle, St. Joseph’s Prep, and Devon Prep, three like-minded Catholic independent schools with similar missions that Ghost has played on a regular basis in different sports.

**Why aren’t rowing and ultimate frisbee, two spring sports that traditionally have some competitions in the fall, included?**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most, if not all, fall rowing competitions have been cancelled across the country due to local or state COVID-19 restrictions. Philadelphia is permitting rowing competition without spectators. The possibility of rowing scrimmages is still a possibility this fall.

The Philadelphia High School Ultimate Education League (PHUEL) has postponed all fall ultimate frisbee matches.

**Will these four schools compete more officially moving forward?**

Using the camaraderie of college athletics Philadelphia Big Five as a model, it is possible that these schools will compete against one another in a regular manner and anoint a champion in some sports in the future. However, each school will continue to compete in their regular leagues/affiliations.