



PAXTON BUCKLEY LODA HIGH SCHOOL

700 W. Orleans St. Paxton, IL 60957 - 217.379.4331 - www.pblunit10.com

Dear Panther Families,

January 8th, 2026

The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) has recently approved several by-law changes that will impact seasons, schedules, and summer plans. The changes are as follows:

- Softball season has been moved up by one week to align with the length of baseball season. Practices may begin as early as February 23rd.
- Beginning the summer of 2026, the IHSA has established a mandatory, statewide “No Contact Week,” scheduled annually for the week of the Fourth of July. **This summer, those dates are June 29th - July 5th.** During this week, teams may not practice, hold open gyms, compete, provide weight training, or conditioning. This eliminates the prior practice of “dead week” in early August.
- Football playoffs have been expanded by 16 schools in each class. Due to this change, the season start date remains the same; however, games can now be scheduled as early as August 20th, eliminating the Week 0 scrimmage. The first football game of the season is scheduled for August 21st, 2026. **The 2026 Homecoming Game is September 11, 2026.**

We understand the impact these changes may have on summer planning and commitments. With practices and games beginning earlier than in previous years, please take these important dates into account. As always, families are encouraged to check our website for the most updated schedules and contact our Athletic Director, Mr. Bruce Wachowski (bwachowski@pblpanthers.org), with any questions.

Thank you for your support,

Mrs. Hannah Eshleman
Principal, PBL High School