

COMBINED RULES AND REGULATIONS

OF THE N.C. HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC.
AND THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Included in these rules and regulations for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association, Inc., are the Regulations Governing Athletes in the Public Schools of North Carolina adopted by the State Board of Education.

It is mandatory that all member schools which participate in athletics conform to the regulations contained herein. Authority is delegated to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to see that all schools must, if they participate in any interscholastic sports program, conform to the regulations adopted by the State Board of Education as a minimum of requirements.

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association, Inc., is not an agent of the Board of Education. However, there is a close working relationship, as the organization serves in a supervisory capacity in the realm of athletics. Member schools are required to comply with all NCHSAA rules and regulations, as well as those established by the Board of Education. Any question regarding a NCHSAA member school shall be reviewed and acted upon by the conference or Association before the matter shall be referred to the State Department of Public Instruction.

Women shall not participate on a men's interscholastic athletic team where the school has a women's team in the same sport or where a school sends an entry to the women's state play-offs in the same sport. In cases where women are permitted on a men's team, the school forfeits all participation in the women's play-offs in the same sport. Men's rules will be used where women play on men's teams. Under no condition shall men participate on women's teams in any sport.

Schools may sponsor teams in other sports not listed below (e.g., gymnastics, weightlifting, women's field hockey, men's volleyball, etc.); all students, regardless of the sport, must be certified as eligible prior to dressing or participating in any interscholastic contest.

For reclassification to additional championships, the number of schools offering teams in a sport must meet the requirement for two years before a championship will be implemented.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL

For athletic purposes in determining eligibility, local boards of education may set their own semester dates prior to the opening of school, and a copy of the calendar indicating these dates must be sent to the NCHSAA along with the filing of the school's first eligibility list.

A high school is composed of grades 9-12 inclusive. No student can be approved for an athletic contest unless he is a regularly enrolled member of those grades at the school submitting his eligibility blank. Exceptions: (1) A middle school/junior high student who is overage and (2) ninth grade public junior high school students are eligible to participate in any sport on a team at the high school to which they will be assigned whenever the present schools which the students attend do not sponsor a team in the sport.

When, because of inadequate space, senior high school students are temporarily housed in a school other than the senior high school, such students shall be eligible for the senior high school teams.

Ninth graders may play with the high school program or junior high, depending upon local policy.

Once a student begins practicing with a high school team, he may not at a later date move down to the junior high team. A student beginning play with the junior high team may, at a later date, move to the high school team but could not return to the junior high team (again, in a situation

where ninth graders are housed at the high school).

Students on teams below the ninth grade shall not play or practice against interscholastic athletic teams which have members above the ninth grade.

Athletes must always stay within the daily, weekly and seasonal limitations of their prescribed sports.

No administrative unit (county or city) of this state may use students of two or more of its high schools to form a "composite team."

If any school district or unit shall have been officially enlarged (e.g., a city unit), students residing in the newly added territory shall be eligible for approval just as though the new territory had previously been a part of the district or unit.

Parochial non-boarding schools, in addition to subscribing to the general rules of the NCHSAA, must agree to adhere to the following regulations: (a) an all-male student body shall have its enrollment doubled for classification purposes; (b) a student must have been in attendance for the two most recent semesters before being eligible for athletics; and (c) athletes shall not be given scholarship aid or other financial consideration.

The head coach of an interscholastic athletic team should be a bona fide member of the faculty and as such shall be responsible for the supervision of athletic teams during all practices, games, and trips. Local superintendents may employ non-faculty persons as head coaches for varsity or junior varsity teams, with the concurrence of the local board of education and until such time as a suitable bona fide faculty member becomes available to serve as head coach. Individuals authorized to coach in this manner are required to know and follow the rules of the NCHSAA and SDPI, including the sports season regulation. In extenuating circumstances and upon the written request of a school's principal, the North Carolina High School Athletic Association may authorize parents to accompany individual participants in lieu of the coach at state-sponsored play-offs. Unsupervised athletes may not participate in state playoff events.

Any person paid or employed as a principal shall not coach interscholastic athletic teams.

All questions relative to middle/junior high rules and regulations must be directed to the State Department of Public Instruction.

1. ENROLLMENT DATE: Any school which desires to renew membership in the NCHSAA must register and pay the fees before November 1. Late renewals are subject to a \$100 fine.

To join the NCHSAA, an eligible school must pay a \$1000 application fee and fill out the appropriate application form. The Board of Directors may send a delegation to make a site visit after the application is received.

2. FEES: A check in the amount of 75 cents per pupil for all students enrolled at the high school should accompany the renewal form. Enrollment shall be determined by total enrollment of students at the end of the first school month of the present school year. Each member school shall also pay an annual school fee of \$100. This entitles the school to one rule book in all sports which the National Federation publishes rules and the NCHSAA offers a championship, as well as other materials.

Enrollment of any school shall be determined by the total enrollment of the students at the end of the first school month of the present school year. Deadline for payment is November 1.

ELIGIBILITY

3. ELIGIBILITY BLANKS: The regulations require that all students must be eligible prior to dressing or participating in any interscholastic contest, whether or not the sport is sponsored by the NCHSAA. Only those students listed on the eligibility forms are covered by catastrophe insurance. No student shall be listed on the form unless and until documents substantiating eligibility are on file in the school. Such documents shall be available for inspection until the student's eligibility has ended. The master eligibility blank (pink sheet) should be used for each sport and shall list all

players, varsity and junior varsity, participating in that sport. A copy should be on file at the school prior to the first regular season contest including Endowment games. Eligibility sheets are no longer required to be filed with the NCHSAA but must be made available upon request. Ineligible players are NOT allowed to participate in practice, either in season or out of season workouts, but this does not apply to summer workouts.

When completing an eligibility list, please enter the proper reference by letter and make all required entries when necessary (if parents do not live in the administrative unit) on the reverse of the pink sheet.

(a) Any student proposed for a contest is eligible at the school to which the local board of education assigns him within the unit of residence of a parent or legal **custodian within this state**.

(b) When two boards of education within North Carolina by mutual agreement assign a student to a different school, he becomes immediately eligible for athletic participation, relative to the qualifications above.

(c) A student is eligible at his assigned school if he has attended school within that administrative unit the previous two semesters.

(d) Legal documents signed by a judge (ward of court) or social services (orphanage/foster home) are required to be submitted along with eligibility forms pertaining to students in these circumstances.

(e) Foreign exchange students (see later in this section).

It shall be the responsibility of the principal to see that no ineligible or noncertified player participates. (See Penalty Code.)

Play-off entry lists: Each year it is necessary to set a deadline for schools to designate individual participants in such sports as cross country, swimming, wrestling, golf, tennis and track. Play-off entry blanks that are accepted after the deadline are subject to a \$50 fine for late entry

4. RESIDENCE: A student is eligible to participate at the school to which he or she is assigned by the local board of education, within the administrative unit of residence.

“Residence” as used for athletic eligibility purposes is defined as the equivalent of the term “domicile” as applied by the courts of North Carolina. Under no circumstances can a student have more than one residence for eligibility purposes. It is the obligation of the school to know the residence status of each athlete and to require compliance with these requirements.

Except as otherwise provided, the residence of any student shall be deemed to be that of his or her parents or the sole surviving parent.

In the event the parents are separated or divorced, the residence of the student shall be that of the parent to whom custody has been awarded by a court of competent jurisdiction. If no custody order has been entered, the residence shall be deemed to be that of the parent who had actual custody immediately upon the separation.

Any change in residence must be bona fide. Determination of what constitutes a bona fide change of residence depends upon the facts of each case. In order for a change of residence to be considered bona fide at least the following facts must exist: (1) The original residence must be abandoned as a residence; that is sold, rented or disposed of as a residence, and must not be used as residence by any member of the family; (2) The entire family must make the change and take with them the household goods and furniture appropriate to the circumstances; (3) The change must be made with the intent that it is permanent.

Transfers within the same administrative unit may be governed by local Board of Education policy. A student transferred from one administrative unit to another by mutual agreement is immediately eligible for athletic participation in the receiving unit.

No non-parental guardianship will be recognized where a student has a living parent unless: there has been a determination of abandonment of the student by such parent(s) or a determination that the student is a dependent juvenile as defined in G.S.7A-5 17(13) or comparable

statute by a court of competent jurisdiction; or the student has been judicially declared a ward of the court or has been identified as an orphan or placed in a foster home by the Division of Social Services (or a comparable agency if out of state) and custody (not guardianship) has been determined by the court or social service agency. A student whose custody has been established by court order or social services agency decision is eligible for participation at the school to which he or she is assigned by the Board of Education of the local unit where the custodian resides.

The residence of a student who is emancipated shall continue to be his or her residence as of the time of emancipation, unless an exception is granted under the procedures established by the Hardship Rule.

The residence of a student who is in an organized and recognized foreign exchange program shall be considered to be the place to which he or she is assigned by that program, and is eligible to participate at the school to which he or she is assigned by the local education agency. Foreign students who are not part of an organized and recognized foreign exchange program must present extenuating circumstances through the procedure established in the Hardship Rule. A foreign exchange student is eligible only during the first year of residence in the United States. With the exception of this residence rule, foreign exchange students are subject to all other eligibility requirements, including but not limited to, the prohibition on participation after graduation or eligibility for graduation from high school.

In no case will any exception be made to the following principles:

- No student may participate at a second school in the same sport during the same sport season, except in the event of a bona fide change in residence of the parent(s) or legal custodian; change of schools must be contemporaneous with change in residence.
- Documents purporting to establish guardianship or custody issued by a notary public, an attorney, a clerk of court, or any entity other than a court of record with competent jurisdiction will not be accepted.

No student shall be subjected to undue influence by an individual or group of individuals to induce or cause him to transfer from one school to another for athletic purposes. **If allegations of recruiting are made against a school, the burden of proof in substantiated form must be borne by the accusing party. Allegations of recruiting that are substantiated will be processed as infractions under the penalty code.**

For the purposes of this rule, “undue influence” consists of actions taken for the purpose and intent of soliciting or encouraging the enrollment of a student-athlete in a school, including but not limited to the following:

- initiating or arranging communication or contact of any sort (letters, email, phone, etc) with a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family
- visiting or entertaining a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family
- providing transportation or arranging for same for a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family to visit a school or meet with anyone associated with a school
- providing verbal or written material, slide, film or tape presentations to a prospective student-athlete or member of his or her family which states or implies that a school’s athletic program is superior to that of any other school with the purpose or intent of soliciting or encouraging the enrollment of the student in that school, or that it would be advantageous for any prospective student-athlete to participate in athletics at that member school as opposed to any other school
- to use non-school athletic teams as a vehicle to solicit or encourage a prospective student-athlete or a member of his or her family to enroll the student-athlete at a different school.

The above applies to any individual who coaches at an NCHSAA member school, head or assistant, paid or non-paid, faculty or non-faculty, parent volunteer, etc., as well as any other persons formally or informally associated with a school's athletic program.

The residence status of any student whose parent(s) do(es) not live in the administrative unit must be identified on the eligibility list as prescribed on the back of that document.

5. ATTENDANCE: (a) A player must have been in attendance for at least 85 percent of the previous semester at an approved high school. Any student must be in membership to be able to make up days missed while in membership (days missed while not in membership may not be made up for athletic eligibility). For a regular 90-day semester, a student may not miss more than 13 days and be in compliance with the 85 percent rule.

(b) A student must, at the time of any game in which he or she participates, be a regularly enrolled member of the school's student body, according to local policy. If there is no local policy, "regularly enrolled" is defined as enrolled for at least one half of the "minimum load." It is recommended the student be in school the day of the contest.

(c) The student must be enrolled within the first 15 days and in regular attendance for the present semester to be eligible for athletics. A student whose family has moved into a school district shall immediately assume the same status in the new district as that from which he moved. Summer school attendance shall not be counted in determining percentage of attendance for athletic eligibility, but approved homebound programs do fulfill the attendance requirement.

(d) At the end of each semester, any participant who has failed to attend school 85 percent of that semester is immediately ineligible.

6. SCHOLASTIC REQUIREMENTS: A student must have passed a minimum load of work during the preceding semester to be eligible at any time during the present semester. The semester is normally considered half of the academic year. All students must also meet local promotion standards, set by the LEA and/or the local school.

A minimum load is defined as five courses in the traditional school schedule and three courses for schools on the "block" format. If the school is on an A/B form of block scheduling, a student must pass six of eight courses during what would traditionally be defined as a semester.

Office assistance, teacher assistance or laboratory assistance may not be used toward academic eligibility.

No work previously passed by a student may be submitted as part of a minimum load. Summer school work used to make up part of the minimum load must be applied to the most recent semester. Credit for summer work is a determination of the local unit.

A student, upon first entering grade nine, is academically eligible for competition on high school teams. This also applies to attendance.

A student not academically eligible at the beginning of the semester is not eligible at any time during the semester. (Exception: a student who receives an incomplete which causes him or her to fail to meet minimum scholastic requirements is ineligible until the course is satisfactorily completed, and eligibility is restored immediately). A student academically eligible at the beginning of a semester remains academically eligible throughout the semester.

Alternative or extended day school students who meet all other eligibility requirements may participate in athletics for the school to which they would normally be assigned, provided the alternative/extended day school has no athletic program. The alternative schools referenced here are those operated by the school system itself. The principal of the school at which the students play shall be responsible for certifying their eligibility and shall have on file all records, including current attendance data, necessary to verify eligibility. Each such student shall be identified on the eligibility list, which shall be accompanied by a letter from the principal stat-

ing that these designated students meet all eligibility requirements.

The principal and coach shall have the same authority in player selection and application of team rules and regulations with alternative school students as with those enrolled in the regular school program.

Pupils enrolled in “exceptional students” classes shall be eligible for participation in interscholastic athletics provided the program of instruction is in accordance with the recommendations of the State Department of Public Instruction, and provided that in the opinions of the principal and teacher, such pupil is making “satisfactory progress.” “Satisfactory progress” is defined that the pupil passes a minimum load on his level. All other regulations must be met.

At the end of each semester, a superintendent or principal has eight school days to check grades of students, removing such player immediately upon knowledge of ineligibility and no later than the completion of the eight-day period and restore to eligibility any debarred player after he or she has qualified at the end of a semester. Any student who has his academic eligibility restored may participate the day following the completion of the semester of the ineligibility.

The purpose of the eight-day period is to allow schools ample time to check grades. A player should be removed before the eight-day period is up if the school has knowledge and has verified the student is ineligible.

7. MEDICAL EXAMINATION: In order to be eligible for practice or participation in interscholastic athletic contests, a player must receive a medical examination once every 365 days by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant and be cleared to play. A recommended preparticipation form may be found online.

Students absent from athletic practice for five or more days due to illness or injury shall receive a medical release by a physician licensed to practice medicine before readmittance to practice or contests.

It is recommended that players be covered by adequate medical and accident insurance, and that medical aid be immediately available at all times. Schools should have medical release forms on site at athletic events in case medical treatment is required.

8. EIGHT SEMESTER RULE: No student may be eligible to participate at the high school level for a period lasting longer than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the student’s first entry into grade nine or participation on a high school team, whichever occurs first. For students who skip the ninth grade and advance directly to the 10th from the eighth, the year prior to entering the 10th grade is considered the year of first entry into ninth grade for athletics.

The principal shall have evidence of the date of each player’s entry into the ninth grade. The North Carolina cumulative record is sufficient.

9. MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SEASONS: No student may be approved for a high school contest if he has taken part in contests during four separate seasons in that sport (one season per year, whether the sport is played in North Carolina or not).

Playing as a member of a private or other non-member school team shall be deemed the same as playing a member of a school team. Enforcement of this rule is to begin with entry into ninth grade, however.

A student shall not participate in school athletic contests after graduation from high school. This does not apply to spring sports playoffs.

10. AGE OF PLAYER: No student may be approved for any athletic contest if his or her 19th birthday comes on or before October 16, 2007; i.e., the date of birth was on or before October 16, 1988. The principal shall have on file evidence of the legal birth date of each athlete.

Evidence of legal birth date must be established by a copy of the birth certificate or from one of the following: a record from the State Bureau of Vital Statistics, Raleigh; a record from the county register of deeds office; an infant baptismal record; a recording from the attending doctor’s registry

or cashbook if specific; a news item at the time of birth from the local newspaper; or an official register sheet from the first grade.

A birth date as shown on a passport is acceptable verification of a foreign student's age.

An eighth or ninth-grade student who is overage for junior high or middle school competition shall be eligible for senior high school participation.

11. AMATEUR RULE: Money or awards having utilitarian value (Example: golf balls, clubs, tennis balls, racket, etc.) may not be given to students for participation in athletics except as noted in the following paragraphs. Students may not accept items by virtue of being on a "free list" or "loan list". Enforcement of this rule by the NCHSAA begins with a student's entry in the ninth grade, so to participate as a member of a high school tennis team, for example, an athlete may NOT receive racquets, warm-ups, etc., by virtue of being on a free list or loan list.

A player may accept a gift provided it meets each of these conditions: is available to every member of the team, is totally consumable and nontransferable (e.g., meals, trips, etc.) or is labeled in a permanent manner (i.e., monogrammed, engraved, etc.) and is approved by the local principal and superintendent.

A student may accept a medal, trophy, ribbon, pin, high school letter, sweater, jacket, blazer or blanket. Sweaters, jackets, blazers and blankets must carry the high school letter or other appropriate school emblem. None of the approved awards shall be accepted from an individual or non-school organization unless the giving of such an award has been approved by the principal and superintendent of the school the athlete attends.

Acceptance of money or a forbidden award will cause an athlete to lose athletic eligibility in that particular sport for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors.

A member school which has any connection with the presentation of a forbidden award—such as assisting in the selection of the person to receive the award, permitting the award to be given at a school function, or holding the award for a student until he has graduated—shall be subject to penalty.

Accepting a nominal, standard fee or salary for instructing, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation, playground, or camp activities shall not jeopardize amateur

FELONY POLICY

Any student who is subject to the NCHSAA eight semester rule who

(1) is convicted of a crime classified as a felony under North Carolina or federal law,

or

(2) is adjudicated delinquent for an offense that would be a felony if committed by an adult,

is not eligible to participate in the North Carolina High School Athletic Association sports program. Such ineligibility shall be immediate and shall prohibit participation in the NCHSAA sports program from the date of conviction or adjudication of delinquency through the end of the student's high school career. Appellate or other post-conviction review of the conviction or adjudication of delinquency does not affect the student's immediate ineligibility.

Note: "Convicted" and "conviction," for the purpose of this policy, includes the entry of (a) a plea of guilty; or (b) a plea of no contest, nolo contendere, or the equivalent; or (c) a verdict or finding of guilty by a jury, judge, magistrate, or other duly constituted, established, and recognized adjudicating body, tribunal, or official, either civilian or military. A person is "convicted" or "adjudicated delinquent" for the purposes of this policy, in North Carolina state courts, the courts of the United States, another state, the armed services of the United States, or another country.

status. "Organized youth sports program" includes both school and non-school programs.

A student is entitled to receive "essential expenses" for any particular game, or games, in which he participates as a player—that is, meals, lodging and transportation for each particular game. Any remuneration beyond these essential expenses shall debar a student from future contests.

No student shall be eligible for any contest if he competes under a false name.

12. DRESSING FOR GAME OR PRACTICING: A player shall not dress for a game or scrimmage when he is not eligible to participate in the game. Dressing and sitting on the bench shall be interpreted as participating in the game. Exception: football, Eight Quarter rule. **Ineligible players are NOT allowed to participate in practice, either in season or during out-of-season workouts, but this does not apply to summer workouts.**

13. ALL-STAR, BOWL AND BENEFIT GAMES: (a) No student shall be permitted to participate in an all-star or bowl game unless it is sanctioned by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association and unless he/she has completed high school eligibility in that sport; (b) no individual player is allowed to participate in more than two sanctioned all-star contests during the school year; and (c) any student who fails to comply with the preceding requirements loses athletic eligibility for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors.

An all-star/bowl game is defined as any contest (where admission is charged either directly or indirectly) in which one or both teams is composed of players selected from two or more regularly constituted teams. This regulation does not apply to summer baseball and softball.

Any all-star game (in state or out of state) involving NCHSAA athletes must be sanctioned by the NCHSAA. A filing fee of \$250 is required for the game to be considered for sanctioning; if the game is approved then an additional approval fee of \$750 is required. If the request is denied, then all fees shall be refunded. This fee is required for games involving groups not affiliated with the NCHSAA, and only upon initial application.

No member school shall permit use of its equipment, facilities, nor of its employees, directly or indirectly, in the management, coaching, officiating, supervision, promotion or player selection of any unsanctioned all-star team or contest involving high school players.

Teams authorized to participate in benefit/fund-raisers must be composed exclusively of players from the same high school.

Students violating the benefit/fund-raising regulation lose athletic eligibility for a period of time to be determined by the Board of Directors.

14. PROFESSIONALS/COLLEGES: No student who has signed a professional contract will be eligible for high school competition in that sport.

No student who has played on a junior college team is eligible to play on a high school team.

A student who has enrolled and attended class in a college will not be eligible for high school competition, but this does not affect a regularly enrolled high school student who is merely taking the college course(s) for advanced credit.

GAME AND SPORT ADMINISTRATION

15. PRACTICE TIME: There shall be no athletic practice during the regular school day. This means no individual or team practice may begin until after the last regularly scheduled instructional period. No authorized practice, contest, or workouts may occur during the work day for teachers during the ten-month teaching calendar, and coaches may not use their vacation or leave time to hold a practice during the teacher work day. This rule also applies to non-faculty coaches. Exception: if a superintendent gives permission for schools in his/her unit to practice prior to the end of a work day DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER ONLY.

16. GAME RULES: All high schools participating in interscholastic athletics shall use the game