



Rhea County School District Athletic Handbook



SPREAD YOUR WINGS & SOAR!

Director of Schools

Dr. Amie Lonas

Spring City Middle

**Principal - Ashlee
Brackett**

AD- Ashlee Brackett

Rhea County HS

**Principal-Ansley
Massengill**

AD- Wiley Brackett

Rhea Middle School

**Principal- John
McPherson**

AD- Michael Swafford

INTRODUCTION

Athletics is an excellent means of bringing together home, school, and community and we consider it an important part of school life. The interscholastic athletic program should provide the opportunity to compete in athletic contests with other schools, aid the student in acquiring new friendships, further community and school spirit, and develop good sportsmanship. This handbook should assist all personnel in interpreting most of the procedures of the Rhea County Schools' athletic programs. Upon principals' discretion, individual schools may have additional rules they implement beyond expectations outlined in this handbook. Each school, staff member, coach, athlete, and parent are to abide by the Rhea County Department of Education Policies and the bylaws of the TSSAA/TMSAA.

Mission Statement

The Rhea County Schools Athletic Department's mission is "To provide a comprehensive and competitive athletic program that prioritizes academic excellence, promotes personal growth, and builds strong character. We strive to create a positive environment where student-athletes can develop valuable life skills, including teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship, while fostering school spirit and integrity both on and off the field."

Goals of the Athletic Program

- Create and maintain expectations of academic excellence.
- Develop a commitment to the growth of character and integrity.
- Help lay the foundation built on hard work, disciplined behavior and high standards.
- Demonstrate loyalty to family, country, school, and team.
- Always strive for playing excellence.
- Help provide for the physical, mental and emotional growth and development of our student athletes.
- Develop the highest degree of sportsmanship, sense of fair play, and respect for coaches, game officials, teammates, and opponents.

SPORTS OFFERED

The following is a list of current athletic programs that may be offered in the Rhea County School System.

Rhea County High School

Boys' Fall Sports

Football
Boys' Golf
Boys' Cross Country
Cheerleading

Girls' Fall Sports

Girls' Golf
Girls' Soccer
Girls' Cross Country
Cheerleading
Girls' Volleyball

Boys' Winter Sports

Boys' Basketball
Wrestling
Bowling

Girls' Winter Sports

Girls' Basketball
Girls' Wrestling
Girls' Bowling

Boys' Spring Sports

Baseball
Soccer
Boys' Tennis
Boys' Track and Field

Girls' Spring Sports

Girls' Softball
Girls' Flag Football
Girls' Tennis
Girls' Track and Field

Spring City Middle School Bulldogs

Boys' Fall Sports

Football
Boys' Tennis
Boys' Cross Country
Cheerleading

Girls' Fall Sports

Girls' Tennis
Girls' Softball
Girls' Cross Country
Cheerleading
Girls' Soccer

Boys' Winter Sports

Boys' Basketball
Wrestling

Girls' Winter Sports

Girls' Basketball
Girls' Wrestling
Girls' Volleyball

Boys' Spring Sports

Baseball
Boys' Golf
Soccer
Boys' Track and Field

Girls' Spring Sports

Girls' Golf
Girl's Track and Field

Rhea Middle School Eagles

Boys' Fall Sports

Football
Boys' Tennis
Boys' Cross Country
Cheerleading

Girls' Fall Sports

Girls' Tennis
Girls' Softball
Girls' Cross Country
Cheerleading
Girls' Soccer

Boys' Winter Sports

Boys' Basketball
Wrestling

Girls' Winter Sports

Girls' Basketball
Girls' Wrestling
Girls' Volleyball

Boys' Spring Sports

Baseball
Boy's Golf
Soccer
Boy's Track and Field

Girls' Spring Sports

Girls' Golf
Girl's Track and Field

AGE LIMIT (VARSITY, JV)

Article 2/Section 9 of the TSSAA handbook says:

(High School Division) No student shall be eligible to participate in any athletic contest during any school year if he/she becomes 19 years of age on or before August 1. The age rule does not apply to a Special Olympics athlete competing in Unified Sports.

(Middle School Division) No student shall be eligible to compete in any athletic contest during any school year if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 1.

ALL-STATE RECOGNITION

RCHS recognizes student athletes named to the TSSAA or TSWA all state teams with a picture hung in the Commons area of the school. In team sports, the athlete must be named 1st team all-state for that sport. In individual sports, athletes are recognized as all-state by their finish at the State Championships. Medaling or finishing as a state-semifinalist or better is recognized as All-State in individual sports.

ATTENDANCE TO SCHOOL AND PRACTICE/GAMES

Regular attendance is expected of all athletes. Athletes must be in attendance for at least half of the school day to participate in a game or practice. The administration reserves the right to review absences and allow the student athlete to participate if there is, in the administration's judgement, a valid reason for absence. Attendance at all games and practices are mandatory unless excused by the coach before the competition or practice.

COMMUNICATION OF ATHLETIC CONCERNS

Positive and respectful communication between parents/guardians, athletes, coaches, and administrators ultimately benefits the student athlete. Involvement in athletics will allow your student athlete to experience some of the most rewarding times of their lives. However, there will likely be times when things do not go their way, or they disagree with a coach or procedure in place. It is important to realize that these situations are as much a part of the learning process as are the positive experiences.

The coaching staff works hard to ensure the success of every athlete in our programs, and we ask that you respect their position on issues within the team. We strongly encourage the athlete, and not the parents, to talk with the coaches regarding any team or personal issues during the season. This is not only the most direct and productive means of communication, but also a valuable method of teaching responsibility. However, we realize that situations may arise in which you as a parent/guardian deem it necessary to raise concern. If a situation like this arises, we ask that you adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Have your student athlete speak to the coach about the concern.
2. Make an appointment to meet with the coach about the concern.
3. Make an appointment to meet with the athletic director about the concern.
4. Make an appointment to meet with the principal about the concern.

*Parents and legal guardians should not confront the coach before or after a practice session and a game or contest. These can be emotional times for both parties; meetings of this nature do not promote a resolution. If this does happen, this could result in further disciplinary action to be taken by the school and or law enforcement.

ELIGIBILITY

RCHS

Article 2/Section 2 of the TSSAA outlines its requirements for academic eligibility. To be eligible to participate in athletic contests during any school year, the student must earn five credits the preceding school year if less than 24 credits are required for graduation.

Students who are in the ninth grade must have been academically promoted to the next higher grade to be eligible. Academic eligibility for a student is based on the requirements of the school the student was attending at the conclusion of the previous school year.

Students who are ineligible in the first semester may gain eligibility in the second semester by earning a passing grade in five classes or three blocks or the equivalent by the end of the first semester. These students will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year. Also, each head coach could potentially have a more strenuous academic requirement for their players.

Middle Schools

Article 2/Section 2. To be eligible to participate in athletic contests, a student shall have been academically promoted to the next higher grade. Any student repeating a grade is ineligible to participate. A student who is ineligible at the beginning of the school year may gain eligibility in the second semester by passing five (5) subjects, or the equivalent, the preceding semester, provided the student is not repeating the same grade. These students will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year.

HOMESCHOOL ATHLETES

Non-traditional students include those students attending:

- a public virtual school recognized by the Tennessee Department of Education
- a legally registered independent homeschool student
- a homeschool student enrolled in a church-related umbrella school
- a homeschool student enrolled in an online accredited school

ELIGIBILITY OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS

This bylaw establishes the minimum eligibility requirements for a non-traditional student desiring to practice, try out, and participate at any level in extracurricular athletics at a TSSAA member school.

1. The family must reside in the TSSAA member school's territory. For a public school, the "territory" of the school is the geographic boundaries and bus routes of the area served by that school as established by the local board of education.
2. The parent or guardian must notify the principal of the TSSAA member school of the non-traditional student's intent to try out and possibly participate before the first official practice date in the sport.
3. A non-traditional student participating in athletics must also provide quarterly attendance and grade reports to the athletic director at the school for which the non-traditional student is participating.
4. Non-traditional students must meet all other eligibility requirements.

HAZING

Hazing in any form (including “initiation”) is degrading and is strictly forbidden. No student shall conspire to engage in hazing, participate in hazing, or commit any act that causes, or is likely to cause bodily danger, physical harm, personal degradation or disgrace, resulting in physical or mental harm to any fellow student or other person. It is understood that hazing of any kind, anywhere, is forbidden, and will not be tolerated. It is further understood that each student athlete has the duty to report any acts of hazing he/she sees, or knows of, to a coach or administrator; and participation in, or failure to report, any hazing will result in a disciplinary review and possible suspension and dismissal from the athletic program.

INSURANCE

Levels of Coverage would include:

Primary Insurance

The student athlete’s family’s primary insurance IS THE FIRST LINE OF COVERAGE FOR ALL STUDENT ATHLETES.

Secondary Insurance

Tennessee Risk Management Trust (Secondary Insurance) is the secondary insurance and takes over when the limits of the primary insurance have been exhausted. Those covered only include athletes enrolled in a Rhea County School System school. Student athletes who are home schooled and co-op students are not covered under TN Risk management because they are not enrolled in the Rhea County school system.

Tertiary Insurance

TSSAA Catastrophic Insurance (Tertiary Insurance) is for major losses and helps cover all student athletes who are on a TSSAA roster.

If a parent/guardian feels they have an insurance claim pertaining to Athletics, they should reach out to the head coach of the said sport or the administrative team of the school within a reasonable amount of time.

Physical Examination and Parental Consent

Article II, Section 10 of the TSSAA/TMSAA Bylaws states:

It is required that no student be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file with the principal a preparticipation medical evaluation form signed by a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the student has passed a physical examination, not prior to April 15, and that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics. In lieu of the form, the principal may accept a signed statement from the health care provider certifying that the student has passed a physical examination that encompasses all elements on the preparticipation medical evaluation form and attesting that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics.

No student shall be required to submit to a physical exam if his/her parent(s) or legal guardian shall file with the principal a signed, written statement (affirmed under the penalties of perjury) declining such physical examination on grounds of sincerely held beliefs or practices.

It is required that no student be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file a parental consent certificate signed by a parent or legal guardian stating that the student has the consent of his/her parent(s) or legal guardian to participate.

All required medical health/physical forms are found on this site. These forms are required to be filled out and returned before a student athlete is allowed to practice/play.

[**TSSAA Physical Forms**](#)

[**TSSAA Concussion Form**](#)

[**TSSAA Sudden Cardiac Arrest Form**](#)

Repeating Rule (Varsity, JV)

Section 7. (High School Division) A student who participates in school athletics for more than two years after entering the 7th grade and prior to entering the 9th grade, shall be ineligible for participation in all sports at all levels in the 9th grade.

(Middle School Division) Any student who repeats 6th, 7th, or 8th grade shall not be eligible until they have reached the next higher grade. A student is considered in a grade after attending class three or more days.

TRANSPORTATION

Coaches will take buses whenever possible.

Tennessee Risk Management Trust will cover certain travel claims, but the car insurance in which the athlete is riding, would be primary insurance, TRMT is secondary insurance, and TSSAA Catastrophic is Tertiary, or third.

Students enrolled in Rhea County Schools would have secondary and tertiary coverage through Tennessee Risk Management Trust and TSSAA Catastrophic Insurance.

Home School and Co-Op athletes on a TSSAA roster would have limited additional insurance through TSSAA Catastrophic Insurance.

A team traveling directly to and from an athletic practice and/or contest with a school coach in charge, would have coverage as indicated above. Independent travel is not covered i.e. athletes driving their own vehicles.

Try Out Dates

SCMS Tryout Dates for the 2026-2027 School Year

May 6th	Sports Physicals /SCMS	8:00 am
May 20 th	Boys Basketball	1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
	Girls Basketball	9:00 am – 11 am
May 21	Tennis	9 am-11am
May 22	Volleyball	8:00 am – 9:30 am
	Baseball	5:00 pm – 7:00 pm
	Softball	5:30 pm- 7:00 pm

Sports with no tryouts required: Football, Wrestling, Cross Country, Track, and Flag Football

Rhea Middle Tryout Dates 2026-2027 School Year

May 20 th	Boys' Basketball	3:00-5:00 PM
	Girls' Soccer	TBA
May 21 st	Girls' Basketball	9:00-11:00 AM
	Volleyball	11:30-1:30 PM
	Girls' Soccer	TBA
	Boys' Soccer	TBA
May 22 nd	Tennis (Boys and Girls)	9:00-11:00 AM
	Softball	11:30-1:30 PM
	Baseball	TBA

Golf will have a one day tryout in May dependent on the Dayton Golf and Country Club.

Sports with no tryouts required: Cross Country, Football, Track, Wrestling.

Rhea County High School Tryout Dates 2026-2027 School Year

May 19th Boys and Girls Tennis
3:15 pm -5:15 pm

May 20th Boys and Girls Golf
3:30 PM @Dayton Golf and Country Club

Volleyball/Day 1 Tryout
2:00 PM -4:00 pm

Boys and Girls Bowling
4:00 pm -5:30 PM @ Crystal Lanes

May 21 Boys Soccer
8:00 am- 10:00 am

Girls Soccer
9:00 am-11:00 am

Boys Basketball
11:00 am- 12:30

Girls Basketball
Day 1 /12:30 pm-2:00 pm

Baseball
Day 1 2:00 pm -4:00 pm

Volleyball /Day 2
5:30 pm- 7:30 pm

May 22 Girls Basketball/ Day 2
10:00 am- 12:00

Baseball /Day 2
12:00 pm- 2:00 pm

Softball
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm

*May 20th Sports Physicals @RCHS 8:00 am

Sports with no tryouts required:Football, Wrestling, Cross Country, Track, and Flag Football

**FINAL MESSAGE TO ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES, SPECATORS AND
PARENTS/GUARDIANS:**

We urge you to support the Rhea County School System Athletics by:

- Attending sporting events.
- Lending positive support to our teams and coaches.
- Encouraging all players without regard to their role on the team.
- Helping other spectators and parents to maintain an appropriate sportsmanlike attitude.
- Showing respect for the authority of the game officials.
- Enjoying the Rhea County School System athletic experience.

GO BULLDOGS AND GO EAGLES!!!!