

2025-26 TSSAA Handbook

TENNESSEE SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

CONSTITUTION

Article I Name and Purpose

Section 1. The name of the corporation shall be the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association, and hereafter shall be referred to as TSSAA.

Section 2. The purposes of the corporation shall be as stated in the Charter of Incorporation and, in addition, to stimulate and regulate interscholastic athletic competition among the member schools in accordance with the standards established by those schools in the TSSAA Bylaws.

Section 3. The mission of the TSSAA is to serve its members by providing leadership and coordination for the administration of interscholastic athletics, which will enhance the educational experiences of students. The TSSAA will promote participation and sportsmanship to develop good citizens through interscholastic athletics, which provide equitable opportunities, positive recognition and learning experiences to students while maximizing the achievement of educational goals.

Section 4. Schools joining the association who participate in the middle school division shall be considered affiliate non-voting members of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association.

Article II Athletic Districts

Section 1. For the purpose of administration only, the state shall be divided by counties into the following athletic districts:

First Athletic District: Carter, Claiborne, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hancock, Hawkins, Jefferson, Johnson, Sevier, Sullivan, Unicoi, Washington.

Second Athletic District: Anderson, Blount, Campbell, Knox, Loudon, McMinn, Monroe, Morgan, Roane, Scott, Union.

Third Athletic District: Bledsoe, Bradley, Grundy, Hamilton, Marion, Meigs, Polk, Rhea, Sequatchie.

Fourth Athletic District: Bedford, Cannon, Clay, Coffee, Cumberland, DeKalb, Fentress, Franklin, Jackson, Lincoln, Moore, Overton, Pickett, Putnam, Rutherford, Smith, Van Buren, Warren, White, Wilson.

Fifth Athletic District: Davidson, Macon, Montgomery, Robertson, Stewart, Sumner, Trousdale.

Sixth Athletic District: Cheatham, Dickson, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Giles, Lawrence, Lewis, Marshall, Maury, Perry, Wayne, Williamson.

Seventh Athletic District: Benton, Carroll, Chester, Decatur, Fayette, Hardeman, Hardin, Henderson, Henry, Madison, McNairy.

Eighth Athletic District: Crockett, Dyer, Gibson, Haywood, Lake, Lauderdale, Obion, Tipton, Weakley.

Ninth Athletic District: Shelby.

Athletic Districts 1, 2 and 3 shall comprise the Grand Division of East Tennessee; Athletic Districts 4, 5 and 6 shall comprise the Grand Division of Middle Tennessee, and Athletic Districts 7, 8 and 9 shall comprise the Grand Division of West Tennessee.

Article III Board of Control

Section 1. Administration: The administrative authority of the TSSAA shall be vested in a Board of Control composed of twelve members. This Board of Control shall be composed of four representatives from each of the three Grand Divisions of the State who shall be elected to serve for a period of three years. The terms of office shall be staggered such that the terms of four members of the Board of Control, one from two Grand Divisions and two from one Grand Division of the State, shall expire each year. The election shall take place in an annual meeting of the schools in each Grand Division.

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Section 2. Election: In each Grand Division, there shall be a minimum of one Independent School representative. Only administrators of member Independent Schools in that Grand Division shall be eligible for election to the Independent School seat. Each member **high** school of the Grand Division that is represented at the meeting by the Principal, or other administrator, shall be entitled to one vote for each Independent School seat to be filled at the meeting.

Administrators from all member **high** schools shall be eligible for election to the other three seats. Nominations shall come from the **high** schools within the Athletic District, and only the members of that Athletic District may vote for their representative on the Board of Control. Each member school of the Athletic District that is represented at the meeting by the Principal, or other administrator, shall be entitled to one vote for each seat to be filled at the meeting. In the event of a tie vote, all member **high** schools in that Grand Division represented at the meeting shall continue to vote until the tie is broken.

The term of office for members of the Board of Control shall begin December 1 following their election.

All members of the Board of Control must be full-time employees (minimum of 100 school days) who devote full-time duties to administration (including school-level athletic directors who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA, or the equivalent.) District-level athletic directors (who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA) whose district has **no more than twenty-five percent of the total member high schools represented in their athletic district** shall be eligible to serve, County and City superintendents of no more than one four-year high school or senior high school shall be eligible to serve. No individual can serve as a member of the Legislative Council and Board of Control at the same time.

Section 3. Officers: The officers of the Board of Control shall be a president and a vice president. These officers shall be elected annually by the members of the Board of Control and each shall perform the duties usually required of the office. The President and Vice-President of the Board of Control shall serve as President and Vice-President of the TSSAA. The President of the Board of Control shall also attend all meetings of the Legislative Council. The Executive Director shall act as Secretary of the Board of Control.

Section 4. Vacancies: Withdrawal from the teaching profession, suspension or lapse of membership of the school represented, or removal from the Athletic District represented shall immediately terminate membership on the Board of Control, and the vacancy shall be filled as provided below.

Vacancies on the Board of Control shall be filled by the members of the Board of Control representing the Grand Division wherein the vacancy occurs. Such members shall serve until the next annual meeting of the member schools of the Grand Division, at which time vacancies shall be filled by regular election.

Section 5. Power and Duties of Board of Control: The Board of Control shall:

- (a) Have general control over all athletic contests in which member schools participate.
- (b) Elect an Executive Director and delegate the authority to interpret and to enforce the Constitution and Bylaws of the TSSAA to the Executive Director.
- (c) Provide financial support for the facilities and staff needed to properly conduct the business of the Association. (The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer.)
- (d) Determine and authorize all necessary expenditures of money in the conduct of the affairs of the Association.
- (e) Determine methods of, and qualifications for, registration of officials; revoke registration of any official for just cause.
- (f) Except as otherwise provided, hear appeals from decisions of the Executive Director and render final decisions in those appeals.
- (g) Have authority to rule on any cause not covered by the Constitution and Bylaws, until the Legislative Council adopts a rule covering the situation.

Section 6. Meetings: The Board of Control shall meet in August, November, January, March and June. Other meetings may be called by the President of the Board of Control. The various ex-officio representatives shall be permitted to attend meetings and may provide input on behalf of their constituents but shall have no vote and shall not be or remain present during any meetings held in executive session.

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Section 7. Quorum: A majority of the members of the Board of Control shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Article IV Legislative Council

Section 1. Administration: The legislative body of the TSSAA shall be a Legislative Council composed of twelve members. This Legislative Council shall be composed of four representatives from each of the three Grand Divisions of the State who shall be elected to serve for a period of three years. The terms of office shall be staggered such that the terms of four members of the Legislative Council, one from two Grand Divisions and two from one Grand Division of the State, shall expire each year. The election shall take place in an annual meeting of the schools in each Grand Division.

Section 2. Election: In each Grand Division, there shall be a minimum of one Independent School representative. Only administrators of member Independent Schools in that Grand Division shall be eligible for election to the Independent School seat. Each member **high** school of the Grand Division that is represented at the meeting by the Principal, or other administrator, shall be entitled to one vote for each Independent School seat to be filled at the meeting.

Administrators from all member **high** schools shall be eligible for election to the other three seats. Nominations shall come from the **high** schools within the Athletic District, and only the members of that Athletic District may vote for their representative on the Legislative Council. Each member school of the Athletic District that is represented at the meeting by the Principal, or other administrator, shall be entitled to one vote for each seat to be filled at the meeting. In the event of a tie vote, all member **high** schools in that Grand Division represented at the meeting shall continue to vote until the tie is broken.

The term of office for members of the Legislative Council shall begin December 1 following their election.

All members of the Legislative Council must be full-time employees (minimum of 100 school days) who devote full-time duties to administration (including school-level athletic directors who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA, or the equivalent.) District-level athletic directors (who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA) whose district has **no more than twenty-five percent of the total member high schools represented in their athletic district** shall be eligible to serve, County and City superintendents of no more than one four-year high school or senior high school shall be eligible to serve. No individual can serve as a member of the Legislative Council and Board of Control at the same time.

Section 3. Officers: The officers of the Legislative Council shall be a president and a vice president. These officers shall be elected annually by the members of the Legislative Council and each shall perform the duties usually required of the office. The President of the Legislative Council shall also attend all meetings of the Board of Control. The Executive Director shall act as Secretary of the Legislative Council.

Section 4. Vacancies: Withdrawal from the teaching profession, suspension or lapse of membership of the school represented, or removal from the Athletic District represented shall immediately terminate membership on the Legislative Council, and the vacancy shall be filled as provided below.

Vacancies on the Legislative Council shall be filled by the members of the Legislative Council representing the Grand Division wherein the vacancy occurs. Such members shall serve until the next annual meeting of the member schools of the Grand Division, at which time vacancies shall be filled by regular election.

Section 5. Duties: The Legislative Council shall make necessary amendments to the Constitution and Bylaws and act upon suggestions submitted by 25 members of the Association.

Section 6. Meetings: The Legislative Council shall meet in December and in April. Other meetings may be called by the President of the Legislative Council. The various ex-officio representatives shall be permitted to attend meetings and may provide input on behalf of their constituents but shall have no vote and shall not be or remain present during any meetings held in executive session. The Executive Director shall prepare an agenda for each meeting of the Legislative Council, which shall include:

- (a) Proposals from the regional meetings.
- (b) Proposals from any committee established by the Board of Control or Legislative Council.
- (c) Proposals from the TSSAA staff.

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- (d) Any proposal submitted by the chief administrator of a member school to the Executive Director no later than four weeks prior to the Legislative Council meeting.

The Legislative Council shall not consider any item not on the agenda prepared by the Executive Director.

The agenda shall be published no later than seven days in advance of a meeting of the Legislative Council.

Section 7. Quorum: A majority of the members of the Legislative Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

Article V Executive Director

Section 1. The Executive Director shall be elected for a term of three years by the Board of Control.

Section 2. Under the direction of the Board of Control, the Executive Director shall receive, hold, expand and account for all funds of the Association.

Section 3. The Executive Director shall maintain the records and property of the Association.

Section 4. The Executive Director shall initiate investigations, conduct hearings, collect information, render decisions and fix penalties based on the information provided to the staff, and in accordance with the rules and regulations of the TSSAA. Such decisions shall be subject to review by the Board of Control on appeal by the principal of the member school involved.

Some examples of disciplinary action are, but not limited to, the following:

- (1) Probation to an individual sport in an athletic program shall result in a fine of \$500.00 annually.
- (2) Probation to a total athletic program shall result in a fine of \$1,000.00 annually.
- (3) Restrictive probation to an individual sport in an athletic program shall result in removal from the tournament series and a fine of \$1,000.00 annually.
- (4) Restrictive probation to a total athletic program shall result in removal from the tournament series in all sports and a fine of \$2,000.00 annually.
- (5) Suspension of an individual sport from participation or the total athletic program from participation.
- (6) No awards shall be given to a member school recognizing their finish in the regular season in any TSSAA sponsored sport if that school has been placed on restrictive probation for that sport.

Section 5. The Executive Director shall attend all meetings and serve as Secretary of the Board of Control and of the Legislative Council.

Section 6. The Executive Director shall be an ex-officio member of all committees of the Board of Control and of the Legislative Council.

Section 7. The Executive Director shall administer the rules and regulations governing the certification of officials as directed by the Board of Control.

Section 8. The Executive Director has the ability to establish advisory committees. The purpose of advisory committees is to provide feedback to TSSAA staff, the Board of Control, and the Legislative Council.

Section 9. The fiscal year of the Association shall be from July 1 to June 30. At the close of the fiscal year, the Executive Director shall publish a financial statement. All surplus funds shall be used as directed by the Board of Control.

Article VI Hearings

Section 1. Any school charged with violating TSSAA regulations shall be notified of such charges by the Executive Director. If a hearing is desired by the school involved, the Executive Director must be notified immediately in writing. Provisions will then be made for such hearing, and the school so notified.

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Section 2. Hearings shall be conducted by the Executive Director in the presence of two or more members of the Board of Control who represent the Grand Division of the state in which the school is located, and who shall act in an advisory capacity. After testimony has been heard, the Executive Director shall meet in executive session with the members of the Board of Control who are present at the hearing. After discussing with the Board members the evidence and possible penalties, the Executive Director shall decide what penalty, if any, is to be placed against the school.

Section 3. Regardless of whether a member school has sought a hearing under Section 2, the school may appeal any decision of the Executive Director to the Board of Control. If the decision of the Executive Director is sustained, the school making the appeal shall defray the expenses for the meeting of the Board of Control in case a special meeting of the Board is called to consider the appeal.

Section 4. No member of the Board of Control shall serve on the Board while a case involving the school which he/she represents is being heard.

Article VII Amendments

Section 1. The Constitution may be amended by a majority of the membership of the Legislative Council. The action of the Legislative Council shall be final except that any amendment it makes may be appealed to the entire membership upon request of 25 members of the Association submitted to the Executive Director in writing. An appeal to the membership must be participated in by at least 51 percent of the total membership or the appeal will be void. A two-thirds majority of those voting will be necessary to reject a regulation adopted by the Legislative Council. Any item, not on the regional agenda, that is submitted by a member school to the Legislative Council must be in writing and submitted to the Executive Director no later than four weeks prior to the meeting of the Legislative Council at which the item is to be submitted. Any item to be placed on the agenda of the Legislative Council must be submitted by the chief administrator of a member school, a committee established by the Board of Control, Legislative Council or members of the TSSAA staff.

Section 2. The Legislative Council shall not act on any proposed rule changes affecting any sport sponsored by TSSAA unless the proposed change has been called to the attention of the membership by letter or by being printed in the TSSAA bulletin.

Article VIII Regional Meeting

(NOTE: Does not apply to the Middle School Division.)

Section 1. Regional meetings shall be held in November and/or December of each year at Jackson, Nashville and Knoxville for the purpose of electing members to Board of Control and Legislative Council and of considering proposals to amend the Constitution and Bylaws or other legislative proposals. Proposals for consideration at regional meetings may be submitted by member schools, the Board of Control, or the Legislative Council. All such proposals must be submitted to the Executive Director in writing not later than October 15 of the year they are to be presented at the regional meetings. The Executive Director shall furnish all member schools with a list of all legislative proposals prior to the regional meetings, and the school or group responsible for each proposal shall be indicated. A committee composed of the President and Vice-President of the Legislative Council, the President of the Board of Control, and the Executive Director shall determine the order in which these proposals shall be considered at the regional meetings.

Each member school, provided it is represented by the principal, or by a faculty member designated by the principal, shall be entitled to one vote on all matters considered at the regional meeting held in its area, unless the Board of Control rules in advance of the regional meeting that certain items on the agenda shall not be voted on by the entire membership but that the vote shall be limited to schools concerned with a particular question. Non-voting faculty representatives of member schools have the privilege of speaking for or against any proposal considered.

The vote of the member schools at the three regional meetings is not binding but shall be considered by the Legislative Council in adopting or rejecting legislative proposals.

The principal, assistant principal, or athletic director shall attend the regional meeting annually. Failure to attend shall result in a warning. If an administrator does not attend the following year, the fine shall be \$100.00.

FAQ's concerning the Constitution can be found on page 36.

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DEFINITIONS

Athletic Program – All aspects of the member school's program of interscholastic athletic competition in the sports listed in Article I, Section 4, of the TSSAA Bylaws.

Athletic Record – A student has an "athletic record" if the student has played in an interscholastic contest at the varsity, junior varsity, ninth grade, or any other level, on behalf of a TSSAA member school or a school that is a member of a state athletic association holding membership in the National Federation.

Bona Fide Change of Residence – A move from one community to another that justifies a change of schools. Where a family **unit** continues to maintain a previous residence for the residential purposes of that family **unit** or any of its members, the move is not one that justifies a change of schools for purposes of the TSSAA Bylaws.

Coach – Anyone who instructs or supervises student-athletes in practices or contests.

Cooperative Program (High School Division) – Two member schools forming a single team in a sport in which at least one of the schools does not have a team and has not had a team for the previous two (2) years.

Cooperative Program (Middle School Division) – Two or more member schools forming a single team in a sport in which at least one of the schools does not have a team.

De Novo – Heard anew. Where a decision by the Executive Director is appealed "*de novo*" to the Board of Control, the Board of Control is not in any way bound, restricted, or limited by the findings or conclusions of the Executive Director and may render whatever decision it deems appropriate based on its own review of the facts and circumstances.

Enrolled (High School Division) – A student is considered "enrolled" at a school, for purposes of these Bylaws, when the student has (a) completed all paperwork required for attendance at the school; (b) paid all deposits and tuition due where applicable; and (c) either (i) attended classes for three days; (ii) engaged in three or more days of football, girls volleyball, cross country, golf, or girls soccer practice during the period on or after the TSSAA first official day of practice; or (iii) participated in an athletic contest in any Fall sport. A student may not be considered to be enrolled in more than one school at any time.

Enrolled (Middle School Division) – A student is considered "enrolled" at a school, for purposes of these Bylaws, when the student has (a) completed all paperwork required for attendance at the school; (b) paid all deposits and tuition due where applicable; and (c) either (i) attended classes for three days; (ii) engaged in three or more days of fall sports practice during the period on or after the Monday of the week of August 1; or (iii) participated in an athletic contest in any sport. A student may not be considered to be enrolled in more than one school at any time.

Family Unit – All individuals living together in the same residence.

Guardian – An adult with whom the student has lived for twelve (12) or more consecutive months. For purposes of TSSAA Bylaws, official appointment by a court is not required to establish guardianship; however, no person may be considered a guardian for purposes of these Bylaws unless the student has lived with that person for twelve (12) or more consecutive months, regardless of whether that person has been appointed as a guardian by a court.

Junior Varsity (High School Division) – Any level of play below the varsity level, whether denominated as junior varsity, b-team, freshman, ninth grade or otherwise.

Junior Varsity (Middle School Division) – Any level of play below the varsity level, whether denominated as junior varsity, b-team, or otherwise.

Last Participation Date – the date of the last interscholastic athletic contest in which the student participated.

Limited Member – A school that has all the privileges and responsibilities of membership but does not participate in the tournament series in any sport.

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Non-Traditional Students - 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

Parent – The birth mother and biological father of a student; the person(s) to whom a proper jurisdiction grants adoption of the student; or a step-parent with whom the student regularly resides.

Practice – Any interaction between a coach and student-athlete(s) where instruction, teaching, coaching, etc., is occurring. Happenstance communications between coach and student-athlete(s), in circumstances where attendance by the student-athlete is neither expected nor required, are not considered to be practice. Such communications may not, however, be used to circumvent the requirement in open facilities that a coach act in a supervisory capacity only. In addition, try-outs are considered practice.

Principal – The chief on-site administrative official of the member school, whether known as “principal,” “head of school,” “executive principal,” or by some other title.

Regular Attendance (High School Division) – A student is considered to be in “regular attendance” at a school when the student is enrolled at the school; is taking at, or under arrangements approved by the member school, a minimum of five (5) full courses or the equivalent for which credit toward high school graduation will be granted by the member school upon the student’s completing and passing the courses; and is satisfying the requirements of the school or school system for class attendance applicable to students generally.

Regular Attendance (Middle School Division) – A student is considered to be in “regular attendance” at a school when the student is enrolled at the school; is taking at, or under arrangements approved by the member school, a minimum of five (5) full courses or the equivalent for which credit toward **academic promotion** will be granted by the member school upon the student’s completing and passing the courses; and is satisfying the requirements of the school or school system for class attendance applicable to students generally.

School Team – An entity comprised of one or more students in a school, under the control and conduct of the school, which represents the school in interscholastic athletic competition.

Special Olympics Athlete – A student participating in Unified Sports who has been identified by an agency or professional as having one or more of the following conditions: intellectual disability, cognitive delay as measured by a formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that require or have required specially designed instruction.

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. For a system-wide public school, magnet school or charter school, the “territory” of the school is the geographic boundaries of the school system. For a non-public school the “territory” of the school is the area within a twenty (20) mile radius from the school.

Tournament Competition – The TSSAA-sponsored championship tournament series.

Transfer Student – A transfer student is any student changing schools for any reason other than having completed the highest, or terminal, grade at another school. A student who must change schools because he/she has completed the highest grade at his/her previous school is not considered a transfer student and is eligible to participate in athletics at any school he/she attends, without further approval, provided he/she satisfies the residence requirement above.

Unified Partner – A student participating in Unified Sports who has no intellectual disability or cognitive delay. Unified Partners are paired with Unified Athletes to participate on Unified Sports teams. Unified Partners are not eligible to participate in the TSSAA postseason at the state level on the school team for the sanctioned sport in which they are participating in the Unified competition.

Unified Sports – Special Olympics Unified Sports® is an inclusive sports program that combines an approximately equal number of Special Olympics athletes (individuals with intellectual disabilities) and partners (individuals without intellectual disabilities) on a team for training and competition.

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BYLAWS

There are three primary objectives that the member schools of the TSSAA attempt to achieve through their Bylaws: (1) maintaining athletics in its proper perspective as subordinate to the primary academic mission of the schools; (2) preventing the exploitation of students for athletic purposes; and (3) fostering fair competition, or a "level playing field," among the TSSAA member schools. While some particular Bylaws may serve additional purposes, all of the Bylaws should be read with these three overriding objectives in mind.

Article I

Membership and Athletic Program Administration

Membership - Sections 1, 2, 3, and 4

Sanctioned Sports - Section 5

Emerging Sports – Section 6

Cooperative Programs - Section 7

Responsibility of the Principal - Sections 8 and 9

Coaches - Section 10

Rules Meetings for Coaches - Section 11

Contracts - Section 12

Membership

Section 1. High school membership shall be open to any Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 school in Tennessee which includes grade 9 and/or higher. Any school desiring membership in TSSAA may make application to the Board of Control. Prior member schools that continue to serve students within the state of Tennessee may also make application to the Board of Control. Contracts for membership shall be approved or rejected annually by the Board of Control.

Middle school membership shall be open to any Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 school that includes the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, for boys and girls interscholastic competition. Any Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 school that terminates with the 6th grade may be a member for the purposes of forming a cooperative program for the 6th grade students only. Contracts for membership shall be approved or rejected annually by the Board of Control.

Member schools that withdraw from the TSSAA membership must be a limited member for one year upon application to renew membership.

Section 2. The annual membership dues will be \$1.50 per student (based on ADM for the current classification period). The minimum total membership fee for a school shall be \$300. High schools that include both middle school and high school grade configurations (i.e. grades 6-12 or K-12) will pay the high school membership fee and may choose to join at the middle school level for an additional membership fee of \$150. The maximum membership fee for a high school shall be \$2,500. The maximum membership fee for a middle school shall be \$1,500.

Membership contracts shall be submitted by August 1 for the subsequent school year. Membership dues shall be paid no later than September 1 and shall be for the school year (August 1 – July 31). There shall be a five dollar (\$5.00) per business day late fee charged to any school that fails to remit its membership dues by September 1.

Section 3. For high school tournament competition there shall be two categories. Division I shall consist of all member public schools. Division II shall consist of all member independent schools. For middle school tournament competition, there shall be one division consisting of all member middle schools.

Any school which includes grade 9 and/or higher may compete as a member high school.

Section 4. For each sport, the method for determining classification shall be the same for all schools within a Division.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

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Sanctioned Sports

Section 5. TSSAA shall sanction the following sports: baseball, basketball, bowling, boys lacrosse, cross country, football, girls flag football, girls lacrosse, girls softball, girls volleyball, soccer, tennis, track & field, **Unified Sports (Flag Football, Bowling, Track & Field)**, and wrestling. Any sanctioned sport offered by a member school that is approved by the school's governing body, shall fall under the jurisdiction of the TSSAA Bylaws.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Emerging Sports

Section 6. The Legislative Council can sanction an "emerging sport" once 15% of the TSSAA membership are either currently participating in the sport or are committed to participation once sanctioned. For the purposes of calculating this percentage, schools only participating in cooperative programs or that have joined TSSAA for only one sport will be omitted from the total count of member schools. When proposing the sanctioning of an emerging sport, the following information should be provided:

- Reasons for requesting the TSSAA to sanction the emerging sport.
- Estimated costs per year to TSSAA member schools and the TSSAA, including payment information for officials.
- Proposed sports calendar for the emerging sport.
- If not already a sanctioned NFHS sport, information about the governing body who determines the rules of the emerging sport.

A sanctioned emerging sport will be treated the same as all other TSSAA sanctioned sports, except that a state championship will not be offered. Instead, TSSAA will work to classify participating schools into districts, regions, and/or sections for a postseason invitational. All emerging sports, regardless of initial participation numbers, must go through a one-year trial period before a state championship will be added. It will be the responsibility of the Board of Control to approve a state championship after the trial period and once the TSSAA office has determined that participation numbers have increased, there exists an appropriate amount of geographic representation throughout the state to execute postseason qualifying procedures, and the state championship can be implemented by existing TSSAA staff. Emerging sports can remain in the emerging sport category indefinitely until a state championship is added. Once a sport is sanctioned with a state championship, the state championship will not be removed even if participation numbers fall.

Cooperative Programs

Section 7. Two member **high** schools in the same Division may petition TSSAA annually for permission to have a cooperative program in any sport if one of the schools does not have that program and has not had that program for the last two years. The Executive Director of TSSAA may approve such cooperative programs subject to approval by the principals of the schools involved. A request for a cooperative program between two schools in different Divisions or between more than two schools shall require Board of Control approval.

Member **middle** schools may petition **TSSAA** annually for permission to have a cooperative program in any sport if one of the schools does not have that program. The Executive Director of **TSSAA** may approve such cooperative programs subject to approval by the principal of the schools involved.

Responsibility of the Principal

Section 8. The principal of each school, in all matters pertaining to the athletic relations of his/her school, is responsible to this Association. Administrators must realize that they have more responsibilities than the general public to understand the purpose of high school athletics and the principles behind the TSSAA rules, and they must maintain that level of understanding and purpose when dealing with the general public and students. The principal shall exercise control over all finances, the scheduling of contests, and all other matters involved in the management of the school's athletic program. Any school whose athletic program is managed by a non-school group shall not be eligible to hold membership in TSSAA.

The principal shall furnish to the Executive Director such information as may be desired concerning eligibility of contestants, participation and reports on officials. Failure to comply within a reasonable time shall subject the school to suspension, fine or other penalty.

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Administrators' meetings are held annually for member middle schools and member high schools. The principal, assistant principal, or athletic director of each member school shall attend the meeting. Failure of a member **high** school representative to attend the meeting shall result in a fine of \$50.00.

Section 9. All games shall be properly supervised to ensure sportsmanlike contests. The host school shall be responsible for providing sufficient security to ensure orderly conduct on the part of all spectators. Visiting teams shall be accompanied by the principal or someone designated by the principal. If the game is played on a neutral field and neither team is designated as the host team, the competing schools shall share the responsibility of providing sufficient security.

The host school is responsible for the safe passage of the game officials upon arrival and exiting the facility.

Public criticism of game officials by administrators or coaches may result in a fine of \$500.00 assessed to the school.

Member schools are responsible for the conduct of their own fans and students at every athletic contest, regardless of where it may be held.

The coach and principal of each of the schools participating in an athletic contest shall file a report immediately with the state office if there is any unusual incident involving poor sportsmanship, during or following the game, on the part of players, coaches, school administrators, game officials or spectators.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Coaches

Section 10. All coaches must be registered with TSSAA annually and will fall under one of the following categories:

1. Full-time certified teacher (a minimum of 100 school days) of a board of education with a Tennessee teaching license or the equivalent.
2. Retired educator (five or more years' experience) with a valid Tennessee state teaching license or the equivalent.
3. Non-faculty coach – Anyone approved by the principal, superintendent, and/or local board of education in the normal course of employment procedures in accordance with applicable state law.
4. Classified Employee – Any individual employed by a member school or school system in a position that does not require a teaching license or the equivalent. A Classified Employee must be employed 30 hours or more per week in a non-coaching position and may not be an independent contractor or an employee of an independent contractor.

A. Coaching Requirements:

1. All coaches must be approved by the principal, superintendent, and/or local board of education prior to coaching.
2. All coaches must be submitted online and assigned to the appropriate sport(s) in the school's portal account to the state office annually. This should be done prior to coaching.
3. Non-faculty Coaches and Classified Employee Coaches must complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses prior to assuming the position. Coaches who have successfully completed the ASEP Coaches Education Course prior to May 15, 2013, will not be required to take the NFHS courses. **Member schools** must pay an annual registration fee per Non-faculty Coach. **The fee for high school division Non-Faculty Coaches is \$75.00. The fee for middle school division Non-Faculty Coaches is \$50.** There is no registration fee for a Classified Employee.
4. In addition to the requirements listed above, all coaches of Unified Sports must meet the requirements set forth by Special Olympics of Tennessee.

B. Use of a coach who does not meet all the requirements listed above shall result in a fine of \$500.00. Use of a Non-faculty Coach or Classified Employee Coach who has met the requirements listed above but has not been submitted to the state office prior to the date of first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar shall result

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in a fine of \$50.00. Use of a full-time certified teacher or retired educator who has not been submitted to the state office prior to the date of first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar shall result in a fine of \$50.00.

- C. All coaches are subject to the TSSAA rules and regulations and must conduct themselves in a manner becoming of a coach and representative of the school. All coaches are responsible to the principal of his/her school. Coaches must realize that they have more responsibilities than the general public to understand the purpose of high school athletics and the principles behind the TSSAA rules, and they must maintain that level of understanding and purpose when dealing with the general public and students. If paid, coaches must be paid entirely from funds approved by either the board of education, governing board of the school, Director of Schools, or the Principal of the school.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Rules Meetings for Coaches

Section 11. A member of the coaching staff in each sport and cheerleading shall attend a state rules meeting in person for their sport each year and submit their attendance voucher online or complete an online version of the same by the TSSAA Date of First Contest, or the school will be fined \$50.00. A school administrator may also satisfy this requirement on behalf of his/her school. If the TSSAA Date of First Contest deadline is missed, the head coach will not be eligible to coach in the post-season tournament series until he/she completes the online rules meeting.

Contracts

Section 12. Contracts made and entered into by member schools may be cancelled by mutual agreement or by authority of the Board of Control. In the event a dispute arises under a written contract between two member schools, and the contracting schools are unable to resolve that dispute, either school may request a resolution by the Executive Director. The Executive Director's determination may be appealed to the Board of Control, whose decision shall be final and binding. TSSAA shall not resolve any disputes under contracts that are not in writing.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

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Article II Eligibility

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Preamble

The member schools of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association have adopted, through their elected representatives, an essential inter-related group of minimum eligibility requirements which work together to define and preserve the fundamental nature of the program.

All eligibility rules are designated “Varsity” if they apply to Varsity participation and “JV” if they apply to Junior Varsity participation **in the high school division and middle school division.**

Enrollment and Attendance (Varsity, JV)

Section 1. To be eligible, students shall be regularly enrolled, in regular attendance, and carrying at least five full courses or the equivalent. A student participating in the **high school division** is eligible to participate in football, volleyball, cross country, golf, and girls soccer prior to the beginning of school if the student is enrolled at the school and meets all other eligibility requirements. **A student participating in the middle school division is eligible to participate in a Fall Sport prior to the beginning of school if the student is enrolled at the school and meets all other eligibility requirements.**

A student shall not participate in athletics during any semester unless he/she is duly enrolled on or before the 20th day of the semester. This rule shall not apply to transfer students who have met the attendance requirements in the school last attended.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Academic Rules (Varsity, JV)

Section 2 . (High School Division) 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 or six credits the preceding school year if 24 or more credits are required for graduation. All credits must be earned by the first day of the beginning of the school year. Students who are in the ninth grade must have been academically promoted to the next higher grade in order 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 the first semester may gain eligibility 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.

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Students on trimesters who are ineligible at the beginning of the school year may gain eligibility by earning a passing grade in five classes or three blocks or the equivalent by the end of the first trimester. These students will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year.

(Middle School Division) 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 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.

(High School & Middle School Division) If a student is forced to withdraw from school, or is prevented from enrolling in school, due to the student's illness, his/her accident, or his/her disability, the principal may request a ruling in regard to the student's eligibility, provided the student was eligible at the time the illness or accident forced the student to withdraw or prevented the student from enrolling in school. If ruled eligible, such a student shall be charged with a semester of attendance for athletic purposes for the semester of non-attendance or withdrawal.

(High School & Middle School Division) A student who returns to a member school after attendance at a school of correction or alternative school may be eligible for athletic participation provided the school of correction or alternative school is accredited by the Tennessee State Department of Education and provided the student returns to the school attended before entering the school of correction or alternative school.

Section 3. For athletic purposes the scholastic record filed in the office of the principal or superintendent at the end of a semester shall be final. Credits earned in a summer school accredited by the State Department of Education shall be recognized for eligibility purposes provided the student was enrolled during the spring semester immediately preceding the summer session and attended at least 40 days of that spring semester.

Section 4. A student who drops out of school before the end of the semester shall be ineligible to participate in **the high school division or middle school division** until the student has been in school a semester and has passed at least five full unit subjects or the equivalent. (To become eligible under this regulation, a student must attend school for at least 40 days of the semester, but in no case shall the eligibility become effective until the beginning of the succeeding semester.)

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

High School Graduate (Varsity, JV)

Section 5. No student shall be eligible to participate in athletics after he/she has graduated from a secondary school. (A student who takes an accelerated course shall not lose his/her eligibility even though that student earns enough units to graduate provided he/she does not participate in a graduating exercise or accept a high school diploma, and provided the student has not attended a secondary school for eight semesters after enrolling in the ninth grade.)

No international student shall be eligible to participate in athletics after he/she has completed the secondary school requirements in his/her country of origin.

Semester Rule (Varsity, JV)

Section 6. (High School Division) A student, once enrolled in the 9th grade, has eight (8) semesters of athletic eligibility. Attendance of 40 school days of any semester shall be regarded as a "semester" under this rule regardless of athletic participation. If a student participates in athletics during a period of attendance of any number of days less than 40, he/she shall be charged with a semester of attendance.

A student who registers for two or more ninth grade subjects after having completed one school year in the eighth grade shall be classified as a high school student for athletic purposes.

The seventh and eighth semesters of athletic eligibility shall be consecutive.

(Middle School Division) A student shall have 6 semesters to complete 4 possible semesters of participation after entering the 7th grade. Attendance of 40 school days of any semester shall be regarded as a "semester" under this rule regardless of athletic participation. If a student participates in athletics during a period of attendance of any number of days less than 40, he/she shall be charged with a semester of attendance. No student shall participate in any sport more than three seasons.

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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.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Grade Participation (Varsity, JV)

Section 8. (High School Division) An eighth grade student is eligible to participate for a member **high school** provided he/she has been academically promoted and he/she is enrolled at the school. An eighth grade student who continues to participate **in the middle school division** shall be ineligible at the high school varsity level in that sport. Students below the eighth grade are not eligible to practice or participate for a member **high school**. Any student repeating the eighth grade shall not be eligible **to participate in the high school division** during the year that the student is repeating the eighth grade.

Participation as an eighth grader shall not reduce the number of semesters a student is allowed to participate after enrolling in the ninth grade.

(Middle School Division) No student in a grade below the 6th grade can practice or participate as a member of a team in the middle school division.

(High School & Middle School Division) A school with teams in any combination of the **high school division and middle school division** may certify a student for any division in which he or she may participate. A student may participate in only one division at any time. A student who has been certified as a member of the **middle school division** may be advanced to the high school division at any time, provided the **student's name is added to the high school eligibility roster in the TSSAA Portal prior to participation**.

Once an eighth grade student who is enrolled and in regular attendance at a high school practices or participates in a sport at that level, he/she will be ineligible to participate in the same sport for a member middle school.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Age Limit (Varsity, JV)

Section 9. (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 may be waived for the Tennessee School for the Blind when this school is competing with other schools for the blind provided such schools are permitted by their state associations to waive the age rule in competing with other schools for the blind. **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.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Physical Examination and Parental Consent (Varsity, JV)

Section 10. 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.

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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

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Students Changing Schools

Section 11. General Provisions. (Varsity)

Under Discipline: (Varsity, JV) If a student has satisfied all other requirements for eligibility but was under discipline at his/her former school, the student shall be ineligible at the new school in all sports for twelve months or until the disciplinary charges have been removed, whichever is less. A student is considered to be "under discipline" if he or she has been suspended from school and/or placed in an alternative setting. The discipline has been removed if the school that has imposed the disciplinary action would allow the student to re-enroll.

"Transfer Student" Defined. A transfer student is any student changing schools for any reason other than having completed the highest, or terminal, grade at another school. A student who must change schools because he/she has completed the highest grade at his/her previous school is not considered a transfer student and is eligible to participate in athletics at any school he/she attends, without further approval.

Executive Director Approval Required. A school may not allow a transfer student to participate in athletics until his/her eligibility has been verified and approved by the Executive Director. The school is responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the information supplied to the Executive Director for this purpose.

Participation While Ineligible. If a student who is ineligible, under these provisions regarding students changing schools, competes in a contest while ineligible, then the student upon becoming eligible under these provisions will nonetheless be ineligible to participate in twice the number of contests in which he/she participated as an ineligible student or will be ineligible for the remainder of the season, whichever is less (See Article III, Sections 12-15). The school will also be disciplined in accordance to Article III, Sections 12-15.

Section 12. Ineligible Transfer Students.

The following transfer students are ineligible for a period of twelve months from the student's last participation date, unless a different period of ineligibility is specified:

- a. **(Varsity)** A student who engages in three or more days of practice after the TSSAA first official date of practice with a school in which the student is enrolled shall be ineligible in that sport for that season if the student enrolls in another school without a corresponding change in the residence **or meeting the provisions of Section 13 (m)**;
- b. **(Varsity)** A student who transfers as a result of a change of residence is ineligible unless (1) the old residence is outside the territory of the new school, (2) the new residence is outside the territory of the old school, *and* (3) the new residence is inside the territory of the new school;
- c. **(Varsity)** If a student has been ruled eligible as a result of a change of residence, and **any member of the family unit returns** to the former residence before the student has been enrolled in the new school for one complete school year (or twelve months if the transfer occurred during the school year), the student will be ineligible for twelve months from his/her last participation date;
- d. **(Varsity, JV)** If a student with an athletic record transfers to a new school where an "athletic coaching link" existed in the past 12 months, that student is ineligible for 12 months past their first date of enrollment at the new school at all levels in the specific sports where a linkage was present. Links may include (1) attendance at an individual camp (and then transferring); (2) playing on non-school (independent) teams where the school coach is the coach or served as an administrator for the independent team/league (and then transferring to that coach's school); (3) transferring into a school where a former coach has been hired; and (4) transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed.

This rule does not apply if the student moves to his/her new schools after completion of the highest ending grade at his/her previous school.

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If the ineligible transfer student has an athletic record for the previous or current school year in any TSSAA sanctioned sport, the student will be ineligible to participate in the sport(s) in which an athletic record has been established.

Section 13. Eligible Transfer Students. (Varsity)

Except as otherwise provided in Section 12 above, the following transfer students are eligible:

- a. The student has no athletic record in the previous twelve months in any sport sponsored by TSSAA;
- b. There has been a bona fide change of residence by the student's entire family unit in which (1) the old residence is outside the territory of the new school, (2) the new residence is outside the territory of the old school, *and* (3) the new residence is inside the territory of the new school. If such a change of residence occurs between school years, the student must transfer at the beginning of the school year to be eligible. If the change of residence occurs during the school year, the student may transfer without loss of eligibility (1) at the time his/her parents change residence; (2) at the end of the next report card period; (3) at the close of the semester or term; or (4) at the close of the school year;
- c. The student changes schools as a direct result of re-zoning **of the existing residence of the student's family unit** or re-assignment of students by the local school system provided the student transfers at the time they are re-zoned or re-assigned;
- d. The student is moving from a boarding school where they are a boarder to the school serving the territory where his/her parents live, or vice versa, provided the student has attended the school he/she is leaving for a minimum of twelve months and provided the principal at the school he/she is leaving indicates in writing that the move is not for athletic or disciplinary reasons. The move must be at the beginning of the school year. (Note: The school must be outside the day school territory of the boarding school.);
- e. The student is transferring to a **member** school in the same **school** system into the earliest grade offered at that **member** school, i.e. at the student's first opportunity to move to that school;
- f. The student who has been determined by a Court to be dependent and neglected and consequently changes residences and schools as a result of a Court order;
- g. The first time the student changes residence from one parent to the other as a result of a court-ordered custody change, so long as the principal of the former school attests in writing that the move was not for athletic or disciplinary reasons; or
- h. The first time the student changes residence from a guardian to either or both parents as a result of a court-ordered custody change, so long as the principal of the former school attests in writing that the move was not for athletic or disciplinary reasons;
- i. The student is attending school where the student's parent/guardian works as a full-time certified teacher, that parent/guardian takes a full-time job as a certified teacher at a different school, and the student transfers to the school where the parent/guardian takes the new job. The transfer must take place when the parent/guardian takes the job or, if the job change occurs during the school year, the transfer must take place when the parent/guardian takes the new job or must be made at the beginning of the following school year;
- j. The student who transfers from school A to school B and then returns to school A without having participated in any sanctioned sport at any level or without practicing three or more days after the first official TSSAA day of practice in any sport at any level at school B. This must be verified in writing by the administration of school B.
- k. A student transfers from a member school to a non-traditional setting but continues to participate for the same member school;
- l. A non-traditional student transfers to the member school where he/she is already participating;
- m. **The first time the student transfers to another school due to a significant academic, social-emotional, environmental or mental health need provided that the sending school's administration does not attest that the transfer is for athletic or disciplinary reasons within seven days of notification of the transfer;**

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- n. The student is moving as a direct result of the dissolution of the student's home due to death;
- o. The student is moving as a direct result of the divorce or separation of the student's parents; provided a complaint or petition for absolute divorce or legal separation has been filed with a court having jurisdiction to grant the divorce;
- p. The student is in foster care and has consequently changed residences and schools as a result of a change in placement; and
- q. The student changes schools as a direct result of the military deployment of their parent or guardian.

Section 14. Practice Rule.

Only students who are enrolled and in regular attendance at a school may participate in practice.

Non-Traditional Students (Varsity, JV)

Section 15. This bylaw establishes the minimum eligibility requirements for a non-traditional student desiring to practice, tryout, and participate at any level in extracurricular athletics at a member school:

1. The **student** must reside in the TSSAA member school's territory.
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 for an independent school must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules. For the purpose of this rule, "full tuition" is defined as the same amount paid by all other students enrolled and in regular attendance at the school.
4. Non-traditional students must meet all other eligibility requirements.

Tuition and Financial Aid (Varsity) (NOTE: Does not apply to the Middle School Division.)

Section 16. If tuition is charged, it must be paid by parent, bona fide guardian or other family member. If a parent, guardian or other family member secures a loan for payment of tuition, it must remain an obligation of the parents, guardian or other family member to repay the principle and interest in full with no exceptions. Any loan program, grant program, educational foundation or similar program that is established and/or administered, in whole or in part, by a school or official of a school is considered financial aid. Financial aid will be allowed under the following condition:

Financial aid may be awarded on the basis of need, but proof of such need must be filed in the TSSAA office on forms approved by the Executive Director. In order to determine the basis for need, all schools awarding financial aid shall use one of the following services: FACTS Grant and Aid Assessment (FACTS), Financial Aid for School Tuition (FAST), School and Student Scholastic Service for Financial Aid (SSS), Family Financial Needs Assessment (FFNA), Private School Aid Services, Blackbaud Tuition Management, Tuition Aid Data Services (TADS), or Clarity. Schools must choose one of the companies for all student-athletes. A committee consisting of School Heads from Division II schools and one ex-officio, non-voting member from the Board of Control and Legislative Council will meet and make recommendations to the Board of Control on each student submitted. In addition, this committee will collect information from schools regarding financial aid statistics, grant procedures, and the overall financial aid program within the school. The Board of Control will then rule on all cases at the November meeting. The Board of Control shall have authority to reject the basis of need for students when in its opinion, or in the opinion of the school committee, the amount of need stated by the financial service cannot be justified.

Schools shall remove any student from athletic eligibility whose accounts with the school are 60 days overdue.

All records pertaining to financial aid or tuition assistance shall be open to TSSAA upon its request. Each school shall be responsible for securing necessary authorization to allow TSSAA to review or audit such records.

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Recruiting Rule (Varsity)

Section 17. Athletic recruiting is prohibited. Athletic recruiting is the use of influence on a student or the parents or guardians of a student, by any person(s) directly or indirectly associated with the school, to secure or retain a student for athletic purposes. In the event that there is a violation of this rule, there shall be a penalty against the school, and the student(s) who was the subject of the violation shall be ineligible for a minimum of one year.

The penalty and any additional period of ineligibility beyond the one-year minimum will be determined by the Executive Director based on a consideration of the number of violations involved, the number of student-athletes involved, the nature of the violation(s), the individual(s) responsible for the violation(s), and the extent to which the violation may have been knowing, deliberate, or in reckless disregard of the provisions of this rule and the commentary that accompanies this rule.

Guidelines for Understanding the Recruiting Rule

1. Athletes or prospective athletes should be treated no differently than students who are not athletes. Students should be seen as students and not singled out based on their potential athletic ability.
2. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, a coach who is contacted by any student or family or individual about attending a school where he or she is the coach should inform that person that he or she needs to contact the administrative official or officials of the school who normally deal with the admission process.
3. To avoid the appearance of impropriety, any meeting with coaches regarding athletes or prospective athletes should be a part of the admissions process at the school and should take place at the school.

Q. How is influence for athletic purposes interpreted in the recruiting rule?

A. Examples of influence for athletic purposes may include, but are not limited to:

1. Offers of or acceptance of any special privileges not afforded to other students, whether athletes or not.
2. Offers of financial aid based on need to any prospective student-athlete by any member of the coaching staff. All financial aid questions should be referred to the principal or person in charge of financial aid.
3. Inducing or attempting to induce or encourage any prospective student-athlete to attend any member school for the purpose of participating in athletics even when the special remuneration or inducement is not given.
4. Any initial contact or prearranged contact by a member of a coaching staff or representative of the school and a prospective student-athlete in the seventh grade and above.
5. Offering or acceptance of any item with school advertisement (shirt, caps, jackets, etc.) to a prospective student; provided that this example does not apply to items of only nominal value (pencils, etc.) that a school gives to all families that participate in the school's admission process.
6. Admitting students to athletic contests free of charge based on their participation in athletics with non-school teams.
7. Recognizing students at athletic contests based on their participation in athletics with non-school teams.
8. Coaches or their representatives sending questionnaires, cards or letters, contacting, or visiting prospective student-athletes and/or their families at their homes. For purposes of the example, the terms "coach" assumes that the individual initiating the contact is acting in his or her capacity as a coach. If that person serves another role at the school and is not acting in his or her capacity as coach, then there may be no violation, unless the contact is really a method for what is in fact the use of influence for athletic purposes.
9. Coaches or their representatives providing refreshments, gifts, and/or asking prospective student-athletes or family members for contact information.
10. Any social media post that encourages prospective student-athletes to consider attending the school.
11. **The school or person associated with the school having input into the selection of a student in a foreign exchange program.**
12. **A member of the school's coaching staff serving as a host family for a student.**

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Q. What is allowed or permitted by member schools in contacting prospective students?

A. The Recruiting Rule is not intended to prevent a member school from marketing its total school program or conducting programs designed to attract students based on the school's overall educational and extracurricular programs. However, such programs must not be used as a method for securing students for athletic purposes. Examples of programs or things that would be permissible include, but are not limited to:

1. With the permission of the administration of both schools, a school may present programs or give information to elementary, junior high, or middle schools, which explain their total educational program. There should be a diversity of presenters, speaking on a variety of topics to students of all interests.
2. Once a student has pre-enrolled at a school in the spring or summer, taken necessary steps, been accepted or approved, paid a deposit (if required), and signed a contract indicating they will attend, the school may contact the student or family concerning summer programs, camps, physicals, etc., provided the student has:
 - a. Completed his/her classes and exams at his/her previous school;
 - b. Signed the independent school's enrollment contract; and
 - c. Paid the deposit required by the independent school.
3. Mass marketing of a school directed to a general population of students.
4. Mass media advertising.
5. Responding to inquiries from parents of prospective students about various aspects of the school's program.

Q. Are there activities that might appear inconsistent with the Recruiting Rule and the Guidelines but have been historically engaged in by many member schools and are permitted under the current Recruiting Rule and Guidelines?

A. Yes. Over the course of many years, there are a number of activities that many schools have customarily engaged in and that have not been regarded as violations of the Recruiting Rule. So long as the activity does not single out particular student-athletes, and so long as the activity is not being used to circumvent the Recruiting Rule, the following such activities are permissible regardless of any apparent inconsistency with the Recruiting Rule or the Guidelines:

1. With the permission of the administration of both schools, a coach may present programs or give information to elementary, junior high, or middle schools, which explain their total program. All information concerning a particular sport program must be given out at one or both of the schools. Any program must be presented at one or both schools. Those students in attendance or who receive information must be determined by the administration of both schools.
2. Students on school teams and/or all students in a school or particular grade may be admitted to athletic contests free of charge provided it has been approved by the administration of both schools.
3. Students on school teams and/or all students in a school or particular grade may be recognized for their accomplishments at athletic contests provided it has been approved by the administration of those schools.

Amateur Rule (Varsity, JV)

Section 18. A student who has never received payment for performance who has never used and is not using his/her knowledge of athletics or his/her athletic skill for pay in the sports which this Association governs and who has always contested under his/her own name is an amateur. (Accepting money for officiating athletic contests, payment for instructional services, or for working as an employee in a city or county recreation program is not a violation of this regulation.) Bowling, golf and tennis students will abide by USBC, USGA, and USTA regulations in accepting pay.

Students may receive payment for activities not related to performance provided that they are carried out in a manner that does not suggest or reasonably suggest the endorsement or sponsorship of the TSSAA member school. The student's activities for which they are compensated may not include an image or likeness of the student in a uniform, or other clothing or gear depicting the name or logo of the TSSAA member school the

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student is attending or has attended. No reference to TSSAA accolades or championships may be used in the student's activities for which they are compensated.

A student who violates any portion of the Amateur Rule shall be penalized according to the sanctions below:

- a. First Violation: The student shall receive a formal warning and return any award(s) or money received in violation of this rule. TSSAA shall direct the student in violation to immediately remove any endorsement, advertisement, sponsorship, or other promotional activity that is in violation of the Amateur Rule.
- b. Second Violation: The student shall be ineligible to participate in interscholastic athletics at any level of competition for a period of one (1) year from the date of TSSAA's determination of the second violation.
- c. Third Violation: The penalty and any additional period of ineligibility will be determined by the Executive Director based on a consideration of the nature of the violation(s) and the extent to which the violation(s) may have been knowing, deliberate, or in reckless disregard of the provisions of this rule.

Note: It is expected that the TSSAA member school will ensure adherence to any of the above penalties imposed on their student.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Award Rule (Varsity)

Section 19. A student may accept a medal, trophy, state championship ring, high school letter, sweater, jacket, shirt, blazer or blanket but nothing else of commercial value from his/her school. (A sweater, jacket, shirt, blazer or blanket must carry the high school letter or other appropriate award emblem.) Acceptance of forbidden awards will cause a student to become ineligible for 12 months in the sport in which the violation occurs. Bowling, golf and tennis students will abide by USBC, USGA, and USTA regulations in accepting awards.

Section 20. A member school that 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/she has graduated — shall be subject to suspension from tournament play in the involved sport(s) for one season.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Independent-Game Participation (Varsity)

(NOTE: For the high school division, this rule does not apply to bowling, golf, tennis, wrestling, cross country, and track and field. For the middle school division, this rule only applies to basketball and football.)

Section 21. Once a student participates in a school contest at any level, a student cannot participate in an independent contest prior to the conclusion of the season. If a student participates in an independent game in that sport after the first contest date allowed and before the season has closed, the student shall be ineligible at the varsity level as explained below.

Any organized game in which players on a non-school team participate – regardless of whether admission is charged - is considered as an independent game. Once a violation of this rule has been confirmed, the student will be ineligible for the remainder of the season in that sport.

If the principal requests the state office to remove a student's name after the first official contest date allowed in that sport, such student may not again be certified during the season of that sport.

Students may practice with an independent team regardless of whether or not scrimmage situations occur at the practice for the independent team as long as the scrimmage situation only involves the independent team that is conducting the practice. A group of students who are assembled to try-out for an independent team is considered a single team regardless of the number of students involved.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Specialized Camps (Varsity)

Section 22. All expenses of an athlete who attends any athletic camp where specialized instruction is offered in any sport sponsored by TSSAA must be paid by the athlete or his/her parents.

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Special Cases Involving Hardship

Section 23. Except for the eligibility rules in regard to age and to the number of semesters in school, TSSAA shall have the authority to set aside the effect of any eligibility rule upon an individual student when:

- (a) the circumstances causing the student to fail to satisfy the eligibility rule were unforeseen and unavoidable;
- (b) application of the rule to the student works an undue hardship in light of the unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances;
- (c) application of the rule would not accomplish the purpose for which the rule was intended; and
- (d) in the case of a change of schools, the change is for reasons unrelated to participation in athletics.

The burden of establishing each of these elements to the Executive Director's satisfaction is upon the school at which eligibility is sought. The individual student must meet the TSSAA definition of *enrolled* at the school where eligibility is sought in order for the Executive Director to consider the hardship case.

Any decision of the Executive Director on any request for a waiver of eligibility rules under this Section may be appealed *de novo* to the Board of Control at its August, November, January March or **June** meetings. The Board of Control only considers appeals at the June meeting on behalf of students that meet the TSSAA definition of *enrolled* at their new school. If the appeal to the Board of Control or any materials in connection with that appeal are received by TSSAA less than one full week prior to the scheduled Board of Control meeting, the member school at which eligibility is sought shall be responsible for all additional expenses associated with providing copies of that material to the Board of Control. A school appealing a decision of the Executive Director under this Section must have an administrator (principal, assistant principal, or athletic director) present at the Board of Control meeting.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Athletes Participating in Unified Sports

Section 24. To be eligible to participate as a Special Olympics Athlete in Unified Sports the student must be enrolled and in regular attendance at the member school unless participating as a part of an approved cooperative program. All other eligibility rules do not apply to a Special Olympics Athlete in Unified Sports. Special Olympics Athletes must complete the Special Olympics of Tennessee pre-participation medical and parental release form prior to practicing or competing. The student must be identified by an agency or professional as having one of the following conditions: intellectual disabilities, cognitive delays as measured by formal assessment, or significant learning or vocational problems due to cognitive delay that require or have required specially designed instruction.

Unified Partners must meet all TSSAA eligibility requirements. They are not eligible to participate in the TSSAA postseason at the state level for the sanctioned sport in which they are participating in the Unified competition.

All Special Olympics Athletes and Unified Partners must be registered through the TSSAA Eligibility Portal.

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Article III Compliance

Effect of Agreeing to Join TSSAA - Sections 1 and 2

Enforcement - Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6

Unsportsmanlike Conduct - Sections 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11

Playing of Ineligible Student-Athletes – Sections 12, 13, 14, and 15

Effect of Agreeing to Join TSSAA

Section 1. Membership in the association is voluntary. By joining the association, a member school agrees to abide by all rules of the association. If a member school, or that school's governing body, files suit against the association and does not prevail on the merits, the member school shall reimburse the association for all legal fees and expenses incurred by the association in connection with said suit.

Section 2. Each member school has a responsibility to monitor its athletic program and to self-report any violations of TSSAA Bylaws to the Executive Director as soon as the school is aware of possible violations. The responsibility extends to all administrators and coaches at the school. Each member school is responsible for the conduct of its administrators and coaches and for any knowledge possessed by its administrators or coaches.

Enforcement

Section 3. The Executive Director and/or the Board of Control shall have power to suspend, to fine, or otherwise penalize any member school for the violation of any provisions of the Constitution or Bylaws of the association or for other just cause. The period of suspension or other penalty shall be left to the discretion of the Board of Control where the penalty is not fixed.

Section 4. The Executive Director shall, in his/her discretion, determine whether information about any possible violation of the TSSAA Constitution or Bylaws is sufficiently reliable to justify further investigation. The Executive Director shall also, in his/her discretion, determine whether to conduct any investigation of possible violations of the Constitution or Bylaws as well as the nature and extent of any investigation that may be conducted and the procedures to be used in any such investigation. Factors to be considered by the Executive Director in making these determinations may include, but are not limited to, the workload of the TSSAA office, the seriousness of the alleged violation, the availability of staff members to assist in any investigation, the cost of investigation, the time needed to conduct an investigation, and any other factor the Executive Director may deem relevant in making these decisions.

Section 5. (a) A violation of the TSSAA Constitution or Bylaws will not result in any investigation or penalty if it is inadvertent and the school first learns of and reports the violation after the conclusion of the following year's playoffs in the sport in which the violation occurred, (b) If it is determined that a school (or any of its administrators or coaches) had knowledge of a violation or possible violation of the TSSAA Constitution or Bylaws and failed to promptly self-report it as required in Section 2, or that a delay in self-reporting occurred as a result of a failure by the school to properly monitor its athletic program as required in Section 2, the provisions of subsection (a) shall not apply. In any such case, a violation may be investigated and penalties may be implemented regardless of when the violation occurred.

Section 6. Any school under suspension, if it has restricted its athletic program to intramural athletics for the period of suspension, may be reinstated by the Board of Control upon application made in writing, 20 days in advance of the time it desires to be reinstated, to the Executive Director by the principal of the school and by the governing board under which the school operates. The Executive Director shall present the application of the suspended school to the Board of Control for its consideration. The principal and the governing board shall agree in writing that the school will abide by all rules of the association in the future. The principal and each member of the governing board shall sign the statement.

If a school with one or more two-year contracts has its athletic program in any sport suspended for violation of TSSAA regulations -- and the first game of the two-year contract has been played at the offending school -- such school shall be required to complete the contract, or contracts, when it resumes its athletic program if the school, or schools, affected desire.

Suspension of a member school shall free all existing contracts between that school and other member schools.

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Unsportsmanlike Conduct

The TSSAA and its member schools believe strongly that the major purpose of **interscholastic athletics** is to be a part of the total educational program. A major part of this purpose is to stress to coaches, players, officials, and fans the vital importance of sportsmanship. It is critical that all people in each of these categories understand the major role that they play and the role model that they can be for others.

Recognizing this principle, unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any of these groups cannot be accepted. Penalties for unsportsmanlike conduct set forth in these Bylaws are minimum penalties. A member school is free to impose any additional penalties upon its student-athletes, coaches, or fans as it may see fit.

Section 7. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Student Athletes

- A. In contests in which registered TSSAA officials are involved, the officials will immediately notify the state office with a written report if players are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. In sports where registered TSSAA officials are not used, it will be the responsibility of the principal and/or coach of the player involved to report this incident to the state office.
- B. On the ejection of the student-athlete, the school will be required to submit a report on the action of the player and any disciplinary action taken by the school. The minimum penalty will be as follows:
 1. Football – 1 Game Suspension
 2. Soccer – There is a 2 Game Suspension for serious foul play except for the following offenses which shall result in a 1 Game Suspension:
 - a. A player anywhere on the field (other than a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area) who deliberately handles a ball to prevent it from going into the goal.
 - b. A foul by a player against an opponent who is moving toward his/her offensive goal with an obvious opportunity to score.
 - c. A player who is disqualified from the contest for receiving his/her second yellow card.
 3. All other sports – 2 Game Suspension

The student-athlete is also suspended from all levels of participation (varsity, junior varsity, freshman) the same number of contest(s) in the sport involved.

If the student-athlete is **competing in their final year in the high school division or middle school division** and cannot fulfill all of the disciplinary action due to the completion of the season, he/she will fulfill the action in the next sport in which they participate.

- C. In addition to what is presently required when a player is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, a meeting shall be held with the player, coach, principal, and parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to the player's next competition. A Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form must be sent to the state office by the principal. Schools that have not submitted the required Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form by the end of the sports season in which the violation occurred shall be subject to a \$100 fine.
- D. If a player is ejected for a second time for unsportsmanlike conduct, a more severe punishment shall be imposed.
- E. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on all the facts.
- F. In all situations where ejections occur for unsportsmanlike conduct, the individual will be removed from the next contest(s) following the one in which the ejection occurred. If the individual plays in a subsequent contest after being ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct the minimum penalty shall be increased by an amount determined by the state office.
- G. For substitutes leaving the bench area during an incident, the school will be fined a minimum of \$250.00. The school will be required to submit a report and video if available. All schools are instructed to inform individuals taping to continue **recording** all incidents. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the sport in which the incident occurred.

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Section 8. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Coaches

- A. The school and coach will be required to submit a written report of the incident.
- B. The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contest(s) and pay a fine of \$500.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.
- C. In addition to what is presently required when a coach is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, a meeting shall be held with the coach, principal, and superintendent, or his/her appointed representative prior to the coach returning to their coaching position. A Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form must be sent to the state office by the principal. Schools that have not submitted the required Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form by the end of the sports season in which the violation occurred shall be subject to a \$100 fine.
- D. On any subsequent ejection by the same coach, the school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contest(s) and pay a fine of \$1,000.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.
- E. If the coach is ejected from the contest and an assistant coach or an employee of the school involved is not available to continue as coach, the event is terminated and forfeited to the opponent.
- F. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on all the facts.
- G. In soccer, coaches who are ejected for receiving a red card, or a second (yellow card) followed by a red card, are subject to the penalties above.

Section 9. Unsportsmanlike Conduct by Fans

- A. For fans coming onto the field or floor during an incident, the school will be fined a minimum of \$250.00. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the entire athletic program.
- B. For fans ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct during a contest, the school will be fined a minimum of \$250.00. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the entire athletic program.

Section 10. If a team is removed from competition, the school shall be fined \$500.00, and the school shall face disciplinary action by TSSAA. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on the facts.

Section 11. Appeals

A school may appeal the ejection of players or coaches or a penalty imposed for unsportsmanlike conduct by fans.

- A. Any appeal request shall be submitted in writing from the administrator of the school.
- B. Ejections of players or coaches will be overturned only if it is shown that there was a misapplication of a rule. If the appeal pertains to the ejection of players or coaches, the written request should state which playing rule was misapplied.
- C. The school will be charged \$50 for the appeal unless the official's decision is overturned.
- D. The decision of the Executive Director on the appeal shall be final.

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Playing of Ineligible Student-Athletes

Section 12. All rulings on eligibility must be in writing, and the accidental, intentional or other use of ineligible players by a member school shall require that team victories in which the ineligible player participated are forfeited to opponents; and any one or more of these additional actions may be taken:

- (a) That individual or team records and performances achieved during participation by such ineligible be vacated or stricken;
- (b) That team or individual awards earned by such ineligible be returned to the TSSAA; and
- (c) That a fine for the playing of an ineligible player be assessed against the school, if deemed necessary.

Section 13. If a student is ineligible according to TSSAA rules but is permitted to participate in interscholastic competition contrary to such TSSAA rules but in accordance with the terms of a court restraining order or injunction against his/her school and/or the TSSAA, and that injunction is subsequently voluntarily vacated, stayed, reversed or finally determined by the courts that injunctive relief is not or was not justified or expires without further judicial determination, those actions stipulated in Section 12 and 14 shall be taken.

Section 14. If an ineligible contestant competes in a meet, match or tournament and any violation of TSSAA rules occurs, all points earned by that student, or by a relay team of which he/she may have been a member, in that meet or tournament are to be declared forfeited. In team sports (baseball, basketball, **bowling**, **boys lacrosse**, football, **girls flag football**, **girls lacrosse**, girls soccer, girls softball, girls volleyball, and soccer) the entire contest is forfeited.

When a team plays an ineligible athlete in TSSAA tournaments or playoffs and wins the contest, the win is vacated, the team is removed from the tournament or playoff, and no team replaces that team in the tournament series. All awards and money earned from the post season tournament series must be returned to TSSAA.

The penalty for playing an ineligible contestant shall be \$50.00 per contest at the varsity level and \$25.00 per contest below the varsity level, with a maximum fine of \$250.00, provided it is voluntarily reported by the school, which is in violation, to the Executive Director. If it is not voluntarily reported by the school to the Executive Director, the penalty shall be \$100.00 per contest at the varsity level and \$50.00 per contest below the varsity level. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on all the facts.

Section 15. If an otherwise ineligible student-athlete provides false information to a member school and is erroneously determined to be eligible and is allowed to participate on the basis of that false information, the student shall be ineligible at all levels in all sports at any member school for twelve (12) months from his or her last participation date.

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Article IV Miscellaneous

Schools Which Member Schools May Play or Scrimmage – Section 1
Contests with Out-Of-State Teams – Section 2
Tournaments and Meets – Section 3
Varsity Team – Section 4
Eligibility Roster – Section 5
Filing Schedule Reports – Section 6
Rules of the Game – Section 7
TSSAA Sports Calendar – Sections 8 and 9
Jamborees – Section 10
TSSAA Share in Tournament Receipts – Section 11
Filing of Tournament and Playoff Financial Reports – Section 12
Awards – Section 13
Use of Tobacco – Section 14
Officials – Sections 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20
Bond – Section 21
Amendments – Section 22

Schools Which Member Schools May Play or Scrimmage

Section 1. A member of the **high school division** is permitted to play or scrimmage any secondary school team with grades 9 and above in regular season play. **A member of the middle school division is permitted to play or scrimmage any middle school team with grades 6-8 in regular season play.**

For the purposes of this rule, a school team may be one school or a cooperative program of one or more schools.

A member school may play one alumni game or one preseason scrimmage with alumni in all sports except football. If the school has separate teams for boys and girls in a particular sport (e.g., girls' and boys' basketball), each team may play an alumni game or preseason scrimmage. A preseason scrimmage with alumni must count as one of the four permitted preseason scrimmages. A game with alumni must count as a regular season contest.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Contests with Out-Of-State Teams

Section 2. All out-of-state trips must be approved by the administration of the school.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Tournaments and Meets

Section 3. (High School Division) All Invitational Tournaments or Meets must be approved by the Executive Director.

A member school that wishes to host a tournament or meet that involves out-of-state teams must make application to the Executive Director for sanctioning.

Member schools must obtain sanctioning from the National Federation of State High School Associations when hosting the following types of events:

1. Any interstate or international event involving two (2) or more schools which is co-sponsored by or titled in the name of an organization outside the school community (e.g., a college/university, a theme park, an athletic shoe/apparel company).
2. Events in non-bordering states if five (5) or more states are involved.
3. Events in non-bordering states if more than eight (8) schools are involved.
4. Any event involving two (2) or more schools that involves a team from a foreign country. The host school should complete the international sanction application. This would include any event(s) that involves

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international traveling teams that play in multiple games in multiple states. (The exceptions to this rule are Canada and Mexico which are considered “bordering states.”)

(Middle School Division). All end of the year tournaments, bowl games, and meets must be approved by the State Office.

Varsity Team

Section 4. There can be only one varsity team in any sport.

Please see FAQ’s on pages 37-56.

Eligibility Roster

Section 5. (High School Division) A TSSAA Portal Eligibility Roster containing the name of each student who is to participate at any level (Varsity, JV/B-Team, ninth grade) during the season in each sport shall be filed online prior to the first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar for each particular sport. If a student whose name does not appear on the original TSSAA Portal Eligibility Roster wishes to become a member of the squad, the student’s name shall be filed online before the student is allowed to participate. Failure to file the eligibility online by the date required shall result in a fine of \$50.00. Any school failing to file such reports promptly along with checks for penalty, after being notified by the Executive Director, shall be subject to suspension.

(Middle School Division) A TSSAA Portal Eligibility Roster containing the name of each student who is to participate at any level (Varsity, JV/B-Team, sixth grade) during the season in each sport shall be filed online prior to the first contest. If a student whose name does not appear on the original TSSAA Portal Eligibility Roster wishes to become a member of the squad, the student’s name shall be filed online before the student is allowed to participate.

Filing Schedule Reports

Section 6. (High School Division) Member schools shall file with the state office a copy of the schedule in each sport. Schedules shall be filed online prior to the date of the first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar for each particular sport. Failure to file the schedule online by the date required shall result in a fine of \$50.00.

(Middle School Division) Member schools shall file with the state office a copy of the schedule in each sport. Schedules shall be filed online prior to the date of the first contest.

Rules of the Game

Section 7. The official rules books as published by the National Federation of State High School Associations shall be used in baseball, basketball, boys lacrosse, cross country, football, **girls flag football**, girls lacrosse, girls softball, girls soccer, girls volleyball, soccer, track and field, and wrestling. The official rules of the USGA shall be used in golf. The official rules of the USTA shall be used in tennis. The official rules of the USBC shall be used in bowling.

Because facilities used for high school athletics come in many shapes, sizes, and conditions, on-site event management may, on occasion, conclude that compliance with NFHS facility configuration guidelines is not feasible. Under all circumstances, onsite event management should utilize set-ups that minimize risk.

For all unsporting acts, TSSAA Bylaws as it relates to unsportsmanlike behavior and officials’ jurisdiction supersedes any other rules book.

Cheerleading squads must abide by the **NFHS Spirit Rules Book** and USA Cheer Safety Guidelines while practicing or participating in a TSSAA event.

Religious headwear is permitted, provided it is not abrasive, hard, or dangerous to the participant and any other player, and must be attached in such a way it is highly unlikely to come off during play. Religious headwear does not need to comply with any of the color restrictions defined in applicable sport uniform codes.

Hijabs, turbans, and yarmulkes are acceptable types of religious headwear.

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TSSAA SPORTS CALENDAR

Section 8. In the high school division, for each sport there shall be a beginning practice date, a date for the first contest, a limit for the number of regular season contests, rules in regard to tournaments where applicable, rules in regard to **pre-season practice**, off-season practice, and summer practice.

In the middle school division, for each sport there shall be a limit for the number of regular season contests, rules in regard to tournaments where applicable, rules in regards to **pre-season practice**, off-season practice, and summer practice.

DEFINITIONS

Team Sports – Baseball, Basketball, Bowling, Football, Girls Flag Football, Girls Softball, Girls Volleyball, Lacrosse, Soccer.

Individual Sports – Cross Country, Golf, Tennis, Track & Field, Wrestling

50% Rule – In the high school division, participation (includes practice or games) during the school year on a non-school team prior to the school season by students that will play the following season **in the high school division** is limited to 50% of the number of players required to play the game. Only the specified number of students participating on a non-school team prior to the **high school division** season may be placed on the **high school division** eligibility list (TSSAA Portal Roster) the following season. Those students cannot be interchanged on the **high school division's** team roster. Limits: basketball – 3; baseball – 5; softball – 5. **This rule does not apply to the middle school division.**

Beginning Sport – Any school that is starting a sport for the first time may have five days of off-season practice in addition to that which is already allocated in the TSSAA Sports Calendar. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Dead Period Rule – No coaching, observing, or contact between coach and players in sport involved. There is no practice, no open facilities, and no weight training/conditioning. The Dead Period, which is to be observed by all schools, is generally the week of the 4th of July and the preceding week – 14 days. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Multiple Contests – In all individual sports, individuals accompanied by a coach may enter varsity competition at a different site on the same time and date, and this will count as two days on the school's schedule. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Off-Season – Begins with the school's elimination from postseason tournament play in a particular sport and concludes with the end of the school year. In team sports, individual instruction may be given to no more than the following number of students per day: football, lacrosse, & soccer - 6; baseball & softball - 5; girls flag football - 4; basketball & volleyball - 3. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Open Facilities – Permitted year round (Monday through Friday) except during the **Dead Period**. Schools may use their facilities for students in their building prior to or after the school day. Coaches may serve in a supervisory capacity only. There is no instruction, no teaching, no coaching, etc. Coaches may not participate or play in any manner. It is a free play type atmosphere. Sport specific skills cannot be taught. ATTENDANCE CANNOT BE MANDATORY. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Practice – Any interaction between a coach and student-athlete(s) where instruction, teaching, coaching, etc., is occurring. Happenstance communications between coach and student-athlete(s), in circumstances where attendance by the student-athlete is neither expected nor required, are not considered to be practice. Such communications may not, however, be used to circumvent the requirement in open facilities that a coach act in a supervisory capacity only. In addition, try-outs are considered practice. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Practice During the School Day – All athletic practice during the regular hours of any school day shall conform to the same rules, regulations, and season as corresponding athletic practice outside the school day. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Pre-Season – Begins the first day of school until the first official day of practice in that particular sport. In team sports, individual instruction may be given to no more than the following number of students per day: football, lacrosse, & soccer - 6; baseball & softball - 5; girls flag football - 4; basketball & volleyball - 3. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

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Scrimmage Rule – After the TSSAA first official day of practice in all sports, a school cannot practice with or scrimmage another school until both schools have practiced a minimum of three days. No tournament format of any type may be used. Scrimmages should look more like practice than games. Once a school has played their first game, there can be no more scrimmages. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division) **In the high school division** a school may have a maximum of four scrimmages or two scrimmage dates or one scrimmage date and two scrimmages (A scrimmage date is defined as more than two schools scrimmaging on the same day).

Summer – The period of time from the end of the school year until the Monday of NFHS Week 4 (opening day of practice). (Applies to High School & Middle School Division)

Tournament (High School Division) – All tournaments shall be held on consecutive days with no other regular season games being played during the tournament unless permission is granted by the Executive Director. A tournament is defined as competition of three or more teams and three or more games, matches, etc., which progresses to determine a winner.

Tournament (Middle School Division) – All tournaments shall be held on consecutive days with no other regular season games being played during the tournament unless permission is granted by the Executive Director. A tournament is defined as a competition of three or more teams and three or more games, matches, etc., which progresses to determine a winner. Regular season tournaments shall count as two games/dates, notwithstanding the number of games/dates in which each team participates in a tournament. Postseason tournaments or bowl games may be played, provided the plan is approved by the state office annually. In a sport that does not have a state championship, any postseason tournament or play-off format that exceeds the number of regular season contests must be approved by the state office.

TSSAA Benefit Games (High School Division) – Schools may choose to host one additional contest in baseball, boys lacrosse, girls flag football, girls lacrosse, girls soccer, softball, soccer, and volleyball, with the host of the game contributing \$100 towards the construction of the new state office building. Each school would be allowed to play in up to two of these games per sport season. These games will not count against the number of regular season contests schools are allowed to schedule. Schools must request permission to participate in a TSSAA Benefit Game, regardless of whether or not the school is the host. Schools will be charged a fee of \$100 for the game they host.

TSSAA Hall of Champions Games (High School Division) – Schools may choose to participate in up to three boys' and three girls' Hall of Champions Games during the week preceding the regular season. These games will not count against the number of regular season contests schools are allowed to schedule. Schools must request permission to participate in a Hall of Champions Game, regardless of whether or not the school is the host. Schools will be charged a fee of \$250 in the TSSAA Portal for each game (boys' and girls') they host.

Weight Training/Conditioning – Permitted at all times except during the **Dead Period**. Must be generic type program that would be beneficial to all students and not sport specific. Exceptions: 1. In baseball and girls' softball, players may throw to condition arms. 2. In lacrosse, players may do stickwork (fundamental catching and throwing). Sport specific skills cannot be taught. Only students who are enrolled and in regular attendance at the school may participate during the school year. ATTENDANCE CANNOT BE MANDATORY. (Applies to High School and Middle School Division)

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High School Division Sports Calendar

| | FALL SEASON | WINTER SEASON | SPRING SEASON |
|--|--|--|---|
| Pre-Season Practice Rule | Does not apply | Team Sports: Rule applies Individual Sports: No restrictions | Team Sports: 8 days of team practice are permitted during a 15 consecutive school day period from the first day of school until December 31 Individual Sports: No restrictions |
| First Practice Date | Golf Monday – NFHS Week 2 All Other Sports Monday – NFHS Week 4 | Bowling Monday – NFHS Week 9 Wrestling Monday – NFHS Week 17 Basketball Monday – NFHS Week 18 | Lacrosse, Tennis & Girls Flag Football Monday – NFHS Week 32 All Other Sports Monday – NFHS Week 33 |
| Scrimmage Rule | Applies to all sports | Applies to all sports except Bowling | Applies to all sports |
| First Contest Date (Deadline to File Eligibility & Schedules in TSSAA Portal) | Golf Monday – NFHS Week 4 All Other Sports Monday – NFHS Week 7 | Bowling Monday – NFHS Week 13 Wrestling Monday – NFHS Week 20 Basketball Monday – NFHS Week 21 | Lacrosse, Tennis, & Girls Flag Football Monday – NFHS Week 35 All Other Sports Monday – NFHS Week 36 |
| Off-Season Practice | Team Sports: 8 days of team practice are permitted during a 15 consecutive school day period after January 1 st and prior to the end of the school year (See Football exception below.) Individual Sports: No restrictions | Team Sports: 8 days of team practice are permitted during a 15 consecutive school day period after January 1 st and prior to the end of the school year Individual Sports: No restrictions | Team Sports: Team practice is not allowed. Exception (Baseball & Softball): Coaches may be involved in a coaching capacity with students in their school on non-school teams. Individual Sports: No restrictions |
| Summer | Football See Below All Other Sports No restrictions | Basketball See Below All Other Sports No restrictions | No restrictions |
| 50% Rule | NA | Applies to Basketball | Applies to Baseball & Softball |
| Dead Period Rule | Does apply NFHS Week 52 & 1 | Does apply NFHS Week 52 & 1 | Does apply NFHS Week 52 & 1 |

NOTE: For sports that are played in the Spring, when NFHS Week 47 is the same week as Memorial Day, first practice dates and championship dates will be shifted.

Football Exceptions:

- There can only be 10 days of team-against-team competition which must occur after the conclusion of the Dead Period (Exception: Two of the 10 days may take place in June, provided the competition takes place in Tennessee.). Pads may not be worn during school-against-school competition.
- In the Summer there are no restrictions in regard to practice. No pads are permitted. Helmets may be worn.
- First Practice Date in pads is the Monday of NFHS Week 4.
- Schools that do not qualify for the playoffs may schedule an additional game for a total of 11.
- Pre-Season Acclimatization:** All TSSAA Football Practice Regulations must be followed. TSSAA Football Regulations can be found at <http://tnhs.us/fbpractice>.
- Practice Regulations:** All TSSAA Football Practice Regulations must be followed. TSSAA Football Practice Regulations can be found at <http://tnhs.us/fbpractice>.
- Maximum of 12 days of **Off-Season** team practice within a 15 consecutive school day period and one interschool scrimmage is permitted. The first two days of practice must be in helmets only.

Basketball Exceptions:

- In the Summer there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- Coaches may participate in a maximum of 10 days of team-against-team competition which must occur after the conclusion of the school year until the Dead Period.

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HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION SPORT SPECIFIC CALENDARS

| Sport | Season | Maximum # of Regular Season Contests & Tournaments | Sport | Season | Maximum # of Regular Season Contests & Tournaments |
|---------------------|--------|---|---------------|--------|---|
| Baseball | Spring | 30 Games (Max. Tournaments – 4 Each count as 3 Games) | Lacrosse | Spring | 16 Matches (Max. Tournaments – 2 Each counts as two matches.) |
| Basketball | Winter | 24 Games (Max. Tournaments – 3 Each count as 2 Games) | Soccer | Spring | 16 Matches (Max. Tournaments – 2 Each counts as 2 Matches) |
| Bowling | Winter | No Limit | Softball | Spring | 34 Games (Max. Tournaments – 5 Each count as 4 Games) |
| Cross Country | Fall | 11 Dates | Tennis | Spring | 22 Matches (Each tournament counts as 2 matches.) |
| Football | Fall | 10 Games | Track | Spring | 11 Dates (Each meet counts as 1 Date.) |
| Girls Flag Football | Spring | 16 Games (Max. Tournaments – 2 Each counts as 2 Matches) | Unified Track | Spring | 11 Dates (Each meet counts as 1 Date) |
| Girls Soccer | Fall | 16 Matches (Max. Tournaments – 2 Each count as 2 Matches) | Volleyball | Fall | 35 Matches (Max. Tournaments – 4 Each count as 3 Matches) |
| Golf | Fall | 14 Contest per Individual | Wrestling | Winter | 22 Dates (55 Match Limit per athlete, excluding forfeits, in the regular season) |

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION SPORTS CALENDAR

The season in which a sport is played is left to the discretion of each school. However, in order to participate in a Middle School Division State Championship, schools must qualify by competing in the postseason events in that season leading up to the state championship.

| | FALL SEASON | WINTER SEASON | SPRING SEASON |
|--|---|---|--|
| Pre-Season Practice Rule | Does not apply | Team Sports: Rule Applies Individual Sports: No restrictions | Team Sports: 8 days of team practice are permitted during a 15 consecutive school day period from the first day of school to the end of the first semester Individual Sports: No restrictions |
| First Practice Date | Monday, NFHS Week 4 | Monday, NFHS Week 13 | Monday, NFHS Week 31 |
| Scrimmage Rule | Does apply | Does apply | Does apply |
| First Contest Date (Deadline to File Eligibility & Schedules in TSSAA Portal) | Set by the school administration, but must follow 3 days of practice. | Set by the school administration, but must follow 3 days of practice. | Set by the school administration, but must follow 3 days of practice.. |
| Off-Season | Team Sports: 8 days of team practice are permitted during a 15 consecutive school day period after January 1 st and prior to the end of the school year. Individual Sports: No restrictions | Team Sports: 8 days of team practice are permitted during a 15 consecutive school day period after January 1 st and prior to the end of the school year. Individual Sports: No restrictions | Team Practice: Practice not allowed for team sports. Individual Sports: No restrictions |
| Summer | No restrictions | No restrictions | No restrictions |
| Dead Period Rule | Does apply NFHS Week 52 & 1 | Does apply NFHS Week 52 & 1 | Does apply NFHS Week 52 & 1 |

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MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION SPORT SPECIFIC CALENDARS

| Sport | Maximum Number of Regular Season Contests | Sectional Completion Date | State Championship Dates |
|--|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Baseball | 20 Games | Saturday, NFHS Week 45 | Tuesday & Wednesday NFHS Week 46 |
| Basketball | 20 Games | Saturday, NFHS Week 31 | Friday & Saturday, NFHS Week 32 |
| Cross Country | 12 Dates | Saturday, NFHS Week 12 | Saturday, NFHS Week 13 |
| Football | 8 Games | N/A | N/A |
| *See below for pre-season acclimatization and practice regulations | | | |
| Girls' Flag Football | 12 games | N/A | N/A |
| Golf | 15 Dates | N/A | TMSGGA event in Spring |
| Lacrosse | 12 Games | N/A | N/A |
| Soccer | 12 Matches | Saturday, NFHS Week 45 | Wednesday & Thursday NFHS Week 46 |
| Soccer (Girls) | 12 Matches | Saturday, NFHS Week 13 | Thursday & Friday NFHS Week 14 |
| Softball (Girls) | 20 Games | Saturday, NFHS Week 45 | Tuesday & Wednesday NFHS Week 46 |
| Tennis | 15 Matches | N/A | USTA event in Fall |
| Track & Field | 8 Dates | Saturday, NFHS Week 45 | Monday, NFHS Week 47 |
| Volleyball (Girls') | 20 Matches | Saturday, NFHS Week 13 | Thursday & Friday, NFHS Week 14 |
| Wrestling | 12 Dates | Saturday, NFHS Week 23 | Friday, NFHS Week 24 |

NOTE: For sports that are played in the Spring, when NFHS Week 47 is the same week as Memorial Day, first practice dates and championship dates will be shifted.

Football Pre-Season Acclimatization: Helmets and shoulder pads may be worn the Monday of the week prior to the first practice date. Each individual athlete must practice in helmets and shoulder pads for three days prior to practicing in full pads, regardless of when they start practicing. Practice in pads is permitted on the first practice date provided pre-season acclimatization has been completed by each individual athlete.

Football Practice Regulations:

1. Practice time in pads may not exceed 3 hours in a single practice.
2. If there are multiple practices in pads on a single day, only one session per day should include full contact. The total practice time in pads may not exceed 5 hours, with practices separated by at least three hours of rest in a cool environment.
3. No student shall participate in multiple practices in pads on consecutive days. Helmets may be worn at any time. A practice would be considered a practice in pads if shoulder pads and/or football pants with or without pads are worn. If weather postpones a practice in pads, the practice may resume after conditions are deemed safe and the remainder of the allotted practice time may be completed. In addition, all TSSAA Football Practice Regulations must be followed.

Off-Season Practice: A maximum of 12 days within a 15 consecutive school day period and one interschool scrimmage are permitted. The first two days of offseason practice must be in helmets only.

Football Summer Practice: Practice is allowed, but no pads are permitted. Helmets may be worn. Pads may not be worn during team-against-team competition.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Section 9. A school **participating in the high school division** may not participate in a regular season contest once they have participated in a postseason contest. The sports season for a school shall end when the team has been eliminated from the TSSAA tournament series or has won the state championship. The sports season shall end for a school whose team does not enter the tournament series with the playing of the last regularly scheduled game.

The sports season for a school **participating in the middle school division** shall end when the team has been eliminated from the **TSSAA** tournament series or has won the state championship. The sports season shall end for a school whose team does not enter the tournament series with the playing of the last regularly scheduled game.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

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Jamborees

Section 10. A member school may participate in one jamboree per sport provided (a) the jamboree is held before any of the participating schools play their first game; (b) the jamboree is sponsored by the participating schools and all proceeds go to the participating schools; (c) the jamboree is conducted in accordance with the following regulations:

- A. No team or participant shall play more than the equivalent of half of a game or contest.
- B. Registered TSSAA officials must be used.
- C. Schools must hold membership in TSSAA or membership in a Tennessee conference in order to be eligible to participate in a jamboree. (Out-of-state schools must obtain approval from their state association before participating.)
- D. **In the high school division**, football schools may participate in a jamboree as early as Thursday of the week preceding the opening of football season.
- E. **In the high school division**, basketball schools may participate in a jamboree one week preceding the opening of basketball season.

Participation in such a jamboree shall not count as a regular-season contest or pre-season scrimmage provided the jamboree meets the above regulations.

TSSAA Share In Tournament Receipts

Section 11. (High School Division) Eighteen percent of the gross proceeds from district and regional girls volleyball, district and regional girls soccer, district and regional soccer, district and regional bowling, district and regional girls bowling, district and regional baseball, district and regional girls softball, **quarterfinal and semifinal boys lacrosse, quarterfinal and semifinal in girls lacrosse**, regional, sub-sectional, and sectional track and field meets, regional and sectional wrestling tournaments, invitational, county, conference, district and regional basketball tournaments shall be paid to TSSAA.

After all expenses in connection with the holding of the state tournaments in baseball, basketball, **boys lacrosse**, bowling, cross country, tennis, football, **girls flag football, girls lacrosse**, girls softball, girls volleyball, golf, soccer track and field, and wrestling have been paid, the retention and/or disbursement of any remaining funds shall be determined by the Board of Control.

Middle School Division Post Season Tournament Financial Guidelines

- A. During the pre-tournament meeting, administrators shall vote on the amount each individual worker should receive (example: Amount to pay director, clock operator, announcer, gate keepers, custodian, etc.).
- B. Eighteen percent of the gross proceeds from sectional baseball, basketball, **girls soccer**, girls softball **soccer**, and **wrestling** tournaments shall be paid to **TSSAA**.
- C. Every host school shall prepare a financial report immediately following the tournament.
- D. Every school participating in the tournament shall be provided a copy of the financial report from the host school.
- E. Items included on the Tournament Financial Report should be income by details, itemized expenses, and total number of shares and amount to be divided per school. The amount divided should be the income minus the expenses. Shares per school should be determined based on the number of games each school plays. A copy of the financial report shall be forwarded to the **TSSAA** office.
- F. **TSSAA** strongly recommends that each school receive tournament shares based on the number of games played after all expenses are paid.
- G. It is recommended that concessions be kept by the host school. This would not be included in the Tournament Financial Report.

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Filing of Tournament and Playoff Financial Reports

Section 12. All checks for district, regional, and sectional tournaments and playoffs must be distributed within 10 business days of the completion of the tournament or game. Failure, without good cause, will result in a \$100.00 late fee to be paid to TSSAA and used in the A.F. Bridges sportsmanship program to go to schools or individuals receiving awards. Failure, without good cause, to distribute funds within 20 business days will result in an additional \$200.00 late fee (total \$300.00). Failure, without good cause, to distribute funds within 40 days will result in an additional \$200.00 late fee (total \$500.00). The school may not host any tournament or playoff until the principal or athletic director appears before the Board of Control to explain the reasons. The Board would then determine whether the school could host tournaments or playoffs in the future.

Awards

Section 13. In the high school division, TSSAA shall furnish trophies, plaques, ribbons and medals in TSSAA-sponsored sports as determined by the Board of Control.

In the middle school division, **TSSAA** shall furnish trophies, plaques, ribbons and medals **in the middle school division** State Championship Sports at the state and sectional level.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Use of Tobacco

Section 14. The use of tobacco in any form by coaches, officials, and athletes is prohibited at TSSAA sanctioned events.

Officials

Section 15. Officials used in **high school division and middle school division** contests in which TSSAA member schools participate are independent contractors and are not employees of TSSAA. Individuals desiring to serve as officials in contests in which TSSAA member schools participate must register with TSSAA. The Executive Director shall establish the minimum qualifications and standards for registration with TSSAA.

Section 16. For the high school division, (a) All officials who work a TSSAA contest shall be registered and approved by TSSAA unless it is an emergency situation. Schools using non-registered officials shall be fined \$15 for the first offense. Continued use of non-registered officials will subject the school to suspension or other penalty as determined by the Board of Control. (b) For varsity contests, all officials must be assigned by the TSSAA approved local association.

For **middle school division** varsity contests, all officials must be registered and approved by TSSAA. If a registered official who has been engaged for an athletic contest fails to appear, the principal of the home school may, with the approval of the visiting school, select an official for the contest. If this is done, the principal of the home school must mail to the Executive Director within 48 hours evidence showing that a registered official was employed for the game and that the official did not appear. The principal of the home school shall give the name and address of the registered official who was employed to officiate the game, and the name and address of the non-approved official used as a substitute.

Section 17. In all **high school division and middle school division** sports sanctioned by TSSAA, the officials' jurisdiction begins upon the arrival of one official within the visual confines of the field or court and ends when the last official leaves the premises at the conclusion of the game. It shall be the duty of a game official to file immediately a report with the state office if there is any unusual incident involving unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of the players, coaches, cheerleaders, or fans.

Section 18. The Executive Director shall have authority to suspend the registration of officials who are guilty of unsportsmanlike or unethical conduct or who fail to file immediately required reports with the state office. Such decisions shall be subject to review by the Board of Control upon appeal by the official.

Section 19. An official shall be prohibited from working in an athletic contest in which a member of his/her immediate family — son, daughter, brother, sister, mother, father, husband or wife — is playing or is serving as a coach for either team. If an official is a teacher, the official is prohibited from working in an athletic contest if one of the teams represents the school in which the official is employed as a teacher unless otherwise approved by the Executive Director.

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Section 20. A school may drop an official from a game after the official has been engaged. If a school decides that it is wise to break its agreement with an official, it may be done by paying the official the regular fee for the game. Canceled and postponed games do not come under the above provision, provided that the official is duly notified. In the case of postponed games, the officials that were originally employed must be given the opportunity to work on the new date.

Please see FAQ's on pages 37-56.

Bond

Section 21. The Executive Director of the TSSAA shall execute annually a Surety Bond on \$30,000 or more if the Board of Control directs, covering TSSAA funds held by him. The fee on this bond is to be paid from the Association funds.

Amendments

Section 22. The Bylaws of the TSSAA shall be amended by the same method as the Constitution.

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TENNESSEE SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1.

Q. How are members of the Board of Control and Legislative Council selected?

A. Members of the Board of Control and of the Legislative Council are selected at the annual regional meetings in the fall. Each school represented has one vote. The sites, dates, and times of these meetings are determined by the Board of Control and posted on the TSSAA Calendar of Events.

2.

Q. May a decision made by the Executive Director be appealed to the Board of Control?

A. Yes.

3.

Q. What procedure is followed by a school that wishes to appeal to the Board of Control a decision of the Executive Director?

A. The school principal should notify the Executive Director in writing that the principal wants the Board of Control to review the case. If it is satisfactory to hold the review of the case at the next regular meeting of the Board of Control, it will be listed on the agenda. If the case is of such nature that the school wants immediate action, the principal should so indicate. The Executive Director will then communicate with the president of the Board who will call a special session to consider the case. When such a special session of the Board is called, the school requesting the special session shall pay all expenses of the meeting in the event the Board of Control sustains the decisions of the Executive Director.

4.

Q. Does the Executive Director have a vote on matters that are presented to the Board of Control?

A. No. The Executive Director is not a member of the Board of Control and therefore can have no vote on matters being considered by it.

5.

Q. How may a member school submit a proposal to amend the Constitution or to change the Bylaws?

A. By putting the suggested change in writing and filing it with the Executive Director no later than October 15 preceding the Regional Meetings. Schools may also submit a proposal to be placed on the Legislative Council's agenda by sending it to the Executive Director four weeks prior to the scheduled meeting.

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TENNESSEE SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION BYLAWS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Membership

1.

Q. How much are a school's membership dues?

A. Annual membership dues will be \$1.50 per student (based on ADM for the current classification period). The minimum fee is \$300. High Schools that include middle school and high school configurations will pay the high school membership fee and may choose to join at the middle school level for an additional \$150. Maximum Fees: \$2,500 (High School); \$1,500 (Middle School).

2.

Q. If a school is not currently a member of TSSAA, what must they do in order to join TSSAA?

A. If a high school meets the requirements as set forth in Article I, Section 1 of the TSSAA Bylaws, the school must make application to the Board of Control. By completing the [New Member Request Form](#), your school will be asking the Board of Control to consider your application for membership at their next Board of Control meeting. (This form must be completed at least one week prior to the next Board Meeting). If a middle school meets the requirements as set forth in Article I, Section 1 of the TSSAA Bylaws, the school will need to submit the [Middle School Division Member Request Form](#).

Responsibility of the Principal

1.

Q. Who is held responsible for a member school's observance of TSSAA regulations?

A. The principal or administrative head of the school.

2.

Q. Who is responsible for the conduct of the spectators at a game?

A. The principal and coach of the host school are primarily responsible. It is the duty of the host school to see that adequate security is present and assigned so that any disorder can be handled immediately. If the game is played on a neutral field and no host team is designated, the competing schools are jointly responsible for providing adequate security protection. Each school is responsible for the conduct of its students and fans, regardless of where an athletic contest is played.

Non-Faculty Coaches and Classified Employees

1.

Q. How long does a non-faculty coach or a classified employee have to successfully complete NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses after being submitted to the TSSAA?

A. All non-faculty coaches and classified employees must successfully complete the NFHS courses prior to coaching.

2.

Q. How often does a non-faculty coach or a classified employee have to complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses?

A. This is a one-time TSSAA requirement for non-faculty coaches and classified employees.

3.

Q. Where can I obtain information about the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses? How do I access the courses?

A. Information regarding the NFHS courses can be found at nfhslearn.com. Persons required to take these courses will first have to register as a new user at nfhslearn.com. This can be done by selecting "Register" in the upper right hand corner of the homepage. Once you have registered, you will need to click on "Courses" on the

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tool bar at the top of the page and search for the appropriate courses. Each participant must pay online with a credit or debit card when they register for the courses.

4.

Q. Are student-teachers considered non-faculty coaches?

A. If he/she is currently student teaching, he/she is allowed to do whatever his/her supervising teacher (college professor in charge) allows him/her to do as part of his/her total educational experience. He/She would not be considered non-faculty while he/she is student teaching and should be submitted as a full-time teacher in the portal.

5.

Q. Are retired educators considered non-faculty coaches?

A. No.

6.

Q. If one of my coaches is a Full-Time Teacher/Administrator at another school, are they considered non-faculty coaches?

A. No. When submitting their names in the portal, they should be marked as a full-time teacher.

7.

Q. Do non-faculty cheerleading coaches or classified employees serving as a cheerleading coach have to be registered with TSSAA?

A. Yes. However, it is not necessary for you to pay for cheerleading coaches. We only need the names for insurance purposes. Cheerleading coaches do not have to complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses. Also, cheerleading coaches must attend or complete online the Cheerleading Rules Meeting every year.

8.

Q. Can I register a non-faculty coach or classified employee online throughout the school year?

A. Yes. Once they have been approved by the principal, superintendent, and/or local board of education, they can be submitted online. The appropriate registration fee per non-faculty coach (\$75 high school division / \$50 middle school division) must be submitted to the state office. As a reminder, for the high school division all coaches must be registered and assigned as a coach for their sport(s) prior to the TSSAA Date of First Contest and for the middle school division all coaches must be registered and assigned as a coach for their sport(s) prior to the first regular season contest or the school will be fined.

9.

Q. Can a non-faculty coach or a classified employee be a head coach?

A. Yes. Provided they have successfully completed the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses OR the ASEP Coaches Education Course in a TSSAA-approved course combined with the TSSAA Online Coaches Training Session prior to May 15, 2013 and have been properly submitted to the TSSAA office.

10.

Q. Are middle schools limited to the number of non-faculty coaches they can use?

A. No.

Enrollment and Attendance

Q. Is there any regulation about the time a student must enroll in order to be eligible during a given semester?

A. Yes. A student must enroll on or before the twentieth day of a semester.

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Academic Rules – High School Division

1.

Q. A school requires 28 units of credit for graduation. How many credits must a student earn by the first day of the next school year in order to be eligible?

A. Students in a school that requires 24 or more credits for graduation must earn six credits the preceding school year.

2.

Q. A school requires 21 units of credit for graduation. How many credits must a student earn by the first day of the next school year in order to be eligible?

A. Students in a school that requires less than 24 units of credit for graduation must earn five credits the preceding school year.

3.

Q. A student is academically eligible at the beginning of the school year. At the end of the first semester the student passes only one subject. Is the student eligible to participate in athletics the second semester?

A. Students that are academically eligible at the beginning of the school year will be academically eligible the entire school year.

4.

Q. A student is currently attending a school that requires less than 24 credits for graduation. At the end of the school year the student earns five credits and transfers due to a change of residence to a school that requires 28 credits for graduation. What is the student's eligibility status?

A. Eligible. The student will be academically eligible since he/she would have been eligible to participate at his/her previous school. 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.

5.

Q. A student is currently attending a school that requires 28 credits for graduation. The student earns five credits at the end of the school year. The student has a bona fide change of residence to a school that requires only 21 credits for graduation. What is the student's eligibility status?

A. Ineligible. The student was ineligible academically at the school he/she was attending at the conclusion of the previous school year. Students cannot transfer in order to gain academic eligibility.

6.

Q. At the beginning of the school year, a student is academically ineligible to participate in athletics. May the student gain eligibility the second semester?

A. Yes. Students who are academically ineligible first semester may gain eligibility 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 become eligible when school resumes on or after January 1.

7.

Q. A school requires 21 credits for graduation. The student fails every course the first semester. He/she earns three credits the second semester. Can the student attend summer school and earn two credits toward academic eligibility?

A. Yes. Credits earned in summer school may be counted toward academic eligibility. All credits must be earned by the first day of the beginning of the school year.

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8.

Q. At the end of the second semester, a student has earned four credits for the school year. The student is in a school that requires 24 or more credits for graduation. Can the student attend summer school and earn one credit and, also, take a correspondence course and receive one credit toward academic eligibility?

A. Correspondence courses approved by the local board of education may count toward athletic eligibility provided the student receives credit toward graduation.

9.

Q. An 8th grade student in middle school finishes the highest ending grade and is academically promoted to the next higher grade. What is his/her eligibility status?

A. The student will be academically eligible the entire school year.

10.

Q. A special education student meets the academic requirements of his/her IEP by the beginning of the school year. What is his/her eligibility status?

A. The student will be academically eligible the entire school year.

11.

Q. A student attends a school that requires 24 or more credits for graduation. The student does not attend school during the fall semester. He/she re-enters school the spring semester and earns four units of credit. What must the student do in order to be academically eligible for athletics the next school year?

A. The student must enroll in summer school or correspondence courses that are recognized by the local board of education and counts toward graduation and earn two full units of credit by the first day of the beginning of the school year. The student must earn six full units of credit. Academic eligibility is based on credits earned and not subjects passed.

12.

Q. The school passing mark is 70. At the close of the first semester an athlete has a grade of 80. At the close of the second semester the grade in the same subject is 65. At the end of the school year the two grades are averaged and the student is allowed one unit of credit. May this subject be used in meeting the academic requirements?

A. Yes.

13.

Q. A student passes both semesters of a course, but does not receive credit toward graduation at the end of the school year because he/she does not meet the attendance policy. Is the student academically eligible to participate in athletics?

A. No. If the student does not receive credit toward graduation, the course may not be counted toward athletic eligibility.

14.

Q. A student has an incomplete or is conditioned at the end of the school year. Will the student be eligible for participation as soon as the conditions are removed?

A. A student who receives an incomplete in a subject which causes him/her not to meet minimum scholastic requirements is ineligible until the course is satisfactorily completed. His/Her eligibility is restored at that point.

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15.

Q. A student repeats a course for which the student has already received a passing grade or is taking a course for which the student is not receiving credit toward graduation. Will this subject count as one of the credits earned the preceding school year for athletic eligibility?

A. No. A student may not repeat a course that he/she has already passed for athletic eligibility purposes nor may a student count a subject for which he/she is not receiving credit towards graduation for athletic eligibility purposes.

16.

Q. A student enrolls in a school and attends only two days. Is this considered enrollment?

A. No. In the definition of "enrolled", (c) states, "A student is considered "enrolled" at a school when the student has either attended classes for three days, has engaged in three or more days of football, girls volleyball, cross country, golf, or girls soccer practice during the period after the TSSAA First Day of Practice, or has participated in an athletic contest in any Fall sport.

17.

Q. A student attends school for twenty-five days and then drops out. During the twenty-five days of attendance: (a) he/she participated in one or more athletic contests; (b) he/she did not participate in any athletic contest?

A. (a) Student will be charged with a semester since he/she participated in an athletic contest.

(b) Student will not be charged with a semester since that student did not attend forty or more days.
(See Article II, Section 1 of the TSSAA Bylaws.)

18.

Q. A student who was ineligible the first semester becomes eligible the second semester by passing five subjects or three blocks or the equivalent. May he/she participate the weekend that marks the close of the first semester?

A. No. The student will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year.

Academic Rules – Middle School Division

1.

Q. What is the academic rule in middle school division?

A. 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 the second semester by passing five (5) subjects or the equivalent the preceding semester provided the student is not repeating the same grade.

2.

Q. May a student compete in athletics if they are being held back?

A. Any student who repeats the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade shall not be eligible until they have reached the next higher grade.

3.

Q. A student is academically eligible at the beginning of the school year. At the end of the first semester the student passes only one subject. Is the student eligible to participate in athletics the second semester?

A. Students that are academically eligible at the beginning of the school year will be academically eligible the entire school year.

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4.

Q. A student is ineligible at the beginning of the school year. Is it possible for the student to gain eligibility later?

A. Yes, the student may gain eligibility the second semester by passing five subjects, or the equivalent, the preceding semester, provided the student is not repeating the same grade.

5.

Q. Can a student attend summer school and earn credits toward academic eligibility?

A. Yes. Credits earned in a summer school accredited by the State Department of Education may be counted toward academic eligibility, provided the student was enrolled during the spring semester immediately preceding the summer session and attended at least 40 days of that spring semester. All credits must be earned by the first day of the beginning of the school year.

6.

Q. A special education student meets the academic requirements of his/her IEP by the beginning of the school year. What is his/her eligibility status?

A. The student will be academically eligible the entire school year.

7.

Q. The school passing mark is 70. At the close of the first semester an athlete has a grade of 80. At the close of the second semester the grade in the same subject is 65. At the end of the school year the two grades are averaged and the student is allowed one unit of credit. May this subject be used in meeting the academic requirements?

A. Yes.

8.

Q. A student passes both semesters of a course, but does not receive academic credit at the end of the school year because he/she does not meet the attendance policy. Is the student academically eligible to participate in athletics?

A. No. If the student does not receive credit toward graduation, the course may not be counted toward athletic eligibility.

9.

Q. Are subjects such as physical education and ROTC counted in determining the eligibility of a player?

A. Yes. Provided these subjects carry one full credit for the year or one-half credit for the semester and meet one hour each day for five days a week or the equivalent.

10.

Q. Is a student who drops out of school for one or more semesters eligible to participate when that student returns, provided he/she completes the last semester he/she was in school and receives the required number of credits the preceding school year?

A. No. A student must attend school one semester before he/she becomes eligible to participate.

11.

Q. A student is forced to withdraw from school, or is prevented from enrolling in school, due to illness or accident to the student. After being out of school for a semester, or a part of a semester, the student recovers from and enters school at the beginning of the next semester. Is it possible for such a student to be eligible to participate in athletics?

A. Such a case may be considered as a special case by the Executive Director provided the principal submits details in regard to the absence of the student. If the student is ruled eligible, that student shall be charged with a

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semester of attendance for athletic purposes, even though he/she attended less than forty days of the semester, or did not even enroll.

12.

Q. A student has an incomplete or is conditioned at the end of the school year. Will the student be eligible for participation as soon as the conditions are removed?

A. A student who receives an incomplete in a subject which causes him/her not to meet minimum scholastic requirements is ineligible until the course is satisfactorily completed. His/Her eligibility is restored at that point.

13.

Q. A student was not in school during the spring semester. May that student attend summer school and become eligible for athletic participation the following fall by passing five subjects in summer school that would give him/her the required number of credits for eligibility?

A. No. A student must have been in school the preceding semester or the last semester school was in session in order to be eligible. A summer session is counted as a continuation of the spring semester.

14.

Q. A student repeats a course for which the student has already received a passing grade or is taking a course for which the student is not receiving credit toward graduation. Will this subject count as one of the credits earned the preceding school year for athletic eligibility?

A. No. A student may not repeat a course that he/she has already passed for athletic eligibility purposes nor may a student count a subject for which he/she is not receiving credit towards graduation for athletic eligibility purposes.

15.

Q. A student enrolls in a school and attends only two days. Is this considered enrollment?

A. No. In the definition of "enrolled", (c) states, "A student is considered "enrolled" at a school when the student has either attended classes for three days, has engaged in three or more days of football, girls volleyball, cross country, golf, or girls soccer practice during the period, on or after the Monday of the week of August 1, or has participated in an athletic contest in any sport."

16.

Q. A student attends school for twenty-five days and then drops out. During the twenty-five days of attendance: (a) he/she participated in one or more athletic contests; (b) he/she did not participate in any athletic contest?

A. (a) Student will be charged with a semester since he/she participated in an athletic contest.

(b) Student will not be charged with a semester since that student did not attend forty or more days.
(See Article II, Section 1.)

17.

Q. A student who was ineligible the first semester becomes eligible the second semester by passing five subjects or three blocks or the equivalent. May he/she participate the weekend that marks the close of the first semester?

A. No. The student will be eligible to participate in athletics when school resumes on or after January 1 of that school year.

Semester Rule – High School Division

1.

Q. What is the maximum number of semesters a student can attend school and still be eligible for athletic participation in the High School Division?

A. After a student has attended school EIGHT SEMESTERS he/she is ineligible for further athletic participation.

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2.

Q. When does the EIGHT SEMESTER count begin?

A. As soon as a student enrolls in the ninth grade. A student is considered as enrolled in the ninth grade when he/she schedules two or more ninth grade subjects after having completed one school year in the eighth grade.

Semester Rule – Middle School Division

Q. What is the maximum number of semesters a student can attend school and still be eligible for athletic participation in the Middle School Division?

A. A student has 6 semesters to complete 4 possible semesters of participation after entering the 7th grade. No student shall participate in any sport more than 3 seasons.

Repeating Rule

Q. If a student plays middle school sports in 7th or 8th grade and then repeats 8th grade and participates again, what is the status of the student's eligibility?

A. A student who participates in school athletics for more than two years after entering the 7th grade shall be ineligible for participation in all sports at all levels in the 9th grade.

Grade Participation – High School Division

1.

Q. If an eighth grade student participates as a member of a high school division team, is such participation charged against the student?

A. No. Such a student will still be entitled to four years of participation in the high school division.

2.

Q. May a seventh grade student participate or practice as a member of a high school division team?

A. No, a student must be enrolled in the 8th grade or higher grade before he/she can participate or practice in the high school division.

Grade Participation – Middle School Division

Q. When can a student begin participating as a member of a team in the middle school division?

A. No student in a grade below the 6th grade can practice or participate as a member of a team in the middle school division.

Age Limit – High School

1.

Q. Is a student whose nineteenth birthday falls on August 1 ineligible for participation in the high school division?

A. Yes, any student who becomes nineteen years of age on or before August 1 of any school year is ineligible.

2.

Q. If a student becomes nineteen years of age on August 2, or any date thereafter, is that student eligible to participate for the remainder of the school year?

A. Yes.

Age Limit – Middle School Division

1.

Q. Is a student whose fifteenth birthday falls on August 1 ineligible for participation in the middle school division?

A. Yes, any student who becomes fifteen years of age on or before August 1 of any school year is ineligible.

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2.

Q. If a student becomes fifteen years of age on August 2, or any date thereafter, is that student eligible to participate for the remainder of the school year?

A. Yes.

Physical Examination and Parental Consent

1.

Q. A student receives a pre-participation physical on May 1 of the current school year. How long is that physical valid for the purposes of the TSSAA Bylaws?

A. The physical would be valid for the following school year, through the summer, and up until the first official day of practice for fall sports the next school year.

2.

Q. A student who has not participated in sports during the current school year receives a pre-participation physical on April 1 in preparation for their school's spring football practice which begins on April 2. How long is that physical valid for the purposes of eligibility and the TSSAA Bylaws?

A. The physical would be valid for the current school year and the summer up until the first official day of practice for fall sports the next school year. The physical would not be valid for the next school year for the purposes of eligibility. Physicals must be dated on or after April 15 to be valid for the upcoming school year.

Students Changing Schools

1.

Q. A student changes school because of the death of his/her parents or guardians. The change is necessary in order for the student to have a home. Is he/she eligible?

A. Yes.

2.

Q. It becomes desirable for a student to live with his/her grandparents. The change in residence causes a change of school. If the grandparents are designated as the guardians of this student will the student be eligible to participate in athletics?

A. No, there has not been a bona fide change of residence by the entire family unit because only the student made the move to the grandparents residence.

3.

Q. If an athlete with an athletic record moves to live with a guardian other than a parent, is the student eligible for athletic participation?

A. Only if the student meets one of the provisions in Article II, Section 13.

4.

Q. A student without an athletic record moves to live with a guardian other than a parent. Is the student eligible?

A. Yes, provided the student meets all other eligibility requirements.

5.

Q. A student whose parents are divorced or separated (provided divorce papers have been signed and processed through the courts) participates in athletics at school A while residing with one parent. The student then transfers to school B where they are residing with the other parent. Is the student eligible to participate in athletics?

A. Yes, provided it is the first change from parent to parent since establishing an athletic record, there is a court-ordered custody change, and a letter from the principal of the student's former school indicating that the move was not for athletic reasons.

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6.

Q. A student whose parents are divorced or separated (provided divorce papers have been signed and processed through the courts) participates in athletics at school A while residing with one parent. The student then transfers to school B where they are residing with a guardian other than a parent. Is the student eligible to participate in athletics?

A. No. The student will be ineligible for 12 months past their last date of participation.

7.

Q. A student who has a record of participation the previous year in baseball only transfers to a nearby school without any change of residence on the part of the student's parents. Is that student eligible to participate in football or basketball?

A. Yes, provided they meet all other eligibility rules. However, the student may be ineligible in baseball for a period of 12 months from the last participation date in baseball.

8.

Q. A student transfers to a school because the student's parents have moved to the community in which the school is located. The student's scholastic and athletic records are satisfactory. May such a student be allowed to participate pending the approval of his/her transfer by the Executive Director?

A. No. All transfer students must be approved by the Executive Director before being allowed to participate.

9.

Q. If the parents of an athlete move from the territory in which the athlete has been attending school, may this student remain in the school to which he/she has been going and live with someone other than his/her parents without forfeiting his/her eligibility?

A. Yes, provided no "undue influence" has been used to cause the student to continue in the same school, and provided the parents pay the expenses incurred as a result of the student not living at home.

10.

Q. If an athlete's parents change residence after the beginning of the school year, must the athlete transfer immediately to the school serving the district into which his/her parents have moved?

A. No. The athlete may transfer to the new school without loss of eligibility at the time his/her parents move, at the end of the next grading period, at the end of the semester or at the beginning of the next school year. (If the athlete remains in his/her former school and participates in an athletic contest after his/her parents have moved, he/she cannot become eligible to participate in that sport in the second school until he/she has completed the report card period or the semester.)

11.

Q. What are guidelines that are used in determining whether a bona fide change of residence has taken place?

A. Some guidelines are, but not limited to:

1. Changing of mailing address 2. Disconnecting phone in previous residence 3. Disconnecting of utilities in previous residence 4. All furniture moved from previous residence 5. The original residence should be closed, rented, or disposed of and not used by family for an overnight stay. 6. Change of address with the DMV or Homeland Security.

12.

Q. A student transfers from School A to School B without a bona fide change in residence by the parents. The change is a result of school zone changes made by the local board of education. Is the student eligible?

A. Yes. Provided he/she meets all other eligibility requirements.

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13.

Q. An eighth grade student participates as a member of a high school or junior high school team. The next year the student transfers to another school without any change of residence on the part of his parents. Is the student eligible for athletic participation?

A. Not necessarily. The student is a transfer with an athletic record the previous year. The student must meet one of the transfer provisions contained in Article II, Section 13.

14.

Q. A student participates in basketball at school A. He changes to school B without a corresponding change of residence by the parents or meeting any other transfer provision, and wants to play basketball. Is he eligible?

A. No. A student will be ineligible at the varsity level for twelve months from his/her last participation date.

Example: A student last played basketball on January 16, 2025 at school A. That student would be eligible at school B on January 17, 2026.

15.

Q. A student with an athletic record transfers from school A to school B without a corresponding change of residence of his/her parents. After attending school B, the student returns to school A. Is the student eligible to participate at school A?

A. Yes, provided the student did not participate in contests or practice in any sport at any level at school B. This must be verified in writing by the administration of school B.

16.

Q. A student who transfers from school A to school B due to a bona fide change of residence by his/her parents is ruled eligible at school B and participates in athletics at school B. One month later the family of the student returns to the original residence where the student was attending school A. Is the student eligible to participate in athletics?

A. No. The student is ineligible to participate in athletics for twelve months from his/her last participation date, since the parents have returned to the original residence serving school A before the student has been enrolled in school B for one year.

17.

Q. What is meant by the term "system-wide" public school in the definition of "territory" as defined in the Definitions?

A. A system-wide public school is a school without geographic zones or bus routes that draws students throughout the school system. Examples of system-wide public schools are, but not limited to: Chattanooga School for the Arts & Sciences, Martin Luther King, the magnet portion of Liberty Technology High School, etc.

18.

Q. An international student attends a TSSAA school and lives with someone other than his/her parents. Is the student eligible?

A. Yes, provided the student meets all other eligibility requirements.

19.

Q. An international student is in a Foreign Exchange program approved by the CSIET. The student participates in athletics with a TSSAA school while living with one host parent then transfers to another school as a result of a change of host parents. Is the student eligible at the new school?

A. No. As a result of the change of guardians the student must now comply with Article II, Section 13 of the TSSAA Bylaws in the same manner as all other students.

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20.

Q. A student attending School A with an athletic record in basketball at School A is receiving individual instruction from a basketball coach at School B in the spring of the current school year. The student transfers to School B with a bona fide change of residence in August. Is the student eligible at School B?

A. The student is ineligible at School B in the sport of basketball. A coaching link exists in the previous 12 months, therefore the student is ineligible for twelve months in the sport where a link is present at all levels of competition.

21.

Q. A student attending School A with an athletic record in basketball at School A attends a summer team camp at School B. The student transfers to School B with a bona fide change of residence in August. Is the student eligible at School B?

A. The student is eligible at School B, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements. Attendance at a team camp where a coach from another school is present does not constitute a coaching link. Attendance at an individual camp where a coach from another school is present would constitute a coaching link and would render the student ineligible at all levels of competition.

22.

Q. A student attending School A with an athletic record plays on a softball team during the summer where an assistant coach at School B is serving as the summer softball team's head coach. The student transfers to School B with a bona fide change of residence prior to or during the following school year. Is the student eligible at School B?

A. The student is ineligible at School B in the sport of softball. A coaching link was established when the student played for the coach's summer softball team. If a coaching link exists in the previous 12 months, the student is ineligible in the sport where a link is present at all levels of competition.

23.

Q. A student attending School A has an athletic record in football, wrestling and soccer at School A. He is receiving strength and conditioning training during the summer from a personal trainer who happens to be the strength and conditioning coach at School B. The student transfers to School B with a bona fide change of residence the following school year. Is the student eligible at School B?

A. The student is ineligible at School B in all sports. A coaching link has been established in all sports since the strength and conditioning coach at School B works with all sports programs at School B.

24.

Q. A student attending School A was injured on September 10 in a varsity football game and was not able to participate in sports the rest of the school year. The student transfers to School B without meeting the provisions of Article II, Section 13 for an eligible transfer student at the beginning of the following school year. The student wants to play football, basketball, and baseball at school B. When is the student eligible at the varsity level in each sport, assuming that the student meets all other eligibility requirements?

A. The student will become eligible in football on September 11. The student will be eligible immediately in basketball and baseball. The student's participation in football does not impact their eligibility in baseball or basketball. Athletic records from each sport are treated independently of each other.

25.

Q. A student plays volleyball and establishes an athletic record at School A. At the end of the first semester, the family has a bona fide change of residence into another school zone where they reside for two months. She enrolls and attends School B. They then return to a residence in School A's zone and the student enrolls in School C. Is she eligible?

A. No. Since the student participated at School A within the past twelve months, she will be ineligible in volleyball twelve months past her last date of participation. Athletic eligibility is always based on what the student has done the past twelve months. In this case, the student participated for a member school in the same zone within the last twelve months. Therefore, the last move does not justify a change in schools.

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Non-Traditional Students

1.

Q. What types of home schools does TSSAA recognize for purposes of athletic eligibility?

A. TSSAA recognizes the following types of home schools: (1) Independent home schools operated pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. Section 49-6-3050; (2) Church-related umbrella schools operated pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. Section 49-50-801; or (3) Accredited online schools.

2.

Q. How is the tuition and financial aid rule applied to a non-traditional student who attends an independent school?

A. The student must pay full tuition at the independent school and meet the same financial aid requirements as a traditional student.

3.

Q. How is the academic rule applied to non-traditional students?

A. If the student is enrolled in a school or virtual program that awards traditional academic credits, then the student must earn credits in the same manner as traditional students under the Academic Rule. If the student is enrolled in a school or program that does not award traditional academic credits, then the student must achieve sufficient academic progress each semester to remain on track for graduation at the conclusion of four years from the beginning of his/her freshman year.

4.

Q. When must a non-traditional student notify a school of his/her intent to participate?

A. A student should notify the member school of his/her intent to participate before the first practice date in the sport.

5.

Q. How does the transfer rule apply to non-traditional students?

A. Once the student has an athletic record at a member school, eligibility following a change of schools is governed by the transfer rule.

Tuition and Financial Aid

1.

Q. Is it permissible for a school to employ a student for summer work who has not attended the school the previous year?

A. No. In order for a student, who will be participating in athletics, to be employed by a school during the summer the student must have attended the school the previous school year.

2.

Q. Can a Division II school employ student-athletes to “work off” tuition?

A. No. Article II, Section 16 of the TSSAA Bylaws sets forth the only means for reduction of tuition. A school may employ student-athletes as long as the remuneration or consideration for work is not in excess of the amount regularly paid for such service.

3.

Q. Must all financial aid to student-athletes be need-based?

A. Yes.

4.

Q. Who is allowed to pay a student-athlete’s tuition?

A. If tuition is charged, it must be paid by a parent, bona fide guardian, or other family member.

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5.

Q. Can TSSAA member schools participating in Division II offer particular groups of employees tuition discounts?

A. Yes, provided it is written into the school's policies. For example, schools may choose to offer a tuition discount to a specific group (all full-time faculty members, all non-faculty head coaches, all trainers, etc.). The discount **MUST** be given to **ALL** individuals in a particular category or else it will be considered financial aid.

Amateur Rule

1.

Q. Can an athlete post a link to a business they are receiving payment for sponsoring if there are references to the school in their social media profile where the link appears?

A. No. References to the school or pictures depicting the athlete in their uniform may not appear in the post containing a link to the sponsoring business.

2.

Q. Can a coach or other school official facilitate, coordinate, promote, or negotiate an NIL agreement for a student-athlete enrolled at his/her school?

A. No. A school can provide generic educational materials or advice regarding the factors that should be considered before entering into an NIL deal but should never be involved with coordinating, facilitating, promoting, or negotiating agreements for student-athletes.

3.

Q. Can a booster club or other school support organization make payment to a student-athlete for the use of his or her name, image, or likeness?

A. No. Payment from a school booster club could reasonably suggest the endorsement or sponsorship of the TSSAA school.

4.

Q. Can a school or school support organization distribute money for services to a student through a Name, Image Likeness Collective?

A. No. School association with a collective would be considered express or implied sponsorship or endorsement of the activity.

5.

Q. If an athlete wishes to give private lessons or run a mini camp using school facilities and advertises the lesson or camp, is he/she in violation of the Amateur Rule by mentioning the school as the host site in the advertisement?

A. Yes. Students may receive payment for activities not related to performance provided that they are carried out in a manner that does not suggest the endorsement or sponsorship of a TSSAA school. To avoid the inference or suggestion that the school endorses or sponsors the activity, the school should not be mentioned in the advertisement. The student may, of course, inform those who contact him or her about the location of the lessons or camp, but that location – if it is a member school – should not be mentioned in any advertisement. If a student is using a school's facility for instructional purposes, he or she should be treated the same as any member of the student population regarding usage agreements, fees, etc.

6.

Q. Are there limits as to how much an athlete can make from an endorsement or sponsorship?

A. No.

7.

Q. Are there limits as to how much an athlete can charge for giving lessons or putting on a camp?

A. No.

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8.

Q. Can a coach of a school assist an athlete who is giving lessons or putting on a camp?

A. No. A coach's assistance would reasonably suggest support or endorsement by the school.

9.

Q. Are there restrictions as to the types of businesses athletes can sign NIL agreements with?

A. Not at this time.

10.

Q. Would it be a violation if an athlete and his/her family were offered a residence as a result of an NIL agreement after he/she had enrolled in and attended a school?

A. This would be a recruiting violation if a school was involved.

11.

Q. Does a school have to document its athletes' NIL activities?

A. Not for the purposes of TSSAA. However, school officials may wish to maintain an awareness of those activities in order to ensure that the activities do not suggest the endorsement or sponsorship of the school.

12.

Q. If a coach is contacted by a community member seeking a pitcher/receiver/setter/etc. to provide lessons to their child, could the coach direct them to one of his/her players?

A. No. A coach directing someone to one of his/her players for this purpose would reasonably suggest endorsement or sponsorship of the school.

Award Rule

Q. If a student accepts a gift card or apparel from an outside entity during a camp, combine, showcase, etc., will he/she lose his/her eligibility?

A. No. Accepting these items from an outside source during a camp, combine, or showcase, etc., would not make a student ineligible. Bowling, golf and tennis students must abide by USBC, USGA, and USTA regulations in regards to accepting awards.

Independent-Game Participation – High School Division

1.

Q. Team A is eliminated in the district basketball tournament. May players on Team A participate in an independent game or tournament without endangering their eligibility?

A. The basketball season ends for any member school when the school is eliminated from tournament play. Students may participate in a game as members of independent teams in any sport after the season for that sport has closed without affecting their eligibility, provided the amateur rule is not violated.

2.

Q. A golfer wishes to participate in a club tournament during the golf season. Is this a violation of the independent rule?

A. No, provided the golfer participates as an individual and not as a member or representative of his/her school. The independent rule does not apply to sports with an individual championship (golf, tennis, bowling, wrestling, track and field, and cross country).

3.

Q. May a player participate in a game with an independent team after participating in a school contest at any level prior to the conclusion of the season?

A. No. The student shall be ineligible at the varsity level once TSSAA is made aware of the incident in the sport in which the violation occurs.

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4.

Q. Is it a violation for a registered athlete in baseball or softball to practice with an independent team?

A. No, provided the independent team is not scrimmaging another independent team as a part of their practice.

5.

Q. Is it a violation for a registered athlete in track or cross country to participate in a road race?

A. No. The independent rule does not apply to track and field or cross country.

6.

Q. A basketball player participates in an independent game and the school notifies the state office of the violation. What is the penalty for the student athlete?

A. The student will be ineligible at the varsity level for the remainder of the season.

7.

Q. What are some examples of scrimmage situations that would not be considered a violation of the Independent Game Participation Rule?

A. Following are two examples:

- 48 students are trying out for an AAU basketball, travel baseball or softball, club soccer or 7 on 7 football team. This group of students would be considered one team and could participate in scrimmage situations.
- 65 students are invited to a college university to practice with a college team. This group of students, along with the college students, would be considered one team and could participate in scrimmage situations.

Independent-Game Participation – Middle School Division

1.

Q. Team A is eliminated in the district basketball tournament. May players on Team A participate in an independent game or tournament without endangering their eligibility?

A. The basketball season ends for any member school when the school is eliminated from tournament play. Students may participate as members of independent teams in any sport after the season for that sport has closed without affecting their eligibility, provided the amateur rule is not violated.

2.

Q. May a player participate in a scrimmage, practice game or game with an independent team after being registered with TMSAA in basketball or football?

A. No. The student shall be ineligible immediately in the sport in which the violation occurs.

3.

Q. A basketball player participates in an independent game and the school notifies the state office of the violation. What is the penalty for the student athlete?

A. The student will be ineligible at the varsity level for the remainder of the season.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Q. If a school has a fan that is ejected in the first quarter of a basketball game and subsequently has a fan ejected in the fourth quarter of the same game, what is the monetary penalty to the school?

A. The school will be fined \$250 per occurrence for a total of \$500.

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Schools Which Member Schools May Play or Scrimmage

1.

Q. What schools may member high school division teams scrimmage during pre-season or play during regular season?

A. High school division teams may play or scrimmage the following:

1. Any school team with grades 9 and above.
2. An individual homeschooled student who might be invited to participate in a track meet, wrestling competition, golf competition, etc. This would primarily apply to individual sports.
3. A homeschool team in a team sport, such as basketball, baseball, softball, etc., where homeschooled students go together to form a cooperative team.

2.

Q. What schools may middle school division teams scrimmage during pre-season or play during regular season?

A. Middle school division teams may play or scrimmage the following:

1. Any middle school team with grades 6, 7, and 8.
2. An individual homeschooled student who might be invited to participate in a track meet, wrestling competition, golf competition, etc. This would primarily apply to individual sports.
3. A homeschool team in a team sport, such as basketball, baseball, softball, etc., where homeschooled students go together to form a cooperative team.

3.

Q. Who can a member school of TSSAA not play?

A. Any non-school team. Examples would be a club team, teams that are not recognized as a school team by the school/school system they represent, recreational park league team, or any type of independent team.

Contests and Tournaments with Out-Of-State Teams

Q. May a member school participate in tournaments or meets involving out-of-state teams that have not been sanctioned?

A. No. All tournaments or meets involving out-of-state teams must be sanctioned by TSSAA, the other state associations concerned, and the National Federation.

Varsity Teams

Q. Can a school's junior varsity team participate against another school's varsity team?

A. No. A game is either a varsity game for both teams, a junior varsity game for both teams, or a scrimmage for both teams. An exception may be made by the Executive Director when a school is beginning an athletic program.

TSSAA SPORTS CALENDAR

1.

Q. A coach has a weight lifting program at school during off-season and in the time permitted by the sports calendar. The program is open to both players and non-players. Is this a violation?

A. No, provided activities are limited to weight lifting, and provided no player is required to attend.

2.

Q. Can a coach have a conditioning program in the off season, provided it is not during the Dead Period?

A. Yes, provided it is a program that would benefit all students and is open to all players and non-players.

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3.

Q. May a school with grades 7-12, 8-12 or 9-12 have 12 days of varsity spring football practice and 12 days of freshman spring football practice?

A. No. A school may have only 12 days of off-season practice in football.

4.

Q. Is it permissible for a school to have try-outs before the first practice date?

A. Try-outs are considered practice. During the school-year try-outs can be held during anytime team practice is allowed and only students enrolled and in regular attendance at that school may participate. Try-outs may be held in the summer during the time outlined for practice in that sport.

5.

Q. In football, five schools come together on a Saturday for a five-way scrimmage on two practice fields. Team A is working a half line scrimmage against Team B, Team C is working 7-on-7 with secondary against quarterbacks and receivers, etc. Later in the day, Team B is scrimmaging Team A, B vs. C, etc. How would this be counted?

A. This is one scrimmage date. All schools would have either two scrimmages or one scrimmage date remaining in preseason.

6.

Q. Three schools go together for a three-way scrimmage with A vs. B, B vs. C, and C vs. A set up during the day. How would this be counted?

A. This is either two scrimmages for each team or one scrimmage date for each team. It really does not make any difference. All three schools would have either two scrimmages or one scrimmage date remaining in preseason.

7.

Q. School A and School B get together and set up a scrimmage with their two schools. During the scrimmage the freshman teams are working against each other at 2:00; the junior varsity teams are working against each other at 3:30; and the varsity teams come back that night and work against each other at 7:00. How would this be counted in preseason scrimmages.

A. This is one preseason scrimmage for both schools, provided all of the scrimmaging is at one site.

8.

Q. A school invites nine schools to participate in an all-day scrimmage on a Saturday. What can occur and how is this counted toward the scrimmage rule?

A. If any of the schools invited scrimmage more than one school, then it would count as a scrimmage date for that school and for all the schools that participate against more than one school in the all-day affair. The schools would then have either two scrimmages remaining or one scrimmage date.

There cannot be any tournament format set up or play that would reflect a regular season game. Preseason scrimmages are an extension of preseason practice and should be learning experiences for athletes and coaches as they prepare for regular season games.

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9.

Q. How many students may receive individual instructions during the pre-season and/or off-season?

- Outside of pre-season team practice in baseball and softball, individual instruction may be given to no more than five students per day.
- Outside of pre-season team practice in soccer, individual instruction may be given to no more than six students per day in soccer.
- Outside of off-season team practice in football and girls' soccer, individual instruction may be given to no more than six students per day.
- Outside of off-season team practice in basketball and girls' volleyball, individual instruction may be given to no more than three students per day.

IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW MANY COACHES YOU HAVE IN A PARTICULAR SPORT. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS THAT ARE ALLOWED TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN ABOVE.

10.

Q. Are school personnel/coaches permitted to coach non-school teams with players from their school in the preseason or offseason?

A. If the TSSAA sports calendar does not permit practice during the time of year that the non-school team is practicing or playing, then school personnel are not permitted to coach these teams regardless of how many or how few players from their school are participating for the non-school team.

11.

Q. Does the 50% rule apply to summer teams in any sport?

A. No. The 50% rule applies only to the following high school division sports: basketball, baseball, and softball and only from the beginning of the school year until the season begins in the sport involved.

12.

Q. School A has one gym and is scheduled to have volleyball practice until 6:00 PM. Can School A have Open Facilities for basketball beginning at 6:30 PM?

A. Yes. Open Facilities is permitted year round (Monday through Friday) except during the Dead Period. It does not have to occur immediately after the school day ends.

13.

Q. Can a school use their facilities during the Dead Period?

A. The Dead Period restricts students from having contact with staff members from their school. It does not restrict students from facilities unless the school staff is present at the activity.

Awards

1.

Q. Does TSSAA name All-District, All-Region, or All-State Teams?

A. No. These teams are normally selected by the coaches, the Tennessee Sports Writers Association, or the Associated Press.

2.

Q. From where/whom do middle school division tournament directors get the awards for their tournament?

A. Tournament Directors may contact Crown Awards to order awards. Their contact information is as follows: Crown Awards – (800) 542-6044

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Officials and Contracts with Officials

1.

Q. May a school use one or more non-registered officials in a contest provided the other officials are registered?

A. All football officials, including the clock operator, must be registered with TSSAA. All basketball officials, except the timer and scorer, must also be registered with TSSAA. All baseball and girls softball umpires must be registered with TSSAA; also wrestling, girls soccer, soccer, girls volleyball, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, girls flag football officials.

2.

Q. What is the penalty for using a non-registered football, basketball, wrestling, girls volleyball, girls soccer, soccer, girls softball or baseball official?

A. Schools using non-registered officials shall be fined \$15 for the first offense. Continued use of non-registered officials will subject the school to suspension or other penalty as determined by the Board of Control.

3.

Q. If a registered official has been employed but for some reason fails to appear, may a school use a non-registered official without being subject to any penalty?

A. Yes, provided the state office is notified in writing within 48 hours after the game is played. This report should give the name and address of the registered official who was employed to work the game and the reason for his/her failure to do so if known; also the name and address of the official who was used in place of the registered official.

4.

Q. What is the policy of TSSAA toward the decisions of officials?

A. The decisions of officials are accepted as final and binding.

5.

Q. May a school drop an official from the game after the official has been engaged?

A. Yes, if a school decides that it is wise to break its agreement with an official, it may be done by paying the official the regular fee for the game.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Classified Employees and Non-Faculty Coaches serving as Head Coaches

- _____ Must be approved by the principal, director of schools, and/or school board each year.
- _____ Must be submitted by the principal to TSSAA each year.
- _____ Must successfully complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses prior to his/her employment.*

Classified Employees and Non-Faculty Coaches serving as Assistant Coaches

- _____ Must be approved by the principal, director of schools, and/or school board each year.
- _____ Must be submitted by the principal to TSSAA each year.
- _____ Must successfully complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses prior to his/her employment.*

Retired Educators (five or more years of teaching experience) & **Full-Time Certified Teachers** (those who are currently teaching a minimum of 100 school days) are not considered non-faculty. These individuals have no other requirements. These individuals must be submitted by the principal to TSSAA each year.

**Coaches who have successfully completed the ASEP Coaches Education Course AND the TSSAA Online Coaches Training Session prior to May 15, 2013, will not be required to take the NFHS courses.*