

## RULES GOVERNING INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

### RULE 1 - AGE, PHYSICIAN AND PARENTS' CERTIFICATE

- Section 1. Any student who reaches his/her nineteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible for athletic competition. Any student who reaches his/her sixteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible if enrolled in the ninth grade or below. Any student who reaches his/her fifteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible for the eighth grade or below. Any student who reaches his/her fourteenth birthday before September 1 will not be eligible for the seventh grade or below. **Non-athletics:** Any student who reaches his twenty-first birthday before September 1 will not be eligible.
- Section 2. No student shall be eligible to represent his/her school in athletics until there is on file with the principal a physical examination and parental consent certificate. The form used shall contain the information on the standard OSSAA form. Other forms may be utilized, by the physician, physician's assistant, or the advanced practice nurse, if the information contained is compliant with the information on the OSSAA form. Any other information, depicting the athlete's previous history, can be added to this form for the purpose of clearance for athletic participation. A qualified physician, physician's assistant, or an advanced practice nurse covered by professional liability insurance shall give the physical examinations. If you have questions concerning the qualifications or the insurance coverage of a health care practitioner offering to give examinations, it is suggested that you check with your school district attorney for an opinion. Physical examinations are required for students each year. All physicals given for OSSAA participation must be given no earlier than May 1 of the preceding year in which the students are to participate and before the first day of practice in that student's particular sport. The physical will be valid from the date of the physical given until the next required physical. Parent(s) or guardian(s) must sign the parental consent form each year before the student participates in any organized athletic practice session including contest participation.
- Section 3. Each non-athletic activity organization which assists in the sponsorship of interscholastic activities may operate under a constitution, or set of rules, which complies with the Constitution and Rules of the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association. This constitution or set of rules should be approved by the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association.

### RULE 2 - ATTENDANCE

Daily attendance for each class period during the school day as well as the cumulative record of attendance for a semester shall be in accordance with local school district policy.

### RULE 3 - SCHOLASTIC ELIGIBILITY

OSSAA scholastic eligibility standards are required of all students engaging in co-curricular activity programs. Local school boards may make exception for only those students participating in non-competitive activities. (Board Policy)

#### Section 1. Semester Grades

- a. A student must have received a passing grade in any five subjects to be counted for graduation that he/she was enrolled in during the last semester he/she attended fifteen or more days. (This requirement would also be five school subjects for the 7th and 8th grade students.) For block schedules that offer 8 or more credits during an 18-week grading period, a student must earn 6 credits counted toward graduation during that 18-week grading period. (1 credit = 1/2 Carnegie Unit) (Trimester Eligibility – Refer to Board Policy XXXVIII)
- b. If a student does not meet the minimum scholastic standard he/she will not be eligible to participate during the first six weeks of the next 18-week grading period they attend.
- c. A student who does not meet the above minimum scholastic standard may regain his/her eligibility by achieving passing grades in all subjects he/she is enrolled in at the end of a six-week period.
- d. Pupils enrolled for the first time must comply with the same requirements of scholastic eligibility. The passing grades required for the preceding 18-week grading period should be obtained from the records in the school last attended.

NOTE: The Board of Directors may make exceptions to non-traditional structures. (Ex. block, trimester, etc.) (Trimester Eligibility – Refer to Board Policy XXXVIII)

- e. A non-senior student who drops a class after the first three weeks of the semester shall be ineligible for at least a three-week period. To regain eligibility after three weeks, the student must be enrolled in the minimum number of classes required for eligibility, and be passing all classes in which the student is enrolled. A senior student may drop a class at any time and maintain eligibility, provided that the dropped class is not required for graduation, and the student is still enrolled in the minimum number of classes required for eligibility and has passing grades in those classes.

An exception also is allowed for a student dropping an AP or honors-level course after the first three weeks of the semester. The student may maintain continued eligibility provided that (i) the student had a passing grade in the AP or honors-level course at the time of withdrawal; and (ii) the student enrolls in a non-AP or honors-level course in the same subject.

#### Section 2. Student Eligibility During a Semester

- a. Scholastic eligibility for students will be checked after three weeks (during the fourth week) of a semester and each succeeding week thereafter. Schools may choose to run eligibility checks on any day of the week. The period of probation and ineligibility will always begin the Monday following the day eligibility is checked. Methods should be devised to check weekly grades of Career-Tech students and all concurrently enrolled students. For block scheduling, scholastic eligibility will be checked after two weeks (during third week) of the first and third blocks and each succeeding week thereafter and at the end of the first week of the second and fourth blocks and each succeeding week thereafter. Schools may choose to run eligibility checks on any day of the week. The period of probation and ineligibility will always begin the Monday following the day eligibility is checked.
- b. A student must be passing in all subjects he/she is enrolled in during a semester. If a student is not passing all subjects enrolled in on the day of the grade check, he/she will be placed on probation for the next one-week period. If a student is still failing one or more classes during the next week on the grade check day, he/she will be ineligible to participate during the next one-week period. The ineligibility periods will begin on Monday and end on Sunday.
- c. A student who has lost eligibility under this provision must be passing all subjects in order to regain eligibility. A student regains eligibility under Rule 3 with the first class of the new one-week period (Monday through Sunday).
- d. "Passing grade" means work of such character that credit would be entered on the records were the semester to close at that time.  
(Trimester Eligibility – Refer to Board Policy XXXVIII)

#### Section 3. Special Provisions

- a. A senior student maintains eligibility by passing the classes required for graduation. The number of classes which a student is enrolled can be no less than four. (For block and trimester exceptions contact the OSSAA office.) A junior or senior student who is concurrently enrolled in high school and college may use the college courses to meet the minimum number of subjects needed to maintain eligibility. These may be a combination of high school and college subjects equivalent to four high school units which are accepted by the Oklahoma State Department of Education.
- b. An ineligible student who changes schools during a semester will not be eligible at the new school for a minimum period of three weeks. A student may regain his/her eligibility by achieving the scholastic standard in Rule 3, Section 2-b at the end of a three-week period. (Any part of a week is considered a full week.)
- c. Incomplete grades will be considered to be the same as failing grades in determining scholastic eligibility. School administrators are authorized to make an exception to this provision if the incomplete grade was caused by an unavoidable hardship. (Examples of such hardships would be illness, injury, death in family and natural disaster.) A maximum of two weeks is allowed for make-up work.
- d. One summer school credit (1/2 unit or one subject) earned in an Oklahoma State Department of Education accredited program may be used to meet the requirements of Rule 3, Section 1-a, for the end of spring semester.

#### Section 4. Students With Individualized Education Programs or Plans in Special Education Classes

A student, who is enrolled in special education classes, and has an individualized Education Program or Plan (IEP) who does not meet the above eligibility requirements may be permitted to participate under this rule, if the student has been certified by the member school principal as doing a quality of work consistent with the expectations and objective of the Plan.

**The following list addresses frequently asked questions regarding the Academic Rule.**

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. Does physical education and competitive athletics count toward the semester grades if a student has already been given two credits as a freshman and sophomore?  
*Answer:* Yes. Local regulations could bring about inconsistencies if ruled on otherwise.
2. May physical education or competitive athletics be counted if the school only gives one-fourth credit per semester?  
*Answer:* Yes.

3. When does a student become eligible after passing only four solid subjects in the spring semester?  
*Answer:* The end of the six week's period during the next semester (student becomes eligible with first hour of class on the seventh week) if the student is passing all subjects enrolled in on a week to week to basis. Note: Any part of a week will count as a full week when school ends that week.
4. May a student participate while on probation?  
*Answer:* Yes.
5. Is a student on probation for two consecutive weeks when he/she fails a course one-week and a different course the following week?  
*Answer:* No. The student would be ineligible the second week as it is impossible to be on probation two consecutive weeks.
6. Is there a limit to the number of probationary weeks a student may have during a semester?  
*Answer:* No, except for the fact that probation cannot occur on two consecutive weeks.
7. Does the scholastic eligibility rule apply to students in music, speech, FFA, VICA, DECA, and cheerleading, etc.?  
*Answer:* Yes. If the student is involved in an activity that involves competition between two or more schools. No exceptions when competition is involved.
8. Does the weekly grade check apply to the grades a student made during a one-week period of time?  
*Answer:* No. The key to understanding this portion of the rule is to ask the following question: Would this student be passing if you had to give him/her a semester grade today? (The weekly grade check is for the cumulative grade a student has earned for all of the time he/she has been in school during a semester.)
9. If a school checks grades on Friday and a student shows up as failing a class would he/she be eligible to participate on that Friday night?  
*Answer:* Yes. The rule defines the period of ineligibility as beginning the Monday following the day grades are checked and continuing through the next Sunday.
10. If a student is serving a week of ineligibility and makes up a test on Thursday would they be eligible to participate on Friday?  
*Answer:* No. Once a student becomes ineligible he/she will remain ineligible for a period defined by the rule to be from a Monday through the next Sunday.
11. If a student is ineligible to start the next semester and our school begins its semester on a Thursday, does the first two days that first week count as a complete week?  
*Answer:* Yes. For the purpose of determining the end of an ineligibility period, if any part of a semester falls with a calendar week that will be considered a full week.
12. If a senior only needs two credits to graduate, can they maintain eligibility by only passing two classes?  
*Answer:* Yes, if the student is passing the two required for graduation and is enrolled in four or more classes. P.E. may be counted toward the four.
13. How is a student's eligibility affected when dropping a class?  
*Answer:* If a student drops a class after the first three weeks of the semester he/she will be ineligible for a three-week period. In order to regain eligibility a student must be passing all subjects and complying with Rule 3, Section 2-b. (Exception: A senior can be enrolled in no less than four subjects.)  
An exception is allowed for a student who enrolled in an AP or honors-level course and wishes to drop that course. A student dropping an AP or honors-level course after the first three weeks of the semester may maintain continued eligibility provided that (i) the student had a passing grade in the AP or honors-level course at the time of withdrawal; and (ii) the student enrolls in a non-AP or honors-level course in the same subject.
14. Does the academic rule apply to junior high schools?  
*Answer:* Yes, the only difference is the interpretation of the classes that can be counted for eligibility. Since 7th and 8th grade courses are not counted for graduation, individual schools can count any of the classes they have in their curriculum offerings.

15. If a school adopts a more restrictive rule, such as requiring a grade of "C" in every class, would the school still be required to do a weekly grade check?  
**Answer:** Yes, the rules of the OSSAA allow a school to have rules that are more restrictive than the OSSAA's and while the above question reflects a more restrictive rule on grade requirements; it is less restrictive in terms of enforcement.
16. If a senior is taking three classes at our school and two classes at a nearby college must he/she be passing all five classes to maintain eligibility?  
**Answer:** No. If the student only needs the three classes that he/she is taking at the high school to graduate, the only classes that would be used to determine eligibility would be the three taken at the high school. The concurrent enrollments in college courses meet the requirements of taking a minimum of four classes.
17. If, when the semester ends, a student passed five subjects counted for graduation and if that student was ineligible due to the week-to-week grade check, is that student eligible before the next semester begins?  
**Answer:** Yes, when a student passes five subjects counted for graduation, he/she becomes eligible on the Monday following the close of the previous semester.
18. If a student's ineligibility period, due to the week-to-week grade check, is scheduled to begin during the Christmas or spring breaks, what is the student's eligibility status during the breaks and the week following the breaks?  
**Answer:** The student would retain the same status for both weeks. Exception: If contests are scheduled during the breaks which would cause the student to miss contests two weeks in a row, the school may ask the OSSAA office for a waiver.
19. What is the eligibility status of a student when a meet, contest or tournament was originally scheduled, but the status changes during the next week when a meet, contest, or tournament is rescheduled because of inclement weather?  
**Answer:** A student's current eligibility status would not change if an OSSAA event (Note: playoff contest only) were delayed into the next week due to inclement weather or other extreme circumstances.
20. May a weekly grade check begin three weeks prior to the opening of the activity for the purpose of eligibility during a semester?  
**Answer:** Yes. If an activity begins later than three weeks after the beginning of a semester the first grade check should be taken 3 weeks prior to participation.
21. If a senior passed five subjects at the end of the semester but failed one subject that was required for graduation, is that student eligible?  
**Answer:** No. Seniors must pass all subjects required for graduation. A senior would be ineligible for six weeks.
22. Are member schools with students enrolled in CareerTech or concurrently enrolled in college courses required to receive documentation of the student's grades prior to being allowed to participate for the purpose of maintaining week to week or semester eligibility?  
**Answer:** Yes. Students must be passing weekly as well as passing all required courses at the end of a semester, inclusive of CareerTech or concurrent enrollment courses.

Section 5. Stock Shows, etc.

- a. Individuals who have been declared ineligible to participate in extra-curricular activities by their local school administration will be declared ineligible to participate in this show.
- b. Individuals who are eligible on the first day of the show will be considered eligible through the duration of the show. Similarly, individuals who are ineligible on the first day of the show will be considered ineligible through the duration of the show.
- c. If an exhibitor is ineligible to participate in the show for any reason, including rules of the Oklahoma Secondary School Activities Association, the animals owned by the exhibitor are also ineligible for the show.
- d. Ineligible individuals who participate in the show will forfeit all show and/or sale premiums and awards; and will be subject to disciplinary action as provided by the local school policies.
- e. It will be the responsibility of the local school administration to notify the student's family and the show management or OSSAA if a particular student is ineligible to participate.

**RULE 4 - CONDUCT OF STUDENTS**

## Section 1.

- a. A student who is under discipline or who is suspended from school or an activity shall be ineligible until reinstated by the school principal.
- b. A student who is disqualified during a game or contest because of a flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct shall be ineligible. A disqualified student shall remain ineligible for at least one contest before he/she is reinstated by the principal. A student whose flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct consists of fighting, cursing or using foul language toward a game official will be automatically suspended from participating in a minimum of the next two regularly scheduled games or contests on the same level of competition that his/her team plays. (Exception: See Soccer) Fighting is defined, but is not limited to, any player or non-player (bench personnel) striking an opponent with arm(s), leg(s), foot (feet), or other object(s), attempting to strike an opponent with arm(s), leg(s), foot (feet), or other object(s) regardless if there is contact with an opponent, biting, or instigating a fight by committing an act(s) that causes an opponent to retaliate by fighting related to an OSSAA sponsored activity in which the players and non-players are participating. A player or non-player who retaliates by fighting is in violation of the fighting rule. The fighting rule will apply to pre-contest and post-contest sponsored activities. It is mandatory that all head coaches remind his/her team that fighting during the post-game hand shaking ceremonies or conducting themselves in an unsportsmanlike manner after the game will be severely penalized. The head coach and team will be subject to additional suspension penalties beyond the normal penalties imposed on fighting and unsportsmanlike acts that occur during the contest. Injuries have occurred because of fans climbing over walls and fences, being trampled, or partaking in dog-pile celebrations, etc., at the conclusion of a contest. The celebration by fans, players, or coaches acting in an unsportsmanlike manner (example: pouring water on the coach) after a contest will result in possible penalties imposed against the school. School administrators should be aware that if their student body and fans come onto the playing area after a contest, penalties may be imposed.

Any substitute or team member who leaves the team bench (football player leaving the team box, baseball or softball player leaving the dugout, basketball player or wrestler leaving the team bench, etc.) and enters the playing area during a fight or any other serious unsportsmanlike act shall be ejected. Those players or team members identified by game officials, school administrators, or videotape will be suspended a minimum of one game if they were not involved in the altercation and a minimum of two games (exception: soccer) if they were involved in the altercation. This rule applies to both regular season and play-off games. The suspension applies to individuals/teams on the same level of competition; i.e., varsity to a varsity game, junior varsity to a junior varsity game, etc. Any additional penalties by the National Federation Rule Book and the OSSAA Rules and Regulations Handbook would also apply. The rule would apply to all OSSAA sponsored activities. Any student involved directly or indirectly for fighting or any other serious unsportsmanlike act a second time during the season shall be suspended for the remainder of the season.

- c. Students ineligible under (a) or (b) are not eligible until reinstated by the principal after the minimum penalty is enforced.
- d. A disqualified student shall be ineligible until reinstated by the principal and a written report of details of the incident and action taken has been filed with the Executive Director for review with the Board of Directors.
- e. If a student who is ineligible under (a) or (b) transfers, the sending school principal **shall** notify the principal of the receiving school (School Law, Section 488.3). The receiving school must require an *OSSAA Eligibility Record Form* (OSSAA Rule 9) to ensure compliance with this section.
- f. Any student currently suspended from an activity or expelled from school who enrolls in another school will be ineligible for the duration of the original suspension or expulsion or until reinstated by the OSSAA Board of Directors.

Section 2. No person shall enter a contest under an assumed name.

Section 3. Any pupil who is a member of an organization in violation of the State Law of Oklahoma or the regulations of any local Board of Education is not eligible. Any school violating this rule will be subject to suspension for a period of one year.

**RULE 5 - AMATEURISM AND AWARDS (DOES NOT APPLY TO NON-ATHLETICS)**

## Section 1.

- a. This Association endorses the general principle of amateur athletics that prompts an individual to participate in physical activity solely for personal pleasure and satisfaction and for physical, mental, social and moral benefits derived from the activity.
- b. In order that students may retain their amateur standings and be eligible to participate in high school, college, national, and international amateur athletics, it shall be the duty of the principal to instruct the students as to how

they may avoid jeopardizing their eligibility. A student should be advised not to use his or her knowledge or skill of athletics or reputation as an athlete for financial gain. A student should be advised not to participate in physical activities with professionals or where professionalism is practiced--that is, where individuals are being compensated directly or indirectly for their participation; or where teams or their sponsors are compensated or reimbursed on a win or lose basis; or where cash or merchandise prizes other than medals or trophies are offered, given, or paid to individuals or to teams. A prize is any article that is to be given as an inducement to participate or an article competed for.

- c. The exceptions and provisos given in the remaining sections of this rule are to apply only to eligibility for participation as a representative of a member school of this Association.

#### Section 2.

- a. A student is not eligible to participate in interscholastic contests in any sport in which he/she has used his/her knowledge or skill for financial gain. An athlete forfeits amateur status in a sport by:
  - (1) Competing for money or other monetary compensation (allowable travel, meals and lodging expenses may be acceptable.)
  - (2) Receiving any award or prize of monetary value which has not been approved by his/her state association.
  - (3) Capitalizing on athletic fame by receiving money or gifts of monetary value (scholarships given by institutions of higher learning are specifically exempted).
  - (4) Signing a professional playing contract in that sport.
- b. Accepting a nominal, standard fee or salary for instruction, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation, playground, or camp activities shall not jeopardize amateur status. "Organized youth sports program" includes both school and non-school programs. Compensation for giving private lessons is permissible if approved by the state association.
- c. A student athlete who loses amateur status may apply to his/her state high school association for reinstatement in the interscholastic program after a waiting period to be determined by that state association.
- d. Only awards of no intrinsic value and approved by his/her state high school association may be accepted by a school student-athlete as a result of participation in school or non-school competition in a sport recognized by that state association.

#### Section 3.

Any student who shall appear on a bout or card for wrestling, if on the same card or bout a professional appeared, or who participated in any athletic contest where cash or merchandise is offered, given or paid to his/her team or individual members of his/her team, shall be ineligible for interscholastic contests in the sport in which he/she participated or appeared until such time as it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Board that he/she did not receive cash or merchandise prizes or gifts because of such participation. If a student has appeared in a wrestling match where a professional appeared or has received a merchandise prize or gift, and refrains from further violations of the rules of the Association and forfeits one year's eligibility, he/she may be reinstated by the Board of Directors.

A student will not be made ineligible should the manager of the team accept gate receipts provided division of receipts does not depend upon the results of the contest and provided such receipts are used to defray team expenses such as playing equipment, care of injuries, team transportation, hotel and meals while playing away from home, and that no member of the team is given or paid an allowance for individual expenses or is compensated at any time for his/her services as a player on this team during the season. This rule does prohibit a student entering a contest where cash or merchandise prizes that are offered, given or paid to his/her team or individual members of his/her team. War savings stamps and bonds are classed as cash or merchandise prizes that are offered, given or paid to his/her team or individual members of his/her team. This does not prohibit prizes such as a loving cup, medal or similar trophy.

#### Section 4.

- a. No monetary awards or prizes other than medals, plaques, rings or trophies of any nature shall be given to or accepted by students in recognition of participation, attainment or honor because of participation in interscholastic athletics except those given by the school, the Association, a conference, the sponsors of an approved meet or tournament, and to outstanding senior athletes upon approval by the principal. This does not prohibit donations to the sponsors of the meet or tournament or the school for the purpose of purchasing such awards.
- b. Medals and trophies may be offered as prizes in conferences or other athletic events involving competition among several schools or intramural competition within the school, and arrangements for such prizes must be made in advance by the organization sponsoring the event so that all may have the same opportunity of qualifying as the winner of the prize.
- c. Courtesies extended to teams in recognition of their participation, attainment or honor given because of their participating in interscholastic athletics, such as banquets, entertainments and trips, may be accepted by the team with the approval of the principal.

- d. Any member of the Association which violated this rule shall be liable for suspension from the Association for one year. Any individual player violating the provisions of this rule shall be ineligible for one year.
- e. "Award", as used in this rule, means any article symbolic of an honor or attainment which was not offered as an inducement for participation or as an article to be competed for which competition is held. "Prize," as used in this rule, means anything competed for or offered as an inducement for participation.
- f. Members of the team and other school groups are not to raise funds through benefits such as dances, shows, donations, sale of refreshments, etc., to be used in the purchase of awards or prizes other than those specified in this rule. Any individual, organization, or group utilizing students in activities to raise funds will be considered a school group.
- g. A general award open to the outstanding boy or girl athlete may be made each school year and it is suggested that scholarship, sportsmanship, leadership, character and team play be considered in making the award.
- h. Students may receive one award per year such as a ring or jacket through the school. Any additional awards from non-attached school individuals or groups must be approved by the principal.

## **RULE 6 - GRADUATED STUDENTS**

### Section 1.

- a. A student who has completed all requirements for high school graduation in an Oklahoma school district and who has graduated from high school or its equivalent shall be considered a graduate and not eligible for competition. Check with OSSAA for GED exception. (For foreign students refer to foreign exchange eligibility.)
- b. Members in good standing in local FFA chapters, 4-H clubs, or FCCLA who have graduated may continue to represent that school in chapters or club activities as the rules of the respective state organization permit.

Section 2. A student, who has a total of semesters' credits equal to the amount for which a school of less than eighteen units is accredited, or who participates in the graduation exercises, is not eligible at any school of equal rank.

## **RULE 7 – PARTICIPATION**

Section 1. After a student begins attending the seventh grade, that student generally is limited to participating in athletics during that school year and the five school years that follow consecutively after that school year. The student is permitted to participate in athletics at the ninth grade level or below during the seventh grade school year and eighth grade school year, but is not permitted to participate in athletic activities open to students in grades nine through twelve unless approved to participate at that level by OSSAA's Board of Directors.

A student at the ninth grade level may be permitted to participate with seventh and eighth grade students in junior high athletic competition, and also may be permitted to participate in varsity or junior varsity athletic competition open to students in grades nine through twelve. A student must have completed the eighth grade to participate in varsity or junior varsity athletic competition open to students in grades nine through twelve, unless approved to participate at that level by OSSAA's Board of Directors. After a student begins attending the ninth grade, that student generally is limited to participating in athletics during that school year and the three school years that follow consecutively after that school year.

These limitations apply even if the student does not actually participate in athletics in the initial seventh grade school year or in any of the subsequent school years in which the student is permitted to participate. Certain exceptions are permitted under this Rule and Rule 20 which may allow a student to participate in an additional school year. Otherwise these limitations apply even if the student:

- i) fails to complete a grade after beginning at that grade level;
- ii) is held back from advancing a grade level;
- iii) is moved from a higher to a lower grade level; or
- iv) has moved or transferred from another school, regardless of the grade in which the student has been enrolled.

Section 2. A student shall be deemed to have begun attending a grade level after attending all or part of fifteen separate days at that grade level at any school, or after participating in an interscholastic contest, including an interschool scrimmage, while at that grade level.

A student shall be considered to have participated when the student has appeared in uniform at an interscholastic contest, including an interschool scrimmage, regardless of whether the student physically participates during the contest.

Section 3. A student who is repeating all or a portion of the seventh or eighth grade is not permitted to participate in athletics during that repeat period, even if the student has moved or transferred to another school for that repeat period, and even if the student did not participate at that grade level previously.

If the student completes a repeat period while at the seventh or eighth grade levels and sits out of athletics during that repeat period, then that repeat period is not counted against the six consecutive school years in which athletic participation is allowed under section 1 above.

Section 4. Students in the seventh and eighth grades may represent a member school in non-athletic activities if permitted by the rules governing that specific activity, including during a repeat period at those grade levels.

The ninth grade year will count as one year against the six consecutive school years in which participation generally is allowed under section 1 above, regardless of whether that student participates during that school year in junior high athletic competition or in competition open to students in grades nine through twelve, or both.

A student repeating all or a portion of the ninth grade level or above is permitted to participate during that repeat period in varsity or junior varsity competition open to students in grades nine through twelve. That repeat period in the ninth grade or above is counted against the six consecutive school years in which athletic participation is allowed under section 1 above, and sitting out of athletics during that repeat period does not extend the limits on participation stated in that section.

Section 5. After a student has begun the ninth grade the periods of participation permitted under section 1 above may not be extended, unless that student demonstrates that circumstances beyond the control of the student and the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) arose which prevented the student from completing work necessary to advance to the next grade level and make normal progress toward graduation. Criteria shall be established by OSSAA's Board of Directors consistent with this Rule and Rule 20 for determining any request for an additional period of participation.

Section 6. If a student is determined to have participated in athletic contests for a member school while ineligible, then the student shall be required to sit out of the same number of contests in the same sport in which the student participated while ineligible.

If the student participated while ineligible in more contests than are remaining in that sport for that school year, then the student would sit out of games in that sport during the following season until the student has sat out the same number of contests.

If the ineligible participation is not discovered until after the season is completed, then the student shall be required to sit out for the same number of contests in the same sport during the following year.

If the student is a senior or does not participate in the same sport in the following season, then the student would be required to sit out for an equivalent portion of the season in the next athletic activity in which that student participates. For example, if a senior is determined to have been ineligible for three of a total of twelve varsity football games in which the student's school participated that year, and the senior then was participating in varsity basketball for the school, then the senior must sit out of the next 25% of the varsity basketball games scheduled that season.

Regular season tournaments, and individual playoff contests or tournaments leading up to a state championship, shall be included when determining how long a student must sit out due to participation while ineligible.

Section 7. After a student has participated as a representative of one member school in a playoff contest or tournament leading up to a state championship, that student shall not under any circumstances be eligible to compete for another member school in that same series of playoffs or tournaments leading up to a state championship for that same school year.



Section 8. A student who has participated at the college or professional level in any of the same athletic activities regulated by OSSAA on behalf of its member schools shall not be permitted to participate for or against member schools in that same activity. A student may be permitted to participate in athletic contests leading to and including the Olympics and similar national or international competitions without losing eligibility, with the approval of OSSAA's Board of Directors.

### **RULE 8 – ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

Section 1. To be eligible to participate in athletics, the student must be residing with the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student). The student must also be lawfully enrolled at a secondary school grade level (grades seven through twelve) in a member public school district or at a member school, in courses, activities, or alternative programs in which credits are being earned and appropriate academic progress is being made toward graduation, consistent with the requirements of that school and the State Department of Education. The student must also comply with all requirements established by the member public school district or the member school and by OSSAA Rules and Policies concerning enrollment, age, attendance, grades, academic progress, and conduct.

Section 2. Eligibility for Athletics in Grades Seven and Eight

- a. A student in the seventh or eighth grade lawfully enrolled in a member public school district or at a member non-public school is eligible unless: (i) the student is repeating all or any part of the seventh or eighth grade, or (ii) the student has been influenced to remain at a school or change schools for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9.
- b. Before allowing participation beginning in the seventh grade and after any change of schools in the seventh or eighth grades, an Eligibility Record Form (or "New Student" Form) must be completed. A student in the seventh or eighth grade is not eligible to participate in varsity competition, and is limited to participating with students at the ninth grade level or below.
- c. A student repeating all or any part of the seventh or eighth grade in a member public school district or at a member school will not be eligible during the repeat period.
- d. Whenever a student is found to have participated in any contests in a particular activity during a repeat seventh or eighth grade period in a member public school district or at a member non-public school, the student will be immediately ineligible for that activity.

To regain eligibility for that activity, the student must sit out of one contest in that activity for each contest in that activity in which the student participated during the repeat period. The student will be eligible at the conclusion of this sit-out period, provided the student is in compliance with all other OSSAA Rules and Policies at that time.

If a student participated during a repeat period while attending a non-member school that allowed participation during the repeat period, and the student then moves to a member school, the student may be eligible immediately, but the repeat participation period will be counted toward the overall limit of six consecutive years allowed under OSSAA Rule 7 once a student first begins the seventh grade. A member school should contact the OSSAA staff with questions concerning any student who participated in athletics during a repeat seventh or eighth grade period at a non-member school.

Section 3. Establishing Athletic Eligibility by Initial Participation for Students in Grades Nine Through Twelve

- a. For grades nine through twelve, a student establishes eligibility at a school when the student first participates in interscholastic athletics at the ninth grade level or above.
- b. Before initial participation for a member school at the ninth grade level or above is permitted, an Eligibility Record Form (or "New Student" Form) must be completed. The member school also must verify the student presently is residing with the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student), and is eligible to participate under all OSSAA Rules and Policies. The member school further must review the student's prior school records to determine whether the student has participated previously at any secondary school grade level (grades seven to twelve) and the secondary school grade levels previously attended. If, after investigation, the member school still has a question about the student's eligibility, the member school must contact OSSAA staff to resolve the question before allowing participation.
- c. A student who was regularly residing with the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) but then attends a member school and resides during the school week or school term in residential facilities provided by the school, may establish athletic eligibility by first participation at that school under this section. The student in these circumstances is considered to be continuing to reside with the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) for purposes of this section.

- d. A student will not be eligible for initial participation at the ninth grade level or above if the student has been influenced to enroll, transfer to, or remain at the student's present school for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9. A student suspected of having been influenced to remain at or change schools for athletic purposes in violation of Rule 9 will not be permitted to participate in athletics until an investigation has been completed, a written report has been provided to or completed by OSSAA, and the student has been approved to participate by OSSAA.
- e. A student will not be eligible for initial participation at the ninth grade level or above if the student has changed schools, and the student was or would have been ineligible for athletics, or was threatened with ineligibility, at the student's prior school. Any issue concerning the student's eligibility at the student's prior school must be resolved before the student is allowed to participate at the student's current school.
- f. If the member school finds that a student repeated all or any portion of a prior secondary grade level, the member school must determine whether or not the student participated in any athletic activities during the repeat period. Repeating all or any part of a secondary school grade level and participating during a repeat period affects a student's athletic eligibility under OSSAA Rules.
- g. Once athletic eligibility has been established by initial participation at the ninth grade level or above, the student is eligible to participate with students at the ninth grade level or below, or with students in grades ten through twelve, provided that the student and the school each is in compliance with all other OSSAA Rules and Policies concerning eligibility.

Section 4. Determining Athletic Eligibility of Students Moving From Out of State After Participating in the Ninth Grade or Above

- a. A student moving from out of state to Oklahoma after participating previously in athletics at the ninth grade level or above generally is eligible at a member public school in the public school district, or at a member non-public school in that school's designated geographic area, in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are bona fide residents. The designated geographic areas for member non-public schools are set forth in Board Policy XLIII.
- b. If the student moving from out of state instead attends a member school outside the public school district or designated geographic area in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are bona fide residents, the student generally is not eligible immediately to participate in athletics. To become eligible, the student must wait a period of one year from the date of first attendance, unless the student applies and receives approval for an exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance pursuant to Section 10 below.

Section 5. Continued Eligibility after Separation, Divorce or Death of Student's Parents, or Appointment of Guardian

A student's athletic eligibility continues at the school at which eligibility already has been established in grades nine through twelve in the event of a separation, divorce, or death of the parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student), or the appointment of a guardian for the student. For athletic eligibility to be established at a different member school, an exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance must be requested and granted, pursuant to Section 10 below.

Section 6. Impact of Changing Schools or Changing Residence on Eligibility

a. Minimum Fifteen-Day Waiting Period When Changing Schools after the Student Has First Participated or Started Attending School

If a student at any secondary school grade level changes schools after the student has first participated or started attending school in the current school year, the student will not be permitted to participate in any athletic competition until at least fifteen (15) calendar days have passed from the date the student first attended the new school. This non-participation period allows time for the receiving school:

- (i) to obtain all necessary records from the school previously attended;
- (ii) to complete an Eligibility Record Form and to submit all forms, reports, and supporting documents that may be required to the OSSAA;
- (iii) to confirm that the student has not repeated all or any part of a secondary school grade level, and that the student was or would have been eligible if the student had remained at the prior school;
- (iv) if the student is changing schools because of a change of residence, to confirm that a bona fide change of residence has been made;
- (v) to investigate any concern that the student changed schools for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9.

If the required process has not been completed, or if a waiver request to OSSAA is required but has not yet been approved, then the student should not be permitted to participate until the required process is completed or, if a waiver request is required, until the waiver request has been approved.

- b. Participation Not Permitted in Championship Event If Student Changes Schools Within Fifteen Days of Event  
If a student changes schools during the school year and was enrolled at the new school within fifteen (15) calendar days of or after the commencement of a tournament, meet or playoff contests leading to a state championship in a particular sport, the student shall not be permitted to participate in the tournament, meet, or playoffs in that sport.
- c. Effect of Ineligibility at Previous School  
A student changing schools who was ineligible or otherwise barred from athletics for any reason at the time the student left the previous school, or who would have become ineligible if the student had remained at the previous school, is not permitted to participate in athletics at the student's current school, unless and until the student satisfies or complies with the requirements that were or would have been imposed for reinstating eligibility at the previous school.
- d. Eligibility after Transfer of Schools During Grades Nine through Twelve  
A student who established athletic eligibility at a school during grades nine through twelve and then transfers to a member school is not eligible for a period of one year from the date of first attendance at the new school, unless the student applies for and is granted an exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance pursuant to Section 10 below.  
This requirement applies even when the student is transferring from a non-member school to a member school. This requirement also applies when the student is transferring to a school that provides residential facilities for students, regardless of whether the student is residing in those facilities.
- e. Impacts of Change of Residence in Grades Nine through Twelve
- (1) Effect of Change of Residence After Eligibility Has Been Established According to Residence  
When a student has established athletic eligibility at a member school in the public school district in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are residing, and the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) move to a residence in a different public school district, then the student may:
- (i) enroll and establish eligibility at a member school in the public school district in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are presently residing; or
  - (ii) enroll and establish eligibility at a member non-public school if the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are residing in the designated geographic area for that school; or
  - (iii) remain and continue to be eligible at the member school previously attended, provided that the student continues to live with the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) and has been lawfully accepted as a transfer student following the change of residence.
- If the change of residence to a different school district occurs during the school year, the student may remain at the school at which eligibility is established until the end of the semester or equivalent period and continue to be eligible for that period. At the end of that period, the student then must elect one of the options above to re-establish eligibility.
- (2) Effect of Change of Residence After Eligibility Has Been Established Outside the Student's District of Residence or at a Non-Public School  
When a student has established athletic eligibility at a school outside of the public school district in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are residing, or at any non-public school, the student's eligibility continues at that same school if the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student), move to a different residence in the same public school district in which they previously were residing. If the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) move to a residence outside of that public school district, then the student may:
- (i) enroll and establish eligibility at a member school in the public school district in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are presently residing; or
  - (ii) enroll and establish eligibility at a member non-public school if the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) are residing in the designated geographic area for that school, or
  - (iii) remain and continue to be eligible at the member school previously attended, provided that the student continues to live with the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) and has been lawfully accepted as a transfer student following the change of residence.

If the change of residence to a different school district occurs during the school year, the student may remain at the school at which eligibility is established until the end of the semester or equivalent period and continue to be eligible for that period. At the end of that period, the student then must elect one of the options above to re-establish eligibility.

- (3) For athletic eligibility to be established at a different member school than described in subparagraphs (1) and (2) above, an exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance must be requested and granted, pursuant to Section 10 below.
- (4) Eligibility will not be allowed if the student has been recruited or otherwise influenced in violation of OSSAA Rule 9 to change schools, or remain at the same school, after a change of residence to a different school district. A student suspected of having been influenced to remain at or change schools for athletic purposes in violation of Rule 9 will not be permitted to participate in athletics until an investigation has been completed, a written report has been provided to or completed by OSSAA, and the student has been approved to participate by OSSAA.
- (5) If the change of residence to a different school district occurs when the student is entering or currently attending twelfth grade, or is otherwise scheduled to graduate within two semesters or the equivalent periods, then the student may remain at the same school at which athletic eligibility is already established, and retain continued eligibility for as long as is permitted under all other Rules.
- (6) If the student continues at the same school after a change of residence to a different school district, as described under subsection (1) or (2) above, and subsequently transfers to another member school, then the student is not eligible for a period of one year from the date of first attendance at the new school, unless the student applies for and is granted an exception due to hardship or other qualifying circumstance pursuant to Section 10 below.
- (7) The member school receiving a student who is changing schools due to a change of residence must:
  - i) request and obtain all necessary records from the school previously attended;
  - ii) confirm that the student has lawfully enrolled at the appropriate grade level, and determine if the student has repeated all or any portion of any prior secondary school grade level;
  - iii) verify that the student's parents (or custodial parent or court appointed guardian with legal custody) have made a bona fide move;
  - iv) confirm that the student was or would have been eligible at the previous school if the student had not left that school, and that the student is otherwise eligible to participate under all other Rules and Policies;
  - v) complete the Eligibility Record Form, and submit all forms, reports and supporting documents concerning the student as may be required by the OSSAA;
  - vi) investigate any concern that the change of schools was made for athletic purposes in violation of OSSAA Rule 9, and report on that investigation to OSSAA.

The above steps must be completed before the student is allowed to participate, and before any request for waiver is submitted, if a request for waiver is required.

If the receiving school becomes aware of any information that indicates the student's parents (or custodial parent or court appointed guardian with legal custody) have not made a bona fide move, then the student should not be allowed to participate in athletic competition. The receiving school also must provide this information to the OSSAA.
- (8) For the purposes of this Rule, a bona fide move and change of residence shall mean that:
  - i) the prior residence has been sold or leased at market value, or has been closed and emptied of personal property;
  - ii) the prior residence is not being used by any family member;
  - iii) all resident family members have moved out of the prior residence, and personal property associated with permanent, long-term occupancy is located in the new residence.

If the prior residence has not been sold, OSSAA shall inspect the prior residence, and the receiving school shall inspect the new residence, to confirm that a bona fide move has been completed. The receiving school shall submit documentation to OSSAA verifying that the new residence was inspected and that the family appears to have completed a bona fide move from the prior residence. The receiving school also shall obtain and submit a Residence Affirmation Form, in which the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) acknowledge and affirm that they understand and are in compliance with this Rule. The receiving school must receive notice that OSSAA has completed its inspection of the prior residence, and approved the receiving school's inspection of the new residence and the Residence Affirmation Form, before the receiving school permits the student to participate.

- Section 7. **Effect of Dual or Multiple Residences on Eligibility**  
A student whose parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) maintain two or more residences in circumvention of the requirements of this Rule shall only be eligible to participate at a sub-varsity level and the student shall not be permitted to participate in varsity level athletics.
- Section 8. **Completion and Availability of Required Forms and Records**  
An OSSAA Eligibility Record Form (or “New Student” Form) must be completed at the time the student first enrolled or reached a grade level at which the student is eligible to participate. The OSSAA Eligibility Record Form, and all other records and forms required under OSSAA Rules and Policies, must be maintained on file and available for review in the school's office to establish a student's eligibility at that school.  
A member school that is asked for appropriate records and information concerning a former student must respond promptly and, if the school is aware that the student was or may be ineligible for athletics, must notify the receiving school.
- Section 9. **Responsibility of Principal or Administrative Head of School**  
The principal or administrative head of the member school is responsible for maintaining all required forms and records concerning athletic eligibility on file at the school and available for review, and for submitting copies as may be required by OSSAA. The principal or administrative head of school also is responsible for confirming, or ensuring that effective procedures are in place for confirming, that students participating in athletics are complying with all requirements established by the member school, the State Department of Education, and OSSAA relating to athletic eligibility. If required forms and records to confirm athletic eligibility for a student are not available for review upon request by OSSAA, or if copies are not submitted as may be required to OSSAA, then the student may be deemed ineligible to participate.
- Section 10. **Determining Exceptions to Rule**
- a. **Authority to grant exceptions**  
OSSAA may grant an exception to a student facing ineligibility when it is found that the application of this Rule works an undue hardship on the student, or that the application of the Rule would otherwise fail to accomplish the purposes for which it is intended.
  - b. **Criteria and procedures for evaluating exceptions**  
The Board of Directors shall establish written criteria and procedures for evaluating applications for exceptions, and those written criteria and procedures shall be made available to member schools. Before submitting any application for exception, the member school shall provide the written criteria and procedures to the student and parents (or custodial parent or court appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) who are considering a request for an exception.
  - c. **Application for exception**
    - (1) OSSAA shall make forms for applying for an exception to this Rule available to all member schools.
    - (2) The member school submitting the forms required for the application is responsible for making certain that the forms are complete and that the application is being submitted in a good faith belief that an exception may be appropriate.
    - (3) Member schools shall cooperate in providing any additional information that may be requested, or any investigation that may be conducted, in connection with any application for an exception.
    - (4) The submission of any false or inaccurate information, or the failure to submit information requested by the OSSAA, may be grounds for denying or deferring action on an application.
  - d. **Consideration by the Executive Director**  
All applications submitted pursuant to this Rule shall be reviewed and evaluated by the Executive Director and staff. The Executive Director or staff designee is authorized to conduct any further investigation or to request any supplementation of the application or supporting materials deemed necessary to the evaluation of the application. The application shall be evaluated using the criteria established by the Board of Directors, and the determination of the Executive Director shall be transmitted, in writing, to the principal or administrative head of the school, or other designated school administrator submitting the application. Any person aggrieved by the determination may pursue an appeal pursuant to the procedures set forth in Rule 20.
- Section 11. **Issues or Questions About Eligibility Under This Rule**  
If member school administrators have any questions or concerns about whether a particular student is eligible for athletics under this Rule, they should contact the OSSAA as soon as possible, and the student should not be permitted to participate until the questions or concerns are resolved.

**RULE 8 – FAQ’S**

The following is a list of questions that are frequently asked with regard to the Residence Rule for grades 7-12. The answers given assume that the student is eligible under all other OSSAA rules.

1. A student lives and has established eligibility in District A and then the student and the student’s parents make a bona fide move to District B. What is the student’s eligibility status in District B?

*Answer:* Eligible. Athletic eligibility is generally determined by the residence of the student’s parents. (Rule 8-6-e-1)

2. If a student in grades 9-12 has established eligibility in District A and then transfers to District B, is he/she eligible in District B?

*Answer:* No. A student who has established eligibility in grades 9-12 at one school and then transfers to another school generally must sit out one year or be approved on a hardship waiver. (Rule 8-6-d)

3. A student in grades 9-12 who lives in District A, gains eligibility in District B, and then returns to District A where the parents reside. What is the eligibility status of the student?

*Answer:* Not eligible. When a student has established eligibility away from his/her home district, the student must sit out one year or be approved on a hardship waiver to regain eligibility back at the home district. (Rule 8-6-d)

4. What is the eligibility status of a student who lives in District A, establishes eligibility in District B, and later moves to District C?

*Answer:* Eligible. When a student establishes eligibility away from his/her home district and the parent or legal guardian move to a new residence outside the previous district, the student may choose to establish eligibility in the new district. (Rule 8-6-e-2)

5. Where is a student eligible after having graduated from a Dependent district (K-8)?

*Answer:* For grades nine through twelve, a student establishes eligibility at a school when the student first participates in interscholastic athletics at the ninth grade level or above. (Rule 8-3-a)

6. A student, who is under discipline in District A, moves to District B. Would the student be eligible in District B?

*Answer:* No. A student changing schools who was or who would have been ineligible or otherwise barred from athletics for any reason at the time the student left the previous school shall not be permitted to participate in athletics until the student satisfies or complies with the requirements that were or would have been imposed at the previous district. (Rule 8-6-c)

7. What is the eligibility status of a student whose parents made a bona fide move from District A to District B in the middle of a semester?

*Answer:* The student is eligible in the district to which the bona fide move was made, or the student can maintain eligibility in the district he/she currently attends until the end of the semester. (Rule 8-6-e-2)

8. What is the eligibility status of a student who has participated in grades 9-12 at a non-member school and then transfers to a member school?

*Answer:* Not eligible. When a student has established eligibility at a non-member school and then transfers to a member school, the student must sit out a year or be approved on a hardship waiver to gain eligibility. (Rule 8-6-d)

9. What is the eligibility status of a student in grades 9-12 who has established eligibility with one parent in District A and later moves to live with the other parent in District B?

*Answer:* Not eligible. The student must sit out one year or be approved on a hardship waiver. (Rule 8-5)

10. Where is a student eligible after establishing eligibility in grades 9-12 when the parents separate and he/she moves with one of the parents from District A to District B?
- Answer:* The student is only eligible in the district he/she currently attends at the time of the separation. (Rule 8-5)
11. A family lives in District A and later moves to District B without giving up ownership of their home in District A. What is the eligibility status of the student?
- Answer:* Not eligible. Eligibility cannot be gained where dual residency is maintained unless and until the proper paperwork is on file and approved by the OSSAA. (Rule 8-6-e.8)
12. A student who has been ruled ineligible at a school outside the state of Oklahoma and then makes a bona fide move to a member school in Oklahoma. Is the student eligible to participate at the new school?
- Answer:* No. When an ineligible student moves from another state, they must satisfy the requirements of the eligibility from the state they are leaving before gaining eligibility. (Rule 8-6-c)
13. If a student is eligible for sub-varsity participation only, is that student allowed to participate as JV player in a varsity tournament?
- Answer:* No. Sub-varsity limits that individual to playing in sub-varsity level events and/or tournaments.
14. A student's family resides in District A and later moves to District B, but allows a family member to use the original residence in district A. What is the eligibility status of the student?
- Answer:* Not eligible. To establish a bona fide move for the purpose of gaining and maintaining athletic eligibility, the original residence must not be in use by a family member. (Rule 8-6-e.8)
15. A student's family resides in District A and later moves to District B, and is in compliance with Rule 8-6-e.8 except that the receiving school fails to obtain a Residence Affirmation Form. What is the eligibility status of the student?
- Answer:* Not eligible. Eligibility after a bona fide move cannot be gained unless and until the Residence Affirmation Form is on file and approved by the OSSAA. (Rule 8-6-e.8)
16. A family resides in district A and later moves to District B, but does not sell or lease the original residence, and leaves personal property at the original residence. What is the eligibility status of the student?
- Answer:* Not eligible. The family's personal property must be moved out of the original residence. (Rule 8-6-e.8)
17. If a student transfers to a new school during his or her 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, is that student eligible for varsity level participation at the beginning of their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year?
- Answer:* Yes. For grades nine through twelve, a student establishes eligibility at a school when the student first participates in interscholastic athletics at the ninth grade level or above. (Rule 8-3)

## **RULE 9 - PROHIBITION ON RECRUITING OR INFLUENCING FOR ATHLETIC PURPOSES**

### Section 1. Statement of purpose.

OSSAA recognizes that permitting member schools to recruit students as athletes would place undue emphasis on secondary school athletic activities, and might cause competitive imbalances among member schools, misdirection of scarce educational resources, and threats to the continued amateur standing of students. Accordingly, no member school is permitted to recruit a student to select or transfer to that school, or to encourage or allow others to do so on its behalf, based on that student's skill, reputation, or experience in athletics.

### Section 2. Recruiting defined.

Recruiting includes initiating or maintaining contact with a student-athlete, or the student-athlete's family members, friends, or associates, in circumstances that could influence that student-athlete to select or transfer to a member

school for the purpose of representing that member school in athletic competition. Offering economic incentives or rewards of any type to a student-athlete, which are not available to all prospective students on an equal basis, regardless of participation in athletics, or offering such economic incentives or rewards to the student-athlete's family members, friends, or associates, for the purpose of encouraging that student-athlete to select, transfer to, or remain at a member school, also constitutes recruiting in violation of this Rule. Recruiting may also include offering or providing special or additional coaching or instruction that is not offered or made available to other student-athletes at the school on an equal basis, or providing special attention or consideration to a student-athlete who is considering transferring, for the purpose of influencing that student-athlete to remain at the school.

Section 3. Information that may be supplied by a school to prospective student-athletes.

A member school may supply any prospective student, or a family member, friend, or associate of a prospective student, who contacts the school about entering or transferring to the school with information summarizing the school's academic and extracurricular programs. The information distributed or made available to any prospective student-athlete must be prepared for and be made available to all prospective students, regardless of whether a student is a prospective participant in athletics. Information about specific athletic programs may be included, but if such information is included, then all athletic programs must be described and comparable information must be included about each program. A member school may further supply information to a prospective student-athlete concerning the events schedule, practice location, days, and times, and type of equipment, clothing or other materials, if any, required to be used or supplied by the participating student, provided that the information is of the same type which would be supplied to all participating students.

Section 4. Limited interaction permitted between employees and representatives of school and student-athletes at other schools.

Interaction between employees or representatives of a member school and student-athletes from other schools is permitted in connection with events such as summer instructional camps, non-school summer leagues, or awards ceremonies, except that school employees or representatives are prohibited at all times from making any statements or engaging in any acts, even if not intended to be taken seriously, that could be interpreted as encouraging a prospective student-athlete to enroll at or transfer to a member school.

Section 5. Employees or representatives of school defined.

Employees or representatives of a school include administrators, teachers, coaches, assistants, sponsors, aides, managers, and trainers employed by the school, as well as other student-athletes presently enrolled or planning to enroll at the school, family members of those student-athletes, alumni, volunteers, and members of organizations supporting the school's athletic activities.

Section 6. Handling contact by or with prospective student-athletes.

If contact is initiated with a member school's employee or representative by a prospective student-athlete, or by a family member, friend, or associate of a student-athlete, about that student-athlete enrolling in or transferring to that member school, the school employee or representative contacted shall direct that person to the school superintendent or to the principal or administrative head of the school for any additional information. The school employee or representative shall not discuss further the subject of enrolling at or transferring to the school, or otherwise use any language or engage in any act that could be construed as encouraging the student-athlete to enroll at or transfer to the school. Any contact with a student-athlete from another school about that student-athlete enrolling or transferring to a member school for athletic purposes shall be reported as soon as possible to the OSSAA by that member school.

Section 7. Acknowledgment and notice of Rule.

- a. Each coach or volunteer providing instruction, assistance, or supervision in an athletic activity for a member school must sign a written certification that the coach or volunteer is familiar with this Rule.
- b. The head coach in each athletic activity for each member school additionally must sign a written certification that students participating in that activity have been informed about this Rule, that the school may be sanctioned for violations of this Rule, and that student-athletes may be subject to sanction, including the loss of eligibility, if they have enrolled at or transferred to a school that has engaged in recruiting, or allowed its employees or representatives to recruit in violation of this Rule, or if they participate in recruiting other student-athletes to enroll in or transfer to the school.



- c. All officers, administrators, supervisors, and sponsors of any club or organization supporting any athletic activity at a member school must sign a written certification that they are familiar with this Rule, and that the members of the club or organization have been informed about this Rule.
- d. These required certifications must be signed each school year before participation begins in that activity for that year, and the signed certifications must be maintained by the school and available for review by OSSAA.
- e. Each member school must make adequate additional efforts each school year to inform all employees and other representatives of the school about this Rule. The superintendent, principal or administrative head of school must maintain a written summary of these efforts, and this written summary must be maintained by the school and available for review by OSSAA.
- f. OSSAA will make forms available for signed certifications or summaries as required under this Section.

Section 8. Prohibition against preferential treatment for athletes in admissions, tuition payment, and financial aid.

- a. OSSAA recognizes that preferential treatment on admission or tuition may influence a student-athlete to enroll or remain at a school that is selective in admissions or which requires payment of tuition. Any such preferential treatment may also be deemed to constitute recruiting in violation of this Rule.
- b. No member school that is selective in admissions, or which requires payment of tuition, or which offers any form of financial aid toward payment of tuition and/or fees, may offer or allow for preferential treatment to a student or a student's family on the basis of athletic ability. Financial aid based on merit or achievement is not prohibited provided that the award of such aid is consistent with previously established criteria unrelated to athletic ability. Financial aid includes, but is not limited to:
  - (1) direct monetary aid, grants, or loans, from either the school or other source associated with the school;
  - (2) tuition or fee remission;
  - (3) deferred tuition or fee payment terms;
  - (4) income or credit for work performed, either by the student-athlete or a member of the student-athlete's family, for the school or for a person or entity associated with the school.
- c. Any member school that is selective in admissions, and/or which requires payment of tuition, and/or which offers any form of financial aid toward payment of tuition and/or fees, must maintain written documentation describing its policies concerning these subjects. If the school provides or allows for financial aid on any basis other than demonstrated financial need, then provisions must be included in the school's policies to insure that financial aid is not provided or allowed to a student on the basis of athletic ability.
- d. By August 1 of each year, the member school must file a copy of its current policies with the OSSAA, or certify that such policies are unchanged from what is currently on file with the OSSAA. The school also must identify, in writing, those individuals and/or organizations involved in determining or evaluating applications for admission or financial aid, and describe the role or responsibility of that individual or organization. The school must notify the OSSAA about any changes in the policies, or in the listing of individuals or organizations, or in the role or responsibility of any individual or organization, during the school year.
- e. Any of the following may constitute a violation of this Rule which would subject a school to potential sanction:
  - (1) Offering or providing admission, financial aid, or tuition payment terms for a student-athlete in circumstances inconsistent with the school's written policies on file with OSSAA;
  - (2) Offering or providing need-based financial aid to a student-athlete excess of demonstrated financial need;
  - (3) Offering or allowing more favorable tuition payment terms for a student-athlete than are allowed to similarly situated students;
  - (4) Accepting tuition payments for a student-athlete from a source outside the student's immediate family or a recognized financial aid source;
  - (5) Providing a disproportionate amount of financial aid to student-athletes as compared to other students.
- f. Upon request the school must make its records concerning the admission of, payment of tuition for, and/or financial aid provided to particular students available for inspection and review. OSSAA will maintain such records as confidential consistent with applicable law, and information obtained from those records will be used only for the purpose of determining whether any rule violations have occurred.
- g. The principal or head of school is responsible for submitting copies of policies and certifications as required under this section.

Section 9. Violation of Rule

- a. A school will be in violation of this Rule and subject to sanction if the school encourages or permits school employees or representatives to recruit student-athletes to enroll at or transfer to that school. Permitting a student-athlete who has been recruited to enroll at or transfer to the school to represent that school in an event shall also be considered a violation of this Rule which would subject the school to potential sanction. A failure to

obtain, maintain, submit, or make available the written policies, certifications and summaries required under this Rule also violates this Rule and will subject the school to potential sanction.

- b. If a school receives information indicating that a student-athlete is being recruited, or was or may have been recruited, to enroll at or transfer to that school, then the school shall provide a written report to the Executive Director as soon as possible, identifying the student-athlete and those persons who are, were, or may have been involved in recruiting that student-athlete.
- c. The fact that a school reported a known or suspected violation of the recruiting rule involving a student-athlete at that school may be considered by the Association, if a violation is determined to have occurred, in evaluating what sanction may be imposed on the school.
- d. A student-athlete may be subject to sanction, including the loss of eligibility, if the student enrolls at or transfers to a school that has sought to recruit, or allowed its employees or representatives to recruit, that student in violation of this Rule, or if the student or the student's family participates in recruiting other student-athletes to enroll in or transfer to the school in which that student is presently enrolled or planning to enroll.

#### **RULE 10 - PROOF OF ELIGIBILITY**

Section 1. An Eligibility Record Form (or "New Student" form), as provided by OSSAA, shall be completed for each new student at a member school who is expecting to participate in athletic competition. The forms, together with other information and documentation provided or gathered in completing the form, shall be used by the member school to evaluate and determine whether the student is eligible for athletic competition. A student should not be permitted to participate unless and until the school is certain that the student is eligible to participate. If the school is not certain the student is eligible, the school may consult with the Executive Director or OSSAA staff and ask for assistance in determining the student's eligibility.

Section 2. Each member school shall keep as a part of its permanent records, subject to inspection, by the Executive Director or the Executive Director's designee, a copy of the eligibility records of individual athletic participants.

Section 3. Each member school principal shall, when requested, furnish to the Board of Directors or the Executive Director such information as may be desired bearing upon the eligibility of individual student participants from his/her school. A failure to comply within a reasonable time may forfeit a school's membership in the Association or result in other sanctions.

Section 4. Principals will be expected to determine the eligibility of all students who represent their schools in non-athletic activities according to these rules but will not be required to certify the identity and eligibility status of such students to the Association office unless requested.

#### **RULE 11 – COOPERATIVE SELECTION FOR OFFICIALS BETWEEN SCHOOLS**

Section 1. At least ten (10) days before each contest the home school must submit a sufficient and feasible list of officials to the visiting school. Lengthy lists should be submitted by schools near metropolitan areas or any areas where there are a sufficient number of officials. Some areas will not have as many officials from which to choose, but efforts should be made to supply an adequate list. After the visiting school accepts the list, the needed number must be approved by not striking more than one half of said list. When a question arises, the OSSAA Board of Directors or the Executive Director shall determine whether or not the list is feasible and when such findings are negative, the list will be supplemented after the Association office is notified. After any accepted list is depleted, the home school may employ officials without the consent of the visiting school.

An incentive should exist for the visiting school not to strike the names of too many officials. After the home school makes an honest effort in trying to replace an official due to a cancellation, the visiting school automatically approves an official when the list has been depleted. However, the home school shall notify the visiting school of any change in the contracted officials; otherwise, the contract will not be binding. Beginning a game with an official constitutes agreement. The official's decision shall be final. One of the calculated risks that a coach must accept is that the coach, players, or the game officials may make mistakes during the course of the contest.

Note: When a commissioner is used to assign officials, the same method should be used by giving the schools an opportunity to add or strike the names of officials on such list.

Section 2. A representative of a school who has knowledge of rule violation or questions the eligibility of a student of another school, both schools being members of the Association, and who does not give such information or raise the question of eligibility with a representative of the offending school, the Executive Director, or the Board of Directors, before

further participation of the student, shall cause his school to be subject to penalty if proved the information was knowingly withheld to gain an advantage.

#### **RULE 12 – PARTICIPATION AGAINST NON-MEMBER SCHOOLS**

Section 1. A member of this Association shall be allowed to compete with secondary-level schools outside the Association, and with organized teams consisting of secondary-level students, as provided for in Article VI of the Constitution. Before scheduling any contest or event with a school or team outside the Association, the member school must verify that competing with that school is consistent with Article VI of the Constitution. Members of the Association cannot compete at any time or under any conditions with schools or teams which have been suspended or expelled from their respective associations or which do not apply participation, amateur standing, and eligibility rules and limits equivalent to the rules and limits applied by OSSAA, or which require the contest to be conducted in a manner inconsistent with the rules of the Association.

Any member of the Association which knowingly competes with any school or team which has been suspended or expelled from their respective association or which does not apply participation, amateur standing, and eligibility rules must apply to the Board of Directors for reinstatement.

Section 2. No member school of this Association shall be permitted to participate in a game, contest, or meet against a school of college standing. Non-athletics: Members in good standing in local FFA chapters, or similar organizations., who have graduated or withdrawn from a school, may continue to represent that school in chapters or club activities as the rules of the respective state organization permit.

Section 3. No member school shall compete in any interstate tournament or meet, in which three or more schools participate, unless such event has been sanctioned by all interested state associations through the National Federation.

#### **RULE 13 – ENFORCEMENT OF CONSTITUTION AND RULES**

Section 1.

- a. The principal of the high school, as used in the constitution and rules, shall refer to the chief administrative office of the high school.
- b. The principal and/or superintendent of the school shall be responsible for the enforcement of the constitution and rules of this Association and shall be the official representative of the school.
- c. The administration of the school shall be responsible for the eligibility of its students.
- d. The minimum penalty for having an ineligible student during the regular season and in an OSSAA activity is as follows:
  - (1) Team Activities - baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball, volleyball and cheerleading (see Board Policies for non-athletic activities). The school must:
    - (a) Forfeit all contests involved.
    - (b) Adjust its place in conference standings and/or relinquish its place in tournament standings.
    - (c) Return team and individual awards.
  - (2) Individual Activities - cross country, golf, swimming, tennis, track and field, and wrestling (see Board Policies for non-athletics). The school must:
    - (a) Forfeit all events in which student(s) were involved.
    - (b) Reduce the team points (score) and adjusts its place in conference standing and/or its place in tournament standings.
    - (c) Return awards of individual(s) and, if appropriate after adjusting standings, team awards.
  - (3) Tournaments or Contests (including OSSAA tournaments):
    - (a) Team or student, most recently defeated upon discovery of violation, replaces offending team or student for remainder of tournament series.
    - (b) The above stated penalties may be modified by the Board of Directors and/or the Executive Director in their absence, dependent upon the circumstances involved.
    - (c) If a student, who has been declared ineligible, is permitted to participate in interscholastic competition because of a court order and/or injunction against the school or OSSAA and if such restraining order and/or injunction subsequently is voluntarily vacated, stayed, reversed, or finally determined by the courts not to justify injunctive relief, one or more of the penalties outlined in Section 1 (d) above may be taken in the interest of restitution and fairness to other member schools.

Section 2. The principal shall be responsible for the instruction of the student body in the rules and ethics of activities as sponsored by the Association. The principal or his/her representative shall be manager of the team representing his/her school, shall be manager of home games or contests, and shall be responsible for the courteous treatment of

visiting teams and their supporters. The principal shall have general supervision over the conduct of members of teams, students and supporters when away from home.

If an act of violence is committed against the person of a game official by a fan, student, player, or faculty member of a school, or if any serious unsportsmanlike conduct is related directly or indirectly to a contest, the Board of Directors will expect, before further competition, that the principal of the school will make a report to the Executive Director giving complete details of the incident, the names of parties involved, and what corrective action has been taken. The school or team is to be considered on probation until further action by the Board of Directors.

Section 3. A person seeking coaching certification must meet Oklahoma State Board of Education Accreditation Standard Rules in OAC 210:35-7-44 (e), OAC 210:35-9-44 (h), OAC 210:20-37-2 and local school district policy. Upon completion of all requirements, a certificate will be issued by a certified licensed athletic trainer or through a Care and Prevention course from an accredited college or university. Each school district shall be responsible for proper certification and training. Individuals duly approved shall be in charge of the training and participation of contestants.

When an official banishes a coach or sponsor from the vicinity of the contest and there is no other designated assistant or faculty member present to assume full responsibility of the team or organization, the game or contest must be forfeited. Any school in violation of this paragraph shall forfeit the game, meet, or contest to the offended school, and the school, team and/or coach in violation shall be placed on warning.

Any coach who is ejected from an interscholastic game, meet, or contest shall be suspended from coaching at least for the next regularly scheduled game, meet or contest (same team and level) in which the team participates. In addition any coach who has been ejected from an OSSAA contest will be required to complete the NFHS Teaching and Modeling Behavior course. The coach can be reinstated after verification of his/her completion of the course and any sit-out time that is required by OSSAA rules. The course is available online at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com). This includes all OSSAA sponsored and playoff activities. A coach who has been suspended from coaching may attend the contest, but he or she must be seated in the spectator area and may not give instructions to the players or the individual who has been assigned to coach the team anytime during the contest, including half time. The coach may not coach directly or indirectly in any capacity. The coach may not enter the dressing room at half time, nor will he or she be allowed to be on the court, field, etc., before or during the contest. Any coach who is ejected from a contest a second time for the same or related activity shall be suspended from coaching until reinstated by the OSSAA Board of Directors.

Section 4. When an athletic coach removes his/her team from the playing area, the game shall be forfeited and the school or team automatically placed on probation.

Section 5. When more than one high school is maintained by a school district, the principals of such schools may adopt special regulations determining the student's home high school of the district for athletic participation and his/her right to transfer athletic eligibility to other schools of the district. A multi-high school district is defined as a school district that operates two or more schools that house 12th, 11th, and 10th grades or any combination thereof. A copy of these regulations shall be filed with the Executive Director.

Section 6. The rules of student eligibility shall not be interpreted to prevent any member school or any conference from establishing more stringent regulations, but no school or conference may set up standards for interscholastic competition for any of its official teams, varsity or otherwise, which are less stringent than the minimums of the OSSAA.

#### **RULE 14 – CLASSIFICATION FOR TOURNAMENTS, MEETS, AND CONTESTS**

##### Section 1.

- a. Member schools generally are placed in a classification for co-curricular activities according to ADM for grades through 12 as reported on the Annual Statistical Report from the State Department of Education.
- b. In athletic activities, a member school that would be placed in Class 4A or below according to ADM shall be placed one classification above the classification in which the member school would be placed according to ADM if the member school meets any three of the following four criteria:
  - i) the school has the ability to decline admission or enrollment to a student, even if the student and the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student) reside within that school's public school district or designated geographic area;
  - ii) the school is located within a fifteen (15) mile radius of a school placed in the 5A or 6A classification according to ADM;

- iii) fewer than twenty-five (25) percent of the children enrolled at the school in grades nine through twelve qualify for free or reduced lunches;
- iv) the school's ADM in grades nine through 12 has increased by fifty (50) percent or more over the previous three school years.

No school shall be moved up to the highest classification (currently Class 6A) for any athletic activity under this subsection.

- c. A school that would be placed in Class 4A or below according to ADM, but which has been moved up one classification pursuant to the above criteria will be moved back down in classification in a particular activity if the school's team has not finished among the top eight teams in that activity in at least two of the previous three school years.

For basketball, soccer, cross-country and track, if the school has both a boys team and a girls team, then both the boys and girls teams in that particular activity will be left in the higher classification for that activity as long as one of those teams has finished among the top eight teams in that activity in at least two of the previous three school years. If neither the boys team nor the girls team has finished among the top eight teams in that activity in at least two of the previous three school years, then both the boys and girls teams will be moved back down in classification in that activity.

- d. A school that has been moved up in classification because it meets three out of the four criteria in subsection b above will be moved back down in classification in an activity if the school, at the beginning of the next school year in which reclassification for that activity is scheduled to occur, no longer meets three of the four criteria.
- e. Whenever reclassification in a particular activity occurs, no school team will be moved up more than one classification above the classification in which the school would be placed according to ADM.

If a school has been moved up in classification pursuant to subsection b above, but in a subsequent school year in which reclassification occurs for a particular activity, the school would be placed, according to reported ADM, in that same higher classification, then the school will remain in that same classification for that activity and will not be moved up another classification in that school year. In those circumstances, the school will not be moved up in classification in any particular activity again under this rule unless and until the school's team has finished among the top eight teams in at least two out of three consecutive school years.

If a school has been moved up in classification pursuant to subsection b above, but in a subsequent year in which reclassification occurs for a particular activity, the school would be placed, according to reported ADM, in a lower classification in that activity than the classification in which the school would have been placed previously according to ADM, then the school will be moved down one classification in that activity.

## Section 2.

- a. OSSAA's Board of Directors shall determine how often reclassification of schools shall occur in particular activities. Reclassifications will occur only before the start of a school year, and shall be effective as of the start of that same school year.
- b. For basketball and spring baseball, school teams will be divided into seven classifications designated Classes 6A, 5A, 4A, 3A, 2A, A, and B. For football, school teams will be divided into eight classifications designated Classes 6A, 5A, 4A, 3A, 2A, A, B, and C. No classifications may be added or deleted for 4 years in these activities. OSSAA's Board of Directors shall determine the number of classifications for other activities.
- c. Initial classifications shall be made based on reported ADM for the preceding school year for grades 9 through 12, as shown on the initial Annual Statistical Report completed by the Examiner's Division of the State Department of Education.

### In basketball:

- i) Class 6A will consist of the 32 schools with the largest ADM.
- ii) The next 32 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 5A.
- iii) The next 64 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 4A.
- iv) The next 64 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 3A.
- v) The remaining schools shall be divided equally between Classes 2A, A and B. If an even division of teams is not possible, then the greater number of remaining schools shall be in Class B.

### In spring baseball:

- i) Class 6A will consist of the 32 schools with the largest ADM.
- ii) The next 32 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 5A.
- iii) The next 64 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 4A.
- iv) The next 64 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 3A.
- v) The next 64 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class 2A.
- vi) The next 96 largest schools according to ADM will be in Class A.
- vii) All remaining schools shall be in Class B.

In football:

- i) Class 6A will consist of the 32 schools with the largest ADM playing 11-man football.
  - ii) The next 32 largest schools according to ADM which play 11-man football will be in Class 5A.
  - iii) The next 32 largest schools according to ADM which play 11-man football will be in Class 4A.
  - iv) The remaining schools playing 11-man football shall be divided equally between Classes 3A, 2A, and A. If an even division of teams is not possible, then the greater number of remaining schools shall be in Class A.
  - v) Schools that would be placed according to ADM in Class A may petition to play 8-man football. Those schools shall be divided between Class B and Class C, with the schools with the largest ADM in Class B.
- d. If any school team is moved up in classification under section 1b above or any other rule or policy, then the school with the lowest ADM within that higher classification will be moved down to the lower classification in that activity. If in subsequent school years a school is moved back down in classification in an activity then the school with the highest ADM within that classification will be moved up to the higher classification in that activity.

### Section 3.

- a. All athletic events for students in grades 7 through 12 must be sanctioned by OSSAA or students participating in those events may not be covered by OSSAA's catastrophic insurance coverage. All meets, festivals, and tournaments in which three or more schools participate must be approved in advance by OSSAA.
- b. To participate in a meet, festival or tournament in which a team or teams from other states are participating, a school must apply for and receive approval of OSSAA. An interstate meet, festival, or tournament also must be sanctioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations and participation by any team from another state high school association must be approved by that team's state high school association. High schools that are not members of any state high school association may participate but must certify that their students would be eligible under all OSSAA rules concerning attendance, academic performance, conduct, amateur standing, age, and number of years of participation.

### Section 4.

- a. In basketball for grades nine through twelve, football-playing schools may participate in a total of 16 regular season games and two tournaments in which more than two teams participate, or a total of 14 regular season games and three tournaments in which more than two teams participate. Non-football-playing schools may participate in a total of 18 regular season games and two tournaments, or 16 regular season games and three tournaments. The play-off elimination contests and state tournament leading to the OSSAA state championship in basketball are not counted in these limitations on the number of tournaments.
- b. Basketball teams for students in grades seven, eight, and/or nine may participate in a total of 14 regular season games and two tournaments in which more than two teams participate.  
Basketball teams for students in grades seven, eight, and/or nine are not permitted to participate in tournaments against teams with students in grades nine through twelve. If school teams limited to seventh, eighth, and/or ninth grade students are allowed to participate in the same tournament as teams with students in grades nine through twelve, the teams with seventh, eighth, and/or ninth grade students must compete in separate divisions for teams with students at those same grade levels.  
School teams that include students below the seventh grade level may not include ninth grade students or compete against teams that include ninth grade students.
- c. The limitations on number of tournaments stated in subsections a and b above also apply to students on an individual basis. A member school's students may not participate in more tournaments than are permitted for the school's team for students in grades nine through twelve. A ninth grade student thus may not exceed this limitation by participating in tournaments both on a school team for students in grades nine through twelve and on another school team for students in grades seven, eight, and/or nine. A student similarly may not exceed this limitation by participating in tournaments for both a school's junior varsity team and its varsity team.
- d. In addition to tournaments, member schools also may participate in a basketball festival. A basketball festival involves no more than four schools, and each team plays no more than two games in the same day or over two successive nights (or over three successive nights if both boys and girls teams are participating). The games played in a festival are counted as regular season games subject to the limitations on regular season games in subsections a and b above.
- e. No more than eight teams may participate in any basketball tournament, and a school may not play in more than three games in any basketball tournament, unless the tournament is limited to teams from the same county or same conference, in which event the school may be permitted a fourth game upon approval in advance by OSSAA.
- f. Basketball tournaments for students in grades nine through twelve may only take place during the first week in December, second week in December, the first week in January, the third week in January, or while all participating schools are out of school for the holidays between semesters.

No basketball tournament for teams limited to seventh, eighth, and/or ninth grade students will be approved which conflicts with OSSAA district, area, or regional play-off contests leading to a state championship in basketball.

- g. Teams are not permitted to play more than two games in one day in any basketball tournament, and must be permitted a minimum of four hours of rest in between games on one day. No tournament basketball games may be scheduled to begin on a weekday prior to 4 p.m., or on a weekend day prior to 10 a.m., nor may any game be scheduled to begin after 9 p.m.
- h. All basketball officials used in district, regional, area, and state tournament contests leading to the state championship shall be retained and paid entirely by OSSAA.

#### Section 5.

- a. OSSAA's Board of Directors is responsible for establishing classifications and setting up tournaments or meets leading to state championships for fall baseball, golf, tennis, track, volleyball, swimming, cross-country, wrestling, softball, soccer, and cheerleading.
- b. If a member school elects to participate as an independent in any athletic activity and not compete for a state championship in that activity, then that school must participate as an independent in all athletic activities for two school years. OSSAA's Board of Directors may grant an exception to allow a school just beginning a particular athletic activity to participate as an independent in that activity for a period not to exceed two consecutive school years.
- c. Any events in non-athletic activities which are competitive in nature, involving awards, ratings, rankings or other forms of recognition, and which involve three or more schools participating, must be approved in advance by OSSAA.

### **RULE 15 – FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP**

Section 1. District Assignments – Class 6A is divided into two divisions: Division I consisting of the 16 largest football-playing schools according to ADM, and Division II consisting of the next 16 largest football-playing schools. Each division is divided into two 8-team districts. The Board of Directors shall determine the number of districts for each of the other classifications.

Section 2. District Schedules – A chairman for each district shall be appointed by the OSSAA. If it is necessary, each chairman shall call a meeting of the representatives of the schools in his/her district to complete district schedules. Games between any two schools of a district will be alternated between their home fields unless otherwise mutually agreed upon. The entire district schedule must be completed before contracts for games with schools outside the district will become binding. Each team is to play all other teams of the district.

Section 3. Separate eight-team championship playoffs shall be held in each of the two divisions in Class 6A. The first, second, third and fourth place finishers in each district in each of the two divisions of Class 6A shall be eligible to participate in the elimination games. In the other classifications, the first, second, third and fourth place finishers in all classes from each district shall be eligible to participate in the elimination games.

Section 4. District Standings – The first, second, third, and fourth place finishers in each district shall be determined in percentage of games won and lost in district play. In case two or more teams are tied in percentage of games won and lost in district play, the highest available position in the district standings and next highest available position(s) in the district standings shall be determined in the following manner:

- a. When two teams are tied in percentage of district games won and lost, the highest available position in the district standings will go to the team that won over the other in district play. The team that lost to the other tied team will occupy the next highest available position in the district standings.
- b. When three or more teams are tied in percentage of district games won and lost, the highest available position in the district standings will go to the team that won over the other tied teams in district play. The next highest available position in the district standings will go to the team that won over the remaining tied team(s) in district play. This procedure shall continue until all available positions are filled.
- c. When three or more teams are tied in percentage of games won and lost in district play, and no team is the winner over the other tied teams in the percentage of games won and lost in district play, the representative(s) for the highest available position(s) in the district standings shall be determined by:
  - (1) Total the marginal points each tied team had in all district games only. Marginal points will be the difference in score. Winners will add the difference in score to their marginal point total and losers will subtract the difference in score from their marginal point total. No team will add more nor subtract more than fifteen points in any district game. Example: Winning score, Team A, 21 points; Team B, 18 points; Team A will add three points to its marginal point total and Team B will subtract three points from its marginal point total.

No team will add more nor subtract more than one point in any district game that goes into overtime(s). The team with the greatest number of marginal points will occupy the highest available position in the district standings. The team which has the next greatest number of marginal points will occupy the next highest available position in the district standings. This procedure shall continue until all available positions are filled. Anytime two teams are tied in marginal points, the teams shall advance in the order as to which team won over the other in district play.

- (2) In the event ties cannot be broken by the criteria in paragraph (1) above, the highest available position in the district standings shall be determined by lot. After lot has decided the highest available position in the district standings when three teams are tied in marginal points, the next highest available position in the district standings will go to the team that won over the other tied team in district play. When four teams are tied in marginal points, the highest available position in the district standings will be decided by lot. The next highest available position in the district standings will go to the team that won over the other two tied teams in district play. If the next available position in the district standings cannot be determined by who won over the other tied teams, then lot will determine the next highest available position in the district standings. The two remaining tied teams will determine their district standing position by which team won over the other in district play.
- d. Should it become necessary for a top-four place finisher to be determined by lot, OSSAA will call a meeting of the involved schools and conduct the necessary procedure to determine the order of placement.
- e. If any of the top-four place finishers from any district do not elect to play or are ineligible to play in the elimination games, the next place finishers in order will be moved up as needed to fill the top four places and represent the district in the play-off series.

Section 5. Class Championships: On the OSSAA calendar week 19, a series of elimination games shall be started and shall be continued by the winning teams playing one game each week until a champion is determined in each of the two divisions in Class 6A and in all other classifications.

In a multi-high school district, games may be adjusted between Friday and Saturday by mutual agreement if a field conflict exists. The OSSAA shall select site, set date, and appoint the manager for the final championship game in each class.

Section 6. Forfeited and Postponed Games: Any game in which an ineligible student is used will be forfeited (see Forfeiture Policy) and if an ineligible student is used in an elimination game, the team will be eliminated. A scheduled game that is canceled will be forfeited. Games which are postponed due to some urgent emergency must be played not later than Monday of the next week. A postponed final game may be played any day of the following week.

Section 7. Officials: The game officials in all elimination games shall be selected and assigned by the OSSAA. Beginning a game with an official constitutes agreement. The official's decision shall be final in play-off games as well as regular season. In elimination games of eleven-man football, five officials shall be used and their fees are to be determined by the Board of Directors.

Section 8. Expenses: In elimination games, representatives of competing schools shall meet not later than Monday preceding the game and shall agree upon the arrangements for the game upon the following basis:

- a. When the game is played on the home field of either school, a representative of the home school will be the manager, and he/she will be responsible for completing arrangements for the game. In case the game is played on a neutral field, a school official shall be a mutually agreed upon representative who shall participate in the arrangements and in the financial accounting. A detailed, itemized financial statement shall be compiled by the manager on the form furnished by the Association, and a copy shall be furnished each school and the Association the week following the game.
- b. The ticket prices adopted for the various groups and classes of tickets shall be uniform to those applying. The Board of Directors shall adopt a plan for distribution of complimentary tickets and contestants' and workers' passes. (NOTE: COMPLIMENTARY PASSES ARE NOT TO BE ISSUED TO FACULTY OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS.)
- c. The expenses of officials shall be taken from the gate receipts. All other expenses incurred in handling the game shall be borne by the school designated as the home school. The home school shall have all concession rights.

Section 9. Trophies: The Association shall award suitable trophies for district winners, and these trophies are to be designed so that the recognition of additional winnings in the championship series can be added. The Association is to provide suitable trophies and medals for the runner-up and championship teams.



**RULE 16-BEGINNING AND ENDING OF SPORT SEASONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH**

## Section 1. Football

- a. Member schools have the option of beginning the varsity football season during week 8 or week 9 on the OSSAA calendar.

A school team that chooses to begin the varsity football season during week 8 on the OSSAA calendar is only permitted to play during Thursday, Friday, or Saturday of that week, and the school's varsity and junior varsity teams are limited to playing no more than one interschool scrimmage, which must be played prior to the first regular season varsity contest.

A school team that chooses to begin the varsity football season during week 9 on the OSSAA calendar is only permitted to play during Thursday, Friday, or Saturday of that week, and the school's varsity and junior varsity teams are limited to playing no more than two interschool scrimmages, which must be played prior to the first regular season varsity contest.

Junior varsity teams are not permitted to begin regular season contests before Monday of week 9 on the OSSAA calendar, regardless of whether the school's varsity team has opted to begin regular season play during week 8

as permitted above. The junior varsity team is limited to one pre-season interschool scrimmage if the school's varsity team has opted to start regular season play during week 8 on the OSSAA calendar, and two pre-season interschool scrimmages if the school's varsity team has opted to start regular season play during week 9 on the OSSAA calendar.

School teams at the seventh, eighth, and/or ninth grade levels, are permitted to begin regular season contests on Monday of week 9 on the OSSAA calendar. Those teams are limited to playing no more than two interschool scrimmages, which must be played prior to the team's first regular season contest.

No school team is permitted to participate in an interschool scrimmage after beginning regular season play.

- b. The football season for member schools, school personnel, and players shall close on Saturday of week 18, excepting for those teams having elimination games following that date, the season shall close with their last elimination game. An individual who has represented his/her school during the current season shall not participate in football unattached, or as a member of a team for the remainder of the school year.

In case of death, impassable roads, or extreme weather conditions, a game is postponed and no date is open to play the postponed game; the Board of Directors shall have jurisdiction in deciding whether the season shall be extended.

- c. From the close of the football season and until the close of school, member schools and school personnel shall not sponsor or conduct clinics or training camps for their football teams, and shall not hold football practice from the close of the football season until 20 days prior to the opening of the current football season. (Except as provided in e.)

Organized practice is defined as school or anticipated school personnel directly or indirectly giving individual or team instruction concerning fundamentals of football. Coaches may coach his or her team in summer passing leagues and summer camps (see camp regulations).

Pre-season conditioning and training sessions, without pads, may begin on Monday of week 6 of the OSSAA calendar. Schools may begin practice with pads on Friday of week 6 of the OSSAA calendar.

Schools must have a minimum of three days of conditioning without pads immediately preceding the first day of practice with pads (Friday of week 6).

Prior to Friday of week 6, only footballs, football shoes, and helmets may be used. No other protective equipment such as pads, guards, etc., and no training devices such as tackling or blocking dummies, charging sleds, or similar devices are to be used nor shall players participate in drills that are designated to cause contact.

Training aids such as air and stand-up dummies which are non-attached, tires, ropes, boards and any other equipment not requiring body contact, may be used during pre-season conditioning and training sessions prior to the first day of practice with pads.

- d. During the three day limited practice, practice must be on the home field. Practice after that date may be on or off the home field.
- e. After all spring activities end for each respective school member high schools (students currently in grades 9-11) will be allowed 21 calendar days to conduct 10 spring football practices. Full contact drills cannot occur on consecutive days during spring practice and each school is limited to a total of six practices where full contact drills are used. All spring practices must be completed by Saturday of Week 49 of the OSSAA calendar. Spring football practice is limited to a total of two hours per day.
- f. Member schools may give football instruction in a physical education class during the regular school day. Except for footballs, helmets and football shoes, no protective equipment such as pads, guards, etc., and no training devices such as tackling or blocking dummies, charging sleds, or similar devices are to be used during the physical education class.

Training aids will be permissible provided they comply with Section 1-c above. When there is no organized physical education class scheduled during the school day, a school may schedule an additional class period immediately after the close of the school day, not to exceed in length that of a regular school hour (60 minutes), for the purpose of conducting a physical education class. A school that is bringing its freshmen and sophomore athletes from another site may schedule its practice period immediately upon the arrival of these athletes, not to exceed in length that of a regular class period, for the purpose of conducting a physical education class. The practices will be conducted by the certified school coaching staff. Any individual is limited to the maximum time of a regular class period.

- g. Before the opening date of the regular season, member schools and individual students are limited to two interschool scrimmage dates only. For any scrimmage, there shall be no kick-off or return of other kicks. Coaches must be on the field, and they shall be responsible for the supervision and administration of the scrimmage.
- h. The limit on the number of games for all teams other than senior high varsity is eight games per season with the exception of Classes 5A and 6A teams that include 9th graders only, sophomore teams and junior varsity teams can play nine games.

## Section 2. Basketball Rules

- a. The basketball season for all non-football playing schools shall open on November 1. The season for all football playing schools shall open for senior high schools on the third weekend in November and for junior high schools on the Monday immediately preceding the second weekend in November. A weekend is Thursday, Friday and Saturday.
- b. The basketball season for member schools, school personnel, and players shall close with the state championship tournament. Students may not participate on school teams from the time the state tournament is completed in a student's particular classification, until all spring activities are completed, unless a postponement is involved. School personnel shall not coach directly or indirectly during this period with exception of the conditions of Rule 16 Section 2c. (Exception: Senior athletes may participate in Association approved all-star games after all state sponsored activities are completed.)  
School personnel are interpreted to be those people who are designated as coaches or assistant coaches within the school system. Those people are defined as those who comply with the requirements as set forth in Rule 13, Section 3.
- c. From the close of the basketball season until October 1, member schools and school personnel shall not hold organized basketball practice. Organized practice is defined as school personnel or anticipated school personnel directly or indirectly giving individual or team instruction concerning fundamentals of basketball. School personnel may coach his or her team in summer leagues and summer camps (see camp regulations). However, from the opening of school until October 1, and from the close of the basketball season until the close of school, member schools may give basketball instruction in a physical education class during the regular school day. When there is no organized physical education class scheduled during the school day, a school may schedule an additional class period immediately after the close of the school day not to exceed in length that of a regular school hour (60 minutes), for the purpose of conducting a physical education class. A school that is bringing its freshmen and sophomore athletes from another site may schedule its practice period immediately upon the arrival of these athletes, not to exceed in length that of a regular class period, for the purpose of conducting a physical education class. The practices will be conducted by the certified school coaching staff. Any individual is limited to the maximum time of a regular class period.
- d. Boys' teams in non-football playing schools, and all girls' teams, may hold interschool scrimmages any time after they start organized practice.
- e. Boys' teams in football playing schools shall not hold interschool scrimmages before November 1.
- f. Member schools shall not hold interschool scrimmages from the close of the basketball season until the close of school.
- g. In addition to the Activities Association sponsored championship tournament series, high school teams from schools playing football are permitted sixteen basketball games, and two tournaments, or fourteen basketball games and three tournaments; teams from schools not playing football are permitted eighteen basketball games and two tournaments or sixteen basketball games and three tournaments. All junior high teams are permitted fourteen basketball games and two tournaments.  
A team will be charged with one game for each invitational tournament it enters in a festival a team will be charged with a game for each game played in the festival.
- h. Member schools and individual students are limited to six interschool scrimmage dates prior to December 1.

## Section 3. Wrestling

- a. The collegiate style wrestling (this style is sanctioned and governed by the OSSAA) season shall open on the third full weekend in November. A weekend is Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.
- b. The collegiate style wrestling season for member schools, school personnel, and wrestlers shall close with the state championship tournament. An individual who has represented his school in collegiate style wrestling during the current season shall not represent his school in that sport after the season closes. Students may participate unattached and school personnel may coach.
- c. Member schools shall not hold organized collegiate style wrestling practice from the beginning of the school year until October 1. No organized collegiate style wrestling practice may take place after the OSSAA sponsored state collegiate style wrestling championship tournament. Collegiate style wrestling techniques and procedures may be taught in regularly scheduled physical education classes. When there is no organized physical education classes scheduled during the school day, a school may schedule an additional class period immediately after the close of the school day. This additional class period shall be for the purpose of conducting a physical education class and shall not exceed, in length, the time of a regularly scheduled period which is defined as 60 minutes. A school that is bringing its freshmen and sophomore athletes from another site may schedule its practice period immediately upon the arrival of these athletes, not to exceed in length that of a regular class period for the purpose of conducting a physical education class. The practices will be conducted by the certified school coaching staff. Any individual is limited to the maximum time of a regular class period.
- d. Coaches may coach their participants in a maximum of three open collegiate style wrestling tournaments in November with no loss of school time. A student must be eligible under all rules and regulations of the OSSAA Administrator's Handbook in order to participate in open collegiate style tournaments that are sanctioned or hosted by an OSSAA member school during the month of November. The OSSAA will not sanction any open collegiate style tournaments after the month of November. Any collegiate style wrestling open tournament held after November 30 and until the completion of the state wrestling tournament in which a school personnel is coaching either directly or indirectly a school team or members of a school team would count against the school's and/or individual's regular season schedule. School personnel are interpreted to be those people who are designated as coaches, assistant coaches, or lay coaches within the school system. Violation of this rule could cause a student to lose eligibility and a coach to be suspended.
- e. In addition to the Activities Association sponsored championship tournament series, teams and/or individuals shall be limited to 26 points. The following point system will apply in determining the teams and/or individual's point total:
  - (1) All two-day tournaments will count three points and all one-day tournaments will count two points. An individual and/or team are limited to a maximum of five tournaments.
  - (2) Duals will count one point.
  - (3) In any multi-team competition, points will be equal to the number of duals wrestled. Example: A triangular would be worth two points and a quadrangular/festival would be worth three points.The 26 point system applies to team schedules and to each individual that wrestles. For an individual, this would include a combination of wrestling on the junior varsity and varsity teams. Ninth grade students may wrestle under the 26 point system. A ninth grade student may reach the 26 allowable points by wrestling a combination of junior high and high school events or wrestling the entire season with the high school team. If a ninth grade student wrestles with the junior high team for the entire season, he/she will be limited to 11 duals and 3 tournaments.
- f. Quadrangular/Festival
  - (1) A quadrangular/festival is not a tournament. When using the 26 point system a quadrangular/festival is classified as multi-team competition.
  - (2) A quadrangular/festival shall be limited to one day or two successive nights.
  - (3) No more than four schools shall participate.
  - (4) All duals must be scheduled before the first match starts.
  - (5) Will be counted as three points towards the 26 point system.

## Section 4. Soccer

- a. Organized practice shall begin no sooner than December 1.
- b. The first scrimmage date is February 15.
- c. The regular season shall open on March 1 and close with the state championships.
- d. From the first day of school until the state championship finals, school personnel or anticipated school personnel (coaches, lay coaches, trainers, etc.) will not be permitted to coach, train, or have any contact with the high school's team members or potential high school's team members (grades 9-12) on a non-school team.
- e. An individual who has represented his school in a sport during the current season shall not represent his school in that sport after the season closes.

## Section 5. Other sports

- a. The season for fast-pitch softball, volleyball, cross-country, and fall baseball may begin in August when limited football practice begins or with the opening of school.
- b. Organized practice for cross-country, fall baseball, fast-pitch softball, and volleyball may begin no earlier than July 15. Organized practice for indoor track and field and swimming may begin no earlier than October 1. Organized practice for golf, track and field, spring baseball, slow-pitch softball and tennis may begin no earlier than December 1.

Organized practice is defined as school or anticipated school personnel directly or indirectly giving individual or team instruction concerning the fundamentals of a particular sport.

From the close of the season in each of the above sports to the start date indicated above for that sport in the following school year, no organized practice in that sport may take place. However, certified school coaching personnel for that sport are permitted to provide instruction in that sport in a physical education class during the regular school day.

If a member school does not schedule a physical education class during the regular school day, then an additional period may be scheduled immediately after the close of the regular school day, not to exceed one hour, for the purpose of conducting a physical education class, and instruction in a particular sport may be provided by certified school coaching personnel to students during that additional one hour period.

Time spent transporting student participants to an off-site facility, or from one school site to another, for the purpose of providing instruction in a particular sport during a physical education class, or during the one hour period immediately following the school day, shall not be counted toward the time allowed for off-season instruction. The practice period shall begin immediately upon the arrival of the athletes.

- c. The season for all sports shall close with its state championship tournament or meet. Except that if a game or meet is postponed and no date is open to play the postponed game or meet, the Board of Directors shall have jurisdiction in determining whether the season may be extended.
- d. Member schools and individuals who participate in fall baseball and/or softball shall be permitted to participate in spring baseball and/or softball.
- e. In addition to the Activities Association sponsored championship tournament series, teams and/or individuals shall be limited to the number of match games and tournaments as established by the OSSAA Board of Directors. This regulation shall apply separately to fall and spring baseball and/or softball seasons. Outside of tournament games, each game played shall be counted as a match game. Junior high teams and individuals shall be limited to the number of match games and tournaments as established by the OSSAA Board of Directors. Junior high teams may play a third tournament if the regular season schedule is reduced three games.
- f. An individual who has represented his or her school in a sport during the current season shall not represent his or her school in that sport after the season closes. Students may participate unattached pending approval of their local school administration.

Section 6. Rule Violation: Student violating the end of the season rule shall be ineligible for further competition in any sport until reinstated by the Board of Directors. The student's ineligibility may continue into the next academic year if the Board so determines it appropriate.

Section 7. Application for Post-Season Tournament or Meet: The Board of Directors will not approve an application from a member school for sanction of an interschool meet or tournament following the close of the season for that sport.

**RULE 17 - ENROLLMENT OF OFFICIALS FOR HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH**

The regulations of the OSSAA provide that all officials used in regular season basketball and football competition and Association sanctioned tournaments where participants are 7th-12th grades must be enrolled with the Association and have passed part I of the current National Federation rules examination for that sport. (Lists of eligible officials are available on the OSSAA website, [www.ossaa.com](http://www.ossaa.com).)

These regulations also apply to regular season competition in baseball, soccer, softball, volleyball and wrestling where participants are 7th-12th grades.

A violation of this Rule could result in sanctions imposed by the OSSAA against the offending school.

**RULE 18 - CONTROL OF BROADCASTS**

The Activities Association shall retain control of television and radio broadcasting, video streaming, telegraphic play by play accounts of all elimination contests, games, tournaments or meets, leading to a state-wide championship sponsored by the Association.

**RULE 19 - ALL-STAR CONTESTS**

## Section 1. In-State All-Star Contests

- a. A student from an OSSAA-member school may participate in an in-state All-Star athletic contest, provided the contest has been approved in advance by OSSAA.
- b. Except for a national-level All-Star contest as provided in Section 2 below, no in-state All-Star football contest shall be permitted except after all spring activities have been completed, and any such contest can only include graduating seniors.
- c. In activities other than football, an in-state All-Star contest may take place during the regular season, or prior to or during the playoff contests leading to the state championship in that activity. Otherwise such All-Star contests may only take place after all spring activities are concluded, and may only include graduating seniors.

## Section 2. National and Interstate All-Star Contests

- a. Graduating seniors only are permitted to participate in national-level All-Star athletic contests, including football, which involve students selected from multiple states, during the school year, or after the conclusion of spring activities. Participation in practices, camps or clinics leading up to or associated with a national All-Star contest also is permitted. Before participating in any national all-star contest during the school year, a graduating senior must obtain approval from the principal or head administrator of the student's school. A member school, or a booster organization for a member school, may assist in paying a selected senior's necessary travel expenses to enable that student to participate in a national-level All-Star athletic contest.
- b. Students may only participate in interstate All-Star athletic contests, involving All-Star teams representing different states, after all spring activities are concluded.

Section 3. All-Star athletic contests within the meaning of this rule are single exhibition-style events to which students from different teams are invited to participate based on talent and prior performance. Participation is not permitted in any activity characterized as an All-Star contest which involves multiple games or contests in a tournament or conference format.

Section 4. A student who participates in an All-Star contest in violation of this rule may be subject to sanction by OSSAA. A member school that becomes aware that a student may have participated in an All-Star contest in violation of this rule shall notify OSSAA. A student or member school representative who is concerned about whether participation in a particular All-Star contest might violate this rule should contact the OSSAA.

**RULE - 20 PROCEDURES FOR DETERMINING VIOLATIONS, WAIVERS AND APPEALS**

## Section 1. Procedures for Investigating and Resolving Alleged Violations of Rule or Policy.

- a. Each member school is responsible for notifying OSSAA promptly whenever a violation of OSSAA rules or policies is suspected, or an allegation of a violation has been received by the school. A failure to report a suspected or alleged violation to OSSAA may subject the school to sanction or penalty.
- b. When a report of an alleged violation at a member school is received by OSSAA from a source other than that school, the member school should be promptly notified of the alleged violation and any evidence supporting the allegations. If the investigation of the alleged violation may be compromised or impeded by immediate notice to the school, this notice may be delayed, and an initial investigation may be conducted without notice to the school, until the risk of interference with the investigation is minimized or eliminated.
- c. After receiving notice of an alleged violation, OSSAA has the option of initiating an investigation, or asking the member school to conduct an initial investigation and to provide a written report.
- d. If an initial investigation and report are requested by OSSAA, the member school must promptly conduct an impartial investigation, and provide a complete and accurate written report concerning the investigation, the school's findings and, if a violation has been found, recommendations for any remedial actions or sanctions.
- e. After receiving an initial written investigative report from the school, the Executive Director, or the Executive Director's designee, will evaluate whether the school's investigation was appropriate, whether the school's findings are reasonably supported by the evidence, and whether any recommendations for

- self-imposed remedial measures or sanctions are consistent with the remedial measures or sanctions imposed for the same or similar violations.
- f. If the report from the member school is incomplete, the school may be asked to provide supplemental information or revised recommendations, or OSSAA may conduct an additional investigation.
  - g. Any investigation conducted by OSSAA, whether before or after notice to the member school, or after an initial report has been received from the school, will be conducted impartially and expeditiously. The member school must cooperate in any OSSAA investigation and provide other responsive information as requested.
  - h. If the investigation may impact the eligibility of a student to participate in interscholastic activities or contests, then the member school will notify the parent(s) or legal guardian of the student of the alleged violation. Any evidence relating to the student's eligibility will be disclosed to them, and they will be provided the opportunity to submit any information they consider to be pertinent or responsive to the school and to OSSAA.
  - i. If the member school determines that the investigation may lead to the imposition of sanctions or penalties on any individual school representative, then before a final determination is made, the school will notify that individual, disclose any evidence relevant to that individual, and provide that individual with the opportunity to submit any information the individual considers to be pertinent or responsive to the school and to OSSAA.
  - j. Because some action may be necessary before an investigation of an alleged violation can be completed, OSSAA's Executive Director, or the Executive Director's designee, is authorized to take temporary action if deemed necessary to prevent possible continuing or repeated violations that could result in the imposition of additional sanctions or penalties. This temporary action may include directing the member school to hold a student out of participation when the student's eligibility is in question, and participation by the student may result in game forfeitures, the adjustment of point totals or standings, or a more extended period of ineligibility for the student. If the school does not comply with the temporary directive, and a violation subsequently is confirmed, then the school's failure to comply may be considered in determining sanctions or remedial measures.
  - k. OSSAA will notify the member school involved in writing of the determination on the alleged violation as soon as possible after a determination has been made. If the violation has not been admitted or conceded by the school, then the notice provided by OSSAA will include a summary of the reasons supporting the determination. If a violation has been found to have occurred, the notice provided by OSSAA will also include a statement of any remedial measures and/or sanctions that will be imposed or which the school has agreed to accept. If the remedial measures or sanctions affect any student or any individual school representative, then the school will provide notice of the determination to those individuals.

## Section 2. Requests for Exception or Waiver Concerning Eligibility Rules and Policies

- a. If a member school has determined that the student is not eligible under OSSAA rules and policies concerning athletic eligibility, or the school is uncertain about the student's eligibility under OSSAA rules and policies, but the school believes that the student may qualify for a waiver or exception that would allow the student to participate, then the school may apply for a waiver or exception. The Board of Directors will approve a standard form to be used to request a waiver or exception.
- b. Before submitting a request, the member school is responsible for reviewing the applicable eligibility rules and policies with the affected student and the parent(s) or legal guardian of that student, determining whether a request for a waiver or exception is appropriate, and gathering all information that may be relevant to the determination of the request.
- c. A student who has been determined by the school to be ineligible, or whose eligibility is in question, is not permitted to participate unless or until a request with full and complete information has been submitted and eligibility has been approved. Consideration of a request may be denied or deferred if the information submitted is not complete.
- d. A waiver or exception to a loss of eligibility under Rule 8 may be granted, based on certain criteria established by the Board of Directors. Such a waiver or exception should be granted rarely, and only upon demonstration that the student's loss of eligibility is the result of an unavoidable hardship having arisen which was beyond the control of the student and the student's parents (or custodial parent or court-appointed guardian with legal custody of the student).
- e. A waiver or exception to the limitations stated in Rule 7, concerning the years in which a student may participate in athletic activities, may be granted, based on certain criteria established by the Board of Directors. As indicated in Rule 7, the circumstances in which such a waiver or exception may be granted are more limited than the circumstances which may justify a waiver or exception concerning Rule 8.

- f. A waiver or exception to the age limitations on participation in athletic activities as stated in Rule 1 may be granted, based on certain criteria established by the Board of Directors. Such a waiver or exception generally should be granted only upon demonstration of circumstances beyond the control of the student and the student's parents (or custodial parent or legally appointed guardian) which delayed the student from starting school or caused the student to be held back from advancing from one grade level to the next grade level. Examples of such circumstances include:
- i) readiness testing at the kindergarten or first grade level demonstrated that the student was not yet prepared to begin school;
  - ii) designation as a transitional student at the first grade level;
  - iii) substantial physical or mental disability;
  - iv) serious injury, illness or other circumstance beyond the control of a student that has been shown to have significantly delayed the student from making normal academic progress;
  - v) difficulties transitioning from a foreign language to learning in English; or
  - vi) a failure to provide appropriate special education services that would have enabled the student to make normal academic progress.
- Even if a student qualifies for a waiver or exception to the age limitation, the student may not be permitted to participate in a particular activity if, in view of the student's size and development, the student's participation presents an obvious danger to other participants.
- g. In some instances, a waiver or exception to the above-referenced rules may be granted if imposing a period of ineligibility or denying additional eligibility would not serve the purposes for which the general rule was created. Such a waiver or exception, however, may not be granted if there is any evidence that the student was influenced to change schools, or to remain at a school at which the student otherwise is ineligible, for athletic purposes.
- h. If a student is discovered to have participated while ineligible under the above-referenced rules, but the school believes that a waiver or exception likely would have been approved if requested prior to participation, the school may ask for a retroactive approval of a waiver or exception. In determining whether a request for retroactive approval should be granted, OSSAA may consider whether the school permitted the student to participate inadvertently, whether the school had adequate procedures and policies in place to prevent ineligible participation, and whether information relevant to the student's eligibility was withheld intentionally.
- i. Under no circumstances shall a student be permitted to continue participation in athletics after reaching the age of twenty, nor shall a student be permitted to continue participation in athletics at the ninth-grade level or below after reaching the age of seventeen.

### Section 3. Appeals from Rule Violation and Eligibility Determinations

- a. A determination concerning a rule violation under Section 1 above, or an eligibility determination under Section 2 above, may be appealed. The appeal must be submitted to OSSAA by or through the member school. An appeal of a rule violation determination under Section 1 is considered directly by OSSAA's Board of Directors. An appeal of an eligibility determination under Section 2 is considered first by an intermediate appeals panel.
- b. The member school may submit an appeal on behalf of a student or an individual school representative who is impacted directly by the determination. The member school is not required to join in or endorse such an appeal, but the member school remains responsible for informing the affected student, and the parent(s) or legal guardian of that student, or the affected individual school representative, about the appeal process, and for providing notice of the date and time for any appeal hearings.
- c. Notice of the date and time for all appeal hearings will be publicly posted in advance, consistent with the provisions of the Open Meetings Act. All appeal hearings will be open to the public, however, if private, confidential information must be discussed in the hearing, then an executive session may be held for the purpose of hearing and considering such information.
- d. A representative of the member school who is able to answer questions and provide supplementary information that is relevant to the appeal is required to be present at any appeal hearing. The school is required to send an appropriate representative even if the appeal is being submitted on behalf of a student or individual school representative, and the school does not join in or endorse the appeal. If an appropriate representative of the school fails to attend, the appeal hearing may be postponed or the appeal may be denied.
- e. In any appeal, all documentation previously submitted or obtained will be made available to the individuals determining the appeal, for review prior to the appeal hearing. The school may submit additional evidence or summaries in advance of or at an appeal hearing, and copies will be provided to each person responsible for determining the appeal. If new information is submitted, however, that was

not provided previously, then the appeal may be postponed, and the determination may be sent back with instructions to reconsider the determination in view of the new information, before the matter is rescheduled for appeal.

- f. At any appeal hearing, the school will be afforded the opportunity to be heard, and to present any new or additional information in support of the appeal, before any determination is made. If the school submitted the appeal on behalf of a student, the student and the student's parent(s) or legal guardian should be present at any appeal hearing, and will also be provided an opportunity to be heard prior to any determination. If the school is making the appeal on behalf of an individual school representative, that individual should be present at any appeal hearing, and shall also be provided an opportunity to be heard prior to any determination. The school and any such student or individual school representative may also be represented at the appeal hearing by an attorney if desired.
- g. In an appeal, all aspects of the prior determinations at issue may be subject to review, and any part of the prior determinations that is found to have been erroneous or inappropriate may be corrected or revised, even if that part of the prior determinations was not appealed.
- h. Any votes on appeals will be taken in open, public meetings, and a record of such votes will be kept and be available to the public. An electronic record of each appeal hearing, including any proceedings held in executive session, will be kept, although the record of proceedings held in executive session will not be available to the public.
- i. The member school is responsible for insuring that a copy of the written statement or written notice of the determination on appeal is provided to any individual school representative, or to a student and the parent(s) or legal guardian of the student, who is directly affected by the determination.
- j. Appeals of Hardship Waiver Request Determinations to Intermediate Appeals Panel
  - i) Any appeal of the determination on a request for waiver or exception to OSSAA athletic eligibility rules and policies will be presented to an intermediate appeal panel for hearing and review.
  - ii) For the purpose of electing five intermediate appeal panel members, the State will be divided into four geographic quadrants, defined by Interstate Highways 35 and 40. One panel member will be elected from each quadrant, and one panel member will be elected from all public school districts with multiple schools offering grades nine to twelve. The panel members from each quadrant and from the multi-high school group will be elected by a majority vote within the respective quadrant or multi-high school group. If no candidate receives a majority vote, then a run-off election will be held between the two candidates with the highest percentages of votes to select the panel member for that quadrant or multi-high school group. No public school district will have more than one person serving as an intermediate appeal panel member.
  - iii) Panel members will be elected to four-year terms. No panel member can serve for more than two consecutive terms. OSSAA's Board of Directors will establish appropriate procedures for setting up and maintaining staggered terms for panel members.
  - iv) Individuals currently serving as certified administrators or athletic directors at member schools are eligible to serve as panel members.
  - v) If one of the panel members is employed at the school that submitted the appeal, then that panel member will be disqualified from considering the appeal. If a school submitting an appeal contends that one of the panel members should be disqualified for any reason, that panel member may agree to disqualify, or the panel member may be disqualified if the other members of the panel agree unanimously that the challenged panel member should be disqualified for valid cause.
  - vi) At the conclusion of the hearing before the intermediate appeal panel, the panel members will determine the appeal by a majority vote. If a panel member has been disqualified, or is not able to attend an appeal hearing for any reason, abstains from voting after participating in a hearing, and the vote on an appeal is tied, then the appeal is considered to be denied, and the determination by OSSAA Staff remains in effect.
  - vii) After the vote on an appeal is completed, a written statement will be prepared summarizing the reasons for the determination and stating how the panel members voted. A copy of the written statement will be provided to the member school.
  - viii) If the appeal is denied, or the appeal is granted in part and denied in part, then the panel's determination may be appealed to OSSAA's Board of Directors at its next regularly scheduled meeting. If the appeal is granted in full, then the panel's determination will be effective immediately, and no further appeal may be made to OSSAA's Board of Directors.



- k. Appeals to OSSAA's Board of Directors
  - i) An appeal concerning a determination of the Executive Director under Section 1 herein or concerning a determination of the intermediate appeals board under Section 3(j) herein, may be made to OSSAA's Board of Directors.
  - ii) If one of the Board members is employed at the school that submitted the appeal, then that Board member will be disqualified from considering the appeal. If a school submitting an appeal contends that one of the Board members should be disqualified for any reason, that Board member may agree to disqualify, or the Board member may be disqualified if a majority of the other Board members find valid cause and vote to disqualify the challenged Board member.
  - iii) Appeals to OSSAA's Board of Directors will be decided by a majority vote at the conclusion of the hearing. When a motion is made to grant or deny an appeal, in whole or in part, the reasons for the motion will be stated, and reflected in the minutes of the meeting. A written notice of the Board's determination and the vote of the Board members will be provided to the member school involved in the appeal.
  - iv) Determinations by OSSAA's Board of Directors will be deemed final. No further appeal, nor any request for reconsideration, nor any additional hearing before OSSAA's Board of Directors will be allowed.

### **RULE 21 - APPROVAL OF TOURNAMENTS, MEETS AND CONTESTS**

(Non-school individuals or non-school groups must supply a certificate of insurance and be co-sponsored by a school or an approved organization in order to be considered for sanctioning.)

- Section 1. No member school shall compete in athletics in any interstate tournament or meet in which three or more schools participate, unless such event has been sanctioned by all interested state associations including the National Federation when required. All entries for out of state tournaments and meets shall be forwarded to the appropriate State Association office for endorsement and approval.
- Section 2. All events in grades 7 thru 12 related directly or indirectly to any activity in which the Association sponsors a play-off series leading to a state championship should be sanctioned. The responsibility lies with the participating schools as well as the host member school, non-public school host, or any non-school individual host. When more than two schools or teams participate, the students may not be covered by catastrophic insurance unless the event is sanctioned. All entries for out of state tournaments and meets shall be forwarded to the Association office for endorsement and approval.
- Section 3. Non-athletics: All related activities that the OSSAA sponsors where representatives of three or more schools participate shall be approved by the OSSAA. (See music and speech manuals for complete sanctioning policy.) Only events which are competitive in nature and where recognition, ratings or awards are given or winners determined should be approved by the Association. If the activity is not sponsored by the OSSAA, all legal matters will be the responsibility of the member school, non-public school hosts, or any non-school individual hosts.

### **RULE 22 - CO-OP TEAMS AND GROUPS**

- Section 1. If a member school has individual students who want to participate in an activity that is not being offered by that school, the school may enter into a cooperative agreement with another member school to provide the students with an opportunity to participate in that activity, subject to approval by OSSAA. The following conditions and requirements apply to any such agreements.
  - a. No more than two member schools are allowed to combine and compete in an activity, unless an exception is approved by OSSAA's Board of Directors.
  - b. The cooperating schools' must have contiguous boundaries unless an exception is approved by OSSAA's Board of Directors, or they must be located in the same independent school district.
  - c. Classification for a co-op team will be determined by the combined ADM of the cooperating schools.
  - d. The cooperative agreements must be for a one-year period for activities in which participating schools are classified annually, and for a two-year period for activities in which schools are classified every two years.
  - e. The cooperative agreements will be for each activity. A school may have an agreement with school A for one activity and school B for a different activity
  - f. One of the cooperating schools must assume the responsibility of being the "host" school. The host school is responsible for scheduling, contests and events for the combined team, arranging for officials, enforcing eligibility rules, and being the contact for all communications from the OSSAA office concerning the combined team.
  - g. The application to approve a co-operative agreement must be on file in the OSSAA office by August 15 for all first semester activities and January 15 for all second semester activities. Applications for those activities that

occur in both semesters must be on file in the OSSAA office by August 15. Applications received after the deadline date may not be considered for the current school year.

Section 2. Applying for approval of cooperative agreement

- a. The application to approve a cooperative agreement must contain information that details how the cooperating schools will handle such issues as transportation, coaching, funding, credits for participation, cheerleaders, half-time activities, and insurance. OSSAA staff may ask for other information relevant to evaluating the application. The application also must identify which school will act as the host school.
- b. The application will explain the need for having a cooperative agreement in that activity.
- c. The application will include a detailed description of the method of confirming the eligibility of students before they are permitted to participate on the co-op team in the activity.

Section 3. The application to approve a cooperative agreement may be denied if OSSAA determines after review that the terms of the proposed agreement do not conform with the purpose, conditions, and requirements of this rule, or if the interscholastic activities of other schools will be substantially disadvantaged. Substantial disadvantage shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, situations where a cooperative effort may result in an unfair domination of an activity, or substantial disruption of activity classifications and management

Section 4. Impacts on basketball and fall baseball when entering into cooperative agreement in football

- a. If a non-football playing school co-ops in football with a football playing school the non-football playing school is permitted to participate in fall baseball, and is permitted to start the basketball season on the same date as other non-football playing schools, the football-playing school is not permitted to participate in fall baseball (except in the circumstances described in subsection c below), and is permitted to start the basketball season on the same date as other football-playing schools.
- b. If non-football playing schools enter into a co-op agreement to play football, the school that is designated as the host school would then be considered a football-playing school for the purpose of determining the start of basketball season, and that school would not be permitted to participate in fall baseball.
- c. If a football playing school co-ops in football with a non-football-playing school and the football-playing school does not participate in spring baseball, then the football-playing school may enter into a separate cooperative agreement to play fall baseball with the same non-football-playing school, provided that the non-football playing school is the host school for fall baseball.

Section 5. Swimming

Member schools may enter into cooperative agreements in swimming for participating students to train under one coach and use the same facilities, but those students are not permitted to compete as a co-op team, and instead must compete at meets for their respective schools.

Section 6. Co-op teams in grades seven through nine

- a. When member schools have entered into an approved agreement for a co-op team in an activity at the high school level, the cooperating schools (or their associated junior high or middle schools) may also form co-op teams in that activity for students in grades seven through nine under that same agreement.
- b. A member school that has entered into a cooperative agreement in one activity cannot enter into a separate cooperative agreement for students in grades seven through nine in that same activity with another member school (or its associated junior high or middle school) if that member school already is in a cooperative agreement for that same activity with a different school.
- c. Kindergarten through eighth grade (K-8), middle or junior high schools may enter into a cooperative agreement in an activity for students at the seven through nine grade levels, even if their respective associated high schools have teams in the same activity. If one of the cooperating K-8, middle, or junior high schools is not associated with a member school, then that school must apply for and be approved as an associate member of OSSAA.

**RULE 23 – ADMISSION OF NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO MEMBERSHIP**

## Section 1. Provisional admission

As approved by vote of the member schools, any non-public school offering instruction through grade 12 is deemed to be admitted upon a determination that certain criteria established by the Board of Directors have been met. Continued membership is contingent on the school complying with these criteria and the Constitution, Rules, and Policies of the Association. If any information provided in connection with the school's provisional admission is later determined to have been false, or if material information was omitted, then the school may be expelled from membership or may be subjected to other penalties.

## Section 2. Criteria for admission

Any non-public school seeking to participate as a member school must demonstrate compliance with all criteria established by this Rule and any additional criteria established by the Board of Directors of the Association. The criteria shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a. Full accreditation by the State Board of Education, or other accrediting organization recognized by the State Board of Education;
- b. Written scholastic eligibility requirements for athletic participation must be in place which are at least as rigorous as current OSSAA Rules;
- c. Written admission policies and procedures must be in place which prohibit preferential treatment on the basis of athletic skill and experience;
- d. If tuition and fees are required to be paid, written payment policies and procedures must be in place which prohibit preferential treatment on the basis of athletic skill and experience;
- e. If financial aid and/or tuition and fee remission is available, written policies and procedures must be in place which prohibit preferential treatment on the basis of athletic skill and experience;
- f. Written policies must be in place or adopted, requiring all coaches, paid or volunteer, and booster organizations to be educated annually on OSSAA Rules on eligibility, including prohibitions against recruiting or influencing athletes to attend the school;
- g. The identity of any other athletic association(s) to which the school belongs or has belonged must be disclosed, and certification obtained from any such association that the school is a member in good standing and has not been found to have violated any of the rules and policies of that association;
- h. Certification that the school has enforced age and periods of participation rules at least comparable to OSSAA Rules concerning age and periods of participation must be provided;
- i. Written policies must be in place to assure that students participating in the school's athletic programs have maintained their amateur standing;
- j. Certification that the school has not recruited or influenced students to attend the school for athletic purposes must be provided;
- k. A resolution from the school's governing board or authority pledging to abide by the Constitution, Rules, and Policies of OSSAA must be submitted.

- Section 3. Required submission of information and OSSAA staff visits  
 A school seeking recognition as a member school must submit information and materials sufficient to enable OSSAA staff to determine whether or not the established criteria have been met. As a part of the evaluation process, the school also must allow OSSAA staff to visit the school to review records, interview personnel, and inspect facilities, to assess the accuracy of information and material provided, and to assist in determining the appropriate classification and appropriate geographic area for residence eligibility purposes. Failure to submit information and materials as required, or failure to cooperate in the evaluation process by OSSAA staff, may be cause to exclude a school from membership.
- Section 4. Approval for provisional membership
- a. Based on the review and evaluation of the information and materials submitted, and the information gathered in the school site visit, the Executive Director shall make a report and recommendation to the Board of Directors on provisional admission to membership, including recommendations on the appropriate classification and appropriate geographic area for residence eligibility purposes.
  - b. The school shall be advised of the Executive Director's report and recommendation, and be provided with notice and the opportunity to attend any Board of Directors' meeting at which approval of provisional membership is to be considered. Provisional membership shall be determined by a majority vote of the Board of Directors. Upon approval, provisional membership is subject to the following conditions:
    - (1) Before beginning competition, the coaches, administrators, and officers of any booster organizations must attend an orientation program concerning OSSAA Rules and Policies presented by OSSAA staff;
    - (2) A member school shall be assigned as a mentor school for the provisional member, to provide advice and guidance on compliance with OSSAA Rules and Policies during the initial two-year period following approval of provisional membership;
    - (3) Violation of any Rule during the initial two-year period following approval of provisional membership will be grounds for expulsion from membership. Upon expulsion from membership, the school shall be barred from re-applying for membership for a two-year period following expulsion.
- Section 5. Transition from provisional membership status
- a. At the conclusion of the initial two-year period following approval of provisional membership, OSSAA staff shall evaluate the school for compliance with the established criteria for membership and with the Constitution, Rules, and Policies of the Association.
  - b. The school's failure to provide accurate and complete information and materials as requested, or its failure to cooperate with OSSAA staff in this evaluation, may be cause to continue provisional membership for a period of time or to expel the school from membership.
  - c. Based on the evaluation, the Executive Director shall provide a report and recommendation to the Board of Directors on whether provisional membership status should end or be continued.
  - d. The school shall be advised of the Executive Director's report and recommendation, and be provided with notice and the opportunity to attend any Board of Directors' meeting at which the termination or continuation of provisional membership status is to be considered. Termination or continuation of provisional membership status shall be determined by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
  - e. If any information provided in connection with the school's transition from provisional membership status is later determined to have been false, or if material information was omitted, then the school may be expelled from membership, returned to provisional membership status, or subjected to other penalties.