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Student-Athlete Eligibility Guide

OVERVIEW

Participating in your school's interscholastic athletics program will provide some of your most memorable and enjoyable moments ever. Since your school is a member of the Ohio High School Athletic Association, there are standards that must be met in order to be eligible to compete.

The essential eligibility requirements in this handout are only a summary of some of the regulations affecting student eligibility. Most requirements are published in the *OHSAA Handbook*, which can be found in the offices of your principal and athletic administrator and is posted on the OHSAA website (www.ohsaa.org). Your school district also has the authority to establish additional academic standards and codes of student or athletic conduct.

Any questions you have concerning the OHSAA standards or your athletic eligibility should be reviewed with your school principal or athletic administrator. You should also meet with these administrators **EVERY TIME** before you change your course schedule or drop a course. Should you transfer schools, you must follow up with your previous school and your new school to ensure that all proper forms have been submitted to the OHSAA.

The eligibility standards of the OHSAA have been adopted by the member schools and were accepted by your school when it became an OHSAA member. You are urged, as a student-athlete, to study these standards carefully since you are responsible for compliance with these standards.

Best wishes as you learn the valuable lessons that come with your participation in interscholastic athletics!

Student-athletes and parents have the opportunity to ask school administrators and/or coaches questions on OHSAA and school eligibility requirements, the school's Athletic Code of Conduct policy and other issues during preseason meetings that the OHSAA requires schools to hold no later than two weeks after the beginning of each sports season. Meetings should include showing a DVD prepared by the OHSAA that reviews key student eligibility issues and discussion on concussion management.

SCHOLARSHIP

You may attend any public or non-public high school in which you are accepted when you enter high school (grade 9) from a 7th-8th grade school. In order to maintain eligibility for grades 9-12, you

must be currently enrolled in a member school and have received passing grades in a minimum of five (5) one credit courses, or the equivalent, in the immediately preceding grading period.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students must be currently enrolled in a member school and have received passing grades in a minimum of five subjects that receive a grade or a pass/fail in the immediately preceding grading period.

- A student becomes a member of an interscholastic squad, and thus establishes eligibility, when he/she participates in a contest (scrimmage, preview or regular season game).
- You may not use summer school grades for failing grades received or lack of courses taken in the final grading period.
- Your semester or yearly grades have no effect on OHSAA eligibility.
- Those taking postsecondary school courses must comply with OHSAA scholarship regulations.
- The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective. **Note:** Check with your principal or athletic administrator to determine the exact date that eligibility will be restored.

SEMESTERS

After establishing ninth-grade eligibility, you are permitted eight (8) semesters of athletic eligibility.

- The semesters are taken in order of attendance once ninth-grade eligibility has been established.
- Semesters are counted toward eligibility whether you participate in interscholastic athletics or not.
- There are exceptions to this regulation, so please arrange a meeting with your principal or athletic administrator to review these exceptions.

AGE

High school students (grades 9-12) who turn 19 years of age prior to August 1, 2012, are ineligible for interscholastic athletics.

Seventh- and eighth-grade students who turn 15 years of age prior to August 1, 2012, are ineligible for 7th-8th grade athletics but are eligible to participate in high school athletics.

- There are exceptions to this regulation, so please arrange a meeting with your principal or athletic administrator to review these exceptions.

HOME SCHOOLING

If you are home schooled and also enrolled in an OHSAA member school in accordance with the school's board-adopted partial enrollment policy, you may be eligible for interscholastic athletics participation at the school where you are enrolled and attending.

- To be eligible, you must enter the OHSAA member school from the home school at the beginning of the school year after having been home schooled for at least one calendar year.

- Failure to meet the one-year provision will require you to be enrolled for a minimum of one grading period before eligibility can be granted.

TRANSFERS

Once you establish your eligibility at a high school, a transfer to a different high school will mean you will be ineligible for athletics for one year from the date of enrollment in the new school.

- There are several exceptions to this regulation. To see if you qualify for an exception, you and your parents should arrange a meeting with your principal or athletic administrator.
- If your parent or legal guardian lives outside of Ohio, you are ineligible unless one of the exceptions to the regulation is met. These exceptions to the out-of-state residency rules are found in Bylaw 4-6.
- **If additional questions concerning these regulations remain, school principals or athletic administrators should contact the OHSAA.**

AWARDS

You may receive awards valued at \$200 or less as a result of athletic participation in interscholastic athletics from any source. You may never accept cash awards, however.

AMATEURISM

You will lose your amateur status and forfeit your eligibility if you:

- Compete for money or other monetary compensation.
- Capitalize on your athletic fame by receiving money, merchandise or services.
- Receive expenses or compensation from a sponsor unless that sponsor is a recognized amateur governing body or organization, recognized by a member school, or is your parent or guardian.
- Sign a contract or make a commitment to play professional athletics.
- Receive services, merchandise or any form of financial assistance from a professional sports organization.
- Compete with a professional athletics team even if no pay is received.
- Enter into an agreement with a sports or marketing agent.

NON-SCHOOL TEAMS

A member of an interscholastic squad in a team sport (baseball, basketball, field hockey, ice hockey, soccer, softball and volleyball) may not participate in an athletic contest, tryouts or any type of team or group training or practices on or with a non-school squad in a team sport in the same sport during the school's interscholastic season. This regulation is applicable for those invited to participate in a tryout, group training or practices at a college or in contests, tryouts, group training or practices with any non-school team such as a club.

- In individual sports of bowling, cross country, golf, gymnastics, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field and wrestling, however, you may practice and try out for a non-school team but may not compete in a contest.

A member of an interscholastic squad in a team sport (baseball, basketball, field hockey, ice hockey, soccer, softball and volleyball) may try out, practice and compete on non-school teams before and after the school season provided:

1. The number of students from the same school on the roster of the non-school team is limited to five (5) students in the sports of soccer, field hockey and ice hockey; four (4) students in the sports of baseball and softball; three (3) students in the sport of volleyball, and two (2) students in the sport of basketball. School football team members are prohibited from competing on non-school teams except from June 1 to July 31. **Note:** Seniors are exempt from these limitations after the conclusion of their sport season. In addition, there is no limit on the number of students from the same school team that may participate on the same non-school team from June 1 to July 31.
 2. You have no contact with school coaches while on a non-school team other than the 10 days permitted between June 1 and July 31.
- You may be declared ineligible for the remainder of the school season for violating these rules during the school season.
 - You may be declared ineligible for the next season for violating these rules outside the school season.
 - A senior may be declared ineligible for the remainder of the school year for violating these rules.

Note: Check the OHSAA Sports Regulations (available on the OHSAA web site) for the date you must cease participation on non-school teams in order to be eligible for OHSAA tournament competition along with penalties for non-compliance with this date.

RECRUITING

You will be declared ineligible if you are recruited by a person or group of persons to change or attend a high school for athletic purposes. Any attempt by you to recruit a prospective student-athlete for athletic purposes is also prohibited. A violation may also affect the eligibility of the school team.

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, DRUGS

You are prohibited from using any form of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs at the playing site of an interscholastic contest. The penalty is disqualification from that contest, and you will likely face additional school and/or legal penalties.

STEROIDS AND PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

If you use anabolic steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs, you are ineligible for interscholastic competition until medical evidence indicates that your system is free of these items.

PREPARTICIPATION EVALUATIONS AND CONSENT FORMS

Each year you must submit a physical examination form signed by a medical examiner before you begin practice for a school sport. In addition, your

parents/guardian and you must sign the OHSAA Authorization and Consent Forms.

- Procedures will be reviewed by school officials.
- Physical examinations are valid for one year from the date of the exam except for those that take place from May 1-June 1. Those exams are valid for one year plus through the end of the next school year.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

While all adults involved in the interscholastic athletics program have a responsibility to recognize the potential for catastrophic injury and even death from concussions, it is also the responsibility of student-athletes to recognize the signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion. If you have symptoms such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems, it is your responsibility to report these immediately to your coach and/or health care professional. OHSAA Regulations prohibit a student-athlete who exhibits these symptoms from returning to play until cleared with written authorization by an appropriate health care professional. So remember: don't hide it . . . report it. It's better to miss one game than the whole season. For more information, visit the [OHSAA website at www.ohsaa.org/medicine/sportssafety.htm](http://www.ohsaa.org/medicine/sportssafety.htm).

SPORTING BEHAVIOR

You are expected to accept seriously the responsibility and privilege of representing your school and community while participating in interscholastic athletics. You are expected to:

- Treat opponents, coaches and officials with respect.
- Display no behavior that could incite fans or other participants in the contest or which is intended to embarrass, ridicule or demean others under any circumstances including on the basis of race, religion, gender or national origin.
- Remember that winning isn't everything. Having fun, improving your skills, making friends and doing your best are also important.

The OHSAA has established a policy for students ejected or disqualified for unsporting behavior or flagrant fouls. If you are ejected or disqualified:

- You will be ineligible for all contests for the remainder of that day, and
- You will be ineligible for all contests at all levels in that sport until two regular season/tournament contests are played at the same level as the ejection (one contest in football).

If you are ejected or disqualified a second time in a season, you are subject to additional, stiffer penalties, including suspension from play for the remainder of the season in that sport.

Note: The complete OHSAA ejection/disqualification policy for unsporting behavior can be found in the *OHSAA Handbook* and is posted on the OHSAA web site (www.ohsaa.org).

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST (For High School Students)

Before you play, you must be eligible. Please review the following checklist with your parents. Unchecked boxes will likely mean you are NOT eligible. For questions, see your principal or athletic administrator.

- I am officially enrolled in an OHSAA member high school.
- I am enrolled in at least five one credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation.
- I received passing grades in at least five one credit courses or the equivalent, each of which count toward graduation, during my last grading period.
- I have at least one parent living in Ohio.
- I have not changed schools without a corresponding move by my parents or legal guardian or by qualifying for one of the exceptions to the OHSAA transfer regulation.
- If I have changed schools (transferred), I have followed up with my previous school and my new school to ensure that all proper forms have been submitted to the OHSAA.
- I have not been enrolled in high school for more than eight semesters.
- I did not turn 19 before August 1, 2012.
- I have not received an award, equipment or prize valued at greater than \$200 per item.
- I am competing under my true name and have provided my school with my correct home address.
- I have not competed in a **mandatory** open gym/facility, conditioning or instructional program.
- I have not been coached or provided instruction by a school coach in a team sport or cross country, track & field and wrestling other than during my sport season or for no more than 10 days between June 1 and July 31 (applies to team sports only).
- I am not competing on a non-school team during my school team's season.
- I have not been recruited to attend this school.
- I am not using anabolic steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs.
- I have had a physical examination within the past year and it is on file at my school.
- My parents and I attended a preseason meeting at my school which the OHSAA requires to be held no later than two weeks after the beginning of each sports season. We viewed a DVD prepared by the OHSAA to review key eligibility issues and sporting behavior.
- My school reviewed its concussion management protocol and my parents and I reviewed a short presentation on concussions that is available at no cost at www.nfhsllearn.com.
- My parents and I have signed the OHSAA Authorization Form and the OHSAA Eligibility and Authorization Statement and they are on file at my school.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

NOTE: This checklist has been provided as a service to the OHSAA membership for schools to utilize with student-athletes and their parents/guardians. Use of this checklist is at the sole discretion of each member school.