

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook
TENNESSEE SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
CONSTITUTION

Article I
Name and Purpose

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

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

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

Section 4. The Middle School Athletic Association is an affiliate of the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association. All expenses associated with the formation and operation of the Middle School Athletic Association shall be borne by the member schools of such Association. Failure to meet the financial obligations of the Middle School Athletic Association will result in the immediate dissolution of the Middle School Athletic Association.

Article II
Athletic Districts

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Ninth Athletic District: Shelby.

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Article III Board of Control

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

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

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

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

All members of the Board of Control must be full-time employees (minimum of 100 school days) who are principals, assistant principals (who devote full-time duties to administration), heads of schools, school-level athletic directors (who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA), district-level athletic directors (who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA), or director of schools. District-level athletic directors, County and City superintendents of no more than one four-year high school or senior high school shall be eligible to serve. No individual can serve as a member of the Legislative Council and Board of Control at the same time.

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

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

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

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

- (a) Have general control over all athletic contests in which member schools participate.
- (b) Elect an Executive Director and delegate the authority to interpret and to enforce the Constitution and Bylaws of the TSSAA to the Executive Director.
- (c) Provide office facilities and employees for properly conducting the business of the Association. (The Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association is an Equal Opportunity Employer.)
- (d) Determine and authorize all necessary expenditures of money in the conduct of the affairs of the Association.
- (e) Determine methods of, and qualifications for, registration of officials; revoke registration of any official for just cause.
- (f) Hear appeals from decisions of the Executive Director and render final decisions in those appeals.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

- (g) Have authority to rule on any cause not covered by the Constitution and Bylaws, until the Legislative Council adopts a rule covering the situation.

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

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

Article IV Legislative Council

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

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

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

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

All members of the Legislative Council must be full-time employees (minimum of 100 school days) who are principals, assistant principals (who devote full-time duties to administration), heads of schools, school-level athletic directors (who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA), district-level athletic directors (who have achieved a minimum CAA recognition through the NIAAA), or director of schools. District-level athletic directors, County and City superintendents of no more than one four-year high school or senior high school shall be eligible to serve. No individual can serve as a member of the Legislative Council and Board of Control at the same time.

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

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

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

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

- (a) Proposals from the regional meetings.
- (b) Proposals from any committee established by the Board of Control or Legislative Council.
- (c) Proposals from the TSSAA staff.
- (d) Any proposal submitted by the chief administrator of a member school to the Executive Director no later than four weeks prior to the Legislative Council meeting.

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

The agenda shall be published no later than seven (7) days in advance of a regularly scheduled meeting of the Legislative Council.

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

Article V

Executive Director

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Article VI

Hearings

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

Section 2. Hearings shall be conducted by the Executive Director in the presence of two or more members of the Board of Control who represent the Grand Division of the state in which the school is located, and who shall act in an advisory capacity. After testimony has been heard, the Executive Director shall meet in executive session with

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

the members of the Board of Control who are present at the hearing. After discussing with the Board members the evidence and possible penalties, the Executive Director shall decide what penalty, if any, is to be placed against the school.

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

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

Article VII Amendments

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

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

Article VIII Regional Meeting

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

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

The action of the member schools at the three regional meetings shall be used as a guide by the Legislative Council in adopting or rejecting legislative proposals.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

DEFINITIONS

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

Athletic Program – All aspects of the member school’s program of interscholastic athletic competition in the sports listed in Article I, Section 5, of the TMSAA Bylaws.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Junior Varsity – Any level of play below the varsity level, whether denominated as junior varsity, b-team, or otherwise. The membership of a junior varsity team shall be composed of varsity substitutes and any other non-varsity players identified on the school’s eligibility list (TSSAA Portal Roster).

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

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

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

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

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

Territory – For a public school, the “territory” of the school is the geographic boundaries and bus routes of the area served by that school as established by the local board of education. **For a system-wide public school, charter school, or a homeschool student attending the “territory” of the school is the geographic boundaries of the school system.** For a non-public school, the “territory” of the school is the area within a twenty (20) mile radius from the school.

Tournament Competition – The TMSAA-sponsored championship tournament series.

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook
TENNESSEE MIDDLESCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
BYLAWS

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

Unless otherwise stated in the TMSAA Bylaws, the Middle School Association does not levy monetary fines. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director, based on the facts.

Article I
Membership and Athletic Program Administration

Membership - Sections 1, 2, and 3
Financial Statement - Section 4
Sponsored Sports - Section 5
Cooperative Programs - Section 6
Responsibility of the Principal - Sections 7 and 8
Coaches - Section 9
Rules Meetings for Coaches - Section 10
Contracts - Section 11

Membership

Section 1. Membership in the Tennessee Middle School Athletic Association shall be open to any school that terminates with the 6th, 7th or 8th grade that is approved by the State Department of Education, State Department of Education approved agencies (schools must be in category 1, 2, or 3), AdvacEd, and/or Southern Associations of Independent Schools. Schools with any combination of grades 6-12 will hold only one membership in the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association, but may compete in the Middle School Athletic Association, Junior High Division, and Senior High Division.

The TMSAA shall be open to any school that terminates with the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade, for boys' and girls' interscholastic competition. Any school that terminates with the 6th grade may be a member for the purposes of forming a cooperative program for the 6th grade students only.

Any member school that withdraws from TMSAA membership must be an affiliate member for one year upon application to renew membership. Affiliate membership is defined as having all rights of other member schools but not being allowed to participate in TMSAA tournament series.

Section 2. Annual membership dues are \$300.00, which includes catastrophic insurance coverage.

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

Section 3. Does not apply for the TMSAA.

Financial Statement

Section 4. The fiscal year of the Association shall be from July 1 to June 30. At the close of the fiscal year, the Executive Director shall publish a financial statement. All surplus funds shall be used as directed by the Board of Control.

Sponsored Sports

Section 5. TMSAA shall sponsor the following sports: baseball, girls softball, basketball, bowling, cross country, football, golf, tennis, track and field, girls volleyball, soccer, and wrestling.

Cooperative Programs

Section 6. Member schools may petition TMSAA annually for permission to have a cooperative program in any sport if one of the schools does not have that program. The Executive Director of TMSAA may approve such

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

cooperative programs subject to approval by the principal of the schools involved, the governing board of the schools involved, and the Board of Control.

Responsibility of the Principal

Section 7. The principal of each school, in all matters pertaining to the athletic relations of his/her school, is responsible to this Association. Administrators must realize that they have more responsibilities than the general public to understand the purpose of high school athletics and the principles behind the TMSAA rules, and they must maintain that level of understanding and purpose when dealing with the general public and students. The principal shall exercise control over all finances, the scheduling of contests, and all other matters involved in the management of the school's athletic program. Any school whose athletic program is managed by a non-school group shall not be eligible to hold membership in TMSAA.

The principal shall furnish to the Executive Director such information as may be desired concerning eligibility of contestants, participation and reports on officials. Failure to comply within a reasonable time shall subject the school to suspension, fine or other penalty. Any eligibility list shall remain on file in the principal's office for a period of not less than five years.

The principal, assistant principal, or athletic director shall attend the meeting for all administrators annually.

Section 8. All games shall be properly supervised to ensure sportsmanlike contests. The host school shall be responsible for providing sufficient security to ensure orderly conduct on the part of all spectators. Visiting teams shall be accompanied by the principal or someone designated by the principal. If the game is played on a neutral field and neither team is designated as the host team, the competing schools shall share the responsibility of providing sufficient security.

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

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

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

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

Coaches

Section 9. All coaches must be registered with TMSAA annually and will fall under one of the following categories:

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

A. Coaching Requirements:

1. All coaches must be approved by the principal, superintendent, and/or local board of education prior to coaching.
2. All coaches must be submitted online in the school's log in area to the state office annually. This must be done prior to coaching.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

3. Non-faculty Coaches and Classified Employee Coaches must complete the NFHS “Fundamentals of Coaching” and “First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches” courses prior to assuming the position. Coaches who have successfully completed the ASEP Coaches Education Course prior to May 15, 2013, will not be required to take the NFHS courses. A school must pay an annual registration fee of **\$25.00** per Non-faculty Coach. There is no registration fee for a Classified Employee.
- B. Use of a coach who does not meet all the requirements listed above or the use of a Non-faculty Coach or Classified Employee Coach who has not been submitted to the state office shall result in a fine of \$500.00. Use of a full-time certified teacher or retired educator who has not been submitted to the state office prior to the date of first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar shall result in a fine of \$50.00.
- C. All coaches are subject to the TMSAA rules and regulation and must conduct themselves in a manner becoming of a coach and representative of the school. All coaches are responsible to the principal of his/her school. Coaches must realize that they have more responsibilities than the general public to understand the purpose of high school athletics and the principles behind the TMSAA rules, and they must maintain that level of understanding and purpose when dealing with the general public and students. Coaches must be paid entirely from funds approved by either the board of education, governing board of the school, Director of Schools, or the Principal of the school.

Rules Meetings for Coaches

Section 10. A member of the coaching staff in each sport and cheerleading or the Athletic Director shall attend a state rules meeting, if held, or complete the online rules meeting (if available), in the sport involved every year by a set deadline, or the school will be fined \$50.00. The coach must complete a make-up online rules meeting if they missed the face-to-face meeting or did not complete the online meeting by the original deadline. If not, the head coach will not be eligible to coach in the post-season tournament series. The school is still fined if the coach takes the make-up meeting after the original deadline.

Contracts

Section 11. Contracts made and entered into by member schools may be cancelled by mutual agreement or by authority of the Board of Control. All contracts between two schools shall be signed by the principals contracting. In the event a dispute arises under a written contract between two member schools, and the contracting schools are unable to resolve that dispute, either school may request a resolution by the Executive Director. The Executive Director’s determination may be appealed to the Board of Control, whose decision shall be final and binding. TMSAA shall not resolve any disputes under contracts that are not in writing.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Article II Eligibility

Preamble
Enrollment - Section 1
Academic Rules - Sections 2, 3, and 4
High School Graduate - Section 5
Eight Semester Rule - Section 6
Repeating Rule – Section 7
Eighth Grade Participation - Section 8
Age Limit - Section 9
Phys. Exam and Parental Consent - Section 10
Students Changing Schools - Sections 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15
Tuition and Financial Aid - Section 16
Recruiting Rule - Section 17
Amateur Rule - Section 18
Award Rule - Sections 19 and 20
Independent-Game Participation - Section 21
Specialized Camps - Section 22
All-Star Games - Section 23
Special Cases Involving Hardship - Section 24
Home School Rule - Section 25

Preamble

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

At the junior varsity or B-Team level, the only eligibility rules that apply are those in Sections 1 (Enrollment), 2 through 4 (Academic Rules), 6 (Eight-Semester Rule), 7 (Repeating Rule), 8 (Eighth Grade Participation), 9 (Age Limit), 10 (Physical Examination and Parental Consent), 13d (Disciplinary Action), 13e (Coaching Link), and 25 (Home School Rule). At the varsity level, all eligibility rules apply.

Enrollment and Attendance

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

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

Academic Rules

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

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

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

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

High School Graduate

Section 5. Does not apply for the TMSAA.

Semester Rule

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

Repeating Rule

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

Grade Participation

Section 8. No student in a grade below the 6th grade can practice or participate as a member of a team in the Tennessee Middle School Athletic Association.

A school with teams in any combination of the Senior High Division, Junior High Division, and Middle School Athletic Association may certify a student for any division in which he or she may participate. A student may participate in only one division at any time. A student who has been certified as a member of the Middle School Athletic Association or Junior High Division may be advanced to a higher division at any time, provided the state office is advised to remove his or her name from the lower division eligibility report and a new eligibility report is filed to show that the student has advanced to a higher division.

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

Age Limit

Section 9. No student shall be eligible to compete in the Middle School Athletic Association during any school year if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 1.

Physical Examination and Parental Consent

Section 10. It is required that no student be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file with the principal a preparticipation medical evaluation form signed by a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the student has passed a physical examination, not prior to April 15, and that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics. In lieu of the form, the principal may accept a signed statement from the health care provider certifying that the student has passed a physical examination that encompasses all elements on the preparticipation medical evaluation form and attesting that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Students Changing Schools

Section 11. General Provisions.

Residence. A student changing schools for any reason, to be eligible, must live at home with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s), unless:

- (a) the student is moving to a boarding school and has no athletic record the previous twelve months in any sport;
- (b) the student is moving as a direct result of the dissolution of the student's home due to death;
- (c) the student is moving as a direct result of the divorce of the student's parents; or
- (d) the student is moving as a direct result of the separation of the student's parents, provided a complaint or petition for absolute divorce has been filed with a court having jurisdiction to grant the divorce.

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

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

Participation While Ineligible. If a student who is ineligible, under these provisions regarding students changing schools, competes in a contest while ineligible, then the student upon becoming eligible under these provisions will nonetheless be ineligible to participate in twice the number of contests in which he/she participated as an ineligible student or will be ineligible for the remainder of the season, whichever is less.

Section 12. Eligible Transfer Students.

Except as otherwise provided in Section 13 below, the following transfer students are eligible:

- a. The student has no athletic record in the previous twelve months in any sport sponsored by TSSAA;
- b. There has been a bona fide change of residence by the student's entire family unit in which (1) the old residence is outside the territory of the new school, (2) the new residence is outside the territory of the old school, *and* (3) the new residence is inside the territory of the new school. If such a change of residence occurs between school years, the student must transfer at the beginning of the school year to be eligible. If the change of residence occurs during the school year, the student may transfer without loss of eligibility (1) at the time his/her parents change residence; (2) at the end of the next report card period; (3) at the close of the semester or term; or (4) at the close of the school year;
- c. The student changes schools as a direct result of re-zoning or re-assignment of students by the local school system provided the student transfers at the time they are re-zoned or re-assigned;
- d. The student is moving from a boarding school where they are a boarder to the school serving the territory where his/her parents live, or vice versa, provided the student has attended the school he/she is leaving for a minimum of twelve months and provided the principal at the school he/she is leaving indicates in writing that the move is not for athletic or disciplinary reasons. The move must be at the beginning of the school year. (Note: The school must be outside the day school territory of the boarding school.);
- e. The student is transferring to a senior high school in the same system into the earliest grade offered at that senior high school, i.e. at the student's first opportunity to move to that school;
- f. The student who has been determined by a Court to be dependent and neglected and consequently changes residences and schools as a result of a Court order;
- g. The first time the student changes residence from one parent to the other as a result of a court ordered custody change, so long as the principal of the former school attests in writing that the move was not for athletic or disciplinary reasons; or

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

- h. The first time the student changes residence from a guardian to either or both parents as a result of a court ordered custody change, so long as the principal of the former school attests in writing that the move was not for athletic or disciplinary reasons;
- i. The student is attending school where the student's parent works as a full-time certified teacher, that parent takes a full-time job as a certified teacher at a different school, and the student transfers to the school where the parent takes the new job. The transfer must take place when the parent takes the job or, **if the job change occurs during the school year, the transfer must take place when then parent takes the new job or must be made at the beginning of the following school year;**
- j. The student who transfers from school A to school B and then returns to school A without having participated in any sanctioned sport at any level or without practicing three or more days in any sport at any level at school B. This must be verified in writing by the administration of school B.

Section 13. Ineligible Transfer Students.

The following transfer students are ineligible for a period of twelve months from the student's last participation date:

- a. A student who transfers without a bona fide change of residence;
- b. A student who transfers as a result of a change of residence is ineligible unless (1) the old residence is outside the territory of the new school, (2) the new residence is outside the territory of the old school, *and* (3) the new residence is inside the territory of the new school;
- c. If a student has been ruled eligible as a result of a change of residence, and the parents or guardian return to the former residence before the student has been enrolled in the new school for one complete school year (or twelve months if the transfer occurred during the school year), the student will be ineligible for twelve months from his/her last participation date;
- d. If a student has satisfied all other requirements for eligibility but was under discipline at his/her former school, the student shall be ineligible at the new school in all sports for twelve months or until the disciplinary charges have been removed, whichever is less. A student is considered to be "under discipline" if he or she has been suspended from school and/or placed in an alternative setting. The discipline has been removed if the school that has imposed the disciplinary action would allow the student to re-enroll.
- e. If a student with an athletic record transfers to a new school past the first date of enrollment, where an "athletic coaching link" existed in the past 12 months, that student is ineligible for 12 months at all levels in the specific sports where a linkage was present. Links may include (1) attendance at an individual camp (and then transferring); (2) playing on non-school (independent) teams (and then transferring to that coach's school); (3) transferring into a school where a former coach has been hired; and (4) transferring to a school where a former or current personal trainer or strength and conditioning coach is employed.

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

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

Section 14. Practice Rules.

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

A student who engages in three or more days of practice, after the first official TSSAA date of practice, with a school in which the student is enrolled shall be ineligible in that sport for that season if the student enrolls in another school without a corresponding change in the residence of the student's parents.

Section 15. Foreign-Exchange Programs.

A foreign exchange student is an international student who attends high school in the U.S. To be eligible for interscholastic athletics in the U.S., such student must be under the auspices of and be placed with a U.S. host family by an international student exchange program that has been accepted for listing by the Council on Standards for International Education Travel (CSIET) and be recognized by the U.S. Department of State. The

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

foreign exchange program must assign students to host families by a method that ensures that no student, or his/her parents, school or other interested party may influence the assignment for athletic or other purposes. The foreign exchange student may not be selected or placed on any basis related to his/her athletic interests or abilities.

A foreign exchange student is considered to be placed with a host family when written notice of placement is provided by the exchange organization to the student and his/her parents, and to the host family.

Neither the school the student attends nor any person associated with the school shall have input into the selection of the student.

No member of the school's coaching staff, paid or voluntary, shall serve as the host family.

The foreign exchange student must possess a current J-1 visa, issued by the U.S. State Department.

The foreign exchange student must comply with all eligibility requirements, with the exception of Article II, Section 11 (Residence).

The foreign exchange student may participate a maximum of one school year. If the student decides to stay beyond the year in which they participated then Article II, Section II (Residence) will be applied at the beginning of the next school year.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Section 16. Does not apply for the TMSAA.

Recruiting Rule

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

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

Guidelines for Understanding the Recruiting Rule

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

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

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

1. Offers of or acceptance of any special privileges not afforded to other students, whether athletes or not.
2. Offers of financial aid based on need to any prospective student-athlete by any member of the coaching staff. All financial aid questions should be referred to the principal or person in charge of financial aid.
3. Inducing or attempting to induce or encourage any prospective student-athlete to attend any member school for the purpose of participating in athletics even when the special remuneration or inducement is not given.
4. Any initial contact or prearranged contact by a member of a coaching staff or representative of the school and a prospective student-athlete in the seventh grade and above.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

5. Offering or acceptance of any item with school advertisement (shirt, caps, jackets, etc.) to a prospective student; provided that this example does not apply to items of only nominal value (pencils, etc.) that a school gives to all families that participate in the school's admission process.
6. Admitting students to athletic contests free of charge based on their participation in athletics with non-school teams.
7. Recognizing students at athletic contests based on their participation in athletics with non-school teams.
8. Coaches or their representatives calling, sending questionnaires, cards or letters, or visiting prospective student-athletes and/or their families at their homes. For purposes of the example, the terms "coach" assumes that the individual initiating the contact is acting in his or her capacity as a coach. If that person serves another role at the school and is not acting in his or her capacity as coach, then there may be no violation, unless the contact is really a method for what is in face the use of influence for athletic purposes.
9. Coaches or their representatives providing refreshments, gifts, and/or asking prospective student-athletes or family members for contact information.
10. Any social media post that encourages prospective student-athlete to consider attending the school.

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

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

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

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

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

1. With the permission of the administration of both schools, a coach may present programs or give information to elementary, junior high, or middle schools, which explain their total program. All information concerning a particular sport program must be given out at one or both of the schools. Any program must be presented at one or both schools. Those students in attendance or who receive information must be determined by the administration of both schools.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

2. Students on school teams and/or all students in a school or particular grade may be admitted to athletic contests free of charge provided it has been approved by the administration of both schools.
3. Students on school teams and/or all students in a school or particular grade may be recognized for their accomplishments at athletic contests provided it has been approved by the administration of those schools.

Amateur Rule

Section 18. A student who has never used and is not using his/her knowledge of athletics or his/her athletic skill for pay in the sports which this Association governs and who has always contested under his/her own name is an amateur. (Accepting money for officiating athletic contests or for working as an employee in a city or county recreation program is not a violation of this regulation.) A student who violates the amateur rule shall be ineligible for 12 months in the sport in which the violation occurs.

Such a student may be reinstated as an amateur after a period of one calendar year from the time he/she was declared ineligible has elapsed, provided he/she has not violated the amateur rule during this period.

Award Rule

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

Section 20. A member school that has any connection with the presentation of a forbidden award — such as assisting in the selection of the person to receive the award, permitting the award to be given at a school function, or holding the award for a student until he/she has graduated — shall be subject to suspension from tournament play in the involved sport(s) for one season.

Independent-Game Participation

Section 21. Once a student's name is listed on the school eligibility report, if a student participates in an independent game in that sport after the first contest date allowed and before the season has closed or his/her name has been removed from the eligibility report at the request of the school principal, the student shall be ineligible at the varsity level as explained below.

Any organized game in which players not registered with TMSAA participate – regardless of whether admission is charged - is considered as an independent game. Once a violation of this rule has been confirmed, the student will be ineligible for the remainder of the season in that sport.

A student's name may be removed from the school's eligibility list upon written request of the principal prior to the first official contest date allowed in that sport without penalty. After the first official contest allowed, a student's name may be removed from the school's eligibility list upon written request of the principal, and he/she may then participate as an independent without penalty. If a principal requests the state office to remove a student's name after the first official contest date allowed in that sport, such student may not again be certified during the season of that sport.

This rule only applies to basketball and football.

Specialized Camps

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

All-Star Games

Section 23 Does not apply for the TMSAA.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Special Cases Involving Hardship

Section 24. Except for the eligibility rules in regard to age and to the number of semesters in school, TMSAA shall have the authority to set aside the effect of any eligibility rule upon an individual student when:

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

The burden of establishing each of these elements to the Executive Director's satisfaction is upon the school at which eligibility is sought.

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

Home School Rule

Section 25. This bylaw establishes the minimum eligibility requirements for a home school student desiring to participate in extracurricular athletics at a member school:

A. Definitions

1. A "home school" is a school conducted by a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) for their own child. To be a "home school" for the purposes of this bylaw, the child must be registered with the LEA that the child would otherwise attend if he/she were not being home schooled. The home school must be operating in compliance with state law.
2. "Director of Schools" shall mean the chief administrative official of a public school system. In the case of a private school, the responsibilities of the Director of Schools are to be carried out by the Head of School or chief administrative official in that school.

B. Minimum Eligibility Requirements

1.
 - a. The student shall be enrolled in a home school conducted by his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
 - b. The student must be taking a minimum of five (5) academic subjects or the equivalent administered by the parent(s) or guardian(s) which count toward graduation.
 - c. The student must notify the Director of Schools (or Head of School, if a private school) by August 1 of the current school year.
2. The participating student must have a legal residence within the school district where he/she is registered, if registering with a public school. If registering with a private school, the student must have a legal residence within 20 miles of the private school and meet all tuition and financial aid requirements.
3. By August 15 of the school year, the parent or guardian must make application for participation in athletics to the principal of the member school in which the home school athlete wishes to try out and possibly participate.
4.
 - a. The home school athlete shall meet the same academic and conduct standards required of a member school student-athlete to participate in the athletic program.
 - b. The Director of Schools (Head of School for private schools) or their designee shall confer with the parent(s) or guardian(s) conducting the home school to determine that the home school student is academically eligible.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

- c. If a home school student's course of study does not include five (5) academic subjects or the equivalent, which are being administered by the parent/guardian, then the Director of Schools (Head of School, for a private school) or their designee and the parent/guardian shall develop an alternative measure of academic progress and submit it to the TMSAA for approval.
 - d. In no event shall a home school student be eligible who is not receiving the minimum four (4) hours per day of instruction administered by their parent/guardian.
 - e. In no event shall a home school student be eligible who has fallen three (3) or more months behind the student's appropriate grade level.
5. **The home school student must provide proof of liability insurance coverage which names the TSSAA as an insured party or the administration of the school must submit to TSSAA a copy of the TSSAA Indemnity Form signed by the guardian(s).**
 6.
 - a. The LEA may impose a participation fee for each sport in which a home school athlete participates. Such participation fee shall not exceed the fees or costs charged to or borne by students enrolled at the school and shall be paid in full prior to the first regular season contest.
 - b. A home school student participating at a private school must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules. For the purpose of this rule, "full tuition" is defined as the same amount paid by all other students enrolled and in regular attendance at the school.
 7. The home school student must meet all other TMSAA eligibility requirements.
 8. Eligibility issues may be appealed in accordance with the Bylaws of the TMSAA.
 9. The home school athlete must adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibility, performance, and code of conduct as other participants of the team.
 10. Ultimate decisions on team rosters are left to the member schools.

Transfer:

1. After participation at the first member school, any changes within member schools shall be governed by the transfer rule.
2. Any student who withdraws from a regular school program, which for the purpose of this policy is defined as a member school, to enroll in a home school education program and who is ineligible at the time of withdrawal from the regular school program due to his/her failure to meet academic or behavioral eligibility standards shall be ineligible to compete in interscholastic athletic competition as a home education athlete until such time as he/she has satisfied this home school bylaw as well as all other eligibility bylaws of TMSAA.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Article III Compliance

Effect of Agreeing to Join TMSAA - Sections 1 and 2

Enforcement - Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6

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

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

Effect of Agreeing to Join TMSAA

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

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

Enforcement

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

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

Section 5. (a) A violation of the TMSAA Constitution or Bylaws will not result in any investigation or penalty if it is inadvertent and the school first learns of and reports the violation after the conclusion of the following year's playoffs in the sport in which the violation occurred, (b) If it is determined that a school (or any of its administrators or coaches) had knowledge of a violation or possible violation of the TMSAA Constitution or Bylaws and failed to promptly self-report it as required in Section 15, or that a delay in self-reporting occurred as a result of a failure by the school to properly monitor its athletic program as required in Section 15, the provisions of subsection (a) shall not apply. In any such case, a violation may be investigated and penalties may be implemented regardless of when the violation occurred.

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

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

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

Recognizing this principle, unsportsmanlike conduct on the part of any of these groups cannot be accepted. As a result, the following actions will be taken when unsportsmanlike conduct occurs:

Section 7. Student Athletes Ejected For Unsportsmanlike Conduct In Any Sport

- A. In contests in which registered TMSAA officials are involved, the officials will immediately notify the state office with a written report if players are ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct. In soccer, this does not apply if the ejection occurs as the result of a player receiving a red card for his/her second caution. In sports where registered TMSAA officials are not used, it will be the responsibility of the principal and/or coach of the player involved to report this incident to the state office.
- B. On the ejection of the student-athlete, the school will be required to submit a report on the action of the player and any disciplinary action taken by the school. The minimum penalty will be as follows:
 1. Football – 1 Game Suspension
 2. Soccer – 2 Game Suspension except for serious foul play, the following offenses which shall result in a 1 Game Suspension:
 - a. A player anywhere on the field (other than a goalkeeper within his/her own penalty area) who deliberately handles a ball to prevent it from going into the goal.
 - b. A foul by a player against an opponent who is moving toward his/her offensive goal with an obvious opportunity to score.
 - c. There is no mandatory minimum penalty when a player is ejected for receiving a red card for his/her second caution.
 3. All other sports – 2 Game Suspension

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

If the student-athlete is finishing the highest ending grade in his/her school and cannot fulfill all of the disciplinary action due to the completion of the season, he/she will fulfill the action in the next sport in which they participate.

- C. **In addition to what is presently required when a player is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, a meeting shall be held with the player, coach, principal, and parent(s) or guardian(s) prior to the player's next competition. A Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form must be sent to the state office by the principal. Schools that have not submitted the required Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form by the end of the sports season in which the violation occurred shall be subject to a \$100 fine.**
- D. If a player is ejected for second time for unsportsmanlike conduct, a more severe punishment shall be imposed.
- E. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on the facts.
- F. In all situations where ejections occur for unsportsmanlike conduct, the individual will be removed from the next contest(s) following the one in which the ejection occurred.

Section 8. Substitutes Leaving Bench Area In An Incident or Fans Coming Onto The Field or Floor

- A. The school will be required to submit a report and video tape if available. All schools are instructed to inform individuals taping to continue taping all incidents.
- B. For substitutes leaving the bench area during an incident, the school will be fined a minimum of \$250.00. In addition, other non-monetary disciplinary action may occur, including but not limited to probation and/or restrictive probation for the sport in which the incident occurred.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

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

Section 9. Coaches Ejected For Unsportsmanlike Conduct

- A. The school and coach will be required to submit a written report of the incident.
- B. The school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contest(s) and pay a fine of \$250.00 or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.
- C. **In addition to what is presently required when a coach is ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct, a meeting shall be held with the coach, principal, and superintendent, or his/her appointed representative prior to the coach returning to his coaching position. A Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form must be sent to the state office by the principal. Schools that have not submitted the required Confirmation of Sportsmanship Meeting Form by the end of the sports season in which the violation occurred shall be subject to a \$100 Fine.**
- D.
- E. On any subsequent ejection by the same coach, the school will be given a choice of removing the coach for a specified number of contest(s) and pay a fine of **\$500.00** or face further disciplinary action. The school shall not allow the suspended coach to attend games while under suspension.
- F. If the coach is ejected from the contest and an assistant coach or an employee of the school involved is not available to continue as coach, the event is terminated and forfeited to the opponent.
- G. Other non-monetary penalties may be assessed by the Executive Director based on the facts.
- H. In soccer, coaches who are ejected for receiving a red card, or a second yellow card followed by a red card, are subject to the penalties above.

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

Section 11. Appeals

Any appeal request regarding the ejection of players or coaches shall be submitted in writing from the administrator of the school, stating which playing rule was misapplied. It should be accompanied by \$50.00. If the appeal is granted, the \$50.00 will be returned to the school.

Playing of Ineligible Student-Athletes

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

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

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

When a team plays an ineligible athlete in TMSAA tournaments or playoffs, the entire contest is forfeited, the team is removed from the tournament or playoff, and no team replaces that team in the tournament series.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Article IV Miscellaneous

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

Schools Which Member Schools May Play or Scrimmage

Section 1. A member of the Tennessee Middle School Athletic Association is permitted to play or scrimmage any secondary school team with grades 6-8 in regular season play.

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

Alumni games are not allowed.

Contests with Out-Of-State Teams

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

Tournaments and Meets

Section 3. All end of the year tournaments, bowl games, and meets must be approved by the TMSAA State Office.

Varsity Team

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

Eligibility Lists

Section 5. An eligibility list (TMSAA Portal Roster) containing the name of each student who is to participate during the season in each sport shall be filed online prior to the first contest. If a student whose name does not appear on the original eligibility list (TMSAA Portal Roster) wishes to become a member of the squad, the student's name shall be filed online before the student is allowed to participate.

Filing Schedule Reports

Section 6. Member schools shall file with the state office a copy of the schedule in each sport. Schedules shall be filed online prior to the date of the first contest.

Rules of the Game

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

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

Cheerleading squads must abide by the AACCA Safety Guidelines while practicing or participating in a TMSAA sanctioned event.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR

Section 8. For each sport there shall be a limit for the number of regular season contests, rules in regard to tournaments where applicable, rules in regard to off-season practice, and rules in regard to summer practice.

DEFINITIONS

Practice – Coach and player(s) together with instruction, teaching, coaching, etc. Try-outs are considered practice.

First Contest Date – The first contest date is set by the school administration.

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

Weight Training/Conditioning – Permitted at all times except during the **Dead Period**. Must be generic type program that would be beneficial to all students and not sport specific. Exception: In baseball and girls' softball, players may throw to condition arms. Sport specific skills cannot be taught. Only students who are enrolled and in regular attendance at the school may participate during the school year. ATTENDANCE CANNOT BE MANDATORY.

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

Preseason Scrimmages – A school cannot practice with or scrimmage another school after TSSAA first official day of practice until both schools have practiced a minimum of three days. No tournament format of any type may be used. Preseason scrimmages should look more like practice than games. Once a school participates in their first regular season contest, they cannot participate in a scrimmage.

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

50% Rule – Does not apply for the TMSAA.

Pre-Season Practice Rule – Begins the first day of school until the first official day of practice in that particular sport. **In basketball, individual instructions may be given to no more than three students per day. In soccer, individual instructions may be given to no more than six students per day. In baseball and girls' softball, individual instructions may be given to no more than five students per day.**

Off-season – Begins with the school's elimination from postseason tournament play in a particular sport and concludes with the end of the school year. **In football, girls' soccer, and soccer, individual instructions may be given to no more than six students per day. In basketball and girls' volleyball, individual instruction may be given to no more than three students per day. In baseball and girls' softball, individual instructions may be given to no more than five students per day.**

Tournament – All tournaments shall be held on consecutive days with no other regular season games being played during the tournament unless permission is granted by the Executive Director. A tournament is defined as a competition of three or more teams and three or more games, matches, etc., which progress to determine a winner. Tournaments shall count as two games/dates, notwithstanding the number of games/dates in which each team participates in a tournament. Post Season Tournaments or Bowl Games may be played, provided the plan is approved by the state office annually. Any post season tournament or play-off format that exceeds the number of regular season contests allowed must be approved by the state office.

Multiple Contests – In all individual sports (cross country, golf, track and field, tennis, and wrestling) individuals accompanied by a coach may enter varsity competition at a different site on the same time and date, and this will count as two days on the school's schedule.

Beginning Sport – Any school that is starting a sport for the first time may have five days of pre-season practice prior to the first season the sports begins. This would apply to girls' volleyball, girls' soccer, soccer, baseball, softball, and track and field. It would not apply to football and basketball since schools are allowed 10 days in the off-season in football and 5 days in the pre-season in basketball.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR

FOOTBALL

- **Pre-Season Practice Rule** does not apply.
- **Pre-Season Acclimatization:** Helmets and shoulder pads may be worn the Monday of NFHS Week 3. Each individual athlete must practice in helmets and shoulder pads for three days prior to practicing in full pads, regardless of when they start practicing.
- First Practice Date in pads is the Monday of NFHS Week 4.
- **Practice Regulations:** **1.** Practice time in pads may not exceed 3 hours in a single practice. **2.** If there are multiple practices in pads on a single day, only one session per day should include full contact. The total practice time in pads may not exceed 5 hours, with practices separated by at least three hours of rest in a cool environment. **3.** No student shall participate in multiple practices in pads on consecutive days. Helmets may be worn at any time. A practice would be considered a practice in pads if shoulder pads and/or football pants with or without pads are worn. If weather postpones a practice in pads, the practice may resume after conditions are deemed safe and the remainder of the allotted practice time may be completed. In addition, all TSSAA Football Practice Regulations must be followed.
- **Preseason Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 8 games.
- Maximum of 12 days of Off-Season practice within a 15 consecutive school day period and two interschool scrimmages are permitted. The first two days of practice must be in helmets only.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice. No pads are permitted. Helmets may be worn.
- There can only be 10 days of team-against-team competition which must occur after the conclusion of the **Dead Period** (Exception: Two of the 10 days may take place in June, provided the competition takes place in Tennessee.). Pads may not be worn during team-against-team competition.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR GOLF (BOYS' AND GIRLS')

- **Pre-Season Practice Rule** does not apply.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 15 dates.
- In the **Off-Season** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR GIRLS' VOLLEYBALL

- **Pre-Season Practice Rule** does not apply.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 20 matches.
- **Off-Season** practice is not allowed.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR CROSS COUNTRY (BOYS' AND GIRLS')

- **Pre-Season Practice Rule** does not apply.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 12 dates.
- In the **Off-Season** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR GIRLS' SOCCER

- **Pre-Season Practice Rule** does not apply.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 12 matches.
- **Off-Season** practice is not allowed.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR BASKETBALL (BOYS' AND GIRLS')

- **Pre-Season Practice** is not allowed.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is **20** games.
- Maximum of ten days of **Off-Season** practice within a 15 consecutive school day period.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR WRESTLING

- As far as **Pre-Season Practice**, there are no restrictions.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 12 dates.
- In the **Off-Season** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR GIRLS' WRESTLING

- As far as **Pre-Season Practice**, there are no restrictions.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 12 dates.
- In the **Off-Season** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR BASEBALL

- **Pre-Season Practice** is not allowed.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 18 games.
- **Off-Season** practice is not allowed.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR GIRLS' SOFTBALL

- **Pre-Season Practice** is not allowed.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 18 games.
- **Off-Season** practice is not allowed.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR TRACK AND FIELD (BOYS' AND GIRLS')

- As far as **Pre-Season Practice**, there are no restrictions.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 8 dates. Each meet counts as one date.
- In the **Off-Season** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR TENNIS (BOYS' AND GIRLS')

- As far as **Pre-Season Practice**, there are no restrictions.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 15 matches. Each tournament counts as two matches.
- In the **Off-Season** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR SOCCER

- **Pre-Season Practice** is not allowed.
- There shall be a First Practice Date for each Sports Season. The First Practice Date for the Fall Season is the Monday, of NFHS Week 4. The First Practice Date for the Winter Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 13. The First Practice Date for the Spring Season is the Monday of NFHS Week 31. The Local Education Association will determine in which season each sport is played.
- **Scrimmage Rule** does apply.
- Maximum number of regular season contests is 12 matches.
- **Off-Season** practice is not allowed.
- In the **Summer** there are no restrictions in regard to practice.
- **Dead Period Rule** does apply.

Coaches and employees of a school are subject to the guidelines of the TSSAA Sports Calendar when working with students from his/her school.

Section 9. The sports season for a school shall end when the team has been eliminated from the TMSAA tournament series or has won the state championship. The sports season shall end for a school whose team does not enter the tournament series with the playing of the last regularly scheduled game.

Jamborees

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

- A. No team or participant shall play more than the equivalent of half of a game or contest.
- B. Registered TSSAA officials must be used.
- C. Schools participating in a jamboree must file the regular eligibility report (TMSAA Portal Roster) with the state office prior to participating.
- D. Schools must hold membership in TMSAA or membership in a Tennessee conference in order to be eligible to participate in a jamboree. (Out-of-state schools must obtain approval from their state association before participating.)

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

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

TMSAA Post Season Tournament Financial Guidelines

Section 11.

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

Filing of Tournament and Playoff Financial Reports

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

Awards

Section 13. TMSAA member schools may purchase awards from Crown Awards (sshea@crownavards.com or (800) 542-6044).

Use of Tobacco

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

Officials

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

Section 16. (a) For varsity contests, all officials must be assigned by a TSSAA approved local association. (b) These officials must be registered and approved by TSSAA. If a registered official who has been engaged for an athletic contest fails to appear, the principal of the home school may, with the approval of the visiting school, select an official for the contest. If this is done, the principal of the home school must mail to the Executive Director within 48 hours evidence showing that a registered official was employed for the game and that the official did not appear. The principal of the home school shall give the name and address of the registered official who was employed to officiate the game, and the name and address of the non-approved official used as a substitute.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

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

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

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

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

Bond

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

Amendments

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

TENNESSEE SECONDARY SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1.

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

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

2.

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

A. Yes.

3.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook
TENNESSEE MIDDLESCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
BYLAWS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Membership

1.

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

A. Membership dues are \$300.00 annually, which includes catastrophic insurance.

Sponsored Sports

1.

Q. A school has both a boys' soccer program and a girls' soccer program. Can a female student participate in both the girls' program and the boys' program?

A. No. If the school has a girls' soccer program, then any female student may participate on the girls' soccer program. If a school does not have a girls' soccer program, then the student may participate on the boys' soccer team. This would also apply to basketball, bowling, cross country, golf, tennis, and track and field.

2.

Q. Can a female student participate in both baseball and girls' softball?

A. Yes. Baseball is not defined as a comparable sport to softball. A female student may participate in both girls' softball and baseball.

3.

Q. Can a boy participate on the girls' volleyball team?

A. No. Girls' volleyball, by its title, is a sport for girls only.

Responsibility of the Principal

1.

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

A. The principal or administrative head of the school.

2.

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

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

Non-Faculty Coaches and Classified Employees

1.

Q. If a non-faculty coach or a classified employee has successfully completed the ASEP Coaches Education Course and the TMSAA Online Coaches Training Session prior to May 15, 2013, must they complete the NFHS "Fundamentals of Coaching" and "First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches" courses?

A. No.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

2.

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

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

3.

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

A. Once a non-faculty coach or classified employee successfully completes the courses, he/she will not be required to take any additional courses.

4.

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

A. Information regarding the NFHS courses can be found at nfhslearn.com. Persons required to take these courses will first have to register as a new user at nfhslearn.com. This can be done by selecting "Register" at the bottom of the gray "Sign In Here" box on the right side of the homepage. Participants will then select the two required courses from the "Courses" drop down menu in the red tool bar at the top of the page. Each participant must pay online with a credit or debit card when they register for the courses.

5.

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

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

6.

Q. Are retired educators considered non-faculty coaches?

A. No.

7.

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

A. Yes. However, it is not necessary for you to pay for cheerleading coaches. We only need the names for insurance purposes. Cheerleading coaches do not have to complete the NFHS “Fundamentals of Coaching” and “First Aid, Health, & Safety for Coaches” courses.

8.

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

A. Yes. Once they have been approved by the principal, superintendent, and/or local board of education, they can be submitted online. Also, the registration fee of \$25.00 per non-faculty coach must be submitted to our office.

9.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

10.

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

A. No.

11.

Q. As a first year teacher who is coaching, do I have any requirements?

A. No.

Enrollment and Attendance

1.

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

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

Academic Rules

1.

Q. What is the academic rule in middle school?

A. To be eligible to participate in athletic contests a student shall have been academically promoted to the next higher grade. Any student repeating a grade is ineligible to participate. A student who is ineligible at the beginning of the school year may gain eligibility the second semester by passing five (5) subjects or the equivalent the preceding semester provided the student is not repeating the same grade.

2.

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

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

3.

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

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

4.

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

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

5.

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

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

6.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

7.

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

A. Yes.

8.

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

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

9.

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

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

10.

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

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

11.

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

A. Such a case may be considered as a special case by the Executive Director provided the principal submits details in regard to the absence of the student. If the student is ruled eligible, that student shall be charged with a semester of attendance for athletic purposes, even though he/she attended less than forty days of the semester, or did not even enroll.

12.

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

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

13.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

14.

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

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

15.

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

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

16.

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

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

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

17.

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

A. No. A student is not eligible until the opening day of the second semester.

Semester Rule

1.

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

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

Grade Participation

1.

Q. When can a student begin participating as a member of a team in the Middle School Association?

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

Age Limit

1.

Q. Is a student whose fifteenth birthday falls on August 1 ineligible for participation in the Middle School Association?

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

2.

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

A. Yes.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

STUDENTS CHANGING SCHOOLS

1.

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

A. Such cases should be submitted to the Executive Director who will make a decision on the facts submitted.

2.

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

A. Such a student may be ruled eligible by the Executive Director if he is convinced that the guidelines as set forth in Article II, Section 24 have been met.

3.

Q. If an athlete with or without an athletic record lives with a guardian, instead of his/her parents, is the student eligible for athletic participation?

A. He/She may be approved by the Executive Director if the student has lived with the guardian for twelve months or longer. If the athlete has lived with his/her guardian, for a period of less than twelve months, he/she is ineligible unless approved by the Executive Director under the provisions of the hardship rule.

4.

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

A. No. A student must live with the new guardian, if other than their parent, for 12 months or longer.

5.

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

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

6.

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

A. No. The student will be ineligible until he/she has lived with his/her new guardian for twelve months.

7.

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

A. Yes.

8.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

9.

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

A. Yes, provided he/she has been enrolled in that school for a year or longer, provided no “undue influence” has been used to cause the student to continue in the same school, and provided the parents pay the expenses incurred as a result of the student not living at home.

10.

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

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

11.

Q. How are the words “change of residence” to be interpreted?

A. As moving from one community to another so as to justify a change of schools. Moving across the street or a few blocks away from the former residence, or similar moves, cannot be accepted as justifying a transfer to another school. TMSAA does not recognize “dual” residences (maintaining two homes, apartments, etc.)

12.

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

A. Some guidelines are, but not limited to:

1. Changing of mailing address 2. Disconnecting phone in previous residence 3. Disconnecting of utilities in previous residence 4. All furniture moved from previous residence 5. The original residence should be closed, rented, or disposed of and not used by family.

13.

Q. Is it possible for an athlete who does not live at home with his/her parents or guardians to become eligible?

A. Yes. After such a student has attended school for a full school year, and has lived in the community in which the school is located for a period of at least twelve months, the student's case may be submitted to the Executive Director for a ruling.

14.

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

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

15.

Q. A student with an athletic record the previous year lives in Town A. His/Her father gets work in Town B and decides it will be more convenient for his son or daughter to enter school in Town B since he/she can ride with him as he goes to and from work. Will such a student be eligible to participate on the school team of Town B?

A. No. There has been no change of residence.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

16.

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

A. No. The student is a transfer with an athletic record the previous year. His/Her parents have not changed residence. (This regulation is sometimes misinterpreted due to the statement that eighth grade participation does not count against a student. Such participation does not count as one of the four years he/she is allowed to participate while in high school, but the student is charged with an athletic record the previous year and cannot therefore transfer to another school unless there has been a corresponding change of residence on the part of his/her parents.)

17.

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

A. No. A student will be eligible twelve months from his/her last participation date. Example: A student last played basketball on January 16, 2015 at school A. That student would be eligible at school B on January 17, 2016.

18.

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

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

19.

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

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

20.

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

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

21.

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

A. Yes, provided the student possess a J-1 visa and is in a Foreign Exchange program which has been approved by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET). Students possessing an F-1 visa are ineligible at the varsity level until they have lived with the guardian for 12 months.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

22.

Q. An international student comes to live with a new guardian and enrolls in a school where the guardians reside. The student is not in a Foreign Exchange program approved by the CSIET. Is the student eligible?

A. No. A student must be in a Foreign Exchange program approved by CSIET. The student is ineligible at the varsity level but may be eligible at the junior varsity level provided he/she meets the requirements of Article II, Section 15.

23.

Q. An international student attends a TSSAA school and is in a foreign exchange program that is not approved by CSIET. Is the student eligible?

A. No. A student must be in a Foreign Exchange program approved by CSIET.

24.

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

A. No. As a result of the change of guardians the student must now comply with Article II, Section 11 and Article II, Section 12 in the same manner as all other students.

25.

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

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

26.

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

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

27.

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

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

28.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

29.

Q. A student attending School A was injured on September 10 in a varsity football game and was not able to participate in sports the rest of the school year. The student transfers to School B with no change of residence at the beginning of the following school year. The student wants to play football, basketball, and baseball at school B. When is the student eligible at the varsity level in each sport, assuming that the student meets all other eligibility requirements?

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

30.

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

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

Award Rule

1.

Q. If a student accepts cash, merchandise or other compensation in a sport sponsored by TMSAA will he/she lose his/her eligibility in that sport?

A. Yes, competing for anything of commercial value during the school year or during the summer vacation is a violation of the award rule. (An exception to this would be in bowling, golf, and tennis as regulated by USBC, USGA, and USTA Award Rules.)

Independent-Game Participation

1.

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

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

2.

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

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

3.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Home School Rule

1.

Q. Who is eligible to tryout, as a home school athlete, for a TMSAA member school team?

A. Only those who meet all ten criteria outlined within TMSAA's Home School Bylaw are eligible.

2.

Q. For a home school athlete to be eligible to try-out for a TSSAA member public school team must my child notify the LEA?

A. Yes.

3.

Q. Are there any requirements that the parent conducting the home school must meet for purposes of the TMSAA Bylaws?

A. Yes. First, the home school athlete must meet all ten criteria outlined within TMSAA's Home School Bylaw. Additionally, the parent-teacher must satisfy all state law requirements for the home school student to be eligible to try out for a TMSAA member school team.

4.

Q. What are the academic requirements for a home school athlete?

A. The academic courses must be approved by the local board of education (or private school) in compliance with state law. TMSAA does not regulate where or how any student athlete receives credit toward graduation. TMSAA is concerned with the following: (1) Are the participants enrolled in a minimum of five academic courses which have been approved by the school and/or school system? And (2) If taken at a member school would the course count towards graduation? If the answer to both questions is "yes", the home school athlete would meet the requirements set forth in the "Academic Rule" and "Home School" Bylaw.

5.

Q. What if a student takes four of the five academic courses at an independent home school, but registers and attends a non-public school for the fifth credit (i.e. science lab,) would this potential home school athlete be eligible under the Home School Bylaw?

A. Yes, provided the student meets the definition of the home school student by state law.

6.

Q. If a potential home school student wants to tryout for a TMSAA member school baseball team, what is the last date that the home school student can notify with the local school superintendent (or head of school if a private school)?

A. A home school student must notify the school superintendent or head of school by August 1 of the current school year, regardless of whether the student desires to participate in a fall, winter, or spring sport.

7.

Q. What is the last date that a home school student can make application for participation in athletics to the principal of the member school in which the athlete wishes to tryout and possibly participate?

A. August 15th of the school year in which they desire to participate.

8.

Q. Can a home school student tryout for a team prior to meeting all requirements of the rule in the TMSAA Bylaws?

A. No. All requirements of the rule must be met prior to the home school student trying out for a team, with the exception of the participation fee. If a participation fee is imposed by the LEA, the home school student would only be required to pay that fee only if they become a member of the team.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

9.

Q. What type of insurance, if any, does a home school athlete participating on a TMSAA member school team need to maintain?

A. The home school student must provide proof of liability insurance coverage which names the TMSAA as an insured party or the administration of the school must submit to TMSAA a copy of the TMSAA Indemnity form signed by the guardian(s). TMSAA Catastrophic Insurance will extend to the home school athlete as it does with all other student-athletes participating at a member school.

10.

Q. If the LEA imposes a participation fee, could the home school athlete be responsible for any additional monetary payments after he/she makes a particular team?

A. Yes, but this will be left to the LEA, and not TMSAA. Many LEAs charge an additional fee to all the athletes participating in a particular sport, such as golf. Some LEAs charge an equipment fee or uniforms fee, while other LEAs require athletes to raise a certain amount of money with fundraising. If the non-home school student athlete is being held responsible for monetary contributions, the home school athlete can be held responsible for those same monetary contributions, which will vary within LEAs.

11.

Q. If a home school athlete makes the roster of a TMSAA member school team in football, basketball, and baseball, what is the participation fee?

A. The answer will vary by LEA. The maximum amount that the home school athlete could pay shall not exceed the fees or costs charged to or borne by students enrolled at the school.

12.

Q. If a home school athlete wants to participate on a TSSAA member private school team, what must the home school athlete do?

A. (1) The student must notify the local Board of Education regardless of where they wish to tryout. (2) The home school athlete must notify the head of school on or before August 1 of the current school year. (3) Additionally, the home school athlete must pay full tuition and abide by all financial aid rules.

13.

Q. If a student has dropped out, withdrawn, or been expelled from a TMSAA member school, will that student be eligible to participate at another TMSAA member school as a home school athlete?

A. No. If the student was expelled then he/she would be carrying a discipline record which makes them ineligible for one year or until the disciplinary charges have been removed. If the student dropped out or withdraws from school he/she would be subject to the TMSAA's transfer rules.

14.

Q. If a home school athlete tries out for a TMSAA member school team, is the home school athlete automatically on the roster?

A. No, like all sports rosters, the ultimate decisions are left to the member schools regarding the athletes that make the team as well as the amount of playing time that each athlete receives.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

Schools Which Member Schools May Play or Scrimmage

1.

Q. What schools may a member school of TMSAA play or scrimmage during regular season?

A. TMSAA member schools may play or scrimmage the following:

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

2.

Q. Who can a member school of TMSAA not play during regular season?

A. Any non-school team. Examples would be a club team, recreational park league team, or any type of independent team.

Contests with Out-Of-State Teams and Interstate Tournaments

1.

Q. May a TMSAA school participate in interstate tournaments or meets that have not been sanctioned?

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

Varsity Teams

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

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

TMSAA SPORTS CALENDAR

1.

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

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

2.

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

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

3.

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

A. Try-outs are considered practice. During the school-year, no school may hold try-outs prior to the first practice date as set forth by the TMSAA Sports Calendar. Try-outs in football and basketball may be held during spring practice but students enrolled and in regular attendance at that school may participate. Try-outs may be held in the summer during the time outlined for practice in that sport.

4.

Q. Does the 50% rule apply to middle schools?

A. No. The 50% rule applies only to high school teams.

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

5.

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

A. During the pre-season and off-season, individual instruction may be given to no more than three students per day in basketball and girls' volleyball. In football, girls' soccer, and soccer, individual instructions may be given to no more than six students per day. In baseball and girls' softball, individual instruction may be given to no more than five students per day. IT DOES NOT MATTER HOW MANY COACHES YOU HAVE IN A PARTICULAR SPORT. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS THAT ARE ALLOWED TO RECEIVE INSTRUCTIONS ARE GIVEN ABOVE.

6.

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

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

Awards

1.

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

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

Officials and Contracts with Officials

1.

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

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

2.

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

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

3.

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

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

4.

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

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

2020-21 TMSAA Handbook

COACHING REQUIREMENTS CHECKLIST

Classified Employees and Non-Faculty Coaches serving as Head Coaches

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

Classified Employees and Non-Faculty Coaches serving as Assistant Coaches

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

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

Middle School Non-Faculty Coaches

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

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