

2026-27 TSSAA SPORTS CALENDAR MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION

DEFINITIONS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

Scrimmage Rule – After the TSSAA first official day of practice in all sports, a school can practice with or scrimmage another school. Once a school has played their first game, there can be no more scrimmages. (Applies to High School & Middle School Division). In the high school division a school may have a maximum of four scrimmages or two scrimmage dates or one scrimmage date and two scrimmages (A scrimmage date is defined as more than two schools scrimmaging on the same day). **If registered TSSAA officials are used for a scrimmage, the schools are subject to the same sportsmanship requirements and penalties that apply to regular season contests.**

Summer – The period of time from the end of the school year until the Monday of NFHS Week 4 (opening day of practice).

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 progresses to determine a winner. Regular season tournaments shall count as two games/dates, notwithstanding the number of games/dates in which each team participates in a tournament. Postseason tournaments or bowl games may be played, provided the plan is approved by the state office annually. In a sport that does not have a state championship, any postseason tournament or play-off format that exceeds the number of regular season contests must be approved by the state office.

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

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

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

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION SPORT SPECIFIC CALENDARS

Sport	Maximum Number of Regular Season Contests	Sectional Completion Date	State Championship Dates
Baseball	20 Games	Sat., NFHS Week 45	Tues. & Wed., NFHS Week 46
Basketball	20 Games	Sat., NFHS Week 31	Fri. & Sat., NFHS Week 32
Cross Country	12 Dates	Sat., NFHS Week 12	Sat., NFHS Week 13
Football (See Below)	8 Games	N/A	N/A
Girls' Flag Football	12 games	N/A	N/A
Golf	15 Dates	N/A	TMSGA event in Spring
Lacrosse	12 Games	N/A	N/A
Soccer	12 Matches	Sat., NFHS Week 45	Wed. & Thurs., NFHS Week 46
Soccer (Girls)	12 Matches	Sat., NFHS Week 13	Thurs. & Fri., NFHS Week 14
Softball (Girls)	20 Games	Sat., NFHS Week 45	Tues. & Wed., NFHS Week 46
Tennis	15 Matches	N/A	USTA event in Fall
Track & Field	8 Dates	Sat., NFHS Week 45	Mon., NFHS Week 47
Volleyball (Girls)	20 Matches	Sat., NFHS Week 13	Thurs. & Fri., NFHS Week 14
Wrestling	12 Dates	Sat., NFHS Week 23	Sat., NFHS Week 24

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

Football Pre-Season Acclimatization: Helmets and shoulder pads may be worn the Monday of the week prior to the first practice date (NFHS Week 2). Each individual athlete must practice in helmets and shoulder pads for three days prior to practicing in full pads, regardless of when they start practicing. Practice in pads is permitted on the first practice date provided pre-season acclimatization has been completed by each individual athlete.

Football Practice Regulations:

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

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

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