



Middle/Junior High School Athletic Manual

**Public Schools of North Carolina
State Board of Education
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction
Academic Services and Instructional Support**

**K-12 Program Areas
K-12 Curriculum and Instruction Division**

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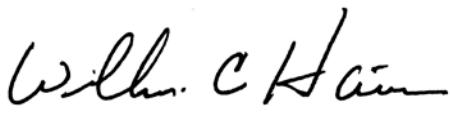
Foreword

A Commitment to Our Children

General Statute 115C-47(4) makes it the responsibility of the local board of education to regulate extracurricular activities, including athletics. This statute reads as follows: "Local boards of education shall make all rules and regulations for the conducting of extracurricular activities under their supervision, including a program of athletics..., provided that all interscholastic athletic activities shall be conducted in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the State Board of Education." General Statute 115C-47 reflects our state's commitment for youth to be involved in activities that enhance physical, social and emotional well-being.

This revision of the handbook for middle/junior high school athletic programs has been completed to assist local boards of education and their staffs in carrying out the intent and purpose of the statute cited. Recommendations were made by many of you who served in some capacity to the revision of this manual. It is our intent that this manual provides guidelines for LEAs to provide consistency, sportsmanship and fairness for all children who choose to participate in interscholastic athletics. As you would expect, a major focus of the handbook is the safety of the participants.

The effectiveness of any program is based primarily on the understanding and commitment of those who are charged with the responsibility for its implementation. I am convinced that you have that understanding and commitment. It is our hope and belief that this handbook will be an invaluable tool as you continue to improve a program that is already recognized as excellent.



William Harrison, Chairman
State Board of Education



June St. Clair Atkinson, State Superintendent
North Carolina Department of Public Instruction

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Interscholastic Athletics

Interscholastic athletics have a vital place in the total educational program when they are effectively planned, organized, administered, supervised, and evaluated. Through school athletics, many of the interests and needs of young people can be served better than through any other channel. For this reason, it is important that school administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community personnel determine what educational objectives seem most desirable and plan athletic programs in keeping with the overall purposes of the school program. These additions should be printed in handbook format and provided to all member schools to ensure compliance and fairness.

Underlying every phase of the athletic program should be a primary concern for the athlete as a person, student, and a member of society. At all times, emphasis should be placed upon progressing levels of maturity both physical and emotional, upon integrity both personal and social, and upon responsibility, both for one's self and to all involved in the athletic program. Any play between organized teams or individuals from different schools is defined as an "interscholastic athletic contest" and shall be subject to all regulations pertaining to such contests.

Statutory provisions state that "Local boards of education shall make all rules and regulations necessary for the conducting of extracurricular activities in the schools under their supervision, including a program of athletics, where desired, without assuming liability therefore provided, that all interscholastic athletic activities shall be conducted in accordance with rules and regulations prescribed by the State Board of Education."

G.S. 115C-47(4)

State Board of Education Regulations

Realizing the need for acceptable standards for the operation of sound athletic programs on a statewide basis, county and city superintendents, principals, and coaches of the state devised and recommended minimum regulations for consideration by the North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE). The standards, "Regulations Governing Athletes," (page 7) were first adopted by the North Carolina SBE on June 5, 1952. These regulations, which are kept up-to-date through frequent amendments, have been considered as minimum standards for each local administrative unit to abide by or surpass in its efforts to maintain the highest possible standards relative to its interscholastic athletic program.

State Board of Education Administrative Code .0202 INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

- (a) Only students in grades 7-12 may participate in interscholastic athletic competition. In order to qualify for public school participation, a student must meet the following requirements:
 - (1) The student must meet the residence criteria of G.S. 115C-366(a). The student may participate only at the school to which the student is assigned by the LEA or, if over the age requirements, the school to which the student would be assigned at the next higher grade level.
 - (2) The student must meet age requirements at each grade level to participate. The principal must have evidence of the legal birth date of the student. A student who is ineligible to participate at one grade level due to age is eligible to participate at the next higher grade level only. However, no student may participate at the high school level for more than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the student's first entry into grade nine or participation on a high school team, whichever occurs first.
 - (A) A student is eligible to participate in high school athletic contests during a school year if the student does not reach the 19th birthday on or before August 31 of that school year.
 - (B) A student shall not participate on a ninth grade junior high school team if the student becomes 16 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year.
 - (C) A student shall not participate on a seventh or eighth grade team if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year.
 - (3) In grades 9-12, the student must pass at least five courses (or the equivalent for non-traditional school schedules) each semester to be eligible anytime during the present semester and meet promotion standards established by the LEA. In grades 7 and 8, the student must pass at least one less course than the number of required core courses each semester and meet promotion standards established by the LEA. Regardless of the school organization pattern, a student who is promoted from the eighth grade to the ninth grade automatically meets the courses passed requirement for the first semester of

- the ninth grade.
- (4) The student must receive a medical examination each year by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, subject to the provisions of G.S. 90-9, 90-18.1, and 90-18.2.
- (5) The student may not participate after any of the following:
- (A) graduation;
- (B) becoming eligible to graduate;
- (C) signing a professional athletic contract;
- (D) receiving remuneration as a participant in an athletic contest; or
- (E) participating on an all-star team or in an all-star game that is not sanctioned by the association of which the student's school is a member. The student is ineligible only for the specific sport involved.
- (b) Each principal of a school, which participates in interscholastic athletics must certify a list of eligible students for each sport.
- (c) Any student-athlete, coach or school official in grades 7-12 who is ejected from any athletic contest shall at least be penalized as follows:
- (1) for the first offense, the person shall be reprimanded and suspended for the next game at that level of play (varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level;
- (2) for a second offense, the person shall be placed on probation and suspended for the next two games at that level of play (varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level;
- (3) for a third offense, the person shall be suspended for one calendar year;
- (4) a coach who is suspended at any level of grades 7-12 (middle school, junior high or high school) may not coach in any other grade level in grades 7-12 during the period of suspension.
- (5) Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sport season to sport season. If no member of the school's coaching staff is present to assume an ejected coach's duties, the contest shall be terminated by a forfeit.
- (d) LEAs may allow their schools to belong to the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA), which has established as a minimum the rules adopted by the SBE. The NCHSAA may waive any eligibility requirement contained in this Rule, except the age requirement, if it finds that the rule fails to accomplish its purpose or it works an undue hardship when applied to a particular student. The NCHSAA may enforce penalties for the violation of this Rule at the high school level.
- (e) The LEA which has jurisdiction over the high school may impose additional penalties. LEAs or conferences may adopt and impose penalties at the middle and junior high school levels.
- (f) The *Middle/Junior High School Athletic Manual* is available at the following link: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/healthfulliving/athletics/>.

The previously stated rules apply to middle/junior and high school athletics, but certain explanatory notes and technical modifications are necessary in utilizing these rules in governing middle/junior high school athletics. The SBE establishes the rules and regulations for the following purposes:

- (1) To maintain consistency in the governance of the middle/junior high school athletic program throughout the state
- (2) To enhance opportunities for fair play and competition
- (3) To promote safety for students who choose to participate in athletics at the middle/junior high school level
- (4) To impose sanctions on schools, coaches, players, spectators, officials and anyone involved in the athletic program who do not adhere to the rules and regulations and subsequently violates the intent or substance of these rules and regulations.

Middle/Junior High School Athletic Eligibility

Only students in grades seven through nine may participate in middle school (7th and 8th grades) or junior high school (7th, 8th and 9th grades) interscholastic athletic competition, provided ninth grade is housed in the same building with seventh and eighth grades. In order to qualify for public school participation, a student must meet the following requirements:

Academics

In grades seven and eight, the student must pass at least one less course than the number of required core courses each semester and meet promotion standards established by the LEA.

If an athlete is "academically eligible" or "academically ineligible" at the beginning of any semester, that status is retained throughout the full semester. It is the responsibility of the school principal to check the academic status of each student/athlete enrolled in school at the beginning and close of a semester.

NOTE: An athlete becomes eligible or ineligible on the first day of the new semester.

Age

The principal must have evidence of the legal birth date of the student. A student shall not participate on a seventh or eighth grade team if the student becomes 15 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year.

A student shall not participate on a ninth grade junior high school team if the student becomes 16 years of age on or before August 31 of that school year. A middle/junior high school student who is overage for middle/junior high school play shall be eligible for senior high school participation.

Ninth graders can be divided so that some play with the seventh and eighth grades at the middle school, provided the ninth grade is housed at the same building. Others play at the senior high level, depending upon local policy. Once a student begins practicing with a high school team, he/she may not, at a later date, move down to the seventh, eighth, or ninth grade (junior high school) team. A ninth grade student beginning play with the junior high school team may, at a later date, move to the high school team, but could not return to the junior high school team.

Attendance

A player must have attended school at least 85% of the previous semester. A student must, at any time of any game in which he or she participates, be a regularly enrolled member of the school's student body, according to local policy. If there is no local policy, "regularly enrolled" is defined as enrolled for at least one-half of the "minimum load." It is recommended the student be in school the day of the contest.

Eligibility Lists

Eligibility lists shall be certified with the signature of the principal and filed with the local superintendent (or his/her designee) prior to the first game or contest in that sport. One copy shall be kept on file in the office of the principal. All eligible students shall be included and all information must be complete and accurate when certified by the principal. It is recommended to keep these lists on file for at least three years.

Promotion

Promotion is defined as progressing to the next grade. In grades seven and eight, the student must meet state and local promotion standards each semester. This includes the academic requirement listed above. Regardless of the school organization pattern, a student who is promoted from the sixth grade to the seventh grade automatically meets the courses passed requirement for the first semester of the seventh grade.

Residence

The student must meet the residence criteria of G.S. 115C-366(a). The student may participate only at the school to which the student is assigned by the LEA. Transfers within the same administrative unit may be governed by the local Board of Education policy. A student transferred from one administrative unit to another by mutual agreement, as provided in G.S.115C-366.1 (F), is immediately eligible for athletic participation in the receiving unit.

Semester Rule

No student may be eligible to participate at the middle school level for a period lasting longer than four (4) consecutive semesters, beginning with the student's entry into seventh

grade. The principal shall have evidence of the date of each player's entry into the seventh grade and monitor the four (4) consecutive semesters.

Sports Pre-participation and Medical Examination Form

In order to be eligible for practice or participation in interscholastic athletic contests, the student must receive a medical examination once every 365 days by a duly licensed physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant, subject to the provisions of G.S.90-9, 90-18.1, and 90-18.2. The recommended Sports Pre-participation and Medical Examination Form can be found at: <http://www.nchsaa.org/pages/464/health-safety-sports-medicine/>.

Students absent from athletic practice for five or more consecutive days due to illness or injury must receive a medical release from a physician licensed to practice medicine before readmittance to practice or contests. Students with potential head injuries must receive a medical release by a physician licensed to practice medicine before readmittance to practices or contests.

It is recommended that players be covered by adequate medical and accident insurance and that medical aid be immediately available at all times. Schools should have medical release forms on site at athletic events in case medical treatment is required.

General Rules and Regulations Governed By The State Board of Education

The SBE authorizes the LEA or the conference of which the school is a member to administer the rules and regulations. **LEAs have the authority to be more strict than State Board of Education policy if they so choose.**

Administration and Supervision of Games

The school administration is responsible for adequate supervision of athletic contests to secure safety and proper conduct of athletes, coaches, fans, and officials. It is recommended that officials be escorted to safety at the end of every game.

Cheerleading

Cheerleading is an activity that comes under the control of the LEA and conference. It is recommended that LEAs and schools follow the National Federation of State High School Associations' spirit rules and guidelines. See the appendix for resource information.

Composite Teams

When an administrative unit is experiencing difficulties in organizing interscholastic athletic teams at the middle/junior high school levels, a local board of education may form composite teams with students from different schools within the administrative unit.

Conforming Rules

To align middle/junior high school athletic rules with rules governing high school athletics, the following shall apply:

- In defining participation in middle/junior high school athletics, dressing and sitting on the bench shall be interpreted as playing in the game.
- Summer school attendance shall not be counted in determining percentage of attendance for athletic eligibility.
- Girls are allowed to participate on a boys' interscholastic athletic team where the school does not have a girls' team in the same sport. (Fast pitch softball is not the same as baseball).
- Boys are not allowed to participate on any girls' team, as defined by interpretation of the Office for Civil Rights interpretation of Title IX in 1994.

Filming and Videotaping

Filming or videotaping of a contest by non-participating schools, in any sport, is considered unsportsmanlike conduct, unless agreed upon by competing teams.

Games and Contests

There shall be no athletic practice or contest during the regular school day. This means no individual or team practice or contest may begin until after the last regularly scheduled instructional period. No authorized practice, contest, or workouts may occur during the work day for teachers during the ten-month teaching calendar, and coaches may not use their vacation or leave time to hold a practice during the teacher work day. Once the students' school calendar year ends, non-mandatory teacher workdays are governed by local policy. This rule also applies to non-faculty coaches. Exception: if a superintendent gives permission for schools in his/her unit to practice prior to the end of a work day DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER ONLY. Team practice in any sport is prohibited after the sports season ends until the first day following the final day of the school year.

Evening contests and/or games shall start no later than 7:00 p.m. when followed by a school day. The exception is for tournaments.

There shall be no Sunday practice or contest in any sport. This regulation includes the assembling of members of athletic squads for purposes of viewing films, chalk talks, or other matters pertaining to coaching.

One (1) pre-season scrimmage is permitted with other school teams in each sport. Non-school team scrimmages are not permitted in any sport. The scrimmage does not count as one of the seven (7) football regular season games or one of the 14 regular season contests in a specific sport.

Season Limitations: Teams and individuals shall not participate in more than seven (7) football games and fourteen (14) athletic contests during the regular season in baseball, basketball, cross country, golf, gymnastics, soccer, softball, tennis, track and field, volleyball, and wrestling. Teams and individual students are permitted to participate in one school tournament or play-off championship game in each sport. Conferences may play up to two additional games (except football that may play one) in lieu of a conference tournament.

Weekly Limitations: Teams and/or individuals may participate in only one regularly scheduled football game per week. In other sports, students may participate in two regularly scheduled contests per week, except as noted in Sports Regulations for the sports of baseball, softball and volleyball. During tournament play a third game will be permitted.

Emergency Exception: A single contest postponed because of an emergency may be rescheduled and played in addition to the number of contests permitted per week. This decision should be made by the principals of both schools in conjunction with conference officers.

Make-up Games: Any single contest postponed because of emergency reasons (e.g. inclement weather, epidemics, mid-term exams, etc.) may be rescheduled and played, in addition to the regular number of contests allowed per week. With the exception of volleyball and softball games, no team or athlete shall play more than three games in one sport per week. Postponed games will be made up in the order of postponement on the next possible date. Saturday will not be used as a makeup day, unless mutually agreed upon by the principals of the two schools involved.

Game Rules

Schools shall use the adopted rules in this manual from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction. The adopted rules are defined in each sport section. General Statute 115C-47(4) makes it the responsibility of the local board of education to regulate extracurricular activities, including athletics. **Thus, LEAs have the responsibility of monitoring National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) rules and guidelines and incorporating them into local policy yearly.**

Hardships

The local board of education or the conference of which the school is a member shall have the authority, in response to a request of the principal of the school, to set aside the effect of any (other than the age) eligibility rule upon the individual student when, in its opinion, the rule fails to accomplish the purpose for which the rule is intended or when the rule works undue hardship upon the student. Decisions of local boards of education or conferences regarding hardship are final.

NOTE: It is to be understood that ordinary cases in ineligibility shall not be considered as coming under the hardship category, and that the conditions which cause the student to fail to meet the eligibility requirements, must have been beyond the control of the school, the student and/or his/her parents. Injuries, illnesses, or accidents which cause the student to fail to meet one of the basic requirements are possible causes for hardship consideration.

Head Coaches

In accordance with SBE policy, the head coach of an interscholastic athletic team shall be a bona fide member of the faculty and as such, shall be responsible for supervision of athletic teams during all practices, games, and trips. The local superintendent may, with the concurrence of the local board of education, designate non-faculty persons as head coaches until such time as a suitable bona fide faculty member becomes available. Any person paid or employed as a principal shall not coach interscholastic athletic teams. The head coach is responsible for the conduct of assistant coaches, players, and bench personnel.

Inclement/Hot Weather Guidelines for Outdoor Sports

All outdoor sports should follow the Inclement/Hot Weather Guidelines found at: <http://www.nchsaa.org/page.php?mode=privateview&pageID=575>. These guidelines are reviewed/revised annually by the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee of the NCHSAA.

Insurance Coverage

It is recommended that student athletes have proper insurance coverage. A Lifetime Catastrophic Liability Insurance plan is available to middle and junior high athletes through the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

Officiating

Officials are recommended to be obtained through a satellite-booking agent of the NCHSAA. Complaints about officiating are to be filed with the booking agent making the assignment. To eliminate any real or perceived conflict of interest, booking agents should not officiate in the sport which they are responsible for booking. Officials should be instructed to inform school officials when ejections occur. It is recommended that officials be escorted to safety at the end of play in all games.

Out-of-State Competition

The local superintendent shall make the decision involving schools playing in out-of-state athletic contests.

Rules Clinics

It is recommended that coaches attend a rules clinic in the sport he/she coaches.

Sanitary And Safety Measures

While the risk for blood-borne infectious diseases, such as HIV/Hepatitis B, remains low in sports, proper precautions are needed to reduce the risk of spreading diseases. Along with these issues are skin infections that occur due to skin contact with competitors and equipment.

Universal Hygiene Protocol for All Sports

- Shower immediately after all competition and practice
- Wash all workout clothing after practice
- Wash personal gear, such as knee pads, periodically
- Don't share towels or personal hygiene products with others
- Refrain from (full body) cosmetic shaving

Infectious Skin Diseases

Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include:

- Notify guardian, athletic trainer and coach of any lesion before competitor practice. Athlete must have a health-care provider evaluate lesion before returning to competition.
- If an outbreak occurs on a team, especially in a contact sport, consider evaluating other team members for potential spread of the infectious agent.
- Follow NFHS or NCHSAA guidelines on "time until return to competition." Allowance of participation with a covered lesion can occur if approved by health-care provider and in accordance with NFHS or NCHSAA guidelines.

Blood-Borne Infectious Diseases

Means of reducing the potential exposure to these agents include;

- Bleeding must be stopped immediately and all wounds covered. All blood-soaked clothing must be removed before continuing competition or practice. Contaminated clothing must be cleaned before using again.
- Athletic trainers or caregivers need to wear gloves and take other precautions to prevent blood-splash from contaminating themselves or others.
- Immediately wash contaminated skin or mucous membranes with soap and water.
- Clean all contaminated surfaces and equipment with disinfectant before returning to competition. Be sure to use gloves with cleaning.
- Any blood exposure or bites to the skin that break the surface must be reported and evaluated by a medical provider immediately.

These procedures were obtained and revised by the NFHS (August 2005)

NOTE: A bucket or squeeze bottle with a 10 percent bleach solution or isopropyl alcohol solution and rubber gloves should be placed at each sporting event for cleaning purposes. Surfaces should be cleaned using the above solution and disposable clean-up materials should be placed in a sealed plastic bag for discarding.

NOTE: It is important that any time there is blood present, even on uniforms, that it is treated with care regarding its ability to transmit infectious diseases.

Skill Development Sessions

Off-season skill development sessions are allowed during the school year for seventh and eighth graders. Skill development sessions shall not be held during any tryout period of an in-season sport. All skill development sessions must be voluntary and open to all athletically eligible students. At no time may a coach require of any student off-season skill development sessions as a measure of potential or continued participation on a team. Skill development sessions are restricted in number of participants to one less than a team, on a daily basis. Any team practice or game environment created in an off-season skill development session is prohibited during the students' school calendar year. Team practice in any sport is prohibited after the sports season ends until the first day following the final day of the school year. The primary focus of off-season skill development should be on individual student athletes, not team. During the summer, working with individuals, including rising and eligible seventh and eighth graders, will be allowed, as long as it is not required.

NOTE: Seventh and eighth graders are not permitted to participate in high school open facility or skill development sessions during the school year.

NOTE: The maximum number of participants on a daily basis is: football (21), basketball (4), baseball (8), volleyball (5), tennis (4), soccer (10), golf (3), softball (8), wrestling (8), track (6), and cross country (4), lacrosse men (9), and lacrosse women (11).

Sports Medicine

All eligible students must submit to the school athletic director a completed North Carolina High School Athletic Association Sport Pre-Participation Examination Form prior to participation in any practice or athletic contest. A copy of the Sport Pre-Participation Examination Form can be found at:
<http://www.nchsaa.org/pages/464/health-safety-sports-medicine/>.

In accordance with the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act:

Any student athlete who suffers a head injury that results in a concussion or ANY symptoms associated with a concussion must submit to his/her coach or athletic director a

completed and signed NCHSAA Concussion Return to Play Form. A copy of the required Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act forms can be found at <http://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.edu/GfellerWallerLaw/gwlaw.html>.

Sports Seasons

All sports may be played during any season of the school year and run as follows:

- Fall - Beginning of the fall semester to November 15
- Winter - October 15 to March 1
- Spring - February 1 to the end of the spring semester

Although dates permit, sports seasons should not overlap whenever possible.

Students with Identified Disabilities

Students with identified disabilities are eligible for participation in athletic programs at the middle/junior high school level. Ninth graders participating in high school athletics are governed by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

- Participation in athletic team tryouts may not be denied a student with a disability, an IEP, or a 504 plan when accommodations or modifications are necessary to provide the student with an equal opportunity to benefit. For example, a deaf student would require an interpreter for the deaf.
- A student with a disability, an IEP, or a 504 plan must meet all requirements that apply to the regular education student.

Weight Training

Weight training programs are permitted for all students eligible for middle school athletics. All weight training and conditioning should be open to all eligible students but required of none. Personnel knowledgeable of weight training and conditioning for middle school students should be on hand at all times to observe and ensure proper techniques and practices are followed.

If high school weight rooms or other athletic facilities are used or shared with middle schools, the middle school student athletes shall not use such facilities at the same time as the high school student athletes.

NOTE: The school administration is responsible for providing adequate supervision of the off-season skill development and weight training sessions and their intended purposes.

Sports Regulations

Time Lines

All sports may be played during any season of the school year and run as follows:

Fall - Beginning of the fall semester to November 15

Winter - October 15 to March 1

Spring - February 1 to the end of the spring semester

Baseball

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

A team is limited to one single elimination tournament per season. This is not to exceed three contests in a week.

Adopted Game Rules

By conference adoption, middle school teams may use modified distances and should decide on a bat size for the conference play.

Doubleheaders

Teams are allowed to play two (2) contests in one day. When playing two (2) contests in a day, contests are limited to five (5) innings each, except to break a tie. No team or individual shall play more than three (3) contests in a week, i.e. Monday through Saturday. *Penalty:* Forfeit

Postponed and Suspended Contests

Any single contest postponed because of emergency reasons (bad weather, epidemics or other unavoidable mishaps) may be rescheduled and played in addition to the regular number of contests allowed. No more than three contests may be played in a single week, even with postponements and rescheduling. Postponed contests will be made up in the order of postponement on the next possible date (excluding Sunday). Saturday will not be used as a makeup day unless mutually agreed upon by the principals of the two schools involved. A contest called for any reason, where a winner cannot be determined, or any contest called at any time for mechanical failure (i.e., artificial lights, water systems, etc.) will be treated as a suspended contest. If the contest is to be completed, it will be continued from the point of suspension with the lineup and batting order of each team the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules of the contest. If more than four (4) innings have been played and a winner can be determined, the contest is over. In a situation where a team does not want to make up a

contest at all, the contest will be forfeited to the opponent.

If any rained-out baseball contest, that would affect the winning of a conference title is to be played, it shall be rescheduled on the same field (exception: suspended contests do not have to be rescheduled on the same field), unless changed by mutual agreement by the two schools.

This rule is effective upon mutual agreement of the competing schools or by conference adoption.

Pitching Limitation

A player is limited to pitching 10 innings Monday through Saturday. One pitch constitutes an inning pitched. (Schools should adopt conference rules to govern pitching outside of school in league play.)

NOTE: Violation of the pitching limitation rule is interpreted as the use of an ineligible player. The penalty is a forfeit of the game for which the ineligible player participated.

Basketball

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional games may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

A team is limited to one single elimination tournament per season. This is not to exceed three contests in a week.

Adopted Contest Rules

Contests involving only middle school students shall be played in six-minute quarters. Contests involving teams with combined ninth grade students with students in the eighth and/or seventh grade (junior high) may be played in eight-minute quarters. By conference adoption, either legal-size ball (girls or boys) may be used for boys' competition. A legal size girls' ball shall be used for girls' competition.

Cross Country

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament/Championship:

The number of tournaments/championships is limited to one (1).

Adopted Contest Rules

The maximum distance for middle/junior high school students is two (2) miles.

Football

Date of First Practice

Practice may begin no earlier than six (6) school days prior to the opening of the school term. A preseason physical conditioning week must be observed. This preseason week shall be as follows:

- The first five (5) days of practice shall be devoted entirely to physical conditioning activities. During the first two (2) days, helmets, T-shirts, shorts, and football shoes constitute acceptable dress, and no other football attire shall be worn. On days three (3), four (4) and five (5), complete football attire may be worn, but absolutely no body- to-body contact is permitted. Practice during the five (5) day period shall be limited to a one (1)-a-day period, not to exceed two (2) hours in length. The first two (2) days of this conditioning week are limited to calisthenics, kicking, throwing, running, and similar exercises. Arm shields may be used, but tackling or blocking dummies, charging sleds, or similar devices may not be used until days three (3), four (4), and five (5). Squad meetings, skull sessions, and film study are not allowed during the five-day period, since it shall be for the sole purpose of improving physical conditioning rather than football excellence.
- Contact activities may begin on the sixth (6th) day of practice i.e., as soon as the required physical conditioning phase of practice has been completed. Only one (1)-a-day contact session may be conducted and shall not exceed two (2) hours in length.
- It is recommended that water breaks be offered every 20 to 30 minutes and that the Inclement/Hot Weather Guidelines for Outdoor Sports in this manual be followed. It is also recommended that athletes do daily weigh-ins in order to monitor weight loss.

A player shall have participated in a minimum of eight (8) separate days of team practice, three (3) of which shall be in full pads and included body-to-body contact, before participating in a football contest or scrimmage with outside competition. The exception to this rule is athletes from other sports who play only as kickers. There are no other exceptions; to fulfill this requirement, these must be football practices.

It is also recommended that EMS be available on game days.

Tie Breaker

If at the end of the fourth (4th) quarter, the teams have identical scores, the tie may be resolved by the method of the ten (10) yard line overtime procedures as set forth by the National Federation Football Rules Book. Teams should notify booking agents regarding the rule that allows the Tie Breaker so he/she can inform the game officials.

Number of Regular Season Contests

No more than one (1) contest may be scheduled per week for a total of seven (7) contests. An individual is limited to only one (1) contest per week. Play-off/championship contests are not to be scheduled as a regular season contest. (Up to one additional contest may be played in lieu of a tournament.)

Play-offs/Championships

Play-offs/Championships are limited to one (1) post-season contest.

Adopted Contest Rules

Based on adopted contest rules, contests involving only students in the seventh and eighth grade (middle/junior high schools) shall be played in eight-minute (8) periods. Games involving teams with combined ninth grade students with students in the eighth and/or seventh grade (junior high) may be played in ten- minute (10) periods. A youth legal-size ball may be used in middle/junior high competition.

Summer Camp

During the entire time period between the end of football season and up through the first five days of practice for the next season, ABSOLUTELY NO body-to-body contact is allowed. This regulation applies to workouts, combines, practices on/off campus, and summer camps.

Golf

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Regular season contests are limited to nine holes. However, in tournament play, 18 holes are permitted. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

The number of tournaments is limited to one (1), and athletes may play 18 holes.

Game Rules

Games rules follow those of the United States Golf Association (USGA).

Gymnastics

Number of Regular Season Contests:

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament/Championship

The number of tournaments/championships is limited to one (1).

Soccer

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

A team is limited to one single elimination tournament per season. This is not to exceed three contests in a week.

Adopted Contest Rules

The contest shall be played in two (2) 30-minute halves. If a tie score exists at the end of regulation play in regular season conference or non-conference contests, with prior mutual consent of the teams, play will continue with two overtime periods of five (5) minutes each. If there is no winner at that point, the contest shall be considered a tie for both teams.

Tournament Play

In tournament play, the National Federation of High School Associations (NFHS) tie-breaking procedure may resolve tied contests.

Suspended Contest Rule

If a contest is suspended due to bad weather, light failure, etc.:

- If the contest is suspended in the first half, even if one team is ahead, contest is to pick up from the point of interruption unless coaches agree to end.
- If the contest is suspended at half time or beyond, the contest is over. If the score is tied when the contest is suspended, then the contest ends in a tie. If one team is ahead when the contest is suspended, then that team is the winner.

Softball (Fast Pitch)

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

A team is limited to one single elimination tournament per season. This is not to exceed three contests in a week.

Fast Pitch Softball Exception

Two (2) doubleheaders [limited to **five** (5) innings per contest except to break a tie] are permitted per week if one of the games is a part of a make-up and where mutually agreed upon by both schools.

NOTE: The legal-size (12-inch) ball shall be used for competition.

Postponed and Suspended Contests

Any single contest postponed because of emergency reasons (bad weather, epidemics or other unavoidable mishaps) may be rescheduled and played in addition to the regular number of contests allowed. No more than four contests may be played in a single week even with postponements and rescheduling. Postponed contests will be made up in the order of postponement on the next possible date (excluding Sunday). Saturday will not be used as a makeup day unless mutually agreed upon by the principals of the two schools involved. A contest called for any reason, where a winner cannot be determined, or any contest called at any time for mechanical failure (i.e., artificial lights, water systems, etc.) will be treated as a suspended contest. If the contest is to be completed it will be continued from the point of suspension with the lineup and batting order of each team the same as the lineup and batting order at the moment of suspension, subject to the rules of the contest.

If more than four (4) innings have been played and a winner can be determined, the contest is over. In a situation where a team does not want to make up a contest at all, the contest will be forfeited to the opponent.

If any rained-out softball contest, which would affect the winning of a conference title, is to be played, it shall be rescheduled on the same field. The exception is that suspended contests do not have to be rescheduled on the same field unless changed by mutual agreement by the two schools. In a situation where a team does not want to make up a contest at all, the contest will be forfeited to the opponent.

This rule is effective upon mutual agreement or by conference adoption.

Adopted Contest Rules

By conference adoption, middle school teams may use modified distances and/or pitching limitations for conference play.

Tennis

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be held in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament/Championship

The number of tournaments/championships is limited to one (1).

Adopted Contest Rules

Adopted contest rules are those of the United States Tennis Association (USTA).

Track and Field

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be held in lieu of a conference tournament.

Tournament/Championship

The number of tournaments/championships is limited to one (1).

Adopted Contest Rules

- Middle/Junior high school students may compete in a maximum of three (3) events.
- The maximum distance for middle/junior high school students is two (2) miles.

The following order of events was developed as a guide to arrange track and field competition that will best meet the needs of middle/junior high school students. It is recommended that this order of events be followed, unless an alternative order is established by mutual agreement of the officials of the competing teams prior to the day of competition.

The recommended order of events shall be shown in the following tables:

Table 3: Track Events

| Boys | Girls |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 110m Low Hurdles | 55m Low Hurdles |
| 100m Dash | 100m Dash |
| 800m Relay | 800m Relay |
| 1600m Run (or 1200m Run) | 1600m Run (or 1200m Run) |
| 400m Relay | 400m Relay |
| 400m Dash | 400m Dash |
| 800m Run | 800m Run |
| 200m Dash | 200m Dash |
| 1600m Relay | 1600m Relay |

Table 4: Field Events

| Boys | Girls |
|-------------|-------------|
| High Jump | High Jump |
| Long Jump | Long Jump |
| 4.0kg Shot | 2.74kg Shot |
| Discus | Discus |
| Triple Jump | Triple Jump |
| Pole Vault | Pole Vault |

Table 5: Hurdle Specifications

| Event | Hurdle Height | Number of Hurdles | Start to 1st Hurdle | Between Hurdles | Last Hurdle to Finish |
|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Girls 55 m Low Hurdles | 30" | 5 | 13.0 m | 8.5 m | 8.0 m |
| Boys 110 m Low Hurdles | 30" | 5 | 18.288 (60') m | 18.288 (60') m | 18.56 m 60'10 3/4 |

Field events should be started before the running program, in order to be completed prior to the final running event.

Specifications for Implements Used in Events:

The discus shall weigh two (2) lbs., 3.27 oz. (1 kg) and have the following minimum and maximum dimensions: Diameter 7 1/8 in. - 7 1/8 in. (180 mm - 182 mm) with a thickness of 1 1/2 in. - 1 5/85 in. (37 mm - 39 mm) at the center and 1/2 in. - 1/4 in. (12 mm - 6 mm) from the outer edge which shall be rounded with a radius of 1/4 in. (6 mm). The discus shall have a core two (2) in. (50 mm).

The shot for boys shall consist of a solid sphere of any metal not softer than brass, weighing 4.0 kg (8 lbs. 13 oz.). It shall have a diameter of at least 3 3/4 in., but not more than 4 1/4 in. (95- 108 mm). The shot for girls shall consist of a solid sphere of any metal not softer than brass, weighing 2.74 kg (6 lbs.) and have a diameter of at least 3 1/4 in. but not more than 4 in.

The scratch line in long jump should be approximately eight (8) feet from the edge of the landing pit.

Other equipment will be similar to that used at the high school level.

Volleyball

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be played in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

A team is limited to one single elimination tournament per season. This is not to exceed three contests in a week.

Scoring

Rally scoring will be used in all contests.

Number of Weekly Contests

No more than two (2) contests are allowed per week. The exception for volleyball is that two (2) doubleheaders (best 2 of 3 sets) are permitted per week.

Adopted Contest Rules

By conference adoption, in regular season and tournament play, matches shall be decided by the best two (2) of three (3) sets, or three (3) of five (5) sets. By conference adoption, the net may be lowered to a minimum height of six (6) feet, four (4) inches.

Wrestling

Number of Regular Season Contests

The number of regular season contests is limited to no more than 14. Up to two (2) additional contests may be held in lieu of a tournament.

Tournament

The tournament is limited to one (1) single elimination, not to exceed an eight (8) wrestler bracket. The exception is that a third and fourth place may be determined in tournament play. Schools may schedule one (1) regular season contest the week of the tournament.

Weight Classifications

For both middle and junior high schools the weight classes are as follows:

83, 90, 98, 106, 113, 120, 126, 132, 138, 145, 152, 160, 170, 182, 195, 220, and heavyweight.

The maximum weight for the heavy weight contestants will be 250 pounds. The minimum weight for the heavyweight class is 196 pounds. The minimum weight for an 83-pound weight class contestant is 68 pounds. The minimum weight for a 90-pound weight class contestant is 75 pounds. A two (2) pound growth allowance will be allowed after December 25th each year.

NOTE: The use of artificial weight loss devices/measures is prohibited.

Sanitary And Safety Measures

All mats must be cleaned with a 10-percent bleach solution or isopropyl alcohol solution prior to the first match and each time blood gets on the mat. A bucket or squeeze bottle with a 10-percent bleach solution or isopropyl alcohol solution and rubber gloves should be placed at each mat for cleaning purposes. This same solution should be used to wipe any blood off an opponent's skin. It is important that any time there is blood present, even on uniforms, that it is treated with care regarding its ability to transmit infectious diseases. If the bleeding problem is severe enough, the competitor should not be permitted to continue, not only from the standpoint of possible disease transmission, but also for the health and safety of the injured athlete.

NOTE: During the match each coach will be responsible for cleaning their own wrestler, and the home team is responsible for cleaning the mat using the guidelines set forth in the National Federation Rule book.

NOTE: It is recommended that coaches monitor daily weigh-ins with weight loss not to exceed 3 pounds per week.

Adopted Contest Rules

Time of Bouts: First period shall be one (1) minute. Second and third periods shall be two (2) minutes.

No wrestler may represent his/her school in more than one (1) weight class in any meet or compete in more than three (3) full-length matches in tournament or championship play

in any one (1) day. A minimum of forty-five (45) minutes of rest between matches shall be observed.

A contestant shall not wrestle more than one (1) weight class above the class for which his/her actual stripped weight, at the end of the weigh in, qualifies him/her.

Other Sports

If your school chooses to participate in any sport that is not listed in this manual, it is recommended that you follow NFHS rules for that sport. Students participating in other interscholastic sports not listed in this manual must meet eligibility guidelines.

Penalty for an Ejection

State Board of Education Administrative Code is mandated and not recommended. It is a minimum standard for middle schools to enforce. The following ejection guidelines are expressed in Administrative Code and are the minimum standards for middle schools.

Any athlete, coach, or school official in grades 7-12 who is ejected from any athletic contest shall be penalized as follows:

- (1) for the first offense, the person shall be reprimanded and suspended for the next game at the level of play (varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level;
- (2) for a second offense, the person shall be placed on probation and suspended for the next two games at that level of play (varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level;
- (3) for a third offense, the person shall be suspended for one calendar year.
- (4) A coach who is suspended at any level of grades 7-12 (middle school, junior high or high school) may not coach in any other grade level in grades 7-12 during the period of suspension.
- (5) Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sport season to sport season. If no member of the school's coaching staff is present to assume an ejected coach's duties, the contest shall be terminated by a forfeit.

Recommendation for Additional Ejection Penalties

The LEA which has jurisdiction over the school may impose additional penalties. LEAs or conferences that adopt additional penalties should have penalties published prior to the first game in the first sport of the school year. Officials should be instructed to notify the principal of the school from which an ejection has occurred for the following to be enforced.

This policy applies to all persons involved in athletic contest, including student athletes, coaches, managers, and game administrators. The examples below include behavior or conduct which will result in an ejection from a contest.

- Fighting includes, but is not limited to, combative acts such as:
 - an altercation between 2 or more parties that includes swinging, hitting, punching and/or kicking;
 - an attempt to strike an opponent with a fist, hands, arms, legs, or feet;
 - an attempt to punch or kick an opponent, regardless of whether or not contact is made;
 - an attempt to instigate a fight by committing an unsportsmanlike act toward an opponent that causes an opponent to retaliate;
 - leaving the bench area to participate in a fight (contact or no contact);

- biting observed or determined by an official;
- taunting, baiting, or spitting toward an official or opponent;
- profanity directed toward an official or opponent;
- obscene gestures, including gesturing in such a manner as to intimidate or instigate; and
- disrespectfully addressing (physically contacting an official is subject to automatic expulsion and can result in ineligibility for remainder of career) an official.

The following recommendation for additional ejection penalties is based on the North Carolina High School Athletic Association's Handbook guidelines. If an LEA chooses to adopt additional penalties for an ejection, a recommendation is to follow the penalty guidelines as expressed in the NCHSAA handbook:

Any athlete, coach or school official in grades 7-12 who is ejected from any athletic contest shall be penalized as follows:

- (1) for the first offense, the person shall be reprimanded and suspended for the next game at the level of play for football, and two games for all other sports (middle school, junior high, varsity or junior varsity) and for any intervening games at either level; (Fighting – for football miss the next two contests, and for all other sports miss the next four contests)
- (2) for a second offense, the person shall be suspended from all sports for the remainder of that sport season (middle school, junior high, varsity or junior varsity).
- (3) for a third offense, the person shall be suspended for one calendar year (365 days from the date of the third ejection).
- (4) A coach who is suspended at any level of grades 7-12 (middle school, junior high, varsity or junior varsity) may not coach in any other grade level in grades 7-12 during the period of suspension.
- (5) Penalties are cumulative from sport to sport and from sport season to sport season. If no member of the school's coaching staff is present to assume an ejected coach's duties, the contest shall be terminated by a forfeit.

Other Situations

Teams in the following situations will not be allowed to participate in tournament play or the remainder of the season (for those who do not play a tournament):

- A team whose players and coaches accumulate six (6) or more individual ejections during the regular season.
- A team whose players and coaches accumulate more than three (3) individual ejections for fighting during the regular season.

NOTE: Ejections in the last game of the season carry over to the next sport in which the individual participates that school year. Ejected players may practice, but not play. Ejected coaches may not be on the premises for a contest.

Recommendations for Penalty Code

Enforcement of the Rules and Regulations

Penalty Code

The LEA or the conference in which the school is a member (if a school participates in a conference that involves more than one local board of education) shall adopt and enforce a penalty code. This code should be published and distributed to each athletic and administrative member of your school prior to the first game of the first season. (The following penalty code has been developed by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction in the event that a locally developed penalty code is absent.)

Violations of these regulations may result in a reprimand, probation, suspension, forfeiture of games, and/or ineligibility.

A coach found guilty of conduct inconsistent with a wholesome athletic program may be

- suspended and placed on probation.
- suspended from directing a team.

If a coach or school official is ejected from a game or if a coach or school official removes his/her team from a contest before the termination of the contest, the coach or school official will be placed on probation until an investigation is made by the LEA or adopted conference. The schools involved shall immediately report in writing to the conference president and the local superintendent.

A student found guilty of misconduct may be

- placed on probation;
- suspended from participation in a sport or sports for a period of time.

An official found guilty of misconduct may be

- placed on probation;
- suspended from participation in a sport or sports for a period of time.

If team members not participating in a game come onto the playing surface during an event or immediately thereafter to engage in conflict, that team shall be placed on probation and may not participate until a decision is rendered by the LEA or conference.

Schools not filing a completed eligibility list with the local superintendent's office for any interscholastic athletic team shall be suspended from playing in that sport until such

list is received by the local superintendent's office.

Any school that uses an ineligible player in any contest is to immediately drop the player from the team and forfeit all games in which the ineligible player participated. (This includes individual sports.)

Game officials shall be appointed by an authorized booking office. Under no circumstances shall a game be played when officials are taken from the audience of spectators or from school personnel. (Exception: In an emergency situation, North Carolina High School Athletic Association certified officials may be used when permission is acquired from the office of the local superintendent of the home team or host school.)

Once a school becomes a member of a conference, a unanimous vote of all other conference members is required to remove that school from the conference. Such removal may not take place until the year following the unanimous vote.

Definitions of Probation and Suspension

If a school or individual is placed on probation, the school or the individual is put on a trial period for a specific time. At the end of this trial period, the LEA or the conference of which the school is a member shall review the school or individual's conduct and behavior and advise the school or individual of their status. During the probationary period, a school or individual may participate in all interscholastic activities unless otherwise stipulated by the governing authority. If, while on probation, a school or individual is found guilty of a second violation, the school shall be barred from participation and the individual shall be barred from participating at the discretion of the LEA or conference of which the school is a member.

A school or individual may be suspended in a particular sport or in all sports.

Appendices

Appendix A

Links

Please use the following links for the most current information on these resources.

1. NCHSAA Sport Pre-Participation Examination Forms:
<http://www.nchsaa.org/pages/464/health-safety-sports-medicine/>
2. Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act Forms:
<http://gfellerwallerlaw.unc.edu/GfellerWallerLaw/gwlaw.html>
3. Checklist for a Comprehensive Approach to Addressing Harassment:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/checklist.html>
4. U.S. Department of Education – Athletic Equity (Title IX) Resources:
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/athleticresources.html>

Appendix B

Resource Contacts

1. An electronic copy of the Middle/Junior High School Athletic Manual is available for free download at: <http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/healthfulliving/athletics/>. If you would like to speak with a DPI staff person regarding middle school athletics, contact the K-12 Program Areas Section at 919-807-3869.
 2. National Federation of State High School Associations
Website: www.nfhs.org
Phone: (317) 972-6900 Fax: (317) 822-5700
 3. North Carolina High School Athletic Association
Website: www.nchsaa.org
Phone: (919) 240-7401
 4. North Carolina Athletic Directors Association
Website: www.ncada.info
 5. National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association
Website: <http://niaaa.org/>
 6. North Carolina Coaches Association
Website: www.nccoach.org
Phone: (336) 379-9095 Fax: (336) 379-0874
 7. North Carolina Athletic Trainers Association
Website: <http://www.ncathletictrainer.org/>
 8. NC Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance
Website: www.ncaahperd.org