



To: NJSIAA Executive Committee  
From: Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer  
Date: May 8, 2024  
RE: NJSIAA Bylaws and Handbook Changes Proposal

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The NJSIAA Chief Compliance Officer was tasked with reviewing the NJSIAA Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines, Rules and Procedures to ensure accuracy and consistency. There are a number of areas that are out of date or not worded correctly within the spirit of the rule. Additionally, there are areas that need to be amended in order to address new areas of need or to clarify our practices. In consultation with NJSIAA staff and counsel, the NJSIAA Chief Compliance Officer recommends the following changes to the NJSIAA Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines, Rules and Procedures. Each recommended change is supported by a brief rationale statement.

### PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

[Additions are underlined, and deletions are ~~struck through~~.]

#### **Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 D (Athletic Recruitment)**

5. Any evidence that a student has moved to a residence associated with, leased, or provided by anyone associated with the school or acting at the direction of the school, including but not limited to administration, staff, coaches, students, parents, booster clubs, or any organization having a connection with the school, shall be considered prima facie evidence of recruiting.

*CL 1: Boarding at a boarding school shall not be considered prima facie evidence of recruiting. A boarding school is defined as a school which has an enrolled boarding school population in grades 9 through 12 of at least 25 students or five percent of the full student enrollment, whichever is larger. Boarding students must spend at least an average of five days per week living and boarding on campus while school is in session.*

***Rationale:*** *This provides a definition of a boarding school and eligibility criteria for its students.*

#### **Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 K (Transfers)**

2. Definitions:

Transfer: A “transfer” occurs when a student who has previously enrolled in a secondary school leaves that school and enrolls in a new one. The date of transfer shall be the earlier of the first day of class or the first day of sports participation at the new school.

*CL1: It is considered a transfer if a homeschooled student moves from homeschooling to a high school or from a high school to homeschooling. If the student’s home district has a Board of Education policy that permits homeschooled students to participate in sports, the student will be*

exempt from the penalty sit when transferring from homeschooling to the home district or from the home district to homeschooling.

**Rationale:** This defines homeschooling as a school and permits students to play without penalty when transferring from homeschooling to home district and vice versa if the district allows homeschoolers to play. It makes sense to do this as they would have been able to play for the home district if they did not transfer.

9. **Exceptions:**

Immediate eligibility, without penalty, will be granted for transfers resulting from DCP&P placement, ~~court placement~~, HIB transfers, and military transfers.

**Rationale:** Court placement is not necessary as it is redundant with DCP&P exception.

**Bylaws, Article VIII (Contest Rules-Championships-Officials)**

**Section 3**

~~All baseball, basketball, field hockey, fencing, football, gymnastics, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, volleyball, and wrestling officials working in any NJSIAA interscholastic baseball, basketball, field hockey, fencing, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, tennis, or volleyball game, gymnastics or swimming meet, or wrestling match, must be registered with the Association.~~

All officials working in any NJSIAA interscholastic competition must be registered with the Association.

**Rationale:** This covers us for all of our sports, and future sports, rather than listing individually.

**Rules and Regulations**

**Section 7 Practices/Scrimmages/Games/Meets**

A student shall not be permitted to participate in a scrimmage or a game (interschool) in any strenuous sport until he/she has completed six days of practice in that sport (days of 24 hours, not sessions) and one day of rest. ~~Practices during the Summer Recess prior to the official opening of the Sports Season cannot be counted to fulfill this requirement. The above restriction will be waived for Student Athletes who are members of a team participating in competition after the start of the next season provided the athlete becomes a practicing member within three (3) practice days. The six (6) days of practice and one (1) day of rest do not have to be consecutive but must adhere to the seven (7) day time frame. This requirement applies to all three seasons.~~

*CL 1: Summer Recess practices do not count for "six day" interschool scrimmage or game provisions. Only those practices from the official opening of the Sports Season may be counted to fulfill this requirement. Any workouts, including summer recess, prior to the first official day of practice for a particular sport cannot be counted to fulfill this requirement.*

*CL 2: Sunday practices may be counted only if approved by the local Board of Education. The six (6) day practice rule begins on the first official day of practice for each sport excluding bowling and golf.*

*CL3: The six (6) day practice rule will be waived for Student-Athletes who are members of a team participating in an NJSIAA competition after the start of the next season provided the athlete becomes a practicing member within three (3) practice days.*

*CL 34: A practice is defined as a session where a team is assembled and involved in physical activity to enhance the participant's physical condition. Practices of any kind for individuals,*

*partial or entire teams, on days when the team is involved in interscholastic scrimmages or games-meets will not count toward satisfying the six (6) day rule.*

~~CL 4~~**CL5:** *It is a local option for schools to permit ineligible students to practice or compete in interscholastic scrimmages. An ineligible student may not participate in an interscholastic regular season contest or scrimmage. Such practices will count to satisfy the six (6) day practice rule. The above is applicable provided the school meets the medical examination and parental permission as required by the State Board of Education.*

~~CL 5~~**6:** *Any lapses consisting of four (4) or more days, a restart of the six (6) day rule must occur.*

~~CL 6~~**7:** *If a student was eligible to participate in a team practice after three (3) consecutive days off but missed the fourth day because of a situation beyond the student's control (i.e., the school closed for a holiday, Sunday, weather, etc.) a restart is not needed if the student practices the next available day.*

~~CL 8:~~ *Only practices with the school team count toward the six (6) day practice rule. No national/club practices will count toward the six (6) day practice rule.*

Interscholastic scrimmages, ~~are not subject to, excluding baseball, tennis, softball and golf, are to be limited to the any~~ number of games, meets, or matches. However, ~~permitted in the sport during the regular season.~~ The rule regarding numbers of contests on consecutive days will be enforced.

**Rationale:** *This clarifies and organizes the existing rule so that it reads more clearly to ADs. It was approved by the Executive Committee and SMAC.*

### **Interpretive Guidelines for Student-Athlete Eligibility, Most Commonly Applied Eligibility Rules (Transfers)**

If the Principal and Athletic Director of the student's former school do not complete ~~refuse to sign~~ a Transfer Form in a timely manner, then the Chief Compliance Officer shall rule on the student's eligibility based on available evidence and documentation. If necessary, a hearing shall be held at the next scheduled meeting of the Eligibility Appeals Committee and an oral decision reached on that date, which shall thereafter be expressed more fully in writing by ~~either~~ the Committee within ten days. Until the Chief Compliance Officer has made a ruling, or the hearing is concluded, the transferring student shall be ineligible.

**Rationale:** *This more accurately describes our practice. When prior schools don't fill out the transfer form, we clear the athlete (after a period of time).*

### **Section 13 Tournament Entry-**

Member schools are to download the appropriate entry forms from [www.njsiaa.org](http://www.njsiaa.org) for state tournament competition. Tournament regulations will be posted no earlier than four weeks before the tournament date. NO entries **or Tournament Refusal Forms** which are postmarked after the cut-off date will be accepted unless accompanied by a late fee established by the NJSIAA.

~~CL 1:~~ *A late fee charge of \$50.00, when a school's game or meet schedule or tournament entry form is late (beyond the established deadlines but prior to the pairings, seeding or heat meeting),*

*is to be paid before the contestant or team is allowed to participate. If the entry is received after the seeding but prior to the first game of the tournament, an administrative fee of \$150 will be assessed the school.*

**Rationale:** *This is addressed elsewhere.*

### **Section 16 Withdrawal/NJSIAA Tournaments**

Any member school and/or Student-Athlete withdrawing from competition after having officially entered an NJSIAA tournament in any sport will be disqualified from all remaining NJSIAA tournament competition in that sport in that season and may be barred from participating in NJSIAA tournament competition in that sport during the next school year unless truly extraordinary circumstances were present.

**Rationale:** *The punishment of barring from the following year should be viewed on a case-by-case basis.*

### **Specific Sport Regulations**

#### 4. Disqualification

CL 4: Student-athletes, grades 9-11, who are disqualified from their last game or next to last game will serve the penalty in that sport in the subsequent school year. If the student-athlete does not participate in that sport in the subsequent school year, the penalty will carry over to the next sports season in which the student participates, according to the penalty provision of that subsequent sport. If the student-athlete is unable to fulfill the penalty, member schools are required to take proper administrative action to discipline the student.

**Rationale:** *This clarifies end of the year disqualifications for grades 9-11 and is consistent with grade 12 penalties.*

- j. Any player that leaves the bench area during an altercation, regardless of whether the player engages in the altercation ~~whether to intervene or participate~~, shall be disqualified, and will be subject to the disqualification penalty (automatically disqualified from the next two contests.) Only coaches can leave the bench with the purpose of restraining players and stopping the altercation.

**Rationale:** *This clarifies that a player who leaves the bench and does not participate or intervene will be disqualified.*

### **Ice Hockey**

Section 1 Rules National Federation Ice Hockey Rules, with the following exceptions, shall govern all NJSIAA games.

1. The game shall consist of three periods of 15 minutes. An exception may be allowed when participating out of state.
2. On a disqualification penalty, the player shall be put in the custody of the coach on the bench.
3. ~~There shall be no overtime periods, except in playoffs, regular season tournaments, or when playing out of state.~~

*CL: Overtime will be permitted during the regular season only when playing out of state for purposes of complying with the host state's rules.*

**Rationale:** Executive Committee approved overtime for ice hockey.

### **All Section 8s in each Specific Sport**

Section 8 Maximum Games ~~A member school may play eighteen (18) regular scheduled games, plus one (1) county or league/conference based tournament, plus the State Tournament, including regular season interschool scrimmages and postponed games from the start of the Regular Schedule to the end of the State Tournament.~~ Provided for in Program Regulations, Section 8.

**Rationale:** Format is consistent with other sections.

### **Soccer**

Section 16 Championship Eligibility A student competing on an interscholastic soccer team must play as a member of his/her high school team in at least 50% of the school's total games to be eligible for the NJSIAA State Tournament.

*~~CL: This means a student must be eligible to play in at least 50% of the school's games up to and including cut-off date while he/she was properly enrolled and eligible at said school according to NJSIAA regulations. Extraordinary circumstances (i.e. injuries or participation on US National teams) will be reviewed on a case by case basis for the purposes of this clarification.~~*

*CL: Students who experience Extraordinary Circumstances, which are limited to injuries/medical reasons or return from academic ineligibility, must play in at least 50% of the school's games, up to and including the cut-off date, less those games in which the student was not able to compete due to the Extraordinary Circumstance. Extraordinary Circumstances shall be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the NJSIAA upon request by the school.*

**Rationale:** Makes language consistent with other sports.

### **Guidelines, Policies and Procedures**

#### **Recruiting Violations Chart**

- Direct recruiting contact/communication with a 9-12 grade student-athlete, or their family, from another high school by a district approved person including, but not limited to: paid coaches, volunteer coaches, students at the behest of their coach, or any district employee.

**Rationale:** Adding family eliminates the loophole of recruiting by talking directly to an athlete's family members.

#### **Waivers**

Member schools must be aware of the fact that waivers are only intended to equalize opportunities among otherwise eligible students who cannot strictly comply with the eligibility rules because of circumstances beyond their control and is not intended to provide such students with an actual advantage over the great majority of students who maintain appropriate academic standards over the normal eight semester secondary program. Accordingly, waivers of these rules are never granted where it would allow a student to participate in more than four seasons in any one sport, ~~or~~ where a student has repeated an academic semester or year of secondary school for academic ~~reasons~~, reasons, or where a student repeats a grade

that the student has demonstrated proof of passing grades and earned enough credits to advance to the next academic grade level.

*Rationale:* This emphasizes the NJSIAA's stance on redshirting.

## Vaping

### ~~INTERIM VAPOR/E CIGARETTES POLICY (under review)~~

~~It has come to the attention of NJSIAA that vapor/e cigarettes maybe/are being used by student athletes and/or coaches prior to, during, or after interscholastic events. The NFHS rule book(s) state "the use of tobacco products" results in a flagrant disqualification, but there is no mention of vapor/e cigarettes. When contacted, the NFHS replied that vapor/e cigarettes are to be treated as a traditional cigarette, which is identified as a tobacco/and or nicotine product, and therefore means any use of the vapor/e cigarettes shall be enforced as a flagrant disqualification. The NJSIAA position on this matter is that we will adhere to the ruling stated above. We will refer this matter to the NJSIAA Medical Advisory Committee for further study and after receiving the Medical Advisory Committees' recommendation(s), we will develop a permanent policy and will distribute such to the member schools of NJSIAA.~~

*Rationale:* It will be referenced in the Statute on page 1.