



2010-11

Guide to Participation in 7th & 8th Grade Athletics

The purpose of seventh and eighth grade education-based athletics is to provide rich and wholesome activities for as many students as possible. As a result, students will develop to the greatest degree talents and skills such as leadership, teamwork and discipline, which will enable them to become responsible citizens in our society while demonstrating good sporting conduct.

We believe in interscholastic athletics as an integral part of the total school program reflecting the needs of the school, the community and the student.

We believe the potential values to the student and coaches to be very essential. Competition under prescribed regulations and policies provides adolescents with the opportunity to develop ideas and habits of health, fair play, initiative, achievement, emotional control, good sporting conduct, social adaptability and good citizenship. Athletics foster team and school spirit and a sense of community.

We believe each coach should make every effort to provide opportunity for participation for all students involved in a sport. The students shall be taught the fundamental skills necessary for further growth and improvement in their respective sports. These skills are to be taught by an educated/trained coach. We believe that high quality skill development for students at the seventh and eighth grade level is of utmost importance.

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

Seventh and eighth grade students must be currently enrolled in a member school and have received passing grades in five of the classes in which enrolled.

The eligibility or ineligibility of a student continues until the start of the fifth school day of the next grading period, at which time the grades from the immediately preceding grading period become effective. **Note:** Check with your principal or athletic administrator to determine the exact date that eligibility will be restored. Also, please note that your local school board policy may have additional or higher academic standards for eligibility.

Seventh and eighth grade students who turn **15** years of age prior to **August 1** are ineligible for seventh and eighth grade athletics but are eligible to participate in high school athletics. Any participation in high school athletics will count towards the eight semester limit of high school athletic eligibility.

You may receive awards as a result of athletic participation in interscholastic athletics from any source. However, the value cannot be more than \$200 per award.

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

- Compete or capitalize on your athletic fame by receiving money, merchandise, services or athletic scholarship to a member high school.
- Receive expenses or compensation from a sponsor unless that sponsor is a recognized amateur governing body or organization, recognized by a member school or is your parent or guardian.
- Receive services, merchandise or any form of financial assistance from a professional sports organization.

If you compete under a name other than your own or provide false information such as age or residence, you may immediately become ineligible.

1. You are prohibited from using any form of alcohol, tobacco or illegal drugs at the playing site of an interscholastic contest.
2. The penalty is disqualification from that contest, and you will likely face additional school and/or legal penalties.
3. Use of anabolic steroids or other performance-enhancing drugs will result in immediate ineligibility for inter scholastic participation.

You may attend camps, clinics and workshops that involve team play any time between June 1 and July 31.

- Team play means there is more than one player opposing one player.
- There is no limit on the number of students from the same school team that may participate on the same non-school team from June 1 to July 31.
- In a team sport, you shall not participate in an athletic contest, tryouts or any type of training or practices on a non-interscholastic squad or as an individual in a team sport in the same sport during the school's interscholastic sports season.

In a team sport, you may receive instruction from a coach from your school team only:

1. During the season of the sport, or
2. For 10 days only from June 1 to July 31.

You may receive individual skill instruction from a non-school coach at any time during the year in individual or group lessons provided that these individual skill instructions do not violate any Board of Education, school administrators' or coaches' policies.

Members of a school football team may play in non-contact football contests and attend non-contact team football camps at any time between June 1 and July 31. Remember, however, that the 10-day regulation for instruction from school coaches is in effect.

Note: It is a violation if a coach suggests your participation in an instructional program is mandatory.

If you have further questions, contact your school administrator or contact us at www.ohsaa.org. Please note that your school district policies may supersede requirements set forth by the OHSAA.

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

School officials may designate open gyms or facilities and the sports to be played. You may participate in open gyms or facilities provided:

- No one is limited from participating. However, schools may limit participation to only students in your district.
- No school officials may invite selected students or determine who will play whom.
- No coaching or instruction is permitted. Open gyms must be unstructured free play.

Violating these rules may result in your school or coach being penalized for a maximum of one (1) year.

Each year you must submit a physical examination form signed by a medical examiner before you begin practice for a school sport. In addition, your parents/guardian and you must sign the OHSAA Authorization and Consent Forms.

- Procedures will be reviewed by school officials.
- PPE's are valid for one year from the date of the exam except for those that take place from May 1 to June 1. Those exams are valid for one year plus through the end of the next school year.
- Any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

You may attend any public or non-public high school in which you are accepted when you enter high school (grade 9) from a 7th-8th grade school. Eligibility is established by:

1. Participating in a contest (scrimmage, preview or regular season game) prior to the first day of school, or
2. Attending the first day of school at any high school (or attending the first five days of school for freshman).

If your parent or legal guardian lives outside of Ohio, you are ineligible unless one of the exceptions to the out-of-state regulations is met. The exceptions to the out-of-state residency rule are found in Bylaw 4-6-1.

Transfer restrictions do not apply to students in grades 7 and 8. However, 8th graders must understand that eligibility is established when entering a high school in 9th grade.

You will be declared ineligible if you are recruited by a person or group of persons to change or enroll in a member school for the sole purpose of athletic participation. Any other attempt to recruit you as a prospective student for solely athletic purposes is also prohibited. A violation of the recruiting bylaw (4-9-1) may also affect the eligibility of the school team.

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

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

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

If you have further questions, contact your school administrator or contact us at www.ohsaa.org. Please note that your school district policies may supersede requirements set forth by the OHSAA.

You may not try out, practice or participate in a contest with a non-school team while a member of a school team in the same sport during the school season.

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

Those in the team sports of baseball, basketball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, soccer, softball and volleyball may try out, practice and compete on non-school teams before and after the school season provided:

1. The number of students from the same school on the roster of the non-school team is limited to five (5) students in the sports of soccer, field hockey and ice hockey; four (4) students in the sports of baseball and softball; three (3) students in the sport of volleyball; and two (2) students in the sport of basketball. School football team members are prohibited from competing on non-school teams except from June 1 to July 31. **Note:** There is no limit on the number of students from the same school team that may participate on the same non-school team from June 1 to July 31.
2. Members of a team sport may not have contact with school coaches while on a non-school team other than the 10 days permitted between June 1 and July 31.
 - Violating these rules during the school season may result in your being declared ineligible for the remainder of the school season.
 - Violating these rules outside the school season may result in your being declared ineligible for the next season.
 - Physical fitness activities, such as weight training and conditioning, may be conducted at any time by a school coach, *with the exception* of during the “no contact” periods established in team sports.
 - Organizations such as MSAA and OAC are NOT affiliated with OHSAA and any participation in events sponsored by these organizations may result in your ineligibility. Please contact your district administrator for further information.

- Recruitment is defined as the use of influence by any person connected or not connected with the school to secure a prospective student-athlete (OHSAA Bylaw 4-9-2) after enrolling in the 7th grade. The bylaws and sports regulations apply to all participants in interscholastic athletic contests involving students in grades 7-12 and include matters of eligibility, contracts, qualifications, responsibility and behaviors of various personnel. (OHSAA Bylaw 1-1-1).
- The transfer bylaws apply to all students enrolled in grades 9-12.
- Seventh and eighth grade students can attend seventh and eighth grade or high school summer sports camps. Coaches can have ten contact days with a team from June 1 to July 31. See the OHSAA for coaching restrictions from August 1 to May 31.
- In matters of academic eligibility, please refer to your district administrator for more specific academic school policies.
- There are no size and weight requirements for any 7th and 8th grade sport, with the exception of wrestling.
- A student that turns 15 before August 1 of the current school year is not eligible to participate in 7th and 8th grade athletics during that upcoming school year.
- Designated dates for the start and end of each middle school athletic season can be found in the General Sports Regulations at www.ohsaa.org.
- A 7th or 8th grade athlete cannot practice, compete, or scrimmage with athletes in grades 9-12 during the high school sport season.
- The minimum scholastic requirement for the OHSAA is students must have received passing grades in five of the classes in which they are enrolled. Districts may establish criteria more stringent than the OHSAA.
- If a 7th or 8th grade student is ineligible, the district's policy will determine if he/she can practice but not dress during middle school contests. The OHSAA does not stipulate practice regulations.
- The physical examination must be completed prior to the first day of practice.
- Seventh and eighth grade students cannot participate with non-school teams during the same sports season.
- A complete listing of information regarding inter scholastic athletics can be found on-line at www.ohsaa.org. Parents are also encouraged to talk with their child's coaches, athletic directors and school administrators with questions regarding specific sport's regulations.

If you have further questions, contact your school administrator or contact us at www.ohsaa.org. Please note that your school district policies may supersede requirements set forth by the OHSAA.

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

- I am officially enrolled in an OHSAA member school.
- I received passing grades in five subjects from the preceding grading period.
- I have at least one parent living in Ohio.
- I did not turn 15 before August 1 of the current school year.
- I have not received an award, equipment or prize valued at greater than \$200 per item for participation in any athletic endeavor.
- I am competing under my true name and have provided my school with my correct and current home address.
- I have not been coached or provided instruction by a school coach in a team sport or cross country, track & field and wrestling other than during my sport season or for no more than 10 days between June 1 and July 31.
- I am not competing on a non-school team during my school team's season.
- I have not been recruited for athletic purposes to attend this school.
- I have had a pre-participation evaluation (physical) within the past year and the OHSAA physical form is completed and is on file at my school.
- My parents and I have signed the OHSAA Authorization Form and the OHSAA Eligibility and Authorization Statement and they are on file at my school.

I have read these guidelines and understand that my son or daughter must follow them in order to participate with a 7th/8th grade OHSAA member school team.

Print Student Name _____

School Name _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Please return this signed section to your school administrator.