

# BYLAWS

## Revised by Referendum — May 2011

### BYLAW 1 — COVERAGE

#### Section 1. Application of Bylaws and Sports Regulations

- 1-1-1 The bylaws and sports regulations apply to all participants in interscholastic athletic contests involving students in grades seven through twelve and include matters of eligibility, contracts, qualifications, responsibility and behavior of various personnel.
- 1-1-2 Students enrolled below the seventh grade are ineligible for participation in interscholastic athletics. Students enrolled in grades 7 or 8 are ineligible for interscholastic competition on the same squad with students in grade 9 or higher. EXCEPTION: A student who attains the age of 15 prior to August 1 is eligible for interscholastic athletics only at the high school level not to exceed eight semesters.
- 1-1-3 These bylaws cannot be waived, modified or amended by mutual consent between or among contesting schools.

#### Section 2. Sponsorship

- 1-2-1 All practices, games, previews and other interscholastic athletic contests must be under the direct or indirect control, sponsorship and supervision of schools involved and be the financial responsibility of such schools.
- 1-2-2 This bylaw applies to all sports recognized by the OHSAA.

#### Section 3. Penalties

- 1-3-1 Penalties for violations of the Constitution, Bylaws and Sports Regulations shall be assessed in accordance with Bylaw 11 unless a specific penalty is provided in the Constitution, Bylaws and Sports Regulations. In such cases the specific penalty shall apply.

#### Section 4. Interscholastic Competition

- 1-4-1 Interscholastic athletic contest, as used throughout the Bylaws and Sports Regulations of the OHSAA is defined as a sports event in which student-athletes from at least one school are engaged in sports-related activities with students from at least one or more schools or non-inter-scholastic programs. This includes, but is not limited to, scheduled contests, practices between two or more schools, sports day, electronic contests, invitational contests, alumni games and interschool scrimmages.
- 1-4-2 Instructional clinics and demonstrations designed for the teaching of fundamental skills and conducted for learning theory, techniques, rules, game procedure and strategy shall not be counted as a scheduled contest.
- 1-4-3 Interscholastic competition shall be conducted using contest rules adopted by the Board of Directors. Modifications or changes in sport rules are not permitted except those provided in the rule book and approved by the Board of Directors.

#### Section 5. Recognized Sports

- 1-5-1 A recognized sport is one adopted by the Board of Directors and for which the OHSAA sponsors a tournament. (Note: boys baseball, boys and girls basketball, boys and girls bowling, boys and girls cross country, girls field hockey, boys football, boys and girls golf, girls gymnastics, boys ice hockey, boys and girls soccer, girls softball, boys and girls swimming and diving, boys and girls tennis, boys and girls track and field, girls volleyball, boys wrestling are recognized sports this year.)
- 1-5-2 If and when a school or school district sponsors or authorizes a varsity, subvarsity, 7th or 8th grade squad/team that competes with other interscholastic squads in a recognized sport, the school or school district shall be responsible for assuring that any and all such squads/teams comply with all OHSAA Bylaws and Sports Regulations, particularly those related to scholarship, age limitations and contest limitations. For purposes of this bylaw, a “sponsored” team or squad shall include any “club” sport or team/squad.

## Section 6. Team Membership

- 1-6-1** Girls may play on a boys team if there is no girls team or if the overall opportunities for interscholastic competition are less for girls.
- 1-6-2** A girl that is a member of a boys team shall follow all contests rules and regulations regarding the sport as specified for the boys.
- 1-6-3** Boys may not play on girls teams unless the overall opportunities for interscholastic competition for boys are less than for girls and the competing schools mutually agree.
- 1-6-4** Interscholastic teams/squads sponsored by a member school may not consist of students from more than one school.  
EXCEPTION: Member schools containing grades 7 and 8 may combine students from two or more schools within the school district to form one interscholastic team in a sport. Requests for permission to combine students from two or more schools in the same non-public or public school system must be submitted annually to the OHSAA in writing by the superintendent of the non-public or public school system.  
The written request must contain the following:  
1 — Names of schools involved.  
2 — Total number of students from each school involved in the sport.  
3 — Total number of boys or girls in each grade of each school in the combination.  
4 — The name of the principal, name of the school and the complete address of the Administrator responsible for the conduct and operation of the combined team or teams.

## Section 7. Team Competition Between Sexes

- 1-7-1** Teams of the opposite sex shall not compete against each other in any interscholastic athletic contests.

## BYLAW 2 — CLASSIFICATION AND ORGANIZATION

### Section 1 — Classification of Schools

- 2-1-1** Classification and representation to tournaments will be calculated every other school year. The classification will be calculated in a school year beginning with an even numbered year for use in the next two school years. Boys classification shall be determined by the total number of boys enrolled in grades 9-10-11. Girls classification shall be determined by the total number of girls enrolled in grades 9-10-11. In those school districts where the ninth grade is not part of the high school, the ninth grade total will be determined by using the number of those ninth graders who will be assigned to the high school the following year.
- 2-1-2** One-third (1/3) or as near to one-third (1/3) as possible of the member schools in each athletic district will be assigned to each classification.
- |           |   |                       |
|-----------|---|-----------------------|
| Class A   | — | Lower third of total  |
| Class AA  | — | Middle third of total |
| Class AAA | — | Upper third of total  |
- 2-1-3** School teams or individuals may compete in OHSAA-sponsored tournaments only in the tournaments to which assigned.
- 2-1-4** Enrollment information used for classification shall be provided by the State Department of Education's *Education Management Information System* (EMIS) to the OHSAA. All boys and girls in grades 9, 10 and 11 included in the school's October EMIS report shall be counted for enrollment purposes with the exception of students who are identified as children with disabilities within the multiple-handicap category. The Board of Directors is authorized to adopt policy for assigning students, who are not specified as belonging to a particular high school, to the appropriate member high school and to publish the policy in the *OHSAA Handbook* and on the Association's website.  
The policy as of August 1, 2009, is listed on page 26 of this handbook.
- 2-1-5** High schools that consolidate during the school year will be classified on the basis of school enrollment of boys or girls in grades 9-10-11 at the legal date of consolidation. In the event of the opening of a new high school or transfer of territory under Section 3311.38 of the Ohio Revised

Code, member school classification assignments will be based upon actual number of boys or girls enrolled in grades 10, 11 and 12 as of September 10 of the current year.

- 2-1-6** In the case of the opening or closing of a high school in a multi-high school district, the member high school classification assignments for all high schools within the district shall be based upon the actual number of boys and girls enrolled in grades 10, 11 and 12 as of September 10 of the current year.

### **Section 2. Organization of Schools**

- 2-2-1** Four year high schools may elect to have all students in grades 9-12 eligible to participate in varsity, junior varsity, reserve and class teams.
- 2-2-2** Ninth grade students in all schools are high school students and shall compete in athletics in accordance with high school bylaws and regulations.
- 2-2-3** Ninth grade students are not permitted to compete in interscholastic competition on the same team or squad with students below ninth grade.

## **BYLAW 3 — ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITY**

### **Section 1. Ultimate Responsibility**

- 3-1-1** The principal of the school shall be held primarily responsible in all matters pertaining to interscholastic athletics involving the school. The principal has the responsibility to educate the member school's students, coaches, school personnel, boosters and other appropriate persons involved in interscholastic athletics regarding OHSAA bylaws and sport regulations that could affect them. Further, the principal shall monitor the school's compliance with OHSAA bylaws and sports regulations and conduct an appropriate inquiry if information arises concerning a possible violation of OHSAA bylaws and/or sports regulations.
- 3-1-2** All school administrative and athletic personnel have a duty to immediately report violations that may affect the status of an athlete, team or contest.
- 3-1-3** The principal, at his or her discretion, may assign other members of the administrative team to sign contracts and any other paper work requiring an official school signature.
- 3-1-4** No later than two weeks after the beginning of each sports season, the principal, through his/her athletic administrator, coaches and such other personnel as deemed advisable by said principal, shall conduct a mandatory, preseason program with all student-athletes who wish to participate in the upcoming sports seasons, their parents and booster club officer(s). The meeting shall consist of (a) a review of the student-eligibility bulletin and key essential eligibility requirements; (b) a review of the school's Athletic Code of Conduct; (c) a sportsmanship, ethics and integrity component, and (d) a review of issues concerning concussions and steroids.

**Note:** See General Sports Regulation 4 for penalties for non-compliance of this bylaw.

### **Section 2. School Representative Must Accompany Team**

- 3-2-1** The principal or representative(s) authorized by the principal, in addition to the coaches, shall be present throughout all varsity football and varsity basketball games. In all other sports, the coach or a person authorized by the Board of Education shall be present throughout the contest.
- 3-2-2** When a male coach is assigned to a girls team, an adult female (non-high school student) should be present at the contest. When a female coach is assigned to a boys team, an adult male (non-high school student) should be present at the contest.

### **Section 3. Courtesy to Officials and Visiting Schools**

- 3-3-1** Recognized law enforcement officials should be given specific instruction by the school administrator as to duties before, during and after the contest. This will include keeping spectators from the field or floor during the contest, supervision of parking and safe conduct of contest officials and visiting team from the contest area. Failure to protect the contest, the teams or the officials constitutes a violation of the bylaws.

#### **Section 4. Student Participation and Physical Examination Forms**

- 3-4-1** Athletic participation forms for participants in any of the grades 7-12 shall be signed by a medical examiner (Physician [M.D., D.O., or D.C.], Advanced Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant), the participant and by a parent or guardian. These forms must be on file with the principal or designee before any candidate for a team may participate in a practice. These forms shall require the medical examiner to certify the individual's physical fitness no less than once each calendar year.

EXCEPTION: If the preparticipation athletic evaluation is conducted between May 1 and June 1, the preparticipation evaluation, signed by the medical examiner, is valid for one calendar year plus the remainder of the next school year.

- 3-4-2** If a student athlete transfers to another school, the physical examination forms shall be transferred to the new school.
- 3-4-3** Section 3313.73 of the Ohio Revised Code reads in part as follows: "This section does not require any school child to receive a medical examination (preparticipation physical evaluation) or receive medical treatment whose parent or guardian objects thereto." A form certifying this objection shall be signed by the parent or guardian and attached to the required parental consent forms. However, nothing in Section 3313.73 of the ORC would preclude a school from adopting a Board of Education policy that would deny participation in interscholastic athletics for any student whose parent or guardian refused to permit a preparticipation physical evaluation.

#### **Section 5. Eligibility Certificates**

- 3-5-1** At the beginning of each sport season each school's administration shall prepare an eligibility certificate listing only those students eligible under OHSAA rules to represent the school in each sport. This eligibility certificate and the information contained therein shall be verified and signed by the principal of the member school. Said eligibility certificates shall be prepared separately for each sport in which that school participates and available for inspection upon request.
- 3-5-2** Corrections, additions and deletions may be made as the sport season progresses and filed in the appropriate school office.

#### **Section 6. Duties Regarding Appeals**

- 3-6-1** All school administrative and athletic personnel, including interscholastic coaches, and student-athletes themselves, have a responsibility to cooperate fully with the Commissioner, the Commissioner's staff and members of the Board of Directors in all matters which are the subject of any investigation, hearing or appeal. In addition, any retaliation or threatened retaliation against an individual or individuals, either inside or outside of the school's employment or community, who provide information in connection with any investigation shall be regarded as a major violation of this bylaw provision, subject to Bylaw 11 sanctions including, but not limited to, membership suspension.
- 3-6-2** When requested by a member of the Board of Directors, or the Commissioner, the principal shall attend any and all hearings or appeals conducted on behalf of the OHSAA.

### **BYLAW 4 – STUDENT ELIGIBILITY**

#### **Section 1. Eligibility**

- 4-1-1** Each student shall meet all requirements in this bylaw to be eligible to participate in interscholastic athletic competition. Notwithstanding any provision of this Bylaw 4 to the contrary, if a student has met all of the substantive eligibility requirements of this Bylaw 4 but is declared ineligible due solely to an administrative error on the part of the school/school personnel, the Commissioner's office may, in its absolute and sole discretion, restore eligibility to that student (prospectively and retroactively), provided it can be shown that the student's actions or failure to act did not contribute in any way to the administrative error that caused the declaration of ineligibility in the first place. Notwithstanding the restoration of eligibility, the school may be subject to additional penalties as prescribed in Bylaw 11.

**Note:** The authority to correct administrative errors is limited to correcting student eligibility issues as codified within Bylaw 4 – Student Eligibility.

**4-1-2** If a student participates in an athletic contest and his or her eligibility has been established by falsified information (includes but is not limited to: name, address, transcripts, birth certificate, etc.), or if an attempt is made to establish eligibility for a student by falsified information, the student shall be ineligible in Ohio for a maximum of one year from the date the penalty is imposed.

**4-1-3** A student is a member of an interscholastic squad when the student participates in an interscholastic contest. Such status as a squad member continues until the start of the next school season in that sport. An athletic contest involving participants from another school or any non-interscholastic or any organized adult team is a game, preview or a scrimmage.

**Section 2. Age Limitation**

**4-2-1** If a student enrolled in high school attains the age of 19 before August 1, the student shall be ineligible to participate in high school interscholastic athletics for the school year commencing in that calendar year.

EXCEPTION 1: If the student is a “child with a disability” as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated thereunder, and the student’s specific disability has contributed significantly to the student’s inability to meet the requirements of this bylaw, that student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner’s office if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner’s office, the Commissioner’s office determines that:

- a) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- b) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes; and
- c) the student’s participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- d) there is no evidence of “red-shirting” or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

EXCEPTION 2: If a student has repeated any grade from kindergarten through grade 3 at the recommendation of the student’s teachers or other educational professionals and for purely academic reasons and, as a result of repeating any of these grades, the student cannot meet the age limitations of this bylaw in the student’s senior year of high school, the Commissioner’s office may declare the student eligible notwithstanding this bylaw 4-2-1 if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner’s office, the following criteria can be met:

- a) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- b) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes of her/his grade level; and
- c) the student’s participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- d) there is no evidence of “red-shirting” or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

**4-2-2** If a student enrolled in grade 7 or 8 attains the age of 15 before August 1, the student shall be ineligible to participate in 7th & 8th grade interscholastic athletics for the school year commencing in that calendar year.

EXCEPTION 1: If the student is a “child with a disability” as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated thereunder, and the student’s specific disability has contributed significantly to the student’s inability to meet the requirements of this bylaw, that student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner’s office if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner’s office, the Commissioner’s office determines that:

- a) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- b) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes; and
- c) the student’s participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- d) there is no evidence of “red-shirting” or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

EXCEPTION 2: If a student has repeated any grade from kindergarten through grade 3 at the recommendation of the student’s teachers or other educational professionals and for purely academic reasons and, as a result of repeating any of these grades, the student cannot meet the age limitations of this bylaw in the student’s eighth grade year with the 7th & 8th grade school, the Commissioner’s office may declare the student eligible notwithstanding this bylaw 4-2-2 if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner’s office, the following criteria can be met:

- a) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- b) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes of her/his grade level; and
- c) the student's participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- d) there is no evidence of "red-shirting" or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

**4-2-3** A student shall become eligible for high school athletics when the student attains the fifteenth birthday before August 1, or when the student attains ninth grade standing. The student is eligible at the school where the student is expected to enroll at the ninth grade level.

**4-2-4** In determining the age of a student, the date of birth as recorded in the school records shall be considered as final, except that when birth records, filed within six years after date of birth, are available in the State Bureau of Vital Statistics or a comparable governmental agency, it shall be used. If this information is not available and if the school records do not agree, the earliest date of birth shall be considered the valid date of birth.

**4-2-5** Family Bibles, physician's statements, parents' affidavits, baptismal certificates etc., will not be accepted in lieu of birth certificates. Amendments to birth certificates filed after six years from date of birth will not be considered.

**Section 3. Enrollment and Attendance**

**4-3-1** All students participating in a school-sponsored sport must be enrolled in and attending full-time in accordance with all duly adopted Board of Education or similar governing board policies of that school.

EXCEPTION 1: A student enrolled in the ninth grade separate from the high school (grades 10-12) is eligible to participate with the school squad of the high school the student will be assigned to attend.

EXCEPTION 2: A student enrolled in a joint vocational school is eligible at the high school where the students' records are maintained.

EXCEPTION 3: A student enrolled in a member school who receives his/her education through a community school established under Chapter 3314 of the Revised Code that is sponsored by the city, local or exempted village school district in which the student is entitled to attend school pursuant to Section 3313.64 or 3313.65 of the Revised Code, is eligible to participate at the member public school that is operated by the school district sponsoring the community school, provided the student is enrolled and attending pursuant to Board of Education policy.

EXCEPTION 4: A student enrolled full time in a postsecondary institution is eligible to participate at the high school where the student's records are maintained, provided the student is receiving high school credit for a minimum of five one credit courses in the postsecondary institution.

EXCEPTION 5: A student enrolled in an alternative school that is sponsored by a Board of Education or similar governing board is eligible to participate at the member school where the student would be entitled to attend provided the alternative school does not sponsor interscholastic athletics and the student is counted on the EMIS report for the member high school.

EXCEPTION 6: A student who is home schooled and is enrolled in a member school in accordance with the partial enrollment policy of a Board of Education or similar governing board may be eligible at the school where the student is enrolled and attending. Such partial enrollment policy requires that at least one of the courses be taken at the school's physical location. Note: A student entering a member school from a home school must do so at the beginning of the school year after having been home schooled for at least one calendar year. Failure to meet this one-year provision requires the student to be enrolled for a minimum of one grading period before the student can be declared eligible.

EXCEPTION 7: A student enrolled in a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) school that is established under Chapter 3326 of the Revised Code is eligible to participate at the member school where the student would be entitled to attend, provided the STEM school does not sponsor interscholastic athletics and the student is counted on the EMIS report for the member high school.

**4-3-2** Enrollment and attendance in a member school shall be deemed continuous until such date when a student has been officially withdrawn from the school in accordance with that school’s policies.

**4-3-3** After a student completes the eighth grade, or is otherwise eligible for high school athletics pursuant to Bylaw 4-2-3, the student shall be eligible for a period not to exceed eight semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not. A student in grade 7 or 8 who attains the age of 15 before August 1 shall be eligible only at the high school level for a period not to exceed eight semesters taken in order of attendance, whether the student participates or not.

EXCEPTION 1: The Commissioner or the Board of Directors may permit a student who completes the eighth semester of eligibility during the season of a sport to complete the sports season of the sport in which the student is participating provided the student is enrolled in school. If such extension is granted, the student is ineligible for further interscholastic participation when the sports season, regular and tournament, has ended.

EXCEPTION 2: If the student is a “child with a disability” as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated thereunder, and the student’s specific disability has contributed significantly to the student’s inability to meet the requirements of this bylaw, that student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner’s office if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner’s office, the Commissioner’s office determines that:

- a) the student does not pose a safety risk to himself/herself or others; and
- b) the student does not enjoy any advantages in terms of physical maturity, mental maturity or athletic maturity over other student-athletes; and
- c) the student’s participation does not affect the principles of competitive equity; and
- d) there is no evidence of “red-shirting” or other indicia of academic dishonesty.

**4-3-4** A student who is enrolled 15 or more school days in any semester, or who participates in an interscholastic contest prior to or during a semester, shall have that semester count as one semester of eligibility. In addition, the following situations shall count as a semester of eligibility: 1: A student who does not attend school in a semester due to a suspension or an expulsion shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted. 2: A student who does not attend school due to enrollment in a postsecondary institution that is not part of the Postsecondary Enrollment Option Part B (dual credit for both high school and postsecondary school) shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted. 3. A student who does not attend any school for a semester(s) due to truancy shall have that semester(s) count in the total of eight that are permitted.

EXCEPTION: The Commissioner may, in the exercise of the Commissioner’s sole discretion, disregard a particular semester of “enrollment” if extenuating circumstances of such enrollment are presented and are shown to have existed through no fault of the student-athlete.

**4-3-5** A student is considered a graduate when the student has completed the work required for graduation and is declared a graduate by the Board of Education or a similar governing board in another state/country. Notwithstanding the age and semester bylaws, such student is no longer eligible for interscholastic sports except for participation in the remaining contests of that semester.

**Section 4. Scholarship**

**4-4-1** In order to be eligible in grades 9-12, a student must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period. For the purpose of this Bylaw 4, Section 4, the term “grading period” is defined as the school’s Board-adopted calendar (e.g., six week, nine week, 12 week or semester) and does not mean an interim marking period. Furthermore, during the preceding grading period, the student must have received passing grades in a minimum of five (5) one-credit courses or the equivalent, each of which counts toward graduation.

EXCEPTION 1: The Commissioner’s office may waive this requirement for a student in her/his 12th and final year of school who (a) has accumulated sufficient credit hours to have graduated in the preceding semester; (b) maintains a grade point average in the top ten percent of the student’s class; and (c) can demonstrate that the underlying purposes of this bylaw have been otherwise fulfilled by the student.

**EXCEPTION 2:** The Commissioner’s office may waive the enrollment requirements of this by-law provided the student has been withdrawn or removed from school because of circumstances due to personal accident, illness or family hardship. An appeal for such a waiver must come from the principal of the school and be in writing. The appeal for waiver shall contain documents with school and medical supporting evidence.

**EXCEPTION 3:** If a student’s failure to meet the requirements of this bylaw are due to an “incomplete” given in one or more courses which the student was taking during the grading period in question, the student may have his/her eligibility restored by the Commissioner’s office once the “incomplete” has been changed to a passing letter grade provided:

- a) the failure to complete the required coursework during the grading period was due to calamity day(s), family tragedy, or illness or accident as verified by a physician; and
- b) the “incomplete” was given in accordance with Board of Education/other governing board adopted policies and procedures and is applicable to all students in the school; and
- c) the previously scheduled work and/or exams is/are completed within the time period provided in Board policy for completing work required to convert an “incomplete” into a letter grade; and
- d) there is no evidence that the “incomplete” was given in order to afford the student extended time in order to provide the student tutoring or other educational services simply to avoid a failing grade.

**Note:** This exception only applies where an “incomplete” has been issued and not a letter grade that is subsequently changed as a result of the extended time/additional work.

**4-4-2** If, either through the due process procedure or the direct mediation process established by the Ohio Department of Education in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, it is determined that a school has failed to provide all of the support services as identified in a student’s IEP as necessary for the student to receive a “free and appropriate public education,” AND the Commissioner’s office determines that this failure to provide these necessary services caused the student to fail to meet the requirements of Bylaw 4-4-1, the student may be declared eligible by the Commissioner’s office upon the student’s successful completion of the appropriate compensatory education as ordered by the Independent Hearing Officer (I.H.O.) or through the mediation process.

**4-4-3** 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. For the purposes of this bylaw, “school day” includes faculty in-service days, calamity days and regular school attendance days but not holidays or school breaks.

**EXCEPTION 1:** Eligibility or ineligibility for the first grading period commences with the start of the fall sports season.

**EXCEPTION 2:** A student coming off the “ineligible status” may become eligible 24 hours after the mandatory grade reporting date (a date established by Board policy which cannot be the same day as the end of the grading period) established by the Board of Education or other similar governing body for that school’s district, provided said grade reporting date is applicable to all students in that district. (See template for Board policy at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org))

**4-4-4** A student enrolled in the first grading period after advancement from the eighth grade must have passed a minimum of five of all subjects carried the preceding grading period in which the student was enrolled.

**4-4-5** A student enrolling in the seventh grade for the first time will be eligible for the first grading period regardless of previous academic achievement. Thereafter, in order to be eligible, a student in grade 7 or 8 must be currently enrolled and must have been enrolled in school the immediately preceding grading period and received passing grades during that grading period in a minimum of five of those subjects in which the student received grades.

**4-4-6** The primary responsibility for verifying eligibility rests with the receiving school. Eligibility shall be verified by reviewing school records or written verification from the sending school.

**4-4-7** Summer school and other educational options may not be used to substitute for failure to meet the academic standards specified in Bylaw 4 during the last grading period of the school year.

## Section 5. Conduct, Character, Discipline

- 4-5-1** In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletic contests and their related activities are not involved, the school itself is to be the sole judge as to whether the student may participate in athletics.
- 4-5-2** In matters pertaining to personal conduct in which athletic contests and their related activities are involved, the principal and game officials shall file a report and the Commissioner's office shall have jurisdiction to determine additional penalties including whether or not the student may participate in athletics.
- 4-5-3** Physical attacks on any official shall be reported to the Association office immediately by the officials involved. The Commissioner's office shall conduct an investigation and determine the penalties involved.
- 4-5-4** Any students who are ejected or disqualified from an athletic contest in any sport for unsporting conduct or a flagrant violation shall be immediately placed under the direct supervision of a school official.
- 4-5-5** Any student suspended or expelled from a member school shall be ineligible for interscholastic athletics at any member school for the duration of the suspension or expulsion. For the purpose of this bylaw, suspension refers to the denial of attendance at school for a period of not more than 10 days. Expulsion refers to the involuntary removal of a student for more than 10 days.

## Section 6. Residence

- 4-6-1** The districts for all public schools are established by the State Board of Education and defined for athletic purposes. In addition, school districts with multiple high schools may establish attendance zones within those districts. In determining one's residence for purposes of these bylaws, the following criteria shall apply: (a) where the parents and family members sleep the majority of the time, (b) where the mail is received, (c) where the meals are prepared and eaten, (d) where the parents are registered to vote, and (e) where important family activities take place during significant parts of each day. Note: It shall not be considered a "bona fide" change of residence as prescribed in Bylaw 4-7-2, Exception 1, or Bylaw 4-7-4 (1) if the parents of a transfer student vacate the residence prior to one year from the date that the student's transfer is approved, and the student remains in the school into which the transfer was approved.
- 4-6-2** A student who is a "child with a disability" as that term is defined at 42 U.S.C. Section 12102 (ADA) and the Regulations promulgated thereunder who is enrolled in a Special Education program at a school outside of the district of residence of parents is eligible at the school where the student attends classes or the school located in the district of residence of the parents, PROVIDED each of the following is met: (a) the student's parents reside in Ohio; (b) the school district in which the parents reside does not provide the required programs to meet the student's special education needs; and (c) there is a contractual agreement specifying the responsibility for educating a "child with disabilities" between the respective school boards or between the parents and the school the student with the disability will attend.
- 4-6-3** A student whose parents reside outside the state of Ohio but within the United States will be ineligible for interscholastic athletics in a member school. (See Bylaw 4-8-1 for eligibility requirements for students whose parents live outside the United States).

**Note:** A biological parent with custodial rights or adoptive parent must reside in Ohio.

**EXCEPTION 1** — The Commissioner's office may declare a student who is the subject of a custody order issued by a court of proper jurisdiction conferring custody upon a grandparent, aunt, uncle or sibling who resides in Ohio, if, in the sole discretion of the Commissioner's office, the Commissioner's office determines that the purpose of this change in custody was not for athletic reasons, but purely for the best interest of the student in terms of the student's mental, physical and educational well-being.

**Note:** Upon enrollment of a student whose parents live outside the state of Ohio but within the United States, or if the parents move outside the state of Ohio prior to or during the student's high school career, the principal of that school in which the student is being enrolled shall notify the Commissioner's office of said enrollment, and the facts and circumstances regarding any

change of custody so that the Commissioner's office can make an informed decision regarding the student's qualifications under this exception.

**EXCEPTION 2** — A student who has attended a minimum of 15 days in the eleventh grade when the parents move outside the state of Ohio may be declared eligible for the twelfth grade provided the student maintains continuous enrollment in the Ohio school.

**EXCEPTION 3** — A student who enrolls at first grade level in a school consisting of grades 1-12 and who maintains continuous enrollment shall be eligible for interscholastic athletics in grades 7-12 in that school regardless of place or state of residence of parents.

**EXCEPTION 4** — A student who resides within the boundaries of a parochial school system consisting of grades 1-12 that has multiple sites organized into elementary schools (1-8) and secondary schools (9-12), and who has enrolled by fourth grade level of an elementary school in that system and has maintained continuous enrollment in that school system through grade 8, shall be eligible for interscholastic athletics in grades 9-12 providing the secondary school attended by the student is the school designated by the school system for the continuance of the student's educational program.

**EXCEPTION 5** — A student who resides within the boundaries of a public school district in a neighboring state; and who attends an Ohio public school system under an arrangement through which the entire grade of the out-of-state student attends the Ohio public school system; and for whom the tuition or cost of education for said out-of-state student is paid by the neighboring state's school district of residence; and who will be eligible to receive a high school diploma from an Ohio public school system shall be eligible for interscholastic athletics in grades 7-12 at the schools designated by the Ohio school system for attendance by the students from the neighboring state.

**EXCEPTION 6** — A student who is enrolled in a member school that provides housing for the student and accepts the role of the parent in loco parentis.

**EXCEPTION 7** — A student who has been enrolled in an Ohio school pursuant to the Interstate Compact of Educational Opportunities for Military Children may be declared eligible at a member school upon submission of a special power of attorney, relative to the custody or guardianship of a child of a military family and executed under applicable law. **The student shall be ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.**

### **Section 7. Transfers**

**4-7-1** The transfer bylaws apply to all students enrolled in grades 9-12 who are transferring high schools whether the schools are public or non-public, member or non-member or whether the high schools are within the same school system or district.

**4-7-2** If a student transfers after the fifth day of the student's ninth grade year or after having established eligibility prior to the start of school by playing in a contest (scrimmage, preview or regular season/tournament contest), the student will be ineligible for one year from the date of enrollment in the school to which the student transferred. A student is considered to have transferred whenever enrollment is changed from one school to another school, or whenever the student participates in a practice, scrimmage or contest with a school-sponsored squad of a school in which the student has not been enrolled. Subject to the specific provisions of this Section 7 – Transfer – the following exceptions to the general transfer bylaw may apply:

**EXCEPTION 1** – If a student's transfer is the result of a bona fide legal change of residence by the parents or legal guardians of the student from one public school district in Ohio to another public school district in Ohio, the Commissioner's Office may declare the student eligible insofar as the transfer bylaw is concerned provided;

a) the student is enrolled in the new public school district of residence of the parents'/legal guardians' new residence or any non-public school; and

b) in the case of an "intact" family, both parents have made the bona fide legal change of residence, and the former residence has been completely abandoned by the parents/legal custodians. In the case of a family in which the parents' marriage has been legally terminated or the parents were never married, the custodial parent has made a bona fide legal change of residence and the

former residence of the custodial parent has been completely abandoned; and

c) the parents of the student complete the notarized Affidavit of Bona Fide Change of Legal Residence as thoroughly, accurately and honestly as possible; and

d) an administrator from the school to which the student is transferring affirms to the Commissioner's Office that she/he has independently verified all of the information/affirmations set forth in the Affidavit of Bona Fide Change of Legal Residence; and

e) the Commissioner's Office is satisfied that the purported change of residence was not accomplished in order to circumvent this Transfer Bylaw but rather the change of residence was the event that created the need to transfer enrollment for the student-athlete.

**The student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's Office.** The declaration of eligibility shall commence with the date of the letter ruling from the Commissioner's Office and requires the maintenance of the bona fide residence for one calendar year from the date of that ruling. Furthermore, the Commissioner's Office is authorized to rescind any declarations of eligibility granted under this exception and declare the student ineligible for up to one year from the date of such rescission in the event the Commissioner's Office learns of any falsification of any information given in the Affidavit of Bona Fide Change of Legal Residence or other documents submitted in the approval process, or if the parents fail to maintain the new residence for one (1) year from the date of the eligibility ruling.

Parents making a bona fide legal change of residence into the state of Ohio for the first time may enroll the student in any school that accepts that student; however, these parents must also complete and submit the Affidavit of Bona Fide Residence. That student may be eligible insofar as transfer is concerned in accordance with this bylaw upon receipt of the completed and accurate Affidavit of Bona Fide Residence which indicates that both parents have moved into Ohio. **Note 1:** These forms can be found at <http://www.ohsaa.org/eligibility/forms/AffidavitBonaFideResidence.pdf>. **Note 2:** See the definition of a bona fide residence in Bylaw 4-6-1.

**EXCEPTION 2** - If the student is the ward of a court-appointed guardian, and there is a subsequent change in that guardian that results in a change of school district, the student may be eligible in the district of residence of the new guardian or at any non-public school provided the student lives with the guardian for a minimum of one year and provided the Commissioners' Office is satisfied that the purported change of custody was not accomplished in order to circumvent this Transfer Bylaw but rather the change of custody was the event that created the need to transfer enrollment for the student-athlete. Likewise, if the student is the child of parents who were never married or have had their marriage terminated and there is a court ordered change of custody, the student may be eligible in the district of residence of the new custodial parent or at any nonpublic school provided the student lives with the new custodial parent for a minimum of one year and provided the Commissioners' Office is satisfied that the purported change of custody was not accomplished in order to circumvent this Transfer Bylaw but rather the change of custody was the event that created the need to transfer enrollment for the student-athlete. For purposes of this exception, the term "parent" means the biological or adoptive parents of the student or, as the case may be, the person to whom parenting rights and responsibilities have been allocated pursuant to court order.

In the event a student has been temporarily or permanently removed from the home, "parent" means the person or government agency with legal or permanent custody. In such a case, the student shall be eligible in the district of residence of the government agency/foster placement with legal or permanent custody or at any non-public school provided the student lives in that placement for a minimum of one year. If the student is subsequently removed from government agency and legal custody is placed back with the parents prior to the expiration of one year, the student may, with the permission of the placement agency/court and the agreement of the member school, remain enrolled in the school where the student was placed OR may return to the district of residence of the parents and apply for eligibility under this exception.

**When a change of residential parent or legal custodian results in a change of school district, the student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.**

**EXCEPTION 3** — If, and only if, either one of the parents in a Shared Parenting Plan, notwithstanding any provisions therein to the contrary, makes a bona fide legal change of residence

from one public school district into another public school district, and such move has taken place within the last calendar year, the student shall be immediately eligible insofar as transfer is concerned in the public school located in the residential district of either parent or any nonpublic school.

**EXCEPTION 4** — If the high school, which is either the high school in a single high school public school district or a non-public high school, in which the student is enrolled closes or discontinues its high school program after grade nine, the student may enroll in any school and be immediately eligible insofar as transfer is concerned.

**EXCEPTION 5** — If the bona fide residence of the student's parents is annexed to a different school district or consolidated within a school district, the student may be ruled eligible upon transfer to a school in the annexed or consolidated district subject to modification by formal action by the Boards of Education concerned. A copy of such action by Boards of Education must be on file in the Association office before the Commissioner's office can rule the student eligible.

**EXCEPTION 6** — A student shall be entitled to one transfer into a public high school located in the public school district within which the student's parent residence is located. **Note 1:** Use of this exception requires the submission of the Exception Six Form to document the transfer as set forth in the exception. The form can be found at [www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org). **Note 2:** Exception six does not apply to transfers to and from high schools within a multiple high school district/system. Please see By-laws 4-7-4, 4-7-6 and 4-7-7 for the transfer rules which apply to intra-district or system transfers.

**EXCEPTION 7** — A student may return to non-public education by transferring from the public high school located in the district of residence of the parents to a non-public high school and have her/his eligibility restored at the discretion of the Commissioner's office provided the following conditions have been met:

1. That the transfer from the non-public high school to the public high school was not done for athletic reasons but for purely academic reasons or family circumstances beyond the control of the student and/or his/her parents; and
2. The student had been continuously enrolled in the same system of non-public education (e.g., Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Association of Independent Schools, Association of Christian School International or other category as denoted by the State Department of Education) beginning in the 6th grade and continuing thereafter through and including the eighth grade and either:
  - a) The student began grade nine in a high school within the same non-public system and shall transfer back to that same non-public high school or
  - b) The student began grade nine in the public school located in the residential district of the parents and the transfer back to a high school within the same non-public school system in which the student was enrolled from grades 6-8 shall occur prior to the start of the student's tenth grade year.
3. The student has been ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

**EXCEPTION 8** — A student who does not live in the same school district as parents or legal guardian and who is financially self-supporting may be ruled eligible upon approval of the Commissioner at a school in the district where the student resides. The Commissioner is empowered to establish requirements for the student to be determined to be self-supporting. These requirements shall be established for each school year by May 15th of the preceding year. Self-support documentation must be submitted for approval every 30 days. The student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner. Note: Living with and/or being employed by a relative does not qualify for self-support under this exception.

**EXCEPTION 9** — A student transferred to the State School for the Blind or State School for the Deaf shall be eligible upon enrollment.

**EXCEPTION 10** — The Commissioner shall have the discretionary power to waive the residence requirements in only those cases of students whose parents live outside the school district and whose contracted domicile is not available for their habitation. The students are ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner.

EXCEPTION 11 — During the period of time, and only if, a school district ceases to sponsor its entire interscholastic athletic programs, a student from that district may transfer to any other school district/system and have his/her eligibility restored upon application to the Commissioner's office. Furthermore, if the district from which such student transferred resumes with its sponsorship of interscholastic programs and the student wishes to transfer back to the district from which he/she transferred, he/she may do so and have his/her eligibility restored in accordance with Exception 6 of Bylaw 4-7-2, and not withstanding Bylaw 4-7-3, provided the transfer back occurs prior to the start of the next school year following the school year in which resumption of sponsorship of interscholastic programs occurred.

In consideration of all applications for the restoration of eligibility pursuant to this Exception, the Commissioner's office shall give due consideration to all factors relating to the transfer and particularly the timing of the transfer in relation to the effective date on which sponsorship of interscholastic athletics ceases and/or resumes.

No student transferring under this provision shall be eligible until declared so by the Commissioner's office.

EXCEPTION 12 - A student returning from a domestic exchange program with whom the member school has partnered may be declared eligible insofar as the transfer bylaw is concerned if all the following conditions have been met:

- a) The domestic exchange program exists primarily for academic and educational learning experiences; and
- b) The student receives credits that apply towards the student's graduation in the Ohio member school for the student's work in this domestic exchange program; and
- c) In the event the student did participate in interscholastic athletics while enrolled in this domestic exchange program, the student's athletic participation was secondary to his/her academic and educational reasons for participation in this program; and
- d) The domestic exchange program has, in its curriculum guide, a structured beginning and end to the program itself; and.
- e) The student shall be ineligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the designated OHSAA approval form.

#### 4-7-3

If a transfer takes place during the sport season in which the student has participated in a regular season interscholastic contest in a sport, **the student is ineligible in that sport for the remainder of that sport's season** in the school into which the student has transferred. A student may not use any of the exceptions to Bylaw 4-7-2 or 4-7-4 to circumvent this bylaw except if the parents make a bona fide move into a new public school district as referenced in Exception 1 of Bylaw 4-7-2 AND the school building into which the student transfers is more than 50 miles from the school building from which the student transfers as determined by [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com), or such other navigational system as adopted by the Board of Directors at its August meeting, using the most direct route. For purposes of this bylaw, "sport season" shall be determined by the sports regulations for that sport, beginning with the first date on which coaching may begin and concluding on the date when the season ends.

#### 4-7-4

The superintendent or person delegated by the superintendent of either a non-public or public school system may transfer students within the system without jeopardizing their eligibility only in the following circumstances:

- 1) The parent(s) or legal custodian of the student have made a bona fide move from one attendance zone into a new attendance zone within the school district and such move entitles the student to attend another district high school OR
- 2) There has been a court-ordered change of legal custody from one individual to another individual living within a new attendance zone within the school district and the student shall live with the new custodian in the new attendance zone OR
- 3) The school closes or there was a mistake made in the student's initial placement
- 4) The student is a child with a disability whose program as prescribed by the student's I.E.P. has been changed to another high school

- 5) The student transfers pursuant to state or federal statutes addressing unsafe schools or academically poor performing schools, and the student can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the superintendent that the transfer is for purely academic reasons and not athletic reasons.

Such transfers are eligible only after approval by the Commissioner's office.

**4-7-5** Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 4-7-2 and 4-7-4, if a student transfers pursuant to state or federal statutes addressing unsafe schools or academically poor performing schools, and the student can demonstrate to the satisfaction of the Commissioner's office that the transfer is for purely academic reasons and not athletic reasons, the Commissioner's office may declare such transferring student eligible upon application to the Commissioner's office. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office. **Note:** The student shall be entitled to one transfer only under the provisions set forth in this bylaw.

**4-7-6** If a student transfers to a high school within the same **public school district** within which the school from where the student transferred is a part, the student may have his/her eligibility restored by the Commissioner's office provided the following conditions have been met:

- 1) The student has been reassigned to the high school by the school district as a result of **redistricting** or a **specific change of program**; and
- 2) The transfer takes place prior to the beginning of the school year; and
- 3) The District petitions the Commissioner's office for the restoration of eligibility for the student no later than 15 school days after the beginning of the school year; and
- 4) The student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

**4-7-7** If a student transfers to a high school located within the jurisdiction of a non-public multiple high school system (e.g., Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Association of Independent Schools, Association of Christian Schools International or other category as denoted by the State Department of Education) from another high school within that same system, the student may have his/her eligibility restored by the Commissioner's office provided the following conditions have been met:

- 1) The student has been reassigned to the high school by the superintendent or other administrative authority of that school system as a result of a **specific change of academic program**; or a material **change in economic circumstances** so as to create a hardship; or a material **change in transportation circumstances** so as to create a hardship; and
- 2) The transfer takes place prior to the beginning of the school year; and
- 3) The superintendent or other administrative authority of the system petitions the Commissioner's office for the restoration of eligibility for the student verifying in detail the specific reason for the transfer in accordance with item #1 and certifying that the transfer is not for athletic reasons no later than 15 school days after the beginning of the school year; and
- 4) The student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

**4-7-8** In order for a transfer student to be eligible for OHSAA tournament competition at a school, the student's name must be listed on the eligibility certificate submitted at the tournament level in the sport.

### **Section 8. International and Exchange Students**

**4-8-1** For the purpose of this bylaw, an international student is a student who is not a United States citizen and who is in Ohio receiving secondary education in an Ohio school. International students are ineligible for interscholastic athletics in Ohio unless they can meet one of the exceptions below.

**EXCEPTION 1:** An international student may be declared eligible if the student's parents have made a bona fide legal change of residence into Ohio and the international student is enrolled and attending an Ohio member school. The student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

**EXCEPTION 2:** The international student who is a participant in a recognized visitor exchange program may be eligible for interscholastic athletics subject to the restrictions and conditions set forth below:

- a. The international student may be eligible for a maximum of one school year which is the first year of enrollment at the Ohio member school.
- b. The international student has not previously participated in any other visitor exchange program in the United States. If the international student has participated in another visitor exchange program in Ohio or any other state, the period of participation in that other program shall count against the one year maximum eligibility set forth in (a) above.
- c. The international student is in this country pursuant to a J-1 Visa. No other visa type, passport or other documentation shall qualify the student for eligibility under this exception.
- d. There shall be no evidence of a direct placement for athletic purposes into a specific member school in Ohio.
- e. No more than five (5) international students from the same visitor exchange program, in one member school, shall be permitted to be eligible during any school year.
- f. The member school at which the international student wishes to be declared eligible for interscholastic athletic participation must submit the appropriate forms to the Commissioner's office, and the student and school must cooperate with the Commissioner's office in determining that all other requirements for eligibility have been satisfied.

The international student described in this Exception 2 shall be ineligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate form.

**EXCEPTION 3:** An international student may be declared eligible for interscholastic athletics upon the submission of a court approved document certifying the student's adoption by a legal resident of the school district in which the student is attending. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate court documents.

**EXCEPTION 4:** A student may be declared eligible for interscholastic athletics when the student's parents are citizens of the United States who reside outside the United States. The student is not eligible until declared eligible by the Commissioner's office upon submission of the appropriate documents.

- 4-8-2** An Ohio student returning from an international exchange program may resume interscholastic competition in the same Ohio member school from which the student left at the point of interruption of the student's Ohio education provided the student meets all requirements relative to age, semesters of eligibility as well as preceding grading period scholastic requirements upon return to the member high school. Such a student is ineligible until ruled eligible by the Commissioner's office.

### **Section 9. Recruiting**

- 4-9-1** A student is considered a prospective athlete after enrolling in the seventh grade, or the grade corresponding to the seventh grade for a student from a foreign country, irrespective of whether the student is currently enrolled in a public 7th-8th grade school located within a public school district or a non-public school that is part of a non-public system. Any attempt to recruit a prospective student-athlete for athletic purposes shall be strictly prohibited.
- 4-9-2** For purposes of this Bylaw Section 9, the term "recruit" shall mean the use of influence by any person connected or not connected with the school to secure the enrollment of a prospective student-athlete.

**EXCEPTION 1:** It is permissible for coaches and other school employees of a public school system to have contact with seventh and eighth grade students currently enrolled in that public school district; however, coaches and other school employees in a multi-high school public school district may have contact with only those students in grades seven and eight who are assigned by that district to attend that high school where the coach or school employee works.

**EXCEPTION 2:** It is permissible for coaches and other school employees of a non-public school system to have contact with seventh and eighth grade students currently enrolled in a non-public school of the same type (Catholic Conference of Ohio, Ohio Association of Independent Schools, Association of Christian Schools International or other category as denoted by the State Department of Education) provided the boundaries of that non-public school system are clearly defined and on file with the Ohio High School Athletic Association and the contact is restricted to students enrolled within that defined boundary.

**4-9-3** “Mass Marketing,” though a form of recruiting students, may be permitted under this Bylaw by any and all member high schools provided that the mass marketing involves the marketing of the entire high school program and all its elements and not solely or primarily the school’s athletic program/programs. Forms of mass marketing that are permissible under this Bylaw include but are not limited to:

- Conducting an open house for all prospective students during which all elements of the school program may be presented.
- Conducting a campaign directed to a group of prospective students that contains general school information and not solely athletics information
- Inviting prospective students to campus for activities that are related to all aspects of the school’s educational offerings and not solely athletic information
- Using the school website to advertise all aspects of the school’s educational offerings and not solely athletics information.
- Advertising in the media information about all aspects of the school’s educational offerings and not solely athletics information.
- Providing athletic camp brochures that advertise athletic camps that are available to a general population are permitted.
- Inviting and/or providing free admission to high school contests or invitations to athletic-related recognition ceremonies/banquets, etc., are permitted provided that the invitation or admission is extended to the entire group or team and is mutually agreed upon by the administrations of both schools/organizations.

**4-9-4** Forms of “recruiting” that are prohibited by this Bylaw include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Meetings with, functions for or marketing to a select athletic group or individual/individuals, i.e., eighth grade team or individual sports participant for the purpose of influencing enrollment at the high school.
- Any coach or group of coaches having any contact with prospective student-athletes, except as permitted in Bylaw 4-9-3, who are not presently enrolled in the school’s educational program, or their parents, prior to written acceptance notification, which cannot occur prior to January 2. **Note:** For the purposes of this section of Bylaw 4, the description of “coaches” as stated in Bylaw 6-1-1 and 6-1-2 shall be applicable. Furthermore, the mere fact that a coach may also have another job title with his/her employer does not relieve that individual from this prohibition.
- Interscholastic coaches answering athletic questions from prospective student-athletes and/or their parents and describing their programs except within the school in accordance with approved administrative policies and procedures (i.e. via admissions offices) and consistent with the provisions set forth in Bylaw 4-9-3. **Note:** When an admissions officer is also a member of a coaching staff, that admissions officer shall have no contact with prospective enrollees except as specified within these bylaws as permissible for coaching staff members.
- Member schools distributing athletic publications or advertising solely for athletics. All athletic materials must be accompanied by general school information prior to student registration.
- Providing favors or inducements, such as T-shirts or caps, to prospective student-athletes or their parents.
- Providing financial aid or scholarships to a student-athlete on the basis of athletic ability.

**4-9-5** Prior to enrollment, a student-athlete may visit a public or non-public school in contemplation of enrollment, as long as that contemplated enrollment is consistent with Board of Education or similar governing board policy formally adopted by that school district and arrangements for the visit are made through the principal and/or school administrator designated by the Board of Education or similar governing board.

- 4-9-6** All questions relating to enrollment, attendance or the athletic program shall be handled through the school administration or the admissions office.
- 4-9-7** Any violation of the recruiting prohibitions as set forth in this bylaw shall cause the recruited student-athlete to be ineligible upon enrollment. Furthermore, the school into which the recruited student-athlete enrolls or the school the recruiting attempts were intended to benefit shall be subject to sanctions as set forth in Bylaw 11. If a coach has been found to have violated these recruiting prohibitions by the Commissioner's Office, and is employed/approved to coach in the ensuing school year by another member school in the same sport in which the violations occurred, the school where the coach is employed/approved to coach shall be ineligible for OHSAA tournament competition in that sport for a minimum of one year.

### Section 10. Amateur

- 4-10-1** A student who represents a school in an interscholastic sport shall be an amateur in that sport. An amateur athlete is one who participates in the activities of his/her sport for the purpose of deriving the physical, mental and social benefits organized sports competition has to offer and not for any present or future pecuniary or commercial gains. Since the student is considered an integral member of the student body, a clear line of distinction between educationally based athletics and professional sports must exist and be maintained at all times. It shall be the shared responsibility of school personnel, the athletes and their parents to maintain this clear line of distinction.
- 4-10-2** An athlete forfeits amateur status, and thus interscholastic athletic eligibility, if any of the following standards of amateurism are violated:
- Competing for money or other remuneration. Allowable travel, meals and lodging expenses may be accepted provided that these expenses are not conditioned on the individual's or team's place finish or performance or given on an incentive basis. In addition, receipt of expenses in excess of the same reasonable amount for permissible expenses given to all individuals or team members involved in the competition is not permitted;
  - Capitalizing on the athlete's fame by receiving money, merchandise or services of value. An athlete "capitalizes" on his/her "athletic fame" by accepting money, merchandise or services of value based in whole or in part upon the notoriety the athlete received through his/her athletic skills and achievements. This includes using the athlete's skill, directly or indirectly, for pay in any form in that sport. "Pay" includes, but is not limited to, any direct or indirect remuneration, gratuity or other economic benefit in either the present or future, or any division or split of surplus (bonuses, games' receipts, etc.). Scholarships to institutions of higher education are specifically exempted;
  - Receiving, from a sponsor, actual and necessary expenses or any form of compensation to participate in athletics practice or competition while not representing a member school. A "sponsor" is a person or entity that undertakes certain responsibilities (such as underwriting, promoting, endorsing or financing) in connection with an athlete or event and who/which is neither (1) a nonprofessional organization or governing body of an amateur sport which is sponsoring the tournament or event, (2) a member school or organization connected with the member school through duly recognized action of the member school's Board of Education (or similar governing body) or (3) any person who is not a "legal stranger" to the athlete. A "legal stranger" is a person who is neither the biological parent nor is the legal guardian or custodian of the athlete nor one who has no legal obligation to support the athlete.  
Any practice for which reasonable and necessary expenses are received must be conducted in a continuous time period preceding the competition except for a practice session conducted by a national team, under the auspices of a United States (USA) National Governing Body, which may be interrupted for specific periods of time preceding the competition;
  - Signing a contract or making a commitment of any kind to play professional athletics, regardless of its legal enforceability or any payment received. This prohibits signing a contract during the interscholastic athletics season that is dated after the completion of the athlete's interscholastic athletic eligibility;
  - Receiving, directly or indirectly, a salary, reimbursement of expenses, merchandise or services or any other form of financial assistance or benefits from a professional sports organization based upon athletics skills or participation.

- EXCEPTION: An athlete may receive reimbursement of expenses as per item (a) for a professional tryout;
- f) Competing with any professional athletics team, even if no pay or remuneration for expenses was received; or
  - g) Entering into an agreement with a sports or marketing agent (O.R.C. §§4771.01 et seq.).

**4-10-3** The following activities do not jeopardize amateur status:

- a) Accepting a fee for instructing, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation, playground or camp activities;
- b) Receiving school-sponsored membership or participation fees in youth serving agencies, athletic clubs, community recreation centers, instructional programs or camps, etc. provided such fees are paid directly to the agency;
- c) Receiving an award, playing equipment or prize of monetary value which does not exceed the awards amount authorized by the Association;
- d) Receiving all non-monetary benefits and awards provided to members of an Olympic team beyond actual and necessary expenses, including entertainment, equipment, clothing, long distance telephone service, Internet access, and any other item or service for which it can be demonstrated that the same benefit is available to all members of the nation's Olympic team or the specific sport Olympic team in question;
- e) Accepting funds that are administered by the United States Olympic Committee pursuant to its Operation Gold Program; or
- f) Participating in member school, charitable or educational promotions or fund-raising activities that involve the use of athletic ability by student-athletes to obtain funds (e.g., swim-a-thons, lift-a-thons, shoot-a-thons) from donors, provided the student-athletes receive no compensation or prizes for their participation.
- g) Accepting scholarship funds that are administered by a national governing body, e.g. the United States Bowling Congress' Scholarship Program, provided such funds are paid directly to a postsecondary institution and the funds are not available until after the student has graduated from high school.

- 4-10-4** A high school student who loses amateur status/athletic eligibility may apply to the Association for reinstatement in the interscholastic program. Such appeals shall be handled by the Commissioner in accordance with the bylaws. If a student-athlete in one sport violates a provision of the amateur bylaw as detailed above, the student-athlete may represent the member school in a different sport.

**BYLAW 5 — AWARDS**

**Section 1. Awards — Approved**

- 5-1-1** Awards directly resulting from participation in interscholastic athletics may be accepted by a student from any source provided the award does not exceed in value \$200 per award.
- 5-1-2** College scholarships may be accepted provided the amount of the scholarship is paid for college expenses.

**Section 2. — Awards — Violations**

- 5-2-1** The penalty for violation for any member of a school squad, except a senior, shall be ineligibility in that sport for the ensuing season.
- 5-2-2** The penalty for violation for a senior shall be ineligibility for all interscholastic athletics the remainder of the school year.
- 5-2-3** The school itself shall be held accountable to the Association for any violation of this bylaw, by individuals or groups before, at, or after graduation.

**BYLAW 6 — COACHES**

**Section 1. Requirements for Coaching**

- 6-1-1** School administrators are primarily responsible for the supervision of coaches prior to, during and after all interscholastic contests except as specifically referenced in national playing rules that are applicable during an interscholastic contest and enforced by contest officials for proscribed conduct only.

**6-1-2** All coaches, paid and volunteer, shall meet the criteria established by the State Board of Education. For more information, visit the Coaches Corner on the OHSAA website ([www.ohsaa.org](http://www.ohsaa.org)).

**Note:** See Sports Regulation 3 for penalties for non-compliance with this Bylaw and procedures to adhere to for verification of such.

**6-1-3** All coaches shall be approved by the Board of Education or similar governing board in non-public schools.

**6-1-4** The designated head coach and all assistant coaches (paid and unpaid) for each sport team or individual sport for which a member school provides sponsorship shall, in addition to teaching the skills and strategies of their sport, be for their athletes a proper role model for citizenship, ethics, integrity and sporting conduct.

### **Section 2. Salary of Coaches**

**6-2-1** The Board of Education or other similar governing board shall have exclusive jurisdiction on matters of salary, stipend or compensation of its coaches.

## **BYLAW 7 – CONTRACTS**

### **Section 1. Contracts for Athletic Contests**

**7-1-1** Regular season contests between two or more member schools should be memorialized in writing and signed by representatives authorized by the competing member schools. All disputes involving the contracts referenced herein that cannot be resolved between the member schools themselves shall be referred to the Commissioner's office for binding resolution.

**7-1-2** When schools come together to form a league or conference and said league or conference publishes a league or conference schedule of contests for its member schools, the league or conference schedule shall serve as a binding contract between the member schools of that league or conference in lieu of the single game contract referenced in Bylaw 7-1-1.

**7-1-3** All member schools of a league or conference shall adopt a Constitution and Bylaws of said league or conference which Constitution and Bylaws shall serve, among other purposes, as a binding contract between each of the member schools of said league or conference.

**7-1-4** The voiding of a contract can only be done upon the mutual consent of the contracting schools. The decision of a school to change league or conference affiliation does not void its previous contract obligations with the league or conference and its member schools. Furthermore, all league or conference contract obligations shall take precedence over any contracts executed later in time.

**7-1-5** The suspension or termination of a school's membership in the OHSAA shall render all contracts voidable by schools whose membership remains in good standing with the OHSAA.

**7-1-6** When a new school district is created under Sections 3311.26 and 3311.37 of the Ohio Revised Code, all contracts for contests and officials made by the former school districts are declared null and void and new contracts for contests and officials should be negotiated by the new school district.

**7-1-7** If contractual obligations cannot be fulfilled by reason of weather, strike, force majeure or similar such circumstances, the contracting school should:

- a) Void the contract by mutual consent of the parties involved, or
- b) Reschedule the contest at another date mutually agreeable to all parties, or
- c) Schools using the damage clause in game contracts would use the amount stated in the contract for financial settlement.
- d) If steps a, b or c cannot be accomplished, determine the financial loss to the offended school and make a financial settlement. If the settlement cannot be agreed upon, the OHSAA will examine past records of games previously played and arrive at a settlement.

### **Section 2. Contracts with Officials**

**7-2-1** The contract between the school and the contest official should be executed on an OHSAA Contract for Officials or similar form and signed for specific dates by the official and the home school administrator or a certified OHSAA officials assigner authorized by the home school.

- 7-2-2** The official's contract may be voided or terminated by mutual agreement of the official and the home school administrator or the certified OHSAA officials assigner authorized by the home school provided such voiding or terminating is executed in writing.

## **BYLAW 8 — OFFICIALS**

### **Section 1. Officials Required**

- 8-1-1** OHSAA officials shall be used in certain sports played in Ohio. The list of sports and officiating requirements will be found in the *Handbook for Officials* and in the specific sports regulations found in this handbook.
- 8-1-2** Schools that violate the provisions of this section shall be fined a maximum of \$100.00 payable to the OHSAA for each offense and will not be accepted as a member school the following year unless the fine is paid.

### **Section 2. Selection of Officials for Regular Season Contests**

- 8-2-1** The principal of the school, the official designee or a certified assigner shall attend personally to the selection of officials. Great care should be exercised in the selection of officials, well in advance of the contest and shall be mutually agreed upon by the schools involved.
- 8-2-2** When the contest begins each school waives all of its rights so far as objecting to the officials.

### **Section 3. Decisions by Officials**

- 8-3-1** Protests arising from the decisions and interpretations of the contest playing rules by officials will not be considered, and those decisions shall be final. The Commissioner's office does not have the authority or jurisdiction to order contests replayed, or to overturn decisions of contest officials regarding the decisions and interpretations of contest playing rules. The decisions and interpretations of the rules by the contest officials are final.
- 8-3-2** The record of the official scorekeeper at the conclusion of the contest is final unless an error is discovered. Such error shall be corrected as covered by specific contest rules.
- 8-3-3** Any team leaving the contest area before the conclusion of the contest because of dissatisfaction with the officiating will render the school liable to disciplinary action by the Association.

### **Section 4. Handbook for Officials and Directory**

- 8-4-1** The Board of Directors, upon recommendation of the Commissioner's office, shall approve on an annual basis a *Handbook for Officials* that shall outline the officiating code of ethics, officials/officiating requirements, officiating permit procedures, and such other matters as deemed necessary and appropriate by the Board of Directors. This *Handbook for Officials*, along with a *Directory of Officials*, shall be published for annual distribution to all member schools and registered officials.

### **Section 5. Rules Examination**

- 8-5-1** The dates for applications and examinations on the rules of the various sports to become an official will be determined and published by the Commissioner's office.

### **Section 6. Rules Meeting Requirements**

- 8-6-1** Officials are required to attend local rules discussion meetings and state rules interpretation meetings as scheduled. Specific requirements for each sport are listed in the *Handbook for Officials*. Officials who have allowed their OHSAA permit to lapse and those not attending the designated meetings may be reinstated as outlined in the *Handbook for Officials*.

### **Section 7. Officials Uniforms**

- 8-7-1** The official uniform for officials in interscholastic sports shall be as specified in the officials manual in that sport or as adopted by the Board of Directors in that sport and specified in the *Handbook for Officials*.

**BYLAW 9 – CONTESTS REQUIRING SPECIAL ATTENTION**

**Section 1. Contests with Non-Member Schools and Non-Interscholastic Teams**

**9-1-1** Members of the Association shall observe all Ohio eligibility and contest rules in contests with non-member and non-interscholastic teams.

**Section 2. Contests with Out-Of-State Schools**

**9-2-1** Schools may travel out of state to compete in contests in states or provinces in Canada that are contiguous to Ohio regardless of distance to travel. The states include Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The province includes Ontario. Additionally, schools may travel out of state one time per sport per interscholastic season to compete in contests in states or provinces in Canada that are not contiguous to Ohio provided there is no loss of school time. “School time” is defined as any time during any day during which the school is in session as stipulated in its Board-adopted school calendar exclusive of contingency days. Penalty for violation: The school shall be ineligible for the OHSAA postseason tournament in the sport in which the out-of-state travel was involved and could be subject to additional penalties as referenced in Bylaw 11.

EXCEPTION: If, because of missed school days due to calamity situations, an otherwise non-school day(s) becomes a school day(s) in order to make-up for the missed school day(s), the school may compete in a contest(s) outside the state of Ohio provided:

- 1) The school had contracted for/committed to said trip/contest(s) at least three months prior to the contest(s) in question and;
- 2) The school receives written permission from the Commissioner’s office at least one week in advance of the scheduled event.

**9-2-2** School-sponsored teams and individuals may not travel out of state for practice purposes.

EXCEPTION 1: If the school’s normal practice and/or competitive facility is located out of state, the school shall be permitted to practice/compete at that facility. Note: In all other cases, the Commissioner may grant permission to practice out of state in rare or limited circumstances.

The principal shall request this permission from the Commissioner’s office in writing.

EXCEPTION 2: If the school is traveling outside the boundaries of the states/Province contiguous to Ohio for the one-time per season competition opportunity, the school squad may also practice during that journey. This provision is made provided there is no loss of school time and provided the squad is engaged in allowable competition as stipulated in that sport’s regulations.

**9-2-3** Schools must secure sanction through the National Federation of State High School Associations of competition by a member school in any of the following contests:

- (a) Any interstate tournament or meet in which four or more schools participate;
- (b) Any interstate competition which involves schools from three or more state high school associations.

In (a) and (b) above, no sanction is required from the National Federation if all competing schools are from states which border the host state. However, schools must secure from each state association sanction for such events.

**9-2-4** The OHSAA must receive approval of competition from the National Federation of State High School Associations for a member school in an activity under the OHSAA jurisdiction to compete against a school from a foreign country, except for two-school and three-school competition with a school or schools from Canada which necessitates a round trip of less than 600 miles.

**9-2-5** In all interstate contests each participating school shall follow the contest rules of the host state.

**BYLAW 10 – PROTESTS AND FORFEITURES**

**Section 1. Protests Relative to Eligibility**

**10-1-1** Concerns relative to the eligibility of a player on a competing team shall be presented, when discovered, to the principal for investigation. A written request for investigation of eligibility may be filed with the Commissioner in any sport.

## **Section 2. Forfeitures**

- 10-2-1** All athletic contests in which ineligible players have participated shall be forfeited.  
EXCEPTION: If a student participates in an athletic contest and his or her eligibility has been established by falsified information, the student shall be declared ineligible (see Bylaw 4-1-2), but forfeiture of the contest shall not be required. All forfeitures shall be reported immediately in writing to the OHSAA and all opponents.
- 10-2-2** Forfeitures of contests cannot be waived by mutual agreement.
- 10-2-3** If an ineligible student participates in an OHSAA-sponsored tournament in a team sport (soccer, field hockey, football, ice hockey, volleyball, basketball, baseball or softball), the team shall be disqualified from the tournament and the last team defeated, or the next highest ranking team, may take its place in the tournament.
- 10-2-4** A member of an eliminated team may participate in OHSAA individual tournament competition, if qualified.
- 10-2-5** If an ineligible student participates in a regular season or an OHSAA-sponsored tournament contest in an individual sport (bowling, golf, cross country, gymnastics, tennis, swimming and diving, track and field or wrestling) the contest is forfeited and all points, records, awards and qualifying positions won by the ineligible student shall be forfeited. However, all eligible participants shall keep their points, records, awards and qualifying positions.

## **Section 3. Additional Penalties**

- 10-3-1** Additional penalties may be assessed to the offending player, coach and/or school by the Commissioner.

### **BYLAW 11 – PENALTIES**

- 11-1-1** Penalties for violation of the OHSAA Constitution, Bylaws and Regulations shall be imposed by the Commissioner or another administrative staff member designated by the Commissioner.
- 11-1-2** Penalties include: suspension, forfeiture of games, forfeiture of championship rights, probation, public censure, denial of participation or fines not to exceed \$2,500 per occurrence or such other penalties as the Commissioner deems appropriate.
- 11-1-3** If property is damaged at a tournament site by competing school teams, student body or spectators, the school from which the students and/or spectators come shall be liable and pay the cost of repair or replacement.
- 11-1-4** If a lawsuit is commenced against the OHSAA seeking to enjoin the OHSAA from enforcing any or all of its Constitution, bylaws, sports regulations, decisions of the OHSAA, and an Order from a Court of proper jurisdiction is subsequently either voluntarily vacated, or stayed, or reversed or otherwise determined by the Courts that the equitable relief sought is not or was not justified, the Commissioner may impose any one or more of the following in the interest of restitution and fairness to other member school's athletes:
- Require that individual or team records and performances achieved during such participation be vacated or stricken.
  - Require that team victories be forfeited to opponent.
  - Require that team or individual awards earned during such participation be returned to the Association.
  - Require the return of any financial receipts realized from tournament participation.
  - Impose a monetary penalty commensurate with the expense to the OHSAA for the litigation.

### **BYLAW 12 – SUSPENDED SCHOOLS**

- 12-1-1** When a school has been suspended as a member of the Association for violation of the constitution, bylaws or regulations of the Association, all contracts with other member schools are null and void.
- 12-1-2** Member schools of the Association shall not compete with schools which are under suspension by the Association.

### **BYLAW 13 – PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE**

- 13-1-1** Robert's Rules of Order shall govern procedures in each situation not covered by the Constitution and Bylaws.