

COMPETITION

39. INTERSTATE COMPETITION

A. ONE-ON-ONE OUT OF STATE OPPONENTS: All contests between two (2) teams during the sports season, whether home or away including scrimmage and regular season involving a non-North Carolina school (not applying to foreign country teams), are approved, provided there is no loss of school time (unless the LEA approves such a contest). **NO SANCTION REQUIRED.**

B. INTERSTATE COMPETITION REQUIRING NATIONAL FEDERATION SANCTION: Interstate competition that meets at least one of the following requirements:

- Any interstate (including bordering states) or international event involving two (2) or more schools which is co-sponsored by or titled in the name of an organization outside the school community (e.g., a college/university, a theme park, an athletic shoe/apparel company).
- Event that involves non-bordering state(s) if more than five (5) states are involved.
- Event that involves non-bordering state(s) if more than eight (8) schools are involved.
- Any event involving two (2) or more schools that involves a team from a foreign country. The host school should complete the NFHS Sanction Application. Those would include any event(s) that involves international traveling teams that play multiple games in multiple states. (The exception to this rule are Canada and Mexico, which are considered "bordering states").

*** For online registration, go to www.NFHS.org and click onto Sanctioning.**

C. BORDER/INTERSTATE COMPETITION REQUIRING STATE SANCTION

ONLY: Interstate competition when an event does not meet any of the National Federation Sanctioning requirements but involves at least one of the following:

- Event only involves state(s) that border North Carolina (Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia)
- Five (5) or fewer states participating when there is a non-bordering state involved.
- Eight (8) or fewer schools participating when there is a non-bordering state involved.

See Border/Interstate Sanctioning Form on the NCHSAA website. State sanction request for the above competitions must be made through the NCHSAA office a minimum of 30 days in advance of the proposed contest.

40. PRESEASON CERTIFICATION: Each member school must send in its preseason certification form to the NCHSAA prior to the first contest of each sports season. It certifies that student-athletes and their parents have signed the sportsmanship pledge, and also certifies that their student-athletes are eligible in all respects. (Dates for submission to NCHSAA are September 15 (fall), December 15 (winter), and March 15 (spring).) In addition, each coach must certify signing the code of conduct for coaches, viewing the Eligibility Powerpoint, and that each school has an updated Emergency Action Plan.

IMPORTANT NOTE--COACHING REQUIREMENT: Each non-faculty coach (individual who is not teacher-certified) and each newly hired coach is required to take the "Fundamentals of Coaching" certification course on-line through the National Federation within 60 days of being hired in order to coach an NCHSAA team. All coaching staffs should be certified in this area by the end of the 2015-16 academic year.

In addition, it is recommended that at least one member of each sport/activity staff take and pass the National Federation First Aid for Coaches course, be CPR/AED certified, and be present at all contests and practices. The host school of an event with three or more participating teams is encouraged to have licensed athletic trainer/certified first responder on site at all times during the event.

41. NO SUNDAY PARTICIPATION: No contest under the auspices of the NCHSAA may be staged on Sunday, except for certain cases approved by the NCHSAA in championships.

There shall be no Sunday practice in any sport. This includes the assembling of athletic squads (full teams or selected individuals) for purposes of viewing films, chalk talks, or other materials pertaining to the coaching of the team.

42. UNPLAYED GAMES AND FORFEITED GAMES: If a conference school plays a part of its schedule, and then withdraws from competition leaving unplayed games, the Executive Committee shall have power, at its discretion, to declare official forfeitures of all unplayed games.

43. TIE GAMES: All tie games shall count one-half game won and one-half game lost whenever a conference champion is determined by percentage standings.

44. TIEBREAKING PROCEDURE: all parts of this procedure are mandatory. The steps should be followed in the order as they appear in the procedure.

(A) DETERMINING CONFERENCE STANDINGS

These rules apply for determining the final regular season standings in any sport in which a conference awards its conference championship on the basis of regular season competition.

(1) The conference standings shall be determined on the basis of the percentage of conference games won by each team at the end of the regular season, based on conference regulations and subject to the tiebreaking procedure which follows. The team finishing in first place shall be recognized as the conference champion; if a tie exists for first place, then conference co-champions, tri-champions, etc., shall be declared.

(2) If two or more teams have equal conference percentages at the end of the season, the team that has the edge in head-to-head competition will get the higher place in the standings. All conference games played against each other would count in the head-to-head competition.

Examples: the intent is to break the tie by using the tied teams. If there is a four-way tie for first and Team A and Team B are 2-1 while Team C and Team D are 1-2, in games among the four of them, A and B would be tied for first by virtue of their 2-1, with C and D tied for third. Then look at head-to-head between the two (A and B) to break that tie, and then between the other two (C and D) to break that remaining tie.

Teams A, B and C are tied for fourth in the conference standings with identical records. In games among the three, A was 3-1, B was 2-2 and C was 1-3. The tie is broken; A is fourth, B is fifth and C sixth.

Any time throughout the whole procedure that a multiple tie is reduced to two teams, no matter what criteria is being used, use head-to-head conference competition between those remaining if possible.

(B) DETERMINING CONFERENCE TOURNAMENT SEEDING

The following rules are used to seed conference tournaments on the basis of regular season standings. Use this section only to seed for conference tournaments and only after Part A is completed; if no conference tournament, proceed to Part C.

(1) Seed the tournament on the basis of final regular season standings; see Part A.

(2) If two or more teams are tied, and the teams played any non-conference games against each other, the team with the better record in all head-to-head games get the higher conference seed. (If there is a multiple tie of three or more teams, one team must have beaten all the other teams for these non-conference games to be used). Note that use of these non-conference or tournament meetings prior to the conference tournament is ONLY for seeding in the conference tournament (exception C5).

Example: Team A and B split in regular season, but played one another in a non-conference game and A won. A would get the higher seed in the conference tournament. Say A and B were tied for fourth in an eight-team league and this occurred; A would get the higher seed in the tournament. However, the meeting in the conference tournament between A and B would be the tiebreaker between the two for determining NCHSAA playoff representatives (see Part C2).

(3) If there is still a tie for a tournament seed, it will be resolved by comparing how the tied teams fared against the rest of the conference until the tie is broken.

Example: A and B finished with equal conference records and split during the regular season, thereby tying for third place in the standings. They did not play each other in a non-conference game. Go to the number one position in the conference and compare how A and B did against that team. Say the tie cannot be resolved there (both teams split with the number-one team), so go to the number two team. Team A lost twice to the number two but B split with the number-two team. Therefore B would be seeded third and A fourth (even though they finished tied for third in the final standings).

Example: There is a four-way tie for first among A, B, C and D. Team A and B are each 2-1 while C and D are each 1-2 in games among the four. A and B are tied for the first seed, while C and D are tied for third seed. Now look at head to head competition between A and B to break that tie, and head to head between C and D to break the other remaining tie.

(4) If the tie still exists, a draw will be held by the tied teams for the seeds available. All tied teams for a position will draw with the numbers of the spots for which they are tied in a hat.

Example: A and B are tied for third and the tie is not resolved after going through the procedure B3 above. The numbers three and four are put in a hat, and the schools will draw and assume the seed of the number drawn. The drawing will be done in alphabetical order as the schools are listed in the NCHSAA Directory.

(C) DETERMINING NCHSAA PLAYOFF REPRESENTATIVES: The following rules are used to determine which teams earn available berths into the NCHSAA playoffs, awarded on the basis of regular season standings. These are used AFTER completion of the conference tournament, or BEFORE NCHSAA PLAYOFFS if there is no tournament.

(1) Award berths based on final regular season standings (see Section A). Note that if a tie is broken using head to head competition, the tie is broken from that point on and there is no need to use other criteria.

(2) If two are tied in the final standings after being eliminated from the conference tournament, a special playoff game will be played unless the tied teams mutually agree to break the tie by other means.

The playoff game may not violate the weekly limitations, and it could be preliminary game to the state playoffs or a game in the conference tournament. No playoff game shall be played prior to a conference tournament. A meeting between the tied teams which occurs in any round in the conference tournament would count as the playoff game.

(3) If both teams are eliminated from the conference tournament but can still play the playoff game and not violate the weekly limitations, it shall be played. Exception: If a team advances to the conference tournament finals, even if a playoff game would not violate the weekly limitations, the game will not be played, and the team that advances to the finals gets the higher seed.

(4) If three or more teams are tied, the team which advanced the furthest in the conference tournament will get the higher berth in the playoffs.

SPLIT CONFERENCE APPLICATION ONLY: If two or more teams are still tied, and the teams represent different classifications, berths will be awarded by separating teams into their respective classifications. Then head-to-head competition among the teams in the respective classifications must be considered if necessary.

(5) If the tie is not broken after (4), all previous head-to-head competition is used to break the tie (cannot be used with multiple ties).

(6) If there is still a tie, it will be resolved by comparing how the tied team fared against the rest of the conference, starting with the number one team and moving down, if necessary, throughout the conference until the tie is broken.

Example: A and B finished with equal conference records and split during the regular season, thereby tying for third place in the standings. A playoff game could not be played and they did not play each other in a non-conference game. Go to the number one position in the conference and compare how A and B did against that team in conference games. Say the tie cannot be resolved there (both teams split with the number-one team), so go to the number two team. Team A lost twice to the number two but B split with the number-two team. Therefore B would be seeded third and A fourth (even though they finished tied for third in the final standings).

(7) If the tie still exists, a draw will be held by the tied teams for the seeds available. All tied teams for a position will draw with the numbers of the spots for which they are tied in a hat.

Example: A and B are tied for third and the tie is not resolved after going through the procedure through B3 above. The numbers three and four are put in a hat, and the schools will draw and assume the seed of the number drawn. The drawing will be done in alphabetical order as the schools are listed in the NCHSAA Directory.

45. GAMES WITH NON-CONFERENCE OPPONENTS: No game which has been scheduled with a non-conference opponent shall be allowed to interfere with the breaking of a tie between, or among, conference teams or with a conference tournament or playoff game. If such non-conference game shall conflict with the game, or games, necessary to break a conference deadlock, the school concerned shall at once. (a) cancel its nonconference game; (b) submit to the drawing, notwithstanding its non-conference scheduled game; or (c) accept the ruling of the Executive Committee that its former percentage has been canceled.

46. CONFERENCES: The Executive Committee shall have the authority to require a conference to accept a school into its membership where it is impractical for that school to belong to any other conference. (See Bylaws, Article VI, Classifications.)

Conference changes will be considered during the winter meeting of the Board of Directors following the completion of the normal two-year football contract period.

Non-conference football contracts shall not be made until the winter meeting of the Board of Directors the year contracts expire.

When a conference change is desired or indicated, a school must submit a letter of intent to the Commissioner prior to that winter meeting of the Board of Directors. Copies of the letter must be sent to the president of the conference in which the school holds membership and to the president of the conference in which membership is desired.

The requested change must receive the approval of the Board of Directors.

A school requesting a change in conferences must meet the terms of any existing athletic contracts, unless the contract is terminated by mutual agreement.

A conference must have at least five members fielding a team in a sport in order to be guaranteed a position in the play-offs for that sport.

The Board of Directors is responsible for setting up the playoff program and for designating the number of participating teams from each conference.

Conference Membership for New NCHSAA Member Schools:

Beginning with the 2013-14 academic year, before any member school applying for initial membership into the NCHSAA may be placed into an existing conference, it must satisfy both of the following criteria:

(A) The member school must field an established minimum number of sports each year as follows:

Six per school: three boys and three girls - including at least two in the fall; at least two in the winter, and at least two in the spring, with at least one male and female sport for each season. Junior varsity sports will count towards these minimums if a member school is unable to field varsity teams. AND

(B) Unless otherwise accepted for membership by an existing conference, the member school must play as an independent member of the NCHSAA until placement by the NCHSAA into an

existing conference at the earlier of (i) the beginning of the first year in a normal four-year alignment cycle; or (ii) the beginning of the third year in a normal four-year alignment cycle.

Any member school currently belonging to an existing conference prior to the beginning of the 2013-14 academic year will be grandfathered under this policy and will not need to satisfy the above criteria in order to remain in its existing conference or be placed into a new conference during future alignment cycles.

NOTE: The intent of this policy is to allow new member schools and existing conferences mutually to agree on membership at any time during the four-year normal alignment cycle, but in order to minimize disruptions of existing conferences and their member schools during the normal two-year contract period for football, basketball and other sports, absent extraordinary situations through timely appeals the Board will only place new member schools satisfying both of the above criteria into existing or new conferences every two years during each four-year alignment cycle.

47. TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS: In sports where applicable, a team must have multiple entries in the event to achieve a team championship. An individual may not earn a team title. For reclassification purposes, a school must have a bona fide team to be counted toward the total of schools fielding teams in a classification. A “team” is defined as “two or more students practicing and competing in a regularly scheduled school season.”

48. RESTITUTION RULE: A member school shall be assessed the full cost including, but not limited to, court costs, counsel fees and actual expenses, of any litigation instituted by, or on behalf of, the school, its staff, coach(es), team(s), or participant(s), that unsuccessfully challenges a rule, by-law or article of incorporation of the Association or any decision of the Commissioner or Board of Directors. A member school shall likewise be assessed such costs resulting from any unsuccessful litigation brought against the Association when the school is made a necessary co-defendant or a third-party defendant in the litigation.

Any member school that does not make full payment of such costs within sixty days of the assessment shall be prohibited from playoff participation in all sports. The restriction shall continue until the full amount plus interest at the statutory rate is paid.

49. NCHSAA ATHLETIC PASSES: Each member school will be issued four passes and each central office two, per NCHSAA Board policy. An additional pass is provided for the chairperson of the local Board of Education. These passes may be signed for and picked up at regional meetings.

50. REPORTING PLAYOFF QUALIFIERS AND ADVANCEMENT: Schools must enter their complete schedules and game results for the sports of baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball, volleyball and lacrosse using MaxPreps.com. Conference presidents will then use this information to submit final conference standings to the NCHSAA.

For reporting potential qualifiers to state playoffs, conference presidents are required to submit the appropriate information online immediately upon conclusion of the regular season. The form includes overall won-loss record and winning percentage for all conference schools. This must be submitted by the appropriate deadlines. The overall winning percentage and finish in conference standings will be considered when determining which schools qualify for wild-card berths in playoffs.

The sports of football, basketball, and soccer will use seeded brackets (see SEEDING in each appropriate sports section). The sports of baseball, softball, volleyball, dual team wrestling, dual team tennis and lacrosse will use predetermined brackets.

The formula for qualifying for sports using predetermined brackets will be outlined on the web site under SchoolCentral.

Upon conclusion of the conference tournament, the conference president will immediately submit the adjusted **overall** records of all teams. These are the records that will be listed on the brackets themselves when playoff qualifiers are posted. **NOTE:** If a team qualifies for a playoff berth

but is ineligible for further competition due to violation of the ejection policy, its position is vacated.

Failure to comply with the reporting procedure will result in a \$400 fine to the conference.

After schools have qualified for the playoffs, it is their responsibility to report advancement by the appropriate method and deadline as designated by the NCHSAA. Failure to report a playoff advancement will result in a \$400 fine to the school. Teams advancing must report advancement no later than 6 a.m. the day following each win. Postponements should also be reported.

Check website for additional information.

51. UNIFORMS: School uniforms may not be used for any outside organization competition or by athletes performing "unattached" during the academic school calendar, inclusive of weekends, holidays, workdays, etc. During the summer outside the dead periods, school uniforms may be worn for school-related activities.

FACILITIES

52. COURT AND FIELD DIAGRAMS: The NCHSAA has adopted the playing rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations for most sponsored sports. Diagrams for the court or field for each sport are contained in the respective rulebooks. The National Federation also publishes a Court and Field Diagram Guide covering all sports.

A copy of rule books for individual sports or of the comprehensive guide may be obtained directly from the National Federation or through the NCHSAA.

53. RECOMMENDED LIGHTING STANDARDS: The Board of Directors has adopted standards for the lighting of events sponsored by the NCHSAA or any member school.

These standards incorporate the most current data available regarding the lighting, electrical and structural issues that apply to the installation and maintenance of safe, effective lighting systems.

These standards were developed by a Standards Advisory Committee made up of experienced engineers, architects, electrical contractors, attorneys and insurance underwriters. They are divided into recommended minimums and desirable features. The minimums establish criteria which are important to the safe conduct of sponsored activities. The desirable features are intended to provide guidelines for lighting systems that give added values of durability, energy-efficiency, environmental sensitivity and cost effectiveness.

NCHSAA playoff events are intended to be held at sites that meet the minimum standards.

A copy of the revised lighting standards may be viewed on the NCHSAA website.

TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association emphatically opposes the use of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs by student-athletes, coaches (including volunteer coaches) and officials.

Participants, coaches and other team representatives and officials, including chain crew, official scorers and timers, should not use any tobacco product, alcoholic beverage or controlled substance at a game site; **violation of the policy will result in ejection from the contest.**

Member schools are encouraged to make all school property, vehicles including charter buses used by participants, and particularly game sites, tobacco-free and alcohol-free zones. They are also encouraged to cooperate fully with police agencies in the enforcement of the criminal laws prohibiting the sale or use of tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, and controlled substances to minors.

In order to minimize health and safety risks to North Carolina's student athletes, maintain ethical standards as well as reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never knowingly supply, recommend or permit the use of any drug, medication or food supplement solely for performance enhancing purposes.