

WIAA Eligibility – Summer Reminders

By: Mel Dow, WIAA Associate Director

Now is a good time to download updated versions of all eligibility forms from the WIAA website.

There are a few the things that athletic directors might want to review relative to WIAA rules, as students participate in their summer activities.

- 1) Remind those that might need to know, the rules affecting transfer students. Download and distribute the Transfer Rules and Waivers Quick Facts (available on the WIAA website) to the appropriate people including your guidance and admissions staff.
- 2) Review with coaches as necessary, the out of season coaching contact rules for their sport. Provide coaches with the summer contact form so they can provide you with a schedule of their planned contact days in advance. Remember that volunteer coaches are the same as paid coaches for purpose of this rule and that the second time someone shows up at practice to help coach they are considered a school coach.
 - a) All WIAA sport coaches are allowed up to 5 days of sanctioned school coaching contact in the summer, between the end of school and July 31. (11-player Football coaching contact ends July 27 in 2024.)
 - b) A reminder that any high school coach can have coaching contact with 8th grade students on down up until the point of those 8th graders actually starting their 9th grade year.
- 3) Remember that schools cannot be involved in out of season sports activities for students in grades 10-12. The only exception is during the summertime within the sanctioned school coaching contact period. School facilities are sometimes used by nonschool groups for out of season camps and clinics. If this is to be done Board of Education policy for nonschool use of the facility must be followed. This may involve rent, and it is advisable that those conducting the activity have insurance protection.
 - a) If conducted, a nonschool camp should be available to students from surrounding areas and not just returning athletes at your school. An acceptable non-school program may not be restricted based on school and/or team status.
 - b) Out of season coaching rules apply.
- 4) Schools cannot conduct summer school classes in sports fundamentals, etc. in excess of the sanctioned school contact days and community education is a school program with the same restrictions and exceptions.
- 5) Schools may issue uniforms and/or protective apparel for nonschool activity, only with formal approval of their school board or governing body.
- 6) Students must pay their own way to any camp, clinic, or specialized training. Nonschool groups can pay expenses related to actual competition, such as entry fees into summer leagues, e.g. The school cannot have any involvement with out of season camps, clinics or competition unless the activity is part of the sanctioned school contact opportunity, is school sponsored and available to all interested students on a voluntary basis.
- 7) Open gyms can be conducted in the summer but open gym rules apply including restricting students from other schools from attending.
- 8) Remind students of amateur status and all star rules. You may wish to ask students to contact you prior to participating in all summer sport activities so you can assess the activity and help protect their eligibility.
- 9) Remind students they must limit their nonschool activity when the school season in that sport starts. Rules allow a student to compete in not more than two nonschool competitions with prior school approval during each regular sport season. Another exception is that during the season, athletes may participate in a skills contest with approval of the school. Specific skill contests (punt, pass, and kick, shooting contests e.g., free throws, 3 point, drive, chip and putt) isolate separate skills outside of the traditional competition setting. The skill contest may not include physical contact or extreme fatigue as the actual sport competition. Fun runs are not considered skills contests. There can be no school coach involvement. All other eligibility rules including amateur status apply.
- 10) It is important to remind students and coaches that out of season and summertime activities must be voluntary. Taking or requiring attendance, providing incentives or connecting playing time and/or lettering requirements to out of season programs is prohibited.
- 11) A reminder that the academic eligibility requirements apply to spring tournaments and an athlete can become academically ineligible and miss the opportunity to play in a state tournament. Also, the period of ineligibility for the fall is 15 scheduled school days or 21 calendar days, depending on when school starts. The WIAA publishes a chart each spring to help you determine when eligibility is regained.

These rules apply to high schools. Some may also apply to middle level but the rules at the middle level are significantly different. These are not all-inclusive but hopefully will serve as a reminder in a number of important areas. Working to prevent the loss of athletic eligibility is always worth the effort.