

Guidelines for *Connecticut Middle Level Athletic Programs*



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Guidelines for Connecticut Middle Level Athletic Programs

Introduction

Providing all young adolescents with opportunities to participate, develop skill levels, and experience the positive outcomes that result from well-planned, developmentally responsive sports programs is as vital to middle level education as academics and the arts. Middle level athletics are fundamental in creating worthwhile and enjoyable experiences for students, while broadening their education in the areas of physical fitness, sportsmanship, leadership, citizenship and participation in activities that will contribute to fitness for life.

Purpose

The Connecticut Association of Schools and the Connecticut Association of Athletic Directors have created guidelines to assist school districts in developing philosophy and regulations designed to provide positive athletic experiences for all middle level students. The associations are not regulatory agencies for middle level athletics; rather they should be viewed as resources to guide local districts in the development of regulations and policies that are in the best interest of student athletes and member schools. The Guidelines for Middle School Athletics (hereafter referred to as Guidelines) are heavily influenced by *This We Believe.*, National Middle School Association 2003, *Sports in the Middle School*, Swaim, J.H., & McEwin, C.K., 2005 and Connecticut Association of Schools' Guidelines for Connecticut Middle Level School Interscholastic Athletics (1988 & 2009).

The Guidelines begin with belief statements about early adolescence, middle level "best practice", sports and competition followed by recommendations for implementation. Following that are Recommended Eligibility Standards and Recommendations for Specific Sports at the Middle Level.

Belief Statements & Recommendations

All middle level students should be afforded opportunities to participate in interscholastic or intramural sports programs.

- *Offer sports programs that include a continuum from informal to formal participation;*
- *Provide adequate and equitably balanced human and financial resources for all middle level sports programs.*

Primary goals of athletic programs at this level are: enjoyment, sportsmanship, skill development and the teaching of fundamentals. Winning is secondary.

- *Operate sports programs in ways that maximize enjoyment for participants;*
- *Provide student athletes with successful experience as well as enjoyment;*
- *Promote life skills, such as teamwork, respect, leadership commitment and decision making;*
- *Promote the highest level of involvement possible;*
- *Organize and administer programs in ways that encourage young adolescents to explore multiple sports rather than specialize in one sport at the exclusion of others. Middle school is exploratory in nature and a training ground for future choices.*

Clear guidelines for eligibility participation in athletics should be established to articulate expectations for academics, citizenship and sportsmanship and be congruent with expectations for all students at the school.

- *Reinforce that playing sports at school is a privilege not a right;*
- *Establish policies that are developmentally appropriate with flexibility, support and incentives rather than hard and fast rules;*
- *Create consequences for disciplinary infractions that are age appropriate;*
- *Establish policies for gender equality in offerings and cross gender participation*

Assign a top priority to assuring that middle level sports programs are as safe as possible.

- *Require appropriate evaluations for all student –athletes to determine that they are physically fit to play;*
- *Establish policies regarding practice, length of athletic contests, age, weight and physical maturity;*
- *Ensure safe, well-maintained equipment and playing fields for all athletic competitions.*

Coaches, parents and other adults associated with middle level athletics should be positive role models for student athletes.

- *Employ middle level coaches who are fully certified;*
- *Employ coaches who are knowledgeable about the nature of developmentally responsive middle level sports programs and committed to implementing them;*
- *Make extensive efforts to help parents understand productive and appropriate ways they can be involved in supporting their children in middle level sports programs.*

Recommended Administrative Practices for Middle Level Athletics

- Secure written parental permission for participation in intramural and interscholastic sports.
- Require pre-participation physical evaluations for all participants in interscholastic sports.
- Employ only qualified personnel who possess valid coaching permits for both interscholastic and intramural sports programs (paid personnel and volunteers).
- Employ certified and approved officials for all interscholastic athletic contests where available.
- Secure financial support from the board of education for all athletic programs.
- Match competitors with consideration for maturity, skill, age, size and speed.
- Require proper safety and first aid equipment for all contests and practices. All equipment used or worn by the athlete must meet all National Federation of State High Associations (NFHS) standards and, where appropriate, meet the Standards of the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).
- Ensure that all participants are adequately covered by appropriate insurance.
- Schedule athletic contests on weekday afternoons with no Sunday contests or practices.
- Limit publicity.
- Present trophies and awards on a modest scale.
- Establish academic standards for participants.
- Minimize loss of school time for travel and contests.
- Use fully-insured conveyance for transportation.
- Restrict practice time to no more than two hours.
- Require athletic administrators to confer with school administration prior to modifying any athletic practices.

Intramural Athletics

Intramural refers to a formally organized program of activities, games, and sports designed to meet the needs of the entire student body. Intramural programs normally provide opportunities for voluntary participation and/or competition among members of the same school, and also for occasional competition between intramural groups at other schools. Because participation is voluntary and open to all, intramural activities allow all students to experience the positive outcomes normally reserved for interscholastic athletics.

There are many varied benefits, which have led to the goal of providing educational experiences through physical activity. Several objectives related to this goal are as follows:

- Physical development - personal fitness programs can help produce happier, healthier individuals.
- Mental development - many sports provide stress relief and require and enhance quick decision-making, interpretation, and concentration.
- Social development - being part of a team requires and fosters teamwork cooperation, and sportsmanship.
- Skill development - intramural activities provide an opportunity to refine specific physical skills, an opportunity that may not have been available previously.
- Leisure-time development - these activities encourage a positive choice for filling free time, which may carry over to healthful life decisions. *

* paraphrased from <http://www.answers.com/topic/college-athletics-intramural-athletics-in-u-s-colleges-and-universities>

Unified Sports

All middle schools are encouraged to offer Unified sports programs for students with intellectual and physical disabilities. Schools with insufficient numbers of special athletes may join together with one or more neighboring schools in order to field Unified Sports teams.

Unified Sports® is a registered program of Special Olympics that combines approximately equal numbers of athletes with and without intellectual disability on sports teams for training and competition. All Unified Sports® athletes, both players and special partners, are of similar age and ability level. Unified Sports® teams are placed in competitive divisions based on their skill abilities, and range from training divisions (with a skill-learning focus) to high level competition.

The CIAC/Special Olympics Unified Sports® Program helps to foster an inclusive school community where the values of tolerance, patience and sensitivity are cornerstones.

The CIAC/Special Olympics Unified Sports® Program provides a forum for positive social interaction between mentally disabled and non-disabled students. As Special Athletes and Special Partners train and compete together, they foster ties that develop into friendships both on and off the athletic field.

Participation in Unified Sports® leads to new friendships, improved self-esteem and positive changes in attitude, behavior, and performance.

For questions and/or further information, contact Lou Pear, Director of Unified Sports, at lpear@casciac.org

Interscholastic Athletics

Interscholastic athletics for middle school boys and girls in Connecticut are considered to be an integral part of the total educational program. It goes without saying that they should supplement, rather than serve as a substitute for, the traditional physical education and intramural programs in our member schools. The purposes of the interscholastic guidelines are as follows.

To recommend interscholastic athletic guidelines in Connecticut middle schools so that they make the maximum contribution to the physical, mental, emotional, social and moral growth of member school participants.

- To develop intelligent recognition of the proper place of interscholastic athletics in the education of our youth.
- To nurture cordial relationships among member schools, coaches and officials by encouraging optimum standards of sportsmanship and citizenship.
- To promote a program of interscholastic athletics that will provide for equitable competition among schools.

General Eligibility Guidelines for Middle Level Interscholastic Athletics

1. Only members of the school's student body, or those enrolled in authorized public schools of choice, such as state authorized charter, magnet, regional cooperative, inter-district satellite schools, are eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics. Eligibility to participate is extended to those attending from the sending school or school from which they would normally matriculate when the school of choice does not provide interscholastic programs. The alternative schools must be state authorized.
2. Student-athletes must meet the scholastic requirements of their own school in order to participate in interscholastic athletics.
3. Student-athletes must meet the school's requirement for good citizenship.
4. Student-athletes may play on outside teams while playing on a school team; however, consideration should be given in order to preserve time for academics and prevent injuries from overuse.
5. Girls are permitted to participate on either a girl's team or a boy's team in a given sport, but not both, in the same school year. Schools may exclude girls from boys teams when they can demonstrate that there are comparable opportunities for girls,
6. Boys are prohibited from playing on girls' teams.
7. The student-athlete shall not have reached his/her sixteenth (16th) birthday, except that a player, who reaches his /her sixteenth (16th) birthday on or after July 1, shall be eligible to compete during the ensuing school year if he/she is otherwise eligible.

Sportsmanship Standards

Introduction

The love of sports is so deeply rooted in our national consciousness that the values of millions of people, participants and spectators, are directly and dramatically affected by the values conveyed by organized sports at all levels of competition. This places significant responsibility on those who influence sports- school administrators, coaches, athletes, officials - to ensure that athletic competition helps build the character and ethics of participants and spectators and to promote the value of school based athletics. The CIAC Sportsmanship Committee believes that athletic excellence and sportsmanship are achieved through respect, honor and fair play. To that end, the committee has developed the following set of standards for sportsmanship for all Connecticut middle and high schools with the expectation that all schools will promote and implement these standards at their events. The effective implementation of these standards and the promotion of good sportsmanship is everyone's responsibility!

- Be positive and courteous
- Lead by example
- Maintain self-control
- Display ethical behavior
- Know, understand, appreciate, and observe the rules of the game
- Display modesty in winning and graciousness in defeat
- Show respect for all
- Always play fair

Athletes

- Demonstrate respect for your opponents, their fans and the game officials
- Accept the responsibility and privilege the student-athlete has in representing your school
- Work for the good of your team at all times
- Be gracious in victory and accept defeat with dignity
- Refrain from the use of illegal substances to gain an unfair advantage
- Abide by all the rules of the game

Coaches

- Always set a good example for your team and fans to follow
- Maintain dignity and self control and pursue victory with honor
- Abide by the rules of the game and CIAC in letter and spirit
- Respect the integrity and judgment of the game officials
- Teach and model good sportsmanship
- Treat opposing coaches, teams, and their fans with respect
- Develop and enforce penalties for participants who do not display good sportsmanship

Parents/Fans

- Help develop a community reputation for good sportsmanship
- Show respect for all players, coaches, game officials and visiting team spectators
- Be a positive role model for other spectators and your child
- Cheer for your team and not against your opponent
- Respect the judgment and strategy of the coach
- Recognize and show appreciation for an outstanding play by either team

Administrators

- Develop a plan to teach good sportsmanship within your school
- Provide appropriate supervision for each activity event
- Be sure that parents and student-athletes thoroughly understand the school's expectations for sportsmanship
- Recognize and celebrate good sportsmanship and address inappropriate behavior
- Develop a positive sportsmanship plan for all activities, coaches and spectators to follow

Officials

- Be fair and impartial at all times
- Keep calm and poised and do not argue with players or coaches
- Encourage and enforce good sportsmanship
- Accept your role in an unassuming manner
- Do not tolerate unsportsmanlike behavior from players or coaches

Announcers

- Never show favoritism
- Always use proper language
- Never criticize an official's decision
- Be enthusiastic but keep calm
- Be aware of the influence you have over the tone of the contest

Cheerleaders

- Cheer for your team and not against your opponent
- Show respect for opposing cheerleaders/bands
- Show respect for the game officials, opponents and spectators
- Model exemplary behavior and sportsmanship as a representative of your school
- Lead positive cheers which praise your team without antagonizing your opponent
- Physical Examinations for Student Athletes

Physical Examinations for student Athletes

Every athlete who participates in any school sanctioned interscholastic activity (practice and/or contest) must be determined physically fit through a pre-participation physical evaluation performed within the past 13 months in accordance with reasonable and prudent written medical protocol as determined by his/her board of education or governing body.

Question: Is it necessary that a physical examination be performed each year?

Answer: A pre-participation physical evaluation must be performed within 13 months prior to the start of the season. As has been past practice, the scope of that evaluation is determined by the local board of education or, in the case of private schools, the governing body. It is the responsibility of the school medical authority to determine, in accordance with board of education (governing board) policy, whether or not a student is physically fit to participate in school sanctioned activities.

Question: Who may administer the pre-participatory examination/physical examination?

Answer: The administration of pre-participation physical evaluations may be performed by any individual who has been authorized to do so under local board of education policy. The responsibility of administering physical evaluations is under local control as long as such policy is not in violation of any state statutes regarding physical examinations.

Concussion Management and Return to Play Requirements

“When in Doubt- Sit It Out”

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury or (TBI), “that changes how the cells in the brain normally work. A concussion is caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or with obstacles, such as a goalpost” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009).

Part I Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion

– A concussion should be suspected if any one or more of the following signs or symptoms are present, or if the coach/evaluator is unsure.

1. Signs of a concussion may include (what the athlete looks like) the following:

- Confusion / disorientation / irritability
- Trouble resting / getting comfortable
- Lack of concentration
- Slow response / drowsiness
- Incoherent / slurred speech
- Slow / clumsy movements
- Loss of consciousness
- Amnesia / memory problems
- Act silly / combative / aggressive
- Repeatedly ask same questions
- Dazed appearance
- Restless / irritable
- Constant attempts to return to play
- Constant motion
- Disproportionate / inappropriate reactions
- Balance problems

2. Symptoms of a concussion may include (what the athlete reports) the following:

- Headache or dizziness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred or double vision

- Over sensitivity to sound / light / touch
- Ringing in ears
- Feeling foggy or groggy

Note: Public Act No. 10-62 requires that a coach MUST immediately remove a student-athlete from participating in any intramural or interscholastic athletic activity who (A) is observed to exhibit signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion following a suspected blow to the head or body, or (B) is diagnosed with a concussion, regardless of when such concussion or head injury may have occurred.

Part II Return to Participation (RTP)

– Currently, it is impossible to accurately predict how long concussions will last. There must be full recovery before someone is allowed to return to participation. Connecticut Law now requires that no athlete may resume participation until they have received written medical clearance from a licensed health care professional (Physician, Physician Assistant, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Athletic Trainer) trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

Concussion management requirements:

1. No athlete SHALL return to participation (RTP) on the same day of concussion.
2. Any loss of consciousness, vomiting or seizures the athlete MUST be immediately transported to the hospital.
3. Close observation of an athlete MUST continue following a concussion. This should be monitored for an appropriate amount of time following the injury to ensure that there is no escalation of symptoms.
4. Any athlete with signs or symptoms related to a concussion MUST be evaluated from a licensed health care professional (Physician, Physicians Assistant, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, Athletic Trainer) trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.
5. The athlete MUST obtain written clearance from one of the licensed health care professionals mentioned above directing them into a well defined RTP stepped protocol similar to one outlined below. If at any time signs or symptoms should return during the RTP progression the athlete should cease activity*.
6. After the RTP protocol has been successfully administered (no longer exhibits any signs or symptoms or behaviors consistent with concussions), final written medical clearance is required by one of the licensed health care professionals mentioned above for them to fully return to unrestricted participation in practices and competitions.

Medical Clearance RTP Protocol (Recommended one full day between steps)

Rehabilitation stage	Functional exercise at each stage of rehabilitation	Objective of each stage
1. No activity	Complete physical and cognitive rest until asymptomatic. School may need to be modified.	Recovery
2. Light aerobic activity	Walking, swimming or stationary cycling keeping intensity, <70% of maximal exertion; no resistance training	Increase Heart Rate
3. Sport Specific Exercise	Skating drills in ice hockey, running drills in soccer; no head impact activities	Add Movement

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|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 4. Non-contact training drills | Progression to more complex training drills, i.e., passing drills in football and ice hockey; may start progressive resistance training | Exercise, coordination and cognitive load |
| 5. Full Contact Practice | Following medical clearance, participate in normal training activities | Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff |
- If at any time symptoms should return during the RTP progression the athlete should stop activity that day. If the athlete's symptoms are gone the next day, s/he may resume the RTP progression at the last step completed in which no symptoms were present. If symptoms return and don't resolve, the athlete should be referred back to their medical provider.

References:

1. NFHS. Concussions. 2008 NFHS Sports Medicine Handbook (Third Edition). 2008: 77-82.
<http://www.nfhs.org>
2. McCrory, Paul MBBS, PhD; Meeuwisse, Willem MD, PhD; Johnston, Karen MD, PhD; Dvorak, Jiri MD; Aubry, Mark MD; Molloy, Mick MB; Cantu, Robert MA, MD. Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich, November 2008. *Clinical Journal of Sport Medicine*: May 2009 - Volume 19 - issue 3 - pp 185-200
http://journals.www.com/cjsportsmed/Fulltext/2009/05000/Consensus_Statement_on_Concussion_in_Sport_3rd.1.aspx
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports*.
http://www.cdc.gov/NCIPC/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm.
4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *A Fact Sheet for Coaches*. (2009). Retrieved on June 16, 2010. [Http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf)

Resources:

- X Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Injury Prevention & Control: Traumatic Brain Injury*. Retrieved on June 16, 2010.
<http://www.cdc.gov/TraumaticBrainInjury/index.html>
- X Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports Guide for Coaches*. Retrieved on June 16, 2010.
http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf

Medical Services and Equipment at Athletic Contests

The provision of medical services and equipment at athletic contests during the regular season is the responsibility of the local school district.

While the CIAC accepts no jurisdiction in this matter, all member schools are strongly encouraged to adhere to the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) **Sports Medicine Handbook**.

Recommendations for Specific Middle Level Interscholastic Sports

Schools should use NFHS accepted game rules as a basic model for various sports. Suggested developmentally appropriate modifications to these rules are included in the following paragraphs. Any rule modifications should be agreed upon by coaches and officials prior to games. There shall be no rule modifications regarding safety equipment.

Baseball

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice session may not start prior to the spring sports season (April 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Equipment

1. Catchers shall wear full protective equipment, including cup and throat protector.
2. Batters, base runners, and base coaches shall wear protective headgear.
3. Mouth guards are required.

Suggested Modifications to Game Rules

1. Length of games shall be seven (7) innings.
2. A pitcher may pitch no more than ten (10) full innings or 100 pitches in any calendar week.
3. Free substitution is encouraged.
4. A batting order of up to 12 players is permitted.
5. When a team bats through the entire lineup, the inning is over.

Basketball

Season, Practices and Games.

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the winter sports season (November 30).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. No more than two (2) games may be played per week.
4. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12).

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. The length of the quarters shall be 7 minutes with an additional supplemental period of 15 minutes running time to insure participation by all athletes.
2. In the case of a tie score at the end of regulation play, the first overtime period shall be three (3) minutes in length. If the score remains tied, a "sudden victory" period will be played.

Cross Country

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the fall sports season (September 1)
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. Meets should not be scheduled for more than two (2) per week.
4. The maximum number of meets recommended is twelve (12).

Suggested Modifications in Meet Rules

1. As many participants as can safely compete should be encouraged to enter.
2. Only the first five (5) finishers for each team will count toward the score.
3. Streets should be avoided for meets and practice. When this is not possible, vests should be required for all runners.
4. Distance: Course distance should not exceed two (2) miles.

Field Hockey

Season, Practice and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of the fall season (September 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Equipment

1. All players must wear eye guards and shin guards that meet NOCSAE standards.
2. All players must wear mouth guards.
3. All equipment must fit properly and be of good quality.

Suggested Modifications to Game Rules

1. Guidelines for expanded substitution should be agreed upon by coaches prior to the game.
2. Games should be 60 minutes long four (4) quarters of fifteen (15) minutes each or 2 halves of thirty (30) minutes each.

Football

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of the fall season (September 1).
2. Conditioning -- a) Football physical conditioning practice must be conducted for at least five (5) sessions prior to contact practice which may begin on September 1.; b) No pads or protective equipment other than a helmet may be worn, and no contact will be permitted; c) Only one session per day on each of the days selected is permitted. Each session is not to exceed two hours; d) Footballs are not to be used during these conditioning sessions; e) Teams may start practice with pads and contact provided the minimum number of conditioning sessions have been held; f) A coach must be present at all practice sessions.
3. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
4. No more than one game per week may be played.
5. A minimum of four (4) practice days must elapse between games.
6. Medical personnel (doctor, EMT or licensed athletic trainer) should be present at all times during games.
7. The maximum number of games recommended is eight (8).

Safety, Equipment and Officiating

1. Football—The coach is responsible for pregame verification that in addition to other required equipment (see NFHS Football Rule Book Player Equipment), each player has a helmet with face mask that meet NOCSAE standards when manufactured and that each helmet has an exterior warning label.
WARNING: No helmet can prevent all head or neck injuries a player might receive while participating in football. Do not use this helmet to butt, ram, or spear an opposing player. This is a violation of the football rules and such use can result in severe head or neck injuries, paralysis, or death to and possible injury to your opponent.
2. Mouth guards are required.
3. All equipment must fit properly and be of good quality.
4. Only certified or probationary officials should be used.

Gymnastics

Season, Practice and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not begin prior to the winter sports season (November 30)
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of meets recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled.

Safety and Equipment

1. Apparatus use should be limited according to strength and experience of participants.
2. Spotters must be present at all times.
3. Emphasis should be placed on basic tumbling skills and floor exercises.

Ice Hockey

Season, Practice and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the winter sports season (November 30).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Equipment and Suggested Modifications in game rules

1. All equipment should be properly fitted and of good quality.
2. Headgear and mouth guards are mandatory for participation.
3. There should be three periods of twelve (12) minutes each with ten (10) minute intermission between each period.

Lacrosse

Season, Practice and Games.

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the spring sports season (April 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12)
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Equipment

1. All equipment must fit properly and be of good quality.
2. Mouth guards should be worn by all athletes.
3. Girls-All players must wear protective eye wear the meets NOCSAE standards
Boys- All players must wear helmets with face guards along with other required equipment (see NFHS Lacrosse Rule Book Player equipment) that meet NOCSAE standards.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

Games should be 60 minutes long; four (4) quarters of fifteen (15) minutes each or 2 halves of thirty (30) minutes each.

Soccer

Season, Practice and Games.

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of the fall sports season (September 1) and shall be confined to the fall sports season.
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12)
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Equipment

1. All players must wear shin guards that meet NOCSAE standards and the NOCSAE logo must appear on the outside of the shin guard.
2. Mouth guards are mandatory.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. Games may be played in four (4) quarters of fifteen (15) minutes each or in halves not to exceed thirty (30) minutes each followed by a supplemental period of 15 minutes running time to allow more athletes to participate.
2. Field size should be adjusted to the players of this age group. A suggested minimum size is 100 x 60 yards and could range up to regulation size.
- 3.

Softball

Season, Practice and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the spring season (April 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Equipment

1. Catcher shall wear full protective equipment including throat protector.
2. If team uniforms include shorts, catcher should wear long pants.
3. Batters and runners must wear protective headgear.
4. Mouth guards are required.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. Length of games shall be seven (7) innings.
2. Free substitution is encouraged.
3. A batting order of up to 12 players is permitted.
4. When a team bats through the entire lineup, the inning is over.

Swimming

Season, Practice and Meets.

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the winter sports season (November 30).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins. The maximum number of meets recommended is twelve.
3. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled.
4. An individual may participate in up to three (3) events, no more than two (2) of which shall be individual events.

Tennis

Season, Practice and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of spring sports season (April 1). In the case of those schools with tennis programs in the fall, organized practice sessions not begin before the first day of the fall season (September 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of meets recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled.

Track and Field

Season, Practice and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of the spring sports season (April 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of meets recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled.

Suggested Modifications in Meet Rules

1. In dual meets a participant shall be permitted to enter no more than two (2) track events or two (2) or field events for a total of three (3) events.
2. In larger meets a participant may enter only one (1) field event and one (1) track event.

TRACK EVENTS	FIELD EVENTS
100 Meter Sprint / 100 Yard Sprint	High Jump
200 Meter Sprint / 220 Yard Sprint	Long Jump
400 Meter Sprint / 440 Yard Sprint	Shot Put (8lbs. boys/6lbs. girls)
55 Meter Hurdles / 50 Yard Hurdles	Triple Jump
800 Meter Run / 880 Yard Run	Discus (1Kilo boys & girls)
70 Meter Hurdles / 70 Yard Hurdles	
1600 Meter Run / 1 Mile Run	
400 Meter Relay / 440 yard Relay	
1600 Meter Relay	

Volleyball

Season, Practice and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start before the first day the fall season (September 1).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. Maximum number of games recommended is ten (10).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Wrestling

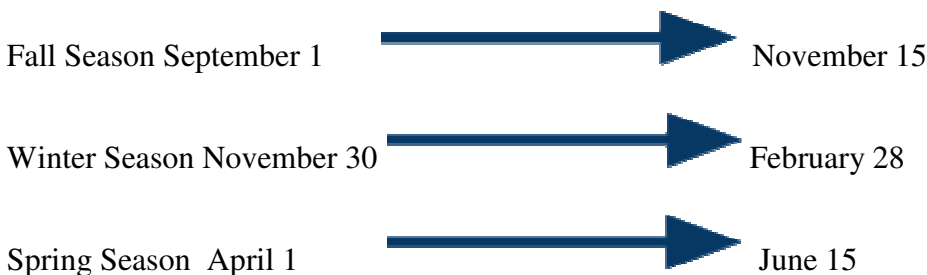
Season, Practice and Matches

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of winter sports season (November 30).
2. At least ten (10) practice sessions must be conducted before interscholastic competition begins.
3. There should be only one (1) meet per week scheduled.
4. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).
5. Forced weight loss and excessive dieting are prohibited.

Suggested Modifications in Match Rules

1. Match competitors with consideration for maturity, skill, age, size and speed.
2. Youth wrestling weight classifications are recommended. Athletes should wrestle in the weight classification based on their weight at the weigh-in prior to the match. An athlete may not wrestle more than one weight class above his/her weight.

Season and Games Limitations



Sport	Practice Days Before Meet/Game	Games Per Season	Limitations Games Per Week	Other
Baseball	10	12	2 per week	7 innings
Basketball	10	12	2 per week	7 minute quarters plus 15 minute running time
Cross Country	10	12	2 per week	
Field Hockey	10	12	2 per week	60 minutes
Football	10 of practice plus 5 days conditioning	8	1 per week	10 minute quarters
Gymnastics	10	10	2 per week	
Ice Hockey	10	12	2 per week	three 12 - minute periods
Lacrosse	10	12	2 per week	60 minutes
Soccer	10	12	2 per week	60 minutes plus 15 minutes running time
Softball	10	12	2 per week	7 innings
Swimming	10	12	2 per week	
Tennis	10	12	2 per week	
Track & Field	10	12	2 per week	
Volleyball	10	12	2 per week	
Wrestling	10	10	1 per week	

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