

MIDDLE LEVEL ATHLETIC GUIDELINES

	Page
Introduction	1
A. Basic Principles and Procedures	1-2
B. Recommended Administrative Practices	2
General Eligibility Standards for Interscholastic Athletics	3
Medical Services and Equipment at Athletic Contests	3
Recommendations for Specific Sports Middle Level	4
A. Baseball Middle Level	4
B. Basketball Middle Level	4
C. Cross Country Middle Level	5
D. Field Hockey Middle Level	5
E. Football Middle Level	5-6
F. Gymnastics Middle Level	6
G. Ice Hockey Middle Level	6
H. Lacrosse Middle Level	7
I. Soccer Middle Level	7
J. Softball Middle Level	7-8
K. Swimming Middle Level	8
L. Tennis Middle Level	8
M. Track and Field Middle Level	8-9
N. Volleyball Middle Level	9
O. Wrestling Middle Level	9-10
Middle Level School Season and Game Limitations	11

GUIDELINES FOR CONNECTICUT MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS

These guidelines were first approved by the Board of Directors of the Connecticut Association of Secondary Schools, Inc., on January 5, 1961, and by the Legislative Body on April 20, 1961. A revised edition was approved by the Board of Directors on March 13, 1969, the Spring of 1975, the Spring of 1983 and the Spring of 1988.

Credit must be given to the New York State bulletins on athletics, the American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Sports Library Series and the CIAC publications.

INTRODUCTION

Three important factors have prompted the Middle Level Schools Board of Control to be concerned with middle level school interscholastic athletics. Regional practices vary considerably in our towns and cities. There are growing demands for student participation in athletics. These demands are well intentioned but still are often at variance with wise measures for protection of the adolescent participant in a total educational environment.

The Board of Control is not an enforcement agency; rather the Board of Control should be reviewed as a resource group equipped to advise the middle level school principals. It is assumed that, for many different reasons, principals will find its suggestions helpful.

This revision of the guidelines represents a consensus of middle level school principals. The process involved local conferences of principals with their physical education staffs, as well as discussion of the first draft of this revision at a statewide CAS meeting.

It is the hope of the Middle Level Schools Board of Control that these guidelines will be helpful to each principal as he/she develops, with his/her staff, policies related to interscholastic athletics for his/her school district. Enforcement of local regulations and policies is the responsibilities of each school principal acting in the best interests of the students in his/her school.

A. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF PROCEDURES

Each middle level school should recognize that interscholastic athletic activities are an outgrowth of a strong, well-developed intramural program. The elements of competition and winning, although they exist, should be controlled to the point that they do not determine the nature of the program.

Participation in athletics, both as a player and as a spectator, is a significant component of the educational experience and should contribute positively to the knowledge, skills and emotional patterns that students possess, thereby enabling them to become better persons and citizens.

The guidelines should not be construed as encouraging wider emphasis on interscholastic competition, but rather to improve and bring an acceptable uniformity to all already existing situations. **THE MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC PROGRAM SHOULD BE CONCERNED PRIMARILY WITH THE WELFARE AND PROTECTION OF THE STUDENTS IN THEIR COMPETITION. EVERY SAFEGUARD SHOULD BE TAKEN WHICH WILL PREVENT EXCESSIVE PARTICIPATION.**

The schools, more than any other agency, are prepared to conduct a desirable athletic program for youngsters. Sound, intelligent leadership and enforcement of policies is the responsibility of the school principal.

Principals can and should provide leadership in encouraging local boards of education and recreation officials to work cooperatively to coordinate athletic programs and rules governing participation.

Every effort should be made to develop programs which provide for students of all skill levels maximum opportunities for participation in a sports activity.

B. RECOMMENDED ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES (MIDDLE LEVEL)

1.
 - a. Secure written parental permission for participation in each sport.
 - b. Recommend medical examinations of all participants.
 - c. Employ qualified personnel to conduct the program.
 - d. Provide adequate facilities and equipment.
 - e. Secure financial support by the board of education for athletic programs. Admission fees to games are not recommended.
 - f. Employ qualified officials.
 - g. Use age, weight, and physical maturity as well as grade and ability to establish the place of the individual in the group so that competition is provided on as equal a basis as possible.
 - h. Require proper equipment for safety.
 - i. Require that all participants are adequately covered by appropriate insurance.
 - j. Play games in the afternoon only.
 - k. Limit the publicity.
 - l. Present trophies and awards on a limited and modest scale only.
 - m. Do not encourage participation in jamborees, playoffs, or tournaments.
 - n. Limit trip length in order to minimize loss of school time.
 - o. Use fully-insured conveyance for transportation.
 - p. Restrict the practice sessions to appropriate time length.
 - q. Schedule interscholastic competition between schools of comparable size.
 - r. End all inter-school competition two full weeks before the last day of school.
 - s. No Sunday games or practices.
 - t. Avoid scheduling practices and games during vacation periods.
 - u. Provide for necessary exceptions to recommended practices and guidelines at a meeting of principals.

2. The maximum number of contests recommended in each sport and the recommended season for the sport is listed below.

-- FALL --		-- WINTER --		-- SPRING --	
Cross Country	10	Basketball	12	Baseball	12
Field Hockey	10	Gymnastics	10	Softball	12
Football	6	Ice Hockey	12	Tennis	10
Soccer	10	Swimming	10	Track	10
Volleyball	10	Wrestling	10	Lacrosse	10

3. It is recommended that there be three sports seasons. The three sports seasons are felt to be essential in order that schools will promote participation in a more varied sports program. Suggested seasons are:

Fall	--	September 1 - November 15
Winter	--	November 15 - March 15
Spring	--	March 15 - June 15

4. Care should be exercised that participants of middle level school age are not permitted to participate in an unduly heavy schedule of interscholastic or game competition and/or play days or sports days. Participants MAY NOT BE MEMBERS OF TWO ATHLETIC TEAMS IN A SCHOOL AT THE SAME TIME.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETES (MIDDLE LEVEL)

1. Any member of the student body is eligible to participate in interscholastic athletics.
2. Students should meet the scholastic requirements of their own school in order to participate in interscholastic athletics.
3. Competitors should meet the requirement of good citizenship through the school.
4. Contestants playing on any middle level school team should not play with an outside team in the same sport after participating in the first interscholastic game in that season.
5. Girls may participate on boys teams. Girls may participate on either a girls team or a boys team in the same sport, but not both, within a team period of one school year. However, a member school has discretion to exclude girls from boys teams when it can demonstrate that its overall sports program does not limit athletic opportunities for girls.

Boys may not participate on girls teams.

6. The pupil 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.

MEDICAL SERVICES AND EQUIPMENT AT ATHLETIC CONTESTS (MIDDLE LEVEL)

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 "Guidelines for Program Development in Sports Medicine," published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, August 1981.

Physical Examinations for Student Athletes -- Position Statement

The matter of physical examinations for athletes is one of growing concern. Every athlete who participates in any practice and/or contest must be determined physically fit through a pre-participating 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.

The Middle Level Schools Board of Control directs the attention of all member school principals and athletic directors, and through them their superintendents of schools and local boards of education, to the "Guidelines for Program Development in Sports Medicine," published by the State Department of Education in conjunction with the Connecticut State Department of Children and Youth Services and the Connecticut State Department of Health Services, August, 1981 (q.v.). (This publication is currently being revised in 1991.)

The Middle Level Schools Board of Control strongly encourages local boards of education, with whom the ultimate responsibility for the safety and well-being of student athletes rests, to plan and implement a sports medicine program if one does not already exist in the school system. The Board of Control recommends as a reference the above-mentioned publication in the planning of such a program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPECIFIC SPORTS

Since principals are responsible for all activities related to their school, each principal is strongly encouraged to review this document with coaches assigned to his/her school and with the athletic director. Each school should use the CIAC accepted game rules as a basic model for the various sports. Suggested modifications to these rules are included in the following paragraphs.

Any rule modifications should be agreed to by coaches and officials prior to the game. No rule modifications should be made regarding safety equipment

A. BASEBALL (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the spring sports season (March 15).
2. At least twelve (12) sessions over a three week period must have elapsed after the first practice before interscholastic competition may begin.
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 and base runner shall wear protective headgear.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. Length of games shall be seven (7) innings.
2. A pitcher may pitch no more than seven (7) full innings in any calendar week.
3. Free substitution, as agreed upon by league members, is encouraged.

B. BASKETBALL (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the winter sports season (November 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
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. Length of quarters in games shall be eight (8) minutes.
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 death" period will be played.

C. CROSS COUNTRY (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of school.
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before the first interscholastic meet.
3. Meets should not be scheduled at more than two (2) per week.
4. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).

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.

Distance

Course distance should not exceed two (2) miles.

D. FIELD HOCKEY (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of school.
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is ten (10).
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. All types of protective devices should be employed.
3. Teeth and eye protection are essential.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. Guidelines for expanded substitution should be agreed upon by league members prior to season.
2. Games may be played in four (4) quarters of fifteen (15) minutes each or in halves not to exceed thirty (30) minutes each.

E. FOOTBALL (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of school.
2. Conditioning -- a) Football physical conditioning practice must be conducted for at least five (5) sessions prior to contact practice; 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; 3) 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 twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be participated in by any player before participation in interscholastic competition may begin.

Football

4. Interschool scrimmages prior to the first schedule game are encouraged.
5. No more than one game per week may be played.
6. A maximum of four (4) practice days must elapse between any games.
7. Medical personnel should be present at all times during a game.
8. The maximum number of games recommended is six (6).

Safety, Equipment and Officiating

1. Provisions for exceptions to the rule should exist in those instances that tackle football is limited to a grade level for participation.
2. All equipment must fit properly and be of good quality.
3. All measures of protection devices should be employed. Teeth and face protection are essential.
4. Only certified or probationary officials should be used.

F. GYMNASTICS (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not begin prior to the winter sports season (November 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be participated in by competitors before interscholastic competition begins.
3. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).
4. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled.

Equipment

Apparatus use should be limited according to strength and experience of participants.

Suggested Modifications in Meet Rules

1. Spotters should be present at all times.
2. Emphasis should be placed on basic tumbling skills.

G. ICE HOCKEY (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the winter sports season (November 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practices over a three week period must be participated in by any player before participation in interscholastic competition may begin.
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 teeth protection is mandatory for participation.
3. Free substitution should be utilized.
4. There should be three periods of twelve (12) minutes each with a ten (10) minute intermission between each period.

H LACROSSE (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the spring sports season (March 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is ten (10).
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. All types of protective devices should be employed.
3. Teeth and eye protection are essential.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. Guidelines for expanded substitution should be agreed upon by league members prior to season.
2. Games may be played in four (4) quarters of fifteen (15) minutes each or in halves not to exceed thirty (30) minutes each.

I. SOCCER (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

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

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.
2. Field size should be adjusted to the players of this age group. A suggested minimum size is 100 x 65 yards and could range up to regulation size.
3. Since the issue of whether games will be played in quarters or halves continues, agreement should be reached by league members prior to the season.

J. SOFTBALL (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the spring sports season (March 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three (3) week period must have elapsed after the first practice before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is twelve (12).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Softball

Equipment

1. Catchers shall wear full protective equipment including throat protector.
2. If team uniforms include shorts, catchers should wear long pants.
3. Batters and runners shall wear protective headgear.

Suggested Modifications in Game Rules

1. Length of games shall be seven (7) innings.
2. Free substitution, as agreed upon by league members, is encouraged.
3. Slow pitch rules, in many instances, more nearly meet the objectives of this sport.

K. SWIMMING (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the winter sports season (November 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).
4. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled.
5. An individual may participate in up to three (3) events, no more than two (2) of which shall be individual events.

L. TENNIS (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Games

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of spring sports season (March 15). In the case of those schools with tennis programs in the fall, organized practice sessions not be begin before the first day of school.
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three (3) week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).
4. No more than two (2) meets per week should be scheduled..

Suggested Modifications in Meet Rules

None recommended at this time.

M. TRACK AND FIELD (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of the spring sports season (March 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. Meets shall be scheduled on the basis of no more than one meet per week. In case of inclement weather, meets may be rescheduled, but at least four days must elapse between meets.
4. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).
5. 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 either one (1) or two (2) track events and two (2) or one (1) field event for a total of three (3) events.
2. In all other meets a participant may enter only one (1) field event and one (1) track event.
3. Forfeiture -- If a participant competes illegally (not in accordance with the above regulations) in a track meet, all points earned by participant are declared forfeited.

Suggested Events

Track Events

50 Meter Sprint / 50 Yard Sprint
100 Meter Sprint / 100 Yard Sprint
200 Meter Sprint / 220 Yard Sprint
400 Meter Sprint / 440 Yard Sprint
50 Meter Hurdles / 50 Yard Hurdles
70 Meter Hurdles / 70 Yard Hurdles
800 Meter Run / 880 Yard Run
1500 Meter Run / 1 Mile Run
400 Meter Relay / 440 Yard Relay
800 Meter Relay / 880 Yard Relay

Field Events

High Jump
Running Broad Jump
Shot Put (8 lbs.)
Triple Jump

N. VOLLEYBALL (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start before the first day of school.
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three (3) week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. The maximum number of games recommended is ten (10).
4. No more than two (2) games per week should be scheduled.

Suggested Modifications in Meet Rules

None available at this time.

O. WRESTLING (MIDDLE LEVEL)

Season, Practices and Meets

1. Organized practice sessions may not start prior to the first day of the winter sports season (November 15).
2. At least twelve (12) practice sessions over a three week period must be conducted before interscholastic competition may begin.
3. There should be only one (1) meet per week scheduled as a general practice.
4. The maximum number of meets recommended is ten (10).
5. A limit on the amount of weight reduction appropriate for growing adolescents should be determined, and adjustments upward in the weight classes should occur as the season progresses.
6. Forced weight loss and excessive dieting are prohibited.

Suggested Modifications in Meet Rules

1. Weight classifications and regulations should be agreed upon by league coaches prior to the season.
2. Weight classifications should be appropriate for young adolescents.

Wrestling

3. Wide participation is encouraged and can be enhanced by conducting competition by grade levels.
4. Consideration should be given to not including forfeits due to empty weight class in team score.

MIDDLE LEVEL SCHOOL SEASON AND GAME LIMITATIONS

Fall -- September 1 - November 15
 Winter -- November 15 - March 15
 Spring -- March 15 - June 15

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Practice Days Before Meet/Game</u>	<u>Games Per Season</u>	<u>Limitations Games Per Week</u>	<u>Other</u>
Baseball	7 practices within 21 days	12	2 per week	7 innings
Basketball	12 practices within three (3) weeks	12	2 per week	8 minute quarters
Cross Country	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	not to exceed two (2) miles
Field Hockey	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	two 25-minutes halves
Football	12 practices within three (3) weeks	6	1 per week	10 minute quarters
Gymnastics	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	
Ice Hockey	12 practices within three (3) weeks	12	2 per week	three 12-minute Periods
Lacrosse	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	4 quarters of 15-minutes each or two 30-minute halves
Soccer	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	4 quarters - 15-minutes each or two 30-minute halves
Softball	12 practices within three (3) weeks	12	2 per week	7 innings
Swimming	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	
Tennis	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	
Track & Field	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	
Volleyball	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	2 per week	
Wrestling	12 practices within three (3) weeks	10	1 per week	