

**THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS**  
**The 73rd Annual Meeting**  
June 2025

**CHANGES TO THE CIAC BYLAWS**

**Change #1: Article XII, Section 1.0 (In-Season Rules)**

*(found on pages 80-83 of the current CIAC Handbook)*

*Explanation of Proposed Changes:*

The CIAC Board of Control convened an ad hoc committee to conduct a thorough evaluation of the In-Season Rule and its effectiveness. After an in-depth analysis of the rule and how it is applied and enforced across member schools—including its impact on student-athletes, coaches, and athletic programs—the committee, composed primarily of principals, recommended no major changes but did approve revisions to several of the rule’s exceptions.

**PROPOSED ADDITIONS IN RED / PROPOSED DELETIONS IN ~~STRIKETHROUGH~~**

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**ARTICLE XII – IN-SEASON / OUT-OF-SEASON RULES**

**1.0 DURING AUTHORIZED CONTEST SEASON (In-Season Rules)**

**1.1 Individual and Team Sports**

- a. Participation as an individual or as a member on a non-school sponsored team in a sports competition, practice, try-out, camp or clinic at any level of play including professional in the same branch of athletics during the authorized contest season will render the athlete ineligible for all interscholastic athletics unless the athlete is reinstated by the CIAC Board of Control. (Season is defined as the date of the first contest for that school and concluding with either the CIAC final tournament game or the New England championships.)

**Exceptions to Rule 1.1.a.**

~~1. Participation in Olympic/Pan American Games/try-outs.~~

- ~~2.~~**1.** Participation in one national governing body (NGB) sponsored national tournament or international competition. **The CIAC Board of Control may grant exceptions to athletes to participate in those contests legitimately organized for the sole purpose of preparing for and selection to a national governing body team.**

~~Note: In all sports the CIAC Board of Control may grant exceptions to athletes to participate in those contests legitimately organized for the sole purpose of preparing for and selection to the next Olympic Games or the Pan American Games. An athlete may participate in one (1) National Governing Body (NGB) sponsored national tournament event or other NGB sponsored international~~

~~competition during the sport season. These contests must be recognized by the United States Olympic Committee, the Pan-American Games and/or the NGB for the sport as having as its sole purpose the selection to the Olympic, Pan-American, national or international team. All decisions for participation will be made in accordance with the restricted competition provision of the U.S. Olympic Sports Act wherein state athletic associations shall have “exclusive jurisdiction” to conduct their programs without interference by any NGB.~~

2. Participation in a college audition – (Audition – when a student-athlete is invited by the college coach to visit the campus and participate in workouts individually or with team members to assess their skills prior to admission.)
3. **Participation in a college showcase--(A college showcase is an event where high school athletes can demonstrate their skills in front of college coaches)**
4. Participation in clinics offered by a college – (Skill development programs that are not used to assess talent or used as a try-out for non-school teams.)
5. Participation in clinics offered by CIAC member schools or other state association member schools **must be approved by the CIAC.**

The following conditions must be met as part of the exceptions #2-4:

- Each event is limited to one (1) day in duration;
  - The member school coach determines the event does not interfere with any functions of the in-season school program;
  - The member school principal or designee must grant written permission if there is any loss of school time;
6. A student-athlete may participate in practices or contests in cross country, golf, gymnastics, indoor track, outdoor track, swimming, and tennis as an individual (unattached – See 5.6.D.) and not as a member of a team during the authorized contest season without loss of interscholastic eligibility provided the following criteria are met:
    - Compliance with weekly limitations for the specific sport. (Exception: golf)
    - In cross country, gymnastics, swimming, indoor track, outdoor track and tennis, no more than four (4) unattached (See 5.6.D.) outside meets per season are permitted. In the sport of golf no more than eight (8). Athletes in these sports may practice but not compete as a member of a non-CIAC team during the season. Such practices may not interfere with or replace member school practices.
    - Prior approval of athletic director, coach, principal and parent.
    - Prior arrangements to complete academic lessons, assignments, tests, etc.
    - Student and parent agree to not accept, directly or indirectly any awards, gifts, trips, merchandise, etc., which would be in violation of CIAC regulations.
    - Athletes will not miss any CIAC-sponsored tournament contest for which he/she is eligible unless excused by the CIAC Board of Control. It is the philosophy of

the conference that student-athletes owe loyalty to their school and team. During the regular season, the school administration will make the determination as to whether a student-athlete may be excused from a contest to attend an event as an “unattached” competitor.

The outside event will be defined as a team event and, therefore, become a violation of the in-season rules, if any of the following criteria is met:

- The athlete’s performance contributes to a team score.
- The athlete wears the same apparel, or the same style and color clothing as other athletes or wears a similar logo.
- The same group of students participate in a competition where they advance as a team.
- The athlete’s name is part of a roster that is submitted to the event as a group.
- The athlete qualifies as an individual for an event but represents a club, organization, municipality, or state, along with others, in a competition.

## 1.2 Lessons

A student-athlete is permitted to receive **individual** lessons with no other students present in his/her sport(s) during the season.

## 1.3 Practicing With Another CIAC Team By An Athlete

During each sport season players who are members of a CIAC team may not practice with another CIAC school in the same sport unless it is sanctioned by the principals of both schools or it is an approved activity governed by other CIAC rules and policies. Players who have ended their competitive season are not allowed to practice with another CIAC school in the same sport unless prior written permission is given by the principals of both schools. However, school teams may continue to practice until the end of tournament season.

## Questions and Answers

1.Q. **May a member school send its athlete(s) to a regional pole vault clinic during the spring track season at an out-of-state facility being hosted by experts unaffiliated with our school?**

A. *Yes, provided it is limited to one day and all the approvals mentioned above are given.*

2.Q. **May a member school allow its athletes to attend a clinic during the sports season hosted by a non-school program such as, but not limited to, AAU, American Legion or ODP soccer?**

A. *No, if the clinic is designed to assess talent for selection for a non-school team. Clinics offered by outside groups that are strictly for skill development could be legal. Please check with CIAC prior to allowing any participation.*

3.Q. ~~May a member school allow an athlete to attend a try out or a showcase during the sports season hosted by a well-known national corporation?~~ **May an athlete go to tryouts for a national team when those tryouts occur during the sport season?**

*A. A student-athlete can participate in one national governing body(NGB) sponsored national tournament, international competition or tryouts with CIAC Board of Control approval. The CIAC Board of Control may grant exceptions to athletes to participate in those contests legitimately organized for the sole purpose of preparing for and selection to a national governing body team.*

**4.Q. May a member school arrange to bring in a foul shooting expert into its basketball practice to provide a clinic during the basketball season?**

*A. Yes, if it is for the member school team it may be considered part of a practice session. However, if it's determined to be a clinic by the host school (other member schools are invited to attend) then it is permissible provided it is limited to one day and all the approvals mentioned above are given.*

**5.Q. May an athlete attend a one-day clinic during the spring sports season with their summer team softball coach for the purpose of being evaluated?**

*A. No, athletes may not participate in a try-out / evaluation of any nature during the season.*

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## **Change #2 - Article IX, Section II. A (Rules of Eligibility)**

*(found on page 216 of the current CIAC Handbook)*

### *Explanation of Proposed Change:*

The proposed change recognizes the value of inclusive athletic participation for all students, including those on F-1 Visas, while maintaining the integrity of state tournament competition. By allowing immediate eligibility for F-1 Visa student-athletes when a member school opts out of the state tournament, the policy balances competitive fairness with the educational and cultural benefits of full school integration. This adjustment supports equity without impacting post-season play.

### **PROPOSED ADDITIONS IN RED**

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## **ARTICLE IX (Eligibility Rules) / SECTION II.A**

**FOREIGN STUDENTS:** A foreign exchange student who is placed in a CIAC member school by an exchange program approved by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET) is eligible to participate in CIAC-sponsored sports providing (1) the student is not considered a high school graduate or its equivalent; and (2) the student meets CIAC age requirements.

A foreign exchange student not in an approved CSIET program or an F-1 Visa student will be eligible providing (1) the student is living with a parent or legal guardian (as determined by Probate Court); (2) the student is not considered a high school graduate or its equivalent; and (3) the student meets all other CIAC eligibility requirements – age, academic standards, number of seasons played (eight consecutive semester rule), etc.

Students attending a CIAC member school while on an F1 Visa are ineligible for participation in varsity athletics for 365 days upon enrollment and may only participate in varsity athletics for two years.

If any F-1 Visa student transfers into a CIAC member school the 365 days of ineligibility in varsity athletics will restart to coincide with the date of transfer.

Member schools who choose to play an F-1 Visa student in varsity athletics prior to the 365 days of enrollment must opt out of the state tournament. *(See Section 6.8 of the CIAC Handbook for explanation of opt-out procedures and conditions.)*

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### **Change #3 - Article IX, Section II. B (Rules of Eligibility)**

*(found on page 217 of the current CIAC Handbook)*

#### *Explanation of Proposed Change:*

At the request of the CIAC Eligibility Committee, CIAC staff have drafted proposed bylaw language to address a growing concern related to the application of the eight-semester rule. Specifically, the proposal seeks to prevent students from extending their eligibility by transferring to a new school and being reclassified, despite having already completed a full academic year at their previous institution.

This practice undermines the intent of the eight-semester rule, which is designed to ensure that all student-athletes are held to the same standards, regardless of school changes or reclassification efforts, and that eligibility is based on time elapsed, not academic designation. The proposed change aims to uphold the integrity of the rule by clarifying that a student's academic reclassification does not reset their eligibility clock.

#### **PROPOSED ADDITIONS IN RED**

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#### **ARTICLE IX (Eligibility Rules) / SECTION II.B**

B. The student shall not have reached his or her twentieth (20th) birthday. A student-athlete will not be allowed to start a season or compete during a season in which his/her twentieth (20th) birthday falls.

A student has eight (8) consecutive semesters or four (4) consecutive years of eligibility from the date of entry into ninth grade to be eligible for interscholastic competition. No student-athlete shall participate in the same branch of athletics more than four (4) seasons in grades 9-12 at any school. Date of entry is defined as the first date of enrollment as a grade 9 student taking four (4) or more high school subjects. (1) Students who are not eligible or elect to not participate do not preserve additional semesters for use at a later time. That is, there is no fifth year of eligibility per se. (2) Once a student has attended 15 days or more, may apply through the member school for consideration of a hardship waiver.

Hardship waiver requests will be considered for unforeseen, unavoidable or unusual circumstances that were beyond the control of the student and resulted in the student being unable to complete their academic requirements in four (4) years or eight (8) consecutive semesters. **Waivers of this rule are never granted where it would allow a student to participate in more than four seasons in any one sport, or where a student has repeated an academic semester or year of secondary school for academic reasons, or where a student repeats a grade that the student has demonstrated proof of passing grades and earned enough credits to advance to the next academic grade level.** All such requests must be well documented. Waivers for serious medical situations that are well documented

will also be considered when it is demonstrated the student was unable to complete any significant school work due to his/her medical condition and it is verified the school made every effort to provide an appropriate alternative program to the student. Injuries sustained in playing a CIAC-sponsored sport will not constitute grounds for a medical waiver for an additional semester/year of play in the sport in which the injury occurred. A waiver will be granted for a student who has been absent one or more semesters because of required military service. If a waiver is granted in any situation, the semester granted must be the same as the semester waived – fall for fall, spring for spring. A waiver of the eight consecutive semester/four consecutive year rule will be granted only once to any athlete. (3) The fact that a student has not participated for four seasons will not justify allowing such student to participate in interscholastic sports beyond the eighth semester after his or her entrance into the ninth grade. (4) This is an eight semester attendance rule, i.e., eight semesters of time not eight semesters of participation or competition rule. (5) Exception: A student who interrupts his/her school career in order to participate in a CSIET approved foreign study program may have his/her eligibility extended for up to two semesters, provided the student does not participate out of country in sports he/she wishes to play upon his/her return, subject to approval by the CIAC.