

THE CONNECTICUT ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS

The Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting

May 12, 2011

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CIAC BYLAWS

(To be voted on by the CIAC membership only)

CHANGE #1: ARTICLE IX (Rules of Eligibility) / SECTION II.B

Explanation of Change: The proposed changes to Article IX, Section II.B allow the Eligibility Review Board greater latitude in granting hardship waivers to deserving student-athletes.

Proposed language (changes in *italics*):

ARTICLE IX, SECTION II. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY (Eight Consecutive Semester – Four Years of Play Rule)

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 the 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. ~~Hardships involve serious documented medical situations where students are not able to attend school at all or become incapacitated. Injuries sustained in playing a sport do not constitute grounds for a medical hardship grant of an additional semester.~~ *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. 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 their 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. (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.

The implementation date was July 2006, affecting all students entering 9th grade in September 2006 and after.

Rationale for change:

The Eligibility Review Board, over the course of 30 plus hearings this year, realized the present language was too narrow and restrictive and thus did not best serve the needs of member schools or their student-athletes. Students who deserved to be granted a waiver due to the nature of their hardship were being denied. Additionally, the definition of a “hardship” was defined differently within the Code of Eligibility in the “Eight Semester Rule and in the Transfer Rule. These changes will also address this inconsistency.

CHANGE #2: ARTICLE XI (Cooperative Team Sponsorship)

Explanation of Change: The proposed changes allow schools involved in football co-ops to choose whether or not to include 9th grade students in their counts towards the maximum number of allowable participants.

Proposed Changes in Cooperative Team Language
(changes in *italics*)**ARTICLE XI – Cooperative Team Sponsorship****Individual Sport Participation Limits****Football Numbers**

Football (9-12) 32
Football (10-12) 25

Schools will be given an option of either using the 32 including freshman OR 25 without freshman. This would allow for some flexibility and yet not deprive a school who would have been eligible using the original number. The number 25 was determined by taking an average number of freshmen involved in co-ops (7.4) and subtracting it from 32.

- Q. Can two schools that each has 25 returning football players in the upper three (3) grades totaling 50, form a co-op team?*
- A. Yes.*
- Q. Can three schools that each have 25 returning football players in the upper three (3) grades totaling 75 form a co-op team?*
- A. No, any three (3) teams cannot exceed the maximum number derived by a two (2) team co-op and in this case that would be 50. When using the (10-12) option, all numbers and calculations in forming the co-op must be associated with the maximum number for each school to be 25.*
- Q. Can two schools forming a co-op each use a different option with one using the (10-12) = 25 option and the other using the (9-12) = 32 option?*
- A. Yes, however, the total number of athletes 9-12 in the program may not exceed 64.*

Part II. Phase Out Wording

12. Dissolution of Cooperative Teams

- a. When the decision of the CIAC co-op committee is to dissolve or discontinue a co-op program, there will be a maximum of a two (2) year phase-out, renewable yearly, (*this two year phase out is renewable one time*) and athletes will be eligible from their schools throughout the two year phase-out period. The cooperative team committee has the authority to reduce a phase-out period to one year if the number of participants in the co-op exceeds or is close to exceeding two times the maximum allowed in the specific sport. Eligibility is not restricted to only those athletes who were on the original co-op team roster at the time of discontinuation.

NOTE: When a co-op team has been put into a phase out and it can be demonstrated that the school(s) affected have in good faith begun a process of creating some type of program, in the same sport and independent of the co-op which will provide opportunity to those new incoming underclassmen, the schools involved may request an extension of the phase out period to insure the students who were in the original co-op may finish out their high school athletic career as a part of the original co-op.

- ii During the phase-out, all schools must agree to remain in the co-op agreement on a yearly basis. League approval is not required. During the phase-out period all athletes are to be notified by their school that a limited period of eligibility exists because the program is in a phase-out period.
- ii Dissolving an active CIAC approved co-op lies solely between the schools involved.

Questions to be edited in the Co-op Q & A Section pertaining to this change.

22. Q. If a cooperative team is dissolved or discontinued is the cooperative entitled to a phase-out period?

- Yes. Schools in the cooperative will be granted a phase-out period of up to two years to allow schools an opportunity to co-op with another school or to budget the necessary funds to establish their own program. The cooperative team committee has the authority to authorize a one year phase-out if the number of participants in the cooperative exceeds or are close to exceeding two times the maximum allowed in the specific sport. *Additionally, a school may request an extension of a phase out if they demonstrated they have begun a program independent of the co-op to accommodate any incoming underclassmen interested in the sport.*

Rationale for change:

The CIAC Cooperative Team Committee for the past two years has been reviewing the impact of including ninth grade athletes in the count for cooperative team applications. The impact of counting ninth graders is particularly significant in the sport of football as a large number of incoming freshmen sign up for the sport; however, the attrition rate is traditionally very high and in football very few if any freshmen play on the varsity team. Consequently, ninth graders skew the maximum allowed to form a cooperative team in football even though most freshmen do not compete at the varsity level. The Cooperative Team Committee believes by allowing schools forming or renewing a football co-op to either calculate their total participants by either including or not including ninth graders will address this issue.

CHANGE #3: ARTICLE XII (Out-of-Season Play) / SECTION 1.0

Explanation of Change: The proposed changes to Section 1.0 of Article XII loosen the restrictions on athlete participation in clinics and try-outs during the sports season.

Proposed language (changes in *italics*):

ARTICLE XII - OUT- OF-SEASON PLAY

1.0 DURING AUTHORIZED CONTEST SEASON (Individual and Team Sports, Camps, Clinics, Lessons)

1.1 Individual and Team Sports

a. Participation ~~in~~ *on an* organized non-school *team in a* sports competition, practice ~~and~~ *or* try-outs during the authorized contest season, including CIAC tournament series, in the same branch of athletics shall mean that the student is declared ineligible for all interscholastic athletics until he or she has been reinstated by the CIAC Board of Control. (Season in this section shall be defined as the date of the first contest for that school and concluding with either the CIAC final tournament game or the New England Tournament if there is such a tournament.)

Exception to Rule 1.1.a.

Participation in Olympic or college tryouts, college showcases, college auditions or student clinics during the authorized contest season, including CIAC tournament series, in the same branch of athletics, is permissible provided all the following are met:

- *Each student is limited to two (2) events per season;*
- *Each event is limited to one (1) day in duration;*
- *The member school principal must grant permission if there is any loss of school time;*
- *The member school coach determines the event does not interfere with any functions of the in-season school program;*
- *Written consent is given by the school administration and athletic department prior to the student attending such activities.*

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. In sports not sponsored by the International Olympic Committee 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.

Athletes wishing to compete in any of the above mentioned events must follow the provision in 1.1.a. Exceptions to these regulations may be granted by the CIAC Board.

Select Sports (Only)

An outstanding student-athlete may participate in golf, gymnastics, indoor track, outdoor track, swimming, and tennis as an individual (unattached) and not as a member of a team during the authorized contest season without loss of interscholastic eligibility provided the following criteria are met:

1. Compliance with weekly limitations for the specific sport.
 2. In golf, gymnastics, swimming, and tennis, no more than four (4) unattached outside meets per season are permitted. Athletes in sports may practice but not compete with a non-CIAC team during the season. Such practices may not interfere with or replace member school practices. For track refer to individual sport section.
 3. Prior approval of coach, principal and parent.
 4. Prior arrangements to complete academic lessons, assignments, tests, etc.
 5. Student and parent agree to not accept, directly or indirectly any awards, gifts, trips, merchandise, etc., which would be in violation of CIAC regulations.
 6. 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.
- b. A pupil shall not participate in or represent his or her school in more than one sport after the date of the first contest for that school in that sport season, nor may that pupil represent more than one school during a season unless the pupil satisfies the conditions of Eligibility Rule II.C.
- The school season is defined as the date of the first scheduled contest for that school and concluding with either the CIAC final tournament game or the New England Tournament if there is such a tournament. The conclusion of the New England tournaments will be the end of the season for teams and/or athletes who qualified for the New England tournament.

1.2 Camps

Students may not attend.

1.3 Clinics

- a. ~~Students may not attend student clinics. (Student clinics are clinics in which the students attending physically participate in the athletic activity, whereas a clinic other than a "student clinic" has the students attending as observers only.)~~
- b. ~~Students may participate for demonstration purposes in clinics held only within the State of Connecticut when their coach is a presenter. Such is considered a practice.~~
- c. ~~Students may attend all clinics other than student clinics as observers.~~

1.3 Lessons

A student-athlete is permitted to receive **individual** lessons in his/her sport(s) during the season.

~~1.5 Tryouts, showcases, skill assessments, college auditions, and similar events~~

~~A student-athlete may not attend or participate in during the season.~~

Rationale for change:

Connecticut student-athletes are unable to participate in events that students from other Section I states are allowed by rule to participate. Often times an athlete is invited to a college showcase during the sports season but Connecticut athletes cannot participate while students from other states can. The proposed change in the by-law would allow Connecticut athletes to participate in such events on a limited basis providing the school grants permission and the activity does not interfere with any school or CIAC athletic event. Also the change allows athletes to participate in a clinic during the season with permission from the school.