

Non-school Participation (In-Season) Rule Change

Updated 5/5/22

What are the new rules?

Two amendments referring to the non-school participation during the season language in the Rules of Eligibility passed. The first allows any individual student-athlete, with school approval, to participate in up to two non-school contests during the regular season in the same sport. The non-school opportunities will not count against the individual maximum in that sport. The membership voted in support, 271-153.

The second amendment redefines the exceptional athlete provision to recognize only invitations to international competitions sanctioned by each sport's identified National Governing Body (NGB) and Olympic Development Programs (ODP) in representing the USA as eligible for an exceptional athlete waiver. This waiver will allow non-school competition for a qualifying exceptional athlete during the regular season and during the WIAA Tournament Series. The measure passed by a 410-13 vote.

When did the rule changes go into effect?

The rules took effect with the publication of the WIAA Bulletin in May (May 27, 2016).

What is the difference between the two non-school proposals?

The first change allows any student to compete in up to two non-school competitions of the same sport during the regular season with school approval. But no approval shall be provided during the WIAA tournament.

The second change allows an athlete who qualifies based on the rules to compete representing the USA in international competition during the regular season or during the WIAA tournament with school approval. Note: In individual sports, the exceptional athlete must be aware that they jeopardize continuation in the individual tournament if they miss regional, sub-sectional and/or sectional tournaments. The exceptional athlete might continue in team competition under the school administration's prerogative.

Are the two mutually exclusive?

Yes. Any student with school approval may participate in up to two non-school competitions during the school sport regular season. If the student qualifies by National Governing Body and/or Olympic Development standards and meets WIAA exceptional athlete rules, the student may participate as an exceptional athlete representing their country in international competition with school approval.

Is a WIAA waiver necessary?

Yes, for the exceptional athlete waiver. No, for the two regular season non-school competitions. School approval is required for both.

Two per year or two per sport season?

Per sport season during the regular season. A student may play in two non-school volleyball contests, two non-school basketball games, and two non-school softball games in one school year.

Can an entire team attend the same non-school competition?

Yes, provided they do so on their own, it's open to any and all interested students, is voluntary, and there is not any school involvement (monies, resources, coaching).

Does a skills contest count as a non-school competition?

No. A student can participate in two non-school competitions and a skills contest. I.e: two non-school basketball games and a free throw contest.

What happens if an athlete participates in more than two non-school competitions or participates without school approval?

The athlete becomes ineligible in the sport for the remainder of the season.

How are the non-school competitions and tournaments that the student competes in counted?

The rule has been directed at students participating in non-school games, meets, or contests. Non-school competitions shall be counted the same manner as provided in the season regulations of a given sport. The sports of tennis, volleyball, and wrestling provide team tournaments. All other sports count contests, meets, or games on an individual basis.

Non-school competitions do not count against a student's individual maximum allowed competitions as part of a school team.

Does participation in non-school competitions count against the individual maximums in either exceptions?

No.

What is the difference in the middle school rule change and the high school rule change?

There is one word different. But the difference does affect the method to count the non-school competitions. In the high school, the competition is counted the same as in the season regulations. The middle school rule, the change was:

It is the philosophy of this Association that a student owes loyalty and allegiance to the school and team of which he/she is a member during the season of a given sport. **Athletes may compete in not more than two non-school events with school approval during each regular sport season. The event(s) will not count against the individual maximum for the athlete in that sport.** A student becomes ineligible in a sport for the remainder of the season for competing in **more than two non-school events** non-school game, meet, or contest in the same sport during the season of practice and competition established by the school. The penalty may be reduced upon request of a school.

The word difference is competition in the high school rule and events in the middle school rule. Therefore, a middle school tournament will count as one event. A middle school non-school event may include more than one game, meet, or contest such as a softball tournament which may have 2, 3, or 4 games included in the event.

Can school funds be used for the non-school event?

No. If school funds and/or resources, including coaching, are used, then it must be added to the school schedule.

Can the student go to the Nike National meet?

Yes, if it is open to any and all students (not an all-star contest) and all other rules followed.

Can a wrestler go to the Iron Man competition? Can a runner go to the Griak competition? Can athletes go individually to events sponsored by schools?

No. If schools are involved in the competition and/or the competition is NFHS sanctioned, it is a school competition. It must be on the school's calendar, supervised by a coach, meet all WIAA eligibility requirements and count against team and individual maximums. This opportunity is only available for non-school competitions sponsored by other than schools.

Can a student compete in a Special Olympic competition during the regular season and WIAA tournament?

Yes. The event must be a Special Olympic sanctioned event. A WIAA waiver is required.

What amateur status rules apply?

All. The student may only be reimbursed for actual costs associated with transportation, food, lodging, and entry fees. No more than those costs.

From the Rules at a Glance:

F. EXPENSES – TRAINING AND COMPETING

1. Students must pay their own expenses, including transportation, to any non-school (out-of-season) camps, clinics, or specialized training. Schools may pay expenses and provide transportation to similar in-season activities in that sport and during unrestricted contact days in the summer.

2. A student may be reimbursed actual and necessary costs associated with competing. This may include transportation, food, lodging and entry fees.

3. A school may not become involved financially, through transportation or any other way in a student's non-school participation outside the sport season and the five Board of Control approved unrestricted contact days in the summer. (BL – Art. II, RE – Art. IV and Art. VI) Note: Funds kept in school activity accounts are considered school funds.

Awards must meet the WIAA amateur status rules as well. From the Rules at a Glance:

3. AMATEUR STATUS

A student may not accept, receive and/or direct to another, reimbursement in any form of salary, cash (including gift cards), or share of game or season proceeds for athletic accomplishments, such as being on a winning team, being selected for the school varsity team, or being a place winner in an individual tournament, etc. A student may receive: school mementos valued not more than \$200, an award valued no more than \$100 retail, and may retain nonschool competition apparel worn by the student as part of the team uniform. Rules further prevent athletes from receiving compensation or benefit, directly or indirectly, for the use of name, picture and/or personal appearance as an athlete because of ability, potential and/or performance as an athlete. This includes receiving free and/or reduced rates on equipment, apparel, camps/clinics/instruction and competitive opportunities that are not identical for any and all interested students. A student may not be identified as an athlete, provide endorsement as an athlete, or appear as an athlete in the promotion of a Commercial/advertisement and/or profit-making event, item, plan or service. Also, an athlete violates this rule if he/she plays in any contest (school or nonschool) under a name other than his/her own. (RE – Art. IV)