



# BULLETIN



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**CHARTER MEMBER**

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## BOARD APPROVES VOLLEYBALL ELECTRONIC SEEDING; OTHER FALL SPORTS CHANGES

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Board of Control approved the recommendations of the fall coaches’ advisory committees and discussed a wide range of topics at its Feb. 4 meeting.

Volleyball will move to electronic seeding for the Tournament Series beginning in 2026. The seeds will be determined by all match scores entered throughout the season into the WIAA Score Center. An initial electronic seeding report will be released the Monday of Week 15 on the WIAA calendar followed by a coaches’ appeal meeting. The official brackets will be released on Friday of Week 15. The seeding criteria will include a team’s own winning percentage, opponent’s winning percentage, opponents’ opponent winning percentage; and head-to-head results across all consecutive seeds.

Two other volleyball recommendations were approved impacting the Tournament Procedures. All sectional finals must be scheduled at 1 p.m., 4 p.m. or 7 p.m. and Division 1 semifinals must be played at 5 p.m. or 7 p.m. at the discretion of the host school. The WIAA will have final authority to determine locations, dates and start times. Another approved change declares the Molten Flistatec (red, white & blue) as the official ball of the boys State Tournament.

The Board approved several football recommended changes, effective in 2026. Two of these address forfeits and point values assessed in the Playoff Qualifying System (PQS). Schools are required to submit their football schedule to the WIAA office by May 1 prior to the season. Any nonconference game canceled after June 15th will be considered a forfeit for PQS points, and games canceled by non-mutual agreement would result in a

forfeit. Any non-conference game dropped or canceled prior to June 15 would be considered a “no contest” when calculating the team’s PQS score. In addition, if a team wins the replacement game of a forfeited game, the more favorable points outcome—whether that be the replacement game victory or the original forfeited game—will be applied if mathematically possible.

The Football Tournament Procedures were modified to use PQS seeding to determine jersey color and sideline assignments, with the higher seed wearing the home jersey color and using the home sideline throughout the Tournament Series. In addition, the #1 and #4 ranked top seed in the PQS rankings will be assigned into one State semifinal half of the bracket, and the #2 and #3 ranked teams seeded #1 in the PQS will be assigned to the opposite State semifinal half of the bracket.

Another approved football recommendation adds a note to the acclimatization policy stating any school program intending to participate in a summer team camp must follow acclimatization rules prior to participating in fully padded activities, either prior to the camp or at the camp.

Three cross country recommendations were approved by the Board. Billed hats, caps and visors will be added as permitted headgear, as well as allowing a 2 1/4-inch manufacturer’s logo on headwear beginning in 2026–27. A second is a clarification that permits face and body paint, symbols and temporary tattoos to be displayed; however, full-face solid block color, or markings that are offensive or that distract from the integrity of the competition are prohibited. A third rule change will allow

# CELEBRATING 50 YEARS of Opportunities and Memories



For half of a century, the State Girls Basketball Tournament has offered thrills for schools, communities and for student-athletes, coaches and licensed officials that have experienced and achieved the ultimate goal of every program, every year.

Girls basketball enthusiasts throughout the state and beyond have shared in the excitement through live telecasts and streams on the State Television Network for many of those years. Depending on our first recollection of the tournament, many of us treasure memories of tournaments gone by, whether they're derived from cheering on our school team or from the classic teams, players and performances that have left an indelible impression. In fact, with champions to be crowned in five divisions this season, the tournament will crown its 200th team champion, with 106 different school programs having captured at least one title.

Beginning with the launch of the 50th Girls Basketball Tournament celebration in January, we recount and recognize the many efforts, accomplishments and moments that have formed the landscape of girls basketball since the inaugural season in 1976. Among the programs and activities planned is a free exhibit at the Discover Green Bay Visitor Center through the Girls State Basketball Tournament in March, featuring memorabilia commemorating the 50 years of the event, as well as the "Future Champions Team Experience." The campaign

promotes youth engagement through souvenir buttons, behind-the-scenes venue tours, and game engagement and recognition.

Additional celebration plans to commemorate the anniversary include team-exclusive Tournament Series shooting shirts available to all schools; a social media campaign highlighting the history of the tournament and the individuals who have participated or made significant contributions to the tournament; in-game t-shirt tosses; in-person recognition of prominent athletes, coaches and officials of past tournaments; buttons for former girls basketball participants; a supplemental program and individual state-qualifier gifts sponsored by Discover Green Bay.

Girls' sports sponsorship in the WIAA first emerged during the 1971-72 school year, but it wasn't until the 1975-76 school year that basketball arrived with a season culminating with a State Tournament Series. Karen Kuhn, WIAA administrator, is credited for the expansion of girls' sports, including the basketball tournament.

The State Tournament experienced growth in popularity and attendance through the late 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The event was held at the UW Field House until 1998, when it moved into the newly opened Kohl Center. A tournament attendance record was set in 2001 at 61,246 spectators. The tournament

experience venue changes multiple times between the Kohl Center, UW Field House and the Alliant Energy Center until moving to the Resch Center in 2013.

Perhaps the lone solemn tournament experience came in 2020 when the tournament was canceled after the first day because of the COVID-19 outbreak. It was, and remains, a powerful reminder of how special these opportunities are and how they should never be taken for granted.

It's always a remarkable celebration when a school community pulls together in support of its State Tournament experience, but it is exceptionally memorable when an entire area of the state unites in support of its teams. Such was the case in 2013, when Kewaunee and Algoma showed up en force to represent Door County at the Resch Center, which resulted in Division 3 and Division 4 titles, respectively.

The most prolific team and community regarding participation in the State Tournament is Cuba City with its 18 appearances, which is more than any other school. The Cubans have also won the most titles with 12 championships, including nine under the guidance of Jeff Pustina, the most by any coach in tournament history. Another notable example of sustained success includes six teams that have won three consecutive championships include Cuba City, Beaver Dam, Flambeau, Notre Dame, Milwaukee Vincent and Milwaukee Washington.

Who can forget the many stellar State Tournament performances of some of the greatest players the state has ever witnessed? Arike Ogunbowale led Divine Savior Holy Angels to a Division 1 title in 2015, setting numerous tournament records, including 82 points over two games. She dropped a tournament record of 55 points in the Dashers' overtime victory in the semifinals and later starred at the collegiate and professional levels. Ogunbowale is one of 16 players from Wisconsin to play in or be drafted by a WNBA franchise.

Other legends of the State Tournament require a deeper dive into the box score, such as Kati Harty's unconventional triple-

double in a quarterfinal loss to Janesville Parker in 2004. She scored 18 points, dished out a Division 1 tournament game record 11 assists and added a tournament game-record 14 steals in defeat.

Some of the heroines of past tournaments participated in arguably the most epic games in tournament history, and each of us have unforgettable games that resonate in our memories. One such game occurred in the Division 1 final of the 2001 tournament. It featured a highly touted matchup of post players—Mistie Bass of Janesville Parker and Janel McCarville of SPASH. Both went on to have lengthy WNBA careers. McCarville won the statistical dual, but Bass led the Vikings to a 51-44 victory and the championship.

The prominence of the game was magnified by the presence of Pat Summit, the legendary head coach at the University of Tennessee. Once seated, a long line of picture and autograph seekers filled the aisle leading to her seat. A similar stirring scenario occurred at the 2025 State Tournament, when fans lined up to have photos with Amy and Anna Terrian, who helped Pewaukee advance to the title game in Division 2 three consecutive years from 2022-24.

Another legendary clash highlighted a Division 4 semifinal game in 2004. South Shore outlasted Elkhart Lake-Glenbeulah with an 86-79 victory, tying for the highest-scoring game in State Tournament history. Jolene Anderson, who later played in the WNBA, set tournament game records with 46 points and 28 rebounds. Kayla Groh delivered a valiant effort for the Resorters in defeat, pouring in 40 points, which still ranks second-most in a Division 4 game.

These are just a few of the many sensational moments in tournament history. What are your favorite memories?

Make your plans now to help us to achieve our goal of 50,000 fans at the 50th Anniversary of the State Girls Basketball Tournament on March 12-14 to celebrate the past, present and future of girls basketball Wisconsin. See you there! ■



competitors to receive biometric data from watches or smart watches, including heart rate, GPS or pace. Athletes and coaches are not allowed to use GPS data to receive coaching while competing, contest the length of a course or review any decision made by a race official.

The Board approved the lone soccer coaches' recommendation, adding language stating that the accumulation of yellow cards (three within the Tournament Series or two in the State semifinal game) does not affect a participant's eligibility to attend or participate in the State championship awards ceremony.

A boys and girls tennis rule change will impact Tournament Procedures beginning in the 2026–27 season, with all players seeded at the subsectional level of the Tournament Series. In addition, the Board approved moving the first day girls may begin practice one day earlier in the fall—from Tuesday to Monday of Week 6 on the WIAA calendar.

In 2026–27, the boys' and girls' golf regulations will include two changes to the adaptations of USGA rules. The first allows a player, within USGA limitations, to take a one-time free relief by placing the ball within one club-length of its original spot, not closer to the hole, in the "general area" that is cut to fairway height or less. The player may clean the ball when lifted and following normal procedures for placing it. The second adaptation change requires season scores to be entered into the tournament management software, which will use each team's best six scores to determine divisional rankings for regional groupings. Lineup changes during the Tournament Series may be made until tee times are posted. A third

golf coaches' recommendation approved by the Board strikes language from the Season Regulations that required host managers to mark the starting time on a physical scorecard for each group.

Two of the three boys and girls swimming & diving changes impact the Tournament Procedures in the 2026-27 sports seasons. The first splits schools sponsoring the sport evenly between two divisions. The winner of each event at each sectional qualifies for the State Meet. In addition, the next 19 fastest individuals and relay teams across all sectionals combined, excluding sectional winners, also qualify. The other alteration to the Tournament Procedures changes language to mandate swimming sectionals to start no later than 1 p.m. The third modification affects the Season Regulations by allowing the use of backstroke ledges, and if used in competition, the host team must provide identical ledges for all lanes. It is also noted that swimmers are not required to use the ledges.

Four Officials Advisory Committee recommendations were approved by the Board, effective in 2026-27. Three of them add language to the Sports Officials Guide. One addresses conflict of interest guidelines, and another establishes social media best practices. The third requires all officials to watch the rules video and complete all exams in each respective sport by the start of Tournament Series to be eligible to officiate in the tournament. Additionally for L1 officials, a score of 70 percent or better on the exams is also required in sports they are eligible to work the tournament. The final change eliminates the need to report the loss of the coaching box in basketball.

Other action by the Board included approvals of the procedural monthly general fund financial statements and payments, fall sports financial statements and the deferred liability fund statement. In addition, the Board requested to initiate a study that reassesses divisional placement regulations in basketball.

Topics of Board discussions included the membership's ongoing transition to new athletic management systems, as well as staff reports on two prospective Constitutional amendments, the upcoming Advisory Council and Board of Control elections, and reviews of the work done by the Classification Committee and the Calendar & Contact Committee.

Other agenda items for discussion included plans for the 2026 Annual Meeting in April, preparations for the 2026 Scholar Athlete program in May, promotion of the 50th Anniversary of the State Girls Basketball Tournament, the addition of a WIAA LinkedIn account, an update on the activities of the WIAA Foundation, and the continued efforts to recruit and retain licensed officials.

The Board also received liaison reports from Dan Rossmiller of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, and Kyle LeMieux of the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association. Additionally, Ginger Gerndt, president of the Student-Athlete Leadership Team, presented projects aligned with the group's goals of the 2025-26 school year, including student-athlete well-being, respect for all, increasing participation opportunities and increasing leadership opportunities. ■



# SITZ ENSHRINED INTO NATIONAL ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS HALL OF FAME



Jeff Sitz, executive director and secretary for the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association (WADA) and former athletic director at Wisconsin Lutheran High School was inducted into the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association Hall of Fame in a ceremony at the 56th National Athletic Directors Conference Monday, Dec. 15 in Tampa, Fla.

In his service to the WIAA, Sitz served on the ad hoc committee assigned to review provisions that would afford private schools a membership option in the WIAA by 2000-01. He later served on the ad hoc committee in 2014-15 to study a competitive balance solution. Other state leadership roles included serving as president of the Wisconsin Independent Schools Athletic Directors Association (WISADA), president of the WADA Board of Directors and hosting numerous WIAA regional and sectional championship events across nine sports.

Sitz is a respected leader in his community, statewide and nationally. His 38-year tenure as athletic director at Wisconsin Lutheran produced significant success and respect for the athletic program. Under his direction, the Vikings earned 26 State Tournament championships and 26 State Tournament runner-up finishes. However, his contributions went beyond wins and losses. He created the school's first Student-Athlete and Coaches Handbooks, established the All-Sports Booster Club, founded the Hall of Fame, and developed the Junior Viking Athletic Program.

His vision drove two major capital campaigns that resulted in state-of-the-art facilities including track and field complexes, turf fields, weight rooms and wrestling facilities. He expanded opportunities by adding girls soccer and girls wrestling programs and created and hired the Director of Sport Performance position.

Prior to his executive director role with WADA, Sitz held roles as assistant executive director, Awards Committee chair, and Certification Committee chair. His dedication earned him the 2020 WADA State Athletic Director of the Year award and induction into the WADA Hall of Fame in 2023.

With the NIAAA, Sitz's impact has been profound. He served on the NIAAA Board of Directors and was president in 2018. He champions professional development and organizational growth, showcased by being the Finance Chair for the NIAAA's 6th Strategic Planning Committee. In addition, he is a member of the NIAAA National Faculty and is chair of Leadership Training Course (LTC) 706, and helped split LTC 706 into two courses.

Other national accolades include receiving the NFHS Citation Award, the NIAAA Bruce D. Whitehead Distinguished Service Award, and the NIAAA 35-Year Award. ■

# WIAA PERFORMANCE FACTOR TO BE APPLIED TO 2026 FALL DIVISIONAL PLACEMENTS

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association performance factor initiative has advanced through the process for the third year with a review of the fall sports to be effective in 2026.

School programs reaching the six-point threshold are placed in the division containing the next largest set of enrollments from where the schools' enrollments would place them for each respective sport other than track & field, swimming & diving—which do not have a team component to advancement in the Tournament Series—and sports with only one division. Schools are restricted to moving up a maximum of one division from the previous year's placement.

The fall sports programs that have accumulated at least six points to engage a promotion to a division with higher enrollments—if their 2026-27 tournament placement enrollment doesn't initially move them up a division—are listed below. In addition, programs that have already been promoted to a larger division must accumulate at least six points in the larger division to be promoted two divisions from which their enrollment places them.

The Performance Factor initiative affords schools the opportunity to request to move to a division with lower enrollments for all sports except football, swimming & diving, and track & field in 2026-27. The Classification Committee reviewed six such requests for girls volleyball (Green Bay East, Hayward, Omro,



## Boys Cross Country (8)

- Cedar Grove-Belgium
- Hudson
- Kohler
- Marquette
- Prentice/Rib Lake
- St. Ambrose/Abundant Life Christian
- Shorewood
- Stevens Point Area Senior High School



## Girls Cross Country (11)

- Aquinas
- Bloomer
- Darlington
- Kohler
- Lancaster
- Madison West
- Menomonie
- Mount Horeb
- Neenah
- Slinger
- University School of Milwaukee



## Football (20)

- |                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Aquinas                     | Muskego          |
| Badger                      | Northwestern     |
| Baldwin-Woodville           | Notre Dame       |
| Bay Port                    | Potosi/Cassville |
| Catholic Memorial           | Rice Lake        |
| Darlington                  | Stratford        |
| Edgar                       | Waunakee         |
| Grafton                     | West De Pere     |
| Grantsburg                  | Winneconne       |
| Kenosha St. Joseph Catholic | Wrightstown      |



## Girls Golf (4)

- Divine Savior Holy Angels
- Middleton
- Prescott
- Spoooner



## Boys Soccer (7)

- Brookfield East
- DeForest
- Marquette
- Middleton
- Oostburg
- Shoreland Lutheran
- Waukesha West



## Girls Tennis (4)

- Arrowhead
- Brookfield East
- Neenah
- University School of Milwaukee



## Girls Volleyball (7)

- Barron
- Divine Savior Holy Angels
- Hamilton
- Manitowoc Lutheran
- Newman Catholic
- Oconomowoc
- Regis

# DEADLINE TO ANNOUNCE CANDIDACY

## For Board of Control and Advisory Council Positions

Oshkosh North, Sheboygan South and Wisconsin Heights), two for boys soccer (North Fond du Lac and Sheboygan South), one for both boys and girls cross country (Sheboygan South boys and girls), and four for girls tennis (Big Foot, Green Bay East, Sheboygan South and Racine St. Catherine's/Racine Lutheran). The committee approved four requests in girls volleyball (Green Bay East, Omro, Oshkosh North and Sheboygan South), one in boys soccer (Sheboygan South), one in girls cross country (Sheboygan South) and three in girls tennis (Big Foot, Green Bay East and Sheboygan South).

In addition, the performance factor process offers schools the opportunity to appeal their promotion to the division with the next largest enrollments based on performance points. Of the 61 programs that compiled points to engage in a promotion, 10 appeals were submitted. The Classification Committee evaluated three appeals in boys cross country (Cedar Grove-Belgium, Kohler and Shorewood), two in girls cross country (Bloomer and Lancaster) and five in football (Badger, Potosi/Cassville, Stratford, Winneconne and Wrightstown). There were no approved appeals.

The performance factor initiative promotes school programs that reach a threshold of tournament success based on a performance point system allocated over a three-year period. Implementation of the Performance Factor was approved by a 265-115 membership vote at the 2023 Annual Meeting that began being implemented in 2024-25. The current committee consists of nine athletic directors, seven superintendents and two principals. ■



### Election Information:

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- Email will go out to membership with form to declare candidacy February 16, 2026
- Deadline to declare candidacy - March 2, 2026
- Primary ballots emailed March 16 (if necessary), due back March 24
- General election ballots emailed April 7, due back April 21
- Results announced at Annual Meeting on April 24th

### Advisory Council

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#### Large Schools

Jamie Koepp, Lakeland Union - Eligible

#### Medium Schools

Ty Breitlow, Lomira - Eligible

Jeff Koenig, Stanley-Boyd - Eligible

#### Small Schools

Patrick Gretzlock, Boyceville - Eligible

Kent Kindschy, Turtle Lake - Retiring (this will be a 1 year term ending with the 2027 school year)

#### Minority At-Large

Tremayne Clardy, Verona - Eligible

### Board of Control

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District 3 - Brian Nadeau, Ellsworth - Eligible

District 4 - Bryan Davis, Oshkosh - Eligible

District 6 - Dennis Birr, Fall River - Retiring (this will be a 2 year term ending with the 2028 school year)

Minority At-Large - Karl Morrin, Wautoma - Not Eligible ■

**WISCONSIN INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION  
 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS  
 AND RULES OF ELIGIBILITY EFFECTIVE 2026-27  
 ANNUAL MEETING - APRIL 24, 2026**

Amendment 1

**#1 Powers and Duties of the Board of Control**

*Constitution Article VI Section 2-A-2 (p. 18)*

The Board shall have the authority to make changes, whenever necessary, to rules and regulations of this Association, except the CONSTITUTION, BYLAWS, and RULES OF ELIGIBILITY. All changes to WIAA rules and regulations must first pass by majority vote of the WIAA Advisory Council before being advanced to the Board of Control. Any amendments made to proposals in rules and regulation changes made by the Board of Control must be returned to the Advisory Council for approval.

Corresponding language:

*Article VIII Section 1-B (p. 20)*

B.The Advisory Council shall vote and approve by majority vote any changes in WIAA rules and regulations before proposals advance to the Board of Control.

**Explanation:**

Returns the power of decision making back to the Board of Control for matters within the Constitution, Bylaws, Rules of Eligibility and sport specific regulations.

**Rationale:**

The petition amendment in 2021 limited the power of the Board of Control to conduct the business of the association.

**Justification:**

Under the current process, the function of the association is delayed and limits the authority of the Board.

	<b>Advance to Annual Meeting</b>	<b>Support</b>
Sports Advisory	13-0	13-0
Advisory Council	18-0	17-1
Board of Control	0-0	0-0
	<b>Supports/Opposes Adoption</b>	

Amendment 2

#2 Coaching Contact

Rules of Eligibility Article VI Section 2-C-2 (p. 35)

2. The Any returning person who will be coaching a student in the following school season shall not be permitted to coach that student other than during the designated school season and Board of Control approved coach contact days in the summertime. An exception is that coaches can have coaching contact with students who have just completed 8th grade up until these 8th graders start their 9th grade year as a student or first attends a day of fall practice (whichever comes first). Board of Control approved summertime coach contact is as follows:

Corresponding language:

Rules at a Glance I-A

A. Returning Coaches may not have coaching contact with any athletes that they will be coaching (except their own children) the following school season during restricted times. There is no distinction between varsity and junior varsity (J.V.) coaches, i.e., J.V. coaches cannot coach varsity athletes during restricted times, and vice-versa, nor any distinction between paid and nonpaid (volunteer) coaches. An exception is that varsity and J.V. coaches can have coaching contact with students who have just completed 8th grade or any preceding grade up until those 8th graders actually start their 9th grade year.

Explanation:

New coaching hires to a school would be exempt from the coaching contact restrictions, returning coaches contact would continue to be restricted to the sport season and the sanctioned summer coaching contact.

Rationale:

Current rules prevent a school from hiring a new coach if they coached any athletes during the restricted period prior to being hired.

Justification:

Finding new qualified candidates for schools is becoming more difficult and the hiring process may not align with non-school programming which has restricted potential candidates.

	Advance to Annual Meeting	Support
Sports Advisory	13-0	13-0
Advisory Council	16-2	15-3
Board of Control	0-0	0-0
<b>Supports/Opposes Adoption</b>		

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Constitution Article III Section 1-A (Eligibility) [p. 13]

A. Membership in this Association is open to Wisconsin:

Bylaw Article II Section 2-B-3 (Competition and Practice Restrictions) [p. 24]

3. During the school sanctioned summer contact, schools may conduct youth programming for students in grades 8 and below, where high school varsity and junior varsity coaches may use some or all of their athletes as clinicians. This may be done for a maximum of six days during the summer (when school is not in session) and must conclude no later than July 31.

Rules of Eligibility Article II Section 1-B (Residence and Transfer) [p. 30]

B. Except in situations involving transfer after a student's sixth consecutive semester, A full-time student whose residence in a given district and attendance at a member school does not conform with any of the provisions outlined in Section 1-A above shall be eligible for nonvarsity competition only, for one calendar year, unless a waiver is provided as outlined in Section 5 of this Article.

Rules of Eligibility Article II Section 2-B (Residence and Transfer) [p.30]

B. Except in situations involving transfer after a student's sixth consecutive semester, A full-time student attending a nonpublic school but not residing in accordance with any of the provisions outlined in Section 2-A above shall be eligible for nonvarsity competition only, for one calendar year, unless a waiver is provided as outlined in Section 5 of this Article.

Rules of Eligibility Article II Section 5-A-2 (Residence and Transfer) [p.31]

2. The residence and transfer requirement may be waived, if requested in advance, by a member school on behalf of one of its students and upon presentation of documentation detailing extenuating circumstances. Such documentation must include communications from 1) parents, 2) person(s) with whom student is living within requesting school's attendance boundaries, and 3) school officials within whose attendance boundaries parents reside. Depending upon the nature of extenuating circumstances, eligibility may be limited to nonvarsity competition except in situations involving transfer after a student's fourth consecutive semester following entry into grade 910.

Rules of Eligibility Article II Section 5-A-3 Note (Residence and Transfer) [p. 32]

Note: An extenuating circumstance is defined as an unforeseeable, unavoidable, and uncorrectable act, condition, or event which results in severe burden and/or involuntary change that mitigates the rule.

Rules of Eligibility Article IV Section 1-C-2-d (Amateur Status) [p. 32]

d.The compensation is not provided by the school or persons associated with school as an real or perceived inducement to attend a particular school ("recruiting") or to remain enrolled at a particular school. ■

# ZASTROW RETIRED FROM PRINT PRODUCTION POSITION AT WIAA



**Sandy Zastrow**, the printer at the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association for the past 35 years, retired from the organization, effective Dec. 31, 2025.

Zastrow joined the staff in 1990 to operate the press and coordinate in-house print productions and publications, including the Season Regulations, Senior High Handbook, Middle Level Handbook, School Directories, several State Tournament programs and various other sport-specific materials. In addition, she performed the production of membership forms, line-up cards, envelopes and several other booklets, which accounted for nearly 950,000,000 impressions.

Additional responsibilities during her career at the WIAA included coordinating and processing all daily outgoing and incoming mail, as well as the mass all-school mailings, officials' rule book shipments and all other shipping and receiving of items.

Among the other contributions to the executive office and the membership were the proof-reading of media and school correspondences, general building maintenance and office receptionist. In addition, she worked as a corner judge in the floor exercise for the State Gymnastics Championships at Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln High School for more than 20 years.

"Sandy's years of experience and commitment to serving the membership and the relationships she has formed with our staff has been astounding," Executive Director Stephanie Hauser said. "We will miss her institutional knowledge, organization skills, attention to detail, work ethic – and most of all – her friendship and the hospitable manner in which she treated our staff as well as anyone who visited our office." ■



## National Test Dates

Students participating in interscholastic sports often find conflicts between these events and college test dates.

Listed below are the 2025-26 dates for ACT.

### 2026 National Test Dates Schedule

Test Date	Regular Registration	Late Registration
	Deadline	Deadline
Feb. 14, 2026	Jan. 9	Jan. 23
April 11, 2026	March 6	March 24
June 13, 2026	May 8	May 29
July 11, 2026	June 5	June 24



# WIAA Fall Team Tournament Sportsmanship Awards Selected



The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, in cooperation with Rural Mutual Insurance Company, has selected the team Sportsmanship Award winners for the 2025 fall State Tournaments.

The recipients of the awards are Cochrane-Fountain City in football, McFarland in boys' soccer, Watertown Luther Prep in girls' volleyball and Altoona in girls' team tennis.

The WIAA/Rural Insurance Sportsmanship Award is presented to one school program and community—or communities in the case of cooperative programs—in each of the State team tournaments that demonstrates outstanding sportsmanship. Award winners are determined by the conduct and sportsmanship displayed by athletes, coaches, cheer and support groups, mascots, bands and spectators. Additional consideration is given for the effort of school administrators and chaperones to ensure support for their teams are positive and that the highest ideals of sportsmanship are demonstrated.

Cochrane-Fountain City was chosen for the award with its display of outstanding sportsmanship at the State Football Finals, which was held at Camp Randall Stadium in Madison, Wis., on Nov. 20-21. The Pirates earn the school's third Sportsmanship Award. Cochrane-Fountain City is the recipient of the award in gymnastics in 2002 and in boys' basketball in 2014. The Pirates finished runner-up in Division 7 after falling to Kenosha St. Joseph Catholic in the program's first appearance in the championship game. Participants in the 8-player and 11-player finals receiving honorable mention are Darlington, Gilman, Grafton and McDonell Central Catholic.

McFarland receives the award in boys' soccer with its display of enthusiasm and sportsmanship on the field and in the stands during the State Boys Soccer Tournament at Uihlein Soccer Park in Milwaukee on Nov. 6-8. The Spartans, the #3 seed, fell 1-0 to #2 seed Notre Dame in their Division 3 semifinal contest. They advanced to the State Tournament for the sixth time in program history. It's the fourth time McFarland has earned the

Sportsmanship Award and the second time for boys' soccer. The first came in 2018. The other two recognitions came in girls' soccer in 2007 and in girls' volleyball in 2021. Arcadia, Hudson, Madison West and Marquette received honorable mention.

Watertown Luther Prep is the recipient of the award for the State Girls Volleyball Tournament, which was held at the Resch Center in Green Bay on Nov. 5-8. The Phoenix earn the school's first Sportsmanship Award in any sport. Luther Prep's stellar sportsmanship was showcased during a 25-17, 25-20, 25-13 sweep over Luther in the Division 3 semifinal and its 20-25, 26-24, 23-25, 21-25 loss to Manitowoc Lutheran in the championship game. Schools receiving honorable mention were Barron, Blair-Taylor, Florence, Heritage Christian, Luther, Luxemburg-Casco, Montello and Newman Catholic.

Altoona is the winner of the award for its display of sportsmanship at the State Girls Team Tennis Tournament held Oct. 24-25 at Nielsen Tennis Stadium in Madison. It's the third time the Railroaders have been awarded the honor in girls' tennis, and it's the fourth time they have received the recognition overall. The previous selections were in girls' tennis in 2001 and 2023, and in girls' volleyball in 2015. In October, the Railroaders finished State runner-up after defeating St. Mary Catholic 4-3 in their Division 2 semifinal match before falling 6-1 to Shorewood in the championship match.

Award winners receive a trophy and banner in recognition of the honor. Schools receiving honorable mention are acknowledged with a certificate of recognition. The selection process includes contributions and evaluations from contest officials, tournament management, police and security personnel, crowd control and ushers, WIAA staff members, and area hotels and restaurants on occasion. ■



# Task Force Conducts *Review and Hearing* for *Realignment Plans*

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Conference Realignment Task Force reviewed submitted applications of the 2025-26 conference realignment process for all sports except football in December and convened again on Jan. 16 to conduct appeals of requests that were denied in December, as well as providing a hearing and configuring plans that were modified from their original proposals.

The plans of the current conference realignment process will be implemented in 2027-28. Football-only conference realignment consideration occurs on an alternate-year rotation.

Twenty-four schools requested a change from their current conference affiliation or independent status, including Altoona for wrestling only, Appleton West, Brookfield East, Catholic Central (boys' volleyball only), Divine Savior Holy Angels, Franklin, Germantown, Grafton, Hamilton, Kenosha Tremper, Lakeside Lutheran, Marquette, Menomonee Falls, Middleton (boys' lacrosse only), Milwaukee Academy of Science, Oak Creek, Parkview (girls' golf only), St. Ambrose, Shawano, Sun Prairie West (boys' volleyball only), The Lincoln Academy, Viroqua, Wauwatosa East and Wauwatosa West.

Five realignment requests that were advanced for further review were sport specific. Altoona would move to the Middle Border Conference from the Cloverbelt in Wrestling only; the Shawano

Co-op would transition into the Great Northern Conference for only boys hockey; the Sun Prairie Co-op would split into two stand-alone programs in the Big Eight Conference for boys' volleyball only; Parkview would go from independent status to joining the Rock Valley Conference in girls' golf; and Middleton would depart its current co-op in the Badger Conference to form a stand-alone boys' lacrosse team in the Big Eight Conference. The Task Force also advanced three schools' realignment solutions for all sports, excluding football. Proposals would move Appleton West from the Fox Valley Association to the Bay Conference, and St. Ambrose and The Lincoln Academy from independent status to the Trailways Conference.

The eight plans that were advanced received further consideration, when all schools impacted by the proposed realignment had the opportunity to express support or opposition to the plans on Jan. 15, 2026.

There were 12 applications that were modified by the Task Force to combine into a single plan that advanced to the Task Force for additional review at its Jan. 15 meeting. Those initial requests were submitted by Brookfield East, Divine Savior Holy Angels, Franklin, Germantown, Grafton, Hamilton, Kenosha Tremper, Marquette, Menomonee Falls, Oak Creek, Wauwatosa East and Wauwatosa West.





The realignment solutions submitted by Viroqua to move from the Coulee Conference to the Southwest Conference and by Catholic Central to be aligned with the Southern Lakes Conference for boys volleyball only were not approved.

At its Jan. 15 meeting, the Realignment Task Force a modified Lakeside Lutheran proposal and the Appleton West plan, referenced at the December meeting, were advanced for possible approval by the Board of Control at its meeting on March 10, 2026. Schools impacted by the action can appeal the Task Force's recommendations directly to the Board at the meeting, or they can send feedback to the Task Force co-chairs or the Board of Control members representing their districts.

The Lakeshore Lutheran proposal would maintain the current structure of the Rock Valley Conference and move Portage from the Badger Conference to the Capitol Conference. The Appleton West plan, upon Board approval, would move Appleton West from the Fox Valley Association to the Bay Conference.

The appeal of the plan originally submitted by Viroqua, which was denied in December, will receive further consideration at the Task Force meeting scheduled for Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026. The proposal moves Viroqua from the Coulee Conference to the Southwest Conference. Schools in those two conferences impacted by the plan may appeal to the Task Force at the Feb. 19 meeting.

Based on the feedback and appeals at the Jan. 15 meeting, the Task Force amended a four-conference, Milwaukee-area plan impacting the Classic 8, Greater Metro, Southeast and Milwaukee City Conference Conferences.

The modified plan aligns Arrowhead, Catholic Memorial, Hamilton,

Kettle Moraine, Mukwonago, Muskego, Oconomowoc and Waukesha West in the Classic 8 Conference. The schools in the Greater Metro Conference would be Brookfield Central, Brookfield East, Divine Savior Holy Angels (girls), Franklin, Marquette (boys), Oak Creek, Wauwatosa East and Wauwatosa West. Milwaukee Academy of Science would remain an independent.

The Milwaukee City Conference would include 20 schools, including Audubon Technology, Carmen Northwest, Golda Meir, Milwaukee Arts, Milwaukee Bay View, Milwaukee Bradley Tech, Milwaukee Hamilton, Milwaukee Juneau, Milwaukee King, Milwaukee Languages, Milwaukee Lifelong Learning, Milwaukee Madison, Milwaukee Marshall, Milwaukee North, Milwaukee Pulaski, Milwaukee Riverside, Milwaukee South, Milwaukee Vincent, Milwaukee Washington, and Obama SCTE. The programs in the Southeast Conference would be Carmen South/Carmen Southeast, Kenosha Bradford, Kenosha Indian Trail, Kenosha Tremper, Milwaukee Reagan, Racine Case, Racine Horlick and Racine Park.

The conference configurations for all the modified realignment plans, as well as all the original realignment proposals submitted, are available on the Conference Realignment Requests and Proposals page of the WIAA Website at <https://www.wiaawi.org/Schools/Conferences/Conference-Realignment/Requests-and-Proposals>.

The Board of Control will vote on all the recommendations of the Task Force at its meeting Tuesday, March 10. The Board's options are to approve, reject or remand the realignment recommendations back to the Task Force. If remanded, the Task Force will reconvene to make appropriate changes to the plan before presenting it to the Board of Control again in April. If rejected, the conferences will remain in their current configuration. ■

# SPORT REPORT PLUS+



## Holmen @ Tomah | Jan. 13, 2026

There is nothing better than a good band at a basketball game. Our entire crew was so impressed with the Tomah band that we just had to report on it as something awesome about the game of basketball. You could feel the music on the floor during warm-ups. They were so loud and proud that it was hard to run the captain's and coaches' meeting. It was awesome - kudo's to Tomah HS and the band program. Whatever you are doing, keep doing it. Very impressive.

Reporting Official: Brian Kenney

## Little Chute @ Oconto Falls | Jan. 12, 2026

It was such a pleasure to work this game. We were greeted at the door by the welcoming administrator and a pair of cheerleaders who presented us with our checks and some small gifts that included candy and other items and a thank you card. It was very nice and a welcome gift. The game was a well-played and the players from both teams showed outstanding sportsmanship as did the coaches from both teams. When we left, we were given snacks for the trip home and a hot dog. So cool to not only have the gifts but the display of sportsmanship was greatly appreciated by all of the officials in this contest!

Reporting Official: Michael Lyons

## Verona @ Stevens Point | Dec. 22, 2025

Both teams, both coaches all preformed very well and most importantly the sportsmanship throughout the game by both teams was exceptional. The biggest highlight of the showcase of sportsmanship was when a #22 for Verona made a drive to the basement and when a block/charge play happened and players hit the floor both teams where right there to lend a hand to help everyone up, the color of the jersey didn't matter. This isn't even the highlight of this play as this happened every time an athlete hit the floor. The highlight was when #22 was unable to get up and walk to the bench due to an ankle injury, and SPASH #12 was the first to lend a shoulder to help his opponent in this game to the bench. This display of great sportsmanship I feel is worthy of note. In this game, both teams competed at a very high level, there were multiple times of competitive play and play that ended with players on the floor sometimes even tied up, but every time the players exhibited great sportsmanship by stopping on the whistle and then helping each other up. Both teams, coaches, players, schools should be commended for the way that they represented there schools on this night. It was a game that I will remember for a long time not only for the great play but most importantly for the great sportsmanship displayed. Well done to Verona High School and Stevens Point Area High School.

Reporting Official: Gabriel Lind

## Menominee Indian @ Oconto Falls | Nov. 25, 2025

Throughout the game the players were outstanding with their sportsmanship. Player #12 for Menominee Indian stood out, because he would always hand the ball to us and never complained. The rest of the guys were hard working guys and displayed outstanding sportsmanship. I was very impressed with them. The head coach also did a great job with the boys because he held them to a high standard and we appreciated that. Great job coach and keep up the good work.

Reporting Official: Barry Harris



### Wausaukee @ Green Bay NEW Lutheran | Dec. 15, 2025

I want to give a good shout out to Addison Bruley from Green Bay NEW Lutheran. From the beginning of the game she showed great sportsmanship. She went out of her way to retrieve the ball no matter where it was. She would then hand it to us respectfully. I heard her once tell the team to not put the ball on the floor after a call. That is what we expect from all student-athletes, but Addison Bruley exhibited that. Nice job and keep up the good work.

Reporting Official: Barry Harris

### Menominee Indian @ Shiocton | Dec. 2, 2025

Shiocton is one of the schools that should be commended for their sportsmanship from their players, and coaching staff. They showed class from the beginning tip to the end of the game. They would hand us the ball and retrieve it for us and did not complain during the game. This was a game that was lopsided not in their favor. Even with this lopsided event, they showed the best sportsmanship and it was very appreciated from our officiating crew. I would go to this school to officiate anytime. I do have some more games there this year and I look forward to working their games. Great job coach teaching them the best values in athletics which is the number one reason to have sports: life lessons. Keep up the good work.

Reporting Official: Barry Harris

### Northland Pines @ Gresham | Dec. 4, 2025

Gresham exhibited very good sportsmanship throughout the game. When the coach had a question, they asked it in a very respectful way and we appreciated that. All teams should be like this. They did not complain and made our night very positive on their end. Keep up the good work.

Reporting Official: Barry Harris



### Whitehall Invitational | Dec. 19, 2025

The entire event was well run with terrific sportsmanship by all teams and student-athletes involved. Respectful competition from the coaches and student athletes was apparent in numerous matches. In many matches one wrestler clearly outmatched their opponent, but there wasn't any disrespectful or unnecessary physical activity that could result in injury. There was wonderful communication between the coaches and officials. The fans were respectful of the athletes and officials. Overall, a terrific example of sportsmanship by coaches and fans for our student-athletes that should prepare them to be upstanding adults.

Reporting Official: Matt Pronschinske

### Racine Park/Horlick @ West Allis Central Invitational Dec. 12, 2025

I had a very positive interaction with the wrestlers and coaches of Racine Park/Horlick girls' wrestling team. They were all very friendly to competitors and gracious in victory and defeat. They were definitely a model of sportsmanship and how to act at an event.

Reporting Official: Billy Krause ■

# Coaching Contact

**During the school year**, coaches are restricted to coaching contact within the sport season only.

Nothing has changed in regard to the time period of contact. During the school year, coaches may not have out of season coaching contact with the athletes they will coach the next season. Coaches may only have coaching contact with their athletes during the sport season while school is in session. The additional non-school coaching contact is only for the summer time that is defined as the last day of school to the first day of school.

**During the summer time** (last day of school to the first day of school), coaching contact is defined as Sanctioned SCHOOL contact and NONSCHOOL program contact.

**Sanctioned SCHOOL Coaching Contact** - All sport coaches have sanctioned school coaching contact opportunities during the summer, between June 1-June 30 and July 7-July 31 (except 11-player Football: July 25, 2026); the days do not need to be consecutive. Sanctioned school contact opportunities allow you to use school support and facilities as you would during the season. Sanctioned means teams can assemble with coaches, school monies and resources can be applied, and schools can sponsor the events/activities. Sanctioned school contact days are open to any interested student in your school. They are not allowed during the school year.

**NONSCHOOL Programming** - In all sports except football, unlimited "non-school" program contact may be used by coaches during the summertime. The summer being defined as when school is not in normal session, provided such non-school programs are not limited to students on the basis of school or team affiliation. An 'acceptable non-school program' is one which is not limited based on school and/or team status. Nonschool contact is open to any and all interested students in your



community and other communities. No school monies and resources can be applied, and schools cannot sponsor the events/activities. Use of school support and facilities must be done in the same manner as any other non-school group such as 4-H, boy scouts, or local rotary.

## School and Coach Involvement

Students may assemble out of season in any manner they choose during the school year and during the summer time. However, their high school coaches and high schools may not be involved. The assembly must be open to any and all along with being voluntary.

The fundamental rule with coaching contact has not changed. Coaches may not have coaching contact with any athletes they will be coaching the following school season during restricted times (except their own children). Coaches include head coaches, assistant coaches, volunteer coaches, and coaches who may be coaching the next year. Coach involvement does include organizing, determining nonschool rosters, providing instruction, coaching at the contest, etc.

Coaches are not allowed to organize nonschool activities during the school year. Organize includes (but is not limited to):

- Holding player meetings outside the established season to discuss nonschool teams.
- Making contact with nonschool leagues to enter a team into the league during the school year.
- Paying entry fees for nonschool leagues and/or tournaments during the school year.
- Transporting to nonschool leagues or tournaments during the school year. Coaching at non-school leagues or tournaments during the school year.
- Helping determine rosters for nonschool teams in nonschool leagues or tournaments.
- Directing others (ie: parents, players, community members, non-school coaches) to determine rosters, assignments, or make up of teams.
- No school monies and resources can be applied, schools cannot sponsor the events/activities.
- Use of school support and facilities must be done in the same manner as any other non-school group such as 4-H, boy scouts, or local rotary.

In short, coaches should be hands off during the summer and school year unless contact is during the school sport season, within sanctioned school contact days during the summer before July 31 (July 25, 2026 for 11-player football), or is classified as nonschool contact during the summertime (from the last day of school to the first day of school). ■





## Clinics And School Facilities

Schools may not be involved in conducting clinics outside the season, with the following exceptions. So long as participation is voluntary and available to all interested students:

1. There shall be no restrictions upon schools, school teams and school coaches (grades 9-12) relative to assembling in the summertime between June 1-30 and July 7-31. School sanctioned contact days must conclude no later than July 31 (July 25, 2026 for 11-Player Football).

2. A school may conduct a clinic for students in grades 8 and below, where high school varsity and junior varsity coaches may use some or all of their high school athletes as clinicians. This may be done during the school sanctioned contact days (June 1-30 and July 7-31, July 35, 2026 for 11-player football). Clinics not utilizing athletes as clinicians may be conducted throughout the year.

3. School facilities may be used for nonschool programs, according to board of education policy, which can result in clinics being conducted, outside the season, by nonschool groups. The nonschool group must request the facilities from the board of education or governing board, through normal procedures and are encouraged to provide their own insurance protection. (BL – Art. II and RE – Art. VI, Sect. 2) ■

## HIGH SCHOOL OUT-OF-SEASON CONCERNS



WIAA Bylaw, Article II, Section 2, A., 2), indicates "A school may not assemble athletes or prospective athletes in physical education classes, or some other manner, for purposes of teaching fundamentals, techniques, plays, etc., except during the designated school season of a sport." This includes the summer period, meaning that schools cannot conduct a **summer school class**, or community education program, on basketball fundamentals, for their basketball players. It doesn't matter if the class is open to all students. The one exception is in the summertime during the Board of Control approved unrestricted contact period between June 1-30 and July 7-31. \*Unrestricted coach contact ends July 25, 2026 for football.

This same Bylaw has another provision, indicating "A school may not organize conditioning programs limited to students with athletic team status, or to prospective athletes, except during the designated school season of a sport." Off-season weight-training programs are fine, as long as they are **not sport specific**. If a weight-training program is conducted, and is available to

anyone interested, and the activities that go on are not sport specific, then it is acceptable under WIAA guidelines. There **cannot, however, be incentives** put in place to encourage athletes to be involved in these off-season programs. For example, it is not appropriate to indicate that any football player attending a given number of weight-training programs, will receive a T-shirt. It is also unacceptable for schools to provide a T-shirt to a basketball player, who attempts so many shots during the off-season. Another example, of **unacceptable incentives**, would be to include off-season activities into the determination of who gets to start during the season, or who gets to play, or for participation in these activities to be included in eligibility for a letter in that particular sport.

Captains Practices: WIAA Rules of Eligibility allow students to voluntarily assemble during the school year and in the summertime without school and/or coach involvement. These assemblies may sometimes be referred to as "captains' practices." ■



# Leadership Summit Confirms Rescheduled Date in Spring

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, in cooperation with Rural Mutual Insurance, will conduct the rescheduled Leadership Summit Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at Sentry World in Stevens Point, Wis.

The Leadership Summit was originally scheduled in December, but it was postponed due to inclement weather and widespread school closures. A survey of schools registered for the Summit indicated an vast majority of respondents preferred April 15 for the rescheduled date. Depending on the number of registered schools planning on attending the rescheduled event, schools not registered in December may have the opportunity to register for the rescheduled event, dependent on event capacity. Additional information will be provided when more details become available.

Schools that had registered for the December Summit will have their \$200 registration fee applied to the rescheduled event. The Summit will follow the same format and schedule and will feature the same speakers as originally planned.

The Summit will feature a morning keynote address by Craig Hillier, author of "Playing Beyond the Scoreboard;" an afternoon

keynote presentation by Mark Horbinski, founder of Won80; a mini keynote session will address "Respect for All" by Kwabena Antoine Nixon, CEO of Be Inspired Works; and three time slots for three different break-out sessions.

The subjects for the three, 30-minute break-out presentations will focus on "Leadership Opportunities" by Bradie Ewing, former Wisconsin Badger and professional football player, "Student-Athlete Wellness" by Charles LaTorre of Emplify by Bellin, and "Encouraging Participation in Education-Based Athletics" by the WIAA Student-Athlete Leadership Team.

The Summit is scheduled to begin with registration at 8:15 a.m. with the first session starting at 8:55 a.m. The anticipated time for the closing address is scheduled for 1:40 p.m.

The purpose of the Summit is to assist membership schools with their leadership, citizenship and sportsmanship efforts with a high-impact day of growth, connection and inspiration.

Schools attending the rescheduled Summit will receive the same t-shirt sizes that were selected on the original registration form.



## INDIVIDUAL WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Kohl Center, Madison

Doors open for fans one hour prior to the start of competition in sessions 1, 2, 3 & 4.  
Doors open for fans 90 minutes prior to the start of session 5 (finals).

**ATTENTION: Fans should plan to allow extra time to enter.**  
**Metal detectors will be used on entry into the Kohl Center.**

### SESSION 1

**FEB. 26 | Eight Mats**

Division 1 & Girls Preliminaries  
2 p.m. (Doors open at 1 p.m.)  
Weigh in: 12:30 p.m.

Div. 1 & Girls Quarterfinals  
Approx. 4:30 p.m.

Div. 2 & 3 Preliminaries  
Approx. 6:00 p.m.  
Weigh in: 4:00 p.m.

Div. 2 & 3 Quarterfinals  
Approx. 8:00 p.m.

### SESSION 2

**FEB. 27 | Eight Mats**

Div. 1 & Girls Weigh Ins: 8:30 a.m.  
Div. 2-3 Weigh Ins: 11:00 a.m.

Div. 1 & Girls Consolation Prelims  
10 a.m. (Doors open at 9 a.m.)

Div. 1 & Girls Consolation  
Quarterfinals  
Approx. 11:30 a.m.

Div. 2 & 3 Consolation  
Quarterfinals  
Approx. 1:00 p.m.

### SESSION 3

**FEB. 27 | Eight Mats**

Div. 1, 2, 3 and Girls Semifinals  
7 p.m. (Doors open at 6 p.m.)

*(Div. 1 on mats 1 & 2; Girls on mats 3 & 4;  
Div. 2 on mats 5 & 6; Div. 3 on mats 7 & 8)*

### SESSION 4

**FEB. 28 | Eight Mats**

All Weigh Ins: 8:30 a.m.

Div. 1, 2, 3 & Girls Consolation  
Semifinals  
10 a.m. (Doors open at 9 a.m.)

*(Div. 1 on mats 1 & 2; Girls on mats 3 & 4;  
Div. 2 on mats 5 & 6; Div. 3 on mats 7 & 8)*

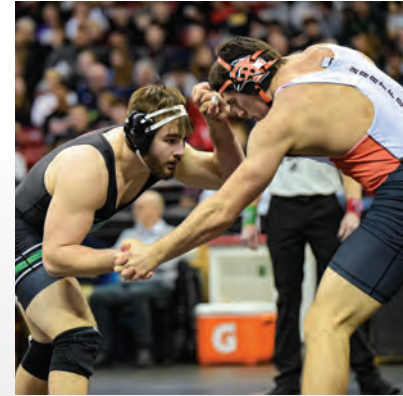
Div. 1, 2, 3 & Girls Fifth Place\*  
Div. 1, 2, 3 & Girls Third Place\*

### SESSION 5

**FEB. 28 | Four Mats**

**March of Champions – 5:30 p.m.**  
(Doors open at 4:00 p.m.)

Div. 1, 2, 3 & Girls  
Championships



## TEAM WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP:

La Crosse Center, La Crosse

Doors open for spectators one hour prior to the start of competition each session.

Teams will be seeded on Sunday, March 1 and posted after seed meetings

### Friday, March 6, 2026 (one session)

Weigh-ins – 4:15 p.m.

Admission \$16 for one session

#### Quarterfinals Matches 1 & 2 in all Divisions – 5:30 p.m.

Match 1: #1 Seed vs. #8 seed

Match 2: #4 seed vs. #5 seed

#### Quarterfinals Matches 3 & 4 in all Divisions – 7:30 p.m.

Match 3: #3 seed vs. #6 seed

Match 4: #2 seed vs. #7 seed

### Saturday, March 7, 2026 (two sessions)

Weigh-ins all divisions – 8:45 a.m.

Admission \$11 for each session

#### Division 1 Semifinals in all Divisions – 10:00 a.m.

Match 5:

Match 1 winner vs. Match 2 winner

Match 6:

Match 3 winner vs. Match 4 winner

#### Championship in all Divisions 3:00 p.m.



## **BOYS HOCKEY STATE TOURNAMENT:**

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Bob Suter's LEGACY20 Arena, Middleton

### **Thursday, March 5**

#### **Division 2 Semifinals**

9:30 a.m. #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

1:30 p.m. #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Friday, March 6**

#### **Division 1 Semifinals**

10:00 a.m. #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

2:00 p.m. #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Saturday, March 7**

#### **Division 2 - Championship**

11:00 a.m. Winner of Game 1

vs. Winner of Game 2

#### **Division 1 - Championship**

7:00 p.m. Winner of Game 1 vs.

Winner of Game 2



## **GIRLS HOCKEY STATE TOURNAMENT:**

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Bob Suter's LEGACY20 Arena, Middleton

### **Thursday, March 5**

#### **Semifinals**

4:30 p.m. #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

7:30 p.m. #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Saturday, March 7**

#### **Championship**

3:00 p.m. Winner of Game 1 vs.

Winner of Game 2



## **GIRLS BASKETBALL STATE TOURNAMENT:**

Resch Center, Green Bay

### **Thursday, March 12**

**Division 3 Semifinals - 1:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 4 Semifinals - 6:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Friday, March 13**

**Division 5 Semifinals - 9:05 am**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 2 Semifinals - 1:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 1 Semifinals - 6:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Saturday, March 14**

**3-Point Challenge - 9:30 am**

Division 5 Championship - 11:05 am

Division 4 Championship - 15 minutes  
following completion of Div. 5 championship game

Division 3 Championship - 15 minutes  
following completion of Div. 4 championship game

Division 2 Championship - 6:35 pm

Division 1 Championship - 15 minutes  
following completion of Div. 2 championship game



## **BOYS BASKETBALL STATE TOURNAMENT:**

Kohl Center, Madison

### **Thursday, March 19**

**Division 3 Semifinals - 1:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 4 Semifinals - 6:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Friday, March 20**

**Division 5 Semifinals - 9:05 am**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 2 Semifinals - 1:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 1 Semifinals - 6:35 pm**

#1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

#2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

### **Saturday, March 21**

**3-Point Challenge - 9:30 am**

Division 5 Championship - 11:05 am

Division 4 Championship - 15 minutes  
following completion of Div. 5 championship game

Division 3 Championship - 15 minutes  
following completion of Div. 4 championship game

Division 2 Championship - 6:35 pm

Division 1 Championship - 15 minutes  
following completion of Div. 2 championship game



# SOCCER POINTS OF EMPHASIS

## Education Based High School Athletics

High school athletics play a vital role in the overall growth of student-athletes, providing opportunities to develop physically, mentally, and emotionally. Soccer serves as a platform for building essential life skills such as teamwork, discipline, leadership, and resilience. Coaching priorities focus on fundamental skills, strategic gameplay, and decision-making while instilling respect for opponents, officials, and teammates. As the game evolves, a strong understanding and application of the rules are essential to maintaining fair and safe competition, making rule education a key responsibility for players, coaches, and officials.

A well-rounded high school soccer program should emphasize both athletic and academic development, reinforcing the importance of discipline, time management, and perseverance. Education-based athletics prepare students not only for success in sports but also for their future endeavors by teaching valuable life lessons through competition. Schools, coaches, and administrators must work together to ensure that high school soccer fosters growth, responsibility, and leadership, creating a positive experience that supports student success both on and off the field.

## Courage, Character and Consistency

Courage, character, and consistency are essential qualities for any soccer official. These qualities encourage the game to be managed fairly, effectively, and with integrity. Officials must have the courage to make difficult decisions, calling fouls equally for both teams without fear of backlash from players, coaches, or spectators. This courage extends to maintaining authority on the field, recognizing and firmly addressing any attempts to challenge their control or interfere with the game. Character is reflected in professionalism and the official's personality they incorporate into their management philosophy, fostering cooperation and mutual support within the officiating team. By maintaining composure and a focused attitude, officials uphold the integrity of the game, ensuring their decisions are based on the rules within the spirit of the game, rather than external pressures or emotions.

Consistency ties these attributes together, ensuring officials apply the rules uniformly and fairly throughout the game. Players and coaches expect predictability from officials in decision-making, which reinforces trust in the official's authority. An official who applies the rules consistently, while managing interactions with confidence and conviction, fosters a controlled and respectful environment. An official who successfully combines these attributes bolsters acceptance when managing dissent and conflicts, while emphasizing calmness, direct communication, and resolution without unnecessary escalation. Ultimately, courage, character, and consistency define an official's ability to manage the game effectively, uphold fairness, and maintain order, ensuring a positive experience for all participants.

## Team Areas and Bench Decorum

Effective communication is essential for officials in maintaining control over the match, particularly when dealing with bench decorum and sportsmanship. An official's role is to keep the game safe, fair, and fun, which requires adapting to the level of play and responding to game situations as they develop. High school soccer is an extension of the classroom, meaning officials must uphold the highest standards of professionalism, composure, and integrity. By setting a respectful tone, referees can prevent escalation and unnecessary conflict. Recognizing and addressing dissent early is crucial—while emotional reactions can be ignored, public, provocative, or persistent complaints must be dealt with decisively.

Coaches and bench personnel set the tone for their teams, and poor behavior can spread if not managed properly. In education-based athletics, adult leaders must be champions of character. Bench decorum must be actively monitored, as unchecked misconduct from the team area can quickly influence players and spectators. The head coach has an obligation to manage their team's behavior. A firm but fair approach ensures that the game remains under control while demonstrating respect for all participants. Officials have tools to warn coaches and must take action to sanction misconduct when it occurs. Ultimately, head coaches are responsible for their team area, including assistant coaches and substitutes, and must be held accountable for any misconduct occurring within it.

## Player Equipment (Shinguards)

Ensuring student-athlete safety is a top priority, and proper equipment plays a key role in maintaining a safe and fair playing environment. NFHS Rule 4 provides clear guidelines on required player equipment, including shinguards, which are essential for protecting athletes during competition. Given that high school players are still in their developmental stages, shinguards must be age- and size-appropriate, meeting NOCSAE safety standards. Each shinguard must display the NOCSAE seal, permanently marked on the front, indicating the approved height range for that model.

While coaches are responsible for ensuring their players are properly equipped before the game, officials take a proactive approach by observing warm-ups to identify any potential concerns. Rather than conducting formal equipment checks, referees use preventive officiating by maintaining awareness during pregame activities and addressing any noticeable issues. If a player's shinguards appear inadequately sized, officials should engage with the coach in a professional and approachable manner to confirm compliance.

By prioritizing communication and proactive observation, officials help reinforce safety standards while allowing players to focus on the game. A consistent and safety-conscious approach ensures that every student-athlete competes with the necessary protective equipment, contributing to a positive and well-regulated match experience. ■



# SOCCER RULE CHANGES

## 3-3-1,2,3,2c (NEW):

Removes redundant language and permits substitutions during a temporarily suspended game.

### Rationale:

Eliminates redundant language and allows substitutions during a temporarily suspended game. In hot weather, state associations often authorize stoppages within a half for water breaks. Under this change, teams would now be permitted to make substitutions during these stoppages.

## \*\*3-3-2b(\*\*2):

Clarifies that an injured player must leave the field if the referee beckons a coach or appropriate health-care provider.

### Rationale:

The rules change clarifies the current rule that if an official beckons a coach or appropriate health-care provider for any injured player, including the goalkeeper, that player must leave the field regardless of the reason the clock is stopped.

## \*\*4-1-2:

Clarifies that a number is required on the front of the jersey and/or the shorts.

### Rationale:

This language supports the rule prior to the reorganization of Rule 4 and adds clarification



to the overall interpretation to clarify that a number is required on the front of the uniform which may be on the jersey and/or the shorts.

## 7-2-4 (NEW):

Prohibits a coach or team personnel other than the team captain from speaking with a referee during interval between periods, unless beckoned by a referee.

### Rationale:

The time between periods of play is designated for rest for all participants, not for engaging with officials. This rule change introduces specific language and penalties for coaches who confront officials during these intervals, aiming to reduce unnecessary disputes and maintain a respectful game environment.

## 12-4-4:

A misconduct penalty may be given to the head coach if team or bench misconduct occurs.

### Rationale:

To encourage and support sporting and positive bench decorum, the rule change reinforces the head coach's responsibility for the conduct of their team and bench personnel within the team area. It provides officials with additional



tools, allowing them to warn, caution, or eject the head coach if any bench personnel engage in misconduct.

## Rule 18:

Elimination of Rule 18. Incorporating the definitions into their corresponding rules while expanding the index to serve as a quick reference tool to streamline the rules, improve clarity, remove unnecessary duplication and eliminate conflicting definitions.

### Rationale:

This change relocates definitions into their corresponding rules, streamlining the rules book by reducing redundancies and contradictions. The expanded index at the back of the book continues to serve as a helpful quick reference tool, while definitions were updated and aligned in context with appropriate rules.

## 2025-26 Editorial Changes

3-3-2b(5), 3-3-3b(4), 3-3-3c(2), 3-3-3d(3), 3-3-7 4-1-1c, 4-1 Notes, 5-1-2, 13-1-5

## 2025-26 Points of Emphasis

1. Education Based High School Athletics
2. Courage, Character and Consistency
3. Team Areas and Bench Decorum
4. Player Uniform Equipment and Safety ■



# TRACK & FIELD

# RULE CHANGES

## 2026

### 3-2-3k (NEW):

Permits the Games Committee to determine takeoff board placement in horizontal jumps.

#### Rationale:

The change gives the games committee authority to determine takeoff board placement in the long jump and triple jump aligning with existing role in setting starting heights for high jump and pole vault. The rules previously did not assign this responsibility, and clarification ensures consistency, fairness and appropriate oversight. Athletes may still change which approved takeoff board to use during competition.

### 3-8-6:

Expands the acceptable calibers and provides flexibility for starting devices.

#### Rationale:

Due to increased cost and limited availability .32 caliber blanks. Expanding the acceptable calibers provides flexibility for meet management while maintaining the safety and functionality required for starting devices.

### 4-6-5:

Permits an appropriate health care professional, designated by the games committee, to evaluate a downed competitor without resulting in disqualification.

#### Rationale:

The change permits the games committee to designate an appropriate health care professional to evaluate a downed competitor on the course without resulting in disqualification provided no assistance is given in progressing along the course. It prioritizes athlete safety by permitting on-course evaluation while preserving the integrity of the competition.

### 4-6-6c (NEW):

Clarifies athletes are not permitted to wear any type of audio or video recording devices during a race, trial, or while in restricted areas.

#### Rationale:

No athlete participating in a meet is permitted to wear any type of audio or video device to record or transmit in a race, trial or in restricted areas. This language aligns with other NFHS rules books.

### 6-2-2 NOTES (3) (NEW):

Clarifies that the time limit for a consecutive attempt applies within a height and at a height change.

#### Rationale:

The chart does not differentiate whether consecutive trials are within a height or at a height change. Adding this note will clarify the rule and establish a standard procedure.

### 6-3-2b4(a):

Incorporates metric measurements alongside imperial to promote clarity and consistency in meet management.

#### Rationale:

Standard metric progressions are typically in 5 cm increments, with 15 cm aligning closely to the traditional 6 inches. This change simplifies implementation, aligns with common metric practices, and supports consistency in meet management.



#### **6-8-6 (NEW):**

Standardizes warm up times for athletes entering the high jump and pole vault after 60 minutes have elapsed.

#### **Rationale:**

The current rule allows warm-up only after passing three consecutive heights, which can result in long periods of inactivity—sometimes over an hour—in large competitions. This can be a disadvantage and potential safety concern for athletes entering later. Changing the rule to provide a standardized 1.5 minutes for high jump or 2 minutes for pole vault warm-up for any athlete entering after 60 minutes have elapsed promotes fairness, consistency, and risk minimization.

#### **6-9-21:**

Clarifies that padding is required for hard and unyielding surfaces that are elevated relative to the ground.

#### **Rationale:**

The addition of "above ground level" clarifies that the padding requirement applies specifically to hard and unyielding surfaces that are elevated relative to the ground. This refinement helps differentiate between surfaces that present a greater risk of impact during a fall (such as raised concrete, asphalt, wood, or platform extensions) versus ground-level areas that may already be accounted for with landing system setup.

#### **6-10-5:**

Incorporates javelin construction specifications into the rules book for clarity and consistency.

#### **Rationale:**

Moving the implement construction specifications for the javelin into the rules book provides greater clarity, consistency, and accessibility for high school coaches, athletes, and meet officials. By incorporating the construction requirements directly into the NFHS rules book, we ensure that all necessary information is readily available, specific to the high school level, and aligned with the intent of education-based athletics. This approach maintains appropriate equipment standards while promoting ease of understanding, consistent enforcement, and fairness across all levels of high school competition.

#### **9-1-1:**

Adds the 200 meter dash as an option for indoor meets.

#### **Rationale:**

Adding the option of the 200 or 300 meter dash in indoor meets provides states with greater flexibility to structure events based on facility size, athlete development, and meet goals. This change supports broader participation and aligns with the varied formats of indoor track and field across the country.

#### **9-6-1:**

Establishes a standardized 20-meter exchange zone for indoor relays.

#### **Rationale:**

A uniform 20m exchange zone in indoor track and field creates a single standard for ease of officiating. ■

# WIAA

## Pitching Restrictions & FAQ

All baseball teams at all levels will maintain a pitch count log for all pitchers during the school baseball season (regular and WIAA tournament).

1. The pitch count is based on the number of pitches thrown to batters during an at-bat. Warm-up pitches allowed before the game, in between innings or allowed by the umpire in case of injury or game delay do not count.
2. Pitches are counted, and when the number of pitches reaches a certain level, the pitcher must take off the required days of rest. The maximum number of pitches is 100.

Age	Maximum Number of Pitches	Required Days of Rest (Pitches)				
		0 Days	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	4 Days
HS	100	1-30	31-49	50-75	76-100	--
MS 11-12	85	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+
MS 13-14	95	1-20	21-35	36-50	51-65	66+

3. When the pitcher reaches 100 pitches, he may not pitch to another batter. He may only finish pitching to the current batter.
4. The pitching rule applies even though a game is called (ended) by the umpire because of darkness, rain or some other factor before it has become an official game.
5. At the pregame meeting, coaches should have a copy of their pitch count log for any questions about pitcher status. Each team will designate a pitch count person for their team. It is recommended (but not mandatory) that a responsible individual be a separate pitch recorder who will also record pitch counts from an area behind home plate.
6. At the end of each complete inning, coaches (and pitch count recorder if present) will meet at a location designated by the team host and/or umpire to review pitch counts. If there is a difference, the coaches must resolve the difference before beginning the next inning.
7. If the counts differ, the following will be used to determine the pitch count:
  - If a pitch count recorder is present and two of three agree, the majority will be considered official.
  - If a pitch count recorder is present and none of the three agree, the pitch count recorder will be considered official.
  - If a pitch count recorder is not present, the home counter will be considered official.

8. At the conclusion of the game, both head coaches and pitch counter if present will sign the pitch count chart.
9. It is not the responsibility of game officials to enforce the pitch count rule. Schools must report violation to the WIAA office following competition. Violations are considered in the same manner as a school using an ineligible student. The minimum penalty for such violations is forfeiture of the game.

### Pitch Count Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: A pitcher throws 78 pitches and goes to a different position, is he allowed to pitch again later in the game?**

**A:** Yes. The count is a daily total. In fact, he could pitch in the second game of a double header. But he is limited to the max of 100 in a day and must end on that batter.

**Q: How do you count an ambidextrous pitcher?**

**A:** If the pitcher is ambidextrous, the pitch count guidelines apply to the individual pitcher, not to the individual arm

**Q: Are intentional walks counted as pitching?**

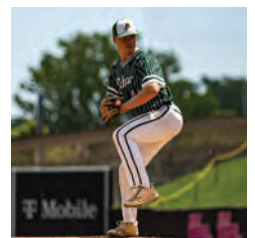
**A:** Only if the pitch is thrown from the pitcher to the catcher. In high school baseball, the defense can tell the umpire to walk the batter without pitching.

**Q: When competing in another state, which pitch count should we use?**

**A:** For WIAA members, the WIAA rules apply and should be used.

**Q: If a pitcher is effectively wild, but unhittable (think Nolan Ryan) – let's say he averages 5 to 6 pitches per batter, striking out most of them – he could conceivably reach the sixth or seventh inning of a PERFECT GAME and have hit the 100 pitch limit and would, therefore, have to leave the PERFECT GAME without finishing it – correct? (Sub-question: Does the rule actually penalize strike-out pitchers compared to pitchers who pitch to contact, since strikeout pitchers, by nature, throw more pitches? If so, do we really want this?)**

**A:** Yes, he has to leave once the 100-pitch count is reached no matter the game situation. In fact, in the Major Leagues a rookie pitcher was pulled after reaching 100 pitches. Dodger's manager Dave Roberts pulled Ross Stripling after 7 1/3 innings on April 8, 2016, despite the fact that the rookie was throwing a no-hitter in his Major League debut. On April 28, 2016, Don Mattingly decided to pull pitcher Adam Conley after throwing 116 pitches despite not allowing a hit for 7 2/3 innings.





In an article, David Lennon stated: "Back in 2012, Terry Collins was in tears after letting Johan Santana throw the first no-hitter in Mets history, perhaps knowing what those 134 pitches eventually might cost his ace." And "And Santana? After the 134-pitch no-hitter, he went 3-7 with an 8.27 ERA the rest of 2012. And after that season, he never threw another major-league pitch." <https://www.newsday.com/sports/columnists/david-lennon/pulling-a-pitcher-from-possible-no-hitter-no-longer-a-no-no-c28374>

On September 9, 2016, "The Dodgers' Rich Hill was six outs away from throwing a perfect game against the Marlins on Saturday, but manager Dave Roberts made the difficult decision to pull him after only 89 pitches due to a blister." <http://www.mlbtraderumors.com/2016/09/dave-roberts-on-rich-hills-near-perfect-game.html>

The pitch count is a risk minimization rule addressing the health of the pitcher. It is not a penalty. A study published in the American Journal of Sports Medicine found that 58.9 percent of Tommy John surgeries were in athletes aged 15 to 19. Fleisig (American Sports Medicine Institute) found that a pitcher is more likely to suffer an injury if: 1) he throws more than 80 pitches in a game (four times more likely); 2) he throws more than eight months a year (five times more likely); and 3) he throws when fatigued in a game (36 times more likely).

**Q: At the State Final tournaments prior to the new pitching regulations, approximately half of the State championship games have had pitchers come in the game in relief that had pitched previously in the semi-final or quarter-final. Almost all of these pitchers would now be unavailable in the State championship game because of the new rule. Correct?**

**A:** Pitchers have required days of rest according to the number of pitches in a day. If they pitch more than 30 in a day, a minimum of 1 day of rest is required. We don't know how many would have been ineligible from prior years. It is our hope that coaches will adjust their strategies, will develop pitchers, and will create opportunities for other athletes to pitch.

**Q: When originally proposed to the WBCA at their clinic, the original proposal stated that when a pitcher hit 100 pitches, he could finish the inning. The current rule was changed to finishing the at bat. Why the change?**

**A:** With the proposal to complete the inning, it was determined that the pitcher might throw too many pitches and the recommendation was to finish the batter. The number 100 was used for the last batter to allow the pitcher to complete the batter. Otherwise, it was a 112 pitch count and pull the pitcher immediately. So it was a reasonable compromise. ■



## REGULATIONS FOR BASEBALL PITCHER INSTRUCTION

Baseball conditioning for pitchers may be conducted for five (5) days during the week prior to the first date for baseball practice (Sun to Sat). There must be a day of rest for at least one calendar day before the season begins. This activity is considered out-of-season and voluntary.

1. Only one session per day per athlete permitted—the maximum length of the session is two hours per individual.
2. The program can be conducted indoors or out depending on the weather.
3. The conditioning program is limited to pitchers and catchers in grades 9 through 12.
4. Balls, gloves and catcher's protective equipment are the only equipment permitted. Portable pitching mounds are permitted. (Bats, batting tees, fungos, batting cages, pitching machines, etc., are strictly prohibited.)
5. The program may consist only of warm-ups, stretching, calisthenics, weight training, running, other conditioning exercises and throwing. Throwing is permitted only because it is an important aspect of conditioning the arm.
6. A coach must be present at all conditioning sessions.
7. Safety Precautions – Catchers should wear full equipment. Do not use anyone to assume a batter's position while pitchers are throwing, since although pitching control may be an outcome of the program, it is not a program objective.

*NOTE: It is a violation of WIAA rules to allow work on fielding, covering bases, pick-offs or any other related fundamentals, and therefore, these types of drills are strictly prohibited. In addition, it should not be used as a tryout, and team cuts are not permitted. ■*

# Baseball Rule Changes

**1-2-9, 2-5-1h, 2-16-1h, 8-2-1, 8-2-2(a)1-7, 8-2-7, 8-4-1g(1)**

Modified that the double first base will be mandatory effective January 1, 2027 and associated rule changes.

**1-4-4**

Clarified what is allowed on a school's official baseball uniform.

**1-6-3**

Clarified what is not allowed to be worn by a player to record or transmit audio or video feeds.

**2-10-3**

Clarified the definition of a player-to-player defensive meeting.

**3-4-6**

Clarified the difference from a player-to-player meeting and a charged conference. ■



## Baseball Comments on the Rules

**Modified that resin, pine tar or any other drying agent is permitted on the bat in a specific area (1-3-2c1)**

This change allows the batter to have better control over their non-wood bat, so it does not slip out of their hands due to moisture or perspiration. It also makes the rule similar for wood bats and non-wood bats.

**Modified the definition of forfeiture (4-4-1c)**

There are seven criteria for forfeiture. This modification of the subsection "c" is the result when a coach, player or team personnel does not conform to the instructions of the umpire. An ejection is a serious violation of sportsmanship and game decorum. To aggravate the violation with a game forfeiture is egregious and contrary to the basic premise of education-based athletics. ■



# *NFHS 2026 Baseball Points of Emphasis*



## Rules Revisions:

- 1.** A double first base will be required effective with the 2027 season. The double first base must be white and a contrasting solid color. The white portion of the base is located in fair territory while the colored half is located in foul territory.
- 2.** A school's name, nickname, logo, mascot and/or player's name will be permitted on a uniform top
- 3.** No player shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during a game.
- 4.** Each team, when on defense, may be granted not more than one player-to-player meeting during an inning.
- 5.** A player-to-player defensive meeting is defined as having two or more defensive players. ■



# SOFTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

## Obstruction

Obstruction is defined as the act of a defensive player who hinders or impedes a batter's attempt to make contact with a pitch or interferes with the legal progress of a runner or batter-runner advancing on the bases. This interference may be intentional or unintentional, and it can be either physical or verbal. However, obstruction does not apply if the defensive player is in possession of the ball or is making the initial play on a batted ball.

The central element in identifying obstruction lies in whether the runner's progress is actually impeded. If the runner or batter-runner is not affected—if there is no delay, no forced alteration of their path, or no hesitation—then by rule, obstruction has not occurred. A defensive player's mere presence or positioning, even if questionable, cannot be ruled as obstruction unless it results in an actual impediment to the runner. An exception exists only for a fake tag, which in itself constitutes obstruction, regardless of whether physical impediment occurs.

Impeding a runner means creating a negative effect on their ability to run the bases. This might include a runner slowing down, altering their intended path, stopping altogether, retreating to the previous base, or making contact with a fielder that disrupts their movement. These examples underscore that the umpire must rely on judgment to determine both whether the runner was impeded and to what extent their progress was affected.

Unlike many rule violations in softball that carry standardized penalties—such as awarding two bases for a thrown ball that goes out of play or one base for a pitched ball entering dead ball territory—obstruction rulings are situational and vary based on the specifics of each play. The purpose of the obstruction award is not to penalize the defensive team arbitrarily, but to nullify the negative effect of the obstruction. The runner is not being granted an advantage; rather, they are being restored to the position they would have achieved had the

obstruction not occurred. This could mean advancing the runner or, in some cases, returning them to a previous base—whatever is necessary to correct the disruption caused by the obstruction, based on the umpire's judgment.

## Maintaining an Unobstructed View of the Play

There are times when an umpire must move from their primary position to maintain an unobstructed view of a play. This is mentioned several times in the NFHS Softball Umpire Manual but, until now, there has not been any guidance for the umpire in the manual. Information has been added to the Umpire Manual to explain aspects of the play that should be considered when moving from the primary position to maintain an unobstructed view of the play.

There are key interactions of the four elements of each play that need to be viewed clearly in order to make a judgment call. On tag plays:

- Defense contacting the offense with the ball (tagging the runner)
- Defense controlling the ball through the process of applying the tag
- Offense contacting the base.

All three of these key interactions must remain within the umpires view in order to make an accurate judgment call on the play. Also, when adjusting an umpire needs to maintain proper distance as to ensure no key interactions of the play are missed.

Details of each play like:

- Defensive positioning
- Direction, height and timing of the throw
- Path of the runner
- Timing of the ball and runner arriving near the base

All these items need to be evaluated in each particular play prior to moving from the primary positioning as each play develops slightly differently. Understanding how these items are going to come together on a particular play allows the umpire to determine where the key interactions will occur, allowing them to adjust, when necessary, to maintain an unobstructed view of the play. ■

# SOFTBALL COMMENTS ON THE RULES



## 2026 Softball Rule Changes

### 1-9-6:

No player shall transmit or record audio or video from the playing surface. New language further clarifies the use of electronic devices and what is not permitted.

#### Rationale:

This change clearly defines the types of electronic devices prohibited by the rule.

### Rule 8:

Rule 8 has been reformatted for clarity. Changes have separated longer articles, and organized exceptions, penalties, and effects into outline format for improved comprehension.

#### Rationale:

Added article references to PENALTIES and EFFECTS, and Section 4 was separated into two sections addressing runners entitled to advance with and without liability to be put out to delineate differences.

### 10-4-2:

Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray umpire pants will no longer be permitted. NFHS umpire slacks may either be charcoal gray or navy blue. The heather gray option was stricken from the rules book.

#### Rationale:

Manufacturers have discontinued producing heather gray umpire pants. This change will assist umpires in the purchase of pants that are currently being manufactured.

### 2026 SOFTBALL EDITORIAL CHANGES

1-3-3, 1-6-3 a & b, 2-25-3, 4-3-2, 7-1-1, 7-2-2, 8-2-12 PENALTY 2, 8-7-PENALTIES (Art. 10 through 14) (2)

### 2026 SOFTBALL POINTS OF EMPHASIS

1. Obstruction
2. Maintaining an Unobstructed View ■

### 1-9-6:

With the increasing accessibility and use of electronic devices, it is important to establish clear boundaries for their use in competitive softball. Players shall not record audio or video while on the playing surface, as doing so presents significant safety risks and potential distractions that can compromise the integrity of the game. Movement and recording during live play—whether with handheld devices, wearable cameras, or phones—can interfere with a player's ability to perform safely and effectively. Handheld equipment may limit a player's capacity to catch or throw a ball, while wearable devices can become entanglement hazards or create impact risks during high-speed plays or collisions. Additionally, extra foot traffic or positioning for the sake of capturing footage can unintentionally place individuals in the path of play, leading to unnecessary contact or disruption. Beyond safety, the use of recording equipment on the field raises concerns around focus and liability. Players distracted by filming may not respond as quickly to the ball or to their teammates, and their inattention could increase the chance of injury. Moreover, audio recordings introduce privacy and liability considerations, especially when capturing conversations during competition. For these reasons, no player is permitted to record while on the field of play. The emphasis must remain on maintaining a safe, focused, and fair playing environment for all participants.

### Rule 8:

To improve clarity and enhance the overall usability of the rules, the existing content was reorganized into a structured outline format. This new layout allows for easier navigation and better comprehension of key concepts by clearly separating topics and presenting information in a logical, accessible sequence. One significant change involved dividing the original Section 8-4 into two distinct sections. This split more clearly distinguishes between situations in which runners are entitled to advance without liability to be put out and those where they advance with liability. By isolating these scenarios, officials, coaches, and players can more readily understand the conditions under which runners are protected or at risk during play. Additionally, article references were added to corresponding PENALTIES and EFFECTS. This change provides direct links between specific rule violations and their consequences, eliminating ambiguity and helping users quickly identify the appropriate rulings and applications. The result is a cleaner, more intuitive rule structure that supports accurate rule enforcement and improved learning.

### 10-4-2:

Effective January 1, 2027, heather gray umpire pants will no longer be permitted for use, as manufacturers have discontinued their production. This update reflects a practical shift to ensure that umpires can purchase and wear uniform pants that are currently being manufactured and readily available through suppliers. Moving forward, umpires will be expected to wear pants in either charcoal gray or navy, both of which are actively produced and supported by major manufacturers. The transition to these colors—particularly charcoal gray—provides consistency in appearance while allowing state associations and officials to align with what is accessible in the current marketplace. This change comes in response to ongoing feedback from state associations, which emphasized the challenges officials face in locating heather gray pants and the need for standardized, available uniform options. By establishing a clear implementation date and aligning with existing production trends, this adjustment supports both uniformity and ease of compliance across all levels of competition. Pants in either heather or charcoal gray will be legal until January 1, 2027, when charcoal pants will be required. ■

# NFHS 2025-26 Boys Lacrosse Rule Changes



## 1-2-12d:

Requires a cone be placed at the corner of the coaches area and the team area to clearly mark the team area.

### Rationale:

Adding a cone to clearly mark the team area in situations where lines are not required, assists in keeping the players within the designated team area without requiring additional field markings.

## 1-9-1b(4 & 5):

Eliminates the restrictions on color and prohibits items attached to the tooth and mouth protector that do not support the function of protecting the teeth and/or mouth.

### Rationale:

Aligns tooth and mouth protector rules with other NFHS sport rules requiring tooth and mouth protectors.

## 1-9-1h(3):

Modifies uniform number size on the back of the jersey by decreasing the minimum height to eight inches – matching the minimum height requirement on the front of the jersey.

### Rationale:

Aligns with other NFHS sport rules for number sizing while maintaining appropriate visibility for officials.

## 1-12:

Requires a working horn be accessible at the sideline table.

### Rationale:

Allows a coach to call for a double horn from the field without delayed communication to the press box.

## 3-5-1 & 2 (NEW):

Requires a working horn be accessible at the sideline table. Establishes that an interrupted game that cannot be resumed on the same day is considered complete if 75% of playing time has elapsed.

### Rationale:

Provides a procedure for interrupted play to assist host management while allowing state associations to develop modifications to game-ending procedures.

## 4-3-3e:

Allows an official to assess a delay of game penalty if player positioning on the face off must be adjusted repeatedly.

### Rationale:

Clarifies the current practice of penalizing faceoff players who need to be repeatedly adjusted.

## 4-8:

Clarifies that a goal is scored if the ball is or becomes loose behind the plane regardless of who caused the ball to cross the line.

### Rationale:

Creates consistency in awarding a goal when the ball becomes loose behind the plane and when a ball is loose and crosses the plane of the goal line.

## 4-18-4 PENALTY; 5-6-2 (NEW):

Reclassifies the foul for a player, other than the properly equipped goalkeeper, that enters the crease with the intent to block a shot as a personal foul for illegal equipment.

### Rationale:

Minimizes risk by discouraging players from acting as a goalkeeper by making the penalty more severe and removing the official's responsibility to remember if it was the first occurrence or subsequent attempts.

## 4-22-1c:

Eliminates the five seconds awarded to a goalkeeper to re-enter the crease on any restart.

### Rationale:

Aligns treatment of the goalkeeper as a field player when it comes to injury or equipment issues while outside the crease while discouraging goalkeepers from leaving the crease and eliminating the need for an official to judge whether a goalkeeper has left the crease in an attempt to delay the game or for a legitimate purpose.

## 6-3-2c:

Adds hooking, lifting, or pinning an opponent's body with the crosse in describing illegal actions related to holding.

**Rationale:**

Additional descriptors help define holding and create a clearer understanding of illegal actions trending in the game.

**6-5-2y:**

Establishes that the loss of a helmet is an illegal procedure.

**Rationale:**

Minimizes risk by increasing the penalty for a player losing a helmet during play encouraging players to ensure chin straps are properly worn and helmets are secure during play.

**7-3:**

Establishes consistency in penalty administration by moving the restart to laterally outside the goal area when the ball crosses the end line before or after the penalty occurs.

**Rationale:**

Simplifies all restarts after penalties by administering them at the same restart point, regardless of any conditions.

**2026 BOYS LACROSSE MAJOR EDITORIAL CHANGES**

**1-2-9:**

Requires all equipment to be kept in the bench area at least 6 yards away from the sideline.

**1-3-2, 1-4:**

Recommends a flat-iron goal for all surfaces keeping up with trends in equipment and minimizing risk of injury.

**1-7-3 thru 6:**

Reorganizes crosse construction rules by clearly identifying what is illegal and what must be fixed without penalty.

**1-9-2a(1):**

Allows undergarments on the top or bottom to be white, gray, black or one of the team's official colors.

**2-5-2:**

Updates the recommended officials' uniform.

**4-3-1 EXCEPTION NOTE (NEW):**

Adds new note to rule exception for a faceoff clarifying where the ball is awarded when the offended team has three players serving penalty time.

**4-19-1:**

Clarifies that a goal will be disallowed if a player jumps without possession, catches a pass, shoots and lands in the crease.

**4-24:**

Restructures language for clarity.

**7-6:**

Restructures language for clarity.

**Official Lacrosse Signals:**

Adds new signal for Check Involving the Head/Neck or Defenseless Player.

**2026 BOYS LACROSSE EDITORIAL CHANGES**

1-2-7; 1-5; 1-6-3; 1-7-1; 1-9-1e; 1-9-1g; 1-9-1h NOTE; 1-9-1h(9); 1-10-1c; 2-10-2; 4-3-3b; 4-3-3l, m, n; 4-62 thru 4; 4-13e; 5-4-1 & 2; 5-4-5; 5-4-6; 5-4-7 PENALTY; 5-5 NOTE; 5-6; 5-8; 5-10 PENALTY; 6-5-2t; 6-6-2; 6-12; 7-2e; 7-2f

**2026 BOYS LACROSSE POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

1. Properly Wearing Equipment
2. Personal Foul – Contact with the Head/Neck
3. Sportsmanship and Role of Head Coach
4. Pregame Responsibilities ■

# NFHS 2026 Girls Lacrosse Rule Changes

**2-4-5:**

Stick checks may be requested at any point during a quarter break, halftime, a team time-out, prior to the start of an overtime period, prior to the start of a draw, and immediately following goals in regulation and overtime periods.

**Rationale:**

Specifies the appropriate times when stick check requests may be made to eliminate potential gamesmanship, maintain pace of play, and allow officials to focus on administration of the game.

**2-8-3 (NEW) & PENALTY:**

No on-field player can wear an audio or video device during the game.

**Rationale:**

Clarifies the prohibition of electronic communications with and by players during the game and aligns with other NFHS rules codes.

**4-3-3d:**

If a possession time-out is called when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball in the goal circle, play will resume at the closest dot and any player may restart play.

**Rationale:**

Aligns the restart procedure for a team time-out when the goalkeeper has possession of the ball in the goal circle with other team time-outs when the ball is in the critical scoring area.

**5-2 PENALTY 1:**

When one player draws illegally, the free position may be taken by any player on the opponent's team at the spot of the ball.

**Rationale:**

Improves the flow of the game without disadvantaging the non-offending team.

**7-3 PENALTIES 1a, 3a:**

When a goal circle foul is committed, the offending player shall move 4 meters away from the player taking the free position instead of behind.

**Rationale:**

Improves the flow of the game and creates consistency in penalty administration of nonmajor fouls.

**2026 GIRLS LACROSSE EDITORIAL CHANGES**

2-2-4; 2-7-1a, 4 & 5 (NEW); 2-7-6; 4-4; 5-4-1 & 2; 7-1-3; 8-1-1 NOTE; 10-1 PENALTIES; 10-1 PENALTIES 6; 10-1 PENALTIES 13b; 11-1-1; 11-2 PENALTIES 2 thru 6; 12-3-2; 12-8 MISCONDUCT PENALTIES 3e; 12-8 COACH MISCONDUCT PENALTIES 2; 13 FLAG; 13 RESTRAINING LINE

**2026 GIRLS LACROSSE POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

1. Identifying and Managing Fouls During Scoring Plays
2. Efficient Draw Administration
3. Delay of Game/Use of the Green Card ■



# DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

## *for 2025-26*

February 1	Winter Sports Request Down/Up Form Deadline
February 1	Winter Tournament Participation Deadline
February 1	Winter Cooperative Team Application Deadline
February 4	Board of Control Meeting
February 8	Hockey Seeding Meetings
February 9	Middle Level Council Meeting
February 10	Boys Swim/Dive Entries Due
February 11	Winter Tournament Central Launch
February 13	Boys Diving Sectionals
February 14	Boys Swimming Sectionals
February 14	Individual Wrestling Sectionals
February 15	Girls Basketball Playoff Brackets Released
February 16	President's Day
February 21	Wrestling Team Sectionals
February 17	Boys Hockey Regionals
February 19	Conference Realignment Task Force Meeting (if needed)
February 19-20	Hockey Regionals
February 18	Ash Wednesday
February 20-21	State Boys Swimming & Diving (Waukesha)
February 22	Boys Basketball Brackets Released
February 23	3-Point Challenge Girls Basketball Stats Due
February 24, 27-28	Girls Basketball Regionals
February 24, 27-28	Hockey Sectionals
February 26-28	Gymnastics Sectionals
February 26-28	State Wrestling Individual (Madison)
March 1	Winter Sports Classification Appeal Open
March 1	State Boys/Girls Hockey Seed Meeting
March 2	3-Point Challenge Boys Basketball Stats Due
March 2	Deadline to Announce Board/Council Candidacy
March 3, 6 -7	Boys Basketball Regionals
March 5 & 7	Girls Basketball Sectionals
March 5 & 7	State Girls Hockey (Middleton)
March 5-7	State Boys Hockey (Middleton)
March 6	Scholar/Athlete Online Application Due
March 6-7	State Gymnastics (Wisconsin Rapids)
March 6-7	State Team Wrestling (Madison)
March 8	State Girls Basketball Seed Meeting
March 9	Earliest Day for Track & Field Practice

March 9	Week 36 Pole Vault Verification Form Due
March 10	Board of Control Meeting
March 11	Classification Committee Meeting
March 12 & 14	Boys Basketball Sectionals
March 12-14	Girls State Basketball (Green Bay)
March 15	State Boys Basketball Seed Meeting
March 16	Earliest Day for Lacrosse Practice
March 16	Earliest Day for Softball Practice
March 16	Board/Council Primary Ballot Emailed
March 17	St. Patrick's Day
March 17	Earliest Day for First Track & Field Meet
March 19-21	State Boys Basketball (Madison)
March 23	Earliest Day for Baseball Practice
March 23	Earliest Day for Girls Soccer Practice
March 24	Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Gymnastics
March 24	Earliest Day for First Softball Game
March 24	Earliest Day of First Lacrosse Game
March 24	Primary Ballot Deadline
March 29	Palm Sunday
March 30	Earliest Day for Boys Golf Practice
March 30	Earliest Day for Boys Tennis Practice
March 30	Basketball Seeding Committee Meeting
March 31	Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Hockey
March 31	Earliest Day for First Baseball Game
March 31	Earliest Day for First Girls Soccer Game
April 1	Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Wrestling
April 1	Winter Sports Classification Appeal Deadline
April 1	Spring Sports Request Down/Up Form Open
April 2	Earliest Day for First Boys Golf Meet
April 3	Earliest Day for First Boys Tennis Meet
April 3	Good Friday
April 5	Easter
April 6	Week 40 Pole Vault Verification Form Due
April 7	Board/Council General Election Ballot Emailed
April 8	Classification Committee Meeting
April 14	Conference Realignment Task Force Meeting (if needed)
April 15	Minimum Weight Committee Meeting
April 21	Board/Council Election Ballot Deadline

April 22 Board of Control Meeting  
 April 24 Annual Meeting  
 April 24 Board/Council Election Results Announced  
 April 27 T/F Wheelchair Tournament Series Verification Form Due  
 April 29 Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Basketball  
 May 1 Spring Sports Request Down/Up Deadline  
 May 1 Spring Tournament Participation Deadline  
 May 1 Spring Cooperative Team Application Deadline  
 May 3 Scholar Athlete Banquet (Stevens Point)  
 May 8 Medical Advisory Committee Meeting  
 May 8 Sportsmanship Committee Meeting  
 May 10 Mother's Day  
 May 13-17 Softball Seed Meetings - D2-5  
 May 15 Board of Control Meeting  
 May 17 Lacrosse Seed Meetings  
 May 17-20 Softball Seed Meetings - D1  
 May 18 Week 46 Pole Vault Weight Verification Form Due  
 May 18 Sports Advisory Committee Meeting  
 May 20 Spring Tournament Central Launch  
 May 20 Boys Golf Entry Deadline  
 May 21 Boys Tennis Entry Deadline  
 May 21, 26 & 28 Softball Regionals  
 May 22 Track & Field Entry Deadline  
 May 24 Girls Soccer Seed Meetings  
 May 25 Memorial Day  
 May 26 Lacrosse Regional (if needed)  
 May 26 Track & Field Regionals  
 May 26-27 Boys Golf Regionals  
 May 26-27 Boys Tennis Subsectionals  
 May 28 & June 2 Girls Lacrosse Regionals  
 May 28-29 Boys Tennis Sectionals  
 May 28, June 2-4 Baseball Regionals  
 May 29 Track & Field Sectionals  
 May 29 & June 2 Boys Lacrosse Regionals  
 May 30 Boys Tennis Special Qualifier Request Due  
 May 30 Boys Tennis Seed Meetings  
 June 1 Spring Sports Classification Appeal Open

June 2-3 Boys Golf Sectionals  
 June 2 & 4 Softball Sectionals  
 June 2, 4 & 6 Girls Soccer Regionals  
 June 3 Advisory Council Meeting  
 June 4 & 6 Lacrosse Sectionals  
 June 4-6 State Boys Individual Tennis (Madison)  
 June 5-6 State Track & Field (La Crosse)  
 June 6 State Softball Qualifier Seed Meeting  
 June 8-9 State Boys Golf (Madison)  
 June 9 Baseball Sectionals  
 June 10-13 State Softball (Madison)  
 June 11-12 Summer Slam  
 June 11 & 13 Girls Soccer Sectionals  
 June 12-13 State Boys Team Tennis (Madison)  
 June 13 State Lacrosse (Sun Prairie)  
 June 14 Flag Day  
 June 14 State Girls Soccer Seed Meeting  
 June 15 Classification Committee Meeting  
 June 15-18 State Baseball (Appleton)  
 June 18 Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Softball  
 June 18-20 State Girls Soccer (Milwaukee)  
 June 19 Juneteenth  
 June 19-21 June Jam  
 June 21 Father's Day  
 June 22 Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Track & Field  
 June 24 Board of Control Meeting  
 June 30 Award of Excellence Application Due  
 July 1 Spring Sports Classification Appeal Deadline  
 July 1 Conference Realignment Application Open  
 July 4 Independence Day  
 July 7 Classification Committee Meeting  
 July 20 New AD Workshop  
 July 25 Last Day of unrestricted school/coach contact for football (11-player & 8-Player FB)  
 July 22 Media Advisory Committee Meeting  
 July 31 Last Day of unrestricted school/coach contact for all sports except football

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