



# BULLETIN



National Federation of  
State HS Associations  
**CHARTER MEMBER**

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## BOARD APPROVES REALIGNMENT FAST TRACKS & BUDGET INCREASES

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Board of Control approved four conference realignment fast-track recommendations and spring cooperative teams at its May 15 meeting.

The four approved realignment fast-track recommendations impact four different sports. In football, the two divisions of the Midwest Classic Conference have been altered for 2026 with the addition of University School of Milwaukee and the formation of the Catholic Central/Kenosha Christian Life Co-op. The renamed Midwest Division of the Midwest Classic Conference for football will include St. Francis, Racine Lutheran, Milwaukee Academy of Science, Pius XI Catholic and Cudahy. The Classic Division includes Brookfield Academy, University School of Milwaukee, Living Word Lutheran, Kenosha St. Joseph Catholic, Kingdom Prep Lutheran and Catholic Central/Kenosha Christian Life Co-op.

The Board also approved Merrill’s move from independent status to the Great Northern Conference in boys hockey beginning in 2026-27, and the Midwest Classic will merge into the Metro Classic Conference to form one wrestling conference beginning in 2026-27.

Beginning in the spring of 2027, the Badger Conference will split into two conferences for boys lacrosse. DeForest, Edgewood Co-op, Oregon Co-op, Sauk Prairie Co-op, Watertown, Waunakee and Wayland Academy will remain in the Badger Conference. Janesville Co-op, La Crosse Central Co-op, Middleton, Sun Prairie East/West, Verona/Mount Horeb and Madison LaFollette Co-op will be affiliated with the Big 8 Conference.

The Board approved staff recommendations for miscellaneous changes to the 2026-27 budget, including increases for Tournament Series officials’ mileage, staff and committee meeting stipends, State Tournament officials’ gifts, State Tournament worker apparel, and licensed officials’ career milestone gifts.

Other action items approved by the Board included spring co-op team applications for 2026-27 and 2027-28, a letter of support for a UW-Milwaukee research study on “Neurocognitive Factors Associated with Noncontact ACL Injury Risk in Female Athletes,” and the April fund statements and payments.

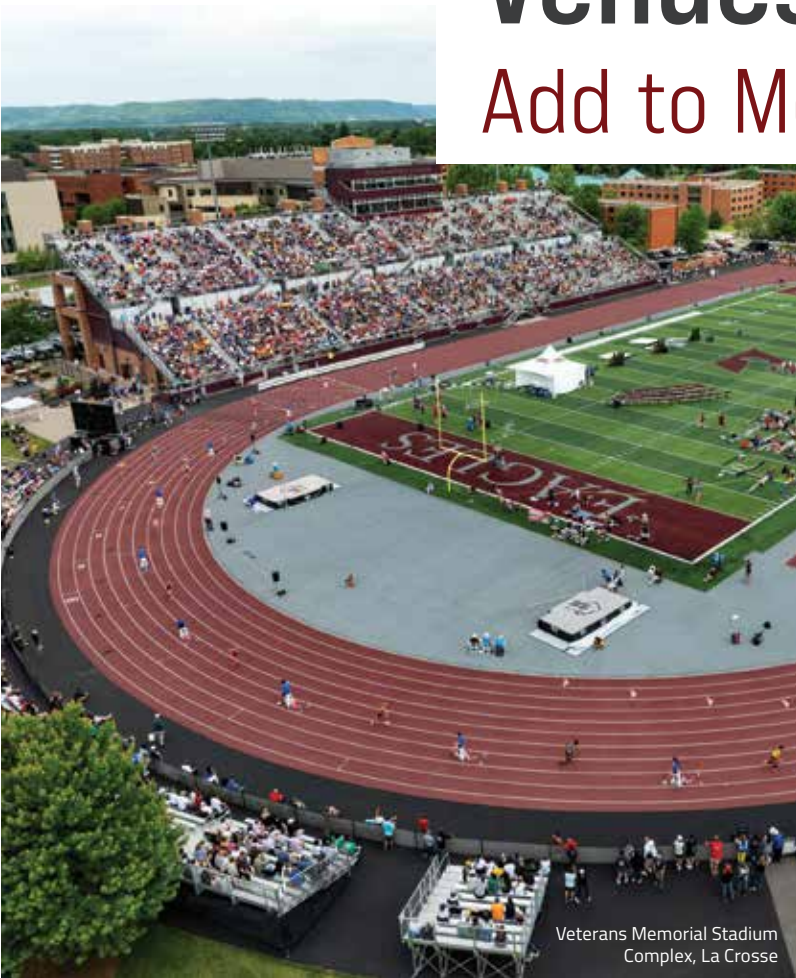
Executive staff updates to the Board included a review of 2025-26 WIAA social media analytics, preparations for the 2026 Spring Tournament Series, progress to the next stage of development for the WIAA Foundation, a membership survey on the current competitive balance initiative, and ongoing efforts to recruit and retain licensed officials.

Rachel Biertzer and Janel Batten, co-chairs of the Calendar & Contact Ad Hoc Committee, presented the findings from a review of season lengths and maximum game limits, recommending no changes to these regulations. The Board also received a report on Student-Athlete Leadership Team activities and the selection of 14 juniors to replace graduating seniors on the team for the 2026-27 school year.

The Board received liaison reports from Dan Rossmiller of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Paul Manriquez of the Department of Public Instruction and Kyle LeMieux of the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association. ■

# Venues & Communities

## Add to Memorable Experiences



Veterans Memorial Stadium Complex, La Crosse

What makes the WIAA State Tournaments so unforgettable? It starts with student-athletes competing with pride for their school and community, and the chance to leave their mark on history with a State Tournament championship.

Adding to the tradition is the memorable tournament experience shared by both competitors and spectators. The venues and host communities across Wisconsin help create an energy and tradition unique to the high school experience. Held in some of the finest facilities in the state, the WIAA State Tournaments provide an atmosphere that is difficult to match.

Behind the scenes of this experience, considerable effort, planning and collaboration is required to build and maintain the partnerships with facility management and host communities and to ensure the WIAA State Tournaments continue to be held at premier locations.

The limited flexibility of the WIAA tournament calendar makes availability of facilities an important consideration. Elite venues also serve primary tenants, and most of WIAA tournaments are multi-day events that typically require a block of dates during peak periods of competition seasons. Securing these dates often requires cooperation and adaptability of facility partners to avoid scheduling conflicts. Sometimes conflicts cannot be resolved, which then requires cooperative attempts to identify alternative options that provide a similar quality State Tournament experience.

Other important components of a venue include reasonable rental costs; a capacity that meets State Tournament attendance expectations; the condition of the facility, playing surfaces and grounds; and an "it" factor that makes it a desirable destination for competitors and



Goodman Diamond, Madison





Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium, Grand Chute



Kohl Center, Madison



Resch Center, Green Bay



Kohl Center, Madison

spectators. Many other factors need to be considered in determining whether a venue can provide a quality State Tournament experience, including media accommodations, digital display capabilities for corporate sponsor and association branding and facility staffing.

The quality of the tournament experience is important to the membership, because 85 percent of the association's revenue—which receives no direct taxpayer subsidies—is attributed to tournament ticket sales.

Another factor that cannot be overstated is the community support for hosting State Tournament events. In many host communities, convention and visitor bureaus play an active role in welcoming visitors and enhancing the tournament experience through participant gifts, guest activities, and event promotion. Some also provide attendance incentives and financial support that help offset tournament expenses for the membership.

Community influences also include affordability for patrons attending the tournaments. For instance, the WIAA works extensively with convention and visitor bureaus to impress upon local properties to encourage reasonable hotel room rates during the high-demand period of a State Tournament. The shopping, restaurants and other interesting things to do within the community and near the venue also adds to a positive tournament experience, often resulting in a multimillion-dollar economic impact for local host communities.

Ultimately, the executive staff determines where tournaments are held, but the process includes input and perspective from multiple levels within the membership committee structure, including the Board of Control. Requests to review State Tournament locations and venues often originate from coaches' advisory committees, which recommend facilities and communities for future consideration.

As noted, many logistical factors are carefully evaluated before extending facility agreements or deciding to relocate a State Tournament. There are also important intangibles to consider, including the history and tradition that contribute to the tournament experience. Generations of memories—for both participants and fans—often add a meaningful sentimental element to the process.

Regardless of the sport or season, the WIAA places a premium on the State Tournament experience for participants and spectators alike. That commitment is reflected in the selection of outstanding facilities and communities that help showcase Wisconsin's best high school student-athletes each season. ■



## MEMBERSHIP CONDUCTS 130TH ANNUAL MEETING; *PASSES TWO AMENDMENTS*

The member schools of the Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association passed two amendments to the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Eligibility and conducted other membership business at the 130th Annual Meeting at the Sentry Theater on April 24.

Both the amendments that were advanced and voted on by the membership received approval. The Constitutional change removes language that required all rule and regulation changes to be approved by the Advisory Council before advancing to the Board. The membership's vote 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. The amendment passed by a 307-62 vote.

The other membership-approved amendment changes language in the Rules of Eligibility. The membership voted 359-10 to remove coaching contact restrictions for newly hired coaches who have not previously coached a student-athlete in the respective school's program.

The membership also voted 301-64 in support of seven editorial changes, clarifying Board language outlined in the Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Eligibility. These changes serve as clarifications to an existing rule or Board of Control interpretation. The rule changes passed will be effective upon publishing of the Bulletin on May 20, 2026.

In the Director's Report, Hauser introduced a five-year Strategic Goals Architecture and Plan developed with collaborative and data-informed feedback from a membership survey conducted last year.

Abundant Life Christian High School was recognized as the recipient of the NFHS Section 4 and Wisconsin recipient of the Spirit of Sport Award, sponsored by the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. Also recognized were the representatives of the 39 schools that received the WIAA Award of Excellence for 2024-25.



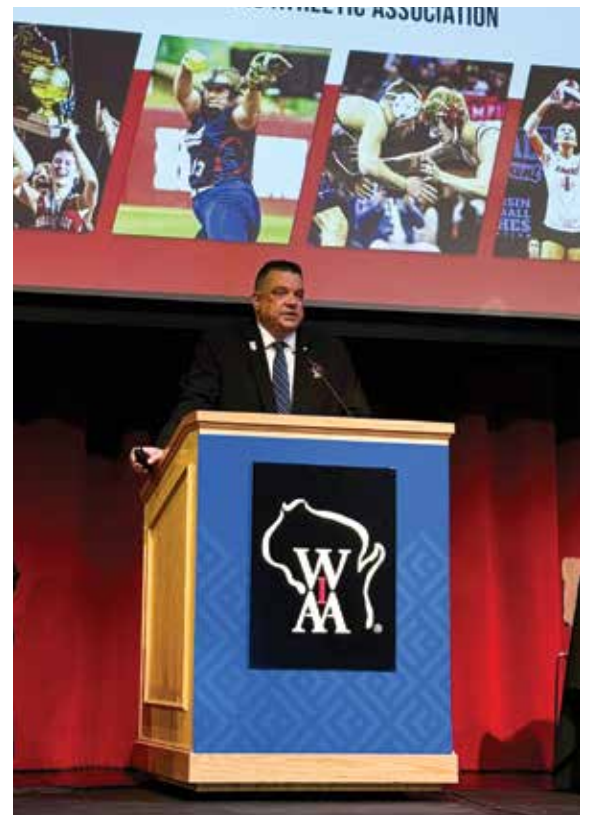
The executive staff responded to four pre-submitted Open Forum topics, including conference realignment, competitive balance, ejection of coaches and seed meetings. Rachel Biertzer and Janel Batten, co-chairs of the Ad Hoc Calendar & Contact Committee, presented an update on the committee's efforts and progress. Aaron Moen also reported on the discussions of the Classification Committee, and Doug Chickering and Dave Steavpack, members of the WIAA Foundation Board, presented on the progress of the WIAA Foundation since its launch in 2025.

In the 2026-27 Board of Control elections, Brian Nadeau, the current Board president-elect and superintendent at Ellsworth, was elected to a second three-year term on the Board as the District 3 representative. Bryan Davis, the superintendent of the Oshkosh Area School District, will continue serving after being elected to a three-term representing District 4. Ty Breitlow, the superintendent at Lomira, will serve a special two-year term representing District 6. Tarrynce Robinson,

the superintendent in the West Allis-West Milwaukee School District, will embark on a three-year term as the ethnic at-large representative, and Katrice Cotton, superintendent of the Brown Deer School District, will serve as the gender at-large representative.

In the 2026-27 Advisory Council elections, Jamie Koepp, the superintendent at Lakeland, was re-elected to a three-year term as a large school representative. In the election for the medium school representation, Jeff Koenig, the superintendent at Stanley-Boyd and Patrick Gretzlock, the principal and assistant athletic director at Boyceville, were elected to three-year terms. Dennis Kaczor, the superintendent at Rosholt, was elected to a three-year term representing small schools, and Jeffrey Campbell, the superintendent at Riverdale, will serve a special one-year term. Tremayne Clardy, superintendent at Verona, returns to the Council to serve a second three-year term as the ethnic at-large representative.

There were representatives from 378 schools in attendance at the meeting. ■



# Board PASSES Strategic Plan and Conference Realignment Plans

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Board of Control approved a strategic plan, several of the Conference Realignment Task Force recommendations, and advanced two Constitutional amendments to the Annual Meeting at its March meeting.

The Board approved a five-year strategic plan for the membership with vision and mission statements that will be shared with the membership at next month's Annual Meeting.

Among the conference realignment solutions approved by the Board were sport specific. Altoona will move to the Middle Border Conference from the Cloverbelt in wrestling only; Shawano/Bonduel will transition to the Great Northern Conference for boys hockey from an independent status; Parkview will go from independent status to joining the Rock Valley Conference in girls' golf; Middleton would depart its current co-op in the Badger Conference to form a stand-alone boys' lacrosse team in the Big Eight Conference; and the Sun Prairie Co-op will split into two stand-alone programs in the Big Eight Conference for boys' volleyball, which is associated with a larger plan that realigns the Badger and Big Eight Conferences for the sport, effective in the 2027-28 school year.

The Big Eight Conference for boys' volleyball will include Sun Prairie East, Sun Prairie West, Madison West, Madison East, Madison Memorial, Madison La Follette, Verona and Middleton. The programs in the Badger Conference includes Waunakee, DeForest, Monona Grove/McFarland, Fort Atkinson and Edgewood.

Several realignment solutions for schools in all sports, excluding football, were also approved. Beginning in the 2027-28 school year, Appleton West will exit the Fox Valley Association to enter the Bay Conference, Viroqua will move to the Southwest Conference from the Coulee Conference, Portage enters the Capitol Conference from the Badger Conference, and St. Ambrose and The Lincoln Academy from independent status to the Trailways Conference.

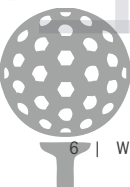
The Board approved realignment in the Milwaukee area that moves Menomonee Falls and Germantown from the Greater Metro Conference to the North Shore Conference and Grafton from the North Shore Conference to the Glacier Trails Conference. The Board remanded plans involving other Greater Metro schools, the Classic 8 Conference, the Southeast Conference and independent schools in the Milwaukee area back to the Task Force that were finalized at the Board meeting in April.

A fast-track application placing Merrill in the Great Northern Conference for boys' hockey will be addressed by the Board following the completion of the realignment process in April.

The Board voted to advance two Constitutional amendments that the membership voted on and passed at the Annual Meeting. Other action items approved by the Board were the winter cooperative teams for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 school years and procedural monthly general fund financial statements and payments, fall sports financial statements and the deferred liability fund statement.

Claire Higgins of St. Mary Catholic, a member of the Student-Athlete Leadership Team, conducted a virtual presentation on the group's activities and promoted the rescheduled Leadership Summit on April 15 at Sentry World in Stevens Point. Additional topics of discussion by the Board included dialog to reassess divisional placement regulations in basketball; updates on the Calendar and Contact Committee; competitive balance, and the ongoing efforts to recruit and retain licensed officials.

The Board received liaison reports from Dan Rossmiller of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Paul Manriquez of the Department of Public Instruction and Kyle LeMieux of the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association. ■



# Board APPROVES Remanded Conference Realignment Plans at April Meeting

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association Board of Control voted to approve a Conference Realignment Task Force recommendation for a previously remanded non-football plan for three leagues in the Milwaukee area at its April meeting.

Beginning in 2027-28, Hamilton will be a member of the eight-school Classic 8 Conference with Arrowhead, Catholic Memorial, Kettle Moraine, Mukwonago, Muskego, Oconomowoc and Waukesha West. Franklin will move into the Greater Metro Conference with Brookfield Central, Brookfield East, Divine Savior Holy Angels (girls), Marquette (boys), Oak Creek, Wauwatosa East and Wauwatosa West. The Southeast Conference will be reduced to a six-team league with Kenosha Bradford, Kenosha Indian Trail, Kenosha Tremper, Racine Case, Racine Horlick and Racine Park. Carmen Southgate and the Milwaukee Academy of Science will not be affiliated with a conference and will compete as independents.

A complete listing of approved non-football conference configurations for 2027-28 is available on the Conference Realignment Requests and Proposals page of the WIAA Website.

(Link: <https://www.wiaawi.org/Schools/Conferences/Conference-Realignment/Requests-and-Proposals>)

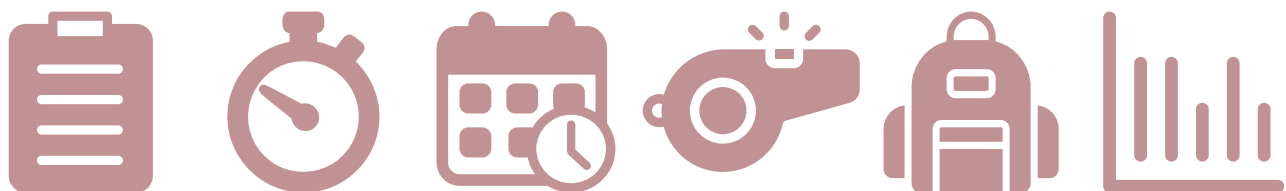


Other Board action included approval of the regular monthly financial statements and general fund payments for February and March, 2026, and approval of the March 10 Board meeting minutes.

Topics of discussion included staff reports on the Annual Meeting scheduled for Friday, April 24 at the Sentry Theater in Stevens Point, the 2026 Scholar-Athlete Award Ceremony on May 3 at SentryWorld in Stevens Point, a recap of the recent NFHS Legal Meeting, reviews of the winter Tournament Series, and an update on the Board of Control and Advisory Council election results that will be announced at the Annual Meeting.

Kiernan Kawleski of Jefferson, a senior member of the Student-Athlete Leadership Team (SALT), conducted a virtual presentation on the group's activities and a recap of the Leadership Summit. Other staff reports included the progress of selecting members for the SALT in 2026-27; an update of the administrative assistant vacancy, the continued development and promotion of the WIAA Foundation; and a review of the licensing, recruitment and retention of sports officials.

The Board received liaison reports from Dan Rossmiller of the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, Paul Manriquez of the Department of Public Instruction and Kyle LeMieux of the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association. ■





# WINTER PERFORMANCE FACTOR RESULTS IN 2026-27 DIVISIONAL MOVEMENT

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association performance factor initiative has advanced through the process for the third year with a review of the winter sports to be effective in 2026-27.

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 winter 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.






This initiative affords schools the opportunity to request to move to a division with lower or higher enrollments for all sports except football, swimming & diving, and track & field in 2026-27. The Classification Committee reviewed 28 such requests for winter sports. Three of the requests were to move up a division for the 2026-27 Tournament Series, including two in boys hockey (Superior and University School of Milwaukee) and one in boys basketball (West Allis Central). All three requests were approved. The remaining 25 requests were to move down for the 2026-27 Tournament Series, including 10 in boys basketball (Algoma, Ashland, Augusta, Green Bay East, Mishicot, Riverdale, Sevastopol, Sheboygan South, Tenor/Veritas and Valley Christian {Oshkosh}), seven in girls basketball (Ashland, Augusta, Green Bay East, Riverdale, Salam, Sheboygan South and Wisconsin Heights), five in boys hockey (Ashland Co-op, Baraboo/Portage, Barron Co-op, Medford Co-op and Wisconsin Rapids Lincoln) and three in boys wrestling (Ashwaubenon, Fall River Co-op and Sheboygan South).

The committee approved all the requests to move down one division in girls basketball, boys hockey and boys wrestling. Green Bay East, Mishicot, Riverdale, Sevastopol, Sheboygan South, Tenor/Veritas and Valley Christian (Oshkosh) were the seven boys basketball programs approved to move down a division.

The performance factor process affords schools the opportunity to appeal their promotion to the division with the next largest enrollments based on performance points. Of the 29 programs listed above that compiled points to engage their promotion, 10 appeals were submitted. The Classification Committee evaluated two appeals in girls basketball (Albany/Monticello and Cuba City), two in boys basketball (Mineral Point and Bonduel), two in gymnastics (Mount Horeb and Dodgeville Co-op), two in boys hockey (Amery Co-op and Tomahawk) and two in boys wrestling (St. Croix Falls and Coleman). The two appeals granted by the committee were Cuba City in girls basketball and Mineral Point in boys basketball, which will participate in the division their enrollment places them.

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.

The WIAA will release the Tournament Series assignments for all 2026-27 winter sports later this spring. For more on the performance factor process, visit the Competitive Balance homepage on the WIAA website. ■

	
<b>Boys Basketball (4)</b>	<b>Girls Basketball (9)</b>
Aquinas Bonduel Mineral Point * Wisconsin Lutheran	Albany/Monticello Arrowhead Cuba City * Edgewood Laconia Oostburg Pewaukee Wauwatosa East Xavier
	
<b>Gymnastics (7)</b>	
Arrowhead Chippewa Falls/McDonell Catholic Dodgeville Co-op Elkhorn	Franklin/Muskego Mount Horeb Verona
	
<b>Boys Hockey (4)</b>	<b>Boys Wrestling (5)</b>
Amery Co-op Edgewood Notre Dame Tomahawk	Coleman Fennimore Kaukauna St. Croix Falls Weyauwega-Fremont
* Appeal Approved	





# WIAA Winter Team Tournament Sportsmanship Awards *Chosen*

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association, in cooperation with Rural Mutual Insurance, has chosen the recipients of the team Sportsmanship Awards for the 2026 winter State Tournaments.

The winners of the prestigious Sportsmanship Award are Reedsville in boys basketball, Fall River in girls basketball, Auburndale in team wrestling, Marshfield in gymnastics and River Falls Co-op in girls hockey. There was no recipient of the award for the State Boys Hockey Tournament.

Reedsville returned to the tournament field in boys basketball for the first time since its only other appearance in 1946, which resulted in the Panthers' first championship. They won the Division 5 title this year with a 56-48 victory over Southwestern in the championship game. As the top seed in the bracket, the Panthers advanced to the final with a 75-72 over Sheboygan Lutheran in the semifinals. The sportsmanship demonstrated by the school and community, as well as the players and coaches earned the Panthers the recognition. It's the first time Reedsville has been selected as recipient of the award in boys basketball and the second time overall. They also received the recognition for football in their 2021 appearance in the final. The schools receiving honorable mention are Bonduel, Prentice, Regis and Seymour.

Fall River is the Sportsmanship Award winner in girls basketball following the Pirates' appearance in the State Tournament. Evaluations of staff and tournament personnel determined the team and community exhibited exceptional sportsmanship in the tournament. As the #4 seed, they fell 70-54 to top-seeded Eleva-Strum in the semifinals. The Pirates won the award once previously with their boys basketball team's appearance in the 2023 State Tournament. The schools receiving honorable mention are Barneveld, Eleva-Strum and Pewaukee.

The sportsmanship evaluations and staff observations at the State Gymnastics Championships led to the selection of Marshfield as

the Sportsmanship Award winner for 2026. The Tigers finished third in the Division 2 team standings, and their supporters displayed enthusiasm during competition. It's the second time Marshfield has been selected as an award recipient and first time in gymnastics. The Tigers also received the award in girls tennis in 1995.

The River Falls Co-op, consisting of three schools, including River Falls, Baldwin-Woodville and St. Croix Central, won the award in girls hockey. Different school configurations of the co-op have earned the recognition four other times for girls hockey, including three straight selections from 2009-11 and again in 2014. In other sports, River Falls was the recipient of the award in gymnastics in 2011, 2012, 2016 and 2021; girls volleyball in 2021; and team wrestling in 1998. The St. Croix Valley Fusion finished runner-up this year after defeating Superior/Northwestern 7-4 in the semifinals and falling to top-seeded De Pere Co-op in the championship game.

The WIAA/Rural Mutual Insurance Sportsmanship Award is presented to one school and community in each of the State team tournaments that exhibits exemplary sportsmanship. The award recipients are determined by the 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 showcased. 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, event security and WIAA staff members. Rural Mutual Insurance has been a sponsor of this award since 1965, and its partnership contributes to the promotion of sportsmanship in education-based athletics as a valued corporate partner of the WIAA. ■

# 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

## MISSION

Striving for excellence and consistent standards through education-based athletics.

## VISION

Inspiring champions for life.

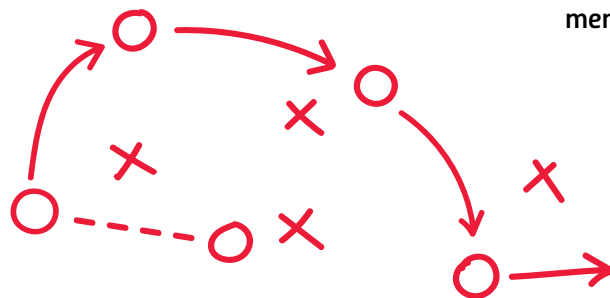


- » Uphold the association’s legal identity as a private entity, reinforcing our primary accountability to our member schools.
- » Strengthen the association through modernized governance policies, empowering the membership to lead with accountability.

- » Create a comprehensive campaign to educate key audiences and celebrate education-based athletics.
- » Develop an all-encompassing digital platform that promotes, educates, and distributes information to relevant parties.

- » Develop a positive culture through retaining and empowering key contributors.

- » Pursue long-term stability by creating a financial and operational plan to meet the evolving needs of the membership.



# 5-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

# UNVEILED



The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association announced a five-year Strategic Goals Architecture and Plan at the 2026 Annual Meeting on April 24.

Executive Director Stephanie Hauser introduced the plan, which was developed with collaborative and data-informed feedback from a membership survey conducted last year, during her executive director's report.

The process examined the three purpose statements of the association dating back 130 years, which began formulating a modernized mission statement that serves as a road map for the future. Analysis for identifying points of growth resulted in a creation of a vision statement.

Identifying objectives of four organizational pillars in the strategic plan—with performance metrics for accountability—began in November 2025 with a meeting of the Executive Staff and the Board of Control that was facilitated by Joe Schroeder, the associate director of the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators.

In December, the same group began the process of formalizing a more modern mission statement and utilized a SWOT analysis activity to identify growth points to begin creating a vision statement. In January, four organizational pillars and objectives were determined, and in February, the goals were finalized and consideration began to identifying benchmarks for accountability performance metrics. The Strategic Plan, as identified, was approved by the Board at its March 2026 meeting.

The vision statement "Inspiring Champions for Life" was determined to serve the philosophical foundation of the WIAA's mission identified as "Striving for excellence and consistent standards through education-based athletics." The four organization pillars identified to ensure accountability were: Governance, Engagement & Education, Human Resources, Finances & Operations.

Speaking on Governance, Hauser is committed to modernizing how the WIAA operates and defending the association's legal identity as a private entity and preserving the membership's self-governance in creating and enforcing its rules and process. When referencing the Engagement & Education pillar, Hauser stated the value of education-based athletics must be shared widely and supported by modern tools and systems. She referenced the launch of the "Hear It, See It and Report It" initiative to foster a safe, respectful and inclusive environment for education-based athletics. She also referenced the establishment of the WIAA Foundation to invest in the future of students participating in school-based sports.

In her comments regarding the Human Resources pillar, Hauser stated "We are a people business." She alluded to the efforts to increase and retain licensed officials and the creation of the Student-Athlete Leadership Team last year as examples of that focus. Hauser also acknowledged the careers of Lisa Gagas, Deb Lepak and Sandy Zastrow, who retired within the past year with a combined 101 years of institutional knowledge and service to the membership, as well as the positive impact observed with the new members of the staff.

Referencing the Finance and Operations organizational pillar, Hauser echoed the membership-approved Treasurer's report by noting that the WIAA is financially sound and ensuring financial stability for the future is an important objective. The WIAA returned almost \$3.2 million to member schools this year while conducting high-quality events at the venues and communities that provide for the most rewarding experiences for student-athletes. This year, the WIAA is on pace to return almost \$4 million to member schools. Furthermore, the executive staff will conduct a WIAA executive office and grounds facility assessment and build a long-term budget for a sustainable future.

Hauser also shared the executive staff began achieving attainable goals through a process called Organize & Execute two years ago, which has produced improvements to the existing website with the Forms Directory and State Tourney Central. She announced the process was the catalyst for the launching of an improved WIAA website this summer, and will be the system used to carry out the action steps of the strategic goals over the next five years.

The Strategic Plan process will continue with development of performance metrics that will assist in determining if the work being done is having a positive impact on the membership. The membership will receive annual updates on the progress of initiatives at the Area Meetings, Annual Meeting, WADA/WIAA meetings, and the WADA Conference. ■



## Members Encouraged to Review Criteria and Submit Award of Excellence Application

The WIAA encourages member schools to recognize and celebrate administrative excellence in their athletics programs by reviewing the award criteria for eligibility and submitting the WIAA Award of Excellence form for their efforts during the 2025-26 school year.

The program, established in 2017 promotes and acknowledges the efforts and achievements of member schools in the areas of sportsmanship, ethics, integrity, leadership, character and administrative accomplishment. Please take this opportunity to promote the qualities of athletic administration excellence that the award represents.

Please submit the application between the completion of your spring sports season and the strict deadline of Tuesday, June 30, 2026 by midnight. The *application for the Award of Excellence* (Link: <https://www.wiaawi.org/Schools/Forms-Directory/Award-of-Excellence>) is available on Forms Directory of the WIAA website. The application form, once completed, requires the signatures of the school's athletic director, principal, superintendent and the school board president to verify their school has achieved the required criteria. The timestamps in the WIAA database will determine if forms identified in the criteria were submitted by the respective deadline.

The criteria applied toward the Award of Excellence in 2025-26 includes:

- Athletic Director maintains and updates all information in the WIAA School Directory annually.
- Athletic Director does due diligence in striving to achieve staff compliance with all WIAA coaching requirements (i.e. rules video, exam, officials' rankings)
- Athletic director conducted regular occurring meetings with a Captain's Club/Team Leadership Council/Etc. – sportsmanship, ethics and/or integrity is on the agenda and is discussed
- Athletic director conducted regular occurring meetings with coaches – sportsmanship, ethics and/or integrity is a topic that is on the agenda and is discussed
- Athletic director conducted at least one informational meeting with student-athletes and their parents – sportsmanship, ethics and/or integrity is a topic that is on the agenda and is discussed
- Athletic director attended conference meetings – sportsmanship, ethics and/or integrity is a topic that is on the agenda and is discussed
- Coaches and student-athletes attended a sportsmanship summit/leadership conference/etc.
- There was school representation at one of the seven WIAA Fall Area Meetings
- There was school representation at WIAA Annual Meeting in April
- Athletic Director made the student body aware of sportsmanship initiatives through school assemblies, announcements, posters, etc.
- Three or more athletic teams gave back to their school or community through volunteerism

- Athletic director has taken the Free NFHS Sportsmanship course
- Three or more head coaches have taken the Free NFHS Sportsmanship course
- Athletic program had no coach ejections at any level
- Athletic program had no coach or player assault of an official at any level
- Athletic director nominated/submitted a boy and/or a girl for WIAA Scholar Athlete recognition (either for local or state level recognition)
- Athletic director or designee submits the online season Schedule/Results Verification Form by the established deadlines for all bracketed team sports (baseball, basketball, football, hockey, soccer, softball, volleyball)
- Athletic director or designee completes and submits the accurate enrollment count on the Enrollment Form by established deadline of Oct. 10, 2025

- Athletic director or designee completes and submits the accurate data on the online Sports Participation Form by June 30, 2026
- Athletic director or designee submits the completed online Fan Ejection Form within three days following the event the ejection occurred, requiring a fan to miss the next competition

The application form, once completed, requires the signatures of the school's athletic director, principal, superintendent and the school board president to verify their school has achieved the required criteria.

The online school entry application for the Award of Excellence is available on the Forms Directory page. Please submit your application no sooner than the completion of your spring sports season and prior to the deadline of June 30, 2026. Any questions about the Award of Excellence, including deadlines listed in the criteria, please contact Todd Clark at the WIAA office at (715) 344-8580.

Recipients will be presented with the Award of Excellence at the fall Area Meetings and will be recognized for the achievement on the WIAA website, *Bulletin* in the State Tournament programs and at the Area Meetings and Annual Meeting. ■

# New Athletic Director Workshop 2026

Free One-Day Orientation | WIAA Office

**Monday, July 20, 2026 | 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.**

(Optional WADA/NIAAA class to follow)

Hiring a new AD for the 2026-27 school year? Help them hit the ground running with this essential training and networking event.

## What You'll Learn:

### WIAA & NFHS Rules:

Master the essential procedures and regulations.

### Digital Tools:

Hands-on navigation of Arbiter, School Database, and ScoreCenter.

### Networking:

Meet the WIAA staff and WADA leadership.

### Support System:

Identify key contacts for help throughout the season.

## The Details:

### Cost:

Free (Lunch is provided!)

### Continued Learning:

Includes follow-up virtual meetings during the school year.

### Registration Deadline:

July 6, 2026.

## How to Register:

Email **Hydie Laidlaw** at

**hlaidlaw@wiaawi.org** with the following:

1. New AD's Name & School
2. Email Address & Cell Phone (if available)

*Still searching for a candidate? Let us know as soon as you hire someone—even if it's after the deadline!*



DAIRY FARMERS  
OF  
WISCONSIN



# SPIRIT of SPORT

## ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN RECEIVES NFHS SECTION 4 AND WIAA SPIRIT OF SPORT AWARD



Abundant Life Christian High School has been selected the 2026 National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Section 4 and Wisconsin recipient of the Spirit of Sport Award, presented by the WIAA and the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin (DFW).

The award was created by the NFHS and adopted by the WIAA in 2018 in partnership with the Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin. The award recognizes individuals or groups that exemplify resilience, sportsmanship and the core values of education-based athletics. The school will be presented the award during the WIAA Annual Meeting Friday, April 24.

On Friday, Dec. 16, 2024, an active shooter entered Abundant Life Christian School and opened fire in a study hall classroom, which claimed the lives of a teacher, and a 14-year-old student and wounded six others, including one who continues his rehabilitation journey.

In the weeks following the tragedy, students, staff and community have coped with the grief by attending funerals and addressing fear, anxiety, anger and confusion and uncertainty. Resuming a normal routine, including athletics, helped restore a sense of stability and connection.

Boys' basketball practice was among the activities that resumed within weeks following the tragedy. The team entered the season with high expectations after placing runner-up at the school's first-ever appearance in the WIAA State Boys Basketball Tournament in 2024. With the school under repair the team practiced at numerous alternate sites until repairs were completed, while also waiting for students and families to be emotionally ready to return.

"Initially, it was strange at first to have basketball practices," said Michael Thies, Abundant Life Christian Athletic Director and Boys' Basketball Coach. "Athletics seemed meaningless, trivial and unimportant, but in the coming days, weeks and months we would come to realize just how important it really was.

"Furthermore, it was when the victims' families started showing up for practices and in the stands that we began to realize the significant impact of our sports teams returning to the court," he said. "The players and coaches showed tremendous faith, resolve and resiliency to keep playing, and to keep playing for a higher purpose – to play for God, and to play for their community."

It took the team weeks of work to get back physically and emotionally from a competitive standpoint. On Jan. 2, 2025, the Challengers played their first game following the tragedy, resulting in a 64-62 loss to Dodgeham before embarking on a six-game winning streak.

The Challengers proceeded to win the South Division of the Trailways Conference championship and won five straight tournament games to advance to the State Tournament at the Kohl Center for the second consecutive year.

One Spirit of Sport Application received honorable mention. University School of Milwaukee submitted the nomination of Ethan Van Genderen, a senior student-athlete on the Wildcats' basketball, football and lacrosse teams.

Two days after receiving football All-Metro Classic Conference honorable mention in 2024, Van Genderen was diagnosed with rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare and aggressive cancer that forms in muscle cells. He has endured more than a year of extensive chemotherapy and radiation treatments, which made it difficult for him to walk and required him to receive additional medical attention at Children's Hospital in Milwaukee last spring. His final prognosis won't be known for several years.

Despite the physical toll, Van Genderen attended lacrosse practices last spring and played limited minutes when possible, scoring one goal. Despite not being able to play football last fall, he attended every football practice and game, and he helped coach the younger teammates on the offensive and defensive lines. This spring, he hopes to return to the lacrosse field this spring to play his senior year.

The recipient of the WIAA Spirit of Sport Award also serves as the membership's nominee submitted to the NFHS for Section 4 and national Spirit of Sport Award consideration. The following is a list of previous recipients of the WIAA Spirit of Sport Award.

- 2018 - Bryce Ladwig, Plymouth
- 2019 - Ashley Stich, Kenosha Tremper
- 2020 - Adam Szepieniec, DeForest
- 2021 - Abigail Tuma, Shawano
- 2022 - Jordan Glenn, Wisconsin Lutheran
- 2023 - Kenzie Koppenhaver, Kiel
- 2024 - Michael Turner, Hartford
- 2025 - Reid Hansche, Westosha Central

Dairy Farmers of Wisconsin is a proud sponsor of the WIAA Spirit of Sport Award. The organization exists to be a tireless advocate, marketer, and promoter for Wisconsin dairy farmers and to drive demand for Wisconsin's dairy products. The organization represents Wisconsin farm families and works to increase the sale and consumption of Wisconsin milk and dairy products, as well as build trust in dairy farmers and the industry. ■



## WIAA Salutes 2026 State

# Scholar Athlete Award Recipients

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association has selected the 32 student-athletes to receive the prestigious, statewide 2026 Scholar-Athlete Award, presented by the We Energies Foundation and the Wisconsin Public Service Foundation.

Sixteen boys and 16 girls were selected as top award recipients based on athletic and academic achievement, with four honorees representing each of the four WIAA divisions. This year, 742 seniors were nominated by 379 high schools statewide. Since the program began in 1984, more than 1,344 scholar-athletes have been recognized.

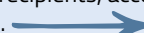
The academic credentials of the 2026 class are impressive. Nineteen of the 32 recipients have maintained a 4.0 grade point average, and collectively have compiled a cumulative GPA of 3.96. Athletically, this year's honorees have earned a cumulative total of 279 varsity letters through 3 1/2 years of their careers for an average of more than eight letters per recipient.

"On behalf of the WIAA and our membership, it's an honor to recognize these scholar athletes for the discipline, integrity, and commitment they've shown in both the classroom and competition," WIAA Assistant Director Jake Beschta said. "Their achievements reflect not only personal excellence, but also the support of their families, coaches and schools. We are proud to celebrate students who truly embody the balance of academics and athletics, and we look forward to the positive impact they will continue to make in their communities and beyond."

The 2026 WIAA Scholar-Athlete recipients were recognized at an awards ceremony on Sunday, May 3 at SentryWorld in Stevens Point. The keynote speaker was Wisconsin native Laken James, a former professional basketball player and founder of Five Star Academy.

Of interest this year, Phillips, Bonduel and Mosinee High Schools produced two WIAA Scholar-Athlete Award recipients, including Leah Harper and Gavin Esterholm from Phillips, Mariah Wondra and Ryan Westich from Bonduel, and Taelyn Jirschele and Treve Stoffel from Mosinee.

A live stream of the awards program will be available on the websites of the State Television Network stations, including WXOW-TV in La Crosse, WQOW-TV in Eau Claire, WAOW-TV in Wausau, WKOW-TV in Madison, WVTM in Milwaukee and WCWF in the Fox Valley at approximately 1 p.m. on May 3. A delayed telecast of the ceremony will be aired Sunday, May 10 at 11 a.m. on the network's dot-2 stations.

For more information on the Scholar-Athlete Award and biographies of the boys and girls recipients, access the [Scholar-Athlete homepage on the WIAA website](#). 



# 2026 WIAA Scholar Athlete Award Recipients

The WIAA salutes the 32 winners of the 2026 Scholar Athlete Award. These young men and women are chosen for this prestigious honor on the basis of academic excellence, athletic participation, co-curricular activities, essay responses, civic and community involvement.



**Brodie Allram**  
*Saint Croix Falls*



**Ella Anschutz**  
*Muskego*



**Logan Becker**  
*Aquinas*



**Harper Brandenburg**  
*Janesville Parker*



**Josie Brudos**  
*West Salem*



**Blake Buhr**  
*Sheboygan North*



**Mya Dernbach**  
*Almond-Bancroft*



**Emmerson Drobac**  
*Deerfield*



**Izabel Durst**  
*Barneveld*



**Cooper Erickson**  
*Stevens Point Area Senior High*



**Gavin Esterholm**  
*Phillips*



**Leah Harper**  
*Phillips*



**Heston Hueckman**  
*Prentice*



**Jordyn Jaglinski**  
*Assumption*



**Taelyn Jirschele**  
*Mosinee*



**Isabella Kongshaug**  
*Elk Mound*



**Chanse Ludescher**  
*Flambeau*



**Ryan McCoic**  
*Hillsboro*



**Hannah Miller**  
*Kewaunee*



**Molly Olson**  
*Manticello*



**Carson Roemhild**  
*Boyceville*



**Rory Salvesen**  
*Wittenberg-Birnamwood*



**Brody Schaffer**  
*Winneconne*



**Piper Schuster**  
*Slinger*



**McCoy Smith**  
*Waunakee*



**Treve Stoffel**  
*Mosinee*



**Tucker Streit**  
*Edgar*



**Emily Urban**  
*Kimberly*



**Caden Van Buren**  
*Middleton*



**Bradyn Wendorff**  
*Gillett*



**Ryan Westrich**  
*Bonduel*



**Mariah Wondra**  
*Bonduel*

The WIAA Scholar Athlete Award program is made possible by a grant from the We Energies Foundation and Wisconsin Public Service Foundation.



# SPORTSMANSHIP PLUS+



## St. Mary Catholic JV @ Appleton West JV | April 24, 2026

The St. Mary Catholic catcher, #8 demonstrated outstanding sportsmanship. I was the plate umpire for tonight's game and witnessed firsthand how more players should carry themselves on the field. A few examples I saw tonight. Even when the game was close with a 1-2 run difference and Appleton West had a big hit, this young man would congratulate this opponents on a nice hit or a good play. He also, on two occasions encouraged another young man from Appleton West. It was very clear the player from Appleton West had not played much baseball before and struck out twice at the plate. The catcher helped him realize he was out, but at the same time used encouraging words about the plate appearance. It was very refreshing to see this kind of sportsmanship, he was quite the example for his school and others who play his position and participate in high school sports.

*Reporting Official: Jason Podgorski*

## Shorewood @ Catholic Memorial | April 11, 2026

What an incredible back-and-forth game. What great sportsmanship on both sides. I want to point out two young men that I worked with in the game for Catholic Memorial. That would be first baseman Mike Haddon and catcher Chase Freschi. Chase was actually hit in the head with a pitch in the game and dinged up by a foul ball but he kept on playing with a smile on his face. They are well-coached and have excellent teammates that support them. As for Shorewood, catcher Yanni Douros has extreme toughness and outstanding character as well. He was a great teammate, and he also kept me protected as a home plate umpire. There were others on the team that had great sportsmanship as well throughout the game. Shorewood was also well-coached by the head coach and assistant coaches. Thank you for making high school baseball fun to umpire. John Steffens, baseball home plate official.

*Reporting Official: John Steffens*

## Kaukauna @ Oshkosh West | April 9, 2026

How wonderful it is to see student athletes exhibit positive acts of sportsmanship before, during and after a varsity baseball game. Kaukauna's Bryce Urban & Bron Schaefer, as well as Oshkosh West's Evan Johnson & Wyatt Martin, exemplify what it means to be great sportsman and leaders of their teams. We wanted to congratulate these young men for this much appreciated display of showmanship and positive attitude. Thank you to Coach Jenkins and Coach Atwood for your positive leadership by example during the game, it was noticed by many.

*Reporting Official: Brent Thompson*

## Appleton North @ Oshkosh West | April 9, 2026

We would like to thank the coaching staffs of Oshkosh West and Appleton North for a great experience. Coach Atwood and Coach Mave, the manner in which you lead your program is top notch. Brennan Otto from Appleton North and Evan Johnson from Oshkosh West, your positive attitude and words of encouragement towards your teammates were noticed. Also a huge thank you to the maintenance staff at Oshkosh West for having the diamond in great condition for play.

*Reporting Official: Phil Punzel*

## Marinette @ Little Chute | April 28, 2026

Both the Little Chute and Marinette school administrators should be very proud of their varsity baseball programs, especially the players, for their display of positive sportsmanship during a recent contest. Jaden Hermesen and Leighton DeBruin of Little Chute, and Cooper Smith and Miles "Rufus" Rutherford of Marinette were obvious leaders of their teams, especially in showing respect for opponents, as well as helping retrieve bats and foul balls during the contest. They offered many encouraging words to all involved. The players of both teams were noticeably appreciative of their coaches, teammates and umpires. Great job guys and best of luck the rest of the season!

*Reporting Official: Brent Thompson*



### **Shiocton @ Bonduel | May 4, 2026**

The communities of Shiocton and Bonduel should be proud of the sportsmanship displayed by the student athletes, coaches, and parents connected to each school's softball programs. Dan and I had a blast officiating the contest between these two schools. Positive sportsmanship and hustle were displayed by both teams. A special note of thanks to Ella Griesbach from Shiocton and Marlie Hartmann of Bonduel for their words of positive encouragement towards their teammates. I would also like to thank the support staff at Bonduel for their work in getting the field ready to play.

*Reporting Official: Phil Punzel*

### **Algoma @ Peshtigo | April 11, 2026**

I am submitting this Sportsmanship Plus for Natalie Ray (#11), catcher for Algoma High School's softball team. Today I witnessed exceptional sportsmanship and leadership from Natalie. She consistently handled every pitch and chased down foul balls, all while maintaining a warm, positive demeanor and a smile throughout the game. She hustled throughout the game, including between innings. She encouraged teammates – calling support to her pitcher after difficult sequences—and also demonstrated respect for opponents. After opposing batters hit foul balls or reached base, Miss Ray retrieved and returned bats promptly and courteously to the next batter. She openly acknowledged good plays by both her team and the Peshtigo players, never questioned any ball or strike calls, and naturally said “thank you” whenever I handed her a ball after the previous one went out of play. Natalie's calm, positive presence and her actions on and off the field exemplify the character the Sportsmanship Plus program recognizes. My partner Tom Mailand and I strongly endorse her for this recognition.

*Reporting Official: Jim Kostura*

### **River Valley @ Richland Center | April 9, 2026**

I would like to take a moment to recognize Michelle Kraemer, assistant softball coach for River Valley High School. At all times during the game, Coach Kraemer was always praising, encouraging, “good swing” on batters striking out, or “great play” when a fielder would make a good play on a ball. Always coaching, always upbeat, whether sitting in the dugout when her team was on defense or coaching first base when her team was at bat. Her energy rubbed off on every player on the team. Someone once said, “Outstanding coaches teach their players, “Good sports win with humility, lose with grace and do both with dignity”. It takes the effort of everyone every day to ensure that sportsmanship remains one of the top priorities. Coach Kraemer is the epitome and roll model for all coaches in the State of Wisconsin.

*Reporting Official: Curt Ladwig*

### **Elcho @ Marion | April 7, 2026**

The varsity softball game demonstrated great sportsmanship by both players and coaches. Players from both teams hustled on and off the field and maintained a positive attitude throughout the game. Teammates were supportive and consistently encouraged one another with positive cheering. Coaches from both sides set a strong example with respectful communication and leadership. A special thank you to the Marion Booster Club for providing a gift to the game officials, which was greatly appreciated and reflects the community's support for high school athletics.

*Reporting Official: Matt Peterson*



## Kettle Moraine @ Catholic Memorial | April 21, 2026

In highly competitive game, Catholic Memorial and Kettle Moraine High Schools were exactly what a referee hopes for. When a foul call or throw-in went to the opponent, both teams responded properly. When goals were scored and celebrated, both teams responded properly and with sportsmanship. As great as the players were, both head coaches, Kaitlyn Kapitan from Kettle Moraine and Andreas Davi from Catholic Memorial, were outstanding mentors to their players. This game really showed a great deal of the sportsmanship you hope for at all levels.

Reporting Official: Jim McNamarae ■



# OFFICIALS REGISTRATION

This year brings a significant update to how we manage our licensing of officials. To provide a more streamlined experience, the WIAA is moving its licensing platform from the WIAA Officials Center to ArbiterSports. This shift allows you to manage your licensing, testing, and rules videos all in one centralized location for officials. Registering in Arbiter is the only way to be licensed and considered "Active" to officiate High School sports across Wisconsin during the 2026-27 school year. Registration is pretty straightforward, and can be completed in minutes if you have everything prepared for registration.

## What You Need to Know and Have Prepared

- The New Portal: You will now register directly through Arbiter via the WIAA website. If you are an existing official, your records and years of service have already been linked to ensure a smooth transition.
- Photo Requirement: While the registration process remains straightforward, there is one new requirement: you must upload a photo of yourself to complete your registration. Please have a digital photo ready to upload when you begin the process.
  - [How-To-Change a Photo](#)
  - The photo requirement has been a request from membership schools. It gives them an idea of who is coming to their facilities and provides better service to you when you arrive on site.
- Arbiter Pay: Is not part of the officials registration process. Officials do not provide banking information while registering as an official.
- Registration closes the first day of the tournament series for that sport as registration will then open the following day for the next season.
- To guarantee physical copies of the rule books you must register by the dates for the following season. Rules materials will still be provided, but you may receive electronic copies instead.
  - July 1 - Fall Sports
  - October 1 - Winter Sports
  - January 1 - Spring Sports

All conference commissioners and athletic directors will have access to the Arbiter list of officials, regardless of what scheduling platform they have chosen. For more information regarding this transition and additional information please visit our website:

<https://www.wiaawi.org/Officials/Online-Licensing-2026-27> ■



# WIAA Extends Agreements for State Track & Field in La Crosse

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association agreed to an eight-year contract extension with the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and Explore La Crosse to host the State Track & Field Championships in La Crosse through 2034.

"On behalf of the 515 member schools in the Association, the WIAA is proud to continue our partnership with UW, Explore La Crosse and the local community for the next eight years." WIAA Executive Director Stephanie Hauser said. "By bringing our State Track & Field Championships to the premier facilities at UW-La Crosse's Roger Haring Stadium at Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex, we are doing more than just hosting an event - we are Inspiring Champions for Life.

"The incredible synergy between this world-class venue and the unwavering support of the university and community creates an unmatched atmosphere for every student-athlete, coach, official, and fan involved," she said.

The agreement with UW-La Crosse provides the WIAA usage of the entire Roger Haring Stadium at Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex, as well as Mitchell Hall and Hetzel Fieldhouse during the State Meet. The current Roger Haring Stadium at Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex was opened in 2008 and seats 9,556 with additional seating and standing room.

"We are thrilled to extend our longstanding partnership with the WIAA and continue to serve as the host site for the State Track & Field Championships," UW La Crosse Chancellor James Beeby said. "It is an honor to have so many incredible athletes and enthusiastic spectators on our campus each spring, and we are especially grateful for the incredible support and collaboration we receive from the WIAA and Explore La Crosse. By working together, we ensure that this continues to be a signature event for our city, region and state — one that not only boosts the local economy, but showcases our wonderful campus and all the amazing things La Crosse has to offer."

The State Track & Field Championships have been held at Roger Haring Stadium at Veterans Memorial Field Sports Complex on the campus of UW-La Crosse since 1990, with the exception of 2020, when the event was canceled amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The championships have grown in stature since moving from Madison in 1990.

Held traditionally the last weekend in May or the first weekend in June, the State Meet has attracted an average attendance of 16,255 throughout the 35 years in La Crosse, including an average of more than 20,000 spectators in the last decade. The projected annual economic impact of the State Meet in the La Crosse area is approximately \$4 million.



The cooperative efforts of UW-La Crosse, Explore La Crosse and corporate sponsor partnerships with local businesses have contributed to recognizing La Crosse as the premier destination and location for the State Track & Field Championships.

“After having a five-year arrangement with the WIAA, Explore La Crosse and the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse, we are extremely excited about an eight-year extension with the WIAA that will secure the State Track and Field Championships for the La Crosse region through 2034,” said A.J. Frels, Executive Director of Explore La Crosse. “This opportunity is only possible due to the generosity of many community sponsors from throughout the La Crosse region.



“We are truly blessed to have so many great champions living in our communities,” Frels said. “I cannot thank the sponsors, UWL, and the WIAA enough for their collaboration in making this agreement a reality. It is a great honor to work with these organizations, knowing that our work always aims to improve experiences for Wisconsin High School athletes.”

The Track & Field Tournament Series begins with regional meets scheduled Tuesday, May 26, and continues with sectional meets Friday, May 29. The State Meet is scheduled for Friday-Saturday, June 5-6. ■



## Calendar and Contact Committee *Update*

The Calendar and Contact AD HOC Committee, which consists of twenty-three district administrators, high school principals and athletics directors from throughout the membership, began their work in March 2024 to investigate game maximums, season lengths, and coaching contact.

The committee brought forward a proposal at the 2025 Annual Meeting which defined new summer coaches’ contact language. The proposal passed with nearly 75 percent support, and new summer coaches’ contact language was implemented for the summer of 2025.

Since the 2025 Annual Meeting, the committee has achieved the following:

- Shared a 2025 Summer Coaches’ Contact Questionnaire with athletics directors and coaches to gain feedback regarding the membership’s experiences implementing the new summer coaches’ contact language.
- In collaboration with the Donovan Group, created and administered a game maximums and season lengths survey to district administrators, high school principals, athletics directors, student-athletes and parents/guardians.

- Reviewed the 286-page game maximums and season lengths report and presented a summary and themes at district caucus meetings and this year’s Annual Meeting.
- Co-Chairs, Janel Batten (Pulaski) and Rachel Biertzer (Port Washington), presented to the Board of Control on May 15 to provide a committee update and share an outline of the future work of the committee.

Based on the feedback collected from the summer coaches’ contact questionnaire, the committee created a summer coaches’ contact toolkit as a resource to support athletics directors in leading local athletic department work in creating a summer contact philosophy, expectations, and summer calendar. The toolkit may be found on the WIAA website - select “Schools” then “Calendar and Contact Committee”.

The committee’s next meeting is June 12 in Madison. The committee will work to finalize their recommendation to the membership regarding the future of the committee and potential next steps. ■



**BOYS INDIVIDUAL & TEAM STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

Nielsen Stadium, Madison

**2026 Boys Tennis State Individual Championships**

Thursday-Saturday - June 4-6, 2026

Thursday, June 4

10:30 a.m. - Play will involve all first round matches

Friday, June 5

9 a.m. - Competition continues through quarterfinals of singles and doubles

Saturday, June 6

9 a.m. Consolation Semifinals

9 a.m. - Championship Semifinals

**2026 Boys Tennis State Team Tournament Series**

DIVISION 1

**Friday June 12**

Division 1 Quarterfinals - 3:30 p.m.

Match 1 - #1 Seed vs #8 Seed

Match 2 - #4 Seed vs #5 Seed

Match 3 - #3 Seed vs #6 Seed

Match 4 - #2 Seed vs #7 Seed

**Saturday, June 13**

Division 2 Semifinals - 9 a.m.

Match 1 - #1 Seed vs #4 Seed

Match 2 - #3 Seed vs #2 Seed

Division 1 Semifinals - 9 a.m.

Match 5 - Winner of Match 1 vs Winner of Match 2

Match 6 - Winner of Match 3 vs Winner of Match 4

Division 2 Championship Match - 2 p.m.

Match 3 - Winner of Match 1 vs Winner of Match 2

Division 1 Championship Match - 2 p.m.

Match 7 - Winner of Match 5 vs Winner of Match 6

**TRACK & FIELD STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

Veterans Memorial Stadium Complex, La Crosse

**Friday-Saturday,**

**June 5 & 6**



**BOYS GOLF STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

University Ridge, Madison

**Monday, June 8 - Tee Times**

7 a.m. - Division 1

Noon - Divisions 2 & 3

**Tuesday, June 9 - Tee Times**

7 a.m. - Divisions 2 & 3

Noon - Division 1



**SOFTBALL STATE TOURNAMENT:**

Goodman Diamond, Madison

**Wednesday, June 10**

**Division 1 Quarterfinals – 11 a.m.**

Game 1 - #2 Seed vs. #7 Seed

Game 2 - #3 Seed vs. #6 Seed

Game 3 - #1 Seed vs. #8 Seed

Game 4 - #4 Seed vs. #5 Seed

**Thursday, June 11**

**Division 5 Semifinal – 9 a.m.**

Game 1 - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

Game 2 - #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 4 Semifinal – 2 p.m.**

Game 3 - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

Game 4 - #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 1 Semifinal – 7 p.m.**

Game 5 - Division 1 Semifinal - Upper Bracket Winners

**Friday, June 12**

**Division 1 Semifinal – 9 a.m.**

Game 1 - Division 1 Semifinal - Lower Bracket Winners

**Division 3 Semifinal – 11:30 a.m.**

Game 2 - Division 3 Semifinal - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

Game 3 - #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Division 2 Semifinal – 4:30 p.m.**

Game 4 - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

Game 5 - #2 Seed vs. #3 Seed

**Saturday, June 13**

8 a.m.

Division 5 Championship

Approx. 10:30 a.m.

Division 4 Championship

Approx. 1 p.m.

Division 3 Championship

4 p.m.

Division 2 Championship

Approx. 6:30 p.m.

Division 1 Championship



**LACROSSE STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS:**

Bank of Sun Prairie Stadium at Ashley Field, Sun Prairie

**Saturday, June 13**





**BASEBALL STATE TOURNAMENT:**

Neuroscience Group Field at Fox Cities Stadium, Grand Chute

**Monday, June 15**

**Division 1 Quarterfinals – 9 a.m.**

Game 1 - #4 Seed vs. #5 Seed

Game 2 - #1 Seed vs. #8 Seed

**Division 1 Quarterfinals – 2:30 p.m.**

Game 3 - #6 Seed vs. #3 Seed

Game 4 - #7 Seed vs. #2 Seed

**Tuesday, June 16**

**Division 4 Semifinals – 9 a.m.**

Game 1 - #3 Seed vs. #2 Seed

Game 2 - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

**Division 3 Semifinals – 2:30 p.m.**

Game 1 - #3 Seed vs. #2 Seed

Game 2 - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

**Wednesday, June 17**

**Division 2 Semifinals – 9 a.m.**

Game 1 - #3 Seed vs. #2 Seed

Game 2 - #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

**Division 1 Semifinals – 2:30 p.m.**

Game 5 - Winner of Game 1 vs. Winner of Game 2

Game 6 - Winner of Game 3 vs. Winner of Game 4

**Thursday, June 18**

9 a.m. Division 4 Championship

Noon Division 3 Championship

3 p.m. Division 2 Championship

6 p.m. Division 1 Championship



**GIRLS SOCCER STATE TOURNAMENT:**

Southeast Sales Powersports Stadium at Uihlein Soccer Park, Milwaukee

**Thursday, June 18**

**Division 2 Semifinals**

11 a.m. #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

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

**Division 1 Semifinals**

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

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

**Friday, June 19**

**Division 4 Semifinals**

11 a.m. #1 Seed vs. #4 Seed

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

**Division 3 Semifinals**

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

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

**Saturday, June 20**

**Division 2 Semifinals**

11 a.m. Division 2 Championship

1:30 p.m. Division 1 Championship

4:30 p.m. Division 4 Championship

7 p.m. Division 3 Championship

**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.

# SOCCER RULE CHANGES

**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 ■

# Summer Contact

All sport coaches have **sanctioned school coaching contact** opportunities during the summer, from June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31. Sanctioned school opportunities allow you to use school support and facilities as you would during the season. Sanctioned school coaching contact 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 and all interested students in your school. They are not allowed during the school year.

NOTE: In 2026, 11-player and 8-player football practice and equipment/fitness testing may be done on Aug. 4. Sanctioned school football coaching contact must end on July 25 in order to meet the dead week rule. **Football must follow the acclimatization plan if school resources are used.**

For coaches in all sports except football, **non-school program contact** may be used by coaches during the summertime provided, such non-school programs are not limited to students on the basis of school or team affiliation. The **summertime** being defined as when school is not in normal session (the last day of school to the first day of school).

An “**acceptable non-school program**” is a program which is not limited based on school and/or team status and no school monies or resources can be applied. Schools cannot sponsor these nonschool 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.

Nonschool programming must be **open to any and all interested students** in your community and other communities along with being **voluntary**. Nonschool programming is not an opportunity for a high school program in disguise. An outside organization coordinates and secures facilities, staff, rosters, schedules, etc. and is not representation of the school.

During the summer and school year out-of-season, athletes may assemble in any manner they wish without school or coach involvement (other than the sanctioned school contact window). The booster club is considered non-school.



### Sanctioned SCHOOL Coaching Contact

- Sports: All sports
- Time period/Duration: June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31 (except Football: July 25, 2026) in summertime
- School Equipment: May be used
- Funding: School funds may be used (Fund 10, 60, 80 and activity accounts)
- School Transportation: May be used
- School Facilities: May be used (as can nonschool facilities)
- Participation: Open to any and all interested. May not be mandated.

### NONSCHOOL PROGRAMMING Contact

An acceptable nonschool program or activity is one which is not limited to students on the basis of a school affiliation, athletic experience, team status, etc. and no school monies or resources can be applied.

- Sports: All sports except football.
- Time period: Last day of school to First day of school in summertime
- Duration: Unlimited during the time period.
- Equipment: with Board of Education permission and following school policy.
- Funding: School funds may NOT be used (Fund 10, 60 and activity funds).
  - Community Ed and School District Recreation funds may be used (Fund 80).
- School transportation: May NOT be used, but may be rented.
- School Facilities: May be rented by nonschool organization following school policy (as can nonschool facilities).
- Participation: Open to any and all interested. May not be mandated.

Examples of Nonschool organizations:

- Booster clubs (monies not in school funds)
- Lion's Club
- Rotary
- American Legion
- AAU basketball
- Youth athletic clubs
- Hockey associations
- School district recreation (fund 80)
- Joe's Pizza
- USAV (club volleyball)

NOTES:

- NONSCHOOL team is not a code word for SCHOOL team.
- Amateur Status rules apply. Athletes may retain items of wearing apparel which are worn for nonschool athletic competition as a part of a team uniform provided for and worn by the student during competition.

### Using Athletes As Clinicians

During the school year, you may only use your athletes as clinicians during the sport season. In the summertime, a school may conduct a clinic for students in grade 8 and below, where high school varsity and junior varsity coaches may use some or all of their athletes as clinicians. Individual students may be used as clinicians from June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31. Using students as clinicians in such a manner may not occur after July 31. ■





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). ■

# Coaching CONTACT



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

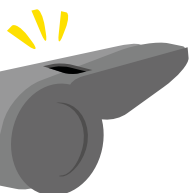
Nothing has changed in regard to the time period of contact. During the school year, coaches may not have out of season coaching contact with the athletes they will coach the next season. Coaches may only have coaching contact with their athletes during the sport season while school is in session. The 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



# Split-Season Sports

*[Golf, Soccer, Swimming, Tennis]*

WIAA rules prevent coaches from having coaching contact with their athletes outside the season, during the school year, in any sport. The rules further prevent schools from offering a sport season, except as outlined in the WIAA Season Regulations. An athlete working as a clinician, under the direction of his/her coach, is considered to be coaching contact.

This means, for example, that boys' tennis players cannot serve as assistant coaches, clinicians, instructors, etc., during the girls' tennis season, in the school program. Obviously, girls' tennis players are similarly restricted during the boys' tennis season. Boys' tennis players cannot practice with the girls' tennis team because the boys' tennis season is defined in Season Regulations and the school cannot make opportunities available outside the season. Again, girls' tennis players are similarly restricted. Swimming, soccer, and golf are other sports with split seasons where these rules apply. ■



# Open Gyms

**Coaches and schools cannot be involved in out-of-season practice for athletes.**

However, open gyms do not violate WIAA rules if they are conducted according to the following guidelines:

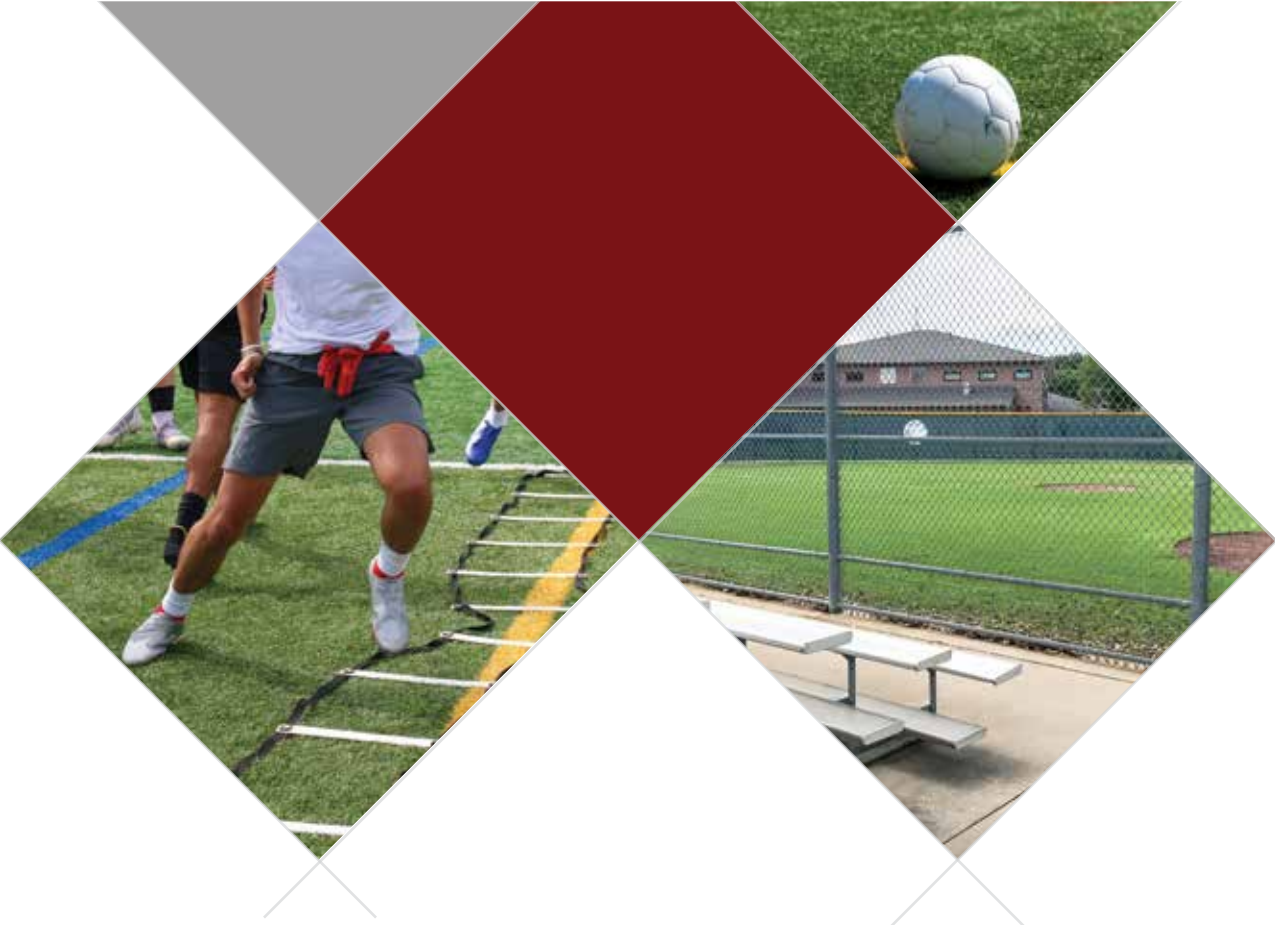
1. The open gym is made known and available to all students in the designated population of that school that is interested in attending. Open gyms may be gender specific. It is also acceptable to include adults from the community. Schools may conduct "open gyms" in any activity. **It is not acceptable to include athletes from another school, public or nonpublic.**
2. There is **no instruction** during the open gym **by a coach or anyone else.**
3. Coaches may supervise open gyms, but they may not instruct, organize drills, etc. Coaches can also recreate with students in school sponsored, open gym settings that are purely recreational in nature, i.e., there is no instruction by the coach or anyone, sport skill demonstration, organized drills or resemblance of a practice being conducted.



4. There is no organized competition, such as established teams participating in round-robin competition, etc.

5. A member school is permitted to supervise conditioning programs under the open gym provisions, which may include weight lifting, speed, agility, and/or fitness. The program must be limited to non-sport and non-sportskill-specific instruction. Basic "instruction" e.g., safe lifting, safe spotting, training regimen and rationale, are permitted. No sport implements and/or sport specific movement/drills should be part of the open gym or weight room. These conditioning programs must be made known and accessible to all interested students and must be voluntary.

Schools and coaches must clearly understand that the philosophy of the open gym is that youngsters from that school may attend, for wholesome recreation, or for purposes of improving their skills if they choose, but it's something they do on their own. It would be a violation of WIAA rules to mandate attendance at open gyms, or to provide incentives for athletes to attend open gyms, or to limit participation based on athletic status, or to allow athletes from other schools to come and work out or compete against your school's athletes. (BL – Art. II and RE – Art. VI, Sect. 2). ■



# WIAA Eligibility

# SUMMER REMINDERS

Now is a good time to download updated versions of all eligibility forms from the WIAA website.

There are a few things that athletic directors might want to review relative to WIAA rules, as students participate in their summer activities.

- 1) Remind those that might need to know the rules affecting transfer students. Download and distribute the Transfer Rules and Waivers Quick Facts (available on the WIAA website) to the appropriate people including your guidance and admissions staff.
- 2) Review with coaches as necessary, the out-of-season coaching contact rules for their sport. Provide coaches with the summer contact form so they can provide you with a schedule of their planned contact days in advance. Remember that volunteer coaches are the same as paid coaches for the purpose of this rule and that the second time someone shows up at practice to help coach they are considered a school coach.
  - a) All WIAA sport coaches are allowed sanctioned school coaching contact in the summer, between June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31. (Football coaching contact ends July 25 in 2026.)
  - b) A reminder that any high school coach can have coaching contact with 8th grade students on down up until the point of those 8th graders actually starting their 9th grade year.
- 3) Remember that schools cannot be involved in out-of-season sports activities for students in grades 10-12. The only exception is during the summertime within the sanctioned school coaching contact period. School facilities are sometimes used by nonschool groups for out-of-season camps and clinics. If this is to be done, the Board of Education policy for nonschool use of the facility must be followed. This may involve rent, and it is advisable that those conducting the activity have insurance protection.
  - a) If conducted, a nonschool camp should be available to students from surrounding areas and not just returning athletes at your school. An acceptable nonschool program may not be restricted based on school and/or team status.
  - b) Out-of-season coaching rules apply.
- 4) Schools cannot conduct summer school classes in sports fundamentals, etc. in excess of the sanctioned school contact days and community education is a school program with the same restrictions and exceptions.
- 5) Schools may issue uniforms and/or protective apparel for nonschool activity, only with formal approval of their school board or governing body.
- 6) Students must pay their own way to any camp, clinic, or specialized training. Nonschool groups can pay expenses related to actual



competition, such as entry fees into summer leagues, e.g. The school cannot have any involvement with out-of-season camps, clinics or competition unless the activity is part of the sanctioned school contact opportunity, is school sponsored and available to all interested students on a voluntary basis.

- 7) Open gyms can be conducted in the summer but open gym rules apply including restricting students from other schools from attending.
- 8) Remind students of amateur status and all-star rules. You may wish to ask students to contact you prior to participating in all summer sport activities so you can assess the activity and help protect their eligibility.
- 9) Remind students they must limit their nonschool activity when the school season in that sport starts. Rules allow a student to compete in not more than two nonschool competitions with prior school approval during each regular sport season. Another exception is that during the season, athletes may participate in a skills contest with approval of the school. Specific skill contests (punt, pass, and kick, shooting contests e.g., free throws, 3-point, drive, chip and putt) isolate separate skills outside of the traditional competition setting. The skill contest may not include physical contact or extreme fatigue as the actual sport competition. Fun runs are not considered skills contests. There can be no school coach involvement. All other eligibility rules including amateur status apply.

10) It is important to remind students and coaches that out-of-season and summertime activities must be voluntary. Taking or requiring attendance, providing incentives or connecting playing time and/or lettering requirements to out of season programs is prohibited.

11) A reminder that the academic eligibility requirements apply to spring tournaments and an athlete can become academically ineligible and miss the opportunity to play in a state tournament. Also, the period of ineligibility for the fall is 15 scheduled school days or 21 calendar days, depending on when school starts. The WIAA publishes a chart each spring to help you determine when eligibility is regained.

These rules apply to high schools. Some may also apply to middle level but the rules at the middle level are significantly different. These are not all-inclusive but hopefully will serve as a reminder in a number of important areas. Working to prevent the loss of athletic eligibility is always worth the effort. ■



# Nonschool Participation

## *During the School Year*

The WIAA membership has several rules in the Rules of Eligibility which affect the non-school participation of WIAA member athletes during the school year.

### **NONSCHOOL PARTICIPATION IN-SEASON**

The first rule, during the season of the sport: It is the philosophy of this Association that a student owes loyalty and allegiance to the school and team of which he/she is a member during the season of a given sport. Athletes may compete in not more than two nonschool competitions with prior school approval during each regular sport season. The contest(s) will not count against the individual maximum for the athlete in that sport. Nonschool competition will not be allowed during the respective WIAA tournament series in a sport. A student becomes ineligible in a sport for the remainder of the season for competing in more than two nonschool games, meets, or contests in the same sport during the season of practice and competition established by the school. (ROE, page 34, Art VI, Sect 1, Par A and WIAA Rules at a Glance III - Students - D)

WIAA rules do not prevent athletes from practicing with non-school teams or from receiving private skills instruction during the school season. However, they may not participate in any nonschool competitions or races, including scrimmages, against other teams. This restriction applies to normal non-school games as well as "gimmicks," such as reduced numbers competition (3-on-3 basketball, 6-player soccer, 3-on-3 soccer, 7-on-7 football, etc.), fun runs (including "banditing"), etc. During the season, athletes may participate in a skills contest with approval of the school. Specific skill contests (punt, pass, and kick, shooting contests e.g., free throws, 3-point, drive, chip and putt) isolate separate skills outside of the traditional competition setting. The skill contest may not include physical contact or extreme fatigue as the actual sport competition. Fun runs are not considered skills contests. There can be no school coach involvement. All other eligibility rules including amateur status apply. Additionally, a student who was a member of a school team during the previous



year may not delay reporting for the school team beyond the school's official opening day of practice in order to continue non-school training or competition. (RE - Art. VI)

### **NONSCHOOL PARTICIPATION OUT-OF-SEASON**

A second rule during the school year is the preseason assembly rule: It is the philosophy of this Association that athletes should not be unreasonably restricted. Subsequently, students may voluntarily assemble at any time without school and/or school coach involvement. (ROE, page 34, Art VI, Sect 1, Par A)

The third part of the rule is the All-Star competition rule: A student becomes ineligible in a sport for a maximum of one year from date of last offense for participating in an all-star game or similar activity. (ROE, Page 35, Art VI, Sect 3, Par B)

### **Athletes**

In the rule, "Subsequently, students may voluntarily assemble at any time without school and/or school coach involvement." Students may assemble out-of-season in any manner they choose during the school year and during the summer. 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.

### **Coaches**

The fundamental rule with coaching contact has not changed. Returning coaches may not have coaching contact with any athletes they will be coaching the following school season during restricted times (except their own children). There is no coaching contact allowed out of season during the school year. "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.

### **In-Season**

The rule now allows any student to compete in up to two non-school competitions of the same sport during the regular season with school approval. But no approval shall be provided during the WIAA tournament. The rule has been directed at students participating in non-school games, meets, or contests. Non-school competitions shall be counted in the same manner as provided in the season regulations of a given sport. The sports of tennis, volleyball, and wrestling provide team tournaments. All other sports count contests, meets, or games on an individual basis. Non-school competitions do not count against a student's individual maximum allowed competitions as part of a school team. ■



# School Involvement in Out-of-Season Activity

A reminder that schools cannot be involved in conducting out-of-season competition during the school year or during the summer. This means a school cannot conduct 3-on-3 basketball tournaments, co-educational volleyball tournaments, softball tournaments, etc., outside the designated school season for that particular sport. The one exception is in the summertime during the Board of Control approved sanctioned school contact period. This does not prevent outside organizations, such as recreation departments which are not a part of the school, service clubs, etc., from renting school facilities and conducting these types of competitions, but the school itself cannot be directly involved.

A further reminder that the WIAA has a rule which states "A school may not conduct intramural programs which involve athletes with past status on a school team (varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, freshman), except during the established school season of a sport." A school cannot, for example, conduct intramural volleyball during the spring, with girls' volleyball players participating. It wouldn't make any difference how many were on a given team, or whether it was co-ed volleyball, if girls' volleyball players were involved, it would be a violation.

WIAA rules do not prevent students from participating in nonschool out-of-season competitions. However, school facilities cannot be used for students to practice for these competitions, unless a nonschool group or organization has made arrangements through normal procedures, to use these facilities.

WIAA Bylaws state that schools, including their administrators, athletic director and coaches, shall not become involved directly or indirectly with the coaching, management, direction, and/or promotion of any kind of all-star game or similar contest involving students with remaining WIAA high school eligibility in any sport, if such all-star games or similar contests are held during the established school year.

**Note:** Coaches are prohibited from having coaching contact outside the designated sport season with any eligible student-athlete while school is in session.



## Summer School Classes:

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. The exception is in the summertime during the Board of Control approved sanctioned school contact period June 1 through June 30 and July 7 and July 31\*. \*Sanctioned school coach contact ends July 25, 2026 for 11-player football.

## Conditioning Programs:

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 offseason 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. Off-season programs must be voluntary. Administration should be aware of programming in disguise of nonschool programming that their high school coaches are involved in.

## 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." ■

# The WIAA



# Transfer Rule

### Simplifying The Transfer Rule

A transfer made necessary by a total and complete change of residence of the parent(s) – unrestricted.

Transfers with no change of residence of the parent(s) at the beginning of:

9th grade – unrestricted

10th grade – unrestricted

11th grade – nonvarsity for calendar year

12th grade – nonvarsity for calendar year

Transfers with no change of residence of the parent(s) during the school year:

9th grade – nonvarsity for remainder of year

10th grade – nonvarsity for calendar year

11th grade – nonvarsity for calendar year

12th grade – nonvarsity for calendar year

\*Provided the student meets residency requirements

The Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association is governed by its member schools. Rules and policies of the Association are developed, promulgated and implemented by the membership either through membership vote for constitutional issues or through a membership-elected committee structure for sport seasons regulations. Therefore, ownership of the membership's rules and regulations, as well as the responsibility of compliance with them, lies with each member school.

Association Bylaws, which outline the provisions of membership in the Association, and the Rules of Eligibility appear in the WIAA Handbook. WIAA rules and regulations are established by a membership vote at the membership meeting. The Annual Meeting is held in the spring of the year when amendments are presented. The interpretation and enforcement of the rules and regulations are the responsibility of the WIAA executive office and Board of Control.

The members of the WIAA have established seven Articles that outline requirements for student eligibility. This overview document focuses primarily on addressing some of the most common questions of the membership with respect to the transfer provisions of the Association.

Student-athlete eligibility for all levels of WIAA interscholastic competition is governed by WIAA Rules. A full-time student may be afforded up to eight consecutive semesters of interscholastic eligibility upon entry into Grade 9.

#### WHY DO THE WIAA MEMBER SCHOOLS HAVE A TRANSFER RULE?

The WIAA transfer rule is not a recruiting rule. It is a transfer rule that is applied when a student who has established eligibility at any school and who transfers to a WIAA member school. A transfer/residency requirement: assists in the prevention of students switching schools in conjunction with the change of athletic season for athletic purposes; impairs recruitment, and reduces the opportunity for undue influence to be exerted by persons seeking to benefit from a student-athlete's prowess.

A transfer/residency requirement: promotes stability and harmony among member schools by maintaining the amateur standing of high school athletics; by not letting individuals other than enrolled students participate, and by upholding the principle that a student should attend the high school in the district where the student's parent(s) reside. It also helps prevent the displacement of the athletes who have attended the high school for the previous two years and worked to improve their skills as well as their team.

A transfer/residency requirement: also prohibits foreign students, other than students who are participants in an established foreign exchange program accepted for listing by the Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), from displacing other students from athletic opportunities.

A recruiting/undue influence prohibition discourages exploitation of students; prevents overemphasis of athletics; gives average student-athletes more opportunity to participate; discourages adults from jeopardizing a student's eligibility, and prevents misuse of athletic programs. The WIAA membership rule pertaining to recruiting states: No eligibility will be granted for a student whose residence within a school's attendance boundaries, with or without parents, or whose attendance at a school has been the result of undue influence (special consideration due to athletic ability or potential) on the part of any person, whether or not connected with the school.

#### WHAT IS THE WIAA TRANSFER RULE?

For the purpose of this rule, attendance at one day of school and /or attendance at one athletic practice shall determine 'beginning of school year.' Transferring schools at any time may result in restrictions being imposed on eligibility, or in some cases a denial of eligibility.

"A student who transfers from any school into a member school will be subject to the transfer rules for one year, unless the transfer is made necessary by a total change in residence by parent(s)." (ROE II-3-A-1 & 3)

If a family entirely moves from one school community to another and the transfer is necessary due to this move, the student will more than likely have unrestricted eligibility. When a transfer takes place during a semester, the eligibility begins after five calendar days (ROE II-3-A-9).

Students will establish eligibility at a WIAA member school at the beginning of 9th or 10th grade. Keep in mind, the residence rule also determines eligibility. Public school students are eligible in the district their parents reside and nonpublic school students are eligible when they live with their parent(s).

The transfer rule states: Students entering 9th and/or 10th grade at the beginning of the school year and who are within the first four consecutive semesters of high school will be afforded unrestricted eligibility provided all other rules governing student eligibility are met (ROE II-3-A-2).

Once eligibility is established at the beginning of 9th grade, a transfer without a total and complete move during 9th grade would restrict the ninth grade student to nonvarsity competition for the remainder of the school year at the new school (ROE II-3-A-4). At the beginning of 10th grade, the student attains unrestricted eligibility.

Again, the student who meets the residence rules and who transfers is unrestricted at the beginning of 10th grade (ROE II-3-A-2). A student who transfers during the 10th grade without a total and complete change of residence of the parent(s), will be restricted to nonvarsity for one calendar year (365 days).

In addition, a student transferring at the beginning of 11th and 12th grade is restricted to nonvarsity opportunities for one calendar year, provided the student meets the residence rule. The rule states: 10th, 11th or 12th grade students who transfer after the beginning of the school year and with written consent from both schools directly involved shall be restricted to non-varsity opportunities for one calendar year (365 days beginning with first day of attendance at the new school). (ROE – II-3-A-5)



In the event of divorce or legal separation, whether pending or final, residence at the beginning of the school year shall determine eligibility for students entering 9th and/or 10th grade. At the beginning of 11th grade or thereafter, a student would be restricted to nonvarsity for one calendar year. (ROE – II-3-A-7) .

#### **WAIVERS AND EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES**

The WIAA's residence and transfer rules continue to retain a waiver provision, which may be provided at the request of a member school in situations where extenuating circumstances can be documented.

The residence and transfer requirement may be waived according to the following provisions (ROE – II-5-A):

1. After a student has not participated and/or has been restricted to nonvarsity competition for one calendar year because parents do not live within that school's attendance boundaries, they become automatically eligible under this Section regardless of parents residence and for as long as enrollment is continuous (uninterrupted) in that school.
2. The residence and transfer requirement may be waived, if requested in advance of competition, 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 (a) parents, (b) person(s) with whom student is living within requesting school's attendance boundaries and (c) school officials within whose attendance boundaries parents reside. Depending upon the nature of extenuating circumstances, eligibility may be limited to nonvarsity competition in situations involving transfer after the beginning of 10th grade.
3. In cases associated with Section 1, A, (2) and (4), Section 2, A, (1) and Section 3, A, (1) of this Article, first-time 9th grade students will be permitted one transfer upon appropriate petition to the Board of Control if the student has attended no more than three days of practice and/or has attended no more than three days of school.

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

In considering a waiver request based on extenuating circumstances, the element of events outside a student or family's control vs. choices/decisions/ actions which contain knowable/predictable outcomes or consequences, is always an integral part of the review. Denial is made when it appears this student's situation has come about largely as a result of choices, decisions and/or actions made by the student or his/her family and/or when there is no evidence or documentation to support a given request. It is important to provide documentation that clearly demonstrates an involuntary transfer rather than a transfer by choice.

Required documentation to be sent as one complete package:

- EVTS (Eligibility Verification of Transfer Student) form - exchanged between schools and WIAA - may serve as documentation from "sending" school.
- "Sending" family - explaining circumstances leading to transfer
- "Receiving" family - documenting acceptance, school enrollment, residence, and meeting graduation requirement
- Receiving/requesting school - student transcripts
- Supplemental documentation that can be helpful when requesting a transfer/residence waiver includes: medical, law enforcement/courts, foster care, HHS, military, e.g.

If and when a student would transfer and become a full-time student at the new school, then the family should schedule to meet with the school athletic director to discuss the circumstances of the transfer.



The athletic director will make the initial evaluation on whether the circumstances meet the member's definition of extenuating circumstances and whether they find the reasons compelling, thus making them willing to advocate for their new student by filing a waiver to the WIAA office.

### WIAA TRANSFER RULE – HISTORY

When the original WIAA Constitution was written in 1896, the Constitution included: Pupils enrolled for the first time shall not be excluded from any contest because of absence during the previous term. But a student entering from another secondary school shall not be allowed to compete unless he has done the work required in section one, as a resident student for at least one term. (Otte, 1997, p. 8)

In 1898, the transfer rule was removed and transfers must not have been a problem as in the previous two years.

In 1928, the WIAA membership adopted the following language: "except as noted, below, any boy who has been certified as a member of a high school athletic team shall be ineligible to compete for a different high school." The exception related to boys whose parents moved as well as to boys in free tuition districts. (Otte, 1997, p. 198)

In 1950, "The Board felt that ... a free tuition student should be permitted to choose his school for athletics as freely as he chooses it for purely educational subjects" (Otte, 1997, p. 229). It does not matter why the transfer took place whether academics or athletics.

In 1961, the Board produced a new procedure for guardianship cases (Otte, 1997, p. 315). Both schools and parents would have to "provide evidence supporting need for guardianship. Betterment of home life will be the basic criteria for approval." Evidence of "physical residence in the district" also would be required. (Otte, 1997, p. 316)

In 1966, the Board added extenuating circumstances waivers. The membership passed "boys who transfer for any reason (or no particular reason at all) would be eligible automatically after sitting out one calendar year." The members passed the amendment and a minority were fearful boys who would be taking advantage of the permissiveness by transferring early and giving up a year of nonvarsity eligibility. (Otte, 1997, p. 306)

1978 changes allowed non-resident students to be eligible for non-varsity competition during their year of ineligibility. The transfer rule now applied to varsity only. (Otte, 1997, p. 347)

In 1989, Chapter 220 and Open Enrollment concerns were addressed (Otte, 1997, p. 451).

Editorial changes stated the student must be enrolled by the third Monday of September to be eligible for the rest of the year and parents who had a home in one district and an apartment in another district "may be required to provide evidence of a total move." (Otte, 1997, p. 416)

In 1990, the transfer rule addressed divorced families – Allowing student of divorced or separated parents automatic eligibility in district of residence of either custodial parent at the beginning of any school year. (Otte, 1997, p. 418)

In 1992, the membership approved a revision which "declared a student ineligible for a year if he/she or parents falsified "records or information furnished a school" and clarified that students transferring from non-WIAA schools, like those coming from WIAA schools, carried their ineligibility status with them. (Otte, 1997, p. 418)

In 2006, the membership approved the removal of practice and competition at any level for transfers after the fourth consecutive semester (10th grade). The rule established eligibility at the beginning of 9th and 10th grades. If a transfer happened during 9th grade, the student is restricted for the remainder of the school year. If the student transferred during 10th grade, the student has non-varsity eligibility for 365 calendar days. Betterment was removed from extenuating circumstances. The rule went into effect in 2008. A student who transferred after 10th grade could not practice or compete at any level.

In 2010, the membership allowed practice for the transfer after the fourth consecutive semester, but the student cannot compete at any level.

In 2016, the membership allowed nonvarsity competition for one year for a student who transfers at the beginning of or during 11th grade.

At the 2018 WIAA Annual Meeting the member schools voted to extend non-varsity eligibility to eleventh grade students not residing in the district that their parents reside.

In 2019, the WIAA membership passed an exception for a student who transfers into a member school without ever participating in a try-out, practice, scrimmage, or contest on a team sponsored by a school or club in a WIAA recognized sport while attending classes at any school in grades 9- 12 is unrestricted.

At the 2023 WIAA Annual Meeting the member schools voted to allow nonvarsity eligibility for seniors who transfer.

Otte, M. (1997). *More Than a Game*. Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association. Amherst, WI: Palmer. ■

# 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
June 13, 2026	May 8	May 29
July 11, 2026	June 5	June 24





# Recruiting *Restrictions*

WIAA rules prevent the recruitment of students for athletic reasons. The specific rule in question states: “No eligibility will be granted for a student whose residence within a school’s attendance boundaries, with or without parents, or whose attendance at a school has been the result of undue influence (special consideration due to athletic ability or potential) on the part of any person, whether or not connected with the school.”

It’s important to note that persons not connected with the school can violate this rule, resulting in a loss of eligibility. Schools are ultimately responsible for the eligibility of all of their students and the school needs to communicate rules and pay close attention to the circumstances that bring students to the school.

Obviously, public schools and private schools encourage students to enroll and this certainly can be done without violating the undue influence rule. The following gives some examples of acceptable and unacceptable practices. This list cannot be considered all-inclusive, but should be helpful as an example.

## **ACCEPTABLE**

- High school personnel visiting a middle school/ elementary school to explain programs and encourage all interested students to attend.
- Inviting all interested students from a middle school/ elementary school to visit.
- Providing game tickets to all interested students and/or team members from a middle school/ elementary school or area youth teams.
- Providing informational pamphlets which describe the high school to all interested students at a middle level/elementary school.
- Providing tuition reduction to prospective students, based on need and/or scholastic achievement.

## UNACCEPTABLE

- High school personnel visiting a middle school/ elementary school sport team to encourage players to attend.
- Inviting selected students, because of athletic potential or ability, to visit.
- Providing game tickets to selected students, based on athletic potential or ability.
- Providing promotional pamphlets to selected students, based on athletic potential or ability.
- Providing tuition reduction to selected students, based wholly or in part on athletic potential or ability.
- Community or booster club member(s) contacting a potential student, because of athletic ability or potential, and encouraging attendance.
- Providing items of apparel and/or other incentives to students.



## ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES

- Interpretation of this provision now allows youth athletic teams to receive invitation/complimentary admission to high school sporting events and to be acknowledged or introduced at those events.
- Teams may also perform and/or scrimmage in connection with a high school event.
- Under no circumstances may a youth team be introduced, etc., at more than one contest per season.
- This interpretation provides for admission, acknowledgment and performance and/or scrimmage opportunity.
- These events may not extend or prolong the contest or periods beyond the limits provided by rule.
- Participating in the high school team's game preparations is not permitted (e.g. pregame, halftime, sidelines, locker room).
- Under no circumstances will it be considered acceptable to single out any individual youth/middle level student-athlete separate from or disproportionate to the remainder of the team.

It is the responsibility of schools to contact other schools and report any possible violations of WIAA rules. The WIAA is always willing to provide rules clarifications and, where necessary, will impose sanctions on schools and programs. It is far better for schools to provide leadership and control to prevent problems than to have to deal with these issues after the fact. ■

# Fall Sport – Academic Ineligibility

**A reminder: When the earliest allowed WIAA game/meet takes place before the first day of classes at a member school, "the maximum ineligibility period shall be the lesser of: a) 21 consecutive calendar days beginning with the date of the earliest allowed competition in a sport; or b) one third of the maximum number of games/meets allowed in a sport (rounded up if one-third results in a fraction)."**

In those instances where a member school has begun fall classes on or before the date of the earliest allowed WIAA game/meet in a sport, ineligible students in these situations are subject to the standard rule applied when school is in session (15 scheduled school days and nights). In this situation, eligibility is regained **on the school day following the period of ineligibility (16th school day).**

**Note 1:** An interschool scrimmage does NOT count as a game or meet for purposes of this rule.

**Note 2:** If a multi-school meet is counted on your schedule as one meet, it also counts as one meet as it applies to the number of meets an ineligible student must sit out.

**Note 3:** Games/meets at different levels of competition (varsity, JV, freshmen) may NOT be combined to reach the number of meets an athlete must sit out.

When your school year begins after the earliest allowed game/meet you may use this chart to determine the period of ineligibility:

**Fall 2026 Dates**

Sport	Boys Soccer	Girls Volleyball	Boys Volleyball	Football	Cross Country	Girls Golf	Girls Tennis	Girls Swimming
Minimum Ineligibility Period: 21 Days or	8 Games	5 Meets	5 Meets	3 Games	4 Meets	5 Meets	5 Meets	5 Meets
Earliest Allowed Game/Meet - Fall 2026	August 25	August 25	August 25	August 20 (11-player & 8-player)	August 25	August 13	August 15	August 19
Student Regains Eligibility on This Date After Sitting Out the Required Number of Meets	September 15	September 15	September 15	September 10 (11-player & 8-player)	September 15	September 3	September 5	September 9

# DATES TO KEEP IN MIND

## *for 2025-26 School Year*

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 & 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 18-19	Summer Slam
June 18-20	State Girls Soccer (Milwaukee)
June 19	Juneteenth
June 21	Father's Day
June 22	Coaches Advisory Committee Meeting – Track & Field
June 24	Board of Control Meeting
June 26-28	June Jam
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

