

Football

SEASON REGULATIONS

(Rules in this section are specific for sport involved. Refer to Constitution, Bylaws and Rules of Eligibility for regulations related to age, residence, scholarship, amateur status, etc.)

ALERT: State Law (175.22) prohibits use of cell phones (and other image-recording devices) in locker rooms except in emergency situations.

1. PRESEASON AND OUT-OF-SEASON

- a. Organizational meetings may be conducted outside the season provided no instruction or practice is included and the meeting(s) has been approved by school administration.
- b. Issuing of equipment and fitness testing may begin on Tuesday, August 4 and the earliest day practice may begin is Tuesday, August 4. Fitness testing is limited to the bench press, squat, dead lift and power cleans, shuttle run, endurance run, dash and vertical jump. No football implements/equipment may be used for testing.
- c. So long as participation is voluntary and available to all interested students, there shall be no restrictions upon schools, school teams and school coaches (grades 9-12) relative to assembling in the summertime, between June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31 for all WIAA sports sponsored by the school. Sanctioned school contact days must conclude no later than July 31. **Football coaching contact ends July 25, 2026. In 2027, July 24 will be the last date for coaching contact for football. See additional details in e. (2) a. below.**
- d. It is the philosophy of this Association that athletes should not be unreasonably restricted, except during the actual school season of a sport. Subsequently, students may voluntarily assemble at any time without school and/or school coach involvement. With school consent, in the summertime, members of a school's team may voluntarily assemble with their teammates and coaches for purposes of instruction and/or competition in all WIAA sports sponsored by the school, without restriction between June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31. Note: Whether an opportunity is school sponsored or not, coach contact may not exceed Board of Control approved contact days.
- e. Other than during the actual school season and those days designated as sanctioned school coach contact days in the summertime, the following provisions shall apply to nonschool participation in accordance with the above:
 - (1) 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.
 - (2) The person who will be coaching a student in the following school season shall not be permitted to coach that student other than during the designated school season and Board of Control approved coach contact days in the summertime. Board of Control approved summertime contact is as follows:
 - (a) Sanctioned School Coaching Contact - Coaches in all WIAA recognized sports (baseball, cross country, football, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, softball, swimming & diving, tennis, track & field, volleyball, soccer, basketball, hockey and wrestling) have been afforded sanctioned school coaching contact between June 1 through June 30 and July 7 through July 31, in accordance with the Bylaws and as described in item B of this section.
 - 1) There must be a minimum of one calendar week (Sun.-Sat.) of no sanctioned school coaching contact prior to (i.e. the week immediately preceding) the first allowed practice in a fall sport. This does not affect nonschool programming.
 - 2) Football must follow the WIAA Acclimatization policy.

Note: Any school program intending to participate in a summer team camp must follow acclimatization rules prior to participating in fully-padded activities (either prior to the camp or at the camp).
 - (b) Nonschool Programming - Coaches in all sports except football have been afforded nonschool program contact beyond the sanctioned school contact days that is permitted to continue throughout the summertime (when school is not in session from the last day of school to the start of school) in accordance with the Bylaws and as described in Section 2 - A and C-1) of Rules of Eligibility, Article VI - Nonschool Participation.

Note: Coaches or others may not mandate participation or provide any incentives to athletes for participating in summertime/out-of-season activities/programs. Participation may not be a requirement for making a school team or earning a letter award, etc.)

2. LENGTH OF SEASON

- a. The earliest day practice may begin is Tuesday of Week 5 (August 4) to allow for a full 8-player and 11-player season.
 - (1) Friday of Week 14/15 (October 9 for 8-player and October 16 for 11-player) for schools participating in the WIAA playoff series and teams participating in 8-player Football.
 - (2) Saturday of Week 15 (October 17) for schools not participating in the WIAA playoff series.
 - (3) Monday of Week 16 (October 19) for all schools' nonvarsity competition.
- b. With WIAA approval, a school not in the playoffs may play a game during the first week of the playoffs.
- c. **Friday of Week 14 (October 10) deadline for changes/additions to football playoff, approved site list.**

3. MINIMUM DAYS OF PRACTICE

- a. Acclimatization Period
 - (1) Practice Days 1 and 2
 - (a) Helmets and mouth guards only; shorts are recommended.
 - (b) Wrestling or volleyball style kneepads may be allowed, but are not mandatory.
 - (c) All other equipment and pads (e.g. spider pads, hex pads or built-in padding and/or on clothing) are not permitted.
 - (2) Practice Days 3 Through 5
 - (a) Helmets, mouth guards, girdles and shoulder pads only; shorts are recommended.

- (b) Wrestling or volleyball style kneepads may be allowed, but are not mandatory.
 - (c) All other equipment and pads (e.g. spider pads, hex pads or built-in padding and/or on clothing) are not permitted.
- (3) Full pads may be worn after the acclimatization plan has been satisfied.
- (4) The acclimatization period must be satisfied by all athletes individually.
- b. If multiple practices in a day are utilized (long day), they may not be scheduled on consecutive days. Practices are limited to alternating Short Days and Long Days.
 - (1) Short Day
 - (a) Maximum practice is 3 hours of physical activity plus a 30-minute recovery period.
 - (b) A 30-minute recovery period (rest in a cool environment, pads and helmets off, hydrate) must occur no later than 2 hours into practice.
 - (c) Unrestricted and unlimited access to water throughout physical activity is strongly encouraged.
 - (2) Long Day
 - (a) Maximum of one practice is 3 hours of physical activity plus a 30-minute recovery period.
 - (b) A 30-minute recovery period (rest in a cool environment, pads and helmets off, hydrate) must occur no later than 2 hours into practice.
 - (c) Minimum of a 3-hour break without physical exertion, in a cool environment, with rehydration before the second practice that day.
 - (d) The longer practice, which is limited to 3 hours of physical activity plus a 30-minute recovery period, may be at any time during the day. When combined with an additional helmet-only practice, there must be a 3-hour break between.
 - (e) Maximum additional practice is 1.5 hours with helmets and mouth guards only; knee pads may be allowed.
 - (f) Unrestricted and unlimited access to water throughout physical activity is strongly encouraged.
 - (3) After 10 practices to the end of the season
 - (a) Only one practice allowed per day.
 - (b) Maximum practice is 2.5 hours.
 - (c) A 30-minute recovery period is not required.
 - (d) Monitor weather and heat conditions and adjust appropriately.
 - (e) Unlimited access to water and hydration should be available.
- c. Player on Player Contact

There are five basic types of player on player contact:

 - (1) **Drill contact** - coach determined outcome
 - Air** - Players should run unopposed without bags or any opposition.
 - Bags** - Activity is executed against a bag, shield, or pad to allow for a soft-contact surface, with or without the resistance of a teammate or coach standing behind the bag.
 - Wrap or Control** - Drills run at full speed until contact, which is above the waist with the players remaining on their feet.
 - (2) **Competition/Full Contact** - no coach determined outcome
 - Thud** - Same as wrap but tempo is competitive with no pre-determined winner and the players are not tackling to the ground.
 - Live Competition or Full Contact** - Full contact is defined as football drills or live game simulations where live action occurs - game speed where players execute full tackles at competitive pace taking players to the ground.
 - (3) **Limitations are the following:**
 - Drill Contact (Air, Bags and Wrap) is unlimited. Competition/Full Contact (Thud and Live/Full) has limitations. The Acclimatization Regulations also apply.
 - Week 1** - Only Drill Contact (Air, Bags and Wrap) is allowed and it is unlimited. Competition/Full Contact is not allowed.
 - Week 2** - Drill Contact (Air, Bags and Wrap) is unlimited. Competition/Full Contact (Thud and Live) is limited to 75 minutes per week (excluding a scrimmage).
 - Week 3 and beyond** - Drill Contact (Air, Bags and Wrap) is unlimited. Competition/Full Contact (Thud and Live) is limited to 60 minutes per week (excluding games).
- d. There must be practices on a minimum of 14 different days (including the days in 3. a.) before the first game may be played.
- e. The first eight days of practice may not involve a team from outside the school.
- f. The minimum days of practice prior to the first competition is a team requirement. While it is desirable for each participant to satisfy this requirement, schools will determine when students may begin competition, after their 5 days of acclimatization.
- g. Teams must rest from all physical activity for at least one calendar day after six consecutive days of practice or competition. In the event extreme weather forces a WIAA tournament contest to be cancelled, school administration may request relief.

4. SCRIMMAGES

- a. One scrimmage, over one day, with another school or schools may be conducted in addition to the maximum allowed games, meets, or contests, provided all athletes participating meet all WIAA and school eligibility requirements (exceptions: students ineligible due to academic deficiency, code of conduct violations, or those required to miss the next competitive event, due to being ejected from their last competitive event, may participate at the discretion of the school), and:
 - (1) Eight different days of practice have elapsed.
 - (2) There is no loss of academic class time.
 - (3) It is held prior to the first game.
 - (4) There is no score in a book or on a scoreboard.
 - (5) There are no kickoffs and the fair catch is employed on all punts.
 - (6) A format other than quarters or halves of play is used.

- b. Any interschool scrimmage other than the one described in 4. a. counts toward the maximum allowed games.
 - c. If a school schedules two scrimmages prior to its first game, there must be a minimum of three days without play between scrimmages and between a scrimmage and a game.
 - d. Each high school team, i.e., varsity, JV, sophomore, freshman, is allowed one scrimmage.
- Note: If either school counts a scrimmage as a game, it must be counted as a game for both programs, schools or teams.
- e. An individual student is allowed to participate in only one day of scrimmage activity. Note: An individual student may participate in multiple levels of scrimmages conducted on the same day.

5. DATE OF FIRST GAME

The first game may not be played before Thursday, August 20 for football.

6. MAXIMUM ALLOWED GAMES

- a. The maximum number of games for 11-player is nine except that with WIAA approval a school not in the WIAA playoffs may play a 10th game during the first week of the playoffs. The maximum number of games for 8-player is eight except that with WIAA approval a school not in the WIAA playoffs may play a 9th game during the first week of the playoffs. Schedules of all teams should be clearly published and separated by level for each team sponsored by a school.
- b. Conference tournaments must be included in count of regular season maximums.
- c. No more than one game may be scheduled in the same calendar week, and there must be a minimum of three days without play between games.
- d. A game or partial game (more than one quarter remaining) postponed because of weather or other unusual circumstances may be rescheduled in a week when another game is scheduled provided there is a minimum of three days without play between games.
- e. The WIAA playoffs are not part of the maximum allowed games.
- f. Except for events held in bordering states (MN, IL, MI and IA), no approval shall be provided for more than one out-of-state competition, event and/or scrimmage per team each school season.

7. INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION LIMITATIONS

- a. It is strongly recommended that a student participate at only one level (varsity or nonvarsity) in the same calendar week.
- b. Under unusual circumstances, as determined by school administration, a student may be a member of two different level teams in the same calendar week. In such cases, it is the responsibility of a coach to be particularly concerned about overexposing students to the point of adversely affecting their health and safety.
- c. Under no conditions may a student compete as a member of more than two different level teams in the same calendar week.
- d. For information about non-school participation, refer to Rules of Eligibility, Article VI, Section 1 of the Senior High Handbook and consult with Athletic Administration.

8. FLAGRANT OR UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT

- a. A student, disqualified from a contest for flagrant or unsportsmanlike conduct, is suspended from interscholastic competition for no less than the next competitive event (but not less than one complete game or meet) at the same level of competition as the disqualification.
- b. Athletes who are ineligible during the WIAA Tournament (for any reason) may not appear in uniform, participate in warm-ups, and may not participate in the awards ceremony at the WIAA Tournament. Exception: An injured athlete will be allowed to participate in the awards ceremony provided he/she is included in the roster allotment for that game. During the regular season, schools should establish their own policy as to whether athletes are allowed to be in uniform and participate in pregame and postgame activity, if they are ineligible to compete due to flagrant and/or unsportsmanlike conduct, athletic and/or academic code violations, or for any other reason.
- c. Any player who in the judgment of the official, intentionally spits on, strikes, slaps, kicks, pushes or aggressively physically contacts an official at any time shall be immediately ineligible for competition a minimum of 90 calendar days from the date of the confrontation. In addition, the player is ineligible to compete for the first 25% of the next season in that same sport.

9. PROHIBITION OF PRACTICE AT TOURNAMENT SITE

Schools are prohibited during the regular season and the WIAA tournament series from practicing for regional, sectional and state tournament preparation at sites and facilities hosting WIAA tournaments.

10. CONTEST CONTROL

- a. All schools are responsible before, during and after a contest for the proper conduct of their coaches, athletes, students and other spectators and, when requested, a school must complete a report regarding the contest in which a problem occurred (WIAA Bylaws, Article X).
- b. Schools are expected to prohibit and/or eliminate pranks, mischief or any other activity involving destruction, theft, etc., of athletic facilities, equipment and material.
- c. Schools are required to conduct a pre-contest meeting (Pre-event Emergency Action Plan Meeting) that shall include event management, the head official and medical personnel present at the event, to discuss the Emergency Action Plan.

11. LICENSED OFFICIALS

- a. Four WIAA licensed officials are required for all varsity interscholastic competition.
- b. Four WIAA licensed officials are recommended for all nonvarsity contests, but only three are required.

12. MEDICAL COVERAGE

- a. For all meets and practices emergency procedures should be in place as per DPI and Wisconsin Statute 121.02 (1) (g) Emergency Nursing Service. These should include, but are not limited to, such things as:
 - (1) A physician available by phone or on location.
 - (2) Phone location and phone numbers available for contacting physician and/or ambulance service.
 - (3) A designated physician or licensed athletic trainer will determine whether an injured athlete may continue whether or not consciousness is involved. They may consult with another physician if they desire, but their decision will be final. Coaches cannot keep medical personnel from examining athletes that are or may be injured.

13. CONCUSSION AND/OR UNCONSCIOUS PARTICIPANT

No athlete shall return to play or practice on the same day of being diagnosed with a concussion. Any athlete suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by an appropriate health-care professional that day. Any athlete with a concussion must be medically cleared by an appropriate

health-care professional prior to resuming participation in any practice or competition. Return to play must follow a step-wise protocol which includes provisions for delaying return to play based upon the return of any signs or symptoms. Any athlete deemed unconscious must have medical evaluation and clearance before being allowed to return to participation.

14. OXYGEN AND FLUIDS PROVIDED INTRAVENOUSLY

- Oxygen administered by mechanical means for recuperative purposes is not permitted.
- Fluids provided intravenously is an invasive procedure to be used only in emergency situations. An athlete may not return to competition the same day.

Note: See WIAA Medical Policies and Procedures for additional medical information.

15. PROSTHETIC LIMBS

National Federation and WIAA rules allow students to compete while wearing prosthetic limbs which are no more dangerous to players than the corresponding human limb and do not place an opponent at a disadvantage.

16. RULES GOVERNING COMPETITION

The official rules for all interscholastic competition are contained in the (a) current editions of FOOTBALL RULES and CASEBOOK and (b) related publications and interpretations of the National Federation with these additional provisions:

NATIONAL FEDERATION ALLOWED ADAPTATIONS

- The WIAA's adaptation of the 25 yard line tie breaker must be used to resolve all senior high contests (varsity, junior varsity, sophomore, and freshman/sophomore) which are tied at the end of regulation play. (Note: There is no overtime provision for teams with only Grade 9 students.)
- The following rule regarding the use of running time must be used:
 - After the first quarter, when the score differential reaches 35 points or more, a mandatory running clock will be used.
 - Normal clock operating procedures resume if the score differential goes back under 35 in the second or third quarters. Beginning with the ensuing kickoff, the clock will run continuously except for the following situations when it will be stopped:
 - Time outs charged to a team.
 - After a score.
 - Intermission between 3rd and 4th quarters.
 - Extended injury time outs.
 - Any time officials determine it is necessary for safety reasons.

Note: 1) Normal clock operating procedures resume when a team scores to make the differential less than 35 points in the second and third quarters. The running clock will be maintained in the fourth quarter even if the score differential goes below 35 points.

2) The use of this rule does not preclude the use of Rule 3-1-3 which reads: "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee any remaining periods may be shortened at any time or the game may be terminated."

- NFHS rules allow state associations and their member schools to place corporate advertising and/or commercial markings on the field of play. The logos must conform with NFHS rules and the WIAA may reject a host with any sponsorships or advertising for businesses whose primary business is the selling of products (tobacco, alcoholic beverages, lottery, gambling, mood-altering substances and lewd subject matter) prohibited by WIAA advertising policies.

STATE ASSOCIATION REGULATIONS

- It is the responsibility of the host school to have the playing field and immediate sidelines completely enclosed by a permanent or temporary fencing, or by a rope, for purposes of crowd control.
- Nonvarsity teams shall be allowed to wear old varsity uniforms which are now unapproved provided participant safety is not jeopardized.
- Coaches must report to their school administration within 48 hours following a contest any player or coach ejection. School administrators must then report the ejection to the WIAA via written communication within three (3) school days following the contest. This written communication must also include a plan of action to prevent future ejections. Officials will continue to provide electronic reports to the WIAA.
- If a team forfeits a game for any reason, they are not eligible to play a game for the remainder of that week.**
- Schools shall submit their football schedule to the WIAA by May 1. Any non-conference game canceled after June 15th would be considered a forfeit for PQS points; games canceled without mutual agreement would result in a forfeit. Any non-conference game dropped or canceled prior to June 15 would be considered a no-contest when calculating the team's PQS score.**

STATE ASSOCIATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is recommended that a licensed official be used on the timepiece if the field clock is official.

17. NON-VARSITY TEAMS WITH ONLY GRADE 9 STUDENTS

All preceding rules apply with these additional provisions:

- The season ends on Monday of Week 16 (October 19).
- The team may have one scrimmage under the condition outlined under Number 4. Scrimmages.
- Quarters may be 12 minutes in length.
- Games must be terminated at the conclusion of regulation (four quarters) play. (There is no overtime provision)
- Four WIAA licensed officials are recommended and three are required.

18. GRADE 9 STUDENTS PARTICIPATING ON GRADE 8 TEAMS

- Rules governing junior high/middle level competition are contained in the Junior High/Middle Level Handbook.
- A school may not allow its students in Grades 9, 10, 11 and/or 12 to compete against another member school's students in Grade 8 and/or below.

Note: In emergency situations a waiver may be requested allowing 9th grade student(s) at member middle schools to compete at the 8th grade level at member middle schools.

- Rules governing Grade 9 season length apply for teams with students Grade 9 and below.