

PART THREE OF FREQUENTLY ASKED ELIGIBILITY RULES AND REGULATIONS

Q: What is the definition of a student-athlete?

A: A student-athlete is a properly enrolled student at a member school who has attained team status in a particular sport, i.e., sophomore, junior varsity, and varsity. Incoming freshman are subject to all out-of-season regulations in all sports in spite of not having played that sport yet. All team members must be listed on the eligibility report filed in a member school's office.

Q: What does team status mean?

A: Team status is defined as having been on the current/immediate preceding roster of a team.

Q: What is the out-of-season period?

A: The out-of-season time period shall be from the end of the season as defined in Rule 2, Section 10 until the next official starting practice date for that sport, excluding the Summer Recess.

Q: When does the Summer Recess period begin?

A: The Summer Recess period begins the day after the last **scheduled** date for NJSIAA championships in the Spring Sport Season until September 1st.

Q: What happens to the start date if the last scheduled date/event is rained out or postponed for any other reason?

A: The Summer Recess period is not affected at the start of it, meaning the Sunday after the Saturday that is the last scheduled date for NJSIAA championships in the Spring Sport Season, remains the start of the Summer Recess.

Q: May team status student athletes participate in intramurals?

A: Yes, they are permitted to participate in all intramural activities during the out-of-season time period, except those in which they have attained team status.

Q: Are there qualifications/parameters to weight-lifting programs?

A: Yes, weight-lifting and other conditioning programs during the out-of-season period are permissible **when not limited to Student-Athletes.**

Q: May coaches supervise weight-lifting/intramural programs?

A: Yes, coaches may supervise or serve as directors, including officiating of intramurals, recreational, club, camp or open-gym programs when the school district's Student Athletes are not involved in **their specific phase of the program during the out-of-season period. Open-Gym Programs involving a single sport in which only Student-Athletes are involved are interpreted as an attempt to circumvent the out-of-season rules.**

Q: Are there any other restrictions to the open gym regulations?

A: Yes, the open gym activities are to be recreational in nature; therefore, practice routines, such as, softball/baseball pitching, catching and batting, football place-kicking, golfing/putting, etc. are always interpreted as an attempt to circumvent the out-of-season rule.

Q: What about "Rec" and/or "Club" programs?

A: NJSIAA does not have any jurisdiction over these programs conducted by OUTSIDE organizations even though school facilities are used; however, school uniforms and other individually issued equipment may not be used by Student-Athletes. Coaches may not be involved when the school district's Student Athletes are involved in that specific phase of the program during the out-of-season period. Coaches may be spectators.

Q: As a basketball coach, can I go and watch my team at a Fall "Rec" league game?

A: By rule yes, (as stated above) but you may not have any contact with/or coach in anyway your players. That includes hand signals, "keeping your elbow tucked in when shooting" gestures, saying "Hello" to a player(s), etc. There is very little to be gained by even being a spectator but there is a lot to lose if the out-of-season rules and regulations are violated.

Q: What are the rules/regulations when it comes to camps and/or clinics?

A: NJSIAA does not restrict an individual's choice to attend any participatory camps or clinics; however, **schools, school organizations, or school-related groups such as Booster Clubs may not assist the Student-Athletes' attendance at any camp or clinic during the out-of-season period; this includes providing uniforms, equipment, and funds related to the camp or clinic, including transportation; and coaches may not instruct their Student-Athletes. Coaches may be spectators.**

Q: Does the above pertain to Student-Athletes when they are just observers at a camp or clinic?

A: No, there are no limitations or restrictions on member schools or their Student-Athletes at any time when attendance at non-school camps or clinics is of a non-participatory nature.

Q: What, if any, limitations does a coach have if he/she attends a participatory camp or clinic?

A: Coaches may attend a participatory camp, clinic or competition MERELY as spectators however they may not be involved in any way with their school's athletes, including being a clinician, when their school's Student-Athletes attend THAT camp or clinic regardless of the format or the separation of stations at a clinic.

Q: Can you explain the above in layman's terms?

A: Yes, the above means that a coach cannot be a clinician at a clinic when his/her player(s) are participating in that clinic even though the coach, when his/her players come to his "station" in the rotation, switches with another clinician so that he/she is compliant with NJSIAA out-of-season rules and regulations.

Q: Are there any more restrictions?

A: Yes, and it is a major restriction. **DURING THE SUMMER RECESS A COACH OR STUDENT-ATHLETE MAY NOT BE SPONSORED OR SUPPORTED BY A SCHOOL OR SCHOOL-RELATED GROUP (EX: BOOSTER CLUB) WHEN TEAM-INTERSCHOLASTIC OR INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION TAKES PALCE AS PART OF THE ACTIVITY IN CAMPS, CLINICS, RECREATION PROGRAMS, INDEPENDENT PLAY OR TOURNAMENTS.**

RULE 2

Q: Can a Student-Athlete compete on two separate sport teams in the same season?

A: Yes and No: Yes, if one of the two sports is one of the two “non-strenuous” sports by NJSIAA definition. Golf and Bowling are the two non-strenuous sports by definition by NJSIAA. So a Student-Athlete could play baseball and golf as an example or swim and bowl in the same season. No, a Student-Athlete may not play football and soccer. A player on an interscholastic athletic team shall participate in only one strenuous high school sport at a time during the regular high school sports season. A player may drop one high school sport to participate in another, but he/she may not return to a sport from which he/she withdrew.

Q: is there a list of strenuous sports?

A: Yes, on page 58 of the 2016-17 NJSIAA Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations.

Q: May a student athlete who has finished his/her season in one sport play another sport in that same season?

A: No, a student athlete concluding a season in one sport will not be able to participate in another sport regardless of the fact that the athlete would be able to meet the six (6) day practice rule.

Q: When do the fall, winter, and spring sport seasons begin and end?

A: Please see page 59 of above referenced document for the answer to this question. Not all sports, even played in the same season, have the identical start and end dates.

Q: What is the basic rule as it pertains to practices/scrimmages/games-meets?

A: A student shall not be permitted to participate in a scrimmage or game (interschool) in any strenuous sport until he/she has completed SIX DAYS OF PRACTICE IN THAT SPORT (days of 24 hours, not sessions). Practices during the Summer Recess prior to the official opening of the Sports Season cannot be counted to fulfill this requirement.

Q: What about a student athlete who plays, let’s say football, and his team plays in the finals of the State Football Championships, but also plays basketball. Does he need 6 practices?

A: No, he does not provided that he becomes a participating member of the basketball team within three (3) practice days of his team’s basketball practice schedule.

Q: What is the definition of a “practice?”

A: A practice is defined as a session where a team is assembled and involved in physical activity to enhance the participant’s physical condition. Practices of any kind for individuals, partial or entire teams, on days when the team is involved in interscholastic scrimmages or games-meets will not count toward satisfying the six (6) day rule.

Q: Are ineligible student-athletes, say because they are sitting out due to the transfer rule, allowed to practice?

A: By NJSIAA rules, yes, they are allowed to practice and pre-season scrimmage, if the school where the student athlete is attending allows same. However, an ineligible student may not participate in an interscholastic regular season contest, post season contest, or an interscholastic scrimmage during the regular season or post season if that sport allows such.

Q: Is there a limit to how many schools can compete in a scrimmage at one location?

A: Yes, no more than four (4) schools shall be permitted to take part in a joint interschool scrimmage.

Q: Can one team or individuals of one team practice with another school?

A: If so, it will be designated as a scrimmage unless extraordinary circumstance has been approved by the NJSIAA.

Q: Are county/conference/invitational and "other" tournaments considered regular season contests?

A: Yes, they are and they are counted toward the total number of games in which a school can participate during a sports season.

Q: Are there any sports that do not use the NFHS rules as the governing body in that sport?

A: Yes, Bowling – US Bowling Congress; Fencing – United States Fencing Association; Golf – USGA; Girls Lacrosse – United States Women's Lacrosse Association; Skiing – NCAA, and Tennis – USTA.

Q: Is there any rule about "Captain's Practices?"

A: During the Out-of-Season time period, practice is not permitted under the direction of an instructor, coach, or **student leaders. Any subterfuge or "sharp practice" shall be construed as a violation of this rule.** A "sharp practice" is defined as "sneaky, something that may be technically legal but still is not right." Also, some other definitions of a sharp practice: 1) a way of behaving that is dishonest but not illegal, 2) actions using tricky and/or dishonorable means barely within the law, 3) a behavior that is barely less than fraud. It can be cunningness, misrepresentation or a trick.

Q: Are there any rules/regulations as it pertains to same sex sports, such as tennis, that are played in different sport seasons and coached by different coaches?

A: Yes, when the same sport for Boys and Girls is conducted in different sport seasons, a Student-Athlete in that sport may not serve as manager of the team of the opposite sex and will be considered a violation of the out-of-season rule. Coaches MAY NOT exchange supervisory and/or coaching duties in their sport to circumvent the out-of-season rule.

QUESTION: From what point may a coach not be involved with a school's Student-Athlete?

ANSWER: From the day the coach is appointed to coach a particular sport until the start of practice for that sport the following year, except the summer recess period.

Q: Can you explain the above better?

A: There is void period of one (1) year at the beginning of the appointing/hiring of a coach, paid/unpaid, volunteer or assistant or head coach, or at the end of the one year assignment. The out-of-season rule forbids a coach from being hired if that person has had contact with those Student-Athletes during the out-of-season time period that have gained team status. EG: I am coaching 9th graders in a Fall baseball league now in 2016. The school board in January will be appointing me freshman coach for the Spring Sports season in 2017. If that occurs the out-of-season rule will be violated. Same is true at the end of the process. I am not re-hired at the June Board meeting (which coaching positions are one-year positions). I coach my freshman team or some players on that team in a fall season. Then I am re-appointed JV coach for the following spring season. This would be a violation of the out-of-season rule. I must go an entire 365 days without any contact with team status Student-Athletes before I could be hired or re-hired so as not to violate the out-of-season time period.

Q: When does a “week” start?

A: A week is define as from 12:01 AM Sunday to Saturday midnight.

Q: Can member schools play against “Club Teams?”

A: No, they may not.

Q: Can a school send a specific sport team to an event/tournament at one location and send another school team of the same sport and gender to another separate location and event?

A: No, a school is permitted to sponsor only one team at the varsity level. A and B teams at the varsity level are not permitted in any sports.

Q: Where can I find the NJSIAA Disqualification Rules?

A: Primarily on pages 63 and 64 of the 2016-17 NJSIAA Constitution and Bylaws.

Q: When may a student athlete practice with a “new school” one where the student athlete is considering transferring to?

A: When that student has officially withdrawn from the previous school, (should have some documentation showing withdrawal), and has officially enrolled at the present school. Coaches should enforce this policy strictly. There is a major liability issue if a student is injured and is not a student in that school.

On Pages 64 to 77 you will find specific sport rules, start of practice, start of regular season, end of season, the mid-point of the seasons as it pertains to transfers on or after as it pertains to not being eligible for post season play even with a bona fide change of residence, number of games allowed, etc.

On Pages 78 to 79 there are three (3) Charts that help to clarify there NJSIAA rules: Participation Chart (Out-Of-Season time Frame); Participation Chart (Summer Time Frame); and the Transfer Chart.

From Pages 83 to 106 there are roughly 30 Procedures/Policies/Statements/Regulations/Guidelines that help to understand the Constitution and Bylaws of NJSIAA.

Please try to find the time to peruse these pages to better familiarize yourself with the working document of you state association.