



ELIGIBILITY RULE AMENDMENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR

NJSIAA recognizes that certain eligibility requirements for the 2020-2021 school year must be relaxed to accommodate the continuing fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are the summaries of the rules that have been amended by the NJSIAA Executive Committee and its Officers, and further below is the full text of the amended rules that will be in place for the 2020-2021 school year.

SUMMARIES OF RULE AMENDMENTS

(1) NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(K) Transfer Rule

- The COVID-19 pandemic has uprooted families across New Jersey. Therefore, NJSIAA has amended the Transfer Rule to modify the “bona fide change of residence” provision, as outlined below. Any student who transfers on or before September 1, for fall sports, or on or before November 1, for winter sports, will not be required to sit 30 days, or half the season, whichever is less. Any student that transfers after those dates will be subject to the sit-period. *Adopted by the NJSIAA Executive Committee on June 4, 2020.*
- As the pandemic progressed into late summer, some member schools chose to cancel or postpone athletic programs. Because the focus of this season is participation, and not championships, NJSIAA further amended the transfer rule to clarify that a transfer for athletic advantage does not include a transfer made because the student’s school cancels or postpones an athletic program due to the pandemic. *Adopted by the NJSIAA Executive Committee Officers on August 27, 2020 pursuant to the Emergency Powers Resolution.*
- Additionally, with regard to some member schools cancelling athletic programs, the transfer rule applicable to Vo-Tech/Public Academy and Charter Schools has been revised. Clarifications 9 and 10 to NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(K) normally permit students attending Vo-Tech/Public Academy or Charter School students attending schools that do not offer a particular sport, to participate in that sport at his/her sending school upon agreement of both Principals. For the 2020-2021 school year, no such agreement by either schools’ Principal is required. *Adopted by the NJSIAA Executive Committee Officers on August 27, 2020 pursuant to the Emergency Powers Resolution.*

- #### **(2) NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(E) Credits Rule** – NJSIAA understands that, in a virtual setting, some student-athletes may face challenges to achieve the required number of credits to participate in athletics. These challenges include, but are not limited to, lack of access to technology and differing learning methods. To accommodate those student-athletes, NJSIAA has adopted a waiver protocol, to be completed by the student-athlete’s school principal, as outlined below. *Adopted by the NJSIAA Executive Committee on June 4, 2020.*

FULL TEXT OF RULE AMENDMENTS

NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V [Eligibility of Athletes], Section 4(K) [Transfers]

1. For the 2020-2021 school year, each student-athlete is permitted one “free transfer,” subject to the provisions herein.
2. For the 2020-2021 school year, for athletes with varsity participation in the 2019-2020 school year, the “bona fide change of residence” requirements listed in Article V, Section 4(K)(1) shall be modified as follows:
 - a. There *shall not* be a requirement that the parent/guardian moves with the student-athlete from one public high school district to another public high school district.
 - b. A student-athlete may transfer to or from a public or non-public school without being subject to the 30-day sit period.
 - c. The transfer must have occurred on or before the following dates:
 - i. September 1, 2020, to be immediately eligible to participate in the fall season;
 - ii. November 1, 2020, to be immediately eligible to participate in the winter season;
 - iii. Given that the spring season for the 2019-2020 school year was cancelled, no student-athlete participated at the varsity level in 2019-2020 in a spring sport. Therefore, there is no deadline by which a student-athlete must transfer to participate in a spring sport to be immediately eligible.
 - d. If a student-athlete transfers *after* the above-listed deadlines related to the fall and winter seasons, the student-athlete shall be ineligible to participate for a period of 30 calendar days or one half of the maximum number of games allowed in the sport by NJSIAA rules (the ineligibility period) from the beginning of the regular schedule, whichever is less.
3. The requirement regarding eligibility for post-season play in Article V, Section 4(K)(2)(c) remains in effect; “A student who transfers during the second half of a sports season . . . shall be ineligible to participate in any post-season championship competition at the new school.”
4. Article V, Section D of the Bylaws, pertaining to “Athletic Recruitment,” remains in effect. Athletic recruitment is prohibited and the relevant hearing procedures remain in place.
5. The provisions related to “transfer for athletic advantage” in Bylaws, Article V, Section 4(K) remain in effect. Transfer for athletic advantage is prohibited, and the relevant hearing procedures remain in place. A transfer for athletic advantage does not include a transfer made because the student’s school cancels or postpones an athletic program due to the pandemic.
6. To prevent possible recruitment or transfer for athletic advantage, all transfers must be processed in the NJSIAA Home Campus Portal before any interscholastic competition.
7. For administration purposes, the parent/guardian is still required to complete the “Student-Athlete Residency Affidavit,” however, the affidavit does not need to be notarized.
8. For Vo-Tech/Public Academy and Charter Schools, if a student wishes to participate in a sport not being offered by his/her school, the student may participate in that sport at his/her sending school *without* seeking approval by the schools’ principals. Normally, such approval is required, but it shall not be required this year.
9. This amendment applies retroactively to all transfers that occurred on or after March 16, 2020 (the date of Executive Order 104, which indefinitely closed schools for the 2019-2020 school year), and through the 2020-2021 school year.

NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V [Eligibility of Athletes], Section 4(E) [Credits]

The provisions in NJSIAA Bylaws Article V, Section 4(E) regarding the number of credits that must be passed for a student-athlete to be eligible for athletic competition remain in effect. For individual issues that arise that are not under the student-athlete's control, the following modification applies:

If a student-athlete is unable to meet the credit requirements provided in NJSIAA Bylaws Article V, Section 4(E) due to a disruption in the student-athlete's education as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, i.e., the student-athlete did not have access to the necessary technology to participate successfully in a virtual environment, the student may be declared eligible to participate in athletics if the student's school principal sends a letter to the NJSIAA requesting that the student-athlete be declared eligible, and the NJSIAA approves of the request.

The principal's letter shall, in detail, explain the following:

- The circumstances that prohibited the student-athlete from meeting the credit requirement; Note – The circumstances must be “out of the student-athlete's control.”
- The Action Plan that will be put in place to ensure that the student-athlete “catches up” on the required number of credits.

NJSIAA staff shall review the letter and determine if the student-athlete shall be eligible to participate in athletics. The determination shall be made administratively; there shall be no hearings held in this regard.