

NJSIAA

COACHES HANDBOOK



2026-2027

Table of Contents

Message from the NJSIAA Executive Director	4
NJSIAA Mission Statement	4
NJSIAA Vision	4
NJSIAA Values	4
NJSIAA Defined Seasons	4
NJSIAA Coaching Certifications and Regulations	4
NJSIAA Sportsmanship Policy	5
Handshake	6
Handshake Procedure	6
Sportsmanship Statement	6
Coaches Responsibilities	6
Jewelry	7
Player Audio/Video Devices	7
No-Count Tournaments	7
Game Termination	8
Forfeit Rules	8
League or Conference Forfeits	8
Non-League or Non-Conference Forfeits	8
Procedure when officials fail to arrive or are unable to continue	8
Drone Policy	8
Six Day Practice Rule	9
Scrimmage Rules	9
NJSIAA Steroid Testing/Banned Substances List	10
NJSIAA Transfer Rule	10
Ineligible Players	10
Disqualifications (DQs)	10
Players Leaving the Bench Area	11
NJSIAA Use of Video	11
Levels of Disqualification	11
NJSIAA Quick Charts	12
NJSIAA Heat Acclimatization Guidelines	12
NJSIAA Heat Participation Guidelines	12
Procedure In the Event of Thunder or Lightning	12
NJSIAA Amateur Rules/NIL Provision	13
NJSIAA Recruitment Rules and Violations	13
Recruitment Violation Chart	13
NJSIAA Player/Coach Do's & Don'ts Chart	15
NFHS/NJSCA Membership	17
NFHS Learning Center – Courses for Coaches	17
NFHS School Honor Roll Program	17
NFHS National Coach Credential	17
Courses for Coaches	18



COLLEEN MAGUIRE
Executive Director

TONY MASELLI
Chief Operating Officer

PAUL POPADIUK
Chief Compliance Officer

AL STUMPF
Assistant Director

DERRYK SELLERS
Assistant Director

SANDY MAMARY
Assistant Director

Message from Colleen Maguire - NJSIAA Executive Director

“A good coach can change a game. A great coach can change a life.”

John Wooden

On behalf of the NJSIAA staff, I want to personally thank you for coaching our student-athletes. Education-based athletics is more than wins and losses, it is an opportunity to teach lifelong lessons that play an integral role in the development of our student-athletes.

We all have fond memories of our high school sports-playing days. We all owe it to today’s student-athletes to provide them with the same opportunities to create their own fond memories. Providing a positive experience and modeling sportsmanlike behavior are your primary responsibilities.

The lifelong lessons that are to be learned by participating in education-based athletics will encourage today’s student-athletes to pay it forward to the next generation of student-athletes.

Thank you for playing your part and best of luck during this school year.

NJSIAA Mission Statement

The mission of the NJSIAA is to assist member schools in providing equitable education-based interscholastic athletic opportunities that support academic achievement, good sportsmanship and fair play for student athletes.

NJSIAA Vision

Through collaboration with key stakeholders the NJSIAA will strive to achieve student athlete growth in an ever-changing environment for their future success.

NJSIAA Values (not in order of importance)

1. A physically and emotionally safe and healthy playing environment
2. Educational experiences of all student athletes through participation in interscholastic sports
3. Excellence in academics and athletics
4. Rules that support fair play
5. Cooperation among member schools to advance individual and collective well-being
6. Programs that through interscholastic participation develop good citizenship, promote healthy lifestyle, foster involvement from a diverse population and promotes school/community relations
7. Properly trained officials who enhance interscholastic competition
8. Student athlete engagement in programs that promote the understanding that interscholastic athletics is a privilege
9. Insistence that good sportsmanship be exhibited at all times by student athletes, coaches, officials and spectators
10. Effective communication to assist in understanding the function of the NJSIAA at all levels

Defined Seasons

1. In-Season Period: The in-season period starts on the first official day of practice and concludes with the final championship in each particular sport.
2. Out-of-Season Period: The out-of-season period shall be from the final championship in a particular sport to the first official day of practice the following year in that sport, except for the summer recess.
3. Summer Period: The summer period begins the Monday after the NJSIAA spring competition end date. This period ends on August 31.

Coaching Certifications and Regulations

A person shall be eligible to coach in any interscholastic contest, provided the person satisfies all of the conditions listed below (For the purposes of this section, “coach” shall mean all persons who coach an interscholastic high school athletic team in any way, whether for pay or as a volunteer at the varsity, junior varsity and/or freshman level – ninth grade through twelve grade).

The person’s appointment as coach must be approved by the local educational agency responsible for the member school at which the person coaches.

In addition to the New Jersey Department of Education requirements, the following NJSIAA requirements must be completed:

1. CPR/AED/Basic First Aid Certification

- All coaches must hold a current (valid) adult CPR/AED and Basic First Aid Certification. Blended courses (online courses with an in-person instructor-evaluated skills test) are approved. Online courses without an in-person instructor-evaluated skills test are not approved. All courses that are approved by the DOE for certification are acceptable.
2. NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course
 - All new coaches will be required to complete the NFHS fundamental of Coaching Course before their first employment as a coach. A certificate of course completion must be submitted to the respective athletic supervisors. Coaches who have experience coaching in an NJSIAA high school prior to the 2006-2007 school year will be exempt from this requirement. This course is a one-time requirement.
 3. All coaches must complete the NFHS Concussion in Sports Course. This course must be renewed annually.
 4. All coaches must complete the NFHS Heat Illness Prevention Course. This course must be renewed annually.
 5. All coaches must complete the NFHS Implicit Bias Course. This course is a one-time requirement.
 6. All coaches must complete the BeNice Program. This course is a one-time requirement.
 7. Swimming & Diving Coaches
 - a. A valid CPR for professional rescuer certificate issued by the ARC or the YMCA.
 - b. A valid Lifeguard Certificate issued by the ARC or the YMCA.
 - c. A valid Water Safety Instructor (WSI) Certificate issued by the ARC or the YMCA.
 8. DOE Certification Requirements (Public Schools Only). Public school coaches must fall within one of the four categories below.
 - a. NJ Teaching Certification
 - b. NJ Substitute Certification (30 Credits)
 - c. Volunteer Coach
 - Must have one of the certifications above
 - Must complete all NJSIAA coaching requirements
 - d. Paraprofessional Aid/Coach
 - Must be approved by the school district
 - Exempt from all certifications
 - Exempt from all coaching requirements
 - Must be under the direct supervision of a certified coach
 - Must not have any direct supervision responsibilities

Please see additional information regarding paraprofessional aid/coaches in the guidelines, policies and procedures section of the NJSIAA handbook.

Note: The above requirements do not apply to the coaches appointed by the school to accompany student athletes to individual events.

Sportsmanship Policy

Prior to the start of every NJSIAA event at all levels, officials are required to read the following statement to all participants. Coaches are expected to assist officials with gathering their student-athletes before an event to assist with the reading of this statement:

“The NJSIAA requires officials to enforce all rules regarding unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and players. There will be no tolerance for any negative behavior, such as taunting, trash-talking and verbal, written, or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or religion. Such behavior will result in being ejected from this event. All participants must respect the game, respect the officials, and respect their opponents.”

Unsportsmanlike conduct shall subject the individual to disciplinary action. The member school with which the individual is associated may also be subject to disciplinary action if it is found that the member school’s policies, actions, or failure to act, substantially contributed to the individual’s conduct.

Unsportsmanlike conduct shall include but not be limited to the following:

1. Any person (athletic department, staff member, Student-Athlete or a fan or spectator associated with a member school) who strikes or physically abuses an official, opposing coach, player, or spectator.
2. Any person (athletic department, staff member, Student-Athlete or a fan or spectator associated with a member school) who intentionally incites participants or spectators to violent or abusive action.

3. Any person (athletic department, staff member, Student-Athlete or a fan or spectator associated with a member school) who uses obscene gestures or profane or unduly provocative language or action towards officials, opponents, or spectators.
4. Any person (athletic department, staff member, Student Athlete, or a fan or spectator associated with a member school) who engages in harassing verbal or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion at an interscholastic event.
5. Any school or athletic staff member who is publicly critical of a game official, opponents and/or opposing coaches/players.
6. The administration of a member school will be responsible for the unsportsmanlike conduct of that school's athletic department, staff members, student-athletes, fans or spectators.

The entirety of the NJSIAA Sportsmanship Rule/Policy, which also addresses unsportsmanlike conduct, can be found in the NJSIAA Bylaws Article IX – Sportsmanship.

Handshake

The NJSIAA strongly believes that the handshake at the end of every interscholastic contest is an important part of sportsmanship. Emphasizing the importance of the handshake is a valuable practice in promoting sportsmanship. The NJSIAA's stance is that it highlights a critical lesson for student-athletes and coaches while demonstrating respect and integrity regardless of the outcome.

Walking away from the handshake due to a tough loss sends the wrong message, suggesting that poor sportsmanship is acceptable in the face of defeat. Student-athletes and coaches engaging in post-competition handshakes can teach valuable life skills such as resilience, humility, and respect for their opponents. This practice helps to foster a positive sports culture and prepares our student-athletes for future challenges both on and off the field.

Handshake Procedure

1. It is the schools/coaches' responsibility to supervise the handshake. Administrators/security should be stationed within close proximity to the handshake line. Officials are not required to supervise the handshake.
2. One team should be on the right and the other team should be on the left. Players from one team should not be allowed to walk down both sides of the line.
3. Absolutely no non-essential personnel should be allowed on the playing surface until both teams have reached a designated area after completion of the handshake line.
4. A coach or site personnel should be stationed at the end of the handshake line to direct the players who have completed the handshake to a designated area.
5. Best practice is to have coaches at the front and end of the line. If that is not practical, a coach at the end of the line is mandatory.

Sportsmanship Statement

Per the memorandum of understanding between the NJSIAA and the NJ Attorney General's Office on Division of Civil Rights, the following is a public service announcement (PSA) that is required to be read several times before and during all interscholastic events, including NJSIAA state tournament events, in which the public announcement system is operated:

Today's contest is being conducted according to the rules of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association. These rules provide for fair competition among players. Spectators can help promote good sportsmanship by observing the rules of fair play. Any verbal, written, or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, or religion shall not be tolerated, could subject the violator to ejection, and may result in penalties being assessed against your team. Everyone is requested to take personal responsibility for keeping this competition at a high level of good sportsmanship.

Coaches Responsibilities

The NFHS has recently updated its rules surrounding hair adornments and religious items for many sports. Please be sure you are up to date in your understanding of these rules.

A member school's head coach shall be held responsible for the head coach's actions and the actions of all assistants and staff who report, directly or indirectly, to the head coach.

It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that all players are equipped properly and meet all NFHS rules as they pertain to uniforms and other accessories.

Prior to the start of every NJSIAA event at all levels, the official will ask the coach “Are your players properly equipped and ready to play?”. Once a coach answers yes, then he/she takes ownership of their team’s compliance with all rules and requirements.

Officials are instructed to speak only to a coach if they see any violation of a rule regarding uniforms or other accessories – they are not to speak to the student-athlete. It is the coach’s responsibility to notify the student-athlete and assist them with remedying any violation.

Jewelry

The NFHS has updated its rules to allow jewelry to be worn during competition in certain sports. Jewelry includes, but is not limited to, necklaces, bracelets, earrings, and watches.

- Medical alert medals are *not* considered jewelry but must be taped to the body.
- Prohibited jewelry: Athletes may not wear jewelry under any circumstances if it is deemed potentially dangerous by the official.

Please review the NFHS rule book for your specific sport to ensure compliance with these guidelines.

Player Audio/Video Devices

NJSIAA prohibits players from wearing any audio devices (such as microphones) or video devices (such as cameras) during a contest. This restriction also applies to all pregame and postgame activities. Bench personnel who are not actively involved in play are also prohibited from using these devices unless they are specifically responsible for filming the game for the team. This rule applies to all NJSIAA sports.

“No-Count” Tournament qualifications

Tournament Criteria

1. Eligibility: Only NJSIAA member schools may participate.
2. Minimum Size: At least 8 schools, with teams playing no more than 3 games.
3. Maximum Size: Up to 32 schools, with teams playing no more than 5 games.
4. Brackets & Scores:
 - Tournament brackets must be published on NJ.com.
 - All game results must be entered on NJ.com after each game.
5. Event Organizer: Must be run by a county, conference, or NJSIAA-approved affiliated organization (such as a NJ coaches association).
 - Third-party event organizers are not eligible.

Tournament Procedures

1. County/Conference/League Tournaments
 - If your county, conference, or league runs a tournament that all schools can participate in, you must participate unless you are formally released from the tournament.
 - County/Conference/League tournaments do not count toward the maximum number of games limit.
 - If you are released and you choose to enter another tournament, only NJSIAA approved tournaments will not count towards the maximum game limit.
2. Qualifying Tournaments
 - NJSIAA approved tournaments that require qualification to enter, and you do not qualify, you may enter another tournament.
 - If you choose to enter another tournament, only NJSIAA approved tournaments will not count towards the maximum game limit.
3. Invitational Tournaments
 - Only NJSIAA approved tournaments will not count towards the maximum game limit.
4. Participation in multiple approved tournaments
 - In the event you have participated in two or more NJSIAA approved tournaments, you must declare only one as a non-counting tournament by the cutoff date for that particular sport.

Game Termination

The host school management has full responsibility for determining whether or not playing conditions are such as to postpone or start a game/meet. Schools must know that once a game/meet/event has started, the official(s) have jurisdiction for terminating the same prematurely.

Termination, once the game has started, is not the prerogative of a coach or school management, and the action of removing a team from the event prior to the conclusion of the game/meet/event, regardless of the circumstances, will result in severe punitive actions by the NJSIAA controversies or executive committee.

Coaches must be cautioned not to refuse to play or to complete a game/meet. Such decisions are within the jurisdiction of the game/meet officials once the contest has started, or rest with home management and/or tournament director if the game/meet has not started.

Forfeit Rules

1. Mutual forfeits are prohibited. Schools cannot mutually agree to forfeit any games.
2. Forfeits must be approved in one of the two ways below:
 - a. Forfeits between league/conference opponents require league or conference approval.
 - b. Forfeits between non-league or non-conference opponents require NJSIAA approval.

League or Conference Forfeits

1. Once approved, the league/conference must notify all affected schools to determine if they accept the forfeit.
2. The league/conference must then complete the appropriate forfeit form.
3. If a school accepts the forfeit, that date cannot be reused for scheduling another game or as a rainout date.
4. If a school does not accept the forfeit, they are permitted to schedule another game on any date.
5. After form submission, the NJSIAA will inform Njschoolsports.com to award accepted forfeits.

Non-League or Non-Conference Forfeits

1. The school forfeiting must complete the appropriate form.
2. If the forfeit is approved, the NJSIAA will notify affected schools to determine acceptance.
3. If accepted, the forfeit date cannot be reused for another game or rainout.
4. If a school does not accept the forfeit, they are permitted to schedule another game on any date.
5. NJSIAA will inform Njschoolsports.com to award accepted forfeits.

Procedure when officials fail to arrive or are unable to continue

When only one (1) official arrives for the game to which two (2) officials are usually assigned, the game must be played. The same applies when an official is unable to complete an assignment.

Every attempt should be made to play the game unless it can be clearly established that doing so would NOT be in the best interest of the participating schools. The responsibility for postponing a game under these circumstances rests with the Principal and the Athletic Director of the host school, this is not a coaching staff decision.

Schools withholding their teams from competition under these conditions will be subject to severe punitive action under Article X of the Bylaws and officials are required to report the violation to the NJSIAA within seven (7) days. In the event that no officials arrive at the site, the game will be postponed. Visiting schools may not ask for a forfeit under this scenario.

Drone Policy

1. The use of unmanned aerial systems ("UAS"), commonly referred to as "drones", by any NJSIAA member school is permitted during practice and at home events in accordance with applicable local, State, and Federal laws and regulations.
2. Member schools are permitted to use UAS at away events with the advance written permission of the host school, or, in the event, there is no home school, the site manager.
3. If only one school operates a UAS at an event, the UAS video shall be provided to all other participating schools as soon as practicable after the conclusion of the event.
4. The use of UAS at an NJSIAA tournament event is strictly prohibited.

Six Day Practice Requirement

Before a student-athlete can participate in a scrimmage or game in a strenuous sport, they must complete six (6) days of practice and one (1) day of rest within the first seven (7) days. If a student-athlete is injured during the six (6) day practice requirement and is out for more than 3 days, that student-athlete will have to restart the six (6) days. If a student-athlete is out for three (3) days or less, they may continue from the last day. The six (6) day requirement does not apply to bowling and golf, as they are categorized as “Non-Strenuous” sports.

1. Important details:
 - The required six (6) days are for a full 24-hour period, not per practice session.
 - Double sessions do not count as two days.
 - Only practices with the school team count.
 - Pre-game warm-ups or private workouts with a coach do not count.
 - Club or national team practices do not count.
2. Late Arrivals due to Playoff Overrun
 - If a student-athlete joins late because they were still competing in a previous strenuous sport season, they do not need to restart the 6-day rule as long as there are no more than 3 consecutive days off between their last competition in the prior sport, and their first practice in the new sport.
3. Late Arrivals for Other Reasons
 - If a student-athlete joins late for reasons other than playoff overrun, they must complete the full six (6) days of practice and one (1) day of rest within their first seven (7) days before they can participate in a scrimmage or game in a strenuous sport

Scrimmage Rules

NJSIAA does not limit the number of scrimmages for most sports starting with the competition may begin date.

1. General Rules:
 - Declared scrimmages on or after the official competition may begin date, do not count toward that sport’s maximum contest limit
 - Declared scrimmages held after a schools first regular season contest will count toward that sport’s maximum contest limit
 - Scrimmages may not involve more than 4 schools
 - Any scrimmage involving an out-of-state team, or a non-member school must count as a scrimmage for both teams
2. Football-Specific Rules:
 - Schools may scrimmage twice per week
 - Maximum of 3 full-contact scrimmages
 - All must occur before the regular season begins
3. State Tournament Exception
 - During the state tournament, teams may schedule additional scrimmages against other teams, provided the opposing team is either:
 - a. Participating in the tournament and has a first-round bye, or
 - b. Not participating in the tournament but has not yet reached its maximum contest limit
 - Tournament teams are permitted:
 - a. One (1) scrimmage during a week containing one bye, or
 - b. Two (2) scrimmages during a week containing two byes

Please Note: Schools are advised that if this exemption is used with a non-tournament team, the scrimmage will count toward that team’s maximum contest limit. For teams still in the tournament, these scrimmages will not count toward their maximum contest limit. Both schools must agree that it is a scrimmage and not a game.

More detailed information is available in the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association handbook under “NJSIAA Program Regulations,” Section seven (7).

NJSIAA Steroid Testing/Banned Substances List

In 2005, an Executive Order was passed that requires NJSIAA to randomly test student-athletes who have qualified, whether as an individual or as members of a team, for state championship competition, for the use of steroids and other banned substances. NJSIAA partners with Drug Free Sports to facilitate the testing program. The testing protocols and list of banned substances are updated and approved annually by the Executive Committee. Drug Free Sports offers a free service for NJSIAA student-athletes to review label ingredients in nutritional/dietary supplements and medications.

This information can be found in the List of Banned Substances found on the NJSIAA website under Health & Safety/Steroid Testing.

NJSIAA Transfer Rule

Students first transfer is penalty free, regardless of the reason for the transfer or prior level of participation, if:

1. The transfer occurs prior to the start of practice, and
2. The transfer occurs prior to the completion of the student's third year of eligibility (Senior Transfer Rule)

Transfer Penalties:

1. Second or subsequent transfers = 30-day sit or $\frac{1}{2}$ the maximum number of contests (4 games for football, 12 games for basketball, 30 days for wrestling)
2. Senior transfers = 22-day sit or $\frac{1}{3}$ the maximum number of contests (3 games for football, 8 games for basketball, 30 days for wrestling)
3. Transfer after start of practice = 30-day sit or $\frac{1}{2}$ the maximum number of contests (4 games for football, 12 games for basketball, 30 days for wrestling)
4. Transfer after competition start date = 30-day sit or $\frac{1}{2}$ the maximum number of contests (4 games for football, 8 games for basketball, 30 days for wrestling) and student is ineligible for NJSIAA post-season competition

Note: There are exemptions for military transfers, HIB placements, DCP&P placements, transfers resulting from a school's closure, or elimination of a sports program.

When implementing a transfer penalty (30 or 22-day), the student's first day of the penalty will begin on the day of the team's first official interscholastic contest (not including scrimmages). For football, the student will sit 3 games for a 22-day sit and 4 games for a 30-day sit.

The entirety of the NJSIAA Transfer Rule/Policy can be found in the NJSIAA Bylaws Article V – Eligibility of Athletes. Coaches must consult their AD to confirm the eligibility status of all transfers prior to participating in any regular season contests.

Ineligible Players

To ensure that member schools make certain that all Student-Athletes comply with eligibility standards or that they obtain appropriate waivers where necessary prior to competition, the following forfeiture penalties will be imposed: (1) If the ineligible student participates as a member of a team, the team will forfeit any contest in which the ineligible student participated, regardless of how long the ineligible student participated in the contest. (2) If the ineligible student participates as an individual, in an event or tournament at which no team score is calculated or team champion declared, the ineligible student will forfeit any contest won. These penalties are mandatory and are not subject to appeal.

Disqualifications (DQs)

Any coach and/or student-athlete that is disqualified from an NJSIAA event at any level will be required to sit out the next two competitions, except for football which requires a one-competition sit. Any coach and/or student-athlete subject to the DQ penalty may not be present at any contest in that sport during the period of disqualification. Definition of not being present at the site means the disqualified player or coach is not to be present in the locker room, on the bus, on the sidelines, in the stands or site area before, during or after the game/meet. In addition, a disqualified coach may not engage in any coaching or communication whatsoever with anyone at the contest.

Officials are required to file the DQ report within 48 hours of the disqualification and must communicate with the school's athletic director the pending DQ by 12:00pm the next day via phone or email.

There are no appeals to any disqualification once it has been filed by the official. NJSIAA does encourage officials to review video to ensure the correct coach and/or student-athlete(s) are identified for disqualification. NJSIAA will also review video brought to its attention that may indicate a violation of its sportsmanship policy. Lastly, a DQ may be corrected if both the official(s) and NJSIAA staff agree that the wrong student-athlete was disqualified based on evidence provided after the report has been filed.

Any disqualification that involved a bias incident will be reviewed by the Executive Director to determine if further investigation is necessary. NJSIAA may investigate the incident itself or refer the incident to the school, league, or conference for further investigation.

Any bias incident, in the form of a disqualification or complaint, will be forwarded to the NJ Division of Civil Rights as required by a June 2013 Memorandum of Agreement between NJSIAA and the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General.

Schools are to be reminded of the 3-team DQ rule for state tournament eligibility, which states “Any varsity team accumulating three or more player or coach disqualifications prior to the team’s participation in the state tournament will not be permitted to participate in the state tournament. The 3-team DQ rule is no longer applicable during participation in the state tournament.

The NJSIAA will follow the procedure below for schools that are disqualified from state tournament competition:

1. If a school is disqualified, either for the use of an ineligible player or violating the 3-team DQ rule, from state tournament competition after the tournament has been seeded but prior to the bracket being final, then the bracket will be reseeded and the next ranked school who entered the tournament will be included.
2. If a school is disqualified, either for the use of an ineligible player or violating the 3-team DQ rule, from state tournament competition after the tournament has been seeded and after the bracket is final, then the bracket will not be reseeded, and no additional school will be included.
3. If a school is disqualified from state tournament competition due to the use of an ineligible player during the state tournament, then the school will be removed from the tournament immediately and their last opponent will advance in their place.

Players Leaving the Bench Area

Any player that leaves the bench area during an altercation, regardless of whether the player engages in the altercation, shall be disqualified, and will be subject to the disqualification penalty (automatically disqualified from the next two contests, except football which is one game.) Only coaches can leave the bench with the purpose of restraining players and/or stopping altercations.

Any player who leaves the bench area at any point during an interscholastic event is automatically disqualified. If an official is unable to identify the player(s) who left the bench area, then the official must report the incident to NJSIAA staff as soon as the event is completed so that video can be reviewed to determine which player(s) should be disqualified.

NJSIAA Use of Video

NJSIAA reserves the right to use video for the following situations:

1. To identify if a violation of our sportsmanship policy occurred and to determine if additional disqualifications are necessary.
2. To correctly identify and determine players that have left the bench.
3. To ensure that disqualifications are correctly identified.

NJSIAA staff will be responsible for entering these additional disqualifications into the DQ system.

Levels of Disqualification

1. Coach DQ
 - a. 1st time
 - Sit 2 games/1 for football
 - \$200 fine
 - Must complete the NFHS “Teaching & Modeling Behavior” course
 - Must complete above if 3 or more players receive DQs
 - b. 2nd time within 365 days of 1st DQ
 - Controversies Committee Hearing
2. Player DQ
 - a. 1st time
 - Sit 2 games/1 for football
 - b. 2nd time within 365 days of 1st DQ
 - Sit 4 games/2 for football
 - c. 2nd time within the same season

- Ineligible for the state tournament
- d. 3rd time within 365 days of 1st DQ
 - Suspended indefinitely from all sports

3. Team DQ

- a. Any varsity team accumulating three (3) or more DQs (coach or player) will not be permitted to enter the state tournament.

More detailed information regarding the information above can be found in the NJSIAA handbook under the “NJSIAA Rules & Regulations” / “Specific Sport Regulations” section.

NJSIAA Quick Charts

NJSIAA maintains “quick charts” for each sports season that provide all important dates and other details by sport for a 3-year period. These charts are updated regularly when changes have been approved. You are strongly encouraged to familiarize yourself with the information included.

The quick charts can be found under the “Schools” menu tab on our website.

NJSIAA Heat Acclimatization Guidelines

NJSIAA requires all member schools to follow the National Athletic Trainer’s Association requirements for pre-season heat acclimatization for all sports. All coaches must be knowledgeable of these requirements and are required to follow them without exception.

The 14-day heat acclimatization period and related definitions can be found in the NJSIAA Policies and Procedures Handbook.

NJSIAA Heat Participation Guidelines

NJSIAA’s heat participation policy requires the use of a Wet Bulb Globe Thermometer (WBGT) readings to determine what level of activity may be safely hosted. Every member school is required to have a WBGT onsite to ensure compliance with the guidelines. These guidelines apply to any event – practice, scrimmage, or game.

The Guidelines can be found on our website under the Health & Safety/Sports Medicine tabs.

Procedure In the Event of Thunder or Lightning

Mandatory:

1. Suspend play, or delay the commencement of the contest, for 30 minutes. All participants and spectators shall vacate the outdoor venue to a designated safer area immediately. A list of the closest safer areas should be announced and displayed at all outdoor venues. Clear instructions should be given over the public address system (if available) to guide participants and spectators to safer areas.
2. Once Play has been suspended, wait at least 30 minutes after the last thunder is heard or lightning is witnessed prior to resuming play.
3. Any subsequent thunder or lightning after the beginning of the 30-minute count will reset the clock and another 30-minute count shall begin. If, for example, the contest is suspended at 8:00pm due to a lightning strike, and then lightning is witnessed again at 8:25pm, the earliest the contest may resume is 8:55pm.

Voluntary Guidelines:

4. If thunder or lightning persists, and access to the field for warmups cannot resume 75 minutes after the initial suspension of play, the contest shall be postponed to a later date.
5. If participants can safely return to the field of play within 75 minutes, the players shall participate in a brief warmup period, and the contest shall resume.
6. Athletic Administrators, coaches & officials may agree to alter #’s 4 & 5 if all agree. If an agreement on how long to wait cannot be reached, then 75 minutes will be used.
7. For Football only, the host school site management shall determine how long to suspend the game before it is postponed

NJSIAA Amateur Rules/NIL Provision

In 2021, NJSIAA's Executive Committee updated the Association's amateur rules which provide a provision to allow student-athletes the opportunity to engage in certain commercial activities in their individual capacities only. Any activity shall not involve any school or team reference, nor can anyone employed by a member school be involved with a student-athlete's NIL activity.

Please refer any student-athlete to the FAQs found on the NJSIAA website under Current Resources for more information.

NJSIAA Recruitment Rules and Violations

The recruiting of high school students is prohibited. A student becomes a "high school student" on the first day the student attends ninth grade, or the first day the student attends fall sports practice prior to the student's ninth grade year, whichever is earlier.

Athletic recruitment is defined as any effort to proselytize, pressure, urge or entice a student to transfer to a school for athletic purposes. It is a violation for a member school to engage in athletic recruitment or for a student-athlete to transfer to a school as a result of athletic recruitment. Athletic recruitment includes, but is not limited to:

1. Using mail, letters, brochures, or news media to compare high schools and to solely point out the athletic assets of the sender.
2. Engaging in proselytizing interviews or communications by school personnel or associates.
3. Offering athletic scholarships, free tuition or other monetary assistance, either from the school directly or indirectly through some affiliated body or individual, to induce a student to attend the school for athletic reasons. This is applicable to students of all grade levels, not just high school students.

Any evidence that a student has moved to a residence associated with, leased, or provided by anyone associated with the school or acting at the direction of the school, including but not limited to administration, staff, coaches, students, parents, booster clubs, or any organization having a connection with the school, shall be considered prima facie evidence of recruiting. This is applicable to students of all grade levels, not just high school students.

If the NJSIAA determines that there has been athletic recruitment by a member school, the recruiting school will be subjected to appropriate disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion among other penalties. The following chart will be used to assist the Controversies Committee in issuing penalties for violation of Article V, Section 4.D, Athletic Recruitment. The following penalties may be fully or in part enacted by the Committee:

Recruitment Violation Chart

Infraction Level	Types of Infractions	Penalties
Level 1	• Use of general advertising for recruitment of 9-12 grade high school students, including but not limited to: social media, flyers, advertisements, brochures, booster/donor sites, etc. • There is no student contact involved in level one.	• School must remediate issue immediately by removing, editing or rescinding advertisement. • School (all sports) placed on probation for one year. • AD and/or coach will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense.

Level 2	Repeating a Level 1 offense. OR Recruiting contact/communication with a 9-12 grade student-athlete, or their family, from another high school by a non-district approved person including, but not limited to: parents, boosters, alumni, former coaches, and recently hired coaches who may have recruited athletes just prior to being approved by the district.	- Person(s) guilty will be banned from all NJSIAA sporting events for three years. - Head coach of program will be suspended for $\frac{1}{4}$ of the season's maximum contests for that sport (scheduled contests if sport has no max.) - Head coach will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense. - School (all sports) placed on probation for one year for 1st violation; 2 years if a level 1 violation has previously occurred.
Level 3	- Repeating a Level 2 offense. OR - Direct recruiting contact/communication with a 9-12 grade student-athlete, or their family, from another high school by a district approved person including, but not limited to: paid coaches, volunteer coaches, students at the behest of their coach, or any district employee.	- Violating program is ineligible to compete in NJSIAA Championship Tournament for one year or removed from tournament if in progress. - Vacating previously earned championships due to this recruiting violation. - Head coach of program, if not directly involved, will be suspended for $\frac{1}{3}$ of the season's maximum contests for that sport (scheduled contests if sport has no max.) - Any coach involved will be suspended in all sports for 1 year. - AD, head coach and all other coaches involved will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense. - School (all sports) placed on probation for 1 year for 1st violation; 2 years if a repeat level 2 violation. - School will be fined $\frac{1}{2}$ of the maximum amount allowed in Article 10, Section 2.

Level 4	- Repeating a Level 3 offense. OR - An egregious violation of direct recruiting of a 9-12 grade student-athlete, or their family, from another high school by a district approved person. The violation may include but is not limited to: recruitment of multiple student-athletes, recruitment that endangers the health, wellness and safety of student athletes, recruitment violations that showed persistent and ongoing recruitment efforts by a district approved coach or employee.	- Violating program is ineligible to compete in NJSIAA Championship Tournament for 2 years (removed from current tournament if in progress plus an additional year). - Vacating previously earned championships due to this recruiting violation. - Head coach of the program, if not directly involved, will be suspended for 1 year. - Any coach involved will be suspended in all sports for 2 years. - AD, head coach and all other coaches involved will take NFHS Course and attend appropriate NJSIAA workshop at own or district expense. - School (all sports) placed on probation for 2 years. School will be fined the maximum amount allowed in Article 10, Section 2.
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The entirety of the NJSIAA Recruiting Rule/Policy can be found in the NJSIAA Bylaws Article V – Eligibility of Athletes.

NJSIAA Player/Coach Do's & Don'ts Chart

The following chart is for general guidelines only. More detailed information regarding these questions can be found in the NJSIAA handbook under the "NJSIAA Rules & Regulations" section.

#	Questions	In-Season	Out-of-Season	Summer
1	Can coaches have meetings with their team or individual players?	YES	YES	YES
2	Can coaches coach their own children?	YES	YES	YES
3	Can coaches have contact with potential players who are currently enrolled in another high school?	NO	NO	NO
4	Can coaches use school organizations like booster clubs to assist in non-NJSIAA programs?	YES	NO	YES
5	Can a coach work or host camps/clinics with their athletes present?	YES	NO	YES
6	Can middle school or recreation teams come to watch high school practices, workouts and clinics?	YES	NA	YES
7	Can a middle school or recreation team or individuals practice with high school teams?	NO	NA	YES
8	Can a coach have contact with any students in grades eight and below?	YES	YES	YES

9	Can coaches coach an AAU/club/travel team with none of their players on the team?	YES	YES	YES
10	Can coaches coach an AAU/club/travel team with their players on the team?	YES	NO	YES
11	Can a coach that works at a sports facility not connected to the high school coach a team or individuals that are on the high school team?	YES	NO	YES
12	Can a coach that works at a sports facility not connected to the high school coach a team or individuals that are not on the high school team even though H.S. players belong to the facility?	YES	YES	YES
13	When can a school sponsor an interscholastic competition?	YES	NO	NO
14	May the school assist H.S. teams or athletes by providing transportation, entry fees, uniforms, etc.?	YES	NO	YES
15	Can a coach participate in open gyms sponsored by either the school or an outside organization with players present?	YES	NO	YES
16	Can a coach discuss his/her program with student-athletes, or their parents, from another high school?	NO	NO	NO
17	Can a coach speak to student-athletes from another high school, or their parents, about their school if the student or parent initiates the contact?	NO	NO	NO
18	Is the coach responsible for the actions of his/her assistants, boosters, parents and other school personnel regarding the recruitment of student-athletes from other high schools?	YES	YES	YES

NFHS/NJSCA Membership

NJSIAA has partnered with NFHS to allow NJSIAA coaches to be dual enrolled in both the National Federation of Coaches Association (NFCA) and NJ Scholastic Coaches Association (NJSCA) for increased benefits and services. The annual membership period is from July 1st through June 30th. The \$35 annual enrollment will provide membership in both associations, which includes some of the following benefits:

1. Access to the official NFHS Coaches Association membership card (available from member profile)
2. Access to NFHS insurance coverage – see the summary of coverage at <https://www.nfhs.org/media/7212168/nfhs-coaches-officials-coverage-limit-summary-2023-2024.pdf>
3. Access to NFHS digital rules books
4. Ability to submit nominations for NFCA and NJSCA coaching award programs
5. Consideration for service on NFHS committees
6. Other partner discounts

Please enroll in the NFCA by visiting: <https://www.nfhs.org/who-we-are/membership#coaches>

This information can also be found on our website: <https://www.njsiaa.org/coaches/njsca>

NFHS Learning Center – Courses for Coaches <https://nfhslearn.com/>

The NFHS Learning Center currently offers about 90 online courses, including more than 60 that are free, for students, coaches, athletic directors, school administrators, parents, officials, performing arts educators, music adjudicators and others involved in high school sports and performing arts programs.

In addition, the NFHS hosts two different national recognition programs that are designed to promote professional development throughout the year – one is for schools, and one is for coaches. Both programs have 3 levels of distinction based on the completion of certain courses. Please see the details below.

NFHS School Honor Roll Program

The NFHS School Honor Roll Program recognizes those schools with 90 percent or more of their coaches have successfully completed the required courses at each level. Schools that apply and meet the requirements earn a banner to hang in their school to highlight this national achievement. This national distinction is an opportunity for all schools to showcase their dedication and commitment to students and to education-based programs. Schools can apply for the NFHS School Honor Roll Program via the following link: https://nfhslearn.com/home/school_honor_roll

NFHS National Coach Credential

The NFHS National Coach Credential recognizes those coaches that have completed the required courses at each level, which are the same courses as the School Honor Roll program. This national credential was developed for individuals who are currently coaching or aspire to coach at the interscholastic level. The goal is to enhance the ability of the coach to better serve students, the school, the community, and the profession of coaching. Schools can apply for the NFHS National Coach Credential Program via the following link: <https://nfhslearn.com/home/coaches>

Courses for Coaches

Building and Maintain Positive Culture	Sports Nutrition
ACL Injury Prevention	Strength and Conditioning
Adolescent Development: Centering Athlete Needs	Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention
Afterschool Security	Sudden Cardiac Arrest
Appearance/Performance Enhancing Drugs	Teaching and Modeling Behavior
Bullying, Hazing and Inappropriate Behaviors	Teaching Sports Skills
Coaching Mental Wellness	The Collapsed Student
Coaching Student Leadership	The Female and Male Athlete Triad
Communicable Skin Infections	Title IX
Concussion in Sports	Understanding Copyright and Compliance
Collecting Statistics: Basketball	Understanding Vaping and E-Cigarettes
Collecting Statistics: Baseball and Softball	Coaching Baseball
Collecting Statistics: Football	Coaching Basketball
Collecting Statistics: Soccer	Coaching Boys Lacrosse
Collecting Statistics: Volleyball	Coaching Cross Country
CPR and AED Training	Coaching Diving
Developing Youth Through Sport	Coaching Field Hockey
Emergency Action Planning - Afterschool Programs	Coaching Field Hockey: Goalkeeping
Engaging Effectively with Parents	Coaching Football
First Aid, Health and Safety	Coaching Girls Lacrosse
Football Tackling	Coaching Golf
Fundamentals of Coaching	Coaching Pole Vault
Heat Illness Prevention	Coaching Soccer
Implicit Bias	Coaching Softball
Introduction to Pitch Smart	Coaching Swimming
Mental Training for Performance	Coaching Tennis
Name, Image and Likeness	Coaching Track and Field
Protecting Students from Abuse	Coaching Unified Sports
Social Media	Coaching Volleyball
Sportsmanship	Coaching Wrestling
Sports Betting	Coaching Adapted Sports