



# **AHSAA Eligibility Rules**

**What Every Parent  
Should Know**

Updated August 2023

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules



*The presentation highlights some of the major AHSAA eligibility rules. It is important to understand that these are general statements only and do not include all the details that may be involved in any specific eligibility question.*

*If you have any questions or need further explanation of details and exceptions, see your school's principal, athletic director or head coach. If an official ruling from AHSAA is necessary, your school must make a request.*

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Enrollment Rule:**
  - Must be a regularly enrolled student and must have enrolled in a school no later than the 20<sup>th</sup> school day of the semester. First 20 days is for a student not enrolled in any school.
  - Must not have graduated or received a certificate of completion from an accredited high school.
  - Home school students are immediately eligible their initial year of enrollment. Homeschool student must enroll in the school and enroll in two electives (one for 7-8 grades/2 for 9-12 grades). Student must meet all AHSAA academic requirements thereafter. Only one PE class per year may be counted towards academic eligibility.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Age Rule:**
  - In high school, must not have reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to Aug. 1 of the current school year.
  - In junior high, must not have reached their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to Aug. 1 of the current school year.
  - In middle school, must not have reached their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to Aug. 1 of the current school year.
  - For seventh-grade-only teams, must not have reached their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday prior to Aug. 1 of the current school year.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about Eligibility Verification Requirements:**
  - Must have the following items on file in the principal's office:
    - Copy of certified birth certificate
    - Current physical exam form signed by a doctor (M.D. or D.O)
    - Concussion information form signed by student-athlete and parent
    - Student release form
    - NFHS Sportsmanship completion certificate
  - Name must be submitted on an official eligibility list and principal certified for two days before becoming eligible to participate in a contest.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about Participation Limits:**
  - Students are eligible for eight consecutive semesters after entering the ninth grade (15 days of attendance during a semester count as a semester).
  - No student can participate more than four years (seasons) in any one sport after entering the ninth grade or three years (seasons) after entering the 10<sup>th</sup> grade.
  - No student can participate in athletics more than six years after entering the seventh grade.

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- **What every parent should know about the Academic Rule:**
  - A 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade student must have passed a minimum of six units of work (including any four core courses) with a composite average of 70 for those six units during the preceding two semesters of attendance. Any four core courses must be included in the six passed and averaged.
  - Any number of units (subjects) may be earned in an accredited summer school and/or Credit Recovery if approved by local board.
  - All students must be taking six units of work (ones not previously passed) during the current year (seniors on track for graduation fall under different guidelines).
  - An 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade student must have passed a minimum of five new subjects with a composite average of 70 and must have been promoted to the next grade.

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- **What every parent should know about the Transfer Rule:**
  - A student is eligible at his/her home school at the beginning of each new school year.
  - The home school is the AHSAA-member school that serves the area where the parents reside. A family must reside in an attendance zone for one year for that zone to be considered the “home school.”
  - Students entering the seventh grade for the first time are eligible where they enroll.

*(Transfer Rule, continued on next slide)*

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Transfer Rule:**
  - A student who is enrolled in one school then leaves and enrolls in another school at any time after beginning the seventh grade is a transfer.
  - A student who attends a school outside of his/her home school district must attend that school for one full calendar year in order to establish athletic eligibility at the varsity level.
  - Before transferring from one school to another, always check AHSAA eligibility rules.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Outside Participation Rule:**
  - A student may not participate on a non-school team or in an outside sport activity (including camps, tryouts, showcases, etc.) in his/her sport during the school sport season, with the following exceptions:
    - Students in track, cross country or wrestling may participate as an independent only in two outside activities with no loss of school time during the season in that sport.
    - A student in soccer may participate in one activity per month with principal and coach permission.
    - Students in tennis, golf, bowling and swimming are exempt from this rule but must compete only as an independent, not part of a non-school team.

*(Outside Participation, continued on next slide)*

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Outside Participation Rule:**
  - Private individual instruction is not considered an outside sports activity. Private individual instruction is one-on-one instruction between athletes from the same school and instructor and cannot be instruction with another player or groups of players from other schools.
  - A team's school sports season begins the day of the school's first contest and ends when the team's season has been completed.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Bona Fide Move Rule:**
  - A bona fide move occurs when a student's parents move completely out of one school attendance zone into another.
  - Guidelines for determining a bona fide move include:
    - The household furniture of the family must be moved into an unoccupied house or apartment.
    - All principal members of the family must reside in the new place of residence.
    - The original residence must be closed, rented or disposed of and not used by the family.
    - Nine months at the new residence will be required to make a move bona fide.

*(Bona Fide Move, continued on next slide)*

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules



- **What every parent should know about the Bona Fide Move Rule:**
  - A transfer student whose parents make a bona fide move is eligible at the member school that serves the area where his/her parents reside if all other requirements are met.
  - If the family making the bona fide move remains at the new residence for less than nine months, the student becomes ineligible there on the day the family leaves the attendance zone of the new school.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules



- **What every parent should know about Overlapping School Zones:**
  - A student, whose parents reside in an area served by more than one school, lives in the school zone of each school, thus lives in overlapping school zones.
  - A student who changes schools within overlapping school zones is ineligible at the varsity level for one year at the new school.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about The Alabama Accountability Act of 2013:**
  - The Alabama Accountability Act of 2013 (Act 2013-265) shall not affect or change the athletic eligibility rules of student-athletes governed by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.
  - A student transferring from a failing school to non-failing is ineligible unless the transfer is within the same school system and is made within the time set forth by the local school.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Higher Level Participation Rule:**
  - A student will be ineligible at any AHSAA-member school if he/she enrolls or registers in an institution of higher rank or plays on an athletic team of such an institution.
  - It is not a violation if a student's principal approves his/her enrollment in special classes for an accelerated or enrichment program.
  - College tryouts are permitted, but only outside the high school sports season or during the season with principal and coach permission. .

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about working with coaches during the school year:**
  - During the school year, a student may not be coached by his/her school's coaching staff outside the season of his/her sport except for the allowable 2 hours per week per sport. (see Rule III. Coaching outside school year.)
  - An evaluation period allowed in each sport is exempt from this restriction.
  - Weight training and conditioning programs are exempt from this restriction.
    - \* A school coach cannot coach any student from his/her school (grades 7-12) in practice or competition on an outside team.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Summer Practice Rules:**
  - During the summer months (from the end of school until the first fall sports practice date), a student may be coached by his/her school coach during the three allowable weeks in competition for each sport in which the student participates.
  - During the summer months (from the end of school until the first fall sports practice date), there is no limit on the number of practice days a student may be coached by his/her coach.
  - Mandatory summer practices are not allowed. Summer workouts are not governed by the AHSAA but fall under local school policy and guidelines.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules



- **What every parent should know about the Dressing Out Rule:**
  - An ineligible student-athlete may not dress in uniform for any varsity level athletic contest, sit on the bench in a game uniform or be on the field or court as a player.
  - An ineligible student-athlete may practice with his/her school team and is covered by catastrophic insurance.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- **What every parent should know about the Levels of Competition Rule:**
  - A student may not participate in two levels of competition (varsity, junior varsity, B-team, junior high or middle school) in one sport during the same event or the same day.
  - This restriction includes all tournaments even though they may be played over several days.

# Recruiting cautions:

- ▶ It is illegal for a coach or anyone associated with another school to talk to a student (not enrolled in his/her school) about transferring to their school to participate in athletics. (this includes private instructors, trainers, club coaches, etc.)
- ▶ It is also illegal for a coach or anyone associated with another school to talk to parents about their student transferring to the other school to participate in athletics.
- ▶ Parents on their own will, may visit a school to inquire about their child transferring to a new school.
- ▶ If a student or parent is contacted by anyone about transferring to a new school, they should notify their school principal immediately.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules

- What every parent should know about the Amateur Rule:

At no time may a student receive financial payments (cash, checks, gift cards, etc.) for athletic participation in school or non-school events.

A student may receive an award or gift package for participation as long as the monetary value of such does not exceed \$250.00 total.

This includes medals, trophies, gear, attire, etc.

# AHSAA Eligibility Rules



- Official AHSAA Rulings
  - To receive an official ruling, the principal of a member school must request a ruling in writing to the Executive Director or Eligibility Coordinator.
  - Official Rulings are issued/approved in writing by the Executive Director or Eligibility Coordinator. A verbal opinion, statement or email is not an official ruling.

# AHSAA Contact Information

- ▶ Alabama High School Athletic Association
  - ▶ P.O. Box 242367
  - ▶ 7325 Halcyon Summit Drive
  - ▶ Montgomery, AL 36124-2367
- ▶ Phone – (334) 263-6994
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