Media Access to Rockdale County High Schools (RCHS) Sporting Events

Please note that the information provided below **does not** substitute for actual media credentials. If you have any questions on how to obtain media access to varsity sporting events, please contact the **Communications Department**.

For the purpose of these guidelines, the phrase **"Recognized Traditional Media Organizations"** refers to media outlets that produce and broadcast news programming and/or newspapers in traditional print and digital form to a mass audience, such as:

- 11 Alive [NBC]
- WSB TV Ch. 2 [ABC]
- Atlanta News First [CBS]
- Fox 5 [Fox]
- Georgia Public Broadcasting [GPB]
- My ATL TV
- ESPN
- Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- Gwinnett Daily Post
- Max Prep

The list above is not exhaustive. It is an example of the media organizations that fit in the "Recognized Traditional Media Organizations" category.

For the purpose of this document, the phrase **"Non-Traditional/Alternative Media"** refers to boutiques or independent reports, bloggers, photographers and videographers whose work primarily appears on the internet or social media platforms such as:

- Twitter
- Instagram
- Tik Tok
- Snapchat
- Facebook
- YouTube
- Vimeo

- Hudl

The list above is not exhaustive. It is an example of the media organizations that fit in the "Non-Traditional/Alternative Media " category.

To ensure the safety of student-athletes, coaches, referees/game officials as well as all qualified media agencies, and to ensure that all qualified media agencies have the appropriate access and working space, the following guidelines and policies have been developed for Rockdale County High School varsity athletic events (excluding Region Tournaments and GHSA State Playoff events)

Members of **Recognized Traditional Media Organizations** and **Non-Traditional/Alternative Media** members requesting "Game Day Media Passes" must first be "credentialed" by attending and completing a one-time inteview with Athletic director where we will cover game day rules and approved locations for shooting photos and/or recording video. *RCHS reserves the right to deny Media Passes to individuals who **do not complete** iinterview.* T

Media Passes are granted at the discretion of the "home" school. Priority will be given to media outlets that have covered the majority of the school's home games/matches/contests. Meeting this threshold, however, does not guarantee access to Media Passes.

Due to capacity limitations, credentialed **Non-Traditional/Alternative/Social Media members must pre-register for games of interest at least 72 hours before the game/match.** Media Passes will be granted on a first-come, first-served basis:

A maximum of **ten (10)** Media Passes will be issued for indoor sporting events (Boys & Girls Basketball, Swimming & Diving, Volleyball, and Wrestling). Media Passes will be allocated in the following manner on a first-come, first-served basis:

- 4 - Broadcast media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 2 - Print (AJC & Gwinnett Daily Post) media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 2 - Non-Traditional/Alternative Media outlets
- 2 - Visiting teams from schools located more than 100 miles from the host school shall be granted two media passes.
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RCHS reserves the right to reduce the number of available Media Passes at its discretion.

A maximum of **eleven (11)** Media Passes will be issued for outdoor sporting events (Varsity Football, Boys and Girls Soccer, Track & Field, Lacrosse, and Baseball). Media Passes will be allocated in the following manner on a first-come, first-served basis:

- 4 - Broadcast media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 2 - Print (AJC & Gwinnett Daily Post) media outlets in the Recognized Traditional Media Organizations category
- 3 - **Non-Traditional/Alternative Media outlets**
- 2 - Visiting teams from schools located more than 100 miles from the host school shall be granted two media passes.

Media Passes **must be displayed by the authorized holder at all times** during the applicable RCHS athletic event. Credentialed media members must carry a government-issued photo ID (driver's license, Georgia ID Card, passport) with them **at all times.**

Media Passes must be returned to the designated representative of the home school at the conclusion of the athletic event. **Individuals, and their affiliated media organizations, will be denied entry into future RCHS athletic contests if assigned Media Passes are not returned to the appropriate person at the conclusion of the athletic contest.**

Media Passes do not grant the authorized holder access to team locker rooms before, during, or after games, matches, or events.

RCHS reserves the right to deny or revoke credentials for any media outlet that violates the provisions of this document, the restrictions, instructions, limitations, and training set forth in the orientation/training sessions, or any legal directives issued by authorized RCHS staff at any game, match, event or contest. Despite the foregoing, RCHS staff may not engage in viewpoint discrimination in the denial or revocation of credentials. Individuals and their affiliated media organizations who have been denied Media Passes or had their Media Passes revoked shall have the right to appeal the decision to Athletic Director. Any individual or their affiliated media organization must file their appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the denial or revocation.

Coaches and players may be available for interviews directly outside the locker rooms.

a. Coaches and/or athletic directors shall determine the availability of coaches and players and the time and length of all interviews.

b. Coaches and/or athletic directors shall reserve the right to be present during student-athlete interviews.

Any media member intoxicated, under the influence of / in possession of alcohol or illegal drugs, using tobacco or nicotine products, or abusing prescription drugs or acting unprofessionally will have their Media Pass revoked and will be escorted off RCHS property. Individuals who engage in the behavior mentioned above and their affiliated media organization will be denied future Media Passes at all RCHS schools. Individuals and their affiliated media organization who have been denied future Media Passes shall have the right to appeal the decision to the Athletic Director. Any individual or their affiliated media organization must file their appeal within thirty (30) calendar days of the event from which the media member was removed.

Individuals and/or media organizations that violate the RCHS Media Access Policy and lose access to Media Passes at one EVENT lose access to Media Passes at all RCHS events.

*Getting credentialed and obtaining a Media Pass is not required for RCHS student journalists, i.e., members of the **home and visiting school's** student newspaper, yearbook, etc.) Student journalists who wish to cover athletic contests are strongly encouraged to connect with their school's athletic director to arrange access to the above-mentioned sporting events as well as opportunities to interview players and/or coaches. A maximum of two student journalists per visiting school shall be granted the same access as student journalists from the home school.

Applying for Media Credentials

- Requests for Media Passes shall be directed to the athletic director of the host school in writing or via email at least 72 hours before the event.
- A valid government-issued photo ID (driver's license, Georgia ID Card, passport) is required to apply for and pick up a Media Pass.
- RCHS does not grant Media Passes to individuals under 16 years of age.
- Each Media Pass request will stand on its own merits.
- Membership in a 'writers' or 'broadcasters' association does not automatically qualify a media outlet or individual for a Media Pass.

- Being credentialed and granted a Media Pass for non-RCHS athletic events does not automatically qualify individuals or media outlets for RCHS athletic events.
- Requests for Media Passes will only be approved for those assigned to cover the game/athletic event.
- Media Passes are not transferable and may not be given or loaned to anyone else.
- Media Passes may not be duplicated or reproduced in any manner.
- Failure to adhere to the requirements of this policy may result in the revocation of credentials and access to Media Passes for the representative and their media outlet.
- Media outlets will be held accountable for the actions, conduct, and professionalism of all their credentialed personnel.
- Availability of Media Passes is subject to space availability restrictions in working media areas at various facilities.

Media Passes shall not be issued to:

- Individuals gathering video and/or taking pictures for books, documentaries, short films, or movies.
- Representatives of syndicated television, cable, or streaming services who are not producing programs for immediate news coverage (i.e., to air within 24 hours or to report on subsequent games or contests or other current events).
- Broadcast, televise, webcast, tape, film or photograph the game, contest, or any description thereof for any commercial purpose beyond reporting on the game, match, event, or contest as permitted by the fair use doctrine.

Risks:
By getting credentialed and receiving Media Passes, outlets and their representatives acknowledge and assume the risks that come from viewing athletic events, including being struck or injured by participants and flying objects such as balls, bats, and other sports equipment, inclement weather (lighting, tornadoes, wind).