

THE MODIFIED INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORTS PROGRAM

Interscholastic competition in sports for pupils below the tenth grade level has been modified by the NYSPHSAA, Inc. and adapted to students in grades 7-8-9. School administrators need to realize that the NYSPHSAA, Inc. Modified Sports Program has been approved by its member schools and is based on twenty years of experimentation and implementation with SAFETY as the major concern.

MEDICAL APPROVAL

The Medical Society of the State of New York and the American Medical Association have officially approved the NYSPHSAA, Inc. Modified Program as a sound, safe program. It is most important that all school administrators, directors, and coaches note this approval. The safety of the pupil has been the dominant factor in the establishment of the policies, rules, game conditions, and modified rules under which participants in this program compete.

INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS, ATHLETIC LEAGUES, AND SECTIONAL ATHLETIC COUNCILS have definite responsibilities to assure proper administration of the program:

THE SCHOOL

1. Abides by the rules by providing proper administration of the program.
2. Informs all essential personnel of program rules, regulations, and program philosophy.
3. Participates actively in the organized group of schools to properly administer the interscholastic athletic competition within the rules of the Modified Program.
4. Becomes involved in sectionally sponsored modified sports administrative committee or council, participating in rules and games clarification programs and clinics.

THE LEAGUE

1. Abides by the rules by providing proper league administration of the modified program through chairmen and committee members.
2. Gives consideration to more restrictive program policies if desired.
3. Expects league sports chairmen to participate actively on sectional sports committees.
4. Provides official, active representation on sectional council.

THE SECTION-COUNCIL FOR MODIFIED ATHLETICS

1. Establishes essential administrative units and sports chairmen to provide the leadership necessary for the Modified Sports Programs in the schools of the section. Official league representatives and sports chairmen shall comprise the Section's Council for Modified Athletics.
 - a) Shall establish the dates for the opening of all sports seasons.

Fall—September 1st is the earliest possible date for the fall sports season. Later dates may be set.

Winter—November 1st is the earliest possible date for the winter sports season. Later dates may be set.

Spring—March 1st is the earliest possible date for the spring sports season. Later dates may be set.

Four sports seasons may be set by sectional action and approval. The established fall starting date may not be changed without approval of both the NYSPHSAA Modified Committee and the NYSPHSAA Executive Committee. Earlier winter and spring starting dates may be established by sectional action. These dates must be reported to the Modified Committee.

b) Conducts all organized team practice and competition during one season.

c) Cooperates with officials' organizations—To provide officials with the essential information relating to the modified program and to secure competent officiating for the Modified Sports Program.

d) Administers all policies essential for proper functioning of the modified program of sports

--No sectional championships or tournaments shall be conducted.

--Clarifies sectional policy on program specifics—i.e. track shoes.

e) Recommends sectional participation in innovative programs to assist in experimentation to meet obvious needs for program improvement.

2. Participates actively in the functioning of the NYSPHSAA, Inc. State Committees on Modified Athletics by:

a) Having official, active representation on the State Committees.

b) The officially selected sectional sports chairmen shall provide the leadership for the sports conducted in the schools of the section and cooperate with the State Sports Chairmen in their continuing efforts to improve the sports programs and the safety of the participants.

3. Establishes a relationship with the Sectional H.S. Athletic Council and Central Committee members to clarify section's final approval of policies, programs, and with representatives involved in the Modified Sports Program of the schools of the section.

a) More restrictive policies may be adopted for sectionally approved programs if desired.

b) Recommendations for additional programs that may be desirable to meet particular needs in the section may be inaugurated.

c) Participation in innovative programs may be clarified and approved.

d) With sectional approval, variations of modified athletic game rules and conditions may be adopted selectively for use by specified conferences or leagues.

e) Essential communications should be established so that all schools are informed as to programs, policies, and administrative procedures necessary for the proper functioning of the Modified Sports Program.

f) Definite understanding needs to exist between the Section Council for Modified Athletics and the Senior H.S. Sectional Athletic Council relative to the responsibilities and authority of each.

The elected Central Committee members are the section's official representatives to the NYSPHSAA, Inc. governing bodies—the Central and Executive Committees. The Modified Sports Program for Grades 7-8-9 is their responsibility and complete understanding of the actions and activities of the Modified Athletics Council needs to exist.

INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

The establishing of essentially sound, safe, and sane modified sports programs to meet the needs of varying sized schools has always been a challenge for the State Committee. When new programs have been presented to meet specific needs the committee has requested sections to experiment with the new program to determine its values before recommending the program for official approval and referenda. Equitable competition is the constant aim.

Innovative programs may be participated in only after being officially requested by Sectional Representatives on the Committee and the approval of the State Committee. This procedure has been of real value in presenting practical programs for referenda.

GIRLS may participate on boys' teams according to Eligibility Standard #15, p. 78, 97.

LIFETIME SPORTS competition is a part of the athletic program in some schools involving grades 7-8-9. The Committee coordinators welcome suggestions from any schools involved in these sports and who feel standards need be established. There definitely needs to be a very close correlation of intramurals, extramurals, and interscholastic activities to provide a broad program for all interested students of all levels of ability.

If a student or school participates in the Modified Program on an interschool level in the lifetime sports, then all General Eligibility Rules must be observed, p. 127-133.

PROGRAM CONTROLS

SPECTATORS: Parents and interested students are usually the great majority of spectators at Modified Program games. Spectator buses to away games are most questionable and never should be permitted without the approval of the host school. When spectators visit another school, adequate and appropriate staff members should be available to supervise their spectators.

SCHOOL BANDS: Bands at Modified Program games are not desirable, since they tend to develop an overemphasized atmosphere for the competitors.

COACHES: The most important factor in the program is the coach. One must adapt coaching to the age level and the abilities of the junior high school youngsters, must teach the basic fundamentals of the games and avoid the intricacies of more advanced programs. Real patience and a knowledge of the youngsters at this particular age level is necessary. An understanding of all program policies and game rules and conditions is essential. Relations with opposing coaches should be one of cooperativeness and good sportsmanship, yet teaching and coaching the team to be the best of one's ability, realizing that the chief obligations are to the pupils and their proper sports education.

SCOUTING: There is no need for scouting of opponents' games at this level of competition.

GENERAL ELIGIBILITY RULES FOR THE MODIFIED PROGRAM

Situations not covered by the following specified modified rules shall be governed by the Eligibility Standards of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association, Inc.

1. **AGE:** Upon entry into the 7th grade, a student is eligible for modified program competition. One is ineligible when the sixteenth birthday is attained; however, if a student attains the sixteenth birthday during a sport season he/she may complete that sport season. **NOTE:** Schools, leagues and sections may organize Modified Program competition by age, grade or ability levels within the limitations of the NYSPHSAA Eligibility Rules to ensure safe and equitable competition. Teams shall practice and compete only against other teams that use the same criteria for organization (ie. age, grade, performance).
2. **BONA FIDE STUDENTS:** A contestant must be a bona fide student of grades 7, 8, 9 of the school represented. **NOTE:** If it becomes necessary to combine member schools to maintain a team or sport, a written request must be submitted and approval obtained from the league and section involved. Schools which have combined must submit a report to the Modified Committee and this will be submitted to the Executive Committee.
3. **CHAMPIONSHIPS-TOURNAMENTS:** Tournament competition is not permitted in the Modified Program. No sectional team or individual championships are to be conducted, nor are there to be championship playoffs on a team or individual basis.
4. **DURATION OF COMPETITION:** High School Eligibility Standard #8 becomes effective on the date of entry in ninth grade. (see p. 46, 93)
5. **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:** It is recommended that all schools develop emergency procedures to be followed by coaches.
6. **EXTENDED PLAYING TIME:** Eligibility for play in an extended playing time should be determined on the basis of the following participation standards:
 - a) Players with no participation in the regular game/contest should be eligible for play in an extended playing time.
 - b) Players whose participation in the regular contest was limited, i.e., their total participation was no more than one-half of the regular playing periods/quarters shall also be eligible for play in an extended playing time.
 - c) Limited participation shall be further defined to mean that entry into a playing period rather than actual playing time shall constitute "participation" in the regulation contest.

Optional Plan for use at the league or Section level: If a team has fewer than the minimum number of players to play the 5 period concept the following game rules will apply.

A 4 quarter game will be played with the number of minutes being increased for each quarter (see chart); however no player may play more than 3 quarters (*see exception). This will apply provided the team has a sufficient numbers of players so as not to exceed the NYSPHSAA regulated playing time allocation for each sport (see following chart).

SPORT	TIME LIMITS			MINIMUM # OF PLAYERS REQUIRED
	Regulation Game	5 Period Play	4 Quarter Extended Play	4 Quarter for extended play
BASKETBALL	7 minute quarters	7 minute periods	9 minute quarters (quarter 1-8 min.)	7
FIELD HOCKEY	25 minute halves	12 minute periods	15 minute quarters	15
FOOTBALL	10 minute	10 minute quarters	12 quarters periods	19
BOYS LACROSSE*	9 minute quarters	9 minute periods	11 minute quarters	14
GIRLS LACROSSE*	25 minute halves	12 minute periods	15 minute quarters	16
SOCCER	15 minute quarters	15 minute periods	18 minute quarters	15

In boys' and girls' lacrosse if a team has only one goal keeper that goal keeper may play all 4 quarters; however the "time" allocated for the game will not be extended. All players except for the goal keeper will follow the 4 quarter extended playing time format and are therefore only eligible to play 3 quarters.

7. **HEALTH EXAMINATION:** A student who may engage in interschool competition shall receive an adequate health examination and may not practice or participate without the approval of the school medical officer. **NOTE:** Physicals for participation in school sports may be scheduled at any time during the calendar year. The results of the physical shall be valid for a period of 12 months during the last day of the month in which the physical was conducted. Unless the medical examination is conducted within 30 days of the start of a season, a health history update is required. Any pupil whose safe participation is in question as a result of the health history interview, or injury, or prolonged absence must be requalified by the school physician prior to participation. If the 12 month period for the physical expires during a sports season, participants may complete the season as long as a health history was conducted prior to the season. For example, a physical conducted on August 1 would be valid through August 31. If a student plays beyond August (ex. football), the student may complete that sports season as long as an interval health history was conducted before the start of the season. Immediately following the last sanctioned tournament competition for that season, a new physical is required if the student is going to play another sport.

Sport season includes tryouts. **NOTE:** The Handbook Committee recommends that each incidence of prolonged absence should be reviewed individually by the coach and the athletic director, consulting with the school physician when necessary, and a reasonable amount of practice time and playing time be established based on the athlete's readiness for safe return to competition.

8. INTERSCHOOL PRACTICE SESSIONS/SCRIMMAGES: A school is limited to three interschool practice sessions/ scrimmages which, if conducted, may be held at any time after minimum practice requirements and previous to the last scheduled contest. By sectional approval, in cases where officials are not available for contests and all avenues of obtaining certified officials have been exhausted, additional scrimmages are permissible as replacements to the scheduled contests. Interscholar practice sessions/scrimmages are governed by the same hours to elapse between such sessions/scrimmages as for regularly scheduled contests with the exception of football. **NOTE:** In practice sessions/scrimmages:

- a) both squads use the same field simultaneously with both coaches making corrections and giving instruction to players as they would do during their own practice,
- b) no official score is kept,
- c) no definite time is set for scrimmage periods,
- d) no admission is charged,
- e) no spectators are permitted unless such is the usual plan whenever the squad has a practice.

9. MIXED COMPETITION: see Eligibility Standard #15, p. 78 and 97.

10. MULTI-SCHOOL CONTESTS/TOURNAMENT COMPETITION/ CHAMPIONSHIPS/FINALS AND AWARDS: Tournament competition is not permitted in the modified program. No sectional team or individual championships are to be conducted. No contest should be conducted with place awards or an order of finish among all the top competitors. Championship playoffs on a team or individual basis are prohibited. Sections, leagues, devices or groupings should not host an end-of-season final multi-school contest that can be construed as a jamboree, carnival, or invitational tournament. Multiple school contests can be conducted at the end of the season **only** if it is in a sport in which multiple team contests are regularly scheduled throughout the season and the final contest mirrors that of the rest of the schedule, thus the contest is not larger than all the others. This may be true for individual dual sports (i.e. quad meets for wrestling, cross country or track). Team sport multiple school contests **prior to the end of the season** are permitted provided:

- a. no participant shall compete in more events, matches or games than permitted in any other regularly scheduled contest in that sport, on that day
- b. all handbook rules are applicable.

Coaches and directors are encouraged to design ideas that follow the spirit of, and guidelines for, modified athletics.

11. PENALTIES:

a) If a school uses an ineligible student in any interschool contest, the penalties shall be as follows:

1. In all team sports- forfeiture of the contest. In individual sports, the use of an ineligible player would result in the contest being forfeited. However, the performances and outcomes of the other individuals would stand.

2. In the individual sports- bowling, cross country, fencing, golf, gymnastics, rifle, skiing, swimming, tennis, track, wrestling - all points scored by the individual shall be forfeited and places moved up accordingly.

- b) For any violation of eligibility or sports standards a school or a school authority may be censured, placed on probation, or suspended.
- c) Consistent with good ethical standards the prompt reporting of the knowledge of an infraction shall be made to the proper authorities in writing.
- d) School Districts may appeal to the Section to gain relief from the prescribed penalty if the violation of eligibility standards resulted from circumstances out of the District's control.

12. PRACTICE SESSIONS: Each student may participate in only one practice session a day on only six days of a calendar week. Practice sessions shall be limited to two hours and be at least 45 minutes in length. No student may be permitted to participate in school organized practice or play on seven consecutive days.

All required practice sessions shall include vigorous activity related to the specific sport.

A tryout session may be used toward the required number of practices needed prior to the first scrimmage or contest when the high school and modified seasons start simultaneously or when the high school tryout periods are contiguous to the beginning of the modified sports season.

13. PROMOTION: A contestant in grades 7, 8 and 9 who practices or competes with or against a freshman, junior varsity or varsity performer shall not return to the modified athletic program in that same season in that same sport. Contestants shall not be promoted to a higher classification within the modified program or to a junior varsity or varsity team after completion of fifty percent of their modified schedule.

NOTE: EXCEPTIONS:

1) General Eligibility Rule #17 "TRYOUTS".

2) In schools where no junior varsity program is provided in a specific sport, a ninth grade modified contestant may be promoted to the varsity team either prior to completion of fifty percent of his/her modified schedule, or at the completion of his/her modified schedule if he/she displays the skills and maturity to compete at the varsity level. Ninth grade contestants promoted at the end of their modified seasons should practice with the varsity team and are limited to post schedule contests.

3) In a section whose "early winter" season ends in mid-winter, followed by the "late winter" season, the modified ninth grader could not be elevated to the varsity for post schedule contests in a sport played in the "early winter" modified season.

4) Promotion Regulation shall be waived for Boys' and Girls' Swimming & Diving permitting schools with section approval the option of running combined modified and varsity swimming and diving meets, alternating events. (see Swimming & Diving, p. 145).

14. SPORTS SEASONS: All competition shall be completed within the sport season indicated by each individual section.

15. TIME INTERVAL: Unless extenuating circumstances arise, it is recommended that no more than two contests should be scheduled per week. Except in football and cross country, contests may be played with only one night of rest three times per season for rescheduling purposes only. A team may never play three days in a row. There shall not be more than 3 contests played per calendar week. Baseball and softball shall be permitted to play two games a day twice during the season. (See Baseball, p. 136 and Softball, p. 144 - Game Conditions.)

16. TRANSFER: A student who is enrolled in one school may subsequently transfer no more than **once** during a school year without a corresponding change in the residence of his parents or guardians, or having reached the age of majority establishes a residency. (p. 89)

a.) A student who transfers from one school to another becomes eligible after starting regular attendance.

b.) Transfer students trying out for sports before school opens in the fall shall register and be accepted by the principal of that school before the medical examination and the first practice. This shall constitute the start of regular attendance for fall sports. **NOTE:** After approval by the school medical officer a student may practice immediately and must satisfy the specific Sports Standard according to the number of practice sessions required.

c.) Practices at the previous school district may be counted toward the minimum number of practices required provided the principal or athletic director of the previous school submits, in writing, the number and dates of such practices to the principal or athletic director of the new school.

17. TRYOUTS:

a.) A section may establish tryout periods to allow EXCEPTIONAL ATHLETES who have completed and passed the NYS Education Department Selection/Classification (S/C) Procedures and Standards the opportunity to be selected for a high school team. (See pages 51 and 150 of NYSPHSAA Handbook)

b.) Seventh and eighth grade students must pass the S/C qualifications prior to the tryout period.

c.) Ninth grade students do not have to pass the S/C qualifications to participate in the tryout.

d.) The tryout period for a modified athlete shall be defined as participation in three (3) of the first five (5) practice days of the high school season. During the tryout period, the modified athlete may not return to the modified program until the athlete's tryout is complete.

e.) Tryout periods for wrestling, boys lacrosse and ice hockey shall be a maximum of five (5) of the first seven (7) practice days of the high school season.

f.) The tryout period for football shall be a maximum of eight (8) of the first ten (10) days of the high school season.

g.) Student athletes participating in sectionally approved tryout sessions are not subject to the Promotion rule.

PROGRAM SAFETY

PHYSICIANS: It is recommended that a physician be present at all football games and to be readily available during practice sessions. If an injury occurs during a game in any sport, the physician in attendance will determine the athlete's fitness to continue play. During practice sessions, in the event of potentially serious injury to head, neck or spine of a player, a physician should see the injured as soon as possible. Any pupil whose safe participation is in question as a result of the health history review interview, or injury, or prolonged absence must be requalified by the school physician prior to participation.

OFFICIATING: Proper officiating is a most important safety factor. The following policies should be in effect:

1. The use of the "fast whistle" is mandatory when participant safety is questionable.
2. Strict enforcement of all rules violations will inculcate the proper playing habits and attitudes.
3. Special attention should be made to determine "potentially dangerous" holds in wrestling and to eliminate them.
4. It is required that certified officials conduct contests whenever possible.
5. At least two certified officials should be used in contact sports to provide the safest possible game supervision. Three (3) officials are preferred for football.

EQUIPMENT: Only sneakers or shoes with molded soles and molded cleats are permitted in the modified program. Shoes with metal posts or spikes are not permitted in any modified sport.

Protective equipment which is properly fitted should be provided for sports of a contact nature. Supporter cups should be worn in those sports where this protection is logical.

Protective headgear shall be worn by soccer goalies for protective purposes. Shin guards must be worn at all times by all soccer players and field hockey players.

COACH ON THE FIELD: The coach is permitted to be on the field during time-out periods to check such matters as seem desirable to control the safety of the games and to use the existing situation as a teaching opportunity. It is realized that this rule is subject to abuse by overzealous coaches. Any coach violating the spirit of this rule should be removed from the program.

RULES OF THE GAME: The approved game rules for all sports are listed on pages 136-150. All adopted modifications indicated for each sport take precedence.

IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL CONCERNED WITH THE MODIFIED PROGRAM OF ATHLETICS:

1. To provide as broad and varied an athletic program as is possible with an opportunity for competition on an equal basis for all students. A desirable modified interscholastic program will encourage participation at several achievement levels. Interscholar competition in a modified sports program should encourage participation for as many children as possible.
2. To realize that the individual schools have the final responsibility to equalize competition and must administer the program so that no overmatching of teams or individuals shall be permitted.
3. To conduct the athletic program so that educational objectives shall be achieved; so that the highest ideals of sportsmanship are upheld; so that no single phase of the educational program is promoted at the expense of other equally important programs.
4. To realize that the athletic program should be balanced with all other activities essential to youth, including those which may be conducted by out-of-school groups, to avoid an excessive load for any student.
5. To administer the program in such a manner that participants are properly examined, approved, equipped, insured, selected, classified, instructed, and supervised so that as safe a program as is possible is conducted.
6. To administer the educationally based athletic program in its proper perspective, with minimal loss of school time, limited publicity, competent officiating, and limited awards focused on participation.
7. To provide qualified leadership that understands the teaching of sports to the age group, the objectives of this modified sports program, and the emphasis on safety procedures.
8. To cooperate with schools in the area in providing an interscholastic athletics administrative organization within your section that will achieve the objectives and will aid in the development of the highest type of cordial interschool relationships.
9. To conduct the program so that proper respect for authority is achieved. All participants, coaches, parents, spectators and interested individuals will demonstrate appropriate conduct at all events.
10. To promote sportsmanship by competing within the spirit of the rules, to give every opponent due credit and respect, and to win honorably and to lose graciously.
11. To finance the program through Board of Education approved funds.
12. To cooperate with the Sectional Athletic Council, League or Conference in its efforts to provide sound leadership for all in the modified athletics program. No sectional team or individual championships are to be conducted in modified interscholastic athletics.

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