

RULES AND REGULATIONS

27-8-1 OUT-OF-SEASON PRACTICE RULE-*No member school shall engage in any form of preseason or postseason practice or in any preseason or postseason interscholastic competition in any sport except under the conditions outlined below. Out-of-season participation shall not be mandated of any student.*

27-8-2 Interpretations:

(1) Practice is defined as the involvement of individuals or group of individuals from a member school in any organized program of demonstration, instruction or participation conducted in part or in entirety by a person or group of people who are involved in the coaching of any of these athletes for pay or other remuneration. The spirit of the practice rule shall be that every school and participant shall have the same opportunities to practice prior to the first game of the season. The foregoing provision does not apply to recreation programs sponsored by governmental agencies and civic organizations when approved by a member school. In approving a program, schools shall insist that the program be open to everyone in the community or areas served, and the program not be limited to varsity or junior-varsity athletes from a specific high school. *Note:* A member of the school's coaching staff may be employed to assist a school approved community recreation program without violating this rule provided the coach does not cause such a program to become, for all practical purposes, a high school squad practice scheme. A great responsibility rests upon the coaches engaged in such a recreation program to make certain that the spirit and the letter of the Out-of-Season Practice rules are observed.

(2) A member school is permitted to organize and supervise conditioning programs to include weight lifting, running and exercising as long as the program is general in nature and includes only exercises designed to promote physical fitness. No school may issue equipment designed for a specific sport for this type of program. These conditioning programs must be open to all members of the student body.

(3) A candidate for a school's athletic team may attend a specialized camp, school clinic or other similar program involving coaching and instruction as long as the school does not provide the fee for the specialized sports camp. Attendance at a summer recreation type camp at which a variety of recreational and sports activities are treated equally is not considered a specialized sports camp. Schools may provide transportation for students attending a specialized sports camp. Schools may also issue equipment to students attending such camps.

(4) A student may participate as an individual and in a manner that is in no way connected with his/her school.

(5) A student shall not be provided nor may he/she use any uniform belonging to a school. A student may use shoes provided by his/her school. (This rule does not apply to cheerleaders)

(6) A school shall not provide to any student any uniform designed for use in any VHSL sponsored sport. A school may provide shoes. (This rule does not apply to cheerleaders.)

27-8-3 Penalty: Any school adjudged guilty of violating the Out-of-Season Practice Rule shall be subject to a fine as stated in 30-5-1 and such disciplinary action, including ineligibility for district championships, as the appropriate district committee or inter-district committee may impose.

Penalties

30-5-1 Specific Penalties-The following penalties shall be specific and shall be enforced by the Executive Director, with the provision that the Executive Director shall notify all member schools involved and the district committee in case of the forfeiture of a contest.

(1) Use of an ineligible student/coach in any contest with any other school. **Penalty-**Fine as stated below, plus forfeiture of the contest to the team opponent or forfeiture of any events won or lost by the ineligible contestant to the next best opponent in the case of individual events. If competing schools are both guilty of using ineligible contestants, this constitutes a double forfeiture and each school is credited with a loss. In addition, it is required that the district committee be apprised of the violation and the district committee may hold a hearing on the case at its convenience to determine whether or not the violation justifies further action against the violating school.

(2) Failure to send eligibility list at least one day before the first contest. **Penalty-**Fine as stated below. Refer to 27-1-6 and 27-1-7 (3).

(3) Failure to use eligible game official in any sport requiring registered officials or to comply with the proviso that the principal notify the Executive Director within three days. Refer to 27-6-1 and 27-6-2. **Penalty-**Fine as stated below for each instance chargeable to the home team after any contest when an emergency official has been used, regardless of any agreement with the other team for the use of the unauthorized official.

(4) Violation of sanction rules or of the rule against competing with nonmember schools. Refer to 27-3-1, 27-3-2, 27-4-1 and 27-4-2. **Penalty-**Fine as stated below, plus such other penalty as may be imposed by the appropriate district committee.

(5) Failure to send to the VHSL office the Weight Control Program Compliance Verification Form (W-3) the second week of January. **Penalty-**Fine as stated below.

(6) Failure to comply with the provisions in 68-6-2 (1) and (2) shall impose upon the school involved a fine as stated below. Refer to 68-6-2 (1).

(7) Competing schools that fail to comply with 68-6-2 (3) and (4) shall be fined as stated below; neither school shall receive rating points for the unreported game, their opponents will received appropriate rating points.

(8) Failure to attend the state rules clinics which are offered each year (Baseball, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Cheer, Field Hockey, Football, Gymnastics, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Softball, Boys Swim and Dive, Girls Swim and Dive, Boys Track and Field, Girls Track and Field, Boys Volleyball, Girls Volleyball, Wrestling, Debate, Forensics and Theatre).

Penalty-Coach is required to take a written rules examination.

(9) Failure for two consecutive years to attend the state rules clinics which are offered each year (Baseball, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, Cheer, Field Hockey, Football, Gymnastics, Boys Soccer, Girls Soccer, Softball, Boys Swim and Dive, Girls Swim and Dive, Boys Track and Field, Girls Track and Field, Boys Volleyball, Girls Volleyball, Wrestling, Debate, Forensics and Theatre). **Penalty**-Coach is required to take a written rules examination and the school shall be fined as stated below.

(10) Failure to attend the state rules clinics which are offered in alternate years. **Penalty**- Coach is required to take a written rules examination and the school shall be fined as stated below.

(11) Violation of participation rules in team sports, including exceeding the Contest Limitation Rule. **Penalty**- Forfeiture of the contest to the team's opponent.

(12) Failure to attend a VHSL State Area Meeting. **Penalty**-School shall be fined as stated below.

(13) Failure to attend a VHSL State Area School Media Meeting prior to submitting a publication for VHSL evaluation. **Penalty**-School shall be fined as stated below.

(14) A school whose substitute players or bench personnel enter the playing field/court during a verbal or physical altercation shall be subject to a fine as stated below.

(15) A school whose team personnel engage in excessive unsportsmanlike conduct before, during or after a contest shall be subject to a fine as stated below.

(16) The first time a player or coach is ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct, he/she shall be ineligible for the team's next contest. A second ejection in the same sport in the same season carries a minimum two-game suspension penalty. A player or coach who engages in fighting, biting or aggressive physical contact shall be ineligible for the team's next two contests. The second incident in which a player or coach engages in fighting, biting or aggressive physical contact in the same sport in the same season carries a minimum four-game suspension penalty. (Note: If the disqualification occurs in the final contest(s) of the season, the penalty shall carry over to the next sports season for students who are seniors and to the next school year for underclassmen and coaches.) (See 27-13-6)

FINES: In addition to other penalties, fines not to exceed the following schedule will be imposed on member schools. Monies from fines shall only be used for student and member school services.

Fine Infraction

\$25

Late eligibility lists

Failure to complete and send to VHSL Weight Control Program Compliance Verification (W-3) Form

\$50

Use of non-registered officials

Failure to properly report additional football games

Failure of coach to attend required rules clinic

Failure of school to have representative attend VHSL State Area Meeting

Failure to provide a required judge at state forensic competition

Failure to provide a required Lincoln-Douglas judge at state debate competition

Failure of a broadcasting, magazine, newspaper/newsmagazine or yearbook adviser to attend a VHSL State Area School Media Meeting or of a new adviser to attend prior to either his/her first or second year in the job and subsequently submitting a publication for VHSL evaluation.

\$75

Sanction rule violation

\$100

Removing team from field or court prior to completion of game unless removal is by mutual agreement of both administrators

Failure to report sportsmanship violations (fine is per unreported occurrence)

Use of an ineligible player/participant

Use of an ineligible coach

Failure to properly report required football scheduling information

\$200

Illegal practice, Sunday restrictions, Out-of-season practices, Minimum practice sessions, Violations of equipment restrictions

Illegal scrimmage or game

\$300

Damage of school/facility property (in addition to cost of replacement/ repair of property)

Substitute players or bench personnel enter the playing field/court during a verbal or physical altercation

Team personnel who engage in excessive unsportsmanship conduct before, during or after the contest

Introduction

54-1-1 Introduction-The League sponsors competitive interscholastic athletic programs leading to district, regional or sectional, and state championships in those activities as indicated in the following sections. Because all students should have the benefit of participation, the League strives to insure that competitive athletics in Virginia high schools are conducted to provide maximum opportunities for the educational growth of all participants. The athletic game playing rules as set forth in the current National Federation of State High School Associations publications shall govern all League athletic events unless other game rules have been specified to govern a particular sport or where the adopted National Federation rules are in conflict with special rules set forth under a specific sport section of the *Handbook*, in which case the special rules take precedence. The Executive Committee may authorize those exceptions to National Federation playing rules which are permitted by the "State Association Adoption" clause.

54-2-1 Participation Limitation-If a school maintains separate teams in the same sport for girls and boys during the school year, regardless of sports season, girls may not compete on boys teams and boys may not compete on girls teams. If a school maintains only a boys team in a sport, girls may compete on the boys team. Boys may not participate on a girls team in any sport other than cheerleading and crew. In the sport of crew, as permitted by the U. S. Rowing Rules, a male coxswain may compete in events for girls, and a female coxswain may compete in events for boys.

54-2-2 "Exhibition" Contests-No member school may permit its athletes to compete in more than the total number of regular season interscholastic contests, meets or tournaments specified for each sport either on the varsity or sub-varsity level. (See 27-11-1, 27-11-2, 54-8-1 and 54-8-2.) The VHSL does not recognize "exhibition" or "novice" competition. Any competition that matches athletes from other schools must be counted as either scrimmages or contests. To be counted as scrimmages they must meet the requirements set in 54-6-1, 2 and 3 of the Virginia High School League *Handbook*. So-called "alumni," "faculty," and "practice" games shall be counted in the number of games permitted. Contests may not be lengthened to accommodate team members who have not competed or for any other reason. Schools or school divisions may organize teams as they see fit below the varsity level. These teams must be recognized by the schools or school divisions.

Scrimmages

54-6-1 Scrimmages-A scrimmage is a practice session between two or among three organized teams, or between groups of players representing their respective teams, or between one organized team and a group of players from another organized team which is representing its team in play.

54-6-2 Member schools are prohibited from participating in, or allowing their teams or players representing the teams to participate in, more than two scrimmages in any sport.

54-6-3 Scrimmages are teaching situations at which coaches are expected to interrupt the practice session to provide instruction from time to time. Prior to any scrimmage the coach should outline the basic purposes and aims of the particular scrimmage so that the players may receive the maximum training and practice from the scrimmage.

Principals responsible for a scrimmage shall observe the following guidelines, except as permitted in 54-6-4:

- No public announcement of the scrimmage should be made and coverage by the news media should be discouraged;
- No admission price shall be charged anyone for attendance at a scrimmage;
- Officials may be paid travel fees if applicable, but not game fees;
- Each school in a scrimmage shall be limited to no more than 1 1/2 times the normal length of the contest (ex. football and basketball, 6 quarters; baseball, 10 1/2 innings);
- No scrimmage shall be converted into an actual game situation; and
- Except for those rules which have been modified by the provisions of this paragraph, all League rules shall apply to scrimmages.

Jamborees

54-6-4 Jamborees-A member school may participate in a volleyball jamboree if the following conditions are met.

General Conditions:

- The jamboree must be sanctioned by the VHSL, Inc. and must be sponsored by member schools only;
- No member school may participate in more than one jamboree in each sport allowed or in a jamboree which includes more than eight teams;
- A jamboree shall be played under game conditions including the wearing of game uniforms, use of registered officials and charging of admissions;
- Only those expenses as outlined by the Executive Committee and printed on the Jamboree Sanction Form may be included in computing the net proceeds; and

- Eighty (80) percent of the net proceeds will be shared by the competing schools and twenty (20) percent of the net proceeds will be deposited into the VHSL state treasury.

Volleyball Jamboree-In lieu of one authorized scrimmage, a school may participate in one volleyball jamboree of eight (8) games.

Contest Limitations

54-8-1 Contest Limitations-No member school may permit its athletes or teams to compete in more than the total number of regular season interscholastic contests, meets or tournaments specified below for each sport either on the varsity or sub-varsity level.

Volleyball - 20

54-8-2 Exception:

(1) Female golfers may participate in no more than three VHSL-sanctioned all girls invitational golf tournaments in addition to the golf contests permitted in 54-8-1.

54-8-3 Interpretations:

(1) In creating schedules within the Contest Limitation Rule, schools must count the maximum number of games possible in any invitational, whether or not they ultimately play those games, and they may not later add games to replace those not played.

(2) Benefit Game-These games are optional, one per revenue sport, and may not extend the season. They do not count against the season limitation in that sport, will not count on a school's record and will not be used as part of the football ratings system. Benefit Games must be revenue producing. After expenses, the competing schools will each receive one third of the net income and the remaining one-third share will be sent to the VHSL. A Benefit Game may be played anytime prior to the end of the regular season but after players have met minimum practice requirements for that sport and must be in lieu of an authorized scrimmage. Schools have the option of extending play beyond the normal length; the extension shall not exceed one-half the length of a game and shall be conducted under scrimmage (not game) conditions as noted in 54-6-1 through 54-6-3. In football, the game may be played including or not including the kicking game based on agreement between the two competing schools. Benefit Games must be approved in advance by the VHSL; forms for approval are in the Principal's Workbook.

54-9-1 Mandatory Compliance With All Rules-In all interscholastic athletic competitions, individual contestants and member schools shall observe and comply with all League rules and regulations set forth in Sections 26 through 33 and with the rules governing specific sports set forth in Sections 50 through 99. These rules and regulations are binding upon all member schools and may not be waived except as authorized in specific sections of this Handbook. Violations are punishable by such penalties as the appropriate district committee, inter-district committee, Sportsmanship Committee or Executive Committee may impose.

General

86-1-1 Schedule-(Fall Season Volleyball Only - Fourteen days is the minimum number of practice days required prior to the first contest. The 14 daily practice sessions means 14 calendar days, not counting Sundays, and has no reference to the actual number of times the team appears and reappears for practice sessions.) Each school shall make its own playing schedule and allow practice within the dates published on the current year's VHSL Competition Calendar. Each school team shall be limited to 20 matches, per season, exclusive of district, regional and state championship matches. See Sports Season Rule, 27-7-1.

86-2-1 District and Regional Championships-District and regional championships shall be set by the appropriate district or regional council on or before the date specified on the Activities Calendar (inside front cover of the *Handbook*).

86-3-1 State Championship-Each classification shall provide a state championship on or before the date specified on the Activities Calendar if the criteria in 54-5-1 are met and the state tournament guidelines are approved by the Group Board.

ATHLETIC RULES INTERPRETATIONS.

54-6-4 JAMBOREES/Fee (12-99) – Any VHSL school participating in an out-of-state jamboree is required to pay \$100 processing fee, but VHSL will not collect 20% of net income.

54-6-4 JAMBOREES/Exceptions (5-80) – The Executive Director may grant specific exceptions to the playing rules when he/she sanctions jamborees. The Executive Director may also make appropriate exceptions in reference to out-of-state schools when sanctioning jamborees.

54-6-4 JAMBOREES/Fees (5-95) – Effective with the 1995-96 school year schools requesting jamborees must submit a fee of \$100 with their request. If the League's share is more than \$100, the \$100 fee will be applied to the amount owed the VHSL; otherwise, the fee will be a part of the jamboree expenses.

54-8-1 CONTEST LIMITATIONS (5-95) – Any school that schedules a contest and then cancels or forfeits it cannot add another contest to its schedule.

86-1-2 VOLLEYBALL/Libero Player (3-05) – The libero player may be used in boys and girls volleyball.

86-2-1, 86-3-1 VOLLEYBALL/Officials (5-98) – Four certified volleyball officials are required for all district, regional and state playoff matches.

88-1-3 VOLLEYBALL/Length of Matches (12-04) – Districts are allowed to approve two-out-of-three game matches in regular season play.

88-1-4 VOLLEYBALL/Match Scoring (9-03) – Prior to the start of the season, a district council may adopt a modified match format for series other than dual-varsity matches; the match format for non-district, non-dual varsity matches (including invitation tournaments) shall be set by the host school. Match format in volleyball would include the number of points that constitute a game and the number of games that constitute a match, but would not include the manner in which points are scored. Districts could opt, for example, to play non-varsity matches in a best two-out-of-three games format, with each game played to 21 points (rally scoring). Districts cannot, however, modify the manner in which points are scored. All games, varsity and non-varsity, must be scored using rally scoring. Traditional (side-out) scoring is not an option.

VHSL OUT-OF-SEASON PRACTICE RULE INTERPRETATION

1. May a member of the coaching staff in any sport organize a conditioning program during the school year or in the summertime as long as school equipment designed for that sport is not used? **RULING** - Yes - A school can organize and supervise a conditioning program anytime as long as the program is general in nature and includes only exercises designed to promote physical fitness and as long as the program is open to all members of the student body. This program could include weight lifting, running and exercise. No school may issue equipment designed for a specific sport for this type of program.

2. May the coach be employed by the Recreation Department or other governmental agency (to teach only his specified sport and nothing else) as a part of the recreational program? **RULING** - Yes - If the program is open to everyone in the community and that portion taught by the coach is an integral part of the community's diversified Recreational Program. School facilities may be used for the Recreation Program if approved by the administration.

3. May candidates for a school's athletic team attend a specialized sports camp or clinic? **RULING** - Yes - As long as (1) the camp is open to everyone and (2) the school (or organization whose finances are controlled by the school) does not pay the fee for this camp. Schools may provide transportation for students attending a specialized sports camp. Schools may also issue equipment to students attending such camps.

4. May an organizational meeting (for the purpose of issuing equipment, explaining squad policies, taking physicals, etc.) be held prior to the sports season? **RULING** - Yes

5. Are Sunday "skull sessions" legal? **RULING** - Not if players are present. Coaches may have staff meetings on Sunday but players are prohibited from practicing or meeting on Sundays.

6. May a team practice after its last game? **RULING** - No - A team is prohibited from practicing after its last regular scheduled game or its last League tournament or playoff contest.

7. May a coach of a high school team be involved as a coach of an AAU team, which contains members from his school? **RULING** - Yes - If the team membership is represented by players from at least two schools.

8. May a coach of a high school team coach a team containing members from his school in an organized summer program? **RULING** - Yes - If the team membership is represented by at least two schools.

9. May a coach of a high school team coach his own team in a team camp? **RULING** - Yes - Provided the "camp" meets the following stipulation. A camp may offer team competition as part of the camp and a coach may coach his/her own team; however, the camp must also offer individual instruction where the coach interacts with students from the other teams as well as his/her students. (NOTE: A team camp must be comprised of multiple school teams – four or more.)

10. Are football-passing leagues permitted? **RULING** - Yes - However, if a team is composed of players from one high school only, members of that school's football coaching staff may not coach that team.

11. Are open gyms permitted? **RULING** - Yes - If they are truly open to all students in that school. The dates and times of the open gym must be publicized well in advance and in such a manner that all students are aware of the open gym. If only members of one high school team show up for open gym, then open gym must be cancelled for to continue with only members of one team constitutes a violation of the open gym policy.

12. Is there a situation where an open gym could be in violation of VHSL Policy? **RULING** -Yes - If, even after properly publicizing the open gym, the students who choose to attend are team members only and a coach of that team is present and gives instruction or organizes the activity.

13. May a coach or coaches supervise the open gym? **RULING** - Yes - If they have been appointed to this responsibility by the school administration. They may not coach during the open gym; they are to be present only for supervision.

14. May schools pay for an athlete to attend a specialized sports camp? **RULING** - No - According to 27-8-2(3) school funds may not be used. *However a school is permitted (even encouraged) to set up a separate school account for camp funds which are raised by the students themselves for that purpose. Schools may not transfer funds from other accounts into the camp fund.*

15. How are team camps and leagues interpreted? **RULING** - To qualify as a team camp multiple schools (four or more) must be in attendance and there must be some type of individual instruction offered. Games may be part of the camp but not the sole aspect. A program where teams come together only to play games would be considered a league. This distinction is important because under the present VHSL interpretation, coaches may coach their own teams in a team camp but may not in a league.

EIGHTH GRADE INSURANCE/ELIGIBILITY INTERPRETATIONS

VHSL HANDBOOK REFERENCES WHICH APPLY:

27-3-3-(5) State Competition Interpretation Note – Athletic competition with “outside” or “independent” teams must be approved by the Executive Committee and is not recommended when sufficient competition can be scheduled with member schools.

28-2-2-(1) Grade Rule Exception: Students may compete on the sub-varsity level while in the eighth grade; however, no student below the eighth grade is eligible to participate in any VHSL interscholastic athletic contest.

28-2-3 Grade Rule Interpretations – Eighth graders, regardless of where they are housed, may fall into two categories:

(1) If they are filed on an MEL and participate on a junior varsity high school team, they must comply with VHSL rules and regulations and are covered by the League’s insurance program because they are considered to be representing their high school.

(2) However, if they are competing on a level below the junior varsity (i.e. junior high or middle schools), they are not covered by VHSL regulations and are not covered by the League’s insurance program unless such insurance has been purchased by the school or school system to cover these students specifically. The grade levels of competition, eligibility rules and regulations, etc., under these non-high school circumstances are up to the local school divisions.

54-2-2 “Exhibition” Contests – ...Contests may not be lengthened to accommodate team members who have not competed or for any other reason. Schools or school divisions may organize teams as they see fit below the varsity level... Seventh graders may not represent a VHSL school at any level. Eighth graders may represent a VHSL school at the sub-varsity level only.

STAFF INTERPRETATIONS

1. Q: Our eighth grade is housed at a separate building, in the middle school; but our school division has determined that the more talented eighth grade athletes may “play up” with ninth graders on the high school’s “freshman” football team. Is this legal?

ANSWER: Yes. Those designated individuals may represent a VHSL school, must be certified on a VHSL MEL, and are covered by the League’s catastrophic insurance for that sport. (Note: The school must count those eighth graders when computing insurance premiums.)

2. Q: What if John Smith, an eighth grader in the above situation, plays “freshman” football for the high school, but plays on the middle school basketball team. What is his status?

ANSWER: He plays by VHSL rules in football and is covered by catastrophic insurance in that sport. He plays by local (middle) school rules in basketball and is not covered by VHSL insurance in basketball; however, the school division may purchase optional insurance for its middle school athletes.

3. Q: May the “freshman” football team above play games against (a) a high school sub-varsity team with students above grade nine, (b) a middle school team with all eighth graders, and (c) a middle school team with seventh and eighth graders?

ANSWER: Yes, in situations (a) and (b) unless local rules prohibit such competition. No, in situation (c) because no student below the eighth grade may participate in any VHSL contest.

4. Q: After the “freshman” team above finishes its regulation game, may players who did not see action be allowed to participate in a “fifth” quarter?

ANSWER: No. Contests may not be extended for such purposes. (See section 54-2-2 above.)