

Virginia High School League

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) is the governing body for Virginia interscholastic athletics. All rules and regulations governing high school athletes and athletics are legislated by this organization. A complete text of these regulations is available from the school athletic director. Coaches are to review the VHSL Handbook each year and review the rules with each team.

The regional councils manage the business of the region, including scheduling of regional championships, as well as special regulations, guidelines, and distribution of funds. Appeals or recommendations to the council should be directed to the district representatives through the school athletic director or principal.

The conference councils manage the business of the conference, including scheduling of conference championships, as well as special regulations, guidelines, and distribution of funds. Appeals or recommendations to the council should be directed to the district representatives through the school athletic director or principal.

The Peninsula District Council is a further extension of the VHSL office and the Regional Council. The membership is comprised of the 10 principals of the high schools in the district. The determination of district policy in athletics is the responsibility of this council, as well as administration of all athletic schedules.

A handbook with complete and up-to-date district policies is available for review from the school athletic director.

VHSL Catastrophic Accident Program

(This plan is included in the school's VHSL membership)

All enrolled students who participate in interscholastic sports and activities under the jurisdiction of the VHSL are eligible for coverage. If, as a result of an injury, an insured person suffers paralysis, coma, or brain death, benefits will be paid as indicated in the Table of Losses for each accident. Claim forms can be secured through the athletic director from the VHSL. Claims for benefits must be filed within 90 days from date of loss, or as soon as reasonably possible.

Revised June 2013

VHSL Individual Eligibility Regulations
(VHSL HANDBOOK, SECTION 28)
GENERAL RULES APPLICABLE TO ALL STUDENTS

54-8-1 CONTEST LIMITATION RULE

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....

NOTE: When a district sponsors a postseason junior varsity and postseason varsity competition/tournament, a player shall be limited to participating in only one of these competitions/tournaments.

Rationale: Previously the rule only applied to basketball. The revision provides consistency among sport activities

No member school may permit its athletes 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. In the sports of baseball, basketball, field hockey, soccer, softball, and tennis, a team may play no more than five games/matches in any approved invitational tournament; in wrestling, the limit is five matches per individual per day over no more than two days. In wrestling, each individual is limited to 60 mat appearances prior to the culminating district tournament (or the published VHSL calendar district deadline if no district tournament is held).

Baseball – 20/18	Golf – 12	Swimming – 10
Basketball – 22/20	Softball – 20/18	Tennis – 16
Cross Country – 10	Indoor Track – 10	Track – 10
Field Hockey – 16/14	Soccer – 16/14	Wrestling – 12
Football – 10 /9		Volleyball - 20
Cheerleading - 5		

28A-2-1 BONA FIDE STUDENT RULE

- (1) The student shall be a regular bona fide student in good standing of the school which he/she represents
- (2) Any student who is under penalty of suspension, or whose character or conduct is such as to reflect discredit upon his/her school, is not considered in good standing.

28A-2-3 (2) BONA FIDE STUDENT RULE/Home School (5-90)

Home school students are NOT eligible because they fail to meet the requirements of a Bona Fide Student.

28A-4-1 GRADE RULE

The student shall be enrolled in the last four years of high school.

- (1) 8th graders may only participate on the sub-varsity level for one year prior to entering the ninth grade.
- (2) Eighth grade students who passed five eighth grade subjects the past school year (see note following (28A-5-1 (6)) and reached the age of fifteen on or before the first day of August may compete on the varsity level.

28A-3-1 ENROLLMENT RULE

The student shall have been regularly enrolled in the school which he/she represents no later than the fifteenth school day of the semester.

28A-5-1 SCHOLARSHIP RULE

The student shall:

- (a) For the first semester be currently enrolled in no fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediate preceding year or the immediate preceding semester for schools that certify credit on a semester basis; and
- (b) For the second semester be currently enrolled in no fewer than five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation and have passed five subjects, or their equivalent, offered for credit and which may be used for graduation the immediate preceding semester.

NOTE: Credit for courses must be recognized by the State Department of Education. Such credit is to be awarded for the semester in which the work is scheduled to be completed. Credit for summer school work must be applied on the immediate preceding semester or year. **Courses for non-credit cannot be used toward the five-subject pass rule.**

28A-5-2 EXCEPTIONS

- (4) A special education student who is working toward a special diploma must make standard progress as determined by the student's IEP.
- (5) A special education student who is working toward a standard diploma must take and pass the equivalent of five subjects in accordance with any IEP modifications. If the IEP Committee determines that a special education student working toward a standard diploma should take fewer than five subjects, he/she must pass those subjects mandated by the IEP.

28A-1-1 AGE RULE

The student shall not have reached the age of 19 on or before the first day of August of the school year in which he/she wishes to compete.

28A-7-1 TRANSFER RULE

The student shall not have been enrolled in one high school and subsequently transferred to and enrolled in another high school without a corresponding change in the residence of his/her parents, parent, or guardian. A student in cases of changes in court ordered custody that involve transfers within a school or between contiguous school divisions, the lesser of a ONE SEMESTER or 90 SCHOOL DAYS will be in effect from the date of the transfer.

28A-7-1 (3) TRANSFER RULE/Site Designated Programs (5-15)

Students who have established eligibility in a school and subsequently change into or out of a site designated program (Academy, Specialty Program, etc.) will be ineligible for 90 school days from date of the transfer.

28A-7-3 INTERPRETATIONS

- (7) Residence is defined as the domicile on an individual, meaning that the individual lives in a locality with the intent to make it a fixed and permanent home. Domicile requires more than bodily presence as an inhabitant in a given place: it requires bodily presence and an intention to make such a place a fixed and permanent home. Other indicia of domicile include automobile registration, voter registration and the reporting of a mailing address change to the appropriate agencies, such as the post office, utility companies, creditors and employers. Under no circumstances can a family or student participant have two residences for eligibility purposes. It is the obligation of the school to know the complete residence status of each student and to see that all comply with these requirements. Any change in residence must be bona fide. Determination of what constitutes a bona fide change of residence depends upon

the facts of each case, but in order for a change of residence to be considered bona fide at least the following facts must exist:

- (1) The original residence must be abandoned as a residence; that is sold, rented or disposed of as a residence, and must not be used as residence by any member of the family.
- (2) The entire family must make the change and take with them the household goods and furniture appropriate to the circumstance.
- (3) The change must be made with the intent that is permanent.

28A-7-2 TRANSFER RULE EXCEPTIONS

A student shall become eligible for interscholastic competition after he/she has completed 365 days of attendance at the high school to which he/she transferred, immediately preceding the semester for which the student desires to become eligible. For the purpose of this rule, the transferring student must have been regularly enrolled in the school in which he/she wishes to establish eligibility no later than the fifteenth day of the first of two consecutive semesters, unless he/she is granted a waiver of the Enrollment Rule by the district committee. For the purposes of this rule the student's eligibility or ineligibility shall be determined on the first day of the school year and on the first calendar day following the end of the first semester according to the school board adopted calendar.

Students who qualify under the McKinney Vento Homeless Education Act may be eligible under the Transfer Rule.

In cases of court-ordered custody, a copy of the appropriate legal custody document shall be submitted to the Executive Director for review and approval. Approval is contingent upon the receiving school's principal attesting that there is no evidence that the transfer was for athletic and/or activity purposes. A student, 18 years of age or older, who would be subject to a transfer of custody if he/she were less than 18 years of age may petition the Executive Director through the student's principal for eligibility, and the Executive Director has authority to grant such eligibility immediately

28A-6-1 SEMESTER RULE

The student shall not have been enrolled in the last four years of high school for a period of more than eight consecutive semesters, beginning with the semester in which he/she was enrolled for the first time in the ninth grade. The eight consecutive semesters shall be counted continuously from that point, regardless of whether or not he/she remains continuously enrolled in school.

28B-2-1 AMATEUR RULE

A student who represents a school in an interscholastic sport shall be an amateur in that sport. An amateur is an athlete who engages in athletic competition solely for the physical, mental, social, and pleasure benefits derived there from.

28B-3-1 ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION / PARENTAL CONSENT / PHYSICAL EXAMINATION RULE

The student shall have submitted to the principal of his/her school, prior to becoming a member of any school athletic squad or team, League Form No. 2 (Athletic Participation/Parental Consent/Physical Examination Form), completely filled in and properly signed, attesting that he/she has been examined and found to be physically fit for athletic competition, and that his/her parents' consent to his/her participation.

28B-4-1 AWARDS RULE

Students may accept awards presented or approved by the student's school. Outside agencies or organizations which desire to present awards or recognitions to students for achievement in some phase of

the League program when such awards are open competitively to the students of more than one school must first secure the permission of the Executive Director.

28B-6-1 INDEPENDENT TEAM RULE

During the sports season for the relevant sport, a student may, while a member of a school squad or team engaged in interscholastic sports become a member of or participate with an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school's control so long as such participation does not conflict with the scheduled activities of the school squad or team. No school or student shall be declared ineligible for participation in interscholastic sports because of participation by a student as a member of an organized team in the same sport which is independent of the school's control during the sports season for the relevant sports.

30-5-3 SPECIFIC PENALTY FOR GIVING FALSE INFORMATION

If a student or his/her parent(s) or guardian gives false information, written or verbal, that affects his/her eligibility upon entering and/or during his/her eight semesters of eligibility, relating to his/her residence, eligibility or any other aspects of these rules and regulations, the student shall be deemed ineligible at any VHSL school for a period of one year from the date the information is certified as being false.

27-11-1 SPORTSMANSHIP RULE

Member schools are required to conduct all their relations with other schools in a spirit of good sportsmanship. Acts, which are prima facie evidence of failure to abide by this rule, are those, which are noted below, and others of a similar nature, which transgress the usually accepted code for good sportsmanship. All incidents of conduct that are violations of the Sportsmanship Rule must be reported to the Virginia High School League.

27-11-2 Includes failure to control spectators attending contests as a violation of the Sportsmanship Rule.

27-11-4 Harassment of contest officials by a coach or a coach's ejection constitutes a violation of the Sportsmanship Rule.

27-13-4 Failure of a school to use every measure necessary to insure proper conduct of faculty, students and spectators constitutes a violation of the Sportsmanship Rule.

27-11-5 Failure of a school to use every means at its disposal to impress upon its faculty, student body, team members, coaching staff and officials the values of sportsmanship in the preparation for, and the conduct and management of, interscholastic contests.

27-11-6 Players and coaches who are ejected from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct and are ineligible for the team's next contest must be reported to the VHSL office.

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