

MODIFIED SPORTS PROGRAM

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.

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. Interschool 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 times.
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 modified athletics program. No sectional team or individual championships are to be conducted in modified interscholastic athletics.

MEDICAL APPROVAL

The Medical Society of the State of New York and the American Medical Association has 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.

RESPONSIBILITIES

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 sectional 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 – With Section/League approval the modified program: Fall season starting date will be week #7 in the NYSPHSAA Standard Calendar; Week #8 starting in Fall 2020.
 - Winter – With Section/League approval Week #19 is the earliest possible date for the winter sports season; Week #20 in Winter 2020. Later dates may be set.

Spring – With Section/League approval Week #36 is the earliest possible date for the spring sports season; Week #37 in Spring 2020.

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.

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 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 Committee.

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 High School 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 sectional 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 establishment of essentially sound, safe, and 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 value 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.

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 to be established. There definitely needs to be a very close correlation of intramurals, extra-murals, 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.

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 and must teach the basic fundamentals of the games and avoid the intricacies of more advanced programs. Real patience and 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 completion.

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 re-qualified 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 should be used in contact sports to provide the safest possible game supervision. Three (3) officials are preferred for football.

EQUIPMENT: 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 may 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 timeout 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 in the Modified Sports Standards. All adopted modifications indicated for each sport take precedence.

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, geography and/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 (i.e. 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.
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 is 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 five (5) period concept the following game rules will apply:

A four (4) quarter game will be played with the number of minutes being increased for each quarter (see chart below); however, no player may play more than three (3) quarters (*see exceptions below). This will apply provided the team has a

sufficient number of players so as not to exceed the NYSPHSAA regulated playing time allocation for each sport (see chart below).

SPORT	TIME LIMIT			MINIMUM # OF PLAYERS
	Regulation Game	5 Period Play	4 Quarter Extended Play	
BASKETBALL	7 minute quarters	7 minute quarters	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 minute quarters	19
BOYS LACROSSE	9 minute quarters	9 minute quarters	11 minute quarters	14
GIRLS LACROSSE	25 minute halves	12 minute periods	15 minute quarters	16
SOCCER	40 Halves /15 QT.	15 minute periods	18 minute quarters	15
Volleyball	3 out of 5 game matches	5 games	6 games with a max of 20 pts per game	12

* Exceptions: In boys' and girls' lacrosse, girls' field hockey and boys & girls soccer, if a team has only one goal keeper that goal keeper may play in all periods of 4 Quarter Extended Play or in all periods of 5 Period Play. Except for the goal keeper, the "time" allocated for the game will not be extended. All players except for the goal keeper will follow the 4 quarter or 5 periods extended playing time format and are therefore only eligible to play 3 periods.

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 after 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 re-qualified 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.