

Q: Will 8th graders be “grandfathered” if they participated on a high school team last year?

A: No. Students will not be "grandfathered". Any participation by a below grade nine student must be granted through the waiver process after meeting the criteria required.

Q: What constitutes a sub-varsity team in the sports of gymnastics, golf, skiing, tennis, indoor track, outdoor track, and cross country?

A: Separate schedules must be developed for the sub-varsity team and the varsity team.

Q: May below grade nine athletes participate in NHIAA Tournament events?

A: Only those students who have been granted waivers for participation at the varsity level during the regular season shall be permitted to participate in an NHIAA Tournament event.

Q: When will the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee take action on waiver requests?

A: All waiver requests are due one week following the first date to practice for that sport. Upon receipt of these requests, a waiver review meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Q: May appeals be handled in writing and/or by telephone?

A: Appeals will only be accepted in writing by the Principal of the member school to the Executive Director of the NHIAA.

Q: If a waiver is granted for junior varsity participation, is that student eligible to be brought up to the varsity team for Tournament play?

A: No. If the waiver is not granted for varsity participation that student athlete is not allowed to participate at the varsity level for tournament play. If an injury or emergency arises which would then require the student

athlete’s participation, a new waiver request would have to be submitted at that time.

Q: Is a below grade nine student eligible to practice with a high school team without having to seek a waiver from the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee?

A: In order for a below grade nine athlete to play on or with a high school team, that athlete must receive a waiver from the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee. With regard to practice, it is the responsibility of the high school principal to determine whether a below grade nine athlete may practice with a team if a waiver has not been granted by the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee.

Q: If a below grade nine student athlete is granted a waiver to participate in a sport that allows individuals to enter the State Tournament (i.e. cross country, golf, ski, indoor track, outdoor track, tennis and wrestling), is that student athlete eligible to participate in the State Tournament?

A: In sports where student athletes may participate as individuals, students in grades 9-12 shall be given the first opportunity to participate in the State Tournament before any below grade nine student athletes are entered. A below grade nine student athlete cannot displace a high school student athlete.



**OFFICIAL  
INTERPRETATION  
OF  
BY-LAW ARTICLE XII:  
BELOW GRADE 9  
ATHLETIC  
PARTICIPATION**

2009-2010

**NHIAA BY-LAW ARTICLE XII:  
BELOW GRADE 9 ATHLETIC  
PARTICIPATION**

Regulations with regard to Below Grade nine participation on high school sports teams are as follows:

**Sect. 1:** No below grade seven participation will be allowed in any NHIAA sport at any level (freshman, junior varsity, varsity).

**Sect. 2:** No below grade nine participation at any level in any sport will be allowed for schools in Class L and I (freshman, junior varsity, varsity).

**Sect. 3:** Class M schools 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who legally reside in their district on a sub-varsity team provided those students are needed to maintain the school's sub-varsity program and a waiver has been granted by the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee.

Class M schools may use 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to participate at the varsity level in the following sports: cross country, golf, gymnastics, indoor track, outdoor track, skiing, and tennis.

**Sect. 4:** Class S schools 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students who legally reside in the district provided those students are needed to maintain the school's program and a waiver has been granted by the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee.

**Sect. 5:** Below grade nine students who have been a granted BG nine waiver will be expected to maintain the same academic standards set for high school students.

**Sect. 6:** If a school uses a below grade nine student athlete without the approved waiver, the team will forfeit all contests in which the ineligible contestant participated. In sports which team standings are not kept, the NHIAA will deny any requests for waivers in the ensuing year in that sport. If a second violation occurs, that school will be brought before the Below Grade 9 Committee with the possibility of receiving sanctions.

**CRITERIA FOR GRANTING WAIVERS**

1. The student athlete must be necessary for the school to field a team in that sport.
2. The student athlete cannot take the place of an athlete in grades 9 through 12.
3. The student athlete must meet all NHIAA eligibility requirements.
4. The student athlete must legally reside in the same school district as the high school.
5. In individual sports, students in grades 9 through 12 shall represent their school in competition at the State Tournament. They cannot, under any circumstances, be displaced by a Below Grade 9 student athlete in a competition.

**GUIDELINES FOR MINIMUM NUMBER  
OF ATHLETES  
NECESSARY TO FIELD A TEAM**

BASEBALL - 15 -Varsity; 12 - Junior Varsity  
BASKETBALL - 12 -Varsity; 10 - Junior Varsity  
CROSS COUNTRY - 10  
FIELD HOCKEY - 15 - Varsity; 15 - Junior Varsity  
FOOTBALL - Review each request based on merits.  
GOLF - 6  
GYMNASTICS - 6  
ICE HOCKEY - 20  
INDOOR TRACK - 15 - boys; 15 - girls  
LACROSSE - 18  
OUTDOOR TRACK - 15 - boys; 15 - girls  
SKIING - 10 per discipline  
SOCCER - 18 - Varsity; 15 - Junior Varsity  
SOFTBALL - 15 - Varsity; 12 - Junior Varsity  
SPIRIT - 8  
SWIMMING & DIVING - 1  
TENNIS - 8  
VOLLEYBALL - 9 - Varsity; 9 - Junior Varsity  
WRESTLING - 14 - dependent upon weight classes

**INTERPRETATIONS**

Q: Will the high school principal have to appear before the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee to request a waiver?

A: No. The principal will not have to appear before the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee; however, if the school wishes to appeal the Committee's decision, the principal will have to appear before the Executive Director and/or Council Appeals Board.

Q: May another school official represent the school at an appeals hearing?

A: Yes. The principal may designate a representative to attend the appeals hearing if written documentation is provided.

Q: How will the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee handle requests by schools if they arise during the season (i.e. injury, illness, transfer, etc.)?

A: A sub-committee of three members of the Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee shall handle emergencies which arise. All requests must be submitted in writing from the principal of the member school.

Q: Who shall determine the size of the school's team?

A: The Below Grade 9 Athletic Participation Committee, in conjunction with the specific sports committees, shall determine a reasonable size for a school's team.

Q: Does "under the direction of a Principal" mean the students must attend school in the same building as the high school principal?

A: No. If the Board of Education of an NHIAA member school also governs those students