

## **E. VERMONT PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION POLICIES**

*The information outlined below was obtained from the VPA website as of 8/23/07.*

*To access all VPA rules, policies, and bylaws, including information about specific sports, go to the VPA website at [www.vpaonline.org](http://www.vpaonline.org)*

### **ARTICLE 1. GENERAL**

#### **Section 1. STATEMENT OF BELIEF ON HARASSMENT AND COMMITMENT TO RACIAL, GENDER-FAIR AND DISABILITY AWARE**

The Vermont Principals' Association believes that all individuals should be treated with dignity, fairness and respect. Students must be able to participate in Association-sponsored activities in an environment that is free of sexual harassment, prejudice, and discrimination.

The Vermont Principals' Association and its member schools are committed to creating an environment in our activities and programs which promotes respect for and appreciation of racial, gender, sexual orientation, religious and ethnic differences, and is disability aware.

Preventing prejudice and discrimination begins with every individual. The Vermont Principals' Association believes that it begins with us, each and every one.

### **ARTICLE 2. PRINCIPAL'S RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Section 1. Control**

- A. Principals are responsible for operating all interscholastic activities within the guidelines of the Vermont Principals' Association.
- B. Schools which hold a voluntary membership in the Vermont Principals' Association may participate in interscholastic activities only with member schools.
- C. No school which holds a voluntary membership in the Vermont Principals' Association may participate in interscholastic activities with a school located in another state unless that school is a member in good standing of its state athletic association.
- D. It shall be the responsibility of the principal of each member school to determine that all opponents in interscholastic athletic contests are members in good standing of its state athletic association.

#### **Section 2. Officials**

- A. Procedures for selection of officials will be sanctioned by the principal.

#### **Section 3. Changes**

- A. No game shall be cancelled nor dates changed except by mutual consent of the principals concerned, or by procedures approved by a league.

#### **Section 4. Raffles**

- A. 50/50 raffles will be allowed at any Vermont Principals' Association finals (championships) and the semi-final contests in

football, ice-hockey and basketball; plus divisional qualifiers in wrestling and track/field, when these events are held at school sites.

## ARTICLE 3. ELIGIBILITY

### Section 1. Certification of Eligibility

- A. The principal of each member school shall certify to the VPA that all participants representing that school in interscholastic activities during the regular season and during VPA sponsored events shall meet all eligibility requirements of the school and the VPA. This certification shall be due two weeks after the start of the sports season.

The administrator of each Recognized Independent School or parent/teacher of a student enrolled in a Home Study Program shall certify to the VPA that all participants representing the school or program meet all eligibility requirements of the VPA. This certification shall be due two weeks after the start of the sports season.

### Section 2. Standards of Eligibility

- A. Eligibility rules and activities policies apply to all students, both boys and girls, in grades 7-12 in affiliated schools. Eligibility rules and activities policies apply to all activities, both athletic and non-athletic, sanctioned or sponsored by the VPA.
- B. Home Study Programs  
A home study student who wishes to participate in a public school co-curricular program shall be an "eligible student" under this section if:
1. The participating student is enrolled in a home-study program in compliance with Title 16, Section 166(b).
  2. The participating student must have a legal residence in the school district or is a legal resident of a district that does not maintain a school and pays tuition on behalf of its students.

Participation in a school's co-curricular activities program shall not commence until a copy of the Vermont State Department of Education Enrollment Letter is presented to the principal by the parent or guardian.

1. The participating student's academic program, as referenced in the Vermont State Department of Education Enrollment, will be reviewed by the student's parent or guardian at appropriate intervals as locally determined and consistent for all students to determine academic progress. This review and determination must be certified in writing from the parent/guardian to the principal.
2. The student may participate in co-curricular activities sponsored by a VPA member school provided the student complies with the same physical examination, insurance, age and any other requirements for participation as required of all students.
3. Eligibility issues on all matters other than academic progress may be appealed in accordance with the bylaws of the Vermont Principals' Association.

Prior to the start of a sport season or fine arts and performance activities in which a home study student wishes to participate, the parent or guardian and student must notify the principal in writing that he/she wishes to participate in a school's co-curricular activities program. Failure to provide a timely notification will not disqualify the student from participating, but may result in some delays in participation.

4. The home study student must adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibilities and performance as other participants of the team.
5. The proposed eligibility standards for home study students would be considered a two-year transitional program beginning July 1, 1999. The VPA shall provide progress reports and recommendations to the Vermont Board of

Education on March 15, 2000, and March 15, 2001, regarding the future of this program.

6. Consistent with the law governing all student athletes, participation in co-curricular activities programs is a privilege, not a right, and nothing in these eligibility standards is intended to confer a right on any individual to participate in co-curricular activities.

\*The definition of co-curricular activities for this document shall include all interscholastic and extra-curricular activities sanctioned by the VPA.

### C. Student Participation Limitations

Participation on scholastic teams is limited to enrolled students and qualified home study students. The rationale for this limitation is as follows:

- Co-curricular activities are supposed to be part of a scholastic program. These are school teams, not community teams.
- School teams promote academic progress in the classroom by requiring adherence to local academic standards. At a minimum, it is more difficult for schools to administer academic standards when some of the participants in activities are, because they are not enrolled, exempted from those requirements.
- School teams promote a sense of community within the school.
- Participation by individuals who are not enrolled displaces enrolled students. All teams have limited playing time. Most teams have cut policies; some students do not even get to participate on their school team. We should not tell enrolled students to sit on the sidelines, or even not make the team, because someone from another school has taken the spot.
- Participation by individuals not enrolled places the school's administrators, teachers and coaches in the position of having responsibility for the participant without the authority they have over enrolled students.
- The VPA wants to nurture an environment in which all schools have proper incentives to fund and support a full range of activities for their students. To the extent that private schools can simply have their students play for other schools' teams, this diminishes their incentives to provide an appropriate range of activities for their students. It also may diminish local support for activities, in that local dollars would be diverted to support students from other schools. The net effect would likely be that students have fewer opportunities to participate in activities.

### Section 3. Eligibility Limitations and Amateur Status

- A. Contestants or participants must be enrolled in their school and must meet the school's prescribed academic and eligibility rules. Students may only compete on school teams sponsored by their own school during the season, and may only compete for the one school in which he or she is officially enrolled. Students may participate in meets as individuals but may not participate as a member of another team.
- B. In a sports season players who have participated in competition as a member of a school group shall not compete as members of a non-school organized group in the same sport. Violation of this rule will be handled as follow:
  1. For the first infraction, a warning to students will be given that the choice of participation on one or the other group must be followed.
  2. For the second infraction, students will be dropped from the school group.
- C. Transfer students are eligible at once provided they were bona fide students in good standing in the school from which they transferred according to the definition in Item A above and there is a bona fide change in residence. If the transfer is the result of any coercion, recruiting or inducement to move in order to participate in interscholastic activities, students will be ineligible for a period of 365 calendar days from the date of the infraction.

If there is no bona fide change in residency, students are eligible to participate immediately up to the first play date of that sports season. If a student transfers, and does not change residence, after the first play date of that sports season, the student must wait 20 calendar days after the transfer to be eligible, and must participate in at least 60% of the season competitions (at the new school) to be eligible for post season competition.

If there is no bona fide change in residency, a student who transfers twice or more during a 365 day period will not be eligible at the new school(s) after his or her subsequent transfers until one calendar year after the date of the first transfer.

The VPA may grant a waiver of the 20 calendar day waiting period or the 60% eligibility requirement or the 365 calendar day waiting period for multiple transfers upon request by the school if the school establishes that the transfer was made for reasons not related to activities.

The principal of any receiving school shall check carefully to determine the reasons for the transfer. Reports of suspected violations of transfer students' eligibility rules must be made to the VPA immediately.

- D. A school shall be deemed in violation of the rule against recruitment for directly or indirectly supporting or sanctioning recruitment if a representative or agent of the school, or any individual or group associated with the athletic programs of that school, approaches a student athlete in another school, apart from a publicized meeting for all prospective students in that school, and directly or indirectly attempts to persuade or induce a student athlete to enroll in his/her school. A school may also violate this rule by failing to take adequate steps to control recruitment by third parties.
- E. A student who competes in any VPA sanctioned activity must be under nineteen (19) years of age, except that a student whose nineteenth (19th) birthday occurs on or after August 1 is eligible for all activities in the ensuing school year. Students who have attained the age of nineteen (19) prior to August 1 shall be ineligible for all VPA sanctioned activities.
- F. Students are ineligible if they have graduated from any course of study in a secondary school comparable to the Vermont system. The initial determination of whether the secondary school is comparable shall be made by the school's principal. If there is a question concerning the eligibility of a student under this rule, the Executive Director may review the principal's determination. Determining whether a secondary school is comparable, the principal, Executive Director, Activity Standards Committee and the Board of Appeals shall give consideration to the normal number of years of the primary and secondary school program; the length of the school day and year; the curriculum; whether graduation makes the student eligible for post secondary education; and any other relevant information. If the total length of the normal primary and secondary program for the school system in question is less than twelve years, then the secondary school may be deemed less than comparable. Waivers of this eligibility rule may also be granted in accordance with these bylaws.
- G. Students have four (4) consecutive years or eight (8) consecutive semesters of eligibility for participation in school activities. Attendance of thirty (30) school days of any semester shall be regarded as a semester. Attendance is defined as being included in the official roll and attendance records of the school and not physical presence in the class. A student that is enrolled for his/her eighth and final semester of eligibility, during the fall-winter term, may complete the winter sports season as long as he/she is an eligible student and has not graduated.
- H. No student may participate in the same sport for more than four seasons.
- I. Students are ineligible if they have lost their amateur standing, i.e., they have accepted remuneration, gifts or donations directly or indirectly for participation in an athletic contest, or they have participated under an assumed name, or they have competed on a team some player of which was paid for his participation, or they have entered into a playing contract with a professional club or agent. Reference to "gifts or donations" is not intended to preclude the acceptance of playing apparel and equipment that is presented by the sponsoring organization.
- J. Amateur Status Rulings and Comments:

1. Students who lose amateur status in one sport do not lose it in other sports.
2. Students will lose their amateur status in the sport involved if they accept any money whether for participation or as a prize for being outstanding players.
3. Students who become members of a ski patrol will not jeopardize their amateur standing.
4. Amateurs or a team of amateurs may participate against a team of professionals. Amateurs may not participate on a professional team, or on a team where members of the team are receiving remuneration for their athletic services.
5. High School students should be advised to exercise great caution in participating in any athletic activity where there are cash prizes. Youngsters should be extremely careful in participating in adult bowling leagues where there are cash prizes. These rulings are made with two thoughts in mind:
  - (a) Maintaining an amateur status while participating in interscholastic activities.
  - (b) Protecting future athletic eligibility for activities after completion of high school.

K. All-Star Contests

1. For purposes of this policy, an All-Star contest is defined to be one in which the participants are selected based upon their performance as a member of VPA sanctioned school athletic activity. This definition does not include Babe Ruth, American Legion, summer soccer or basketball, CYO or DeMolay Activities, etc.
2. The VPA does not sanction or approve of All-Star contests. Students who participate in an All-Star contest will lose their VPA eligibility to participate in that same sport at their high school for the succeeding season. The only exception to this policy is when the All-Star contest is directly related to the activities of the U.S. Olympic Committee.

L. Students who, during the regular school day, attend specialized schools or programs where the primary purpose of this instruction or program is to enhance skills in specific sports and/or activities, during the time of established VPA seasons in that particular activity, will not be permitted to participate with their home school in that activity.

M. Students who have matriculated in a post-secondary academic program that grants degrees, certificates or diplomas shall be ineligible.

#### **Section 4. Exceptions and Waiver**

A. Exceptions

1. Schools enrolling less than fifty boys or fifty girls in grades nine to twelve inclusive may use students under sixteen years of age from affiliated grammar schools in interscholastic competition, provided the Executive Director approves. Such approval shall be automatic if the requesting school shows an enrollment of less than fifty boys or fifty girls as of October 1, of each school year. Students granted such permission cannot compete until they have reached the eighth grade and then only one year. Such students must meet the local academic and eligibility standards of the school they are attending.
2. Students enrolling in Vermont high schools under the auspices of recognized foreign and domestic exchange programs should be evaluated by the principal under existing local school and VPA eligibility standards. It is the policy of this organization to provide foreign exchange and domestic exchange students with equal access to all activities. Students in recognized foreign and domestic exchange programs who are bonafide, full-time students studying for credit toward a high school diploma (or comparable certificate) shall be eligible to compete, provided only that they meet the same eligibility rules as all other students.

## B. Waiver

### 1. Grounds for Waiver

- a. Waivers of eligibility rules in matters of age may be granted as a matter of discretion only under extraordinary circumstances in which undue hardship, (as defined in these rules), directly causes non-compliance with the eligibility rule, and if the waiver will not have an adverse impact on other participants or the fairness of competition.
- b. For eligibility in matters other than age, waivers may be granted or denied as an exercise of discretion by the Activities Standards Committee after considering the information that the Committee deems relevant.

### 2. Definition of Undue Hardship

- a. Undue Hardship: A severe burden upon the student or his/her family/guardian as a direct result of circumstances which were unforeseeable and could not be avoided. Circumstances involving choice on the part of the student or parents/guardians do not constitute undue hardships.

### 3. Waiver Procedure

- a. The principal must submit a written waiver request to the Executive Director thirty (30) days prior to the start of that activity for which the waiver is being requested, or in the case of a transfer/new student, upon enrollment.
- b. The Executive Director shall circulate the written waiver request to all members of the ASC. The ASC may, but need not, commence a hearing prior to ruling on the request.
- c. The Executive Director shall notify the principal in writing of the ASC decision.

### 4. Emergency Procedure

- a. If there is an emergency request for a waiver due to an extraordinary circumstance that, in the judgment of the Executive Director, precludes timely review of the waiver request through the procedures described in this policy, the Executive Director, with the concurrence of the Chairman of the ASC, may grant a waiver in accordance with the standards of the policies.

## Section 5. Penalties

- A. Schools. Schools are expected to comport with and enforce the eligibility standards as set out in the VPA bylaws and policies.
- B. Violations of the eligibility standards by schools shall result in one or more of the following penalties:
  1. A warning
  2. Forfeiture of game will result
  3. Prohibition from post-season competition or statewide nonathletic activity(ies)
  4. Suspension or exclusion of institutional membership in the VPA.
- C. Students. A student who has violated one of the eligibility rules becomes immediately ineligible.
- D. Violation of VPA Standards of Eligibility, Article II, will result in automatic game forfeiture(s) of game(s) in which player(s) have played.
- E. Tournament Play - Ineligibility

During any VPA-sponsored tournament/state championship, when there is not time for normal administrative procedures to deal with student and/or team ineligibility, the Executive Director (or his/her designee), in consultation with the VPA Activities Standards Committee representative(s) and member(s) of the sport/activity committee in question, will make an ad hoc decision in consideration of the best interests of the tournament and the VPA membership as a whole.

Explanation:

1. Make the most reasonable and fair decision for all concerned without interrupting the tournament structure or tournament time lines.
2. In cases where a team is declared ineligible at any level of the tournament and therefore disqualified from further competition, the ad hoc committee will correct the error at the lowest level of the tournament possible without causing a disruption of the tournament time lines. For example: When a team is disqualified from a tournament and it is impossible to correct the problem at its origin since it will disrupt the flow of the tournament for other teams, the problem is corrected at the next possible level by allowing the team defeated by the ineligible team to assume the position of the disqualified team and continue the tournament competition at that level.
3. It is the most reasonable way to complete a tournament on time, maintain all previously-agreed-to contractual commitments on facilities and personnel, and promote fair and equitable enforcement of tournament and VPA bylaws and rules.

#### **ARTICLE 4. RULES FOR ORGANIZED GIRLS AND BOYS SPORTS**

Preamble

- A. Statewide interscholastic sports are organized, supervised and regulated by Principals/Headmasters and advisers. The best interests of Vermont school age children are uppermost goals for providing wholesome amateur athletic experiences.
- B. Competitors are expected to display a high standard of sportsmanship at all times. Fighting and unsportsmanlike acts cannot be tolerated. It is the responsibility of the school authorities, and especially the coaches and their staffs, to see that unsportsmanlike conduct is not condoned. Coaches can do much by precept and example.
- C. The Executive Director will investigate any act of unsportsmanlike conduct, crowd, control, or any other actions detrimental to the health and/or safety of any participant, supervisor, chaperone, official, spectator and/or property; or acts detrimental to sound educational practices and a good interscholastic program, and take action deemed proper according to penalties defined in Article III, Section 5 to prevent recurrence. This relates to interscholastic activities between or among member schools, or schools holding membership in another state association, or activity sponsored by the VPA.

##### **Section 1. General Rules**

- A. Schools will organize formal practices for each athletic activity in accordance with the definition of the appropriate season.
- B. No school will schedule more than two (2) games per week, Monday through Friday, exclusive of the need to reschedule postponed games or compete in sanctioned tournaments. A third game may be scheduled on Saturday.
- C. In all sports with the exception of baseball and softball, schools shall schedule no more than one contest per day per team. In baseball and softball, schools may schedule double headers, provided that all other policies and bylaws are followed.
- D. The Vermont Principals' Association will allow the scheduling of VPA Sunday tournament play only under all the

following circumstances:

- Weather conditions resulted in a postponed Saturday game.
  - Both principals agree to such Sunday participation.
  - Any game must be scheduled not to begin prior to 1 p.m.
- E. When schools schedule interscholastic games or contests with schools in other states, each school shall observe its own state regulations in eligibility.
- F. No member school will host or participate in an interstate tournament or meet involving more than two (2) schools unless such contest has been approved by all interested state associations. Application for sanction must be initiated at least thirty (30) days prior to the date of the meet.
- G. The playing rules for interscholastic athletic contests shall be those prescribed by the committee having the responsibility for that activity.
- H. No member school while involved in interscholastic competition with a team at the varsity, junior varsity and/or organized school unit level shall compete in a tournament not sanctioned by the VPA.
- I. Participants in all interscholastic athletic activities must have a minimum of ten (10) practice sessions before competing in interscholastic contests. No more than two practice sessions in a day shall count toward the minimum of ten practice sessions. Participants in unavoidably delayed state tournaments or authorized regional athletic activities are exempt from this rule if such participation prevents compliance. Participants must be allowed one day without any practice or game in each calendar week.
- J. Participants must have a minimum seven (7) days rest period before starting practice for the succeeding sports season. Participants in unavoidably delayed state tournaments or authorized regional athletic activities are exempt from this rule if such participation prevents compliance.
- K. No student may participate in any VPA-sanctioned activity without providing evidence to the student's school administration or designee prior to participation in an activity showing that the participant is covered under some private or public health insurance program for the medical care for injuries that may be suffered on account of participation in an activity. Member institutions are encouraged to work with their student participants and parents to help make available individual insurance policies at affordable cost to students who wish to participate in VPA-sanctioned activities.
- L. Taunting. Taunting is considered any action(s) or comments by coaches, players or spectators which are intended to bait, anger, embarrass, ridicule or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar or racist. Included is contact that berates, needles, intimidates or threatens based on race, gender, ethnic origin or background, and conduct that attacks religious beliefs, size, economic status, speech, family, special needs or personal matters.

Taunting in all sports is a flagrant unsportsmanlike foul which will result in a game ejection as outlined in the student/coach ejection policy (Section 1: General Rules (M)).

Each school is encouraged to have procedures in regard to taunting by spectators.

- M. Student/Coach Ejection Policy. Any student/coach ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct or a flagrant foul shall be suspended from the next two contests, (with the exception of football, skiing and gymnastics, for which the suspension shall be one contest) in the sport from which the student/coach was ejected. If the ejection occurs in the last contest of the season, the student shall be ineligible for the same period of time in the next sport in which the student participates. If the ejection occurs in the last contest of the coach's or student's last sport season, the school shall take appropriate disciplinary action to impose a sanction proportionate to the penalties imposed by these rules, and shall report that discipline to the VPA. The suspended student may not be in uniform. A student who is ejected a second time shall be suspended for the remainder of the season in that sport.

A coach ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct shall receive the same suspension given to student-athletes. If suspended, a coach may attend the contest, but must be seated in the spectator area and may not give instructions to the players or to the individual who has been assigned to coach the team any time prior to or during the contest. A suspended coach may not travel with the squad to an away contest.

A student or coach who has been ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct for the second time in a season shall be suspended for the remainder of the season in that sport.

- N. Assault Upon Officials By Coaches. A coach who intentionally strikes, shoves, kicks, or makes other aggressive physical contact with an official before, during, or after an interscholastic contest, shall be disqualified immediately and his/her coach's eligibility may be suspended for up to one full calendar year. A coach who is disqualified under this provision shall not coach in any contest, pending a hearing before the Activities Standards Committee. The Activities Standards Committee shall determine the length of the suspension, giving due consideration to all relevant factors, including the seriousness of the offense. At the end of any suspension the coach may request the reinstatement of his/her eligibility. At this time, the Activities Standards Committee will place the request on their next meeting agenda, at which meeting the coach and principal are required to attend. The Activities Standards Committee will make the determination whether or not to reinstate the coach's eligibility.
- O. Assault Upon Officials By Students. Any member of the team who intentionally strikes, shoves, kicks, or makes other aggressive physical contact with an official before, during, or after an interscholastic contest, shall be disqualified immediately and may be ineligible to participate in all sports for up to one full calendar year. A student who is disqualified under this provision shall not play in any contest, pending a hearing before the Activities Standards Committee. The Activities Standards Committee shall determine the length of the suspension, giving due consideration to all relevant factors, including the seriousness of the offense. NOTE: Member of the team includes player, manager, score keepers, timers, and statisticians.
- P. Assault Upon Coaches By Coaches. A coach who intentionally strikes, shoves, kicks, or makes other aggressive physical contact with another coach before, during, or after an interscholastic contest, shall be disqualified immediately and his/her coach's eligibility may be suspended for up to one full calendar year. A coach who is disqualified under this provision shall not coach in any contest, pending a hearing before the Activities Standards Committee. The Activities Standards Committee shall determine the length of the suspension, giving due consideration to all relevant factors, including the seriousness of the offense. At the end of any suspension the coach may request the reinstatement of his/her eligibility. At this time, the Activities Standards Committee will place the request on their next meeting agenda, at which meeting the coach and principal are required to attend. The Activities Standards Committee will make the determination whether or not to reinstate the coach's eligibility.
- Q. Enforcement and Appeals. Judgment calls by officials ordering ejection shall be final. The only grounds for appeal from suspension under this section shall be that the ejection was caused by gross misconduct by the official, or that the official has filed a written report stating that the ejection was clearly erroneous. Unless a stay of the suspension is granted by the Executive Director in his sole discretion, the suspension shall be immediately effective. It is the responsibility of the local school to ensure this regulation is enforced. When a suspended student or coach is allowed to participate, forfeiture of the contest is mandatory. This regulation shall apply to all regular season and tournament contests.

## Section 2. Specific Rules

Each interscholastic sport activity has a maximum number of games limit exclusive of playoffs or tournaments. No school, individual, and/or individuals may participate on the combined freshman, junior varsity and varsity level or equivalent that exceed the maximum number of games limit within that sport.

### A. Baseball

1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) games exclusive of playoffs or tournaments sanctioned by the

VPA.

#### B. Basketball

1. No school shall schedule more than twenty (20) games exclusive of playoffs and tournament games sanctioned by the VPA.
2. No basketball player shall play more than four (4) quarters in any day, exclusive of the need of overtime play. An overtime in a junior varsity or freshman game shall be considered a quarter. Participation in a quarter constitutes a quarter of play.

#### C. Cheerleading

1. No squad shall cheer in more than twenty (20) games exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

#### D. Field Hockey

1. No school shall schedule more than fourteen (14) games exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

#### E. Football

1. No school shall schedule a game after the first Saturday in November.
2. No school shall schedule more than nine (9) games in any one (1) season exclusive of possible playoffs or championship games sanctioned by the VPA.

#### F. Golf

1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) matches in any one (1) season exclusive of possible playoffs or championship matches sanctioned by the VPA.

#### G. Gymnastics

1. No school shall schedule more than twenty (20) meets in any one season exclusive of possible playoffs or championship meets sanctioned by the VPA.

#### H. Ice Hockey

1. No school shall schedule more than twenty (20) games exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

#### I. Lacrosse

1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) games exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

#### J. Skiing

1. No school shall schedule more than twenty (20) meets exclusive of playoffs and championship meets sanctioned by the VPA.

#### K. Soccer

1. No school shall schedule more than fourteen (14) games exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

#### L. Softball

1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) games exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

M. Tennis

1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) matches exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

N. Cross Country

1. No school shall schedule more than fourteen (14) matches exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

O. Track

1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) meets exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

P. Wrestling

1. No school shall schedule more than twenty (20) matches exclusive of playoffs sanctioned by the VPA.

### **Section 3. Sports Seasons**

A. The following is a list of sports and the seasons to which they have been assigned:

1. Fall Sports Season — cross country, field hockey, football, soccer, cheerleading.
2. Winter Sports Season — basketball, cheerleading, ice hockey, wrestling, gymnastics, skiing, snowboarding and indoor track.
3. Spring Sports Season — baseball, golf, softball, track and field, tennis, lacrosse.

B. SCHEDULING OF SPORTS SEASONS: The Activities Standards Committee shall establish the starting and ending dates for each of the sports seasons in accordance with this bylaw. The Activities Standards Committee shall also establish the length of the sports season for each activity. Should state tournaments or authorized regional tournaments be scheduled after the official close of any sports season, a team that otherwise eligible may participate. The Activities Standards Committee shall schedule the seasons to maximize gender equity, the availability of appropriate sites and officials, and support for all competitions and tournaments.

C. FALL: All fall sports for boys and girls shall start on the same date. Tournament competition in any sport may be staggered, so that one gender starts and completes its tournament before the other gender.

D. WINTER: There shall be at least a one week break between the scheduled end of the Fall Sports Season, and the start of the Winter Sports Season. Tournament competition in any sport may be staggered, so that one gender starts and completes its tournament before the other gender.

E. SPRING: There shall be at least a one week break between the scheduled end of the Winter Sports Season, and the start of the Spring Sports Season. All spring sports shall start on the same date. Tournament competition in any sport may be staggered, so that one gender starts and completes its tournament before the other gender. The Spring Sports Season shall end no later than the second Saturday in June, inclusive of all scheduled tournament dates.

### **Section 4. Out of Season (including between seasons during the school year) Sports Activities**

- A. Out-of season(including, for all purposes in this section, to also encompass the time between sport seasons during the school year) practice is not permitted under the direction of a school's instructor or coach, or student leaders. There shall be absolutely no practice during the out-of-season period for a particular sport.
- B. During the out-of-season and summer recess, the school, a school's organization (Boosters) and the like may not assist

the student-athlete during the out-of-season or provide equipment, uniforms, transportation or funds related to camp or clinic attendance when same is of a participatory nature. Sports equipment may be provided per local school policy.

- C. From the last day of school to the start of the fall season ten calendar days prior to the Fall Sports Season all restrictions are rescinded. Local schools may determine to what extent the school, the coaches, and the students are to be involved in the "summer recess" program.
- D. There shall be no student practices in any sport ten calendar days prior to the official start of that season.
- E. Exception to out-of-season coaching restriction. Students should have the opportunity to voluntarily participate in out-of-season scholastic competition that does not interfere with educational development. The choice to participate in such activities should be truly voluntary. There should be no pressure placed on student athletes. Student athletes should have the opportunity to pursue a variety of activities. Student athletes who pursue a variety of activities should be protected from an unfair competitive disadvantage against those who may concentrate in one particular sport. This rule is intended to balance these important interests.

A coach from a VPA member school may not coach athletes from his or her own school program in the same sport out-of-season. The only exceptions to this restriction are the following:

- 1. A coach from a VPA member school may instruct his or her child without any restriction.
- 2. A coach from a VPA member school may coach a limited number of players from his or her scholastic program who are participating in a recognized, organized program, such as AAU or Nordic Soccer. The limits on players for team sports shall be one fewer than half the number of players needed to field a team in actual competition. Specifically, the limitations are:

Baseball(4); Basketball (2); Football (5); Ice Hockey (4); Soccer (5); and Softball (4). For individual sports (Golf, Cross Country, Wrestling, Tennis and Track), the limit shall be two athletes. Children of a coach shall count towards this limit; provided, however, that a coach may instruct any number of his or her own children without violating the limit.

- 3. Student participation in out-of-season sports activities should be truly voluntary. No student should be pressured, either directly or indirectly, to participate in out-of-season sports activities. Any coach, instructor, or administrator who directly or indirectly pressures a student athlete to participate in out-of-season sports activities shall be subject to sanctions, including suspension from coaching in any VPA activities. If a coach from a VPA member school wishes to coach athletes from his or her school out-of-season, the coach must first obtain from the student athlete and his or her parents a signed copy of the following acknowledgment, and file a copy of the acknowledgment with his or her school principal:

My scholastic coach has advised me that it is my free choice whether to play (name of sport) after the scholastic season. It is also my free choice whether I want to play under my scholastic coach or someone else. My scholastic coach has also advised me that if I chose to not play this sport after the scholastic season, my participation on the scholastic team would not be harmed in any way. My scholastic coach has not in any way pressured me to play this sport after the scholastic season, or to play under my scholastic coach. My scholastic coach and I agree that my academic progress shall be my first priority. I shall be encouraged to fulfill all of my academic obligations, including homework, classes, and associated scholastic activities, which shall have preference over any game or practice.

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent or Guardian

This section 4 E shall expire three years from the date of its adoption, unless renewed or revised by a further amendment to these policies.

### **Section 5. Definitions**

- A. Scrimmage: A scrimmage is defined as and intended to be a learning situation, not a competitive event. Further it is defined as a practice session involving students from more than one school, organization or group. While the public need not be denied admittance to a scrimmage, it shall not be played as a regular game, and no admission shall be charged. Scrimmages shall not be publicized. Awards cannot be given. If a timing device is used, normal game time shall be altered to make instruction the primary reason for the scrimmage. No official score shall be kept.
- B. Number of Scrimmages: A team cannot play more than 20% of the maximum number of regular season games as scrimmages with other schools (teams) up to the conclusion of the regular season. (Example: Ice Hockey permits a maximum of 20 regular season games, thus 20% of 20 means that 4 scrimmages would be maximum number permitted during the regular season.
- C. Jamboree: A jamboree is defined as a scrimmage in which a team engages two or more other teams in an exhibition which may or may not be designated to declare a winner. Total playing time must not exceed the total time allowable by the rules of the particular activity.
- D. Round Robin: A round robin is the same as a jamboree.

### **Section 6. Penalties**

- A. Cancelled Season Policy: A school which cancels a sport after the official schedule has been established must forfeit wins to its remaining scheduled opponents unless this action takes place ninety (90) days prior to the start of the activity.

## **ARTICLE 5. CLASSIFICATION**

### **DIVISIONAL ALIGNMENT CLASSIFICATION**

#### **Section 1. Introduction**

The Association may establish divisional alignments within the various activities. When a divisional alignment is being reviewed, the Executive Director will send a notice to its member schools. The notice shall require that the member school submit to the VPA the count of its enrolled students as of October 15. The count shall be submitted on a form attached to the notice, in accordance with the directions set forth on the form.

The Activities Standards Committee may solicit and consider advice from any source on the classifications, including committees for the various activities. It shall be the goal of the Activities Standards Committee to establish divisional classifications by February 1 for use in the following school year.

Notice of the divisional classifications shall be sent by the VPA to the member institutions. Ordinarily, the notice will be sent by December. Within fifteen days of the receipt of notice of the new divisional alignments, the member institutions may submit a request for adjusting the divisional alignment of the school for any activity.

Requests to compete in a higher classification may be granted by the Executive Director of the VPA. If the request to compete in a higher classification is denied by the Executive Director, then the request may be reviewed by the Activities Standards Committee. The Activities Standards Committee shall consider all requests to reduce the classification of any member school for any activity. Requests to reduce the classification will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances.

The Executive Director and the Activities Standards Committee shall endeavor to decide all requests for waivers or changes by its January meeting. Following such decision, the final classifications shall be provided to the member schools. It shall be the goal of the VPA to provide the final classification by February 1st. The final classifications shall be employed in the following two school years.

## **ARTICLE 6. PROTEST PROCEDURES**

### **ARTICLE VI. PROTEST PROCEDURES**

#### **Section 1. School Sponsored Activities**

- A. Unfortunate circumstances and misunderstandings can and should be resolved between the Principals/Headmasters of the schools involved.
- B. If the Principals/Headmasters of the schools involved are unable to arrive at a resolution to the problem, a principal will:
  - 1. Notify the President of the league, in writing, filing a copy with the Executive Director of the VPA.
  - 2. If the dispute is not league related, the Executive Director/designee will be available to mediate the disagreement.

#### **Section 2. VPA Sponsored Activities**

- A. In all activities sponsored by the VPA, athletic and non-athletic, the following will be the procedure for handling protests and grievances:
  - 1. Any protest relative to any aspect other than the actual activity will be settled by the observer. Should there be no observer assigned or present the host principal will make the necessary decisions.
  - 2. Any protest relative to the activity will be settled by the chief official. If no official has been designated as chief official by the Council, the referee or the official so designated by the playing rules will be considered the chief official. In any athletic activity where protest procedures are provided in the playing rules these procedures will be followed. Only playing rules of the rule book/guide governing that activity being protested are protestable.
  - 3. The director of any activity or the coach of any team desiring to lodge a protest during the actual activity or game must notify the chief official, referee, umpire, and the opposing coach that the contest is going on under protest. If a protest has not been as set forth in the rule book or guide, no protest may be lodged. no protest may be lodged.
  - 4. Should the principal of any school wish to appeal the ruling, based on the misapplication of a rule, made by the chief official, observer or host principal, the Principal must contact the VPA office within 24 hours. The Executive Director/Associate Executive Director will conduct an investigation requiring written reports, if deemed necessary, and will render a decision.
  - 5. Any protest to be made of a decision by the VPA office shall be by telephone communication within twenty-four (24) hours. It will be the Executive Director/Associate Executive Director's responsibility to contact the other members of the protest committee and to obtain statements from all concerned.  
The following will constitute the protest committee:
    - a. The President of the Association
    - b. The President-elect of the Association
    - c. The Executive Director of the Association
    - d. The Chairman of the Committee concerned

- e. An additional principal from the committee concerned and not one of those listed above
- f. Alternates shall be appointed by the President to serve in place of any of the principals listed above whose school is involved in the protest or grievance or who have any conflict of interest.  
The decision of the protest committee shall be final.

### **ARTICLE 7. COACHES ELIGIBILITY AND TRAINING PROGRAM**

The VPA believes that coaches should obtain proper training. Coaches play a critical role in the overall quality of the interscholastic activity program, the safety of student athletes, and the education of our children.

A person shall be eligible to be employed as a coach in any interscholastic high school and/or middle level activity if the person satisfies all of the following conditions:

- 3. The person's appointment as coach must be approved by the local school district responsible for the member school in which the person coaches.
- 4. The coach must be at least 18 years of age or a high school graduate at the commencement of the sport season for which the person has been appointed to coach.
- 5. The coach must sign a statement acknowledging that he or she has read, understood and agrees to comply with and abide by all VPA bylaws and policies.
- 6. The coach must successfully complete a National Federation Interscholastic Coaching Education Program, or an equivalent program approved by the VPA.

A coach must complete training within one year (as determined by the start of that sports season) of his or her employment as a coach. Coaches who have previously completed approved training but are not currently certified may continue in their positions; they must complete the approved training within seven years from the adoption of this bylaw.

This by-law only applies to coaches who are under contract with a school or school district. It does not apply to volunteer assistants.

The Activities Standards Committee may adopt a program requiring coaches who have completed the initial Coaching Education Program to periodically update their training in other courses that are approved by the Activity Standards Committee.

### **Article 8. ALLOW MEMBER SCHOOL STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE ON OTHER MEMBER SCHOOL TEAMS**

Adopted May 3, 2006

#### **MEMBER PARTICIPATION ON OTHER MEMBER SCHOOL TEAMS**

Member high school students may participate on another member high school's team provided that the following criteria is met:

Application Process:

- 1. Member high schools that are interested in developing a program must submit a written request for participation on another member school's team to the VPA Executive Director or Director of Student Activities sixty days prior to the start of each sports season to allow adequate time for reviewing the application. The VPA will only approve requests that satisfy all of the criteria of this experimental program.
- 2. As part of the application, there must be a written agreement between each participating school that has been

approved by the respective school boards (and is reflected in the boards' official minutes), principals, superintendents and athletic directors. Receiving (or host) schools may enter into multiple agreements in a sport season as long the total number of students does not exceed the 20% allocation of students from other member schools. The agreement must specifically authorize the participation

3. The agreement must state that the schools have considered compensation from the sending school(s). Compensation could be in the form of an exchange of opportunities in other programs, or any other form that the schools agree to. If compensation is agreed to, the agreement shall describe the compensation.

Substantive Requirements:

4. This program only applies to team sports (i.e., Baseball, Basketball, Field Hockey, Football, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer and Softball). Students can continue to participate as individual competitors in all other sports under existing standards.
5. The athlete(s) must meet all eligibility requirements otherwise established by VPA rules and the involved schools.
6. There must be no athletic recruitment of the student athlete. No coach, booster, or persons involved with the athletic department should directly or indirectly solicit students from other schools for this program. This means that a coach or school employee who receives a direct inquiry must immediately refer the inquiry to the appropriate school administrator.
7. The sending school(s) may not offer the team sport in which the student wishes to participate. If a sending school has previously offered this team sport, they are ineligible to participate in this program for two year from the date the team was dropped.
8. In sports which the VPA sanctions separate championships for boys and girls (Basketball, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse and Soccer), a student may request participation if the student's school does not offer the sport to his or her gender. (All schools should provide athletic programs that provide appropriate opportunities to both genders)
9. In order to assure that the sending school(s) is generally meeting its responsibilities to provide activities for student athletes, the sending school(s) must be a member of the VPA and offer at least one-half of the team sports activities sanctioned by the VPA. The sole exception to this rule is if a school has less than 50 boys or 50 girls in grades 9 through 12. These schools would be eligible for entering into a Member to Member Program. Boys and girls teams in the following sports shall be counted separately as single sports in both the calculation of the sports offered and the potential sports to be offered: Basketball, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse and Soccer.
10. There must be no displacement of student athletes from the receiving (host) school sponsoring the activity from spots on the team. Thus, the receiving school sponsoring the team must maintain a no-cut policy for the team in question, or have less than the normal complement of players required for a team who are enrolled in the sponsoring school. Two schools may reach an agreement for a particular sport, however the agreement will not take effect until tryouts have been completed and it is determined there are available slots. Schools may enter into a Member to Member Program for sub-varsity teams as long as there is no displacement at the JV or Freshman level. Schools that have a varsity program and a JV program may only enter into a JV program agreement.. For purposes of this rule, the normal complement of players required for a team shall be the following for each of the listed sports:
  - Baseball - 18
  - Basketball - 12
  - Field Hockey - 20
  - Football - 38 (8 player football - 25)
  - Ice Hockey - 24
  - Lacrosse - 20

- Soccer - 20
- Softball - 18

Students from sending schools shall comprise no more than 20% of the normal complement or team roster (if the school does not have the normal complement) for each team listed above. The maximum numbers are listed below. (Note - a team must go with the normal complement or team roster, whichever number is lower)

- Baseball - 4
- Basketball - 2
- Field Hockey - 4
- Football - 7 (8 player football - 5)
- Ice Hockey - 5
- Lacrosse - 4
- Soccer - 4
- Softball - 4

11. In the event that a receiving school receives more requests for placement on a particular team than are available, the sending school shall allocate the available slots through a lottery. In cases where there are multiple schools, lotteries will be done by both the receiving school (to determine which sending school gets priority) and the sending schools (to determine which students get selected for the available slots). A sending school may not award the slots based on ability.
12. The student athlete must comply with the standards for behavior, academic progress (or its equivalency and any other eligibility requirements of both schools. The receiving school must also conduct a mandatory pre-season meeting for all sending school students in order to explain all training requirements of the team and other requirements of the school (academic, behavioral, etc.).
13. The sending school(s) and receiving school shall define all legal liabilities for student participants in the program agreement.
14. The sending school student(s) shall assume all responsibility for transportation to and from the receiving school.

Evaluation:

15. All schools involved in a program shall complete a VPA evaluation of the program at the end of the sports season. All agreements are one season in length and must be renewed on an annual basis.

## MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES

### ARTICLE 9. MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES

#### PREAMBLE

It is the belief of the Vermont Principals' Association that all aspects of middle grades education should be driven by an understanding of the unique physical, psychological, emotional, and educational needs of the middle level children we serve.

The VPA has developed these standards in order that our middle school athletic/activities programs may consistently apply the best of what we know to this centrally important part of the larger middle grade program.

## Section 1. Standards

- A. Student activities, intramural, and interscholastic should be an integral part of the Middle School's educational program.
- B. The emphasis of a Middle School activities program should be on teaching, participation, and progression without the competitive pressures which are part of the Senior High School athletic program.
- C. The administration of the activities programs shall be under the complete jurisdiction of the school administration. The highest ideals of sportsmanship shall be upheld, and no single phase of the educational program shall be promoted at the expense of other equally important programs.
- D. The supervision of activities should be in the hands of trained personnel of the school. The selection of this leadership should be based on their knowledge of teaching activities to this age group, their understanding of the modified sports/activities program, and safety procedures.
- E. The program should operate with minimal loss of school time, limited publicity, competent officiating, limited awards and an effort to keep the program in its proper perspective.
- F. It is the duty of all concerned with Middle School activities to administer the program in such a manner that participants are properly examined, equipped, insured, selected, instructed, and supervised so that a safe and healthy program is conducted.

## **ARTICLE 10. MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **Section 1. Principal's Responsibilities**

- A. Principals are responsible for operating all middle level activities within the guidelines established by the Vermont Principals' Association.
- B. Member schools may compete with other member schools. Member schools may also compete with teams from schools and programs, in state or out of state, that are not members, but which substantially follow the VPA Middle Level Standards and Regulations.
- C. Only VPA Member schools may participate in VPA sponsored activities, namely Spelling Bee, Geo Bee, Math/Science, Music Festival, Student Council.

### **Section 2. Regulations**

- A. The student must be enrolled in their school or state approved school and must meet the VPA school's prescribed academic and eligibility rules.
- B. No more than two (2) games per week, will be scheduled Monday through Thursday, including tournaments.
- C. No school shall schedule interscholastic athletic/activities on a Sunday.
- D. Playing rules shall be NFHS rules adopted by the Vermont Principals' Association.
- E. Practice time shall be limited to one and one-half hours during any calendar day.
- F. Participants in all interscholastic athletic activities must have a minimum of ten days of practice before competing in interscholastic contests.

### **Section 3. Game Regulations**

"The VPA believes that middle school sports should be kept in perspective. To that end, we concur with the National Middle School Association Research Summary, Sports in Middle School, which states: "many positive benefits for young adolescents may result from participation in sports which can enhance their self esteem and increase their interest in sports. However, when young adolescents needs and interest become secondary to pressures and unreasonable expectations from coaches, parents and even themselves, sports often have the opposite effect. Young adolescent's psychological well being should be a priority in developing middle level sports programs."

The VPA supports and encourages middle level schools to provide young adolescents opportunities to participate in both

sports and in other developmentally appropriate activities (music, drama, dance, etc.). With this in mind, the VPA has developed sports seasons (including maximum number of games) for the middle level on the premise that a middle level program should reflect 75% of an allowable high school sports program.

- A. Soccer (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including authorized tournaments.
  - 2. The halves shall be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes. In the event of a tie, there will be no overtime.
- B. Basketball (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) games, including tournaments.
  - 2. A basketball game shall consist of a maximum of four six-minute quarters.
  - 3. No basketball player shall play more than four (4) quarters in any day, exclusive of the need of overtime play. Participation in a quarter constitutes a quarter of play.
- C. Baseball (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. Games shall consist of seven-innings or schools may enter into a mutual agreement as to a time limit prior to the start of the games.
  - 2. No pitcher shall pitch more than seven innings during any six (6) day period.
  - 3. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
- D. Field Hockey (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. Games shall consist of a maximum of thirty (30) minute halves.
  - 2. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
- E. Softball (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. Games shall consist of seven innings or schools may enter into a mutual agreement as to a time limit prior to the start of the game.
  - 2. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
  - 3. No pitcher shall pitch more than seven innings in a four day period.
- F. Cross Country (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than ten (10) meets including tournaments.
- G. Wrestling (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) matches including tournaments.
- H. Track (NFHS Rules will be used)/Gymnastics (USGA Gymnastics FIG)
  - 1. Gymnastics - No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) meets.
  - 2. Spring Track - No school shall schedule more than ten (10) meets.
- I. Lacrosse (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
  - 2. Total game or jamboree playing time shall not exceed the limit of one game (48 minutes).
  - 3. No body checking shall be allowed.
- J. Cross Country Skiing
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than ten (10) meets, including tournaments.

#### **Section 4. Sports Seasons**

- A. The Fall Sports Season shall open on the first Wednesday before Labor Day and conclude on the last Saturday in October, inclusive of tournaments.

- B. The Winter Sports Season shall consist of a maximum of 15 consecutive weeks. The earliest start of the season shall be the third Monday in November.
- C. The Spring Sports Season shall open on the first Monday in April and conclude on the second Saturday in June, inclusive of tournaments.

## **ARTICLE 11. COOPERATIVE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC TEAMS FOR MIDDLE LEVEL COMPETITION**

### **Section 1. Cooperative Sponsorship**

- A. Cooperative sponsorship of an interscholastic athletic activity(ies) by member schools will be considered under the following conditions:
  - 1. The schools must be located in the same geographic area.
  - 2. Cooperative sponsorship agreements must be reviewed on an annual basis, and be for a minimum of two years.
  - 3. The principal of each member school must jointly make the application to the Vermont Principals' Association Executive Director and/or his/her assistant.
  - 4. The request must include a resolution adopted by each Board of School Directors.
  - 5. Requests must be submitted to the VPA by April 1 to be considered for the following school year.

## **ARTICLE V. DIVISIONAL ALIGNMENT CLASSIFICATION**

### **Section 1. Introduction**

The Association may establish divisional alignments within the various activities. When a divisional alignment is being reviewed, the Executive Director will send a notice to its member schools. The notice shall require that the member school submit to the VPA the count of its enrolled students as of October 15. The count shall be submitted on a form attached to the notice, in accordance with the directions set forth on the form.

The Activities Standards Committee may solicit and consider advice from any source on the classifications, including committees for the various activities. It shall be the goal of the Activities Standards Committee to establish divisional classifications by February 1 for use in the following school year.

Notice of the divisional classifications shall be sent by the VPA to the member institutions. Ordinarily, the notice will be sent by December. Within fifteen days of the receipt of notice of the new divisional alignments, the member institutions may submit a request for adjusting the divisional alignment of the school for any activity.

Requests to compete in a higher classification may be granted by the Executive Director of the VPA. If the request to compete in a higher classification is denied by the Executive Director, then the request may be reviewed by the Activities Standards Committee. The Activities Standards Committee shall consider all requests to reduce the classification of any member school for any activity. Requests to reduce the classification will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances.

The Executive Director and the Activities Standards Committee shall endeavor to decide all requests for waivers or changes by its January meeting. Following such decision, the final classifications shall be provided to the member schools. It shall be the goal of the VPA to provide the final classification by February 1st. The final classifications shall be employed in the following two school years.

## ARTICLE VI. PROTEST PROCEDURES

### Section 1. School Sponsored Activities

- A. Unfortunate circumstances and misunderstandings can and should be resolved between the Principals/Headmasters of the schools involved.
- B. If the Principals/Headmasters of the schools involved are unable to arrive at a resolution to the problem, a principal will:
  - 1. Notify the President of the league, in writing, filing a copy with the Executive Director of the VPA.
  - 2. If the dispute is not league related, the Executive Director/designee will be available to mediate the disagreement.

### Section 2. VPA Sponsored Activities

- A. In all activities sponsored by the VPA, athletic and non-athletic, the following will be the procedure for handling protests and grievances:
  - 1. Any protest relative to any aspect other than the actual activity will be settled by the observer. Should there be no observer assigned or present the host principal will make the necessary decisions.
  - 2. Any protest relative to the activity will be settled by the chief official. If no official has been designated as chief official by the Council, the referee or the official so designated by the playing rules will be considered the chief official. In any athletic activity where protest procedures are provided in the playing rules these procedures will be followed. Only playing rules of the rule book/guide governing that activity being protested are subject to protest.
  - 3. The director of any activity or the coach of any team desiring to lodge a protest during the actual activity or game must notify the chief official, referee, umpire, and the opposing coach that the contest is going on under protest. If a protest has not been as set forth in the rule book or guide, no protest may be lodged. no protest may be lodged.
  - 4. Should the principal of any school wish to appeal the ruling, based on the misapplication of a rule, made by the chief official, observer or host principal, the Principal must contact the VPA office within 24 hours. The Executive Director/Associate Executive Director will conduct an investigation requiring written reports, if deemed necessary, and will render a decision.
  - 5. Any protest to be made of a decision by the VPA office shall be by telephone communication within twenty-four (24) hours. It will be the Executive Director/Associate Executive Director's responsibility to contact the other members of the protest committee and to obtain statements from all concerned.

The following will constitute the protest committee:

- a. The President of the Association
- b. The President-elect of the Association
- c. The Executive Director of the Association
- d. The Chairman of the Committee concerned
- e. An additional principal from the committee concerned and not one of those listed above
- f. Alternates shall be appointed by the President to serve in place of any of the principals listed above whose school is involved in the protest or grievance or who have any conflict of interest.

The decision of the protest committee shall be final.

## **ARTICLE VII. COACHES ELIGIBILITY AND TRAINING PROGRAM**

The VPA believes that coaches should obtain proper training. Coaches play a critical role in the overall quality of the interscholastic activity program, the safety of student athletes, and the education of our children.

A person shall be eligible to be employed as a coach in any interscholastic high school and/or middle level activity if the person satisfies all of the following conditions:

1. The person's appointment as coach must be approved by the local school district responsible for the member school in which the person coaches.
2. The coach must be at least 18 years of age or a high school graduate at the commencement of the sport season for which the person has been appointed to coach.
3. The coach must sign a statement acknowledging that he or she has read, understood and agrees to comply with and abide by all VPA bylaws and policies.
4. The coach must successfully complete a National Federation Interscholastic Coaching Education Program, or an equivalent program approved by the VPA.

A coach must complete training within one year (as determined by the start of that sports season) of his or her employment as a coach. Coaches who have previously completed approved training but are not currently certified may continue in their positions; they must complete the approved training within seven years from the adoption of this bylaw.

This by-law only applies to coaches who are under contract with a school or school district. It does not apply to volunteer assistants.

The Activities Standards Committee may adopt a program requiring coaches who have completed the initial Coaching Education Program to periodically update their training in other courses that are approved by the Activity Standards Committee.

## **ARTICLE VIII. ALLOW PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE ON OTHER PUBLIC SCHOOL TEAMS**

Recently, there has been much debate over a pilot program that will allow a student from one public high school to participate on another public high school's team. That debate has been spirited, at times painful, but ultimately useful. It has helped us to focus on an issue that is important to Vermont students, and the values that should guide us.

The VPA works to provide educational opportunities to Vermont students through activities. This work reflects our fundamental values as educators. We believe that activities can be a great asset to the education of students. We want students to have every opportunity to learn and grow through activities. We want to encourage participation, wherever possible.

We know that each student does not enjoy the same opportunity to participate in activities. Some schools can support a full range of activities. Others cannot. Students at schools with more limited programs lack opportunities that could be important to their growth and learning. Unfortunately, some of our students are disadvantaged.

We wish that we had the resources to make all activities available at everyone's home school. But clearly the resources do not exist. As educators, we have to recognize these resource limits. We must work creatively to maximize the opportunities that can be allowed by limited resources.

We believe that schools need to cooperate to maximize opportunities for students. This should be true for every aspect of educational programs. If a child in one school can benefit from a program in another school, and if that program can accommodate the child, we need to try to make that program available to the child.

Our goal has to be to work together so that all of our students have the maximum chance to succeed. That success may be fueled by the chemistry lab, inspired by a school play, or instilled by an athletic coach. It does not matter. Wherever we can benefit students by providing opportunity, we have to do it. And we need to foster a culture in which we reach across school lines to benefit all of our children.

We recognize that team sports present special problems in implementing this vision. Many educators have expressed strong concern that allowing students to play on other school teams would actually limit opportunities for students, or harm the experience by leaving participants with a sense of unfairness. These are legitimate concerns. But we viewed these concerns as an opportunity. We have tried to develop a policy that we hope will provide students with greater opportunities to participate, but prevent the negative impacts we all want to avoid.

### **The Process for Reviewing This Policy**

Even before the recent public controversy, the VPA was working on a policy to allow participation by students on the other public schools' teams. The VPA Activities Standards Committee reviewed a draft of the following draft policy. The VPA Executive Council has endorsed the policy in principle. The VPA has stopped short of formally adopting this policy, because it wants to solicit the widest possible input.

Because of the importance of this issue, the VPA wants to obtain comments from the membership, educators, coaches, athletic directors, students, and the public at large. We encourage you to write letters, send faxes, or provide emails to the following addresses:

Both the Activities Standards Committee and the Executive Council will review all comments. The Executive Council expects that it will submit this policy to the membership for review. If the membership approves the program, the VPA will prepare an application form for use by schools.

### **Experimental Program for Public High School Students to Participate on Other Public High School's Existing Teams**

As an experimental program for the school years 2002-2003 and 2003-2004, public high school students may participate on another public high school's teams, provided that the following criteria are met:

#### Application Process:

1. The involved schools must submit a written request for participation on another school's team to the VPA Executive Director sixty days prior to the start of each sport season to allow adequate time for reviewing the application. The VPA will process late applications, but cannot assure that review will be completed in time for the season. The VPA will only approve requests that satisfy all of the criteria of this experimental program.
2. There must be a written agreement between each participating school that has been approved by the respective school boards (and is reflected in the boards' official minutes), principals, superintendents and athletic directors. The agreement must explicitly authorize the participation.
3. The agreement must state that the schools have considered compensation from the sending school. Compensation could be in the form of an exchange of opportunities in other programs, or any other form that the schools agree to. If compensation is agreed to, the agreement shall describe the compensation.

## Substantive Requirements:

4. The experimental program only applies to team sports (i.e., Baseball, Basketball, Field Hockey, Football, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, Soccer and Softball). Students can continue to participate as individual competitors in all other sports under existing standards.
5. The athlete must meet all eligibility requirements otherwise established by VPA rules and both of the involved schools.
6. There must be no athletic recruitment of the student athlete. No coach, booster, or person involved with the athletic department should directly or indirectly solicit students from other schools for this program.
7. The sending school may not offer the team sport in which the student wishes to participate.
8. In sports in which the VPA sanctions separate championships for boys and girls (Basketball, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, and Soccer), a student athlete may request participation if the student's school does not offer the sport to his or her gender. (All schools should provide athletic programs that provide appropriate opportunities to both genders.)
9. In order to assure that the sending school is generally meeting its responsibilities to provide activities for student athletes, the sending school must be a member of the VPA and offer at least one-half of the team sports activities sanctioned by the VPA. Boys and girls teams in the following sports shall be counted separately as single sports in both the calculation of the sports offered and the potential sports to be offered: Basketball, Ice Hockey, Lacrosse, and Soccer.
10. There must be no displacement of student athletes from the school sponsoring the activity from spots on the team. Thus, the school sponsoring the team either must maintain a no-cut policy for the team in question, or have less than the normal complement of players required for a team who are enrolled in the sponsoring school. For purposes of this rule, the normal complement of players required for a team shall be the following for each of the listed sports:
  - \* Baseball -- 15
  - \* Basketball -- 12
  - \* Field Hockey -- 18
  - \* Football -- 38 (8 player football -- 30)
  - \* Ice Hockey -- 20
  - \* Lacrosse -- 20
  - \* Soccer -- 20
  - \* Softball -- 15

Students from sending schools shall comprise no more than twenty percent of the normal complement for each team as listed above. The maximum numbers are listed below:

- \* Baseball -- 3
- \* Basketball -- 2
- \* Field Hockey -- 3
- \* Football -- 7 (8 player football -- 6)
- \* Ice Hockey -- 4
- \* Lacrosse -- 4
- \* Soccer -- 4
- \* Softball -- 3

11. In the event that a sponsoring school receives more requests for placement on a particular team than the slots that are available, the sponsoring school shall allocate the available slots through a lottery. A school may not award the slots based on ability.
12. The student athlete must comply with the standards for behavior, academic progress (or its equivalency), and training of the sponsoring school's team, in addition to all similar standards of the sending school.
13. The sending school and sponsoring school shall jointly assume all legal liabilities for students participating in this program.

Evaluation:

14. The Activity Standards Committee shall evaluate this program in the summer of 2004 and prepare a report concerning whether to continue or modify this program. The VPA shall solicit comments from the membership, educators, coaches, athletic directors, students, and the public at large on the report. The VPA shall then determine whether to continue or modify the program.

Divisional Alignment:

15. In establishing divisional alignments, the appropriate VPA committee shall consider any existing programs and their impact on fair competition. In reviewing applications under this program, the VPA shall review the application with the affected sport's committee and may revise the divisional alignment as a condition of approval if appropriate to preserve fair competition.

## **VERMONT PRINCIPALS' ASSOCIATION POLICIES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS/ACTIVITIES**

### **ARTICLE IX. MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETICS AND ACTIVITIES**

#### **Preamble**

It is the belief of the Vermont Principals' Association that all aspects of middle grades education should be driven by an understanding of the unique physical, psychological, emotional, and educational needs of the middle level children we serve.

The VPA has developed these standards in order that our middle school athletic/activities programs may consistently apply the best of what we know to this centrally important part of the larger middle grade program.

#### **Section 1. Standards**

- A. Student activities, intramural, and interscholastic should be an integral part of the Middle School's educational program.
- B. The emphasis of a Middle School activities program should be on teaching, participation, and progression without the competitive pressures, which are part of the Senior High School athletic program.
- C. The administration of the activities programs shall be under the complete jurisdiction of the school administration. The highest ideals of sportsmanship shall be upheld, and no single phase of the

educational program shall be promoted at the expense of other equally important programs.

- D. The supervision of activities should be in the hands of trained personnel of the school. The selection of this leadership should be based on their knowledge of teaching activities to this age group, their understanding of the modified sports/activities program, and safety procedures.
- E. The program should operate with minimal loss of school time, limited publicity, competent officiating, limited awards and an effort to keep the program in its proper perspective.
- F. It is the duty of all concerned with Middle School activities to administer the program in such a manner that participants are properly examined, equipped, insured, selected, instructed, and supervised so that a safe and healthy program is conducted.

## **ARTICLE X. MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC/ACTIVITIES RULES AND REGULATIONS**

### **Section 1. Principal's Responsibilities**

- A. Principals are responsible for operating all middle level activities within the guidelines established by the Vermont Principals' Association.
- B. Member schools may compete with other member schools. Member schools may also compete with teams from schools and programs, in state or out of state, that are not members, but which substantially follow the VPA Middle Level Standards and Regulations.
- C. Only VPA Member schools may participate in VPA sponsored activities, namely Spelling Bee, Geo Bee, Math/Science, Music Festival, Student Council.

### **Section 2. Regulations**

- A. The student must be enrolled in their school or state approved school and must meet the VPA school's prescribed academic and eligibility rules.
- B. No more than two (2) games per week, will be scheduled Monday through Thursday, including tournaments.
- C. No school shall schedule interscholastic athletic/activities on a Sunday.
- D. Playing rules shall be NFHS rules adopted by the Vermont Principals' Association.
- E. Practice time shall be limited to one and one-half hours during any calendar day.
- F. Participants in all interscholastic athletic activities must have a minimum of ten days of practice before competing in interscholastic contests.

### **Section 3. Game Regulations**

"The VPA believes that middle school sports should be kept in perspective. To that end, we concur with the National Middle School Association Research Summary, Sports in Middle School, which states: "many positive

benefits for young adolescents may result from participation in sports which can enhance their self esteem and increase their interest in sports. However, when young adolescents needs and interest become secondary to pressures and unreasonable expectations from coaches, parents and even themselves, sports often have the opposite effect. Young adolescent's psychological well being should be a priority in developing middle level sports programs."

The VPA supports and encourages middle level schools to provide young adolescents opportunities to participate in both sports and in other developmentally appropriate activities (music, drama, dance, etc.). With this in mind, the VPA has developed sports seasons (including maximum number of games) for the middle level on the premise that a middle level program should reflect 75% of an allowable high school sports program.

- A. Soccer (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including authorized tournaments.
  - 2. The halves shall be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes. In the event of a tie, there will be no overtime.
- B. Basketball (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than sixteen (16) games, including tournaments.
  - 2. A basketball game shall consist of a maximum of four six-minute quarters.
  - 3. No basketball player shall play more than four (4) quarters in any day, exclusive of the need of overtime play. Participation in a quarter constitutes a quarter of play.
- C. Baseball (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. Games shall consist of seven-innings or schools may enter into a mutual agreement as to a time limit prior to the start of the games.
  - 2. No pitcher shall pitch more than seven innings during any six (6) day period.
  - 3. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
- D. Field Hockey (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. Games shall consist of a maximum of thirty (30) minute halves.
  - 2. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
- E. Softball (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. Games shall consist of seven innings or schools may enter into a mutual agreement as to a time limit prior to the start of the game.
  - 2. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.
  - 3. No pitcher shall pitch more than seven innings in a four day period.
- F. Cross Country (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than ten (10) meets including tournaments.
- G. Wrestling (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) matches including tournaments.
- H. Track (NFHS Rules will be used)/Gymnastics (USGA Gymnastics FIG)
  - 1. Gymnastics - No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) meets.
  - 2. Spring Track - No school shall schedule more than ten (10) meets.
- I. Lacrosse (Boys and Girls) (NFHS Rules will be used)
  - 1. No school shall schedule more than twelve (12) games including tournaments.

2. Total game or jamboree playing time shall not exceed the limit of one game (48 minutes).
3. No body checking shall be allowed.

J. Cross Country Skiing

1. No school shall schedule more than ten (10) meets, including tournaments.

#### **Section 4. Sports Seasons**

- A. The Fall Sports Season shall open on the first Wednesday before Labor Day and conclude on the last Saturday in October, inclusive of tournaments.
- B. The Winter Sports Season shall consist of a maximum of 15 consecutive weeks. The earliest start of the season shall be the third Monday in November.
- C. The Spring Sports Season shall open on the first Monday in April and conclude on the second Saturday in June, inclusive of tournaments.

### **ARTICLE XI. COOPERATIVE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC TEAMS FOR MIDDLE LEVEL COMPETITION**

#### **Section 1. Cooperative Sponsorship**

- A. Cooperative sponsorship of an interscholastic athletic activity(ies) by member schools will be considered under the following conditions:
  1. The schools must be located in the same geographic area.
  2. Cooperative sponsorship agreements must be reviewed on an annual basis, and be for a minimum of two years.
  3. The principal of each member school must jointly make the application to the Vermont Principals' Association Executive Director and/or his/her assistant.
  4. The request must include a resolution adopted by each Board of School Directors.
  5. Requests must be submitted to the VPA by April 1 to be considered for the following school year.