

JUNIOR HIGH SPORTS MANUAL GRADES 7 & 8

The purpose of this Junior High Sports Manual is to clarify the rules and regulations for seventh and eighth grade girls' athletics for the member schools of the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union. Information is provided regarding rules and regulations plus some answers and clarifications to some of the most frequently asked questions.

The purpose of the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union shall be: To promote, direct, protect, and regulate amateur interscholastic athletic relationship for junior high and secondary girls between member schools and to stimulate fair play, friendly rivalry, and good sportsmanship among contestants, schools, and communities throughout the state of Iowa. Hopefully participation is the primary focus of junior high sports.

Membership: All senior and junior high schools in the state desiring membership or associate membership in the IGHSAU may make application to the Board of Directors. Application for membership is subject to approval by the Board of Directors. Membership expires at midnight of June 30 of each year. Penalties are assessed on July 1 and August 1 a school is not eligible to compete until their membership is approved.

Cooperative Sharing Agreements: It is permissible for a junior high member school to enter into a cooperative sharing agreement with another junior high member school when the need exists. The schools involved in the agreement must share attendance boundaries unless schools who do share boundaries do not offer the program or refuse to enter into a sharing agreement. A school may have a cooperative sharing agreement with only one other school unless all schools involved agree to separate sharing agreements. The procedure to be followed is that the Board of Education of each member junior high school must formally agree to the combining of teams. Each school should keep a copy of the agreement on file for reference. The schools are **NOT REQUIRED** to file these agreements with the Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union.

BY-LAWS - ARTICLE V - JUNIOR HIGH

Section 1. For each junior high attendance center within a district where interschool competition is allowed, a membership must be maintained with the IGHSAU.

Section 2. All students participating on a team from a junior high attendance center must be enrolled in the same school.

Section 3. Any time there is more than one junior high attendance center in a school district, any game between those two attendance centers must count towards the team limitation.

Section 4. All starting times are determined by the host school.

Section 5. Ninth grade students (and older) are ineligible to compete with seventh and eighth grade students, on junior high teams except for eighth graders in softball. This applies to all competition teams in the Athletic Union administered events.

Eligibility: All students shall be eligible upon entering the seventh grade. The Department of Education has no eligibility rules governing seventh and eighth grade students. Local school districts shall establish their own rules and guidelines regarding academic and good conduct rules for eligibility. Students in grades below 7th grade are not eligible to practice with or compete on junior high teams. Exception: After completion of their sixth grade school year, a girl may participate on the junior high softball team.

Physical/Medical Examination: Any student who desires to participate in interscholastic athletics must have a medical examination prior to participating. The certificate of medical examination is valid for one calendar year. A grace period not to exceed 30 days is allowed for an expired physical examination. In addition, the concussion form must be signed and returned to the designated school staff annually before being allowed to participate.

Administrative Regulations: "Males shall be excluded from female athletic teams". This policy was approved by the IGHS AU Board of Directors, September 9, 1990 and reaffirmed on June 28, 2006.

Local school districts shall determine practice protocol and schedules for their respective 7-12 grade girls' teams. Each local school will determine how their practices will be scheduled for all 7-12 grade participants in their girls' sports. It is not permissible for 7th and 8th graders to compete in high school competitions and intersquad scrimmages against other schools (exception: 8th graders playing softball).

Sixth-graders and younger are not allowed to practice or compete with 7-12 grade teams.

Subject to local school district approval, boys may participate in girls' practices in all sanctioned sports. Each school district can establish their own procedure and protocol of whether to allow or not allow boys to practice against girls' teams. Boys may only be utilized in a practice setting and are never allowed to compete or scrimmage against any opposing team or player.

Officials: It is recommended that competition involving junior high students in volleyball, basketball, soccer and softball have at least two registered officials. Track, cross country and swimming competitions require one registered official. Any competition involving junior high students must have at least one registered official. High school students are permitted to officiate junior high contests if they are registered with the IGHS AU or if the other official is registered.

MEMBER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTESTANTS MUST OBSERVE THE REGULATIONS AND LIMITATIONS APPLICABLE TO MEMBER HIGH SCHOOLS AND THEIR CONTESTANTS UNLESS SPECIFIC JUNIOR HIGH RULES APPLY. THOSE EXCEPTIONS ARE LISTED HEREAFTER:

School teams are only permitted to play against other school teams. A school team cannot play against an AAU, club or parks and recreation team.

The junior high fall sports season may begin on Monday of Week 8 (or the 1st day of school). Other junior high seasons may be any time during the school year, but it may not be longer in length than that of the high school season (exception-softball and soccer may be during the summer).

Uniforms: Allowances shall be made by officials regarding uniforms which do not totally conform to all requirements of the rule book. Many schools use hand-me-down uniforms or practice jerseys in an effort to allow all players an opportunity to participate. Latitude shall be given to teams whose uniforms are of the same basic color but may vary in other aspect (ie...style, trim, minor color variance, duplicate or illegal numbers, etc). Contestants will be permitted to wear hats and glove only if weather conditions necessitate such items. If hats or gloves are worn, they shall be worn only for the athlete's health and safety and not to draw attention to the athlete. A legal uniform is well defined in Rule 4, Section 3, Articles 1 and 2 of the National Federation Rules. Starting in 2023 for both Cross Country and Track and Field uniform adaptations to 4-3-1b7 and 4-3-2a have been eliminated by both the IGHSAU and IHSAA. From now on both organizations will follow Rule 4-3 as written in the NFHS Rules book. GPS watches and jewelry are legal.

EJECTION POLICY

If a coach/player is ejected from a game/match, he/she cannot coach/play for the remainder of that game/match. He/she may not coach/play in other competitions later that same date. The ejected coach/player cannot coach/compete in any level of competition until they have served their suspension at the subsequent level of competition in which they were ejected, i.e. ejection from varsity competition equals suspension at varsity level.

When a coach is serving a suspension, he/she may not coach and must be out of sight and sound of the contest venue. If a player is serving a suspension, she may not be in uniform or participate in the contest(s) or pre-game warm-up. Local policy dictates whether the student may be in street clothes on the bench, dugout, travel with the team, be in the locker room, etc.

THE IGHSAU RESERVES THE RIGHT TO IMPOSE ADDITIONAL PENALTIES/SANCTIONS AFTER REVIEW OF THE INCIDENT.

Should a coach or player be ejected from a contest in any sport, the following procedure is in effect:

FIRST OFFENSE: The school administration and game officials shall notify the State Office the following business day. The administration must meet with the offender and file this form with the State Office. Coaches who are ejected must view the NFHS Teaching & Modeling Behavior video and provide the certificate of completion to the IGHSAU before returning to coach. Players must view the NFHS Sportsmanship Video and provide the certificate of completion to the IGHSAU before returning to play. The offender must also file a written summary of the events that led to the ejection with the State Office before returning to coach or play. The penalty for a first offense is a **one-date** suspension. If the ejection occurs on the last game/match of the season, the coach/student suspension will occur on the first date of the next sport in which he/she participates in.

SECOND OFFENSE: The school administration and game officials shall notify the State Office the following business day. The offender must file a written summary of the events that led to the ejection with the State Office. The penalty for a second offense within one year of the initial offense is school membership sanction and the violator is subject to a multi-date suspension as determined by the IGHSAU.

THIRD OFFENSE: The school administration and game officials shall notify the State Office the following business day. The offender must file a written summary of the events that led to the ejection with the State Office. The penalty for a third offense will be determined after a formal hearing by the Board of Directors.

Local authorities may also impose additional or more severe sanctions and/or penalties.

VOLLEYBALL

Playing Dates-9

Individual player limitations-6 matches per day

No scrimmages or jamborees are allowed.

May not start practice before Monday of Week 8 (or the 1st day of school). Tournaments are legal and count as one playing date

③ Must use rally scoring-Point requirements and/or time limits shall be determined prior to the start of each match

③ No scoring cap allowed-Must win by 2 points

③ Line judges are REQUIRED

③ Net height is 7'4 1/8" (same as high school).

BASKETBALL

Playing Dates-12 games per team and per individual player

Individual Participation Limit-6 quarters per day

No scrimmages or jamborees are allowed.

A school may play two games on a non-school day (Saturday). A student would be allowed to play in eight (8) quarters that day.

③ 3 point goal-If the playing floor has the 3-point line marked, the 3-point goal must be used.

③ 6 minute quarters-3 minute overtime period

③ 28.5 inch ball shall be used

CROSS COUNTRY

Playing Dates-7

Length of race-2 miles (maximum)

No scrimmages are allowed

May not start practice before Monday of Week 8 (or the 1st day of school).

③ Uniform---school issued

Jewelry is legal.

Not permitted to run in races in which high school participants are competing. It is legal to start high school race and then several minutes later start the junior high race. Both are running at the same time but not actually competing against each other.

TRACK AND FIELD

Playing Dates-7

No scrimmages

Jewelry is legal.

Invitational meets are limited in number of teams to the number of lanes on the track (unless special permission is granted by the IGHS AU).

Individual Participation-four events per meet of which not more than three may be running events

Schools must run the standardized order of events.

- ③ 4 K shot put shall be used
- ③ 1 K discus shall be used
- ③ All junior high hurdle races shall use 30-inch hurdles.

Shuttle Hurdle Relay-(new in 2011). Each hurdler shall run a 102.5 meters (112 yards, 2 inches). The distance from the starting line to the first hurdle and from the last hurdle to the finish line shall be 13 meters (42 feet, 7 3/4 inches) and the distance between hurdles is 8.5 meters (27 feet, 10 1/2 inches). Odd numbered lanes shall be assigned to the first and third runners and even numbered lanes to the second and fourth runners. There shall be ten hurdles.

200 Meter Hurdles-The distance from the starting line to the first hurdle shall be 55 meters and the distance between the hurdles shall be set at 35 meters. The distance from the last hurdle to the finish line shall be 40 meters. There shall be a total of four hurdles used in the race.

100 Meter (10 Flight) Hurdles-(new in 2011). The distance from the starting line to the first hurdle shall be 13 meters (42 feet, 7 3/4 inches) and the distance between hurdles shall be 8.5 meters (27 feet, 10 1/2 inches). The distance from the last hurdle to the finish line shall be 10.5 meters (34 feet, 5 1/2 inches). There shall be 10 hurdles.

SOFTBALL

Playing Dates-40 games

Individual participation limit-65 games.

No scrimmages or jamborees are allowed.

An individual may only play in three games on one day.

A team is permitted to play no more than three games in any single day.

Metal cleats and metal toe plates are legal.

A team may play in only one tournament at a time and may play no more than three games on a calendar day.

A student who has completed the sixth grade is eligible to play softball on the junior high team that summer. Eighth graders are eligible to play softball with the junior high and/or high school team--has a three games per day limit (total for JH and HS) and a 65 game season limit.

Eighth grade students are eligible to practice on the first day of high school softball practice and compete on the first day of competition. Eighth graders may compete on the junior high team, high school team, or both. If competing in junior high and high school, may only play in three games in one day. Their season limitation is 65 total games. If graduated 6th graders are used on junior high teams, they cannot practice or play until their school year is completed.

SOCCER

Playing Dates-13

No scrimmages or jamborees are allowed.

Each individual player may participate in three halves per day (six if in a tournament). The season match limitation is equal to that of the team. Any participation on a day constitutes participation in a match. If double dual, limit is four halves.

Two of the 13 dates may be tournaments. When more than one match takes place in a day, it constitutes a tournament. Double duals are legal and count as two playing dates if not used as a tournament.

No more than five matches may be played in one tournament, and no more than three matches in one day. Regularly scheduled regular season matches may not be part of a tournament.

Eighth grade students are not allowed to compete with the high school team.

Wrestling

Playing Dates-9

No scrimmages or Jamboree allowed.

Team limitations- Tournaments are NOT permitted in 7th and 8th grade girls wrestling. However, it is permissible for more than two junior high schools (7th and 8th grade only) to compete provided no team points are scored and there is no entry fee. This type of meet would count as one of a school's 9 meets, and no participant will wrestle more than three times.

Individual limitations- 3 matches per day. Each wrestler is required to have a minimum of 30-minutes rest between matches.

Weight Classes- There are no weight classes in junior high wrestling competition. It is recommended that schools weigh their wrestlers at home the day before the meet. When they arrive at the site of the meet, the two coaches can compare weights and match individuals up according to size and ability.

Wrestlers weighing 175 pounds or more may not compete against an opponent who weighs less than 10% of the heavier wrestlers' weight. For example, a 175# wrestler may not compete against an opponent weighting less than 157.5#.

Note: Junior high (7th and 8th grade) matches will consist of three periods. The first period shall be two minutes in length and the 2nd & 3rd periods shall each be one minute in length (2-1-1). The overtime period in junior high wrestling shall be one period of one minute in length, with a 30-second tie breaker, if necessary. The wrestler who scored first during the overtime or tie breaker will be declared the winner. All other overtime procedures as per the national high school wrestling rule book will be followed.

GOLF

Playing Dates-5

No scrimmages or jamboree allowed.

TENNIS

Playing Dates-9

No scrimmages or jamboree allowed.

SWIMMING

Playing Dates-5

No scrimmages or jamboree allowed.

May not start practice before Monday of Week 8.

BOWLING

Playing Dates-12

No scrimmages or jamboree allowed.

Team limitations-2 matches per day.

Individual limitations-6 games per day.

Note: 5 baker games=1 game.

IMPORTANT CONCUSSION INFORMATION

The Iowa Legislature passed a new law, effective July 1, 2011, regarding students in grades 7-12 who participate in extracurricular interscholastic activities. All 7-12 coaches, paid and volunteer, must view the National Federation concussion video prior to the first day of practice. Please view the Iowa Code Section 280, 13c and other important concussion information and management protocol on the IGHS AU website (www.ighsau.org).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q—Can a high school coach allow an especially talented 8th grade girl to scrimmage against his high school team?

A— Each local school shall determine practice protocol and schedules for grades 7-12. However, a junior high player cannot scrimmage against another school.

Q—Our high school team had a very small squad, not enough to practice or scrimmage. Can our 8th grade team practice with the high school team given these circumstances?

A—Yes. Each local school shall determine practice protocol and schedules for grades 7-12. It is local school decision how to structure 7-12 practices including scrimmage against their own team (junior high could not scrimmage against another school's team).

Q—Can a 5th or 6th grade student play on the junior high team?

A—No. A student must be in 7th or 8th grade in order to practice or compete on a junior high team with the following exception: a student who has completed the 6th grade may play on the junior high school soccer or softball team during competition that summer; however a 5th grade student would never be eligible to play on the junior high team. Sixth grade and younger students may never practice or compete on the junior high team in any other sport.

Q—Do junior high coaches have to be certified?

A—Yes. Anyone whether under contract or voluntary who performs coaching duties must be properly licensed or certified.

Q—Our school has a large number of athletes and not enough coaches. Can a parent volunteer to help during practice?

A—No. No one except properly licensed or certified coaches may perform coaching duties in practice or in game competition.

Q—Our school has an academic rule where students have to be passing all classes or are checked academically on a weekly basis. Can they do that?

A—Yes. Each local school shall establish their own rules governing academic eligibility. They may also establish their own timelines for becoming eligible again.

Q—Can a school have “good conduct” rules and consequences in junior high?

A—Absolutely. Each local school may establish their own set of “good conduct rules and consequences”.

Q—Is it legal for a school to hold practice on a Saturday, Sunday, or during Thanksgiving, Christmas or spring vacation?

A—Yes. Each local school is in charge of determining their own practice schedules.

Q—Do we have to have licensed officials to officiate junior high games or matches?

A—Yes, at least one registered official must be used in all sports. It is obviously recommended that all officials be registered in volleyball, basketball, softball, soccer, etc.

But it is permissible to conduct the game with one registered and others as non-registered. Remember, high school students may become licensed to officiate games involving seventh and eighth grade students.

Q—We witnessed a high school student officiating in a junior high game. Is this legal? A—It is possible for a high school student to be licensed. They are only allowed to officiate junior high games.

Q—We have a boy in our junior high who would prefer to play on the girls' volleyball team instead of on the boys' football team. Can he do that?

A—No. A boy is not permitted to participate (or practice) on a girls' athletic team.

Q—Can a junior high girl participate on the junior high boys' football team?

A—Yes, subject to the policies of the Iowa High School Athletic Association and local school district. If there is a like sport program for girls within your school district, then the girl must participate on the girls' team. If a like sport is not offered, then it is possible for the school district to allow the girl to compete on the boys' team. A meeting is recommended involving the principal, athletic director, coach, athlete, and the parents to discuss the expectations and risks involved.

Q—What happens if a junior high athlete or coach gets ejected from a game?

A—A report must be filed with the State Office from the official and from the school administration of the offender. Typically for a first offense, a one-date suspension will be issued. For a repeat offense, a multi-date suspension will be issued. They must also view the National Federation's Sportsmanship video before being allowed to compete/coach in their next game.

Q—Our volleyball or cross-country coach wants to start practice the week before school starts. Can they legally do that?

A—Fall season practices may not start before Monday of Week 8.

Q—A student is retained in junior high for a third year. Can she participate?

A—The Department of Education has no rules governing eligibility at the junior high level. However, it is recommended for each local school district to have a policy in place to govern the number of semesters a student may be eligible.

Q—A student is in the eighth grade but is 16 years of age. Is she still eligible to compete?

A—The Department of Education has no rules governing eligibility at the junior high level. However, it is recommended for each local school district to have a policy in place to govern the age limitations for a student to remain eligible at the junior high level.

Q—Our coach has stated that if an athlete misses practice that the athlete will not get to play or might even be dismissed from the team. Can they do that?

A—Yes. Each local school shall establish their own rules for their team including consequences for missing practice or other disciplinary reasons.

Q—Our coach has stated or handed out expectations in writing that if the athlete does not attend off season camps or weight room workouts, then they will not be allowed to come out for the sport or simply won't get to play. Can they do that?

A—No. Coaching personnel shall not be allowed to require students to participate in any activities outside the season of that coach's sport as a condition of participation in the coach's sport during its season.

Q—Can our high school coach work with our junior high athletes outside the season on an AAU or club team?

A—Yes. Junior high students and coaches are not governed by the camp/clinic and contact rules.

Q—In basketball, our school plays an A, B, and C game for eighth grade basketball. Can a girl play in the A and B game on the same night?

A—Girls are allowed to play in six (6) quarters on a calendar day. It does not matter which games or levels those six (6) quarters come from. It is the coach's responsibility to keep an accurate record of quarters played so that a player does not exceed the six (6) quarters in one day.

Q—In track, what is the penalty if an athlete exceeds the limit of four events in one day or exceeds the limit of running in three events?

A—The team shall forfeit all points scored by that individual in all events she was in during that meet.

Q—What are the junior high hurdle heights?

A—All junior high hurdles are 30". The 100 Meter Hurdles and Shuttle Hurdle Relay are exactly like the high school except using 30" hurdles.

Q—In volleyball, what happens if there are no line judges?

A—The officials shall simply not begin the match until line judges are selected and in place. It is the responsibility of home management to provide two line judges. It is not required for them to be adults. Many times a player from each team who are playing in a different match are used. It is also permissible for parents or teachers to be used.

Q—In volleyball, can junior high teams play two of three game matches or do they play three of five matches? And do they play to 15, 21, or 25 points?

A—In junior high, the number of games and point totals used are determined by the host school but usually mutually agreed upon by both teams or by a conference rule prior to the match. They cannot have a scoring cap—must win by two points. However, they can play two games, six games, two of three, three of five, or just play for a specified amount of time (ie...1 hour or one hour 15 minutes, etc.) and can play to 11, 15, 21, 25, points etc. The important thing is that it is mutually agreed upon prior to starting and that the officials have been informed of the protocol, point totals, and time limits prior to starting.

Q—Is it legal for junior high softball players to wear metal cleats?

A—Yes, metal cleats and metal toe plates are legal.

Q — Is it permissible to use the libero player in junior high volleyball?

A — Yes, a team is not required to use the libero, but may if they wish. Effective in 2006, the libero is also allowed to serve in one rotation spot. If used, a tracker must assist the scorekeeper in keeping track of the libero and her replacements.

Q — Can junior high athletes wear jewelry while competing?

A — Yes, jewelry is now permitted.

Q—Can our high school coach conduct a clinic for junior high or younger students during the school year?

A—Yes the contact rule does not apply to junior high age or younger students. High school athletics in that sport are allowed to assist one day each as clinicians with that clinic.

Q—Our school has the same coach for junior high as high school cross country. Can both groups practice at the same time?

A—Yes, in cross country both groups may practice at the same site simultaneously. Each local school shall determine practice protocol and schedules for grades 7-12.

Q—Can a boy participate in our junior high volleyball practice in a spiking or blocking drill?

A.—Yes, boys may practice against girls, however they are not allowed to compete with girls' teams.

Q—Can girls shoot the three-pointer in junior high girls basketball games?

A—Yes, if the playing floor is marked for the 3-point goal, it shall be used.

Q—Our school has a junior high softball team in the summer. Can they play against a club or city rec team from a neighboring school?

A—No, a school team may only play against another school team.

Q—What is the legal weight of the junior high shot put and discus?

A—Junior high uses the same shot and discus as the high school girls:
shot=4K, discus=1K.

Q-A junior high girl fails a class...is she eligible?

A—The academic scholarship rule does not apply to junior high. It would depend on that school's local policy.

Q—Can an eighth grade girl play softball on the junior high and high school team?

A—Yes, however she is limited to not more than three games in a day and cannot exceed 65 games for the season.

Q—During the summer, can a junior high girl participate in a camp or in a league with high school students?

A—Yes, participation in non-school events are not governed by the IGHS AU. This would be subject to local school's decision.

Q—Can a junior high girl participate in volleyball and cross country during the same season?

A—Yes, totally subject to the local school district's decision.

Q—Can a junior high girl compete against college athletes?

A—Not if the college athlete is representing her collegiate institution or if the event is sanctioned or sponsored by the college.

Q—Can a junior high girl wrestle against a junior high boy in competition?

A—No, as of 2022 girls wrestling is a sanctioned sport in the state of Iowa for grades 7-12. Girls may only wrestle girls in the state of Iowa under the IGHSAU.

Q—Can a junior high girl wrestle against a junior high boy in practice?

A—Yes, for practice purposes this is permitted. Please remember to always match kids up according to their weight, and ability. Please also consider each student's comfort level in a situation where you are mixing genders.

Q—Can a junior high girl participate in basketball and wrestling during the same season?

A—Yes, totally subject to the local school district's decision.