



**TENNESSEE STATE INDEPENDENT ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
(TSIAA)
2021-2022 CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS
Updated May 2021**

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CONSTITUTION

Article I: Organization

Section I: Name

This private organization is an association of small schools and shall be known as the Tennessee State Independent Athletic Association (TSIAA).

Section 2: Purpose and Goals

The TSIAA exists to assist member schools in providing quality athletic programs for students. We will implement fairness and organization within the competitive framework, and we will create a culture of excellent sportsmanship in everything we do.

In order to accomplish these goals, the TSIAA will govern the following:

- Competition in Middle School athletics which a championship is offered.
- Competition in Varsity sports unless a team is participating within the rules of an TSIAA board approved organization or association. Other requests can be submitted to the board.
- Uniform playing rules and standards of eligibility, conduct and competition. The National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) will govern any rule not addressed in the by-laws.
- Safeguards for the health, safety and well-being of players, coaches and officials.
- Standards of conduct and penalties for non-compliance.
- As scheduled league meetings.

Article II: Membership

Section I: Participation

- A. Membership in the TSIAA is open to all schools that are approved upon application review of the Executive Board of Directors.
- B. Upon entering the league, new member schools will have a probationary period for the current school year. During the probationary period, schools may fully participate in league play if they are in compliance with the TSIAA Constitution and By-Laws. In order for a team to be post-season eligible the school needs to have been voted into the conference prior to the scheduling meeting of that sports season.
- C. Memberships will be voted on by the Executive Board per application submitted.

Section 2: Good Standing

- A. Fees: For a school to be a member in good standing, it must pay all athletic membership fees established by the stated deadlines.
- B. Grievances: All grievances occurring within the current school year must be addressed and resolved by the TSIAA Board Members.

Section 3: Sanctions

- A. A member school may be suspended or placed on probation for any violation of the Constitution, By-Laws and Association Policies. A school cannot be disciplined in this manner without receiving a written notice at least ten (10) days prior to league action. This can only occur by a majority vote of Executive and Secondary Boards.
- B. Lesser penalties specified by this Constitution shall be imposed and/or confirmed by the Executive Director. The Executive Director may designate penalties already written in the regulations.

Article III: Administration

Section 1: Officers and Representatives

- A. The makeup of the TSIAA Board shall consist of Executive Director, Assistant Executive Director, Administrator/Treasurer, and 2 Board Members. In addition to the Executive Board, there will be a Secondary Board consisting of 5 board members.
- B. Secondary Board Members: Shall be appointed after application is sent to TSIAA Executive Board for approval. Secondary Board members will serve a four year term. They are able to apply for consecutive terms.
 - 1. The Executive and Secondary Board officers shall enforce the Constitution, By-Laws and policies when necessary.
 - a. It will be the responsibility of the Executive Board to choose their successor which will need to be approved by the remaining executive board members in the event that they step down from their position.
- C. The Administrator/Treasurer and Executive Director shall oversee the conferences' finances.

Section 2: Vacancies

- A. Schools: Any school leaving the TSIAA must be voted back into the league and pay all membership dues just as a new member and serve a probationary year.

Article IV: Meetings

Section I: Time and Place

- A. The Executive Director shall call regular meetings at the time and place agreed upon by the league to consist of a bi-annual Fall and Spring Meetings. Those in attendance to these meetings should be either a Head of School or Athletic Director only.
- B. Special meetings may be called when necessary, including scheduling meetings.
- C. Meeting Minutes will be taken and available for review to Member Schools only and upon discretion of the Executive Director.

Article V: Finances

Section 1: Use of Funds

- A. The Executive Director will disburse funds as the Executive Board Members deem necessary.
- B. Executive Director and Assistant Executive Director shall disburse funds when necessary that pertain to league spending.

Section 2: Recording Funds

- A. The Admin/Treasurer shall keep accurate records of financial actions and should inform league officers as to its financial status throughout the year.
- B. The Admin/Treasurer shall be responsible for an annual report in the bi-annual Fall and Spring Meeting.

Article VI: Constitution and/or By-Law Amendments

Section I: Amendments

- A. The proposed amendment must be presented and approved by the Executive Board Members.
- B. An amendment will go into effect at a determined date.

BY-LAWS

Article I: Regulated Sports

Section I: Sports Offered

Middle School and High School sports shall be offered and controlled by the TSIAA. The Board Members shall have the authority to add or eliminate a sport by a majority vote. Sport offerings are subject to change. Current offers are: Fall - 8-man football, volleyball, cross country; Winter - basketball; Spring - varsity boys soccer, co-ed middle school soccer, baseball, Boys Volleyball softball.

Note: Co-ed middle school soccer will require a minimum of 2 girls on the field at all times.

Article II: Spectator Control and Sportsmanship

Section I: Responsibilities When Hosting an Athletic Contest

- A. The home school in any contest shall be responsible for hosting visitors, including the game officials. The home school should provide a changing station for the visiting school. It should also provide protection for game officials from fans and incidents, if the officials feel the need for protection. Any infraction on this rule may subject an offending school or its representatives to discipline by the TSIAA.
- B. When the conduct of spectators, athletes, coaches or any other person is not representative of the TSIAA, the host school Administrator or Athletic Director shall have authority to stop the contest and warn the offender(s). Upon repetition of the offense, the Administrator or Athletic Director may resolve the situation according to his/her best judgment. We do want control of our league, but officials must have the authority over the contest at all times. For Conference Tournaments, the elected league officials will serve as game administration.
- C. Hospitality:
The Host School must provide the following at game sites:
 - 1. Appropriate locker room for visiting school.
 - 2. Appropriate locker room for game officials.
 - 3. Game Supervisor: someone other than a Head Coach shall be in charge of crowd control, protection of fans, players, coaches, and game officials. Someone other than a Head Coach should be in charge of injuries, ejections, accidents, etc.
 - 4. Game Officials include but are not limited to: the referees of the contest, scoreboard monitor and official scorekeeper.
- D. Sportsmanship
 - 1. Game Officials and fans shall have no interaction during an athletic contest. Fans interested in a rule interpretation, score change, foul situation, etc. should contact their Head Coach.

2. The Game Supervisor shall protect the Game Officials at all times.
3. The scoreboard monitor and official scorebook keeper shall be adult for all Varsity Conference games and remain unbiased at all times. This means that they shall not cheer for their team or argue about an official's call.
4. The official scorebook keeper shall give the same strategies to the visiting team. This means discussing remaining time-outs, fouls per player, etc. with the home team and not with the visiting team is considered unsportsmanlike and will not be accepted.
5. No artificial noisemakers are allowed during the playing of a game. During time-outs, quarter breaks, halftime or any stoppage of play, a stereo may be played for cheerleaders, fans, etc. This must cease once the game resumes.

Article III: Player/Coach Conduct

Section 1: Player /Coach Conduct

- A. At a TSIAA event, unacceptable conduct such as student use, possession, purchase, or sale of drugs, tobacco products, or alcoholic beverages along with acts of immorality and the like shall result in the immediate suspension of a student from TSIAA sponsored events. THIS IS A ZERO TOLERANCE ISSUE! Reinstatement may be made at the discretion of the elected Board Members.
- B. Vulgar and offensive language will not be tolerated.
- C. Any offenses should be reported to the TSIAA Executive Director within 48 hours.
- D. Any conduct determined inappropriate and not in accordance with TSIAA standards is subject to review by the elected officials who will make a fair determination of the offense in question.
- E. Any team member being ruled out of a contest by an official because of unsportsmanlike behavior shall be disqualified from athletic competition for the given game and an additional two (2) games (one game during football season). When a player is disqualified, the Administrator or Athletic Director of the represented school shall report the name of the player to the TSIAA Executive Director. If the Executive Director finds upon investigation that the offense was sufficiently serious, the offender shall be permanently disqualified until reinstated by the TSIAA Board Members.
- F. During the disqualification period, it will be at the discretion of the TSIAA Executive Director as to whether or not the player is allowed to be on game-site during his/her suspension. For the purpose of definition "not being on game-site" means not being on school property or game-site property during the entire contest. This includes both a women's game and men's game and any JV and middle school games that may take place.

Section 2: Player & Coach Penalties

- A. A coach's ejection will require a two (2) game suspension (one (1) game in football season) and a \$250 fine.
- B. A player ejection will require a two (2) game suspension (one (1) game in football).
- C. Coaches can appeal the ejection within 48 hours with a written report turned into the TSIAA Executive Director. Schools may provide video, if available.
- D. Game Officials must provide a written report for both player and coach ejections.

Section 1: School Attendance

- A. A player must be a full-time student (at least four (4) instructional hours per day for Homeschool Students) of the school he/she is representing. The Headmaster/Principal of each school is responsible for confirming each student/athletes scholastic schedule. Instructional hours include dual enrollment and/or collect courses on a college campus.

Section 2: Age

- A. Any athlete, upon entering his/her freshman year for the first time, shall only have a total of eight (8) semesters, which must occur consecutively, of eligibility of Varsity play. An athlete is ineligible for Varsity play if he/she turns 19 before August 1st of the given school year.
- B. Classification: High School consists of participants 7th grade through 12th grade in every sport except football which will remain at 8th thru 12th grade.
- C. Classification: Junior Varsity - This level of classification is for all sports and intended for developmental purposes. It is expected only freshman and sophomore participation however exceptions can be made for juniors after prior communication with opposing athletic directors.
- D. Classification: Middle School - must be 5th grade through 8th grade and must be under 15 before August 1st.

Section 3: Game Eligibility

- A. It is the suggestion of the TSIAA that in a single night of football or basketball a student only plays in 6 quarters of play, or in soccer three (3) halves of play. This suggestion is made for the student athlete's safety and wellbeing.

Section 4: Graduation

- A. A player is declared ineligible if that player has received a high school diploma or equivalent from any high school institution. No exemptions to this rule will be allowed.

Section 5: Transfer Student

- A. All transfer students must be submitted and cleared for play by the TSIAA.
- B. Member Schools: a transfer student is ineligible for Varsity conference play for one (1) year from the date of transfer unless a hardship exemption is granted by the Executive Board Members of the conference. A high school transfer student who did not participate in any athletic team at his/her previous school within the prior school year will be deemed eligible.
- C. Non-Member Schools: a transfer student, who has transferred from a non-member school to a member school must sit out for two (2) weeks (14 days) and is eligible on day 15. The two weeks starts from the official enrollment date given by the school if the student enrolls after the school year has begun. Any student who enrolls prior to the start of the school year is immediately eligible. A letter of good standing and statement of enrollment date must be sent to the Executive Director of the TSIAA upon transfer.

Section 6: Post-Season Play

- A. To compete in post-season play, all players are required to have played or have been eligible for play in one-fourth (1/4) of the regular season conference games.

Section 7: Eligibility Forms, Official Game Rosters and Official Game Schedules

- A. The TSIAA League Administrator must receive rosters two (2) weeks before the first game of the season.
- B. Additions to rosters must be made through the TSIAA Executive Director before the player(s) compete(s) in their first TSIAA game.
- C. Failure to submit a roster by the due date, will result in a potential forfeit of their first conference/division game to be determined by the TSIAA board AND a \$25 fine per day until the roster is submitted.
- D. Eligibility List
An eligibility list containing the name of each student who is to participate during the season in each sport shall be filed online prior to the first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar for each particular sport. If a student whose name does not appear on the original eligibility list wishes to become a member of the squad, the student's name shall be filed with the conference before the student is allowed to participate. Failure to file the eligibility by the date required shall result in a fine of \$50.
- E. Filing Schedule Reports
Member schools shall file with the TSIAA league administrator a copy of the schedule in each sport. Schedules shall be filed prior to the date of the first contest allowed by the Sports Calendar for each particular sport. Failure to file the schedule by the date required shall result in a fine of \$50.

Section 8: Physical Examination and Parental Consent

No student will be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file with the principal/headmaster or athletic director a participation medical evaluation form signed by a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the student has passed a physical examination and that in their opinion the student is physically fit to participate in interscholastic athletics.

It is required that no student be permitted to participate in practice sessions or in athletic contests until there is on file a parental consent certificate signed by a parent or legal guardian stating that the student has the consent of his/her parent(s) or legal guardian to participate.

***We will be adding medical and consent forms to the website for students to print off.

Section 9: Grades

- A. The league strongly recommends that a player maintain an average GPA of a 2.0 or a "C" average overall. Each member school will have its own academic requirements, which will not be monitored by the TSIAA.

Section 10: Home Schooled Students

This by-law establishes the minimum eligibility requirements for a homeschool student desiring to participate in extracurricular athletics at a Tennessee Independent Athletic Association member school.

- A. The student shall be enrolled in a homeschool umbrella program that is being administered by the member school in which the student wishes to participate.
- B. The student must be taking a minimum of five (5) academic subjects or the equivalent administered by the member school's umbrella program that counts toward graduation.

- C. The student must be registered with the Head of School of the member school by August 1st of the current school year.
- D. The participating student must have a legal residence within 25 miles driving distance of the member school with which he/she wish to participate. TSIAA will use google maps to determine if the athlete is eligible to participate.
- E. By August 1st of the school year, the parent or guardian must make application for participation under the umbrella of the member school in which the home school athlete wishes to try out and participate.
 - 1. The home school athlete shall meet the same academic and conduct standards required of the member school's on campus students.
 - 2. In no event shall a home school student be eligible who is not receiving the minimum four (4) hours per day of instruction under the member school's umbrella program.
 - 3. The member school shall provide verification of academic eligibility to the TSIAA each semester.
- F. The home school student must provide proof of basic primary medical insurance coverage and liability insurance coverage which names the TSIAA as an insured party in the event the school's provider does not extend coverage to the home school student.
- G. The home school student must meet all other TSIAA eligibility requirements.
- H. TSIAA member schools and organizations will be allowed to use one (1) umbrella program. This program must be identified to the TSIAA before the start of each school year.

Section 11: Cooperative Teams

- A. The expressed purpose of the TSIAA allowing schools to co-op in a sport is for all involved schools to soon grow into their own exclusive programs. With this in mind, there are two situations in which the officers may give consideration to cooperative applicants.
 - 1. If one member school is unable to field a team for a particular season because of low player numbers, that school may appeal for consent to send its players to another member school with an established program for play that season. Teams wishing to co-op must submit, in writing, a request to co-op, at least 30 days prior to the start of the season. This written request must be submitted to the TSIAA Executive Director.
 - 2. A newly established school is unable to fill a team for one sport and can request to co-op for the initial year.
- B. All cooperative schools must also meet the criteria of being involved in 1 regular team sport within TSIAA in addition to the cooperative sport.
- C. The elected Board Members will consider appeals on a case-by-case basis. Any consent given to such an appeal will be valid for one (1) season. Renewal of such consent must be sought on a season-to-season basis.
- D. The following limits are effective on total roster sizes of multi-school cooperative teams for given sports:
 - 1. Football-20
 - 2. Basketball-10
 - 3. Volleyball-10
 - 4. Soccer-16
 - 5. Baseball-16
 - 6. Softball-14

Article V: Tournaments

Section 1: Sanctions

- A. TSIAA Board Members must approve tournament sites.
- B. The TSIAA will receive 75% of the ticket sales. 25% will go to the host school.
- C. The host school will receive all revenue from additional sources.

Section 2: Withdrawal

- A. Teams participating in TSIAA regular seasons are expected to participate in the post-season tournament.
- B. Failure to appropriately withdraw from a tournament will carry a \$500 league penalty plus any other fines deemed necessary by the TSIAA Executive Board Members to cover the host school's expenses.

Section 4: Tournament Seeding

- A. Teams will be seeded by their overall and/or division conference record.
- B. If there are other tournament formats, the TSIAA will approve the fairness in the TSIAA seeds.

Section 5: Ties

In case of ties for seeding the tournaments, the following procedures will be instituted:

- A. Head to head competition during the regular season.
- B. Flip of a coin by the TSIAA Executive Director.

Article VI: Games

Section 1: Referees

- A. Referees are the responsibility of the host school. with the exception of tournament play.
- B. Relatives of participants, school/staff/sponsoring church or former graduates shall not officiate for that school with the exception of volunteer line judges for volleyball matches.
- C. Officials may not call more than three (3) consecutive games per night in tournament play.
- D. All referees must come from an approved association. The Executive Director will be notified of the association that provides game officials for each school.

Section 2: Uniforms

- A. Home uniforms are to be white an away uniform dark colored. Football/soccer teams use the reverse of this rule. In Football/Soccer, the home team wears the darker jersey.
- B. Uniforms are to be numbered properly. NFHS rules for uniform numbers are used. The game officials reserve the right to make the official call for fairness and the spirit of the game.

Section 3: Communication

- A. The Athletic Director/Head Coaches must communicate via email and/or phone at least a week prior to a game and confirm times, location, and dates. This is not solely the responsibility of the host school team nor the visiting team. Both teams are responsible for

the communication. Directions should be provided during this communication. If your school is sponsoring a function (Homecoming, Senior Night, a Spirit Bus, etc.), the communication should be sooner than a week from game day.

- B. In case of inclement weather, the home team must communicate to visitor AD no later than 2pm the day of the relevant game if the canceling of the game is in question.

Section 4: Canceling a Game

- A. At least 72 hours notice must be given when canceling a game. If there is not proper notice, the school will be fined \$100 plus the cost of officials for the game or games.
- B. Short-notice school closure in the event of dangerous weather conditions, power outages, etc. will not be subject to this rule.
- C. Violation would constitute a fine equal to the amount of the cost of officials for the game(s) canceled.
- D. An offending school wishing to appeal must do so with the TSIAA Executive Director within 48 hours after the scheduled start time of the canceled game.
- E. If either school is unable to reschedule, the offending school will forfeit the canceled game.
- F. This rule applies for either the host team or the visiting team.

Section 5: Canceling a Season

- A. If reported to the Executive Director less than 30 days before the sport season, a \$500 fee will be applied to the school that pulls a team out of TSIAA.
- B. Canceling a season may result in a school being placed on probation as determined by the TSIAA Executive Director.

Article VII: Playing Rules

Section 1: The Equipment

- A. All equipment being used for athletic contests should meet National Federation of State High School Association (NFHS) standards. This is to include fields, floors, nets, etc.
- B. A copy will be provided by the conference for each sport in which they participate. A copy of these rules can also be purchased at www.nfhs.org.

Section 2: Regulation

Rules of the Game

The official rule books as published by the National Federation of State High School Associations shall be used in football, basketball, baseball, girls' softball, girls' soccer, soccer, track and field, cross country, and girls' volleyball. The official rules of the USGA shall be used in golf. The official rules of the USTA shall be used in tennis. The official rules of the USBC shall be used in bowling.

Cheerleading squads must abide by the AACCA Safety Guidelines while practicing or participating in TSIAA-sanctioned events.

Article VIII: Protests

Section 1: Violation of TSIAA Rules

- A. Any protest against a member school for violation of the TSIAA rules shall be made in writing to the TSIAA office within 72 hours after said offense is known. Information including the known facts, sources of information, eyewitnesses and the time such information became known should be included in the notice. Such a protest must originate with either the Administrator or Athletic Director of a member school. Failure to render the report will not relieve the offending school of its responsibility, and such negligence may jeopardize the standing of any official and/or any school for withholding evidence.
- B. The elected officials shall conduct an investigation after all information has been obtained, and a ruling will be determined, where upon all parties will be notified. The final decision will lie with the Executive Director and Officers on any and all protests.

Section 2: Decision of Contest Officials

- A. Protests arising from the decisions and interpretations of the rules by game officials concerning a game will not be honored. Their decisions and interpretations are final.
- B. Official timers, Scorekeepers and other personnel required should be high school students or adults.

Article IX: Reporting Contest Results

Section 1: Reporting Contest Results

- A. The home team is responsible for reporting the results of the games.
- B. Reports will include the final score (including individual game scores in series matches), the date of the game, and the location of the contest.
- C. A report must be sent to the League Administrator or Executive Director within 24 hours of the contest.
- D. A \$15 late fee (per game) and an additional \$5 per day fine paid to the league will be assessed and must be paid in order to be eligible for post-season play.

Article X: Imposition of Penalties

Section 1: Interpretation of Penalties

- A. Probation: A school on probation is on a conditional TSIAA membership. An individual or school on probation may engage in regularly scheduled events of the TSIAA. A school on probation may enter tournaments if the school was placed on probation for reasons other than rules infractions (i.e., new members).
- B. Probation with Post Season Suspension: A school on probation is on a conditional TSIAA membership. An individual, sport or school on probation may engage in regularly scheduled events of the TSIAA. Depending on the severity of the probation, a suspension may be placed on an individual, sport or school. The individual, sport or school may not participate in any post-season competition sponsored by the TSIAA. It is expected that steps have been taken to alleviate the problem that caused the individual or school to be on probation. Any violations while on probation will result in suspension and/or loss of membership participation from the TSIAA.
- C. Suspension: A school suspended from TSIAA may participate with other member schools if those schools agree to do so. The school may reapply for membership after one (1) year time period (365 days) has passed. The individual or school will be eligible for play after the elected officials have approved reapplication.

Article XI: Fees

Section 1: Membership Fees

- A. Membership Fee for high school sports - \$750
- B. Membership Fee for middle school sports - \$550
- C. Membership Fee for Elementary school sports - \$250

Article XII: Schedule Requirements

Section 1: TSIAA Competition

- A. Teams are required to play their division teams twice as assigned by the league prior to the season.
- B. Tournament Eligibility: Any team unable to fulfill Article XII, Section 1: A will be declared ineligible for the post-season tournament unless weather conditions made it impossible to re-schedule.
- C. Games postponed due to unforeseeable conditions should be rescheduled if possible.
- D. Games not played for specific reasons must have cleared the approval of the TSIAA Executive Director or the Executive Board. However, if these games cannot be rescheduled, this will not necessarily prevent a team from playing in the post season.

Article XIII: TSIAA Finances

Section 1: Financial Practice

- A. The Tennessee State Independent Athletic Association account is setup for deposit of fees and payment of necessary items. The account is only to be setup through the TSIAA Executive Director/Administrator