

the ejection report. If the wrong student-athlete is identified, a correction can be made through the regional supervisors and the NCHSAA. For more on the Sportsmanship/Ejection Policy and Penalties, see 3.3.6 and 3.3.7.

- (a) For soccer, reference Yellow Card Tracking and Ejections in the Soccer section 3.3.7(k) or 4.8.1(j).
- (b) For wrestling, in addition to the above, during a two day tournament, if a wrestler is ejected on Friday, this wrestler must miss Saturday of that tournament AND the next contest for a first ejection and the next two contests for a second ejection.

4.1.8 **Team Championships** - In sports where applicable, a team must have multiple entries in the event to achieve a team championship.

- (a) An individual may not earn a team title.
- (b) For reclassification purposes, a school must have a bona fide team to be counted toward the total of schools fielding teams in a classification.
- (c) A "team" is defined as "two or more student-athletes practicing and competing in a regularly scheduled school season."

4.1.9 **Interstate Competition** - (see Sanctioning Chart Page 116)

- (a) **One-On-One Out of State Opponents** - All contests between two (2) teams during the sports season, whether home or away including scrimmage and regular season involving a non-North Carolina school (not applying to foreign country teams), are approved, provided there is no loss of school time (unless the membership entity approves such a contest). No sanction required.
- (b) **Interstate Competition Requiring National Federation Sanction** - Interstate competition that meets at least one of the following requirements:
 - (1) Any interstate (including bordering states) or international event involving two (2) or more schools which is co-sponsored by or titled in the name of an organization outside the school community (e.g., a college/university, a theme park, an athletic shoe/apparel company, etc.).
 - (2) Event that involves non-bordering state(s) if more than five (5) states are involved.
 - (3) Event that involves non-bordering state(s) if more than eight (8) schools are involved.
 - (4) Any event involving two (2) or more schools that involves a team from a foreign country. The host school should complete the NFHS Sanction Application. Those would include any event(s) that involves international traveling teams that play multiple games in multiple states. (The exception to this rule are Canada and Mexico, which are considered "bordering states").
 - (5) For online registration, go to www.NFHS.org and click on Sanctioning.
- (c) **Border/Interstate Competition Requiring State Sanction Only** - Interstate competition when an event does not meet any of the National Federation Sanctioning requirements but involves at least one of the following:
 - (1) Event only involves state(s) that border North Carolina (GA, SC, TN and VA)
 - (2) Five (5) or fewer states participating when there is a non-bordering state involved.
 - (3) Eight (8) or fewer schools participating when there is a non-bordering state involved.
 - (4) See Border/Interstate Sanctioning Form on the NCHSAA website. State for the above competitions must be made through the NCHSAA office a minimum of 30 days in advance of the proposed contest.

4.1.10 **Games with Non-Conference Opponents** - A game which has been scheduled with a non-conference opponent shall not be allowed to interfere with the breaking of a tie between, or among, conference teams or with a conference tournament or playoff game. If such non-conference game shall conflict with the game, or games, necessary to break a conference tie, the school concerned shall at once:

- (a) Cancel its nonconference game; or
- (b) Mutually agree to break the tie amongst the tied teams per the Handbook procedure in 4.1.11
- (c) Accept the ruling of the NCHSAA.

4.1.11 **Tiebreaking Procedure** - All parts of this procedure are mandatory. The steps should be followed in the order as they appear in the procedure.

- (a) **Determining Conference Standings** - These rules apply for determining the final regular season standings in any sport in which a conference awards its conference championship on the basis of regular season competition.
 - (1) The conference standings shall be determined on the basis of the percentage of conference games won by each team at the end of the regular season, based on conference regulations and subject to the tiebreaking procedure which follows. The team finishing in first place shall be recognized as the conference champion; if a tie exists for first place, then conference co-champions, tri-champions, etc., shall be declared.
 - (2) If two or more teams have equal conference percentages at the end of the season, the team that has the edge in head-to-head competition will get the higher place in the standings. All conference games played against each other would count in the head-to-head competition. The intent is to break the tie by using the tied teams.

Ex. 1 - If there is a four-way tie for first and Team A and Team B are 2-1 while Team C and Team D are 1-2, in games among the four of them, A and B would be tied for first by virtue of their 2-1, with C and D tied for third. Then look at head-to-head between the two (A and B) to break that tie, and then between the other two (C and D) to break that remaining tie.

Ex. 2 - Teams A, B and C are tied for fourth in the conference standings with identical records. In games among the three, A was 3-1, B was 2-2 and C was 1-3. The tie is broken; A is fourth, B is fifth and C sixth.

- (3) Any time throughout the whole procedure that a multiple tie is reduced to two teams, no matter what criteria is being used, use head-to-head conference competition between those remaining if possible.

(b) **Determining Conference Tournament Seeding** - The following rules are used to seed conference tournaments on the basis of regular season standings. Use this section only to seed for conference tournaments and only after 4.1.11(a) is completed; if no conference tournament, See 4.1.11(c).

(1) Seed the tournament on the basis of final regular season standings; See 4.1.11(a).

(2) If two or more teams are tied, and the teams played any non-conference games against each other, the team with the better record in all head-to-head games get the higher conference seed. (If there is a multiple tie of three or more teams, one team must have beaten all the other teams for these non-conference games to be used). Note that use of these non-conference or tournament meetings prior to the conference tournament is ONLY for seeding in the conference tournament [See 4.1.11(c)(5)].

Ex. -Team A and B split in regular season, but played one another in a non-conference game and A won. A would get the higher seed in the conference tournament. Say A and B were tied for fourth in an eight-team league and this occurred; A would get the higher seed in the tournament. However, the meeting in the conference tournament between A and B would be the tiebreaker between the two for determining NCHSAA playoff representatives [See 4.1.11(c)(2)].

- (3) If there is still a tie for a tournament seed, it will be resolved by comparing how the tied teams fared against the rest of the conference until the tie is broken.

Ex. 1 - A and B finished with equal conference records and split during the regular season, thereby tying for third place in the standings. They did not play each other in a non-conference game. Go to the number one position in the conference and compare how A and B did against that team. Say the tie cannot be resolved there (both teams split with the number-one team), so go to the number two team. Team A lost twice to the number two but B split with the number-two team. Therefore B would be seeded third and A fourth (even though they finished tied for third in the final standings).

Ex. 2 - There is a four-way tie for first among A, B, C and D. Team A and B are each 2-1 while C and D are each 1-2 in games among the four. A and B are tied for the first seed, while C and D are tied for third seed. Now look at head to head competition between A and B to break that tie, and head to head between C and D to break the other remaining tie.

- (4) If the tie still exists, a draw will be held by the tied teams for the seeds available. All tied teams for a position will draw with the numbers of the spots for which they are tied in a hat.

Ex. - A and B are tied for third and the tie is not resolved after going through the procedure in 4.1.11(b)(3) above. The numbers three and four are put in a hat, and the schools will draw and assume the seed of the number drawn. The drawing will be done in alphabetical order as the schools are listed in the NCHSAA Directory.

(c) **Determining NCHSAA Playoff Representatives** - The following rules are used to determine which teams earn available berths into the NCHSAA playoffs, awarded on the basis of regular season standings. These are used AFTER completion of the conference tournament, or BEFORE NCHSAA PLAYOFFS if there is no tournament.

(1) Award berths based on final regular season standings [See 4.1.11(a)]. Note that if a tie is broken using head to head competition, the tie is broken from that point on and there is no need to use other criteria.

(2) If two are tied in the final standings after being eliminated from the conference tournament (or before NCHSAA Playoffs if there is no tournament), a special playoff game will be played unless the tied teams mutually agree to break the tie by other means. The playoff game may not violate the weekly limitations, and it could be a preliminary game to the state playoffs or a game in the conference tournament. No playoff game shall be played prior to a conference tournament. A meeting between the tied teams which occurs in any round in the conference

tournament would count as the playoff game.

Note - Split Conference Application Only - If teams represent different classifications, berths will be awarded by separating teams into their respective classifications. Then head-to-head competition among the teams in the respective classifications must be considered if necessary.

(3) If both teams are eliminated from the conference tournament but can still play the playoff game and not violate the weekly limitations, it shall be played. **Exception:** - If a team advances to the conference tournament finals, even if a playoff game would not violate the weekly limitations, the game will not be played, and the team that advances to the finals gets the higher seed.

(4) If three or more teams are tied, the team which advanced the furthest in the conference tournament will get the higher berth in the playoffs.

NOTE - Split Conference Application Only - If two or more teams are still tied, and the teams represent different classifications, berths will be awarded by separating teams into their respective classifications. Then head-to-head competition among the teams in the respective classifications must be considered if necessary.

(5) If the tie is not broken after (4), all previous head-to-head competition is used to break the tie (cannot be used with multiple ties).

(6) If there is still a tie, it will be resolved by comparing how the tied team fared against the rest of the conference, starting with the number one team and moving down, if necessary, throughout the conference until the tie is broken.

Ex. - A and B finished with equal conference records and split during the regular season, thereby tying for third place in the standings. A playoff game could not be played and they did not play each other in a non-conference game. Go to the number one position in the conference and compare how A and B did against that team in conference games. Say the tie cannot be resolved there (both teams split with the number-one team), so go to the number two team. Team A lost twice to the number two but B split with the number-two team. Therefore, B would be seeded third and A fourth (even though they finished tied for third in the final standings).

(7) If the tie is still not broken after step 6, it will be broken using the NCHSAA RPI Rating.

(8) If the tie still exists, a draw will be held by the tied teams for the seeds available. All tied teams for a position will draw with the numbers of the spots for which they are tied in a hat.

Ex. - A and B are tied for third and the tie is not resolved after going through the procedure through 4.1.11(b)(3) above. The numbers three and four are put in a hat, and the schools will draw and assume the seed of the number drawn. The drawing will be done in alphabetical order as the schools are listed in the NCHSAA Directory.

4.1.12 **Playoff Declaration** - A school has the option to “opt out” of the playoffs, provided it fills out the Playoff Declaration Form on the website, and submits it and it is in the NCHSAA offices prior to the reporting deadline for that specific sport. Proper submission means the school will not be considered for either an automatic berth or a wild card position. If the form is not submitted, then the school will be considered and may qualify for a playoff berth. This provision does not apply to the sports of cross country, golf, swimming, and track and field.

4.1.13 **Reporting Playoff Qualifiers** - Schools must submit their completed and accurate schedule and results into the designated reporting platform to be considered for playoff qualification for the sports of Baseball, Basketball, Football, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Dual Team Tennis, Volleyball. Conference administrators must use this information to submit the final order of finish to the NCHSAA.

(a) For reporting potential qualifiers to state playoffs, conference administrators are required to submit the appropriate information online immediately upon conclusion of the regular season.

(b) Failure to comply with the reporting procedure may result in a penalty.

(c) Upon conclusion of the regular season and prior to the reporting deadline, the conference administrator will immediately submit the final conference standings of all teams. The records that are listed on the brackets when playoff qualifiers are posted by the NCHSAA will represent the overall record of each team.

NOTE - If a team qualifies for a playoff berth but is ineligible for further competition for any reason its position is vacated.

(d) Check the NCHSAA website for additional information.

4.1.14 **Submission of Incorrect Record** - Once the seeding process is completed and the brackets have been finalized, if a team has submitted an incorrect record a penalty may be assessed to the team or head coach.

4.1.15 **Playoff Ranking Formula** - A Ratings Percentage Index (RPI) formula will be used for qualification and seeding determinations in all team bracketed playoffs with the exception of dual team wrestling.

(a) $RPI = (0.3 \times WP) + (0.4 \times OWP) + (0.3 \times OOWP)$

- (1) Winning Percentage (WP) - Divide the number of wins in qualifying games by the number of total qualifying contest played. A tie equals half of a win. If a win in an individual contest gives that contest a winning percentage of 1.00, a tie would give that individual contest a winning percentage of .500 for both teams.
 - (2) Opponents' Winning Percentage (OWP) - Average the winning percentages of a team's qualifying opponents. All contests involving the team whose RPI is being calculated are ignored in this process.
NOTE - This is not calculated via the combined record of the opponents, but rather by averaging each winning percentage of the qualifying opponents.
 - (3) Opponents' Opponents' Winning Percentage (OOWP) - The same process as described in 4.1.15(a)(2) is used to calculate this percentage for the opponents of a team's opponents.
NOTE - There is an exception for out-of-state teams and non-NCHSAA members in North Carolina addressed in 4.1.15(b).
- (b) Out-of-State and In-State Non-NCHSAA Member Opponents - Out-of-State opponents from states that border North Carolina will be counted the same as in-state opponents provided they have a verified MaxPreps account and schedule.
- (1) It is the responsibility of the NCHSAA member school to ensure that the data from their out-of-state opponent or non-NCHSAA member opponent is correctly listed on MaxPreps.
 - (2) Any out-of-state opponent from a state that does not directly border North Carolina will be calculated in the following manner:
 - (i) Opponent's direct winning percentage (i.e. .750) will count toward the formula, but each of their opponents will have a .500 winning percentage assigned.
 - (ii) The .500 figure was selected because it is the average value of opponents' opponents' winning percentages across all sports in data gathered from the states using RPI, such as Colorado, Utah and Washington.

4.1.16 Bracket Sizes

- (a) Baseball, Basketball, Football, Soccer, Softball, and Volleyball - 64-team
- (b) Lacrosse - 32-team (1A/2A/3A Girls), 40-team (1A/2A/3A Boys), 48-team (4A Boys/Girls)
- (c) Tennis - 32-team (1A), 48-team (2A), 64-team (3A & 4A)
- (d) Wrestling - 32-team

4.1.17 Playoff Berths/Qualification

- (a) Each conference will be allotted automatic playoff berths based on the number of schools fielding a team in a particular sport in a given classification.
 - (1) 1-5 teams = 1 Berth (Conference Champion)
 - (2) 6+ teams = 2 Berths (Conference Champion and Second Place or Conference Tournament Champion)
- (b) The highest finishing team from a given classification in a split conference will automatically qualify, regardless of overall conference finish, provided there are at least two schools from each classification in that split conference.
- (c) Any remaining, non-automatic qualifying teams in each region (East/West) will fill the remaining berths based upon their RPI rating. A team cannot qualify for a berth before all teams in their conference that finished ahead of them in the conference standings have qualified (Leap Frog Provision).

4.1.18 Seeding

- (a) The pre-determined East and West Regions will be seeded independently of one another.
- (b) The teams in each region will be seeded as follows:
 - (1) Seed all 1st place automatic berths by RPI rating (or other NCHSAA selected ranking system).
NOTE: The highest finishing team in its half of a split conference must finish in 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place overall and/or have an overall winning percentage of .500 or higher in order to be seeded as a #1. Otherwise, the team will be seeded with all other at-large teams.
 - (2) Seed all 2nd place automatic berths or conference tournament champions and at-large berths by RPI rating (or other NCHSAA selected ranking system).
- (c) Once seeding is complete:
 - (1) Existing byes will be awarded to the highest seeds possible.
 - (2) The higher seed is the home team unless otherwise determined by the NCHSAA.

4.1.19 Reporting Playoff Advancement

- (a) After schools have qualified for the playoffs, it is their responsibility to report advancement by the appropriate method and deadline as designated by the NCHSAA.
- (b) Failure to report a playoff advancement may result in a penalty. Teams must report advancement no later than 6:00 a.m. the day following each win.
- (c) Postponements should also be reported.