



## North Carolina High School Athletic Association Media Policies and Procedures



- I. General: These Media Policies and procedures set forth the policies promulgated by the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) concerning the release of information about NCHSAA business and activities, the issuance of media credentials and broadcast rights for radio, television and other media to NCHSAA playoff, championship and other special events (described herein as “NCHSAA events” or “NCHSAA-sponsored events”), as well as general operating procedures for news media at NCHSAA events. These policies are designed to protect the NCHSAA, its member schools and student athletes in accordance with the Association’s by-laws and its Memorandum of Understanding with the North Carolina Board of Education. School administrators, print editors and broadcast directors should carefully review these policies and procedures applicable to their organization. NCHSAA reserves the right to amend this policy at any time and in any manner deemed necessary. No exception to this policy may be made by a media outlet, host school principal or contest manager except by written permission of the NCHSAA.
- II. Providing Information to the Media
  - a. Any member of the news media may purchase, when available, NCHSAA publications at a reasonable cost to be established by the NCHSAA. Such publications are being printed on a limited basis.
  - b. Playoff pairings for each NCHSAA team sport will be posted on the NCHSAA website immediately after such pairings have been completed and verified by the NCHSAA.
  - c. The NCHSAA will not comment about an eligibility situation prior to it being resolved within the framework of its rules and regulations. At no time will the NCHSAA divulge personal details of the eligibility situation which might compromise the privacy of the student-athlete involved.
  - d. The principal of the member school involved or the person(s) involved may release information about an eligibility case as they see fit.
  - e. The NCHSAA will not release by telephone, fax, mail or otherwise the names of student-athletes involved and/or implicated in any investigation into alleged violations of NCHSAA rules or regulations. Such information may be obtained from the principal of the member school involved or the person(s) involved, if they see fit.
  - f. The NCHSAA will not comment on any investigation into any member school or individual. Should a decision be made at the conclusion of an investigation involving the enforcement of the Penalty Code as outlined in the NCHSAA handbook section 3.3.5, the administrators of the member school involved or the person(s) involved may release information as they see fit.
  - g. Generally, media members can expect to receive media notes and rosters upon arrival at NCHSAA Championship events. When available, statistics will be distributed to media members after each game as soon as possible. Priority will be given to those media members still on the air producing a live broadcast and those on deadline.



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- III. Policy for Photography, Film, Video and Audio at NCHSAA Playoff and Championship Events
- a. Copyright/Ownership Rights: Unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the NCHSAA, NCHSAA is the owner of the rights to and the copyright holder of all NCHSAA audio-visual work, which includes all still photographs taken of NCHSAA playoff and championship events, all film, videotape and audiotape of NCHSAA playoff and championship events and the live audio and visual broadcasts of NCHSAA-sponsored events. Still photography, filming, video taping and audio recording is prohibited at NCHSAA playoff and championship, except as expressly and specifically authorized by the NCHSAA. All video, broadcast and title rights for NCHSAA-sponsored events are the exclusive property of the NCHSAA. The selling or redistribution of photographs, film, videotape and audiotape from NCHSAA events for personal or commercial gain is strictly prohibited without the express written permission of the NCHSAA, and discovery of any unauthorized distribution will result in the revocation of credentials and/or possible civil damages.
  - b. Participating Schools:
    - i. Representatives of participating schools are authorized to take still photographs, film, video tape and audio tape at NCHSAA events so long as the representative is recommended by the participating school's principal or other appropriate administrator and receives proper photography credentials.
    - ii. Under no circumstance may still photographs, films, videos or audio tapes, in full or in part, be used for any commercial purpose, unless authorized by, and a rights fee has been paid to the NCHSAA.
    - iii. Non-Commercial Recordings: The NCHSAA does not restrict the recording of audio or video for personal, non-commercial use at any game, including playoff or state championship games, by any parent of a student participating in the game or any employee of the school competing in the game or event.
  - c. Media:
    - i. Members of the media are authorized, without paying a fee, to take still photographs and take short film, video and audio clips of NCHSAA-events for print and electronic news coverage.
    - ii. Under no circumstance may still photographs, films, videos or audio tapes, in full or in part, be used for any commercial purpose, unless authorized by, and a rights fee has been paid to the NCHSAA.
    - iii. The filming or taping of the majority of an NCHSAA event is prohibited, unless prior approval is secured. The media outlet may not air a total of more than three (3) minutes of footage and any such footage must include visual credit to the NCHSAA and the championship rights holder, if any.



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- iv. The media outlet will not lend, give away or sell the film or videotape, in whole or in part, except only for the purposes hereinabove specifically set forth and/or in such cases as NCHSAA requests for use by NCHSAA.
- d. Spectators:
  - i. Individual spectators are allowed to personally take still photographs at events, for strictly personal use only.
  - ii. Under no circumstance may still photographs, films, videos or audio tapes, in full or in part, be used for any commercial purpose, unless authorized by, and a rights fee has been paid to the NCHSAA.
  - iii. Any still photography, filming, videotaping and audio taping shall be conducted from the seating area, or, if space available, from a designated area. No one will be allowed in the playing area without proper credentials.
  - iv. Live streaming of NCHSAA events through social media or other internet-based technology by spectators is strictly prohibited. Unauthorized transmission of accounts, descriptions, video or audio, of NCHSAA events could result in civil damages.
  - v. In no event may a spectator interfere with a game play or violate this policy. The NCHSAA and/or school representatives reserve the right to ask any spectator to leave the game/facility in the event they violate this aforementioned policy.
- e. Internet Real-Time Policy:
  - i. The NCHSAA grants a media outlet a limited license to use certain gathered information on the media outlet's website beginning at the start of an NCHSAA event and up to the conclusion of such event, all subject to the following limitations and conditions:
    - 1. No more than ten (10) still photographs may be used for news coverage of the game and other editorial purposes. Such still photographs must be used on a time-delayed basis, that is at least thirty (30) minutes after the happening of the event depicted by the still photograph.
    - 2. Unless otherwise authorized in writing by the NCHSAA, video is NOT to be used on the website (except the video may be shown as part of a single, online "simulcast" of a television station's regularly-scheduled news program).
    - 3. While a game is in progress, the use of textual statistical information is time-delayed and limited in amount (e.g., updates pertaining to score, injuries and national, conference or institutional record-breaking performances, a condensed half-time story) so that an organization's website game coverage does not undercut the authorized and rights-paying fee organization's rights to play-by-play accounts of the game and/or exclusivity as to such rights.



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4. Any use of social media to textually describe the full contest action of an NCHSAA event with play-by-play is subject to the terms of this policy. Full text play-by-play through social media is allowed, however, the outlet must use the official NCHSAA hashtag for each update posted on the social media site. (Ex: #NCHSAABASE).
    - ii. Should any of these conditions be breached, the NCHSAA reserves the right to immediately revoke the credential and have the media outlet removed from the event premises. The NCHSAA may also choose to revoke the media organization's credentials to cover any future NCHSAA events.
  - f. Flash Photography: The use of electronic flash equipment is prohibited at all indoor NCHSAA events. The NCHSAA and officials covering and NCHSAA event reserve the right to have strobe flashes removed from any NCHSAA events at their discretion.
  - g. Photographers in Bench Area: The presences of any type of photographer (video or still) in the bench area for all sports is strictly prohibited and no media personnel shall communicate in any way with persons in the team area or coaching box. The NCHSAA prohibits photographers (video or still) from stopping and shooting behind the bench area. In no event may a photographer interfere with a game play and the NCHSAA reserves the right to revoke a photographer's credential at its sole discretion if it believes the photographer is interfering with the game.
  - h. Media Area/Press Box: Unprofessional conduct or "cheering" in the working news media area at NCHSAA events will not be permitted. Children are not permitted in the working news media area without written permission from the NCHSAA. These areas will be maintained to offer a working atmosphere conducive to productivity and concentration. Violation of this regulation may result in loss of credentials and ejection from the news media area.
  - i. Distribution of Materials/Publications: Unless prior written approval is given by the NCHSAA, in no event may a media outlet distribute publications or print outs on the premises of an NCHSAA event, whether before, during or after a game.
  - j. No Review: Still photographs, films, videos or audio tapes may not be used to review decisions of game officials at any live contest.
- IV. Broadcast rights
- a. Live Television & Live Video Internet Streaming: The NCHSAA holds the rights to over-the-air and digital distribution whether by cable, satellite, internet streams or other means tantamount in nature to broadcasts of all NCHSAA Playoff and Championship Events. The NCHSAA has no authority over television or streaming rights for regular season contests. Sinclair Broadcasting Group has purchased the exclusive rights to produce and distribute the Football and Basketball State Championships. Sinclair also has the right of first refusal on any playoff contest in those two sports per their contract with the NCHSAA. The NCHSAA also has an agreement with the NFHS Network that cedes the remaining portion of NCHSAA



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post-season events media rights to the NFHS Network. Per that agreement, the NFHS Network would have their choice of games during the football and basketball playoffs after Sinclair. The NFHS Network has first right of refusal on all other sports during the playoffs. Live broadcasts may be permitted during the playoffs provided the following conditions are met.

- i. Both Sinclair and NFHS Network, or any affiliated content producers, decline to produce an event.
  - ii. An outlet must complete the Live Broadcast Request form found at [NCHSAA.org/broadcast-request-forms](https://NCHSAA.org/broadcast-request-forms).
  - iii. Once the form has been completed, school personnel will be notified of the request and will alert NCHSAA Staff as to their decision to allow a live broadcast or not.
  - iv. If the school agrees to the broadcast, the requesting outlet will be given approval to broadcast the contest. Payment must be remitted to the host school athletic director or the NCHSAA Staff Representative on site. The fee schedule is available on the NCHSAA's website on the same web page as the Broadcast Request Form.
  - v. The NCHSAA will publish a list of approved broadcasts each week on the NCHSAA site.
- b. Radio or Audio-Only Broadcasts and Streams: The NCHSAA holds the rights to over-the-air and digital distribution whether by AM/FM, Satellite or Internet streams streams or other means tantamount in nature to broadcasts of all NCHSAA Playoff and Championship Events. **The NCHSAA has no authority over streaming rights for regular season contests.** An outlet may broadcast a postseason game when the following conditions are met:
- i. An outlet must complete the Live Broadcast Request form found at [NCHSAA.org/broadcast-request-forms](https://NCHSAA.org/broadcast-request-forms).
  - ii. Once the form has been completed, school personnel will be notified of the request and will alert NCHSAA Staff as to their decision to allow a live broadcast or not.
  - iii. If the school agrees to the broadcast, the requesting outlet will be given approval to broadcast the contest. Payment must be remitted to the host school athletic director or the NCHSAA Staff Representative on site. The fee schedule is available on the NCHSAA's website on the same web page as the Broadcast Request Form.
  - iv. The NCHSAA will publish a list of approved broadcasts each week on the NCHSAA site.
- V. Media Credentialling
- a. Year Long Credentials (YLC)
    - i. The NCHSAA will issue Year-Long Credentials for approved media members that will provide credentialed access at all NCHSAA Playoff events and neutral site championships. The Year-Long Credential (YLC) will be the only credential issued by the NCHSAA. Members of the media seeking to cover singular events must still request a YLC Card online



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through the DragonFly platform. Per a December 2022 decision made by the NCHSAA Board of Directors, all members of the media must provide a background check history before being approved for a credential. Therefore, credentials must be applied for by individuals, not outlets.

- ii. The background check requirement may be met in one of two ways; 1) Members of the media can register through DragonFly and pay the \$12 fee to obtain a background check through that platform or 2) employers can submit proof of a background check but a DragonFly account will still be required so that members can request a YLC Card.
  - iii. Background checks are only valid for credentialing purposes for 365 days, with some exceptions for late spring applicants.
  - iv. While the YLC Card will allow members access to all NCHSAA Playoff events, media members will still be required to register for specific Championship (Final) events through the NCHSAA Website. Members of the media will be notified via email when this registration is open. This process will have no fee but will allow the NCHSAA to ensure space is available for working media. When multiple championships are being conducted at the same time, members of the media may register for more than one championship, however the YLC Cards are nontransferable.
  - v. The NCHSAA will no longer issue Credentials to individuals under the age of 18 unless they provide a letter of recommendation from their school and/or a letter confirming employment with a bona-fide news organization. Each member school will be provided with two (2) school media passes to be used for school newspapers, yearbooks, or other use at the discretion of the school.
  - vi. The YLC Cards will be digital and should be presented at the site media entrance on a mobile device. Printed versions of the digital card can be accepted in special cases with approval from NCHSAA Staff.
- b. General
- i. The issuance of all media credentials to NCHSAA events is at the sole discretion of the NCHSAA staff. Submission of a YLC card request or Event Registration does not guarantee a representative a media credential. All requests will be reviewed and must be approved by the NCHSAA staff. The NCHSAA will notify any individual whose request has been denied.
  - ii. Subject to limitations of space of specific events, registrations may be limited and will be allocated to accredited media in accordance with the following general criteria.
    1. Media outlets who have followed the participating schools on a regular basis;
    2. The circulation/market size/market penetration of the media outlet in question;
    3. Previous coverage of NCHSAA events;



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4. The date of receipt of the media outlet's request for credentials;  
and
5. Media outlets that report original and unique content.
- iii. In allocating space for accredited media organizations to NCHSAA events, priority will be given to:
  1. Media which is statewide in scope (wire services, regional television, etc.);
  2. Media which covers their hometown competing teams (daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, radio stations, television/cable stations, etc.);
  3. Media which covers the site of the host facility (daily newspapers, weekly newspapers, radio stations, television/cable stations, etc.);  
and
  4. All other media (internet sites, specialty publications).
- iv. Only those representatives whose registrations are submitted by the advertised deadline AND have been issued a YLC will be approved. Late requests will not be guaranteed processing. Media representatives not approved for credentials in advance will not be issued credentials upon arrival at the site of the event.
- v. Out-of-state media organizations must have a circulation area that includes the community of a participating school and must have covered that school throughout the regular season and state playoffs. All other out-of-state media organizations must explain the necessity for their coverage of the event.
- vi. Media representatives who receive a YLC and register to an NCHSAA event must be on assignment for a specific media organization. Credential requests for freelance reporters, freelance photographers, correspondents, or stringers must include outlet names that freelancers have or typically worked with.
- vii. Unless otherwise approved by the NCHSAA, YLC Cards will not be issued to commercial photographers.
- viii. Credentials or complimentary tickets for spouses, friends, etc. of news media representatives will not be provided. Individuals who attend an event with a credentialed news media representative will be required to purchase a ticket.
- ix. YLCs to an NCHSAA event are issued for the sole purpose of identifying and providing complimentary admission and special access to representatives who have a legitimate working function in connection with the event. Unauthorized use, sale or other transfer of a credential will subject the bearer to ejection from the event, revocation of the credential and the indefinite denial of credentials to future events.
- x. YLCs, once issued, remain the property of the NCHSAA and are subject to revocation and confiscation at the discretion of the NCHSAA Commissioner and/or his/her designees. Grounds for revocation and



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confiscation of a credential include, but are not limited to, misuse, abuse and/or transfer of the credential to anyone other than to the person to who the credential is issued. Any media outlet whose representative has a credential revoked for any reason is subject to being denied credentials to future NCHSAA events.

- xi. Acceptance of a YLC constitutes an agreement by the bearer and his or her organization to abide by the foregoing policy, as well as the following conditions:

### *Conditions Placed on Use of NCHSAA-issued Media Credentials*

*This working credential is issued for the sole purpose of providing facility access to a representative of an accredited media organization recognized by the NCHSAA who has a legitimate working function in connection with this NCHSAA-sponsored event. It is non-transferable. Any unauthorized use of this credential subjects the bearer to ejection from the facility and/or his/ her organization to forfeit future privileges. Issuance and use of this credential is subject to the following conditions:*

1. *This credential shall be used solely for news and editorial coverage (bona-fide news purposes) of this NCHSAA-event.*
2. *Any use of news and editorial content or photographs/electronic images for entertainment and commercial purposes and not for bona-fide news purposes is strictly prohibited without prior written consent of the NCHSAA. The selling of news and editorial content or photographs/electronic images is exclusive to the NCHSAA and/or any other company so designated by the NCHSAA.*
3. *The accredited media organization and bearer shall indemnify, defend and save harmless the NCHSAA, its officers, agents, employees and each of its member schools, their officers, agents and employees, from and against any and all expenses, lawsuits, damages costs and liabilities (including reasonable attorneys' fees and expenses) incurred by, arising from, or in connection with:*
  - *The unauthorized use of news and editorial content or photographs/electronic images, whether such unauthorized use is by the bearer, or some third party to whom the bearer distributes news and editorial content or photographs/electronic images.*
  - *any injuries resulting from acts or omissions by the bearer or some third party to whom the bearer directly or indirectly distributed news and editorial content or photographs/electronic images;*
  - *any cameras, wires, cables, computers, telephones or any other equipment brought to the premises by the bearer, or*
  - *the use of any news and editorial content or photographs/electronic images or any other matter other than coverage of this NCHSAA event.*
4. *Irrevocable permission is granted to the NCHSAA and its assignees to utilize the bearer's voice, image and likeness in connection with any broadcast, other recording or print reproduction of the event without compensation.*





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5. *Bearer assumes all risk and danger incidental to this NCHSAA event, whether occurring prior to, during or after the event, and releases the NCHSAA and all agents thereof from any and all liabilities resulting from such event.*
6. *This credential is the property of the NCHSAA and may be revoked at any time at the sole discretion of the NCHSAA and will automatically terminate if any term hereof is breached. In cases deemed unique by the NCHSAA, these policies and any other NCHSAA media policies may be amended. The accredited media organization and/or bearer that breaches the conditions of use of this credential is subject to legal liability as well as all costs incurred in enforcing the terms of these conditions including but not limited to reasonable attorneys' fees.*
7. *Acceptance of this credential constitutes agreement by the bearer and his or her organization to abide by the foregoing conditions, other NCHSAA media policies, as well as guidelines established for the conduct of media representatives at this NCHSAA event.*

*The NCHSAA thanks you for your cooperation.*

### C. Newspapers:

- i. Registrations will be approved only for reporters covering hometown or circulation-area teams. Newspapers must identify the school(s) they are covering in their event Registration form.
- ii. At specific events, daily newspapers may have up to two (2) writers and one (1) photographer. Weekly newspapers may have no more than one (1) writer and one (1) photographer. Publishing companies that publish weekly newspapers for more than one community will be considered a single weekly newspaper. Requests for more than the above allotment will be at the discretion of NCHSAA Staff.
- iii. Newspapers with no vested interest in the event may be denied registration to championship events.

### D. Radio Stations:

- i. Radio stations not providing a live broadcast of the event will be limited to one (1) Registration for specific events. Requests for more than the above allotment will be at the discretion of NCHSAA Staff.
- ii. Stations that are providing full live coverage will be required to remit payment to either the host school Athletic Director or the NCHSAA Staff Representative on site prior to the beginning of each streamed contest.
- iii. Radio stations must identify school(s) they are covering in their event registration form.
- iv. Stations with no vested interest may be denied.

### E. Television:

- i. Television stations may request no more than two (2) registrations for specific events. Requests for more than the above allotment will be at the discretion of NCHSAA Staff.



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- ii. Stations that are providing full live coverage will be required to remit payment to either the host school Athletic Director or the NCHSAA Staff Representative on site prior to the beginning of each streamed contest.
- iii. Stations with no vested interest may be denied.
- iv. Television stations must identify school(s) they are covering in their event registration form.

### F. Internet Sites/Magazines:

- i. YLC Card requests will be considered on an individual basis and will be issued at the discretion of the NCHSAA.
- ii. The following guidelines will be used when reviewing an internet site credential request:
  - 1. Internet sites must regularly update news content with unique and original content, and have a demonstrated record of sustained coverage of high school sports.
  - 2. Internet sites must have a unique registered domain name ending in one of the recognized extensions (.com, .cc, .edu, .net, .org).
  - 3. Parallel internet sites owned and operated by traditional media (i.e., newspapers, radio stations and television stations) may have approved registrations if the request is for the purpose of reporting unique content that only can be accomplished by receiving the credentials. In instances where space is limited, such credentials may be counted as part of the traditional media outlets' allotment.
  - 4. Internet sites must furnish, upon request, certifiable traffic number from an established auditing firm (i.e. Nielsen), Google Analytics or from its service provider. Hit counters on pages will not fulfill these requirements. The following information may be requested: the average number of "page views" by each visitor; and the name and telephone number of the auditing firm or service provider to discuss and ensure the accuracy of the numbers.
- iv. Internet sites intending to merely report information already available on the NCHSAA website will not be granted registrations.
- v. Internet sites with no vested interest may be denied registrations.

### G. Social Media Based Photographers.

- i. YLC Card requests will be considered on an individual basis and will be issued at the discretion of the NCHSAA.
- ii. The following guidelines will be used when reviewing an internet site credential request:
  - 1. Social Media only photographers must provide two (2) letters of recommendation from member schools or from a recognized media outlet.
  - 2. Photographers must be at least 18 years of age.
  - 3. Social Media Accounts must regularly update content with unique and original content, and have a demonstrated record of sustained coverage of high school sports.



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4. Social Media Accounts must furnish upon request their number of followers and average number of likes.
5. All Social Media Based photographers' body of work is subject to review prior to approval of an NCHSAA Media Credential.

G. Participating School Representative: Provided space is available, each participating school may be issued two (2) photography registrations (one (1) video and one (1) still) to photograph and/or film their team during an NCHSAA event championship events. School Representatives may utilize the School Media Passes provided to each school and those will be accepted at all NCHSAA postseason events. Provided that the registrant is a school employee, no YLC or DragonFly account is required. Requests for more than the above allotment will be at the discretion of NCHSAA Staff. The participating school's principal or other appropriate administrator must make an online registration request according to the established deadlines. Participating school representatives granted credentials are expected to adhere to all NCHSAA regulations, may be subject to further regulations as determined by the NCHSAA and may lose credentials and be ejected from the tournament contest should these regulations be violated. School administrators are also allowed to utilize VIP or School Administrator Passes, which are distributed to teams participating in championship events, for the purpose of photography, videography or other media coverage at their discretion.

H. High School Student Photography/Journalism: The NCHSAA is dedicated to the educational experience of all students and priority will be given to student journalists when possible. School Administrators may register up to two students at championship events provided that the school is participating in an NCHSAA event. Student journalists may utilize the School Media Passes provided to each school and those will be accepted at all NCHSAA postseason events. Provided that the registrant is a student at the school, no YLC or DragonFly account is required. Requests for more than the above allotment will be at the discretion of NCHSAA Staff. School advisors/administrators must make an online registration according to the established application deadlines on behalf of the students. Students granted credentials are expected to adhere to all NCHSAA regulations, may be subject to further regulations as determined by the NCHSAA and lose credentials and be ejected from the tournament contest should these regulations be violated. Schools may not register for-profit businesses and no school contracts for photography needs will be honored at NCHSAA events. This high school student media credential is intended for use by students in their school's journalism program and should include newspaper, broadcast and yearbook journalism. School administrators are also allowed to utilize VIP or School Administrator Passes, which are distributed to teams participating in championship events, for the purpose of photography, videography or other media coverage at their discretion.

I. Recruiting Services/Scouts: The NCHSAA does not issue media credentials to recruiting services or scouts.

J. Special Requests: The NCHSAA reserves the right to issue additional credentials to certain media organizations that submit special requests with the NCHSAA. Such decision to issue additional credentials will be at the NCHSAA's sole discretion.