

POLICY COMMITTEE

Committee Members: Sam Jones (Chair), Allen Plaster (Vice Chair), Eddie Doll, Jamie King, Brad Alford, Wendell Hall **Staff:** Janna Fonseca

AGENDA ITEM	RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>1. Shoulder pads during summer football workouts</p> <p>[SMAC]</p> <p>No attachment</p>	<p>Use of shoulder pads during summer football skill development and 7 v 7 be discontinued.</p>	<p>Rationale: While activity modification guidelines for heat apply for summer skill development, there is no acclimatization requirement.</p> <p>Removing the use of shoulder pads during summer skill development will discourage/eliminate contact and lessen the risk of heat illness.</p> <p>Budget Impact: None</p> <p>Educational Impact: None</p> <p>Equity Impact: None</p> <p>Effective Date: Summer 2026</p>

AGENDA ITEM	RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>2. Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) Training</p> <p>[SMAC]</p> <p>Attachment P1</p>	<p>All coaches (head, assistant, paid, volunteer, etc.) shall be required to complete a youth mental health and first aid training program once every three years. Options will be provided for satisfying the requirement.</p>	<p>Rationale: Coaches are considered trusted adults and may be the first to recognize changes in behaviors that indicate mental health concerns. Training in mental health first aid equips coaches with skills to recognize warning signs, respond appropriately, and refer students to qualified medical personnel.</p> <p>Budget Impact: Up to \$170 per person based on what option is chosen. See supporting document for details.</p> <p>Educational Impact: Additional of an educational requirement for coaches.</p> <p>Equity Impact: None</p> <p>Effective Date: July 1, 2026</p>
<p>3. Data Collection Method</p> <p>[Staff]</p> <p>No attachment</p>	<p>To inform decision-making, such as sanctioning a new sport, the NCHSAA shall designate the official reporting platform for any data collection.</p>	<p>Rationale: To ensure data collection is consistent and accessible to all member schools.</p> <p>Budget Impact: N/A</p> <p>Educational Impact: N/A</p> <p>Equity Impact: N/A</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 school year</p>

AGENDA ITEM	RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>4. Use of Backstroke Ledges</p> <p>[Swimming/Diving Advisory Group & Swimming/Diving Regional Supervisors]</p> <p>Attachment P2</p>	<p>To approve the optional use of backstroke ledges in accordance with the NFHS allowance.</p>	<p>Rationale: The NFHS has granted state associations to approve the use of backstroke ledges.</p> <p>Budget Impact: The budget impact will be on the schools if the facilities charge for the use of backstroke ledges or the outright purchase of backstroke ledges.</p> <p>Educational Impact: NCHSAA staff must provide training and education to coaches and officials.</p> <p>Equity Impact: Equitable for both genders.</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 school year</p>
<p>5. Course Requirement for Diving Judges</p> <p>[Swimming/Diving Advisory Group & Swimming/Diving Regional Supervisors]</p> <p>Attachment P3</p>	<p>To require the “Judging Springboard Diving” course on NFHS Learn for all diving judges/officials on an annual basis.</p>	<p>Rationale: The disparity of judging in diving is becoming more drastic.</p> <p>Budget Impact: None, the course is free.</p> <p>Educational Impact: N/A</p> <p>Equity Impact: N/A</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-27 school year</p>
<p>6. 6-dive format for Regional and State Championships</p> <p>[Swimming/Diving Advisory Group]</p> <p>Attachment P4</p>	<p>Approve the 6-dive format now that the NFHS is allowing states to modify the number of dives performed by participants during a state meet.</p> <p>Note: The required dive must be a “twist.”</p>	<p>Rationale: Participation numbers for diving are already low. The current format of 11 dives limits the number of athletes who can complete 11 dives safely.</p> <p>Budget Impact: If more divers qualify, there may be an increased cost to the school. There is opportunity for cost savings as meets may be shorter due to fewer required dives.</p> <p>Educational Impact: There is no loss of school or study time.</p> <p>Equity Impact: The proposal is equitable to both genders.</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 school year</p>

AGENDA ITEM

7. Athletics participation when enrolled in a neighboring school

[Four Rivers Conference]
Attachment P5a

[Carteret County]
Attachment P5b

RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>Proposal P5a (Four Rivers): To implement a Cooperative Team Agreement Policy that allows two schools to combine athletic programs in specific sports when one or more of the schools cannot independently field a full, competitive team due to limited participation, declining enrollment, or other challenges.</p> <p>Proposal P5b (Carteret Co): To revise the current athletic eligibility requirements to allow students to participate in sports at the nearest neighboring school within the same district, provided that their home school does not offer that sport. The students are limited to the next closest school in the district that offers the sport, and the onus for transportation to the receiving school is on the student/parents.</p>	<p>Rationale: Rural and smaller communities are facing decreasing student populations and limited athletic participation.</p> <p>Budget Impact: See supporting documents.</p> <p>Educational Impact: No change to loss of school time (reflected in both proposals).</p> <p>Equity Impact: Positive and equitable to both genders (reflected in both proposals).</p> <p>Effective Date: Proposal 1: 2027-2028 school year Proposal 2: August 1, 2026</p>
<p>Enhancements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unweighted team GPA raised to 3.2 (is currently 3.1) ▪ To clarify language concerning home-schooled student-athletes' participation in the Scholar-Athlete program 	<p>Rationale: 3.2 on a 4.0 unweighted scale corresponds to a "B" average.</p> <p>Home-schoolers' grades are not conferred by an NCHSAA member school.</p> <p>Budget Impact: N/A</p> <p>Educational Impact: N/A</p> <p>Equity Impact: N/A</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 school year</p>

8. Enhancement to Scholar-Athlete Calculations

[Staff]

Attachment P6

AGENDA ITEM

9. Enhancement to Wells Fargo State Cup Criteria

[Staff]

Attachment P7

RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>Enhancements include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Points being awarded if a school or individual remains ejection-free ▪ To allow “team scholar-athlete distinction” to count towards state cup points (new opportunity for points) ▪ To clarify language that pertains to wrestling 	<p>Rationale: Ejections are trending upwards.</p> <p>Reinforce the relationship between classroom excellence and education-based athletics.</p> <p>Wrestling is the lone sport with two separate events that calculate team standings (dual team and team champion at individual tournament).</p> <p>Budget Impact: N/A</p> <p>Educational Impact: N/A</p> <p>Equity Impact: N/A</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 school year</p>
<p>10. Editorial Changes for Current Rules</p> <p>[Legal Counsel]</p> <p>Attachment P8</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance application notes to the felony rule <i>Application Note 1.2.10</i> 2. Add clarifying language to Statute of Limitations <i>3.3.12</i> 3. Clarify how the grievance/internal remedy process operates for officials. <i>3.4.2</i> 4. Add examples of specific behaviors <i>3.3.6.d.26</i> 	<p>Rationale: Legal counsel to provide context for changes. See supporting document for current handbook verbiage.</p> <p>Budget Impact: N/A</p> <p>Educational Impact: N/A</p> <p>Equity Impact: N/A</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-27 handbook</p>

AGENDA ITEM	RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>11. Playoff Qualification when not in a Conference</p> <p>[Wilson’s Mills; Johnston County Public Schools]</p> <p>Attachment P9</p>	<p>To allow a new high school, Wilson’s Mills, to be eligible for team and individual sport playoffs even though it has not been accepted into a conference.</p>	<p>Rationale: Wilson’s Mills is a new member school for 2026-27 (9th and 10th grade only). They requested to join two conferences, and were denied by both. The NCHSAA BOD will place this school in a conference for the 2027-28 school year.</p> <p>Budget Impact: Potential limitation of gate revenue if not adopted.</p> <p>Educational Impact: None</p> <p>Equity Impact: This proposal affects both genders equally.</p> <p>Effective Date: 6/30/2026-6/30/2027</p>
<p>12. Penalties</p> <p>[Staff]</p> <p>No attachment</p>	<p>Edit the handbook to read “<i>participation in or hosting an in-or-out-of-state unsanctioned event</i>” in the Level 3 infraction on the Penalty Code.</p> <p>3.3.6.c.19</p>	<p>Rationale: Brings infractions in line with the current penalty of participating in an out-of-state unsanctioned event.</p> <p>Budget Impact: None</p> <p>Educational Impact: None</p> <p>Equity Impact: Equitable for both genders.</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 School Year</p>
<p>13. Participation in Combines, All-Star Contests, Showcases, etc.</p> <p>[Staff]</p> <p>Attachment P10</p>		<p align="center">**Discussion Item Only**</p>

AGENDA ITEM	RECOMMENDATION/CONSIDERATION	SUPPORTING INFORMATION
<p>14. Women’s Wrestling</p> <p>[NC Wrestling Coaches Association]</p> <p>Attachment P11</p>	<p>Girls must only complete against girls in regular season and post-season wrestling.</p>	<p>Rationale: Girls’ wrestling is entering its fourth year as a sanctioned sport and has shown sustainability in its growth.</p> <p>Budget Impact: None</p> <p>Educational Impact: None</p> <p>Equity Impact: Creates equity in that girls compete against their gender and are not forced into situations where they must compete on a boys team for team points.</p> <p>Effective Date: 2026-2027 school year</p>
<p>15. Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete award</p> <p>[Staff]</p> <p>Attachment P12</p>	<p>Establish the <i>Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete Award</i> to honor the legacy and service of retiring Commissioner Que Tucker.</p>	<p>Rationale: The award recognizes the Association’s top student-athletes for their collective achievement in secondary and interdisciplinary excellence.</p> <p>Budget Impact: None</p> <p>Educational Impact: None</p> <p>Equity Impact: None</p> <p>Effective Date: First award presented in the 2027-2028 school year.</p>

Recommendation:

All coaches (head, assistant, paid, volunteer, etc.) are required to complete a youth mental health and first aid training program once every three years.

Option for satisfying the requirement:

1. NFHS Coaching Mental Wellness and NFHS Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention; or
2. National Council for Mental Wellbeing Youth Mental Health First Aid

Rationale:

Requiring coaches to complete a youth mental health and first aid program is essential to ensuring the safety, well-being, and success of student-athletes. Coaches interact with students regularly and are often among the first trusted adults to observe changes in behavior, mood, or performance that may signal mental health concerns. Athletic participation can intensify stress related to competition, injury, academic demands, and social pressures, increasing the need for informed adult support. Mental health and first aid training equips coaches with the skills to recognize warning signs, respond appropriately to crises, and refer students to qualified school personnel while maintaining appropriate boundaries. This requirement aligns mental health preparedness with existing physical safety standards, promotes a supportive and inclusive team environment, and demonstrates the school's commitment to early intervention, student safety, and responsible care.

About the Courses**NFHS Coaching Mental Wellness**

It's widely known that stress, anxiety, and depression create challenges for both society and individuals, including interscholastic students. Coaches serve a crucial role, acting as a liaison to get students dealing with mental health issues the proper help they need. That is why the NFHS is proud to bring you the course, Coaching Mental Wellness, in response to this reality. With a focus on creating a framework to improve BOTH physical and mental wellness, this course also highlights various signs, symptoms, and strategies to deal with mental health issues in a POSITIVE manner.

NFHS Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

It's widely known that stress, anxiety and depression create challenges for both society and individuals, including interscholastic students. And severe conditions can lead to the worst outcomes, such as suicide. The NFHS is proud to bring you this course on Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in response to this reality. With a focus on wellness, including both physical and psychological, this course highlights causes, strategies and provides helpful resources. For students, their peers and anyone responsible for their care and well-being, take the course Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

National Council for Mental Wellbeing Youth Mental Health First Aid

In this full-day training, you'll learn how to help young people ages 12-18. Topics include anxiety, depression, eating disorders, bullying, social media, substance use and ADHD. You'll be able to:

- Recognize signs and symptoms in young people.
- Use the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE).
- Interact with a young person in crisis.
- Connect a young person with professional help.
- Address stigma and explain that recovery is possible.
- Encourage young people to practice self-care.

Budget Impact:

NFHS Coaching Mental Wellness

\$0.00

NFHS Student Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

\$0.00

National Council for Mental Wellbeing Youth Mental Health First Aid

\$0 - \$170 (Instructors handle pricing independently)

Educational Impact:

N/A

Gender Impact:

N/A

Effective Date:

July 1, 2026

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s) : Ryan Pegarsch

School/LEA/Conference/Group: Swimming/Diving Advisory Group & Swimming/Diving Regional Supervisors

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

The recommendation is to approve the use of backstroke ledges in accordance with the NFHS adoption beginning with the 2026-2027 season.

Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?)

The rationale is the NFHS approval of the use of backstroke ledges during the 2025-2026 rule changes following state adoption. The use of backstroke ledges has been standard practice in USA Swimming and World Aquatics for many years. The NFHS has developed a great resource and teaching material for coaches to help train athletes to use the backstroke ledges. Also, the NFHS has developed material for officials on how to officiate with the backstroke ledges. The use of backstroke ledges is optional and not required for a competition.

Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school's/athletic department's finances?)

The budget impact will be on the schools if the facilities charge for the use of backstroke ledges or the outright purchase of backstroke ledges.

Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?)

There will be no loss of school time or study time for students.

Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?)

This proposal is fair for both genders.

Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)

The effective date would be immediately.

Submitted by: *Ryan Pegarsch* on 3/26/2026 for the Swimming/Diving Advisory Committee and the Swimming/Diving Regional Supervisors



Teaching Starts Using Backstroke Ledges

Beginning with the start of the 2025-26 school year, state high school associations may permit the use of backstroke ledges during swimming competitions. Associations that adopt the use of backstroke starting ledges in competition must clearly articulate the importance of a teaching protocol implementation for their high school competitors to minimize risk. The utilization of backstroke ledges requires clear, structured education protocols, which are outlined below. Adequate training time must be provided to minimize risk and ensure performance readiness. By following these guidelines and maintaining a clear focus on skill progression, safety, and controlled environment practices, the use of backstroke ledges can be safely integrated into swimming competitions and training sessions.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE NEW RULE?

Each State Association must first adopt the use of the ledges via an appropriate policy. Without that adoption, ledges shall not be used in that state. The rule spells out the dimensions for the starting ledges which are to be identical for all lanes. Minimum water depth of six feet at the starting wall, for a distance of 5 meters from that wall, is required for all lanes. Use of the ledge is optional for each swimmer, and each swimmer is responsible for setting the ledge in place prior to the start of the race.

WHAT CONSTITUTES "STATE ASSOCIATION ADOPTION"?

Before ledges are used in high school competition, the State Association must formally declare that usage is permitted. In addition, the State Association may wish to include any requirements to impose on that usage. Such requirements could include topics such as proper training for athletes, coaches and officials and monitoring thereof; expectations regarding the installation and removal of the ledges in the medley relay and backstroke events; additional specifications for the equipment and dealing with malfunctions and other negative effects upon equitable competition.

WHAT TRAINING SHOULD ATHLETES RECEIVE PRIOR TO USING THE LEDGE?

A sample curriculum to assist coaches is provided on the Swimming and Diving page of the NFHS.org website. State Associations may wish to stipulate their expectations of the components of proper training prior to the use during competition and may also want to limit use of ledges to certain groups of athletes. Research studies involving use of ledges make it clear that training is essential to safe use of this equipment. Monitoring of athlete training prior to the use of ledges in training sessions and eventually in competition will also need to be addressed to assure athlete safety.

WHAT COACHING QUALIFICATIONS ARE NEEDED?

State Associations will need to provide guidance in this area, as generic training for coaching backstroke starts does not necessarily include using the backstroke ledges safely and effectively. Monitoring of coaches' preparation for overseeing ALL aspects of high school swimming and diving is an essential task of the State Association.

WHAT TRAINING SHOULD OFFICIALS RECEIVE?

The new rule imposes no new duties on meet officials, though State Associations may wish to utilize officials in a variety of ways that facilitate implementation of the state's policy. State Associations must clearly communicate expectations of officials in their role regarding backstroke ledges. The main attribute required of officials with respect to this new equipment is PATIENCE. It is very likely that an additional 1-5 minutes per heat will be added to the duration of the meet, as swimmers learn how to install the devices prior to their races. Officials are not responsible for the use of the ledges or how to teach their use. If a swimmer does not know how to use the ledge it may indicate a lack of education, and the official should direct swimmer back to their coach.

WHAT TYPES OF DEVICES MAY BE USED?

There are a number of backstroke ledges available commercially across a wide price range. State Associations may determine which of those they wish to approve and may place appropriate limitations on which devices are acceptable, provided the specifications of the rule are met.

MAY "HOMEMADE" LEDGES BE USED?

The rule provides multiple specifications for this equipment which presumably can be met by other than manufactured devices. However, monitoring of proper construction and compliance with rule specifications, including the proper mounting of the device, is most appropriately a concern of the local governing entity.

MAY A SWIMMER USE HIS OR HER OWN DEVICE?

The rule expectation is that ledges used in competition are identical for all lanes. While it is conceivable that a swimmer's own device might match what is provided by the meet host, it would be unlikely and thus swimmers should probably be restricted, by State Association policy, from using personal equipment.

HOW IS THE LEDGE TO BE INSTALLED?

By rule, the swimmer is responsible for properly placing the ledge for use prior to the start of the heat in the medley relay and 100 backstroke events. Use of the ledge is optional for each backstroke swimmer.

WHAT CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-REMOVAL OF DEVICE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE START?

Ideally, ledges will be removed immediately following the start of each heat of the 200-yard medley relay and 100-yard backstroke events. How and by whom this is accomplished is a matter for local determination via State Association policy. Keep in mind that backstroke swimmers finishing their leg of the relay and the swimmer turning at 50-yards in the 100-yard backstroke event may encounter difficulties if the ledge remains in the water; also, interference with accurate electronic timing may occur. Any adjustments in competition results or sanctions for not removing the ledges will need to be established by the State Association policy. Swimmers may designate a team member, a timer or a coach to remove the ledge in that event.

Consideration of penalties:

- a. Teammate not being able to remove the ledge in a timely manner - [The host school should communicate with the visiting coach on how to remove the ledges after the start.](#)
- b. Teammate falling into the water trying to remove the ledge - [Similar to when the 500 free](#)

lap counter falls into the pool and should be handled in the same manner.

- c. When does a re-swim occur if it is to be awarded - Follow the guidelines of a swim-off, for adequate rest. If the swimmer and coach agree that adequate rest has been provided, the swim may occur sooner than 25 minutes.
- d. How can turn judges and take off judges manage the circumstances as the ledges are removed during the medley relay in the limited space - Keep all subsequent relay swimmers behind the timers at the start of the backstroke. One of the other swimmers in the relay could be designated to approach the starting end to remove the ledge. Keep all other swimmers back and non-participants out of the starting area.

HOW SHOULD A LEDGE MALFUNCTION BE TREATED?

Different types of malfunctions may occur. For example, if the mounting straps somehow separate from the footboard, this would be something an athlete could not be expected to control, and any response should protect the athlete. If the athlete improperly installs the ledge prior to her/his race, and the device fails as a result, a different response may become appropriate. Remember, backstroke ledge malfunctions are similar to a starting block malfunction. For example, a re-swim can be considered which is similar to a swim-off.

Malfunction of backstroke ledges:

- a. Is the entire heat stopped or only the lane with the malfunction? There are a multitude of scenarios related to the malfunction of the ledge which are combined with the type of meet that is being held. A point of clarification, the official must investigate to confirm that it is indeed an equipment malfunction not simply a poor start.
- b. In either case in the above when would a re-swim occur (if a single lane - does the competitor swim alone) Subject to a confirmed malfunction of the backstroke ledge, the official should ask the swimmer if the malfunction affected their swim. If the swimmer feels the malfunction affected their swim then the swimmer can be offered a re-swim. The official should clearly state that the re-swim would negate the first swim and the time on the re-swim will be the official time.
- c. **Dual meet with a properly functioning timing system:** The swimmer may be offered a solo swim. **Invitational:** If the malfunction can be fixed the swimmer should be placed in a subsequent heat and all swimmers utilizing ledges according to the rule. If the ledge cannot be fixed or a replacement is not available then the swimmers who achieved a time using the ledges must re-swim and the new time be used for placing or advancement. **Prelims and Finals:** For prelims, utilize a re-swim as in an invitational. For finals, all swimmers should re-swim and everything that occurred in the original heat is negated except for a sportsmanship violation.

USE OF BACKSTROKE LEDGES DURING WARM-UP

Similar to NFHS Suggested Meet Warm-up Procedures for forward starts, specify 2 lanes as one-way sprint lanes with racing starts permitted at the starting end of the pool. Place a cone marker or similar sign on the starting platforms in lanes not specified as one-way sprint lanes. Swimmers should not be allowed on a starting platform when a backstroke swimmer is executing a start in the same sprint lane.

Teaching Starts Using Backstroke Ledges

Beginning with the start of the 2025-26 school year, by state association adoption may permit the use of backstroke ledges during swimming competitions. Minimum water depth is 6 feet (1.84 meters) measured at the starting end extending out 16 feet, 5 inches (5 meters) from the starting end wall. Associations that adopt the use of backstroke starting ledges in competition must clearly articulate the importance of a teaching protocol implementation for their high school competitors to minimize risk. The implementation of backstroke ledges requires clear, structured education protocols, which are outlined below. Adequate training time must be provided to minimize risk and ensure performance readiness. By following these guidelines and maintaining a clear focus on skill progression, safety, and controlled environment practices, the use of backstroke ledges can be safely integrated into swimming training sessions and competitions.

General Instructions – before you teach backstroke starts, ensure:

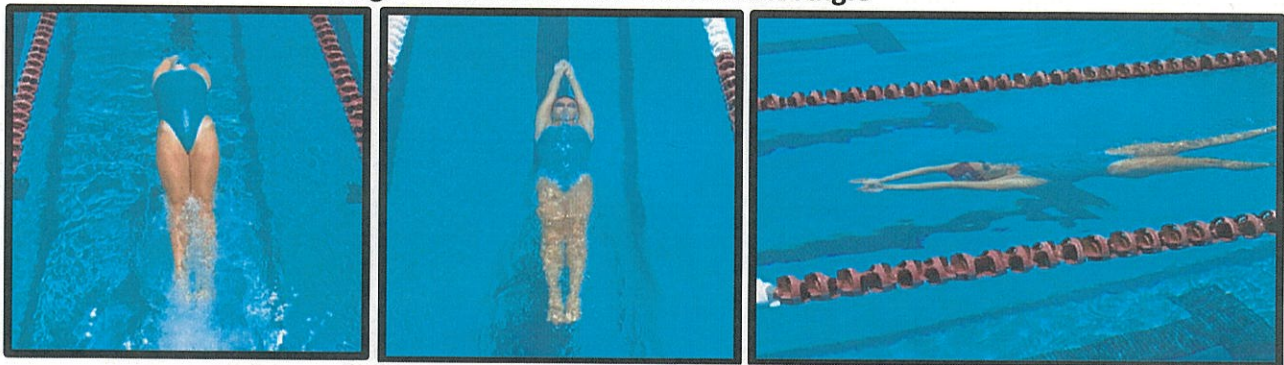
1. Swimmers can step in feet first into deep water, surface, turn around, level off and swim 10 feet.
2. Swimmers can demonstrate correct hand, arm, and head position. Practice a tight streamline on dry land.
3. Swimmers can maintain a tight streamline on a forceful push-off and glide underwater on their back.
4. The coach and the swimmers know the water depth (minimum 6 feet).
5. Starting blocks are tightly secured to the pool deck and are of size and height regulations.
6. Swimmers enter the water feet first.
7. The lane is clear of other nearby swimmers.
8. Starts utilizing backstroke ledges may take place as long as the water depth is at least 6 feet deep from the end wall and the depth is maintained 16 feet, 5 inches from the starting end wall.

Note: Confirm with your state association for any conflicting depth regulations.

Teaching Backstroke Starts Without the Ledge:

1. Instruct swimmers in the step-by-step progression BEFORE using the backstroke ledge.
 - **Prerequisite:** Swimmer can hold their arms in a tight streamline on a forceful push from the edge of the pool and glide underwater on their back before adjusting their hands to come to the surface at an angle.

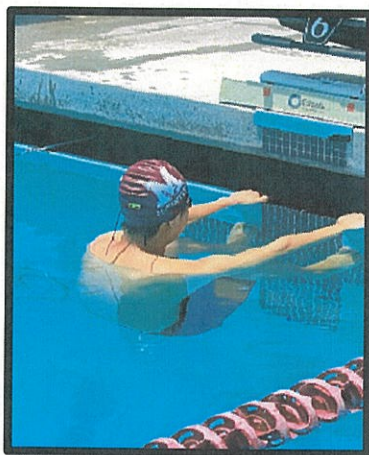
Tight Streamline Push To Shallow Angle



- **Progression Recommendations:** Swimmer gets into position with the hands grasping either the gutter or the lower bar on the blocks, whichever is closest to the water surface. For foot position, at least one toe of each foot must be in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. The swimmer performs a shallow backstroke racing start following the steps listed in the Teaching Backstroke Starts (Detailed Protocol). Once mastered, coach may teach swimmer to use the lower bar on the block, if in the coach's opinion the athlete is tall and strong enough to handle this skill safely.

2. Always ensure arms are fully extended overhead during entry in a tight streamline.
3. Do not perform entries over stationary object like poles, lanes lines or kickboards.

Ready Position Without Ledge



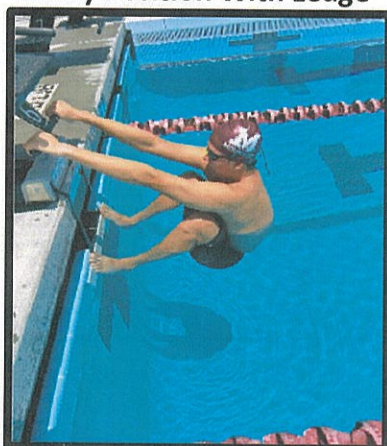
Take Your Marks Position Without Ledge



Teaching Backstroke Starts with the Ledge:

1. Instruct swimmers in the step-by-step progression above BEFORE using the backstroke ledge and the starting blocks.
 - **Prerequisite:** Swimmer has mastered backstroke starts without the ledge.
 - **Progression Recommendations:** The swimmer gets into position with the hands grasping either the gutter, the lowest bar or hand grips on the block, whichever is closest to the water surface. For foot position, the front balls of the feet are on the ledge with at least one toe of each foot in contact with the end wall or face of the touchpad. The swimmer performs a shallow backstroke racing start following the steps listed in Teaching Backstroke Starts (Detailed Protocol) below. Once mastered, the coach may teach swimmer to use the lowest bar or hand grips on the blocks, if in the coach's opinion the athlete is tall and strong enough to handle this skill safely.
- Note:** Research has shown that older, larger and stronger swimmers can generate more height. Consequently, the risk of reaching greater depths with the ledge is more pronounced with these athletes.
2. Always have swimmers hold arms fully extended overhead during entry in a tight streamline.
 3. Always have swimmers hold arms fully extended overhead during entry. Do not perform entries with arms at sides.

Ready Position With Ledge



Take Your Marks Position With Ledge



Teaching Backstroke Starts (Detailed Protocol):

1. Have the swimmer grasp the pool edge at water level with both hands and place their feet on the wall, either parallel or slightly staggered. Arms should be straight and relaxed, eyes looking forward at the wall. Swimmers who are older, larger or stronger, and are comfortable reaching a bar on the starting block, can do so. Have the athlete keep their feet placed near the surface of the water.
2. On the command "Take your marks," the swimmer should bend their arms and legs to pull their body up and closer to the wall. Swimmers learning the start should pull up slightly to a level their strength can handle. Swimmers who are comfortable and strong enough to grip the bar can pull up more, with the hips at the surface of the water or just above. The swimmer should adjust the angle of their back, so their body is ideally positioned to jump off the wall while not slipping. With their back perpendicular to the water, they may be less likely to slip but their legs may be too tightly bent to get the best jump. To get into this position, have the swimmer bend their legs more to bring the hips closer to the wall or bend their arms less. Alternatively, with their back leaning towards the wall, they may be more likely to slip, but it may be easier to extend their legs to push away from the wall. To do this, have the swimmer bend their legs less so their hips are further from the wall or have them bend their arms more. This position may be better suited with a ledge.

Starting Position

Perpendicular

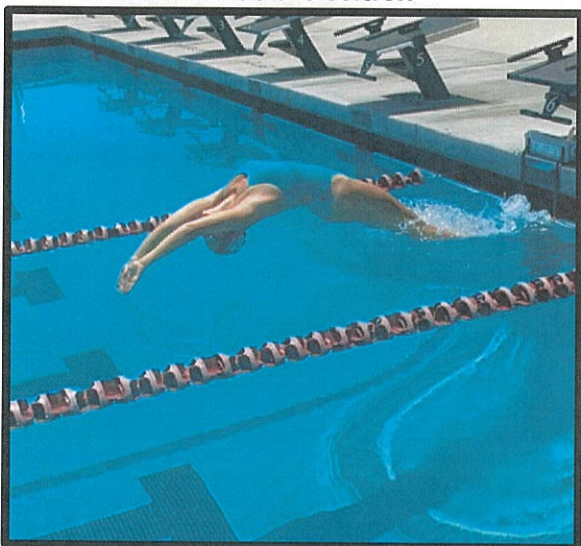


Leaning Forward



The backstroke start position should be individual to each athlete, their strengths and comfort. Try experimenting with different combinations of knee bend, arm bend and back angle to find the best position for them.

3. On the starting signal, the swimmer should throw their head back to a neutral position, which is generally in line with the spine. Simultaneously, they should throw their hands from the edge or starting block straight back over their head. They should push forcefully with their legs to jump upward and away from the wall while arching their back and driving their body, hands first, up over the water. The swimmer should kick their feet up to ensure they get over the water and into full streamline.

Head in Neutral Position**Hands Straight Back**

4. The athlete should tip their head back and get into a streamlined position. The goal is to have a clean entry and maximize forward speed by not going too deep. Their hands should enter before their back, and their back should enter before their legs. To improve their entry position and depth, athletes should adjust how high and away they jump off the wall while also working on kicking their feet up. A higher jump may lead to a cleaner entry but may also be deeper, which is not preferred.
5. Once in the water, athletes should adjust the angle of their hands and/or head for a horizontal streamlined glide. They should straighten their back to avoid going excessively deep.

Teach Your Swimmers the “Do’s” and “Do Not’s” for Starts:

Do:

1. Use starting blocks and backstroke ledges only during controlled swim practice, instruction, supervised warm-up or competition.
2. Know the water depth and location of pool floor slopes. Use feet first entry.
3. Use feet first entry in warm-up and always enter at the starting end of the pool.
4. Look to make sure the lane is clear of other nearby swimmers before entering the pool.
5. Enter the water only with permission of the coach or meet official.
6. Use a shallow angle entry and hold arms fully extended overhead.
7. For backstroke start practice, have the swimmers step into the water feet first.

Do Not:

1. Start a water entry until the preceding swimmer has come to the surface and moved away from the entry area.
2. Make a headfirst entry into cloudy water.
3. Play around in the area that contains the starting blocks or the pool edge.
4. Attempt to abort a poor start or a false start by somersaulting, pulling up quickly or rolling to the side.
5. Attempt a somersault or flip entry into a competition pool.
6. Enter headfirst with the arms at the side.
7. Grasp the backstroke start bar or starting block while entering the pool for backstroke start practice.

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s) : Ryan Pegarsch, Diving Regionals/State Coordinator

School/LEA/Conference/Group: Swimming/Diving Advisory Group & Swimming/Diving Regional Supervisors

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

The recommendation is to require the “Judging Springboard Diving” course on NFHS Learn for all diving judges/officials on an annual basis.

Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?)

The rationale is disparity of diving judging across the state is getting more drastic each year. This course will allow for a standard course and refresher each year for all diving judges to get the most current and up to date trends within diving. As the sport continues to grow and evolve, we have to continue to advance officiating in the sport of diving.

Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school’s/athletic department’s finances?)

There will be no budget impact to the schools or the NCHSAA as the course is free through NFHS Learn.

Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?)

There will be no loss of school time or study time for students.

Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?)

This proposal is fair for both genders.

Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)

The effective date would be immediately.

Submitted by: *Ryan Pegarsch* on 3/26/2026 for the Swimming/Diving Advisory Committee and the Swimming/Diving Regional Supervisors

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s) : Ryan Pegarsch

School/LEA/Conference/Group: Swimming/Diving Advisory Group

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

The proposal is to adopt the rule change from the NFHS for championship diving competitions to be a 6 dive championship for Regionals and State Championships. Also, to make the required dive a “twist”

Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?)

The participation numbers in diving are already low and with the current rule of championships for diving must be a 11 dive championship continues to limit the # of athletes that can successfully complete 11 dives in a safe manner. The 6 dive championship will allow more athletes to qualify and safely complete the dives for the Regionals and State Championships. Teams lose a lot of divers due to the fear of trying to complete all 11 dives. For the divers safety, the 6 dive format is much safer for each diver.

Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school’s/athletic department’s finances?)

We do not feel there will be a budget impact to the individual schools unless more divers come out because of the 6 dive format instead of 11 dive format. The cost savings will be in the amount of time needed to rent a pool for a dive meet will be cut basically in half because you will have 5 less dives to schedule for per diver.

Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?)

There will be no loss of school time or study time for students.

Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?)

This proposal is fair for both genders.

Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)

The effective date would be immediately. (Pending approval from the NFHS for the rule change)

Submitted by: *Ryan Pegarsch* on 3/26/2026 for the Swimming/Diving Advisory Committee

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s): Jerry Talley (President), David Hayes (Uwharrie Charter), Matt Kiser (Southwestern Randolph), Foster Cates (Eastern Randolph), Barry West (Jordan Matthews), Chris Coble (North Moore), Cameron Vernon (Northwood High School)

School/LEA/Conference/Group: Four Rivers Conference

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

We propose that the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) implement a Cooperative Team Agreement Policy that allows two schools to combine athletic programs in specific sports when one or more of the schools cannot independently field a full, competitive team due to limited participation, declining enrollment, or other challenges.

- Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?) Many schools across North Carolina—particularly in rural or smaller communities—are facing decreasing student populations and limited athletic participation. This directly affects their ability to sustain individual sports programs, limiting opportunities for student-athletes and reducing competitive balance across conferences. By creating a structured system that allows schools to form cooperative athletic teams, we can preserve and expand athletic participation while maintaining fair competition and alignment with NCHSAA standards.
- Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school's/athletic department's finances?) It's hard to foresee possible possible budget impacts on the school/s athletic finances. But the schools working jointly could mitigate any increase costs by combining programs.
- Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?) There will be no loss of school/instructional time.
- Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?) The implementation of Cooperative Athletic Team Agreements would have a positive and equitable impact on gender representation and participation in high school athletics across North Carolina. These agreements would directly support the NCHSAA's and

federal Title IX goals of providing equal athletic opportunities for both male and female student-athletes.

- Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)
We propose that the Cooperative Athletic Team Agreement policy be implemented beginning with the 2027–2028 school year.

Signature _____ Date 3/27/26

David Hayes: Uwharrie Charter *David Hayes*

Barry West: Jordan Matthews *Barry West*

Matt Kiser: Southwestern Randolph *Matt Kiser*

Foster Cates: Eastern Randolph *Foster Cates*

Chris Coble: North Moore *Chris Coble*

Cameron Vernon: Northwood *Cam Vernon*

Jerry Talley: Four Rivers Conference President *Jerry Talley*

Percentage of NCHSAA Schools NOT Fielding a Team (Full Breakdown)

Sport	21-22	22-23	23-24	24-25
Football	11.48%	11.57%	12.16%	12.90%
Men's Cross Country	8.43%	10.88%	9.40%	8.82%
Men's Soccer	8.43%	6.94%	6.65%	5.88%
Spirit (Fall)	11.71%	11.57%	11.47%	11.31%
Volleyball	1.41%	1.16%	0.92%	1.36%
Women's Cross Country	12.18%	12.73%	12.39%	10.63%
Women's Golf	35.83%	37.50%	35.32%	32.81%
Women's Tennis	22.25%	21.99%	22.02%	23.98%
Men's Basketball	2.34%	0.23%	0.46%	0.68%
Men's Indoor Track	39.11%	32.87%	30.28%	28.05%
Men's Swimming	30.21%	30.56%	30.05%	30.77%
Men's Wrestling	21.08%	19.91%	21.56%	20.59%
Spirit (Winter)	1.87%	18.06%	5.05%	4.07%
Women's Basketball	5.39%	1.62%	1.61%	2.04%
Women's Indoor Track	31.62%	34.03%	29.82%	28.05%
Women's Swimming	30.21%	29.63%	29.82%	30.54%
Women's Wrestling	100.00%	100.00%	43.12%	35.75%
Baseball	4.22%	5.32%	5.05%	7.69%
Men's Golf	15.22%	14.12%	14.91%	15.61%
Men's Lacrosse	73.30%	72.69%	72.25%	72.17%

Men's Tennis	25.53%	27.31%	26.83%	27.60%
Men's Track	5.85%	5.56%	6.42%	5.43%
Softball	7.96%	7.87%	7.80%	9.05%
Women's Lacrosse	77.28%	77.08%	76.83%	76.70%
Women's Soccer	10.54%	9.95%	9.17%	9.73%
Women's Track	6.09%	5.32%	6.19%	6.11%

Proposed NCHSAA Bylaw

Cooperative Athletic Team Agreements

Bylaw X.X – Cooperative Athletic Team Agreements

Section 1 – Purpose

The purpose of Cooperative Athletic Team Agreements is to provide opportunities for student-athletes to participate in interscholastic athletics when individual member schools cannot independently field a full and competitive team due to limited participation, declining enrollment, or other extenuating circumstances.

The North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) recognizes that cooperative athletic teams may preserve athletic programs, expand participation opportunities, and support the educational mission of member schools while maintaining fair and equitable competition.

Section 2 – Definition

A Cooperative Athletic Team Agreement is a formal arrangement approved by the NCHSAA that permits two member schools to combine eligible student-athletes to form a single team in a specific sport.

The cooperative team shall compete as a single program representing the participating schools and must comply with all NCHSAA rules and regulations.

Section 3 – Eligibility for Cooperative Agreements

Member schools may apply to form a cooperative team when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The school does not have sufficient student participation to field a full team.
- Enrollment limitations or declining participation threaten the sustainability of an athletic program.
- Geographic or demographic factors limit athletic participation opportunities.
- Cooperative participation would preserve or expand opportunities for student-athletes.

Cooperative agreements shall be approved on a sport-by-sport basis.

Public School Unit (PSU) Restriction:

Cooperative agreements may only be formed between schools within the same Public School Unit (PSU).

Schools from different PSUs are not permitted to enter into cooperative athletic team agreements.

Participation Thresholds

Schools applying for a cooperative team must demonstrate limited participation in the sport. A cooperative application should not be submitted if projected participation exceeds the following limits:

Fall Sports (Grades 9–12)

- Cross Country – 5
- Football – 32
- Soccer – 16
- Volleyball – 16
- Tennis – 8
- Golf – 4
- Swimming – 14

Winter Sports (Grades 9–12)

- Basketball – 8
- Wrestling – 14
- Indoor Track – 12
- Swimming – 14

Spring Sports (Grades 9–12)

- Baseball – 14

- Softball – 14
- Lacrosse – 16
- Outdoor Track – 12
- Tennis – 8
- Golf – 4

The NCHSAA may adjust these thresholds as participation trends change.

Section 4 – Application and Approval Process

Schools seeking to establish a cooperative athletic team must submit a Cooperative Team Agreement Application to the NCHSAA.

The application must include:

- Signatures of both Athletic Directors
- Signatures of both School Principals
- Approval and signatures from both Superintendents or PSU leaders

Applications shall be submitted during the annual NCHSAA classification appeals period.

The NCHSAA shall review applications and determine approval based on:

- Demonstrated need
- Competitive balance
- Compliance with NCHSAA eligibility rules
- Impact on conference alignment and classification

The NCHSAA reserves the right to approve, deny, or place conditions upon any cooperative agreement.

Section 5 – Classification and Competitive Balance

For classification purposes, cooperative teams shall be assigned based on enrollment using a standardized formula applied to the specific sport entering into the cooperative agreement.

Classification Formula:

- 100% of the enrollment of the largest participating school, plus
- 50% of the enrollment of the smaller participating school(s)

This calculation shall be applied on a sport-by-sport basis for the cooperative program.

The NCHSAA may adjust or modify classification placement as necessary to ensure competitive equity.

Cooperative teams shall compete in the conference and playoff classification determined by the NCHSAA.

Section 6 – Participation and Team Structure

Cooperative teams must operate with the intent of maximizing student participation.

Participating schools must implement no-cut policies.

Cooperative teams must operate with the intent of maximizing student participation.

Participating schools are encouraged to implement no-cut policies when feasible.

Eligibility Clarification (Alignment with Bylaw 1.2.4 AthI-005):

In accordance with NCHSAA Bylaw 1.2.4 (AthI-005), Section 4 – Enrollment Requirements, a student enrolled in a school supervised by a local board of education shall only participate in interscholastic athletics on behalf of the school to which they are assigned under G.S. 115C-366, unless the student is participating in a sport offered through an NCHSAA-approved Cooperative Athletic Team Agreement.

Student-athletes participating under a cooperative agreement must be enrolled at one of the participating member schools and meet all NCHSAA eligibility and academic requirements.

All participating students shall be given equitable opportunities for participation within the program.

Section 7 – Academic Eligibility

All student-athletes participating under a cooperative agreement must meet all existing NCHSAA academic eligibility standards.

Participating schools must coordinate schedules and transportation to minimize disruptions to instructional time.

Section 8 – Coaching and Administration

Cooperative teams shall designate:

- One head coach
- Additional assistant coaches as needed

Coaching assignments and stipends shall be determined jointly by the participating schools.

One school shall be designated as the host school for administrative purposes.

The host school shall be responsible for:

- Scheduling contests
- Submitting eligibility documentation
- Reporting results
- Ensure compliance with NCHSAA rules

Section 9 – Facilities and Practice Locations

Participating schools may share facilities for practices and competitions.

Schools are encouraged to rotate practice sites when feasible to reduce transportation burdens and maintain equitable access to facilities.

Section 10 – Financial Responsibilities

Costs associated with cooperative teams may include:

- Transportation
- Equipment and uniforms
- Officials and contest fees
- Facility maintenance

- Coaching stipends

Participating schools shall determine cost-sharing agreements prior to submitting the application.

The NCHSAA may establish an administrative fee for cooperative team applications if necessary.

Section 11 – Equity and Gender Compliance

Cooperative team agreements must comply with all Title IX and gender equity requirements.

The creation of cooperative teams should expand participation opportunities for both male and female student-athletes and must not reduce existing opportunities for either gender.

Section 12 – Monitoring and Review

The NCHSAA shall monitor all cooperative programs to ensure compliance with association policies.

Term of Agreement:

All Cooperative Athletic Team Agreements shall be approved for a period of two (2) years.

Cooperative agreements may be terminated prior to the conclusion of the two-year term if participation levels increase to a level that allows one or more participating schools to independently field a team.

At the conclusion of the two-year term, schools must reapply and receive approval from the NCHSAA in order to continue the cooperative agreement. Renewal shall be based on updated participation data, continued demonstrated need, and overall program impact.

Approved cooperative agreements shall be reviewed periodically and may be modified or discontinued if:

- Participation levels increase to allow independent team formation
- Competitive balance concerns arise
- Schools fail to comply with NCHSAA rules

Section 13 – Implementation Timeline

The Cooperative Athletic Team Agreement policy shall be implemented beginning with the 2027–2028 academic year.

Schools may submit applications during the 2026–2027 classification appeals process.

Section 14 – Educational Purpose

Cooperative athletic teams support the educational mission of NCHSAA member schools by:

- Expanding access to interscholastic athletics
- Promoting leadership, teamwork, and character development
- Encouraging academic engagement and student retention
- Strengthening collaboration between schools and communities

The NCHSAA affirms that participation in athletics is an extension of the classroom and an essential component of the educational experience for student-athletes

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s): Blair Propst, Assistant Superintendent of Carteret County Public Schools

School/LEA/Conference/Group: Carteret County Public Schools

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

The proposal is to revise current athletic eligibility requirements to allow students to participate in sports at the nearest neighboring school within the same district, provided that their home school does not offer that sport. The students are limited to the next closest school in the district that offers the sport, and the onus for transportation to the receiving school is on the student/parents.

- Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?)
Please see attached letter.
- Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school's/athletic department's finances?)
This should not impact the finances of the receiving school, as the funds are already allocated for sports. Students from the other schools are eligible to try out, but are not guaranteed a spot on the roster. Therefore, the receiving school does not bear additional expenses due to an increase in participants for the sport. Students wishing to participate in a sport at a neighboring school will be responsible for their own transportation to and from that school. It will alleviate concerns about offering other sports that are not financially sustainable for smaller schools.
- Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?)
No, the interruption of school time would not be any different from the time normally lost by those participating in the sport at their enrolled school, i.e., traveling to away games.
- Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?)
Yes, the proposal is available to all sports, not provided at a school, and to both male and female students.
- Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)
8/1/26

Dear Members of the Board of Directors and Commissioner Que Tucker,

We hope you are doing well. On behalf of the Four Rivers Conference, we are writing to follow up on the proposal presented during the winter meeting regarding cooperative athletic programs. After receiving feedback and questions, we would like to provide additional clarification on how cooperative programs could function within the North Carolina High School Athletic Association.

One question centered around what sports teams could become cooperative and how that would impact ADM numbers. Under this proposal, any sport could form a cooperative program if a school cannot successfully field a team due to low participation numbers. For example, if one school only has three tennis players, those student-athletes could potentially join another school within their PSU to participate on that team. This ensures students still have the opportunity to compete rather than losing the sport entirely for that season.

This is not just a hypothetical situation. Within the Four Rivers Conference this school year, we have had schools that were unable to field both boys' and girls' tennis teams due to low participation numbers. A cooperative program would have provided student-athletes at those schools an opportunity to still participate, rather than missing an entire season of competition.

Another question involved how ADM numbers would be calculated. Under the proposed structure, the ADM for a cooperative team would consist of 100% of the enrollment from the larger school and 50% of the enrollment from the smaller school. This ADM calculation would apply only to the specific sport participating in the cooperative agreement and would not affect the overall classification of either school.

The primary goal of cooperative programs is to provide participation opportunities for student-athletes when a school does not have sufficient numbers to field a team. At the same time, the long-term objective is to support schools in rebuilding their programs so they can eventually sustain teams independently.

It is also worth noting that cooperative programs are currently permitted in 28 other states to help maintain participation opportunities. Additionally, both the North Carolina Independent Schools Athletic Association and the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction allow "composite teams" at the middle school level, which reflects a similar concept of combining students from multiple schools to make participation possible.

To support this proposal and provide additional clarity, we have included several items for your review that may be helpful. These include a draft of what a proposed bylaw for cooperative programs could look like within the NCHSAA, a sample application form for schools seeking to enter into a cooperative agreement, and data spanning a five-year period that highlights the percentage of NCHSAA member schools that were unable to field teams in specific sports.

We are happy to provide additional information or discuss this proposal further. Please feel free to reach out at your convenience.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Four Rivers Conference

NCHSAA Cooperative Athletic Team Application (Fillable)

P5a

Boys Sport:

Girls Sport:

Primary School:

Secondary School:

Primary Enrollment:

Secondary Enrollment:

Calculated ADM (100% + 50%):

Participation Data (Provide Numbers):

Same PSU? (Yes/No):

Agreement: 2-year term, renewable, may terminate early due to participation increase.

Eligibility: Must follow NCHSAA Bylaw 1.2.4 unless in approved co-op.

SIGNATURES

Primary School Principal:

Primary Athletic Director:

Secondary School Principal:

Secondary Athletic Director:

Superintendent (PSU):



Richard L. Paylor
Superintendent

Jody McClenny
Blair E. Propst
Assistant Superintendents

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Board of Education
Katie Statler, Chair
Clark Jenkins, Vice Chair

Kathryn Smith Chadwick
Nathan Chambers
Stephanie Krzich
Brittany Wheatly
Kevin White

March 29, 2026

Commissioner Tucker and Board of Directors

North Carolina High School Athletic Association
PO Box 3216
Chapel Hill, NC 27515

Re: Proposal for a Revision of Athletic Eligibility within School Districts

Dear Commissioner Tucker and Members of the Board,

I am writing to you today in my capacity as Assistant Superintendent for Carteret County Public Schools, where I oversee district athletics. This formal request for a revision to current athletic eligibility rules is submitted on behalf of Carteret County Public Schools and our member high schools: East Carteret High School (represented by Principal Jay Westbrook), West Carteret High School (represented by Principal Justin Holt), and Croatan High School (represented by Principal Chris Davis). Onslow County Schools and Beaufort County Schools also share support for this proposal.

We respectfully request that the Board consider and adopt a policy revision allowing students to participate in a sport at a neighboring school within the same district, provided their home school does not offer that sport.

The Case for Equity and Student Well-being: Currently, disparities exist within our district and across districts statewide. Many students participate in recreational sports through their middle school years, developing a passion and aptitude for athletics. However, upon reaching high school, those opportunities often cease simply because of the specific school they are zoned to attend, while their peers in the same district continue to compete. In Carteret County Public Schools, men's and women's lacrosse serve as examples of disparities within our district. However, we acknowledge that with the increasing popularity of women's flag football and men's volleyball, additional athletic offerings will likely further exacerbate this issue.

The inability to sustain all athletic offerings across all high schools within a district creates a difficult dilemma for our students: either transfer schools and disrupt their educational and social foundations, or abandon a sport they love. However, this dilemma exists only if the district has open-enrollment boundaries or if the student agrees to access academic programs not provided at their current school, such as JROTC, thereby allowing them to make a discretionary assignment request. Some students are completely restricted from transferring to other schools within the district. Furthermore, we firmly believe that students should not be forced to sacrifice their

VISION

Engaging, Educating and Empowering ALL Learners from Cedar Island to Cedar Point.

academic stability and social success within their current feeder pattern solely to access an athletic program. Without revising this rule, a valid and pressing question remains regarding the equitable treatment of all students within a public school system.

The Challenges Facing Smaller Schools: Our member principals fully support this revision because the current landscape places smaller schools at a distinct disadvantage. It is not feasible for every high school to offer every sport, specifically due to the following constraints:

- **Financial Limitations:** Smaller schools cannot assume the significant costs associated with equipment, travel, and officiating for every potential sport.
- **Infrastructure:** Many smaller campuses lack the physical space or specialized facilities required for additional sports.
- **Personnel Constraints:** Currently, all our schools struggle to fill coaching vacancies for their current offerings. In smaller schools, staff members are already fully engaged with current sports offerings. Furthermore, smaller schools have fewer employees available to fill coaching vacancies. Adding new athletic teams to a smaller school further exacerbates the difficulty of filling coaching vacancies.
- **Student Body Constraints:** Smaller schools often lack a student body large enough to fill new rosters, particularly when seasons overlap. Furthermore, while there may not be sufficient aggregate interest to field a full team in a given sport, there are individual students with strong interest who are currently being denied the opportunity to play. Additionally, interest in current offerings may fluctuate, necessitating that students participate at other schools.

Legislative Awareness and Precedent: We urge the Board to recognize that this issue has already garnered attention in the state legislature. The legislature has considered mandating these revisions, specifically via **Senate Bill 48**. As you may be aware, the bill states:

“If a public high school does not offer a particular sport, a student from that school may participate in the sport at the public high school closest to the student’s school that has a program in that sport, subject to the terms and conditions applicable to a regularly enrolled member of that high school’s student body, except that the high school may charge a reasonable fee for participation by the local board of education in accordance with G.S. 115c-47(6).”

By proactively adopting this stance, the NCHSAA can lead the way in aligning athletic policy with the legislative intent of maximizing student opportunity and equity.

Alignment with NCHSAA Core Values: Finally, we view this request as a direct reflection of the NCHSAA’s own charter and core values. This is an opportunity to advance the landscape of high school athletics in North Carolina by upholding the values of **equity and the education and development of student-athletes**.

If the true goal of the Association is equity - fairness, just and right, equitable treatment of all, dealing fairly and equally with all concerned – then we must ensure means for all students to access all sport opportunities within a district, regardless of their residential constraints.

If the true goal of the Association is the education and development of student-athletes—where participation in athletics aids in the physiological and psychological development of the student-athlete—then we must remove arbitrary barriers that prevent that participation.

We respectfully request a change to the eligibility rules to accommodate these students. We welcome the opportunity to present this request to the Board formally or to provide any further clarity and answer questions regarding the logistical implementation of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Blair Propst, Assistant Superintendent, Carteret County Public Schools

In coordination with:

Jay Westbrook, Principal, East Carteret High School

Justin Holt, Principal, West Carteret High School

Chris Davis, Principal, Croatan High School

Cory Braithwaite, County Athletic Director

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Prepared by: Alex Bass – Director of Development & Special Programs

Committee: Policy (Spring 2026; For implementation in 2026-27)

SCHOLAR-ATHLETE PROGRAM (ENHANCEMENTS)

#1

*Amended provision – The 3.1 unweighted team grade point average (GPA) for designated semesters (fall - fall and winter sports; spring - spring sports) is raised to 3.2.

Rationale – 3.2 on a 4.0 unweighted scale corresponds to 80% - a “B” average per the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI).

#2

*Clarifying language concerning home schooled student-athletes’ participation in the Scholar-Athlete program.

“Only participating student-athletes enrolled and progressing toward receiving a diploma from a NCHSAA member school (or that school’s LEA-affiliated early college, with the student assigned to a designated NCHSAA member school for interscholastic athletics eligibility) may have their grades included for Scholar-Athlete program recognitions.”

Rationale – Home schoolers’ grades are not conferred by a NCHSAA member school. This practice aligns with NCHSAA policies requiring a home schooler (and his/her parent/legal custodian) to be responsible for his/her catastrophic insurance coverage for sports participation at a NCHSAA member school.

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Prepared by: Alex Bass – Director of Development & Special Programs

Committee: Policy (Spring 2026; For implementation in 2026-27)

WELLS FARGO STATE CUP POINTS (ENHANCEMENTS)

#1

*Amended provision – A state playoffs qualifying team must complete an ejection-free season (regular and post seasons) to earn five points toward its school’s annual total. A state playoffs qualifying individual, likewise, must complete an ejection-free season (regular and post seasons) to earn five points toward his/her school’s annual total.

Rationale – Ejection data is trending upward. Specifically, the growing number of student-athletes being ejected is outpacing growth of NCHSAA membership.

#2

*Amended provision – Any team earning “team scholar-athlete” distinction (3.2 unweighted team GPA for the designated semester) – as reported by an authorized school representative and through the Scholar-Athlete Program – earns five Wells Fargo State Cup points for its school.

Rationale – This adjustment will reinforce the mutually inclusive, symbiotic relationship binding and celebrating traditional classrooms’ excellence and extended learning communities’ achievements through education-based athletics.

#3

*Clarifying, sport-specific language concerning points calculations for wrestling –

“Each classification’s lone dual team wrestling tournament – in which men and women are eligible to participate - yields outcomes that determine how Wells Fargo State Cup points are awarded for a top eight team finish. Each classification’s individual wrestling tournaments – distinct for men and women – include participants who determine if a school receives five points for having a state qualifier.”

Rationale – Wrestling is the lone sport with two separate events that calculate team standings.

ITEM 1: Felony Rule and application notes currently read:

1.2.10 ATHL-005, Section 10 - Criminal History [Felony Conviction]. A student shall not participate in interscholastic athletics after pleading guilty or “no contest” to, or being convicted of, a felony under the laws of North Carolina, the United States, or any other state. Prior to deeming the student ineligible, an administering organization shall receive a certified copy of a criminal record reflecting the conviction and verify that the student is the same individual identified in the criminal record.

NCHSAA Application Note 1.2.10. The requirements set forth in ATHL-005, Section 10 apply to students at all membership entities.

- (a) Upon a student-athlete’s conviction of a felony, the member school shall (before the next athletic contest in which the student would participate) notify the NCHSAA and, as promptly as possible, provide the NCHSAA with a certified copy of a criminal record reflecting the conviction.
- (b) Ineligibility under this rule shall be immediate and shall prohibit participation in the NCHSAA sports program from the date of conviction through the end of the student’s high school career.
- (c) Pending appellate or other post-conviction review of the conviction does not affect the student’s immediate ineligibility. If the felony conviction is overturned on appeal or post-conviction review, the member school shall notify the NCHSAA and the student’s eligibility may be restored, subject to meeting other eligibility requirements.
- (d) A “felony” is any crime designated as a felony by the jurisdiction of conviction.
- (e) “Convicted” and “conviction,” for the purpose of this rule, includes the entry of:
 - (1) A plea of guilty; or

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- (2) A plea of no contest, nolo contendere, or the equivalent;
- (3) A verdict or finding of guilty by a jury, judge, magistrate, or other duly constituted, established, and recognized adjudicating body, tribunal, or official, either civilian or military; or
- (4) A diversionary disposition, such as deferred prosecution, but only if the court record demonstrates that such disposition required a judicial determination of guilt or an admission of guilt in open court.
- (f) A person is “convicted” for the purposes of this rule if any event identified under Application Note 1.2.10(e) occurs in any jurisdiction, including the courts of North Carolina, the United States, an other state, the armed services of the United States, or another country. For avoidance of doubt, a conviction may occur, rendering a student immediately ineligible, although the sentence has not yet been imposed.

Clarification/Addition:

“An adjudication of delinquency is not a felony conviction for purposes of that rule.”

ITEM 2: In 3.3.12 (statute of limitations), currently reads:

3.3.12 Statute of Limitations - September 1 of the following year is the deadline for all incidents, violations, etc., to be reported to the NCHSAA.

Clarification/Addition: Needs to be clear that it is September 1 of the following school year. So, if something happens in May 2026, it must be reported by September 1, 2026, not September 1, 2027.

ITEM 3: In 3.4.2, clarify how the grievance/internal remedy process operates for officials. If there is discipline against an official, when and how can the official challenge it? Currently reads:

- (e) Officials
- (1) NCHSAA officials and regional supervisors will adhere to the Code of Ethics policy (on NCHSAA website - Officiating).
 - (2) Varsity football, soccer, volleyball, basketball, wrestling, baseball, softball, swimming, and lacrosse officials must be registered with the NCHSAA. Any person under the age of 18 or still in high school cannot be assigned to officiate NCHSAA contests.
 - (3) Are required to be dressed and on the field a minimum of 30 minutes prior to game time in football and on the court when the teams take the floor for warm-ups in basketball.
 - (4) When an official is reported as being late for a contest and is at fault, he or she shall be sanctioned by the NCHSAA.
 - (5) Game officials are required to obtain and record the name of the game administrator in charge of the event. If no game administrator is available or identified, the head coach will be designated and recorded as the game administrator.
 - (6) The referee is responsible for giving the visiting and the home coaches cards with the first and last names along with the position of each official working a varsity football game. In basketball, the officials are responsible for signing both scorebooks (home and visitor) in all men's and women's varsity contests.
 - (7) Officials must electronically file ejection report(s) to the NCHSAA's reporting platform within 24 hours of completion of the contest. Copies will be sent electronically to the principal, athletic director and regional supervisor. In addition, officials should also report any unusual occurrences in a contest (teams leaving bench area, etc.) to the NCHSAA and the regional supervisor.
 - (8) Officials using alcohol, tobacco or other drugs in and around an athletic event will be suspended.
 - (9) Penalties/sanctions of officials
 - (i) Review and sanctioning may be conducted by the NCHSAA Supervisor of Officials
 - (ii) Appeals may be submitted to the Commissioner
 - (10) Grievance/Appeal Process For Contest Officials
 - (i) Follow the grievance policies and procedures in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the local officials association.
 - (ii) Written appeal to the NCHSAA Supervisor of Officials
 - (iii) Written appeal to the Officiating and Review Committee of the NCHSAA Board of Directors
 - (iv) Written appeal to the NCHSAA Executive Committee
 - (v) Written appeal to full Board of Directors of the NCHSAA
 - (11) All officials must adhere to standards of professionalism, including but not limited to any code of ethics that may be promulgated from time to time by the NCHSAA and the NCHSAA's felony policy. The NCHSAA may determine an official is ineligible to serve as an NCHSAA official on a temporary or permanent basis if the NCHSAA reasonably determines that initial or continued service as an NCHSAA official would be contrary to the letter or spirit of the NCHSAA's mission or purposes.

ITEM 4: To provide examples of specific behaviors (ex: hazing). Currently reads:

- (26) Conduct and unsporting behavior inconsistent with a wholesome athletic program.

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s): Bradley Betterton (AD), Chad Jewett (principal), & Josh Plisko (District AD)

School/LEA/Conference/Group: Wilson's Mills High School; Johnston County Public Schools

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

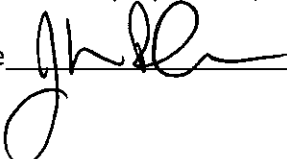
We are recommending on behalf of our future student athletes as a new public high school of 9th and 10th graders only; a one year approval for Wilson's Mills High School to be eligible for both team sport and Individual sport playoffs as an NCHSAA member who has not been accepted into a conference and thus will be independent for only the 2026-27 school year and then be placed in a conference for 2027-2029.

Wilson's Mills and Johnston County Public Schools (JCPS) are proposing a one year waiver of 3.1.2(d)(2) NOTE - pg 56 of the NCHSAA Handbook for Wilson's Mills High School. The school will seek placement in a conference at the NCHSAA Winter Board Meeting in December of 2026 for the 2027-28 school year through year 3 and 4 of this realignment.

- Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?)
The school's student athletes and teams should be able to compete in the playoffs if fortunate enough to make the qualifying field based on RPI in the first year of a traditional public high school as an independent school, particularly since recent changes to playoff representation and conference finish. The school is projected to have only 539 students as of March's student information department's report. The school attempted to become members of the Quad County 2A/3A/4A (Vote 0 for; 6 opposed) and the Three Rivers 4A (Vote 3 for; 4 opposed) conferences. These conferences did not approve Wilson's Mills as a member. Some additional considerations and rationale is supported through the handbook.
- One, we feel this is what is best for kids and aligns with the NCHSAA core values of equity, education and development of student-athletes, and fair competition. In addition, the new bracketed sports playoff berth being solely based on RPI (4.1.11.(c)-pg 78) should not cause any disruptions to existing schools and supports the argument any member school in a classification is eligible for post-season play. There are only 59 schools in both the 2A & 3A classification with 64 schools allowed in this classification per NCHSAA bylaws, thus allowing Wilson's Mills High School to be a 2A or 3A school

based on projected ADM or E1 data (entry date reporting) in August. Furthermore, Classification (VI.-pg 16) is now solely based on ADM so this would be a relatively easy update administratively. Also, the school made a good faith effort to join a conference and understands the importance of conferences in the overall make-up and structure of the NCHSAA and education-based athletic programing. The school and JCPS are not attempting to circumnavigate this and will be applying to be placed in a conference.

- We understand as you look across the state at premier programs or high schools along the state line that you may not want to open the door to an "independent" program mindset while maintaining NCHSAA playoff eligibility, but that is certainly not what we are asking for as a traditional public high school opening up with 9th and 10th graders, while offering all NCHSAA sanctioned sports but only playing JV football in 2026 with intent to join a conference in years 3 and 4 of realignment. In the past 15 years, we are only aware of 3 traditional public high schools opening east of Wake county (Cleveland HS, Corinth Holders HS, & South Central HS) ; this is not the norm for the area and has been further complicated by the 8 classifications when attempting to join conferences.
- We conclude with asking the Board of Directors and NCHSAA to not keep the opportunity of experiencing all that being a NCHSAA member school has to offer to our students, school, and community by upholding a "NOTE" section of a the handbook that we feel does not apply based on the new formatting of playoffs and inherently is not viewed as the original purpose and intent of the rule when it was created. Again this would only be for the 2026-2027 school year.
- Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school's/athletic department's finances?)
If not allowed it can negatively impact potential gate revenue needed to sustain an overall robust athletic program.
- Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?)
NA
- Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?)
NA, both genders are accounted for based on sport offerings
- Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)
06/30/2026- 6/30/2027

Signature  Date 3/27/26

From: Rodney Brewington <rodneybrewington@youthshrinebowl.com>

Date: Monday, March 16, 2026 at 5:45 PM

To: Que Tucker <que@nchsaa.org>

Cc: Nigel Pate <nigeldpate@gmail.com>

Subject: Follow-Up: Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas – Participant Eligibility Clarification

Dear Commissioner Tucker,

I hope you are doing well. This email is simply a follow-up to a brief conversation I tried to start with you during the state championships. I apologize again for catching you at such a busy time, and I appreciate you taking a moment to speak with me then.

My name is Rodney Brewington, and I serve as President of the Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas.

When the event was originally established in 2015, the question of eligibility—particularly regarding participants who may enter the ninth grade prior to the event—was raised with both the North Carolina and South Carolina state associations while we were in the early stages of developing and framing the event. At that time, the guidance we received helped us structure the event so that it would not interfere with or be connected to middle or high school athletic programs, and we have continued to operate under that same structure since that time.

The Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas is a charitable youth football event that benefits Shriners Hospitals for Children. Participants are selected through youth football organizations and youth leagues, and eligibility is based primarily on age, typically involving participants between the ages of 10 and 15. As a charitable youth event, participation is open to both male and female athletes who fall within that age range.

Players are evaluated through approximately 25 regional youth football tryouts conducted throughout North and South Carolina. Participants are selected and participate as individuals representing their youth football participation (including church leagues, travel programs, and community recreation leagues) and not as representatives of their middle school, high school, school district, athletic association, or team. Participation is voluntary, community-based, and not affiliated with any middle or high school athletic program.

Because eligibility for the event is based on age and youth football participation, it is possible for a participant who was selected while in the eighth grade to enter the ninth grade prior to the event, which is held each December. Some of these participants may later choose to participate in high school athletics, while others may not. Regardless, participants compete strictly as youth participants and not as representatives of their middle or high school. No middle or high school equipment, uniforms, or identifiers are used, as all uniforms, equipment, and event materials are provided through the Youth Shrine Bowl organization.

For additional clarity, we provide the following language to all participants and families regarding the structure of the event:

Participants are selected and participate as individuals representing their youth football participation (including church leagues, travel programs, and community recreation leagues) and not as representatives of their middle school, high school, school district, athletic association, or team. Participation is voluntary, community-based, and not affiliated with any middle or high school athletic program. The Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas is a charitable youth event and is not sponsored, sanctioned, or affiliated with any middle school, high school, or athletic association.

Recently, one of our participating parents contacted the NCHSAA office to ask about eligibility and was informed that participation in this event could potentially affect a student-athlete's eligibility once they have entered the ninth grade. Because of that communication, I wanted to reach out directly to make sure that nothing has changed in interpretation since we originally structured the event. Since the Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas has now been operating for over eleven years under the same structure, I felt it was important to reach out rather than assume that our current approach remains aligned with expectations.

Additionally, we are aware that the South Carolina High School League previously issued clarification regarding outside all-star, show-case event and charitable contests indicating that participation is **not prohibited so long as the event is not affiliated with the middle or high school and middle or high school equipment is not used**. Our event has been structured in a similar manner, and I simply wanted to confirm that we are continuing to operate in a way that aligns with expectations in North Carolina as well.

While the event is sometimes informally described as a bowl or showcase, participation is based on youth league involvement and age eligibility rather than middle or high school athletic participation.

If there are any additional steps or language you would recommend to further clarify that our event remains separate from middle and high school athletic programs, we would certainly welcome that guidance so that we can continue protecting the students who participate.

Our goal is simply to ensure that we are continuing to operate responsibly and not placing any participant at risk regarding their opportunity to participate in high school athletics.

Thank you for your time and for the leadership you provide to education-based athletics in North Carolina. If you ever have a moment to discuss this briefly, I will also welcome your perspective.

Respectfully,

Rodney Brewington
President
Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas

From: Rodney Brewington <rodneybrewington@youthshrinebowl.com>
Date: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 6:34 AM
To: Que Tucker <que@nchsaa.org>
Cc: Nigel Pate <nigeldpate@gmail.com>, Alfie Wheeler <alfie@nchsaa.org>
Subject: Re: Follow-Up: Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas – Participant Eligibility Clarification

Dear Commissioner Tucker,

I hope you are doing well.

I wanted to follow up after our conversation last week regarding the Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas. First, I would like to congratulate you on your upcoming retirement. Job well done—you have served the state of North Carolina with outstanding leadership, and your impact on education-based athletics is truly appreciated.

Per your guidance, I have updated our website to clearly reflect the structure and compliance of our event. The Youth Shrine Bowl of the Carolinas is defined as an independent charitable youth event that is not sanctioned by, affiliated with, or representative of the NCHSAA, SCHSL, or any member school or school district. All participants are selected as individuals based on their participation in youth, recreational, or travel-based programs—not as representatives of any school.

Additionally, the language now clarifies that participation is limited to youth athletes based on age eligibility (ages 10–15). For participants who are currently in the 8th grade and transitioning into the 9th grade, their high school eligibility will not be jeopardized due to the independent, non-school affiliated nature of the event. In cases where a current high school student meets the age requirements, participation would only occur in full compliance with NCHSAA regulations, including obtaining any required waivers or approvals from the NCHSAA.

Thank you again for your time, guidance, and support in helping ensure we are operating in full compliance. I truly appreciate your leadership and willingness to provide clarity on this matter.

I look forward to receiving the written statement from your office following your board meeting in May.

Wishing you all the best in your retirement—congratulations again on an outstanding career.

Respectfully,

Rodney Brewington

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

Meeting of the Board of Directors – Agenda Item Submission

Name(s) : Tripp Rogers on behalf of NC Wrestling Coaches Association and Sanction NC.

School/LEA/Conference/Group: NC Wrestling Coaches Association

We/I request that the following item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting of the NCHSAA Board of Directors:

Recommendation/Proposal: (State in detail the recommendation/proposal)

Proposal that girls must only compete against girls in regular season and postseason wrestling.

Rationale: (Why should the board consider and possibly pass this recommendation?)

Girls wrestling in North Carolina is entering its fourth year as a sanctioned sport. The grace period for schools to build schedules and coaching staffs should be expired and girls have ample opportunities to compete across the state. Continuing to allow girls on boys teams is unfair to the athletes and creates confusion for many coaches when submitting records for regional seeding. Though the rules are clear, nearly every regional has a coach that did not know they must count on their record a girl who wrestles against a boy.

A constant question that the Wrestling Coaches Board gets asked is if a girl can compete in a girls dual and boys dual in the same evening. Prohibiting girls from competing against boys eliminates that possibility without having to write a rule or clarification from the NCHSAA.

Budget Impact: (What does this mean to a school's/athletic department's finances?)

None

Educational Impact: (Does this mean loss of school time? Does it interfere with study time?)

It does not change or affect loss of school time.

Gender Impact: (Is this proposal fair to males and females?)

Creates equity in that girls compete against their gender and are not forced into situations where they have to compete on a boys team for team points.

Effective Date: (When would this go into effect?)

2026-2027 Wrestling Season

Signatures:

President - Tripp Rogers (Hough HS) forestw.rogers@cms.k12.nc.us

Vice President - Chase Holleman (Havelock HS) havelockramswrestling@gmail.com

Treasurer - David Perry (Croatan HS) davidp@bluewaternc.com

Secretary - Mark Harris (Enka HS) mark.harris@bcsemail.org

Billy Baker (St. Stephens HS) billy_baker@catawbасhools.net

Jamie Belk (Piedmont HS) jamie.belk@ucps.k12.nc.us

Ian Roper (Swain HS) iroper@swainmail.org

Butch Ross (West Lincoln HS) butchcross90@gmail.com

Justin Shuffler (Newton-Conover HS) justin.shuffler@n-ccs.org

Byron Sigmon (Fred T Foard HS) byron_sigmon@catawbасhools.net

Jacob Tutterow (Cary HS) rtutterow@wcpss.net

Heang Uy (North Henderson HS) khuy@hcpsnc.org

Submitted on March 28, 2026

NORTH CAROLINA HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION

“QUE TUCKER CAREER SCHOLAR-ATHLETE” AWARD

Prepared by Alex Keith Bass

For approval in Spring 2026, implementation in 2026-27, and first awards presented in 2027-28

Purpose

The NCHSAA’s “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete” Award celebrates the Association’s finest student-athletes through communal recognitions of secondary, interdisciplinary excellence. This program manifests education-based athletics’ cooperative partnership in contributing to students’ postsecondary preparedness.

Who is a “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete?”

A “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete”:

*Has completed a postsecondary preparatory high school curriculum, and will earn a high school diploma from a NCHSAA member school or LEA-affiliated early college within a maximum of eight semesters (NCHSAA eligibility duration) following his/her initial ninth grade enrollment

*Has been a full-time student in good standing at a NCHSAA member school or LEA-affiliated early college for at least six complete, “calendar” semesters (the last of which may be a student’s eighth semester) of his/her high school career following initial ninth grade enrollment

* Has been a full-time student in good standing at the same NCHSAA member school or LEA-affiliated early college for at least three immediately preceding semesters upon completing his/her seventh semester EXCEPT IN CASES OF

Student transfers per documented parental/custodial civil and/or religious service

Student transfers among NCHSAA member non-boarding parochial schools

*Has maintained a minimum, *unweighted 3.6 cumulative grade point average* or GPA (per this document’s calculation directives) for his/her high school career, and specifically, during his/her NCHSAA member school and/or LEA-affiliated early college enrollment (3.6 equals 90%, or an “A” average, per NCDPI)

*Has completed at least one NCHSAA-sanctioned varsity, interscholastic sport’s/activity’s regular season as a team member in good standing (per NCHSAA requirements) in two separate academic years at the same NCHSAA member school

*Will graduate from a NCHSAA member school or LEA-affiliated early college by the current academic year's spring semester conclusion (or during the summer following his/her sixth high school semester)

How is GPA calculated for “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete” award distinction?

A “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete”:

Earns semester and cumulative GPAs for academic achievement while a high school student in NCHSAA member schools, and/or an LEA-affiliated early college

*Earns designated quality points for each attempted course's semester grade

A (90-100) – 4 points; B (80-90) – 3; C (70-80) – 2; D (60-70) – 1

*Earns additional quality points for an “A” semester grade in an “Advanced Placement” (AP), two- or four-year college/university, “International Baccalaureate” (IB) and/or “Honors” courses

A (90-100) – 5 points (“AP,” college/university, and “IB”); 4.5 points (“Honors”)

*Earns semester GPAs per the following division equation:

$(\text{Sum of semester grades' quality points}) / (\text{Number of attempted courses})$

*Earns a cumulative GPA per the following division equation:

$(\text{Sum of semester GPAs}) / (\text{Number of completed GPA semesters})$

ALL courses taken (in-person, virtual, college/university, and otherwise) by a student during grades 9-12 for which the school/LEA documents the course, records grades, and awards credits and grades shall be included in GPA calculations

What provisions yield achievement of the “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete” award?

A “Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete”:

* Is recognizable as a character exemplar who remained “in good standing” by practicing academic integrity, displaying appropriate student decorum and competition decorum, and adhering to civil obedience (i.e. – no felony convictions) throughout his/her high school career

Specifically, good standing means...

No felony convictions, and long-term suspensions/expellable offenses prior to and for his/her high school career's duration

No more than one “short-term” suspension (three days maximum) as a ninth grader, with his/her remaining high school career being spotless, including academic honesty

No high school sports competition ejections for his/her last two academic years, and never more than two ejections before his/her last two academic years

*Is afforded any & all school-approved accommodations (per his/her individualized education plan/504 plan) in pursuit of previously listed requirements

*Is considered a varsity student-athlete in good standing for one sport season if he/she sustains a season-ending illness/injury (per documented medical opinion) after a season's beginning

*Is considered a varsity student-athlete in good standing for a second sport season if he/she completed that same varsity sport's regular season at the same school in the preceding academic year, and is precluded by injury/illness (per documented medical opinion) from competing for the second season's duration

How is a "Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete" recognized?

A "Que Tucker Career Scholar-Athlete":

*Will be recognized at a spring/summer event (presented by the NCHSAA), except in cases of summer graduation

*Will receive a custom honor cord (blue/orange/silver) to be worn during commencement (per school/LEA approval)

*Will have a custom miniature decal affixed to his/her high school diploma (per school/LEA approval)

*Will have his/her name and graduation year included among a digital "continuation plaque" archived at the NCHSAA office