Eligibility - Fact or Fiction
The Alabama High School Athletic Association
Founded in 1921

Function
The AHSAA, providing a vehicle through which member schools may write their own rules and regulations, determines that schools are abiding by those standards in such areas as student eligibility, contests and championship programs.
Everyone agrees rules are needed in athletics.

Everyone desires an avenue to create or change those rules.

Everyone wants an independent body to govern their rules.
Legislative Process...

1. MEMBER SCHOOLS MAKE THE RULES
2. MEMBER SCHOOLS CAN CHANGE THE RULES
3. MEMBER SCHOOLS AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE RULES
The Process of by which Member Schools can create AHSAA Bylaws

AHSAA MISSION STATEMENT

The Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA) serves member schools through interscholastic competition by enhancing student learning, sportsmanship, safety and lifelong values. With integrity as its foundation, the AHSAA consistently governs the rules created by member schools.

Article XII: Amending the Constitution
The Constitution and eligibility rules may be amended at any regular meeting of the Legislative Council, a two-thirds vote being necessary.

**Legislative Council**
4 members from each of the eight districts are elected by the member schools within that district to serve a four year term. (One of these members will serve on the Central Board of Control.)

**Central Board of Control**
1 member from each District-8
1 from each Bi-District-4
2 at large female members-2
1 from the AL State Dept. Educ.
Total= 15 Board members
Legislative Proposals

SECTION 17. LEGISLATIVE PROPOSALS. Legislative Proposals may be submitted online by member schools and must include a rationale and be signed by the principal by Jan. 31. Only the Principal or their designee can vote. Each member school gets one vote per proposal.

Proposals will be ratified at a regular scheduled meeting in April by a two/thirds (2/3) vote of the Legislative Council. The Council will vote based on how the schools within their districts voted.
2018 Proposals

170 schools voted

Example Proposal that passed

Q: Proposed, to amend Rule 1 Section 6. That all individual sports (Bowling, Cross Country, Swimming, Wrestling, Tennis, Golf, Track) be exempt from the 50% rule. Vestavia Hills

Rationale: The purpose of the 50% rule is to stop teams from working on team strategy in the off-season. It is not meant to stop individuals from working on their own skills. With individual sports, there is little to no team strategy. The nature of individual sports is different than team sports that require the entire team to work together on a game plan. The AHSAA already makes some exceptions for individual sports (Rule 1 Section 6 which allows some individual sports to receive private individual instruction as a group, Rule 1 Section 6 Letter A which allows students in some individual sports to participate as independent in two non-sanctioned activities). This change will allow our athletes to continue to develop their skills without changing the intent of the 50% rule.

YES: 117
NO: 38
NOT VOTING: 15

2019 Proposals

307 schools voted

APRIL 2019

2:00 pm Legislative Council Meets*

*Immediately following the meeting, the AHSAA will release a statement regarding proposals that were passed.
Article X: Complaints

- A school may be charged with violating the laws of the Association or with unsportsmanlike conduct...
- To receive an official ruling on any case, the principal of a member school must request a ruling in writing to the Executive Director. A verbal opinion, statement, or email is not an official ruling.
- The AHSAA may take action in a case without receiving a formal complaint.

Don’t interpret the bylaws.
Allow the AHSAA to interpret them for you.
To receive an official ruling:

- The principal must submit a request in writing on school stationary to the Executive Director.

- All information regarding the eligibility ruling must be provided at the time of the request.

- The Executive Director, in collaboration with the Exec. Staff, will review all information provided.

- An official ruling will be determined based on the information provided by the school and in accordance with AHSAA bylaws.

- The school will be notified in writing of the Executive Director’s decision.

- Before releasing, every ruling is reviewed by 3 exec. staff members, the exec. director, administrative secretary and, if needed, Legal Counsel.

*Please do not send letters or statements from the parents or other individuals related to the eligibility ruling.*

* Past rulings are researched through a data base that contains every ruling released from our office to ensure consistency of upholding the bylaws.*
Eligibility ruling:

* Once received in the AHSAA office, the request is reviewed by one of the Executive Staff then discussed with the Executive Director.

* If needed, a staff member will contact the school for more information or an explanation of facts provided.

* The Executive Director will deliver an official ruling based on the information provided by the school and in accordance with AHSAA bylaws.

* A staff member will contact the school (by phone, email, or text) to inform the school of the Executive Director’s decision.

* The AHSAA will provide the school an official ruling in writing within 24-48 hours.

* If ruled eligible, the student-athlete may participate two days after being principal certified in the school’s online eligibility software if all other eligibility requirements are met.
To self-report a violation:

- Principal of the School will notify the AHSAA in writing of the violation.
- School will provide all information surrounding the violation.
- School will inform the AHSAA of any and all disciplinary actions assessed by the school to parties involved in the violation.
Timeline

Self-report:
* Once received in the AHSAA office, the report is reviewed by one of the Executive Staff then discussed with the Executive Director.

* If needed, a staff member will contact the school for more information or an explanation of facts provided.

* The Executive Director will assess penalties in accordance with AHSAA bylaws and based on the actions taken by the school.

* A staff member will contact the school (by phone, email, or text) to inform the school of the actions taken by the AHSAA.

* The AHSAA will provide the school an official ruling in writing within 24 hours or less.
If a student participates while ineligible, the usual penalty for the student will be a period of ineligibility equal to the time that the student participated while ineligible. This period may be determined to suit the nature of the case.

Note: A student’s period of ineligibility must extend over consecutive semesters until eligibility is regained.

You may find on page 41 of the AHSAA Handbook, Rule I. Eligibility. Section 22. Student Restitution:

You may find on page 65 of the AHSAA Handbook, Rule VI. Administration. School Restitution Rule:

If a school that has been disqualified or a student who has been declared ineligible is allowed to participate in interscholastic competition because of a court restraining order and/or injunction against the school or the AHSAA, and if such restraining order and/or injunction is subsequently vacated, stayed, reversed or a final judicial determination is made that injunctive relief was not justified, then all contests in which such ineligible student participated shall be forfeited as well as any honors, points or awards received by the school or the ineligible student. In addition, the school may be fined or placed on probation in the interest of restitution and fairness to other member schools.
Restitution:

STUDENT-ATHLETE

COACH

SCHOOL
Appellate Process for Ejections

- First, complete the AHSAA School Ejection Appeal Form found in C2C.
- Be sure to explain in detail the rationale for the appeal. (Judgement calls are not a basis for an appeal.)

- Submit any video evidence to support your appeal.

- The AHSAA Appeals Committee will review the request, discuss with the Executive Director, and the Exec. Director will grant the appeal or deny the appeal and the ejection will stand.
Article XI: Appeals

An official ruling made by the Executive Director may be appealed to the school’s District Board. A District Board’s ruling may be appealed to the Central Board of Control.

If the Executive Director’s decision is changed by the District Board, it is automatically appealed to the Central Board of Control. The Central Board of Control has the authority to make the final decision on any case appealed to it.

1. Notify the AHSAA that the school is requesting an appeal hearing before the District Board.
2. Contact the president of the District Board and request a date and time for an appeal hearing.
3. If the District Board upholds the original ruling, the school may then request an appeal to the Central Board of Control.
   a. The school must contact the AHSAA and request a date and time for the appeal hearing.
   b. You may find on page 66 of the AHSAA Handbook, Rule VI. Administration. Section 11. Unscheduled Central Board Meeting: If a school requests the Central Board to convene on a date other than its four annual meeting dates, the requesting school will be assessed the expenses of the meeting.
      Note: If the requested meeting involved an appeal, the requesting school(s) will be assessed the expenses of the meeting if the appeal is denied.
   c. The AHSAA will notify the school in writing of the appeal date, time, and guidelines.
Guidelines for a Hearing before the Central Board of Control:

AHSAA Appeal Hearing Guidelines:
• If any party involved requests legal representation to be present, the AHSAA must be notified (in writing) within sufficient time to have legal representation as well.
• The appealing school will be allowed 15-20 minutes to present their argument to the Board. Per request, additional time may be provided.
• In accordance with Board policy, school personnel directly involved with the appeal, member school legal counsel, and parent(s) of the student-athlete involved will be allowed at the hearing. Any other relevant parties must be approved within 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. Only school personnel will be permitted to address the Board. The CBOC has the authority to ask questions to any parties present.
• Once the appeal presentation is concluded, the Board will move into executive session in order to discuss the school’s appeal. Upon returning to regular session, the CBOC will vote on the school’s appeal. If desired, your school may be present as the appeal decision is rendered.
• An official letter from the AHSAA will be mailed to the school providing the decision rendered by the Board.
What if you lose an appeal.....

- Accept it
- Go through the process of changing a rule
- Ask someone of importance to contact the AHSAA and ask for an exception.
- Go to your legislator to get a bill passed.
- File a lawsuit.
BE PROACTIVE.

CREATE OR CHANGE A RULE BEFORE WE HAVE A PROBLEM- NOT AFTER WE HAVE A PROBLEM.

Don’t blame the Association just because you don’t like a rule that YOU made.

Have the courage to stand up for what’s right.
When the outcome is not what you expected...

Student-athlete + School + Association

Working together for the same goal—providing an opportunity for every student to participate in educational based athletics.
In the Circuit Court of County Alabama

Plaintiff,

v.

Savarese-Stivo, individually and as Director of the Alabama High School Athletic Association; and Alabama High School Athletic Association.

Defendant.

Case No.

Complaint

For Temporary and Permanent Injunction and Emergency Motion

For Temporary Restraining Order

Come now the above-referenced Plaintiff by and through their undersigned counsel, and in seeking the equitable and injunctive relief as prayed as follows:

Preliminary Statement of Facts as to the Nature of the Action

1. [Redacted] to the extent of [Redacted] High School in [Redacted], Alabama, who had been disqualified from competing in high school sports in Alabama by the defendant because she received a $875.20 “bonus time” payment from USA Basketball for representing the United States of America and winning a gold medal in the 2018 FIBA Americas U18 Championship in Mexico City, Mexico during the period of August 1 through August 5, 2018 as a member of “TEAM USA.”

2. [Redacted] to the “All Tournament Team,” despite the fact that most of the players, including one of the initial members of TEAM USA, were rising college players that had not taken their high school eligibility.

3. The [Redacted] frequently胁迫 players on TEAM USA to rule by playing in an individual match that named USA Basketball to make a decision on “Yes and unless the players receive payment. Such payments are permissible under the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and none of the states that have their eligibility issues best or are in jeopardy of losing their amateur status. Must itself from the beneficent

Which is the best option?
What Type Of Results Do We Desire?

Litigious

Harmonious
A student who is a member of any school athletic team (grades 7-12) may not participate (includes practice) on a non-school team in the same sport during the school season of that sport. A student who is a member of any high school athletic team may not participate in an outside sport activity in the same sport during the school season of that sport.

A student who violates this rule becomes ineligible to compete on that school team or in that school sports activity for the remainder of that school season. Any student who participates on an outside team after the school season begins is ineligible to join that school team for the remainder of that season.

The first time a student violates this rule, fine and restitution will be assessed. Any student who violates this rule a second time is ineligible to join that school team for the remainder of that season and fine and forfeitures will be assessed.
• Schools agree rules are needed in athletics.

• Schools want an avenue to create and change their own rules.

• Schools support having an independent body to govern their rules.

RFD: State

Government First Read: 05-MAR-19

19 PFD: 01/10/2019

SYNOPSIS: This bill would require the State Board of Education to review and approve any rules relating to student participation eligibility before adoption by a high school athletic organization. This bill would require 25 percent of the membership of the governing body of the organization to consist of individuals appointed by the State Superintendent of Education or the State 16 Board of Education. This bill would also require the Department of Examiners of Public Accounts to audit the organization in the same manner as an agency of the state.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT
Silence Speaks Volumes

It's been said that actions speak louder than words. Sometimes, it's what you don't say or do, that sends the loudest message.
• Every State Faces Issues.
  o Eligibility
  o Litigious
  o Legislative
  o Classification
  o Officials Decisions
  o Lack of Officials
• These issues are not specific to Alabama.
• Alabama needs to be the state that works together as a family to resolve our issues.
• We work for you and truly count on each district to elect individuals that will function in the best interest of our membership.
During the 2017-18 school year, 97 self-reports were submitted to our office.

2% -- the result of a student’s academic accountability.
98% -- the result of an adult’s mistake.

Our member schools are trying to follow the rules they created and agreed to abide.
You Make a Difference!

Thank You