

9.5 LIMIT OF ELIGIBILITY

9.5.1 High School Student Has Four Years of Eligibility. A student has four consecutive calendar years of eligibility from the date he/she begins ninth grade for the first time. This does not imply that the student has four years of participation. A student becomes permanently ineligible four consecutive calendar years from the date he/she begins ninth grade for the first time.

9.5.1.1 Exception – Student Whose Limit of Eligibility Expires During Sports Season. A student whose four-year limit of eligibility expires during the season of a sport in which the student is participating may complete the season if the student continues to meet all other eligibility requirements. The student, however, will not be permitted to participate in any other sport that begins after his/her limit of eligibility has expired.

9.5.1.2 Participation Prior to High School Does Not Affect Limit of Eligibility. A student's four-year limit of high school eligibility is not affected by the student's participation in interscholastic athletics before beginning the ninth grade for the first time.

9.5.2 Middle School Student Has 1-Year Limit of Eligibility in Each Grade. A middle/junior high school student may participate only one year in each grade level of middle school or junior high. A middle school or junior high student who repeats a grade will not be eligible during the grade being repeated.

9.5.3 Middle School Student Attending a Combination School. A middle school student attending a combination high school with grades 6, 7 and/or 8 may participate on the high school level, only one year as a sixth grader, only one year as a seventh grader and only one year as an eighth grader.

9.6 AGE

9.6.1 Student May Participate at High School Level Until the Age of 19 Years 9 Months. A student may participate at the high school level until the day he/she reaches the age of 19 years 9 months if the student has not exceeded his/her four-year limit of eligibility. The student becomes permanently ineligible at the high school level on the day he/she reaches the age of 19 years 9 months.

9.6.1.1 Exception – Student Who Reaches Age Limit During FHSAA State Championship Series. A student who reaches the age of 19 years 9 months during a FHSAA State Championship Series in which he/she is participating may complete that state series if the student continues to meet all other eligibility requirements. The student, however, will not be allowed to participate in any other sport that begins after he/she has reached the age of 19 years 9 months.

9.6.2 Student May Participate at Junior High School Level Until the Age of 16 Years 9 Months. A student may participate in interscholastic athletic competition at the junior high school level until the day he/she reaches the age of 16 years 9 months. The student becomes permanently ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition at the junior high school level on the day he/she reaches the age of 16 years 9 months.

9.6.2.1 When Junior High Age Limit Applies. The 16 year 9 month junior high school age limit applies to a participating student only when:

- (a) Teams representing junior high schools compete against each other; or
- (b) Teams representing the junior high school departments of combination junior-senior high schools compete against each other.
- (c) If a junior high school team competes against a senior high school team or the varsity team of a combination junior-senior high school, the high school age limit of 19 years 9 months will apply to all participating students.

9.6.3 Student May Participate at Middle School Level Until the Age of 15 Years 9 Months. A student may participate in interscholastic athletic competition at the middle school level until the day he/she reaches the age of 15 years 9 months. The student becomes permanently ineligible for interscholastic athletic competition at the middle school level on the day he/she reaches the age of 15 years 9 months.

9.6.3.1 When Middle School Age Limit Applies. The 15 year 9 month middle school age limit applies to a participating student only when:

- (a) Teams representing middle schools compete against each other; or
- (b) Teams representing the middle school departments of combination middle-senior high schools compete against each other.
- (c) If a middle school team competes against a senior high school team or the varsity team of a combination middle-senior high school, the high school age limit of 19 years 9 months will apply to all participating students.

9.6.4 School Must Verify Age of Student. A school must verify the age of each student who represents it in interscholastic athletic competition. The student must provide documented proof of his/her age for this purpose. A student who is unable to provide documented proof of his/her age cannot participate.

9.6.4.1 What is Documented Proof of Age? Documented proof of age is one or more of the following:

- (a) An original birth certificate issued by the office of vital records in the country, province, state, county or city where the student was born;
- (b) A passport, visa or "green card" that lists the student's date of birth; or
- (c) An official record of birth from the hospital in which the student was born.