

Sharpsville Area Middle/High School Athletic Handbook 2024-2025



Sharpsville Area Middle/High School
301 Blue Devil Way
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724-962-8300



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Non-Discrimination & Title IX

The Sharpsville Area School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, and prohibits sex discrimination, including sex-based harassment, in any education program or activity that it operates, as required by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §§1681 et seq., and its regulations, 34 C.F.R. Part 106. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the District’s Title IX Coordinator, Jonathan Fry at jfry@sasdpride.org or at 724-962-8300 x2850. The District’s full Title IX Notice of Nondiscrimination is located at <https://www.sharpsville.k12.pa.us>.



Letter from the Administration

Dear Parents and Student Athletes:

Welcome to the 2024-2025 athletic program. The purpose of this handbook is to outline our athletic programs and policies. This handbook provides the guideline to facilitate an enjoyable and productive athletic / academic year. We strive to provide our student-athletes with many opportunities that stretch beyond the field of play.

The 2024-2025 athletic handbook contains information regarding athletic programs, eligibility, after school tutoring, sportsmanship, district policies, rewards and participation requirements. Please review the information contained in this handbook in order to be aware of all policies that may impact student athletes in Sharpsville Area Middle/High School.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Athletic Director, High / Middle School Principals, or the Superintendent at the school by phone at 724-962-8300 or via email at athletics@sasdpride.org.

Thank you and as always, Go Blue Devils!

John Vannoy
Superintendent

Carol Houck
Athletic Director / High School Principal

Jon Fry
Middle School Principal



Sharpshooter Area School District Athletic Philosophy and Objectives for Athletics

Philosophy

The athletic program in the Sharpshooter Area School District is designed to promote a wholesome atmosphere of good sportsmanship, teamwork, and competition among the students and to generate school spirit. The administration of the Sharpshooter Area School District believes that the success of the athletic program is not necessarily measured by the record of the victories compiled by the various teams.

The administration would never presume to dictate to any coach the methods, style of play, or procedures used in preparing his/her squad for competition. However, there are several guiding principles which in keeping with the educational nature of coaching seem necessary to be established as an overall framework of operation for coaches.

Members of each squad will reflect the highest order of ability, behavior, actions, and attitudes. Such things as using tobacco, drugs, or profanity on the court, field, bus, school, etc. cannot be tolerated, and can only lead to an unsuccessful program and will require disciplinary action. This extends to every coach, assistant, and volunteer.

Athletic programs in the elementary school are designed to expose students to the sport. The goal is to learn how to play the game and to work on acquiring the necessary skills needed to participate in the program. Emphasis needs to be on offering a learning experience that of fun and not based on win/lose competition.

High school varsity, junior varsity and middle school programs are designed to maximize learned skills in competition representing our school. At these levels, not all team members may get in every contest. It is our hope that when the contest has been decided, free substitution will be utilized. The focus of the programs at this level is competition representing our school. Not all team members may get a time to play in the game or event.

Effective coaching presumes efficient planning. Practice sessions as well as every phase of the entire sport activity must be planned in advance. The PIAA sport practices and games take priority over the off-season or outside team. The student-athlete cannot be penalized by the coaching staff for participating in the out of school or off-season activities. It is the responsibility of the student athlete to discuss any conflicts with the in-season sport head coach, especially if special arrangements are required.

Win/lose competition is not to be the prime incentive. Therefore, all students shall be given the opportunity to participate in every aspect of the program. Playing at this level is more important than winning the game.



Objectives

1. To provide natural outlets for students desiring to participate on teams in competition with other teams of similar ability.
2. To assist in the development of school and student morale.
3. To teach good sportsmanship and teamwork.
4. To help develop skills that have carry-over value in terms of leisure time.

Organization of the Chain of Command

- 1) **Head Coaches:** All head coaches shall be responsible to the athletic director for the total operation of their respective sports programs. Head coaches will be responsible for the normal duties required of interscholastic competition. Those duties described in the coach's job description, and/or any duties delegated by the administration. Parents are required to allow 24 hours to pass after a game or practice before making contact with the coach to set up a meeting. If you do not get resolution, then contact the Athletic Director.
- 2) **Athletic Director:** The athletic director reports directly to the principal. The primary responsibility of the athletic director is the administration and supervision of the interscholastic athletic program at Sharpsville Area Middle/High School. The athletic director's duties will be those described in his/her job description and any others as designated. He/she will provide the leadership necessary for the day-to-day operations of the athletic department. Parents please contact the athletic director as the next step in the chain of command. The AD will communicate with the coaches, principals, boosters, and superintendent as needed.
- 3) **Principal:** The principal is the official representative of the school and is directly responsible for the general attitude of the student body and the conduct of the athletic affairs by the athletic director and the coach. By delegation and by established precedent, the school principal is the official school representative in matters dealing with Sharpsville athletics and conference affiliations.
- 4) **Superintendent of Schools:** The superintendent is responsible to administer the schools according to adopted policies of the board of education, rules and regulations of the State Department of Education, and in accordance with Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949. It is his/her duty to establish a definite school athletic policy and to have an understanding of that policy. The superintendent shall represent the school district as its chief executive officer and its foremost professional educator in its dealings with other school systems, social institutions, and businesses.
- 5) **Board of Education:** The board of education is responsible for developing policies in accordance with state statutes and mandates in accordance with the educational needs and wishes of the people. Approving professional staff and the means by which professional staff may make these policies effective. Evaluating the interscholastic athletic program in terms of its value to the Community, and adopt a yearly budget.



Athletic Committee

The athletic committee shall recommend athletic policy to the school board. The athletic committee or superintendent shall recommend to the school board personnel for employment in the Sharpshville Athletic Department. In addition, the athletic department will contribute to a more effective, broader athletic program. Head coaches are welcomed to attend meetings.

Coaching Staff and Booster Organizations

The Sharpshville Area School District Athletics' Program recognizes and supports its coaches. The head coach is responsible to assemble their own coaching staff. This coaching staff must have the appropriate clearances, approved by the school board and complete the requirements laid forth by the PIAA. Each coach and their coaching staff must remember that participating in and supporting the Sharpshville Area School District is a privilege. The coaching staff represent the school district, and therefore, they are expected to portray themselves and the school district in a positive manner at all times. The head coach will actively participate with their booster club. It is the responsibility of the head coach to contact the athletic director with concerns, not members of the booster club.

Each sport booster organization must also remember that participating in and supporting the Sharpshville Area School District is a privilege and not a right. The booster organizations represent the school district, and therefore the school district policy and procedures are required to be followed over booster by-laws. Booster groups are expected to portray themselves and the school district in a positive manner at all times.

The school district will purchase all sports teams and individual banners that will be hung at the fields or in the gymnasium. The photographer will be the middle/ high school designated photographer. The Athletic Director will be in touch with the coach and booster president to arrange a date prior to the season starting. If the boosters opt to purchase other banners or photos for their student athletes, it will be at their cost and the booster president will need to make those arrangements with the coach for a separate time. However, these will not replace the banners/posters taken by the school designated photographer that will hang in the gym or field.

Booster officers can contact the Athletic Director by phone or email to get fundraising or a reminder put on the school district app. Coaching staff and booster clubs need to be reminded that online postings must be consistent with federal and state laws, as well as, the school district and PIAA rules and regulations.

Athletic Overview

Athletic Programs

Sharpshville's interscholastic athletic program consists of 15 varsity teams, 6 junior varsity (JV) teams and 8 middle school teams. Sharpshville is a member school of the PIAA and District 10.



Fall Sports

Varsity Fall Cheerleading
 Varsity Cross Country (Boys and Girls)
 Varsity Golf (Boys and Girls)
 Varsity/JV Football
 Varsity Boys Soccer
 Varsity Girls Soccer
 Varsity/JV Girls Volleyball Middle School
 Football Middle School
 Middle School Girls Basketball (Nov-Jan)
 Middle School Soccer (Boys and Girls)

Winter Sports

Varsity Winter Cheerleading
 Varsity/JV Boys Basketball
 Varsity/JV Girls Basketball
 Varsity Unified Sports Bocce
 Varsity Wrestling (Boys & Girls)
 Middle School Boys Basketball
 Middle School Unified Sports Bocce
 Middle School Wrestling (Boys & Girls)

Spring Sports

Varsity/JV Baseball
 Varsity/JV Softball
 Varsity Track and Field (Boys & Girls)
 Middle School Girls Volleyball
 Middle School Track and Field (Boys & Girls)
 Middle School Girls Softball

Minimum Participant Requirements

Fall Sports

Football	22
Volleyball	12
Cross Country	12
Golf	5
Soccer	15

Winter Sports

Wrestling	13
Girls' Basketball	10
Boys' Basketball	10

Spring Sports

Track	30
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Baseball	12
Softball	12

Any sport not meeting the minimum number of participants will be placed on probation for that year. The head coach of a sport that is placed on probation will be required to develop an improvement plan and meet with the athletic committee within 1 month of the completion of their season.



Coaches

Head coaches, assistant coaches and volunteers must have approval from the board of education. These individuals must have appropriate clearances on file with the district office plus have documented completion of required coaching education courses on file prior to the start of their sport's official PIAA season in order to coach at a practice, scrimmage or in-season contest.

Coaches need to become familiar with and use the Hudl software program and Big Teams/Schedule Star. This is required for the head coach or someone they designate to have an account and use it accordingly for the sport season. If you have any questions concerning this software program, contact the athletic director.

The head coach of each sport is charged with developing a consistent program from elementary through the varsity levels. The head coach throughout these levels should direct philosophies, strategies and expectations. Junior varsity, junior high and elementary coaches must recognize that their role is one of support to the head coach and his/her plan for program success.

Building security, Coaches are responsible to see that all doors and gates are locked prior to leaving from practice or returning from a game or scrimmage. At no time should a door be propped open. Coaches will be warned by the administration the first time. If this occurs again the coach will be penalized gym time and/or have to sit out a game.

Each coach representing the Sharpsville Area School District will conduct him/herself in a professional and responsible manner at all times. Specifically prohibited behaviors include but are not limited to:

- Use of obscene or offensive language: There will be a zero tolerance for any obscene or offensive language used by any member of the coaching staff at any time. If obscene or offensive language is used it will result in a one game suspension. If the action results in disqualification of a coach, then an additional game will be added to the suspension. Additional penalties may be added at the discretion of the PIAA. This also applies to players as well.
- Physically abusing a student/athlete at any time.
- Publicly displaying anger that may be interpreted as action unbecoming a professional.
- Placing any student/athlete in a situation that could be dangerous for the safety and well-being of that student/athlete.
- Leaving school/field after practice or game before the students have left; students are to be supervised at all times.
- The head coach must ride the bus.

Coaches should develop rules for traveling, appearance, and behavior at the athletic contest. The bus should not be left unclean (all litter is to be discarded) or damaged in any fashion. Coaches are responsible for their team's behavior and actions. Coaches are responsible for reviewing away game visiting locker rooms/facilities before allowing Sharpsville student-athletes in to help prevent false accusations of damage.

Coaches will communicate with the Athletic Director concerning practice schedule times. Teams are to practice throughout the season, and can include Saturdays. Only under special circumstances and with prior approval from the superintendent, teams maybe permitted to practice on Sunday. However, a team may not practice or compete for seven consecutive days.



All sports should practice 5 to 6 days a week. The head coach and all assistants must attend all practices. Practices need to be structured.

All coaches must communicate with the athletic director, high school principal and middle school principal throughout their season.

All coaches must realize that there are a limited number of athletes available to participate in various activities. Coaches should work with all athletes and other coaches or teachers. Coaches are expected to cooperate in all areas to avoid conflicts in scheduling games or practices. Fall and Spring sports season coaches, make an effort to know which student athletes are participating in more than one sport for your season. These student athletes will need to make a plan, prior to the season, with the head coaches from both sports or activities.

It is the head coach's decision whether or not he/she chooses to cut any players at try-outs.

Coaches must make sure that all players meet PIAA and school district eligibility requirements. At no time should an ineligible player participate in a contest or scrimmage. Ineligible players may practice but they are not to dress for contests. Ineligible players are expected to sit on the bench or stand on the sidelines with the team.

Coaches are responsible for using purchase requisitions when placing an order. Coaches are responsible for staying within the individual sport's budget. No budget/materials can be ordered prior to July 1 of the applicable fiscal year. No orders will be placed without a purchase order created.

The head coach is responsible for attending a PIAA sanctioned rules meeting each year. Failure to do so will result in the district being fined \$100.00. This fine will be taken from the individual sport's boosters budget, not the athletic account. All coaches must uphold all school district and PIAA rules and policies.

All scrimmages must be cleared with the athletic director so that transportation, officials, and the like may be scheduled.

All transportation must be scheduled through the athletic director. Players must be transported on approved transportation only. The head coach is responsible for determining departure times and for departing on time. Early dismissals from school require pre-approval by administration and requests should be limited. If alternate transportation is used coaches need to have release forms and van approval from the district prior to booking.

Students and coaches may participate in school-sponsored or community-sponsored recreational programs, clinics and camps as long as the participation is voluntary. The school cannot organize interscholastic athletic activities such as tryouts, or practice outside of the season, as specified by the PIAA.

The head coach must make sure that all athletes are properly supervised at all times which includes playing/practice areas, locker rooms, away sites and on the bus. Students should not be in the hallways or other undesignated areas of the building. Family members are not to accompany athletes to practice.



All coaches must uphold all school district, District X and PIAA rules and policies. Head coaches are responsible at all times for hired and volunteer coaches on their staff. If a coach on staff gets ejected from a game the head coach will also have the same consequences and loose game time during the season. Head coaches are the only ones to interact with game officials. The head coach and ejected coach/staff/ player will meet in person with the Athletic Director and Principal following the incident. Once the PIAA and administration has met the principal will notify the head coach and assistant(s) of the consequences. This will also be put in writing and signed by all parties. A final in person meeting will be scheduled to release that individual and verify they are cleared to coach or play.

Meals will be provided for all games over 80 miles' round trip and leaving before first lunch. The head coach must request them. Any overnight trip needs school board approval. If staying overnight, the head coach must stay with and supervise the team. The head coach needs to stay at the same hotel with the team. All players must ride the bus to and from games or scrimmages unless other arrangements are made with the coach.

All coaches should enforce pride regarding each player's behavior both on and off the playing field or floor.

Coaches are responsible for ensuring that new students who have applied for enrollment with the district have been fully vetted and cleared by the administration before they are eligible to participate in any in-season or out-of-season activities. Please contact the principal and/ or the athletic director to verify.

At the end of each season, all coaches are required to turn in a statistics spreadsheet of all players and any scorebooks pertaining to the sport. All coaches are to keep accurate records for all players. If using digital means of scoring, a flash drive must be turned in with all stats. This is for the varsity level only.

Equipment

The head coach is responsible for the supervision, distribution and collection of school district equipment (see inventory form). Athletes are responsible for all athletic equipment issued to them. Theft will not be tolerated. Issued equipment that is not returned or is damaged beyond repair must be replaced with the original equipment or paid for (at market price). Players who do not comply with these regulations will be ineligible to participate on any other school athletic teams, receive a report card, graduate or have credentials transferred to other schools until their debts are resolved. Coaches last payment will be held until all uniforms and equipment are accounted for and returned.

Late Arrival Home due to extended play time at Away Games

In the case of a late arrival from away events, the following guidelines will be used for arrival to school the following day. In the case of a bus arriving between 12:00 a.m. and 1:00 a.m., the students who were on the bus for the event will have their starting time extended to 9:00 a.m. In the case of a bus arriving later than 1:00 a.m., the students who were on the bus for the event will have their starting time delayed to 10:00 a.m. This is only to be utilized in the case of a bus failure, an accident that is not preventable, or if an athletic contest went longer than expected. It does not allow for any pre-planned stops. In addition, the Athletic Director and/or the High School Principal should be notified of the situation promptly. The delayed starting time will be



strictly adhered to and the same policies will be in effect for any tardiness past the designed time.

Injury Procedure

All injuries must be reported to the Athletic Director as soon as possible. Parents/Guardians will be notified of any serious injuries. The injured player will need cleared by a physician to determine whether they are capable of participation in practices and contests.

Any student athlete that receives treatment from a physician or physical therapist, as a result of possible injury, must provide a medical release to the athletic director and head coach before returning to participation in his/her sport.

The head coach or adult coach in charge of the student(s) must complete an Accident and Personal Injury Report form. This form must be submitted to the high school/middle school office within 24 hours of a student/staff/coach injury or accident resulting in the need for medical attention regardless of lost time or no lost time. If necessary, attach a letter detailing any additional information that may be pertinent to the incident. Be sure to include the date of the injury, the individual(s) injured, a description of the accident and any additional remarks that are necessary. Once completed, be sure to prepare to duplicate, submit 1 copy to the high school/middle school office and send 1 copy to the superintendent's office if medical treatment is beyond the capability of the school.

Instructions to Student Athletes

Athletes

These basic rules provide guidelines to the student athletes regarding the school building and practice sessions:

- Athletes are not permitted in any part of the building after school except those areas designated by their coaches or the athletic director.
- Athletes should report promptly to after school to supervised practices.
- Students are only to stay after school if a coach is present.
- Athletic shoes with spikes are not to be worn in the school building.
- Athletes will not be permitted to practice or play in contests without a physical and/or baseline concussion test on file at the school.

Athletic Courtesy

Athletics should foster clean sportsmanship at all times. It is the privilege and duty of every person connected with athletics to exemplify these principles in their actions and earnestly advocate them before others.

- A. Contest rules are to be regarded as mutual agreements, the spirit or letter of which no honorable person would break.
- B. No advantages are to be sought over others except those in which the contest is understood to show superiority.
- C. Unsportsmanlike or unfair means are not to be used, even when opponents use them.
- D. Visiting Teams are to be honored guests of the home team, and should be treated as such.
- E. No action is to be taken nor course of conduct pursued which would seem unsportsmanlike or dishonorable if known to one's opponent or the public.



- F. Student-spectators represent their school the same as student-athletes.
- G. Any spectator who continually shows poor sportsmanship will be requested not to attend future contests.
- H. Decisions of contest officials are to be abided by, even when they seem unfair. Contest officials and opponents are to be regarded and treated as honest in intention.
- I. In contests when opponents conduct themselves in an unbecoming manner, and when contest officials are manifestly dishonest or incompetent, future relationship with them should be avoided.
- J. Good points in others should be appreciated and suitable recognition given.

Student-Athletes Should:

- A. Conduct themselves in a sportsmanlike manner at all times. Your actions reflect upon your team, your school, and your community.
- B. Not use profanity, obscene gestures, and/or obscene language.
- C. Not seek to provoke opponents, contest officials, or spectators to engage in improper conduct.
- D. Not seek to injure opponents.

**A student athlete may be ruled ineligible to compete in a competition for behavior or conditions that are detrimental to the team, school, or community.*

PIAA Sportsmanship

It is unconscionable that a school or any of its employees would subvert the high purposes of interscholastic athletics by condoning any violation of the rules. To involve boys or girls in any practice or procedure which “gets around the rules” is unworthy of a person associated with athletics.

Appropriate Communications

Coaches and the Athletic Director are responsible for communicating information regarding the athletic program to parents. Parents are responsible for understanding the athletic program’s rules, regulations, and requirements and expectations.

Communication/Information Coaches Should Provide to Parents:

- A. Eligibility and playing criteria
- B. Coach’s expectations of players and their parents
- C. Locations and times of all practices and contests
- D. Team requirements (i.e. special equipment, off-season conditioning, etc.)
- E. Team rules, guidelines, and disciplinary procedures
- F. Lettering requirements
- G. Information regarding procedures to contact coaches

Communication / Information Parents Should Provide to Coaches:

- A. Required PIAA physical and concussion testing paperwork
- B. Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- C. Specific concerns in regard to the coach’s philosophy and/or expectations
- D. Information regarding student injuries and medical condition



Appropriate Concerns for Parents to Discuss with Coaches:

- A. Treatment of their child
- B. Ways to help their child improve
- C. Concerns about their child's behavior

Issues NOT Appropriate to Discuss with Coaches:

- A. Playing time / positions / assignments
- B. Team strategy
- C. Play calling
- D. Other student athletes

Procedures for Discussing Parental Concerns

- A. Parents should not confront coaches or engage in discussion with coaches, either in person or via telephone, immediately before or after a practice or on a game day as discussions. During times of high emotions does not promote resolution of issues. Concerned stakeholders should adhere to a 24-hour waiting period before contacting coaches with concerns regarding student athletes or athletic contests.
- B. Parents may discuss concerns with coaches via the telephone or request a meeting with the coach.
- C. If a parent meeting is desired, the parent should call the coach to schedule an appointment in advance.
- D. If the coach cannot be reached, the athletic director should be contacted to schedule the meeting.
- E. If the meeting with the coach does not provide satisfactory resolution, the parent may schedule an appointment with the athletic director to discuss the situation.
- F. Coaches may also schedule a meeting with the athletic director to discuss issues with parents.
- G. Parents will be required to complete the District Athletic Complaint form prior to meeting with the Athletic Trainer, Principal or Superintendent. This form is located in this Athletic handbook and can be found on the district website under Athletics / Links & Forms
- H. The proper chain of command for parents is as follows:
 - a) Coach
 - b) Athletic Director
 - c) Principal
 - d) Superintendent

Sharpshville Athletic Code of Conduct

Academic Eligibility and Curricular Requirements

A student who participates in interscholastic athletics at a school which is a member of the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association (PIAA) must adhere to PIAA eligibility rules. If you fail to comply with these rules, you will lose your eligibility to participate in interscholastic athletics. If you participate while ineligible, you, your school and/or team will be penalized including potential forfeiture of wins, entire seasons, championships and records. It is, therefore, important for you to be aware of the applicable eligibility provisions.



The information provided is a summary highlighting the major eligibility requirements in order to participate in interscholastic athletic. It does not list every rule or every detail. Unless otherwise indicated, these rules apply to students in Grades 7-12. Student athletes must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by your principal as a full-time curriculum.

The Principal of your school is responsible for certifying the eligibility of all students representing your school in interscholastic athletics. Academic eligibility will be determined on a weekly basis during each grading period. Students' grades will be reported from the guidance secretary to the principal and athletic director by 1:00 p.m. each Friday or the last day of the school week. If you have any questions concerning your athletic eligibility, either now or in the future, you should discuss the matter with your school principal or athletic director. If an administrator, parent/guardian, or student are uncertain about eligibility a complete copy of the PIAA eligibility rules may be viewed on the PIAA Website at www.piaa.org, or may be obtained from your principal or athletic director.

All aspects of student effort shall be considered in the grading process: tests, quizzes, projects, homework, class participation, etc. The grade given at the end of each week is cumulative and shall be the same one the student would receive on the report card at that time. A student who is not achieving a grade of sixty percent (60%) or greater in two (2) or more curriculum subjects that are each 1.0 credits or more (for example English, mathematics, science, social studies, art, band etc.) will be deemed ineligible to participate. The student is strongly encouraged to attend tutoring after school until the grades are up to passing.

Ineligibility for participation (= failing 2 one credit course) shall mean not permitted to play in games, contests, or events. Student may not travel with the team to away games, contests, or events. If a home game is played the student is to dress in regular clothing and sit behind their team in support. The ineligible student may practice with the team the first week. The second consecutive week is no practice and no games. Third consecutive week the student athlete will be suspended from the team until the grades are passing. A student on the ineligible list has the right to review his/her grade with each teacher who placed the student on the list.

The process for notification is as follows, the student will be notified at school by either the principal or athletic director that they are ineligible. If they are failing 2 one credit classes, they will not be able to play from Sunday (12:00 a.m.) till the following Saturday (11:59 p.m.) However, if ineligibility occurs with less than a week of school available for the student to improve his/her grade due to a holiday break, the student shall be ineligible for the remaining school days prior to the beginning of the break. They will be eligible once school resumes after the holiday break.

If a student is failing (below 60%) one core subject, they will be notified by the principal and the athletic director. They will be strongly encouraged to attend tutoring until that class is passing. If only failing one subject (1 credit course) the student may continue to attend practice and participate in interscholastic competitions. This student still needs to be held responsible to get this class up to passing.

The head coach or designee is responsible for receiving the eligibility list each Friday or last school day of the week. It is the responsibility of the head coach to discuss this with the athlete



and/or parent/guardian if necessary. Ineligible student athletes are required to comply with the eligibility policy. This means not participate in contests during the period of ineligibility.

Tardiness/Illness Eligibility Students are to be in school the entire day to be eligible to participate in activities (this includes practices, athletic events, field trips, plays/musicals, club meetings, etc.) Students are to be in school on time, before 7:50 AM Student athletes are only permitted to come in late the morning after a game if the coaches have been given prior approval by the principal. We understand that forces beyond our own control may lead to a situation where a student arrives late to school. We will work with students in these situations; however, excessive tardiness (as determined by the principal) to school will result in the loss of eligibility to participate. Doctors, dentists, college and counselors are the only excuse for late or early dismissals during a game or performance day. Students will be required to present a written note from the appointment with the doctor's name, date and time visible.

Any student who leaves school due to illness during the course of the regular school day is not eligible to participate in any school-sponsored activity occurring the same day/evening. This does not affect students who are excused from school for a normal doctor or dental appointment that had been previously scheduled and approved by the high school office.

Age

To be eligible to participate in grades 9 through 12, you must not have reached your 19th birthday by June 30th immediately preceding the school year. Where participation is limited to grades 7 and 8, you may not have reached your 15th birthday by June 30th immediately preceding the school year. Where participation is limited to grades 7 through 9, you may not have reached your 16th birthday by June 30th immediately preceding the school year.

For more information regarding amateur status and awards please see Article I Age of the [PIAA By-Laws](#)

Amateur Status and Awards

To be eligible to participate in a sport, you must be an amateur in that sport. Amateur status, and eligibility, is lost if you, or your parent(s) or guardian(s), receive money or property for or related to your athletic ability, participation, performance, services, or training in a sport.

You may receive awards only from your school or school-affiliated booster club, the sponsor of an athletic event, a non-profit service organization approved by your school Principal, or the news media. Permissible awards include items of apparel, a blanket, watch, ring, scroll, carry-on or warm-up bag, photograph, medal, plaque, or similar award, which must bear appropriate institutional insignia or comparable identification. The fair market value of items provided to you may not exceed \$500.

For more information regarding amateur status and awards please see Article II Amateur Status and Awards of the [PIAA By-Laws](#).



Attendance

School of Attendance

You must be regularly enrolled in and in full-time attendance at a PIAA member school, or be home-schooled. Generally, you are eligible only at the school at which you are enrolled or, if a homeschooled student within the district, at a public school in the public school district in which you reside. Charter School or Cyber Charter School students should consult with your Principal to determine the school at which you are eligible.

Daily Attendance

Student athletes must be in attendance at school, college classes (dual enrollment) or attending a school-sponsored activity (to be considered a full day. Students are required to be present and in the high school by 7:50 a.m., when the bell rings. You will be ineligible to participate in the sport or activity that day if you are late to school. Late is 7:51 a.m.

Exceptions may be made if the student has a confirmed medical, dental, counseling appointment, college visit or other previously approved medical, dental, counseling, or college excuse (approved by the school Principal). These are the only exceptions. An original note or excuse MUST be provided from the office of the doctor, counselor or college. If no excuse is provided you will not be eligible to participate in the game. (District Policy 123)

Student athletes MAY NOT leave on the day of a game to do any of the following examples. To get a haircut, go to a nail appointment, get a drivers permit, take a driver's test, get tires on a vehicle for a parent, go to get a new cell phone, or take a parent or sibling to an appointment. These are just a few examples. Keep in mind if it is not a doctor, counselor or college that can provide the required documentation then please reschedule the appointment for a non-game day.

If you are absent from school during a semester for a total of 20 or more school days, you will lose your eligibility until you have been in attendance for a total of 45 school days following your 20th day of absence. (Section III pg. 13 [PIAA By-Laws](#))

Consent of Parent or Guardian

You are eligible only if there is on file with the Athletic Director of your school a certificate signed by your parent(s) or guardian(s) agreeing to your participation in practices, Inter-School practices, scrimmages, and/or contests in the particular sport involved. This consent form is contained in the CIPPE form. (Physical Packet and forms are online. Everything should be uploaded to Big Teams).

Pre-Season Heat-Acclimatization Guidelines

Practice or competition in hot and/or humid environmental conditions poses special problems for student-athletes. Heat illness is a primary concern in these conditions. Although deaths from heat illness are rare, constant surveillance and education are necessary to prevent heat-related problems

- Acclimatization Period: During the first five days of football practice, helmets and shoulder pads with shorts are permitted with no contact.



- These practices are limited to 5 hours of practice daily for the 5 days of heat acclimatization. Practice sessions may be no longer than 3 hours in length and teams must have 2 hours of rest (recovery period) between sessions.
- If more than 48 hours occurs between the conclusion of the heat acclimatization program and the first day of practice, the program will not have its intended effect medically. Therefore, these practices are not limited to five hours per day with no contact on the fifth day since it is prior to the start of the stipulated fall season.

Comprehensive Initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation/Baseline Concussion Testing

You are eligible only if you have completed a comprehensive initial pre-participation physical evaluation ("CIPPE"), performed by an Authorized Medical Examiner (as that term is defined in the GLOSSARY of the PIAA By-Laws) before your first sport season's first Practice of that school year. If you seek to participate in subsequent sport(s) in the same school year, you may be required to be re-evaluated and re-certified that your physical condition is satisfactory. Check with your principal or athletic director to determine whether reevaluation and re-certification is needed.

In all cases, an Authorized Medical Examiner must certify, on the PIAA CIPPE form, as to your physical fitness to participate. A CIPPE may be performed no earlier than June 1st; and, regardless of when performed during the school year, remains effective only until the next May 31st. Only one physical/CIPPE form is required per school year regardless of the number of sports a student athlete participates in (i.e. you do not need a physical before football season and then again before basketball).

Transfers

You are treated as having transferred whenever you change schools, even if you are promoted to a higher-level school or are out of school for a period of time before entering the new school. If your transfer from one school to another is materially motivated in some way by an athletic purpose you will lose your athletic eligibility in each sport in which you participate within a period of one year immediately preceding the date on which you transferred. This requirement applies even if you would be otherwise eligible at the school to which you transferred.

The principal and athletic director of each school may sign off on your transfer. If one side feels that your transfer is athletically motivated, there may be a hearing in front of the District 10 committee to determine your eligibility. The District 10 committee at this hearing will make final eligibility decisions, unless one party appeals to the PIAA Board of Directors. ([PIAA By-Laws](#))

Period of Time After Eighth Grade, Participation, and Grade Repetition

Your athletic eligibility extends only until you have reached the end of your fourth consecutive year beyond the eighth grade. Therefore, if you repeat a grade after eighth, you will be ineligible as a senior.

Additionally, you may participate in (a) a maximum of six seasons in each sport during grades seven through twelve, (b) a maximum of four seasons in each sport during grades nine through twelve, and (c) a maximum of three seasons in each sport during grades seven through nine. You may participate in only one season in each sport during each school year. ([PIAA By-Laws](#))



Student Discipline (suspensions, detentions, etc.)

All student's athletes must realize that academics always come before athletics and participation in athletics is a privilege not a right. Student athletes must display proper conduct while at school, on the way to and from school and while participating in or attending any school related activity or function. Students may be ineligible to participate in athletics if:

The student athlete is serving in-school suspension, out of school suspension or is place in an alternative out of school suspension. The student athlete will not be permitted to participate in practices, games, scrimmages, etc. during the suspension period.

Athletic obligations are not excuses for missing detention and tutoring sessions.

Parental requests to withhold athletic activities may be obliged.

Involvement in delinquent, gang affiliation or criminal activity in or out of school will result in ineligibility or dismissal from the team.

Head coaches may hold consequences for student athletes as per their team rules.

Athletic Awards

Requirements for lettering in a sport will be determined by that sport's head coach. If any problems arise due to extenuating circumstances, a committee composed of the principal, athletic director, and the head coach shall make the final decision. The head coach will then inform the athletic director of the names of student athletes that lettered in each sport each season.

Varsity Awards

- A. The first year - Six-inch chenille letter and certificate – all varsity sports, including cheerleading. A letter will be awarded to an athlete the first time he/she meets the qualifications of each sport.
- B. The second year a participant meets the requirements he/she will receive a certificate and a metal insignia for that sport.
- C. The third year a participant meets the requirements he/she will receive a certificate and a silver service bar.
- D. The fourth year a participant meets the requirements he/she will receive an 8" by 8" gold plated plaque and a gold service bar.

Letterman Jackets

Are optional to purchase. Jackets are purchased by the student athlete.

Tri-Athlete Award

- A. To be considered for this prestigious award the student athlete MUST successfully meet each criteria listed.
- B. Student must be in grades 9-12.
- C. Sport must be recognized in the PIAA
- D. Student MUST maintain an 85% or above through the first three nine-week periods of the year.



- E. Student participate in at least one PIAA-sanctioned sport in each season (fall, winter, and spring). The point is that they do a sport year round and maintain good grades. Students who do two sports in one season do not qualify (ex. Kick for the football team and play soccer) unless they also do a sport in the winter and spring
- F. Club sports outside of the school do not count.
- G. Awards for Tri-Athlete
- H. Freshmen, Sophomores, and juniors get a certificate and a pin.
- I. Seniors must earn the Tri-Athlete Award for all four years. They will receive a plaque and pin.

General Criteria

- J. Attendance/Participation – Athletes should attend all practices unless excused by the head coach. **Athletes must compete the entire season in order to earn a letter.**
- K. Sportsmanship – Athletes should realize that they are representing their school and community and should conduct themselves in such a manner that they are unquestionable assets to both.
- L. Adherence to Training Rules – Athletes must abide by the training rules set forth by the head coach and the athletic department.
- M. Interscholastic Competitions – Participants must compete in Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association approved interscholastic varsity level sports or competitions.

Specific Criteria

Specific criteria in meeting the requirements for a letter are as follows:

- A. Football/Basketball – must participate in at least 50% of all varsity games (excluding scrimmages)
- B. Golf/Girls' Volleyball – must participate in at least 50% of all varsity matches
- C. Wrestling – must participate in at least 50% of all varsity matches and score at least a total of 8 team points
- D. Baseball/Softball – must participate in at least 50% of the innings played during the season
- E. Soccer – must participate in at least 50% of all varsity matches (excluding scrimmages)
- F. Track/Cross Country – must participate in at least 50% of all varsity meets and score at least 21 points
 - a. Dual Meet Requirements:
 - i. First Place – 5 points
 - ii. Second Place – 3 points
 - iii. Third Place – 1 point
 - b. Invitational Requirements:
 - i. First Place – 10 points
 - ii. Second Place – 8 points
 - iii. Third Place – 6 points
 - iv. Fourth Place – 4 points
 - v. Fifth Place – 2 points
 - vi. Sixth Place – 1 point
 - c. Standard set at all athletic Invitational
 - i. The athlete will receive 10 points for district qualifying standards set by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association in their individual events. Relay standards are set by the coaches because the District does



not have a set time. Athletes reaching the coach's standards will also receive 10 points and will be eligible to compete at the District 10 meet.

- G. Cheerleading – Only varsity squads can letter. Lettering is achieved by the number of games attended per season. All girls must enthusiastically participate in 90% of designated season games excluding tournaments. If a cheerleader misses more than 10% of the games, a valid excuse is required (example: death in family). Working is not a valid excuse.
- H. Bocce – must participate in at least 50% of all varsity matches. This includes the “helper” for the Bocce participant.
- I. Special Situations:
 - a. Managers: Fulfill the duties assigned by the head coach. Recommendation of the head coach shall determine award winners.
 - b. Two Years in the Same Sport: Any athlete who participated in the same sport during his/her junior and senior years and did not meet the specific requirements for a letter, may be recommended for a letter by the head coach.
 - c. Trainers: Fulfill the duties assigned by the head coach. Recommendation of the head coach shall determine award winners.
 - d. Injured Athletes: An athlete who has been injured and cannot complete the season or who cannot meet the requirements of that sport may receive a letter upon the recommendation of the head coach.

Drug/ Alcohol Policies

Controlled Substances/Paraphernalia –

The use of drugs in any manner, and/or for the intent of enhancing athletic performance, is prohibited and is a violation of both the District's Athletic Policy and Discipline Code. Drugs may include but are not limited to, any drug sold or distributed for the purpose of athletic enhancement and those referred to in the student handbook. [District Policy # 227](#)

A violation of this policy will result in an immediate suspension from school for a period of ten days and referral for a drug and alcohol assessment. During this period of time, the student athlete is not permitted to participate, whether it is practice or competition. Upon the student's return to school, they will be permitted to return to the team under a probationary status and must submit to a drug test at the parent's expense.

A second offense of this nature, as it relates to any aspect of school jurisdiction, is an immediate ten-day suspension and referral to the board of education for expulsion. In conjunction with a second offense the student will not be permitted any future participation in athletics within the Sharpsville Area School District until they return to school. We are here to help our student-athletes in any way possible. A self-referral of a drug or alcohol problem will be dealt with and assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Coaches may not distribute any performance enhancers/substance. Any coach who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action and or termination by the board of education.

Refer to the Student Handbook for further details under Drugs, Vaping, Tobacco, and Alcohol



Off-Season

Off-Season Practices and Weight Room Rules

All weight room and off-season conditioning activities are to be held under the supervision of the head coach and/or assistant coaches who have appropriate approval and clearances on file with the district office. Facilities necessary for these activities shall be scheduled in advance with the athletic director and facilities manager to avoid schedule conflicts and activities shall be in accordance with [District Policy # 707 - Use of School Facilities](#).

All doors must be secured and locked. All weights and equipment must be cleaned up and put away at the conclusion of each session. Failure to do so may cost forfeiture of times to use facilities.

Coaches' Rules and Preseason Compliance

Each head coach is trusted by the Sharpsville Area School District to execute effective offseason programs and conditioning sessions. These sessions must all adhere to the PIAA by-laws and all district policies.

Student athletes are urged to comply with the head coach's programs in order to effectively prepare themselves for upcoming athletic seasons. Pre-season compliance is a terrific method to reach your potential as an athlete.

See [PIAA By-Laws](#) for more information.

Hazing Policy

The purpose of this policy is to maintain a safe, positive environment for students and staff that is free from hazing. For purposes of this policy hazing is defined as any activity that recklessly or intentionally endangers the mental health, physical health or safety of a student or causes willful destruction or removal of public or private property for the purpose of initiation or membership in or affiliation with any organization recognized by the board.

Any hazing activity, whether by an individual or a group, shall be presumed to be a forced activity, even if a student willingly participates. The Board directs that no administrator, coach, sponsor, volunteer or district employee shall permit, condone or tolerate any form of hazing.

Each incident of hazing will be individually investigated by district administration and all parties involved will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Hazing will not be tolerated by the Sharpsville Area School District.

The District Policy # 247 - Hazing is available online at [District Policy # 247 - Hazing](#) or via request.



Name, Imagining & Likeness Policy

The Sharpshooter Area School District follows the PIAA policy for NIL. This can be viewed on the PIAA website for further information.

NCAA Eligibility

NCAA Information

Student athletes should conduct a meeting with their high school coach(es) at the end of their junior season. Students should let their coaches know that they are very interested in participating in college athletics and should discuss their potential as an NCAA Division I, II, or III player. Athletes should not be afraid to ask for their coach's help in the recruitment process. Coaches will help students, but there are limitations as to how much they can do. There are over 3000 colleges and universities that offer athletic programs. Contacting each and every one of them is impossible for a high school coach.

Levels of Play:

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)

- NCAA Division I. This is the highest level of play and they offer the most scholarships. These are the large schools with large student populations.
- NCAA Division II. Smaller specialty schools that provide scholarships as well as financial aid grants.
- NCAA Division III. No athletic scholarships but many high school graduates receive academic scholarships, financial aid, grants, and jobs on campus, also known as work study programs.

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)

- NAIA can give athletic scholarships as well as other benefits to enable a player to attend school.

National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

- Financial aid is provided for the cost of tuition and books. If you are not ready physically or mentally to attend a 4-year college, then a junior college that offers athletic programs may be the answer.

Once a student has established that participating in college athletics is a goal, an athlete should begin to market him/herself. A student can only be offered a college scholarship if a college coach or scout has had an opportunity to see the student/athlete play. Therefore, it is important that students market themselves to the colleges of their choice.



Guide to College Bound Student

The following are some recommendations to aid the student/athlete in his/her quest to seek a college scholarship:

1. Go to the guidance office or the internet and obtain addresses of the colleges that you would be interested in attending both for academics as well as athletics. Pick a school that you would be happy attending even if you were not going to participate in athletics.
2. Prepare a letter to be sent to college coaches (sample attached).
3. Prepare a resume of your career (sample attached).
4. Prepare a highlight tape and game tape to send **upon request** from the coach of the college/university that you have sent your resume to (be sure to label your game tape with the appropriate information – name, address, school name, etc.)
5. Do not send whole games. Create a highlight film that lasts about 5 minutes. If this tape sparks a coach's interest then he/she will request more film at a later date.
6. If you participate in an AAU type of summer activity for your particular sport, include a summer schedule for the coach to be able to come and see you play. Send the information before you are in your junior and/or senior season. The best advice would be to send it immediately after the signing of the last recruiting season ahead of you.

The majority of the colleges will send you a questionnaire; complete it and return it to the colleges immediately. Complete all questionnaires regardless if you are interested in the school.

If you are an outstanding student, you may have opportunities to obtain athletic and academic scholarships. Many of the top academic universities have stringent minimum academic entrance requirements where many athletes cannot qualify. Talk with your guidance counselor/coach to obtain the names of academic universities in which you may obtain an athletic scholarship. This is a great opportunity for you if you are an outstanding student.

It is suggested that you attend a summer camp to increase your chances of being noticed. You will have the opportunity to perform in front of the college coaching staff for four or five days. Your high school coach or the athletic director can help you obtain information for summer camps.

If all else fails, you have the opportunity to walk on at the college of your choice and have the chance to earn a college scholarship later. It is very feasible to walk on a team and earn a partial or full scholarship for your remaining years if you become a starter.

Example of letter attached to this handbook.

Big Teams/ Schedule Star

Coaches, Student Athletes, and Parents/ Guardians, we are using Big Teams to gather the needed physical forms, keep records up to date and in one place. Each athlete needs to download the needed information into Big Teams. Coaches this is your responsibility to make sure your athletes are registered and have the appropriate paperwork in order to be eligible to play. The AD will keep reminding coaches but it is not their sole responsibility to do this. Directions for downloading forms are on the website under athletics.



Guidelines on Handling Practice and Contests During Lightening or Thunder Disturbances

During practice or contest times the certified authority will be the Athletic Director or game manager as the final authority as when to cancel or suspend practice or a contest due to thunder and/or lightening. The athletic director or game manager will confer with the head coach and come to an agreement for suspending play. At this point both head coaches will be notified as well as the officials.

If at any time the coach suspects danger and the Athletic Director has not yet communicated with him/her in the process of clearing the practice fields, he/she should remove all personnel to a designated safe location. The responsibility of removing a team or individuals from an athletic site in the event of dangerous and imminent thunder and or lightning activity lies on the coach supervising the activity.

PROACTIVE PLANNING

1. Develop an evacuation plan, including identification of appropriate nearby safer areas and determine the amount of time needed to get everyone to a designated safer area. Safe location would include gymnasium, bus, schools, car, vans. A fully enclosed building or vehicle.
2. Unsafe locations are places termed shelters, that can also be open. Examples of unsafe locations would be dugouts, storage sheds, tents, concession stands, trees press boxes.
3. Allow 30 minutes to pass after the last strike of lightning is see (at least 10 miles away) and after the last sound of thunder. This 30-minute clock restarts for each lightning flash within 10 miles and each time thunder is heard.
4. When lightning detection devices or mobile phone apps are available, this technology could be use to assist in making a decision to suspend play if a lightning strike is noted to be within 10 miles of the event location. However, you should never depend on the reliability of these devices and, thus, hearing thunder or seeing lightning should always take precedence over information from mobile app or lightning detection device
5. Coaches if at an away event and the opposing team does not have a designated safe location, seek safety on the bus, or in the school if possible.

All events will be postponed until notification by the Athletic Director and officials say it is safe to continue.



Sample Letter to be sent to College Coaches

Your Address Date

College Address

Dear Coach (Coach's last name):

I am currently a junior at Sharpsville Area High School, which is located in Sharpsville, Pennsylvania. I will graduate in the spring of (Graduation Year) and am very interested in (name of university/college) and the programs, both athletic and academic, that you have to offer.

I play (position and/or sport) and after having a very successful junior season, I am looking seriously at the possibility of continuing to play at the college level. Would you please evaluate my credentials and give me your consideration as a scholarship candidate? I have enclosed a resume and I can provide a highlight tape from my high school career upon request.

Your consideration would be greatly appreciated, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

(your name typed here) Enclosures:

Resume Highlight

Video

Letters of Reference



Sample Resume

Personal Information

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Parents: _____

Year of Graduation: _____

Height: _____

Weight: _____

40 Time: _____

High School Information

Sharpsville Area High School 301
Blue Devil Way Sharpsville, PA
16150

Sharpsville High School Coach: _____

Phone: _____

Sharpsville High School Counselor: _____

Phone: _____

Sharpsville High Sport(s): _____

Academic Performance

GPA _____

PSAT: Verbal: _____

SAT: Verbal: _____

ACT: _____

Class Rank _____

Math: _____ Math: _____

College Interests

Academic area (major) you wish to pursue in college: _____

Sport(s) you wish to play in college: _____



Athletic Handbook Parent/Guardian Receipt Acknowledgment

This form is online.

We, (PRINT students name)_____ and

(PRINT Parent/Guardian Name) _____

Have received and reviewed a copy of the 2024-2025 Sharpshville Area Middle/High School Athletic Handbook. Our signatures below indicate that we accept responsibility for being aware of its contents and we understand that our son/daughter is expected to abide by the applicable district, PIAA, District 10, team and athletic department rules, regulations, procedures and policies.

Student Signature / Date

Parent Signature / Date

****Please detach this form from the handbook and return to your head coach. ****



Sharpshooter Area School District Athletic Complaint Form

Individual filing complaint _____ Date _____

In the space provided below, please specify your complaint in detail. If you require more space, use the reverse side of this form. Please sign the form upon completion and return to the office of the athletic director.

Signature _____