



October 2019

Middle Level Participation on High School Teams – MIAA Rule 53 Waivers

A. BACKGROUND

Various factors have necessitated the need for schools and athletic programs to expand the reach to potential student-athletes in order to fill multiple levels of teams within a school structure.

B. POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

The MIAA Board of Directors has delegated the approval or disapproval of Middle Level Waivers to the host school District Athletic Committee (DAC).

Considering the Board's and the District Athletic Committee's experiences with middle level waivers, the Association must continue to set policies, regulations, and guidelines which can provide a workable structure for those member schools which believe it to be in the best interest of their schools to permit students in grades prior to grade nine (9) to participate on high school teams.

The Board intends that these policies:

- ◆ Respect the goals of the petitioning school districts.
- ◆ Protect competing schools from competitive disadvantage.
- ◆ Guarantee increased participation.
- ◆ Ensure that no displacement of athletes in grades 9-12 occurs.

Deadlines

The Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver form must be completed in detail and include all pertinent accompanying documentation. The waiver request should be submitted, minimally 60 days prior to the start of each athletic season (i.e., fall, winter, and spring) to the District Athletic Committee Chair of the petitioning school. If approved, the waiver approval is only for that season and must be applied for each school year.



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Policies

1. Schools may request of the DAC a Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver if the middle school & high school are under the same Head of School/Superintendent. Schools with a middle school principal and a high school principal **MUST** receive a Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver for middle level students to participate on a high school team.
2. Consideration will not be given if the request is motivated to provide opportunity for a specific student(s) or the anticipated high school numbers will support a team.
3. The requested level of athletic participation must be specific and accompany the waiver request. Consideration will be given only for sub-varsity teams, unless the school offers only a varsity level team. No high school student may be “cut” in favor of a middle level student. Approved Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver students may only participate in the lowest level offered.
4. Schools may have middle level teams and also request a Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver for students to participate at high school level.
5. Minutes of the League meeting, including a recorded formal vote of support from all league schools, must be included with the request.
 - a. A majority vote is necessary for the request to be advanced to the District Athletic Committee (DAC).
 - b. The “league” is the group of schools against whom the petitioning school will compete in that sport
6. Schools in Cooperative Team Agreements may also request a Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver. High school students on the cooperative team may not be cut to accommodate a Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver approved student(s). District Committees can consider Rule 53 Middle Level Waiver requests for one or more of their co-operative teams.
7. The High School Principal is responsible and accountable for adherence to all MIAA and local standards, and must develop protocols with the middle school principal to ensure the integrity of all rules. Further “supervision” and “jurisdiction” as defined by MIAA Rule 51 must not be overlooked.



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C. PROCESS

The principal or athletic director of the high school must complete the online MIAA form: Application for a Waiver of Athletic Eligibility Rule 53 in the Members Only section of the MIAA website.

The District Athletic Committee(s) will not act on any request that is not supported by the majority of the league schools or the majority of the opponents (if competition in that sport does not occur within a league structure).

D. DECISIONS

The decision on each request will be rendered by the host school's District Athletic Committee. Approved Rule 53 Middle Level Waivers will be listed on the MIAA home page under Tournament Information and Quick Links.

All DAC decisions are final; no appeals.

Extenuating circumstances outside the parameters of these policies can only be re-considered by the DAC whom originally approved the waiver.