

UHSAA Memorandum

Date: December 4, 2007

To: All Wrestling Coaches, Athletic Directors, Principals

From: Bart Thompson, Associate Director, UHSAA

Re: 9th Grade Wrestlers



Due to several concerns and questions received in this office regarding the participation of 9th grade students in wrestling, the following clarification is issued:

On page 28 of the UHSAA Handbook, rule 1 states,

“...B. High school teams (9th grade, 10th grade, junior varsity, varsity, etc.) may play any other member high school team or junior high school team consisting only of 9th grade students. **High school teams or individuals may not compete, practice, or try out with or against any students below the ninth grade.** Exceptions:

- (1) Eighth grade students may try out for drill team in the spring at the designated time established by the high school.
- (2) Seventh and eighth grade students of six year schools may participate in music with those grades 9 through 12.

C. A student who has participated on a junior high team or its equivalent during the ninth grade year is ineligible to participate on a high school team in that particular sport during that year...”

The two areas of concern are in bold.

First, please understand that competing against, practicing with or allowing tryouts for any students below the ninth grade violates this rule. In areas where one practice facility is used for both high school and jr. high teams, care must be taken to assure that practices are separated either physically or by time.

Second, a ninth grade wrestler who has competed in a junior high match or tournament which includes students in grades lower than the ninth grade, is no longer eligible to compete with a high school team in competition which includes students above the ninth grade during that season.

On October 29, 1991 the following was written in a memo issued by the UHSAA dealing with ninth grade participation in wrestling:

“...After a review of the history of this rule the interpretation is clear, a student cannot participate on the junior high wrestling team then participate on the high school team. They must make a choice prior to the high school season.

This interpretation of the rule may be different than you have received in the past however, this is the latest and the one we will follow until changed by the Executive Committee.”

This interpretation has not been changed by the Executive Committee since October 21, 1991 and is still in effect. In Item C above, for the purpose of wrestling, the term

“equivalent” is interpreted to mean **any** competition in a junior high match or tournament as a part of a club or as an individual.

As stated in Item B above, ninth grade wrestlers who are eligible with a high school team are allowed to compete against “... junior high school team(s) consisting only of 9th grade students.” In the case of a junior high tournament for ninth grade only, which is hosted by a junior high school or other entity that are not members of the UHSAA, the member high school is required to notify the UHSAA in writing prior to competing in the tournament that they intend to compete in such a tournament. This notification is to include the following:

- Name and host of the tournament.
- Date and location of the tournament.
- Name(s) of notifying school’s team member(s) who intend to compete.
- Certification that the tournament will not allow students below the ninth grade to compete.
- Certification that the tournament will be run according to NFHS rules including weight classes, and that certified officials will be used.
- List of all high school teams, junior high teams, club teams, etc. invited to compete (may be included with above certification).
- Signatures of the member high school head wrestling coach and principal.

An example of certification would be a printed copy of the tournament information issued by the host indicating the tournament will not include competitors under the ninth grade and that they will be using NFHS rules including weight classes. Similar documentation from the tournament host would also satisfy these requirements. Ninth grade tournaments hosted by UHSAA member schools are to follow the regular sanctioning process.

All matches and tournaments wrestled by ninth grade students who are eligible with a high school team against ninth grade students who are not eligible with a high school team must conform to all UHSAA rules for the high school wrestler (season start/end date, weight certification, etc.) and count as part of that wrestler’s contest limitation credits (see UHSAA Handbook, Interpretations/Guidelines, 23-B-(13)).