

TANTASQUA WARRIOR ATHLETIC PHILOSOPHY

Tantasqua Regional School District believes that athletics provide a valuable teaching and learning tool. The Athletic Department will try to provide the students of Tantasqua with as many opportunities to participate as possible.

The entire philosophy is based upon the following precepts:

Do your best at all times. It must be understood by all student-athletes that winning and losing are not the only criteria for judging a successful season. All teams must strive to do their best in regard to effort, teamwork, sportsmanship, and representation of the Tantasqua community. Athletics teach participants to be honorable, loyal, and to persevere. These are qualities that make good citizens, which is the goal of education and interscholastic athletics. Failure at Tantasqua will only be recognized if participants do not try their best, not if they lose a contest.

Respect your opponent. Athletics provides the chance to meet other athletes with diverse backgrounds. Although the differences may be obvious, we must remember that most student-athletes believe in the same things including: enjoying the challenge of competition; striving to improve; being with teammates; sharing common goals and interests; trying to develop leadership skills; and having fun (fun must not be confused with laughing; it must be seen as a way of reflecting back on hard work that has paid off). Remember that your opponents provide you with the opportunity to play, and without them there would be no game.

The highest standards of sportsmanship and fair play will be demonstrated by players, coaches, parents, and spectators.

Be thankful. The opportunity to play interscholastic sports is not one that is given to all. Ability level, school and personal finances, and other considerations may not make athletics possible for all students. If you are fortunate enough to play, enjoy the experience and be thankful.

All student-athletes will remember that they are students first. Academics will never be compromised. Most people will only be able to participate in athletics for a few short years, while your education will last forever.

Athletics is not a “frill” or “outside activity”. It has an enormous impact upon every student-athlete who participates. We must be mindful that a commitment must be made by the school, coach, player, and parent to promote a positive environment.

THE FLAG CODE

The National Anthem: Star Spangled Banner

The composition consisting of the words and music known as The Star Spangled Banner is designated as the national anthem of the United States of America. During rendition of the national anthem when the flag is displayed, all present should stand at attention and remove hats, facing the flag. When the flag is not displayed, those present should face toward the music and act in the same manner they would if the flag were displayed there.

GOVERNANCES

Tantasqua Regional is a member of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and the Southern Worcester County League and will abide by all rules set forth by each organization. Tantasqua Regional has the right to make any rules more stringent to fit the philosophy of the school.

1. The Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA)

All schools are voluntary members of MIAA and compete only with member schools. As a member, Tantasqua agrees to abide by and enforce all rules and regulations of the Association. The primary role of MIAA is to maintain rules and regulations that ensure equity in competition for the student-athletes and a balance with other educational programs.

2. Southern Worcester County League (SWCL)

Tantasqua Regional High School is proud to be a member of the Southern Worcester County League. The SWCL is governed by its own constitution which has been approved by the SWCL Principals Board. In addition to the state guidelines, SWCL has added some rules to help aid in running a quality athletic league. The more prominent rules are listed below:

1. Students must attend and participate in five practices prior to playing in their first athletic contest.
2. A student will not be allowed to join a team after the first official game has been played. The only exception would be due to injury or illness which prevents a child from trying out for a team. This will require a note from a physician.

The league is currently made up by Tantasqua and the eleven schools listed below:

Auburn	Leicester	Quaboag
Bartlett	Millbury	Southbridge
David Prouty	Northbridge	Uxbridge
Grafton	Oxford	

MIAA ATHLETIC CODE OF CONDUCT

The community, school administrators, and the athletic staff feel strongly that high standards of conduct and citizenship are essential in maintaining a solid athletic program. The welfare of the student-athlete is the foremost priority of the school, while the foremost priority of the student-athlete is to uphold the traditions, responsibilities, and rules that go along with being involved with athletics. All athletes are to abide by all school rules as well as the rules set forth by MIAA. Listed below are the rules that are most commonly questioned.

MIAA Rule 62 (Chemical Health)

Student (and Coach) Eligibility: Chemical Health/Alcohol/Drugs/Tobacco

62.1 From the earliest fall practice date, to the conclusion of the academic year or final athletic event (whichever is latest), a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use, consume, possess, buy/sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol; any tobacco product (including e-cigarettes, VAP pens and all similar devices); marijuana (including synthetic); steroids; drug paraphernalia; or any controlled substance. This policy includes products such as “NA or near beer,” inhalants (defined as any substance that produces a mind-altering effect when inhaled), and misuse of over-the-counter medications and substances used for the purposes of altering one’s mental state. It is not a violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student’s own use by their doctor. I MIAA Handbook July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 58 This MIAA statewide minimum standard is not intended to render “guilt by association”, e.g. many student-athletes might be present at a party where only a few violate this standard. This rule represents only a minimum standard upon which schools may develop more stringent requirements. If a student in violation of this rule is unable to participate in interscholastic sports due to injury or academics, the penalty will not take effect until that student is able to participate again. Minimum PENALTIES: (also see Rule 32.8 – Ineligible Students) First violation: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests (regular season and tournament) totaling 25% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program. It is recommended that the student be allowed to remain at practice for the purpose of rehabilitation. During the suspension the disqualified student may not be in uniform and attendance at the competition site is determined by the high school principal. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 25% of the season. Second and subsequent violations: When the Principal confirms, following an opportunity for the student to be heard, that a violation occurred, the student shall lose eligibility for the next consecutive interscholastic contests (regular season and

tournament) totaling 60% of all interscholastic contests in that sport. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional part of an event will be dropped when calculating the 60% of the season. If after the second or subsequent violations the student of own volition becomes a participant in an approved chemical dependency program or treatment program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in MIAA activities after a minimum of 40% of events provided the student was fully engaged in the program throughout that penalty period. The high school principal in collaboration with a Chemical Dependency Program or Treatment Program must certify that student is attending or issue a certificate of completion. If a student does not complete the program, penalty reverts back to 60% of the season. All decimal part of an event will be truncated i.e. All fractional parts of an event will be dropped when calculating the 40% of the season. Penalties shall be cumulative each academic year, but serving the penalty could carry over for one year. Or, if the penalty period is not completed during the season of violation, the penalty shall carry over to the student's next season of actual participation, which may affect the eligibility status of the student during the next academic year (e.g. A student plays only football: I MIAA Handbook July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 59 he violates the rule in winter and/or the spring of same academic year: he would serve the penalty [ies] during the fall season of the next academic year). If a student is not an athletic participant for one full year after affirmation of a violation, then the penalty period would close and the student would face no consequence. Prior to any chemical health violation a student's request for and enrollment in a substance abuse treatment shall not in and of itself constitute a violation of the chemical health/alcohol/drugs/tobacco. Rule 62.

1st Offense - 25%	
# of Events / Season	# of Events / Penalty
1-7	1
8-11	2
12-15	3
16-19	4
20 or over	5
2nd Offense - 60% (and every subsequent offense)	
# of Events / Season	# of Events / Penalty
1-3	1
4	2
5-6	3
7-8	4
9	5
10-11	6
12-13	7
14	8
15-16	9
17-18	10
19	11
20 or over	12
2nd Offense w/Dependency Program - 40% if in the program throughout the penalty period.	
# of Events / Season	# of Events / Penalty
1-4	1
5-7	2
8-9	3
10-12	4
13-14	5
15-17	6
18-19	7
20 or over	8

62.2 During practice or competition, a coach shall not use any tobacco product (penalty: same as students' – see chart above).

62.3 Anabolic androgenic steroid use and performance enhancing drugs (PED's) are of grave concern. Coaches need to send a clear, unequivocal message that MIAA Handbook July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 60 unauthorized steroid use and PED's are not acceptable. This discussion should highlight the fact that the penalties for other substance use apply. Short and long term health effects can also motivate student-athletes to protect their future. Coaches should take a proactive role, learning about steroids, and then providing this information to their athletes. Steroids can, with proper diet and weight training, increase muscle development; however, as is typical with most “get-rich-quick” schemes, steroid use has serious short and long term consequences. Normal and equal musculature development can occur without steroid use. Although the natural process takes longer, muscle tone will last longer and does not carry the

harmful side effects of steroids. Most coaches would not promote steroid use intentionally. Total silence by coaches however condones use in some young people's minds. Even though steroids may not be mentioned when it is suggested to an athlete that success is limited only by a lack of weight and/or strength, without a disclaimer the statement can be a motivation to use steroids. The pervasiveness of the drugs that allow for development of increased weight under the aforementioned circumstances is a coercive power that is difficult for young athletes to resist without knowing what the side effects of the drugs may be. The issue goes beyond protecting the integrity of sport. The use of steroids in sports is cheating. We must oppose the use of steroids for both health and ethical reasons.

1. MIAA Rule 49.3 Athlete Contest Disqualification/Suspension

Any student-athlete, who is disqualified from a competition, including a jamboree, scrimmage, etc., shall not participate in the next scheduled interscholastic competition that is part of their regular season schedule, or in tournament play. The disqualified student-athlete is ineligible to participate in any contest at the same level of play in that sport until the next contest, or the next two (2) contests in the sports of baseball, ice hockey, and soccer, have been completed. (Note: In the sport of wrestling, the disqualified student-athlete is ineligible to participate in any and all contests during the next scheduled date of competition). Disqualifications in the following sports per specific sport rules: field hockey-(Rule 68.3); basketball-five (5) personal fouls; girls' lacrosse (2) yellow cards; ice hockey - eight (8) minutes in penalties and game misconduct (Rule 72.15); wrestling-technical disqualification, do not apply to the above prescribed penalties. During the suspension the disqualified student may not be in uniform and attendance at the competition site is determined by the high school principal. I MIAA Handbook July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 48

49.3.1 A two (2) game suspension will be given to any student-athlete who is ejected from any contest for the following reasons:

Fighting

Punching or kicking an opposing player

Spitting at someone

MIAA Rule 45 (Bona Fide Team Member)

Loyalty to the High School Team: Bona Fide Team Members A bona fide member of the school team is a student who is consistently present for, and actively participates in, all high school team sessions (e.g. practices, tryouts, competitions). Bona fide members of a school team are precluded from missing a high school practice or competition in order to participate in a non-school athletic activity/event in any sport recognized by the MIAA. Students cannot be given special treatment (late arrival, early dismissal, etc.) for non-school athletic programs. Saturday and Sunday practices ONLY may be excluded from this rule and no waiver is required. First Offense: Student-athlete is suspended for 25% of the season (see chart on

Rule 62). Second Offense: Student-athlete is suspended for an additional 25% of the season, and is ineligible for tournament play immediately upon confirmation of the violation. See Rule 98 for additional tournament restriction and Rule 88 for waiver guidelines.

45.1 A student-athlete must be a Team Member for 50% of the regular season schedule for that sport to participate in any MIAA Tournament competition (team member: any student-athlete who attends practices or games for their sport team – e.g. Freshman basketball player moved to JV and then Varsity).

45.2 If ineligible, cannot be in uniform. Attendance at event to be determined by High School Principal.

POLICIES FOR TEAM SELECTION

Each team that requires tryouts to pick a specific number of student-athletes for the team will use a grading rubric. The rubric will be sport specific and position specific. The rubrics will be made by the coaching staff and approved by the Athletic Director.

The rubric guidelines will be reviewed with prospective student-athletes at the pre-season meeting. At this meeting, the coach will explain the requirements necessary to make the team.

Students may speak with the coaching staff to have their results explained to them in detail with a review of the scored rubric. The coaching staff may also make recommendations for skills to be worked on for future development.

The general rubrics *may* include the following:

1. Sport specific skill level (physical ability)
2. Comprehension of game tactics (mental awareness)
3. Specific position play
4. Projected ability to improve
5. Speed (sprint time)
6. Quickness (shuttle run time)
7. Explosiveness (vertical leap height)
8. Endurance (distance run time)
9. Coachability

Sport specific rubrics may include fundamental techniques such as shooting, dribbling, footwork, throwing, catching, fielding, pitching, putting, etc. Selection of the team will be based on the achievement levels of the preceding criteria.

POLICIES FOR COACHES

Parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. Coaches must always remember that they are held to the highest level of ethics and compassion. “In loco parentis” means “in place of parents.” Children will spend more time with a coach than any other adult outside of the family. It is of paramount importance that coaches demonstrate positive traits that young people will want to emulate.

MIAA Rule 33 (Coaches’ Education)

All coaches hired prior to August 1, 1998 are exempt from taking the Fundamentals of Coaching Course. Coaches hired after 8/1/98 and before 7/1/05 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course with the exception of Certified MA teachers.

All MIAA member school coaches (stipend or volunteer) are required to take annually the online National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. Rugby Coaches must see Rule 76.2 for additional coaches’ education information.

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2005 must complete the National Federation of High Schools, NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course taught by an MIAA Instructor, (must be passed prior to coaching a second year) and an approved Sports First Aid course (NFHS, American Red Cross or American Heart Assoc. and must be passed prior to coaching a third year).

All coaches (stipend or volunteer) first serving as an interscholastic coach after July 1, 2007 must complete the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course, an approved Sports First Aid course and the NFHS Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills Course in the sport they are coaching (must be completed prior to coaching a third year). Note: The sport-specific requirement began on July 1, 2007 or when each particular sport-specific course becomes available, if after this date.

NFHS Sport Specific Technical and Tactical Skills Courses presently available: Baseball, Basketball, Field Hockey, Football, Golf, Lacrosse, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Wrestling, Volleyball, Cheer & Dance, and Track and Field. The NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching Course requirement must be met through attending an MIAA sponsored Fundamentals of Coaching Class with MIAA Certified Instructors. I MIAA Handbook July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021 34

The NFHS Sports First Aid and Sport Specific requirement may be met by completing on-line courses with the NFHS <http://www.nfhslearn.com>. AED training for all coaches is now required.

Coaches will be trained on symptoms of cardiac events in student-athletes. This training will be done in conjunction with the existing mandated CPR training which is a State Law for all coaches.

COMMUNICATION PARENTS/GUARDIANS SHOULD EXPECT FROM THE COACH

1. Philosophy of the coach
2. Expectations the coach has for their child
3. Locations and times of all practices and games
4. Team requirements (practices, out of season conditioning, etc)
5. Procedure followed should a child be injured during participation
6. Discipline that may result in the denial of a child's participation

Student-athletes have shown that they are willing to sacrifice their time and energy to make a commitment to their coaches and the athletic program. Student-athletes should be commended for their commitment. Coaches must treat our student-athletes as they wish to be treated and always remember that they are a teacher first and foremost. Be a positive role model and lead by example.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. Health, social, attendance, and academic issues and ways they can be solved
2. Ways to help the student-athlete improve
3. Always point out the positive progress student-athletes are making to their parents/guardians

POLICIES FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS

As mentioned earlier, parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing a role for each position, we are better able to accept the actions of the other and provide greater benefit to the children. As parents, when your child becomes involved in our athletic program, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication from the coach of your child's program.

COMMUNICATION COACHES SHOULD EXPECT FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. Concerns expressed directly to the coach about their child
2. Notification of any scheduled conflicts well in advance
3. Specific concerns with regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations
4. Calling for an appointment on a non-game day always works best for discussing your children's progress

As your children become involved in the programs at Tantasqua, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand that there also may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged. Appropriate times to contact a coach: prior to or after a practice, or on a non-practice or non-game day. Right before or right after a game is not an appropriate time for these types of discussions.

APPROPRIATE CONCERNS TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
2. Ways to help your child improve
3. Concerns about your child's behavior

ISSUES NOT APPROPRIATE TO DISCUSS WITH COACHES

1. Playing time
2. Team strategy
3. Play calling
4. Other student-athletes

ROLE OF THE PARENT/GUARDIAN WITH STUDENT-ATHLETES AND COACHES

1. Be positive during games. No student-athlete or coach will try to fail. As long as maximum effort and sportsmanship are evident, parents should appreciate that their child and the coach are doing things the right way.
2. Encourage your child to work hard. Some of the greatest successes are only learned after failure. Student-athletes, parents, coaches, and Tantasqua must never accept quitting.
3. Remember that the “fun” part of athletics is not humor, but the journey a child takes with a team to reach goals. Sometimes the “fun” times are more noticeable upon reflection of a past season.

POLICIES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

In addition to rules set by the governing bodies, Tantasqua has also established rules and policies concerning athletic participation.

A. Requirements for Participation

1. Physical Examination/Medical Coverage Concussion

MIAA Rule 56.1 All students must pass a physical examination prior to participation in High School Athletics. A physical exam covers the student for 13 months from the exam date. A student’s eligibility will terminate once a physical has reached the 13 month limit.

Physical examinations must be performed by a duly registered Licensed Physician, Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner. The Sports Medicine Committee recommended physical examination form is in the MIAA White Book.

56.1.1 All MIAA member school coaches (paid or volunteer) are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. MIAA Board of Directors’ policy effective November 29, 2010.

56.1.2 All MIAA member school Athletic Directors and Athletic Trainers are required to take annually the on-line National Federation Concussion Course, or other recognized education program, prior to the start of their season. MIAA Board of Directors’ policy effective March 21, 2011.

56.1.3 All students are required to take the on-line National Federation Concussion Course or other MA Department of Public Health recognized education program following regulations as put forth by the Department of Public Health in regards to the Concussion Law.

2. Academic Eligibility: Student-athletes must have attained 15 out of 20 credits in a semester to be eligible for the next semester. For example, to be eligible for a fall sport in your junior year, you must have received a minimum of 15 credits from the previous spring semester.

3. Completion of Athletic Permission Form and Emergency Information: Student-athletes and parents/guardians must complete the online sign-up process prior to participation in a sport. The online process will be completed through Schooldocs.

B. Choosing the Team

Choosing the members of athletic teams is the sole responsibility of the head coach and his/her staff. Before tryouts the coach shall provide the following information to all the candidates for the team at the pre-season meeting:

1. Extent of tryout period
2. Rubric Review: Criteria used to select the team
3. Practice commitments
4. Game commitments
5. Review of specific team policies

When a team cut becomes necessary, coaches will inform athletes of their status. Coaches are available to discuss the reason for the decision and offer alternative possibilities for participation in the sport or in other areas of the activity program.

C. Equipment

All athletes are responsible for the proper care and security of equipment issued to them. School furnished equipment is to be worn only for contests, practice, and spirit days. Equipment lost or not returned in good condition at the end of the season may be subject to financial penalty. All uniform pieces are numbered. At the end of the season if the assigned number is not checked off, the student-athlete is responsible for restitution.

D. Reporting an Injury

All injuries, no matter how insignificant they may seem, should be reported to the coach. All noted injuries will be addressed to the athletic trainer who will communicate with the school nurse, Athletic Director, and principal when necessary. Any student-athlete whose injuries require a visit to a doctor must have a “return to participation” note from that physician in order to return to activities. However, in the case of a diagnosed concussion, the pre-established protocol will be followed. The TRHS Concussion policy can be found here:

E. Attendance

In order to participate in athletics, a student-athlete must attend scheduled classes on the day of a game. Students who arrive in school without attending two full classes are ineligible to play. In rare cases (college visits, funeral etc.), the Principal may make an exception to this rule. Once again we must remember that student-athletes are students first and should attend every class, every day.

F. Release from Class

It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to see his/her teacher before the classes that will be missed because of an athletic contest. All work will be made up at the convenience of the teacher. Distance and transportation limitations are the primary reasons for early dismissals. The Athletic Department will make every effort possible to schedule contests so that class time is not missed.

G. School Vacations

All student-athletes are expected to attend practices and games during school vacations. The Athletic Department may schedule games during vacations. Should inclement weather force games to be played during that time, all team members are expected to attend. If a family vacation or other related plans have been scheduled prior to the season, the student-athlete is required to inform the coach prior to trying out for the team.

H. Good Citizenship

All student-athletes are expected to be good citizens in school and in public. Any infraction that results in an arrest or violation of public law will be dealt with accordingly. After due process, in a meeting with the Principal and Athletic Director, suspension or termination from athletics may take place.

I. Detentions and Suspensions

Eligibility to participate in practices and/or games will be determined by the principal and/or athletic director if all detentions have been served or have been scheduled to be served. Suspended students are not allowed to participate in practices or games during the time of suspension.

COMMITMENT

After being selected to be a member of a team, Tantasqua Regional High School student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and games. Practices generally average two hours in length. Weekend practices vary by sport and schedule, but should be expected. Sunday practices are only held when scheduling quirks dictate and must be approved by the Principal or Athletic Director and cannot begin before noon.

All student-athletes and parents/guardians must realize that contests will be scheduled during school vacations. Additional time needed to fit games in over any vacation may be necessary due to scheduled game cancellations.

Interscholastic athletics demand much more commitment than a club or recreational activity. Student-athletes should understand that they will be asked to make sacrifices to be on a team. If they are willing to do this, they will find the athletic experience one they will treasure for a long time.

Being a student-athlete and part of a team teaches commitment. Toward that end, attendance at team events is necessary for an individual student-athlete and team to achieve success. Any student-athlete missing practices or games for any reason other than school related events or medically documented reason will be subject to disciplinary actions but the Athletic Director and/or coach with regard to their athletic team participation.

PLAYING TIME

Perhaps the most emotional part of a student-athlete being involved in high school athletics centers around playing time. When student athletes become involved with interscholastic athletics for the first time, they will find that practices and games are much more demanding and intense than previous experiences. Attendance, attitude, commitment, team requirements, and athletic ability all will determine the distribution of playing time.

There are many decisions made by the Tantasqua coaching staff on a regular basis. It is the coach's responsibility to determine who should start, the position an athlete will play, and the duration of playing time. These decisions are a prerogative of the coaching staff and are approached very seriously, after having observed the student-athlete in practice sessions, game-like situations, scrimmages, and games. Outside organizations, coaches, teams, and players have no bearing on the interscholastic team. The dynamics of interscholastic play are much different from that of out of season teams and organizations. Tantasqua will do everything it can for the student-athlete to develop into a complete person.

At the ninth grade and junior varsity levels, members of the coaching staff will make a strong effort to play all team members in each game for as much time as practical. At the developmental level, the coaching staff is teaching skills and offensive and defensive philosophy needed to advance to the varsity

level. Student-athletes who attend practices daily, work hard, and fulfill all other team obligations should have the opportunity to display what they have learned in games.

At the varsity level, we look for our teams to compete against opponents at the highest possible level of execution. Varsity teams are the premier tier of interscholastic competition. The entire Tantasqua community supports the goals of our student-athletes. Because of the competitive nature of varsity athletics, there are many instances when the major burden of the contest will be carried by the most competitive and skilled team members. However, teams will not be successful without committed substitutes, or “role players”. These players have to be ready at all times to step forward and shoulder the burden when called upon. As the saying goes, “Starters win games, benches win championships.” Our commitment to winning will be within the guidelines of good sportsmanship and the Tantasqua Athletic Philosophy.

ATHLETIC PROGRAM CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

Athletic involvement, while fun and exciting, can be very emotional and time consuming. Because of this, conflicts and issues may arise between a student-athlete and the coach. It is imperative that any conflict/issue be addressed immediately, and as directly as possible, so that it can be resolved promptly.

Step One: Student – Coach Contact

The issue should be presented by the student-athlete as soon as possible to the coach. The coach may be unaware of the student-athlete’s feelings with regard to the issue and therefore an explanation to the coach is vital. We must all understand that this is not an attack on the coach, but a way of having young adults speak for themselves in a mature and responsible manner. This discussion should not take place on the field of play or immediately prior to or after any contest. A scheduled appointment time works out best for all involved, as cooler heads generally prevail. Parent/guardians may feel the need to speak on behalf of their children. That is acceptable and appreciated as long as a scheduled time to meet has been established.

Step Two: Student – Athletic Director Contact

If a satisfactory resolution is not reached through direct contact with the coach, the student-athlete and parent should contact the Athletic Director. The coach should be informed that this contact is going to be made by the Athletic Director. All dealings with those involved must be made “above the table” in an open and honest atmosphere. Opinions may differ, but the right to converse in a mature fashion must always be respected. This discussion should take place as soon as possible, since athletic seasons are relatively short. It is important that student-athletes and their parents/guardians trust that any comments, concerns, or issues raised to

the Athletic Director will be addressed. Student-athletes and parents/guardians may also expect to hear from the Athletic Director regarding the outcome of their concerns. Issues concerning coaching personnel or the student-athlete may not be publicly communicated. While there is no guarantee that all parties will agree with the resolution or findings, a thorough, respectful airing of different perceptions and experiences can lead to more productive relationships and clearer understanding in the future.

Step Three: Student – Principal Contact

If a satisfactory resolution has not yet been reached, the student-athlete and parent/guardian should contact the High School Principal. The Athletic Director should be informed of this contact.

Step Four: Student – Superintendent Contact

As above, if a satisfactory resolution with the Principal has not been reached, the student-athlete and parent/guardian should contact the Superintendent. The principal should be informed of this contact.

“Retribution”

On occasion there is a perception by members of the Tantasqua community that voicing an opinion or concern about a coach, or the Athletic Department, carries the risk of “retribution” towards the student-athlete either by the coach or by other staff members within the department. The Athletic Director and coaches are committed to ensuring that there will be no “retribution” in any form for raising an issue or concern.

TIME ALLOWED FOR PARTICIPATION/AGE

Upon the first day of attending classes of their ninth grade year, students shall be eligible for interscholastic competition for no more than 12 consecutive athletic seasons. A student athlete must be less than 19 years of age as of September 1 of the current school year to be eligible to participate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

All students are required to participate in regularly scheduled physical education classes. Students who are medically excused from physical education are not allowed to participate in their team practice or game that day.

BUILDING AND FACILITY ACCESS

No student will be allowed access to any of the athletic facilities without proper supervision by a school staff member. Students may not use the Field House or Fitness Room unless a staff member is present.

POSTPONED CONTESTS

Some contests throughout the school year may be postponed due to unavoidable circumstances. The Athletic Department will do its best to make this decision in a timely fashion. Most games will be postponed before 1:00 pm. For the most up-to-date information on games, schedules, postponements and/or cancellations go to: southworcestercountyleague.org and click on Tantasqua. Below is the link:

<https://www.southworcestercountyleague.org/g5-bin/client.cgi?G5genie=680>

MIAA Rule 16. Medical Emergency Evacuation/Thunder & Lightening

16.1 Each school must have a written medical emergency response plan in accordance with MA General Laws Chapter 69, Sec. 8A that was enacted on April 18, 2012. Click here to access the Medical Emergency Law.

16.2 Thunder or lightning necessitates that all outdoor practices and competitions be suspended. 16.2.1 Each Member School shall have a plan for shelter prior to the start of any contest.

16.2.2 When thunder is heard or when lightning is seen, the following procedures must be executed:

16.2.2.1 Suspend play and direct participants to the previously identified shelter, a building normally occupied by the public or if a building is unavailable, participants should go inside a vehicle with a solid metal top (e.g. bus, van, car).

16.2.2.2 Do not permit people to stand under or near a tree; and have all stay away from poles, antennas, towers and underground watering systems.

16.2.2.3 After thunder and/or lightning has left the area, wait 30 minutes after the last boom is heard or strike is seen before resuming play or competition.

DIRECTIONS TO AWAY CONTESTS

Directions to away contests can be gathered in the following way:

1. Go to the miaa.net website to “Member School Lookup”.

ATHLETIC AWARDS POLICY

Letters will be awarded in varsity athletics based on the following criteria. Varsity letters will be awarded at the conclusion of each season.

General Criteria:

1. All student-athletes are expected to attend all practices and games unless excused by the coach.
2. Student-athletes must remember that they are representing Tantasqua and the five communities and should conduct themselves accordingly. The highest levels of sportsmanship, fair play, and team work will be observed at all times.
3. All student-athletes must successfully complete the season
 - a. Student-athletes dismissed from a team for disciplinary reasons will not be eligible to receive a letter
 - b. A student-athlete must be a member of the team at the end of the regular season, including post-season tournament play.
 - c. Injured student-athletes will be considered on an individual basis by the coach and Athletic Director.
 - d. All end of season obligations must be complete (uniform returned, etc.).
 - e. A student-athlete must be academically eligible for the duration of the season.
4. Criteria set by the coach during the pre-season must be achieved:
5. Any student-athlete who serves as manager for that team is to be awarded a letter. The job of a manager is of vital importance to the team.

SPORTS SEASON STARTING TIMELINE

FALL SPORTS: begins the third Monday of August.

- Cross Country (B&G)
- Cheerleading
- Field Hockey
- Football
- Golf
- Soccer (B&G)
- Volleyball

WINTER SPORTS: begins the first Monday after Thanksgiving.

- Basketball (B&G)
- Cheerleading
- Swimming and Diving (Coed)
- Indoor Track (B&G)

SPRING SPORTS: begins the third Monday of each March.

- Baseball
- Lacrosse (B&G)
- Softball
- Tennis (B&G)
- Track and Field (B&G)