

**UNIONDALE  
KNIGHTS**

**Athletic**

**Handbook**

**FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES  
AND THEIR PARENTS**

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Dear Parents/Guardians and Student-Athletes:

Welcome to the Uniondale School District's Interscholastic Athletic Program.

Interscholastic athletics is governed by local and state entities responsible for ensuring safe and fair competition. This handbook can be your guide to understanding the rules, regulations, and philosophies associated with public school sports in New York. More importantly, Uniondale's policies and procedures for participation in middle school and high school athletics are thoroughly explained.

Please take the time to carefully read every page of this Athletic Handbook. This handbook will be updated as needed to account for any changes in policies and procedures. Visit Uniondale's athletics web page regularly to remain current with the Athletic Handbook and The Student Athlete's Game Plan.

If you have any questions or concerns about this handbook, or interscholastic athletics in general, please contact me at the number listed below.

Sincerely,

Jonathan T. Jefferson, Ed.D.



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## GOVERNING BODIES IN ATHLETICS

Interscholastic Athletics is governed by rules, regulations and guidelines as established by the **New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA)**, which is directly responsible to the **State Education Department (SED)** and the **Commissioner of Education**.

The NYSPHSAA is comprised of eleven sections or chapters in the state of New York. Nassau County, which is referred to as **Section VIII (Nassau County Public High School Athletic Association)**, is a member of the NYSPHSAA. It is the purpose of this organization to formulate and adopt policies that will enable public high schools to administer and govern interscholastic athletics in accordance with sound educational practices.

The NYSPHSAA and Section VIII establish many of the rules, regulations and policies that govern public school interscholastic athletic competition. Season start and end dates, the Selection/Classification program (process for moving up), eligibility, schedules (dates of contests), placement (which opponents are played), contest rules, safety policies, practice mandates, postseason tournament opportunities (league, division, county and state play-offs) are some of the areas governed by these associations. Section VIII also is responsible for the scheduling of all officials for all contests played in Nassau County.

Uniondale, as a member of the Nassau County Public High School Athletic Association, is obligated to comply with state and section regulations. Therefore, our district policies must not be in conflict with those policies that govern Nassau County public school athletic programs.

### SPORTS PROGRAMS (MODIFIED, JV, VARSITY)

<u>Fall</u>	<i>Varsity</i>	<i>JV</i>	<i>7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup></i>
Girls Badminton			X
Boys Cross Country	X		X
Girls Cross Country	X		X
Football	X	X	X
Girls Soccer	X	X	X
Boys Soccer	X	X	X
Girls Swimming	X		
Girls Tennis	X		
Boys Volleyball	X		
Girls Volleyball	X	X	
<u>Winter</u>	<i>Varsity</i>	<i>JV</i>	<i>7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup></i>
Boys Basketball	X	X	<u>X</u>
Girls Basketball	X	X	X
Boys Swimming	X		<u>X</u>
Boys Indoor Track	X		
Girls Indoor Track	X		
Boys Volleyball			X
Girls Volleyball			<u>X</u>
Wrestling	X	X	X

X = Winter I Season

Spring	Varsity	JV	7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup>
Girls Badminton	X		
Baseball	X	X	X
Boys Lacrosse	X	X	X
Softball	X	X	X
Boys Tennis	X		
Girls Track	X		X
Boys Track	X		X

### Approximate Start/End Dates for Three Sport Seasons

- FALL:** Monday before Labor Day to the 2nd week in November  
**(Note: High School football begins two weeks before Labor Day)**
- WINTER:** Two Wednesdays before Thanksgiving to the last week of Feb. **(post season play includes the February break)**
- SPRING:** First Monday after the first Saturday in March to the first week in June **(includes the spring break for most teams)**

### Approximate Start and End Dates for Four Sport Seasons (7<sup>TH</sup> & 8<sup>TH</sup>)

- FALL:** First day of school through the first week in November
- EARLY WINTER:** Early November through late January
- LATE WINTER:** Late January through late March
- SPRING:** Late March through early June

**THE EXACT SCHEDULED START DATES FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL IS NOT DETERMINED UNTIL SOMETIME IN THE SPRING. CONTACT THE COACH OR THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT FOR SPECIFIC DATES AT THAT TIME.**

**Note: The season placement for middle school volleyball is different than the high school.**

These dates are subject to change, and are determined by the NYSPHSAA and Section VIII.

## PHILOSOPHY of ATHLETICS

Interscholastic athletics in the Uniondale School District is an outgrowth of our educational program, and therefore is an important part of the district's overall goal of educating the whole person. The interscholastic competitive environment provides an opportunity for our student-athletes to learn positive life skills, values and ethics in a climate that demands dedication, responsibility, self-discipline, cooperation, positive work ethic and respect for others. This program provides an opportunity for all to share their commonalities, celebrate their differences, and appreciate physical activity as a lifelong endeavor.

Students involved in the athletic program must show a personal commitment to the goals of their team, and make the sacrifices necessary in order to achieve success. Making such a commitment to excellence nurtures positive self-esteem, loyalty, and leadership qualities in an athlete that enable them to become more resilient and better prepared to face life's challenges. Interscholastic experience allows participants to achieve their full potential as students, athletes, and citizens.

It is the nature of athletic competition to strive for victory. However, the number of victories is only one measure of success. Ultimately, the real challenge is guiding the individual and the team to reach full potential. This is the true measure of achievement. The competitive athletic environment is one that demands respect for a full effort, and applause for those who rise to the challenge and accept the risk of defeat. Those who are successful in life are those who have learned to embrace challenge, and take personal risks. Dedication and self-sacrifice on the athletic field does not always result in victory over the opponent. However, if one strives towards reaching full potential, with a passion and perseverance, personal victories that last a lifetime are the end rewards, even though the win-loss record may not always meet expectations.

### ***A. Modified Program Philosophy***

Middle school (modified) programs, in general, offer an introduction to the world of competitive athletics. The existence of leagues, student interest, facility availability, financial resources and the relationship to the high school program determine sport activities offered. At this point, the focus is on learning basic skills and game rules, fundamentals of team play, social and emotional growth, and healthy competition. The emphasis is to provide an opportunity for children, through physical participation in a positive competitive environment, to learn about their capabilities and appreciate human physical potential. Athletes are introduced to the benefits of physical conditioning, and encouraged to become responsible for maintaining an appropriate fitness level. The modified program allows for game rules and requirements of play to be adapted matching the competitive abilities of young, inexperienced, middle school athletes, who have not yet reached emotional, social, physiological, or physical maturity.

While we would like to provide an opportunity for every athlete who expresses interest in a program, this is not always possible. While we try to avoid cuts at the middle school level, certain factors exist that must be dealt with by imposing a limitation on the number of students that can be accommodated in specific programs. If the number of students trying out for a team creates a situation that is difficult to manage, poses a safety problem, or is problematic because of facility considerations, reducing team size may be necessary. Ultimately, the number of teams and size of the squad in any sport will be determined by the availability of:

- 1) A safe environment
- 2) Qualified coaches
- 3) Suitable indoor or outdoor facilities
- 4) Financial resources

In order for the desired development of the adolescent athlete and team to occur, practice sessions are vital. The NYSPHSAA and Section VIII have established sport specific practice guidelines, which govern the number of practices that each individual and team must have in order to be eligible for competition. There are also established guidelines, which govern the number of contests allowed, and in certain sports, mandate days of rest between scheduled contests.

Coaches expect athletes to regularly attend five (5) practices a week, two hours in duration, in preparation for the six to twelve contests that are scheduled against opponents from other school districts. Occasionally, practices or contests will be scheduled on Saturdays, and vacation dates. Opportunities for meaningful contest participation for each team member will exist over the course of a season, providing that the athlete meets program expectations. Athletes in all programs, regardless of level, are expected to be committed and give a full effort to practice sessions, maintain a positive and cooperative attitude, and show a willingness to meet the team's needs with respect to position and role. Every athlete is expected to demonstrate respect for others and promote positive sportsmanship. In addition, the athlete must have enough skill and physical maturity to safely participate in the competitive environment.

### ***B. Junior Varsity Program Philosophy***

The junior varsity programs are intended for those who display the potential for continued development into productive varsity level players. In junior varsity programs, teams are comprised of mostly ninth and tenth grade athletes. At this point in the athlete's development, the level of expectations increases substantially. The high school sports season (three seasons per year) is longer than the middle school sports season (four seasons per year). The practice sessions are longer and more intense, and the skill requirements for participation in contests are greater. The atmosphere is more competitive, and in many cases athletes who were able to meet the demands of play in the modified program will not be able to meet the expectations of participation at the junior varsity level. Athletes must be prepared for competitive tryouts, and should not assume that they will automatically make the team because they were involved in the program at the modified level. Each and every season is treated as a new year and new experience, and tryouts are conducted accordingly.

Skill, conditioning, work ethic, and reliability are big factors in an athlete's quest to move up. At this level, athletes are expected to have visibly committed themselves to the program and continued self-development. To this end, increased emphasis is placed on physical conditioning, refinement of fundamental skills, elements and strategies of team play, and social and emotional development. Junior varsity programs work towards achieving a balance between continued team and player development and the quest for victory. The outcome of the contest does become a consideration at this level.

The realization that practice sessions are important is a premise that is vital to a successful junior varsity program and player. For all team members, meaningful contest participation will exist over the course of a season, providing the athlete meets program

expectations. A specified amount of playing time, however, is **never guaranteed**. Athletes are expected to compete for a position, and earn their position in the starting line-up.

The time commitment of a participant involved in a junior varsity program is similar to that at the varsity level. Athletes and parents should be prepared for a six-day-a week commitment for games and practices. *While practices are not held on certain religious holy days, and rarely on Sundays, the athlete will be expected to make a full commitment to scheduled team practices during vacation periods.* With the goal of becoming a varsity athlete clearly in sight, a high level of dedication and commitment is expected at the junior varsity level.

### **C. Varsity Program Philosophy** – *the above underlined sentence also applies to Varsity.*

Varsity competition is the culminating experience for each sport's program. It is an experience provided for the elite or gifted athlete, and is the most demanding and competitive of all programs. Although junior and senior athletes dominate most varsity team rosters, gifted ninth and tenth grade athletes are eligible for varsity level play. Although rare, it is possible for a middle school student to be included on a varsity roster. Athletic Placement Process approval must be obtained for a middle school student to participate at the varsity level. Prior participation in the program does not guarantee an athlete a spot on the roster, even if the athlete was a member of the varsity squad the preceding year.

Team size at the varsity level is limited in many sports, although there are a few sports that will accommodate more numbers in practice and in competitive situations than others. However, even in those sports where cuts are not made in a given year, athletes must still understand that they may be denied an opportunity to participate unless they meet program expectations, especially with respect to start dates, attendance and commitment. Athletes who do not meet program expectations will not be eligible to earn a varsity letter.

The number of participants on most varsity teams is determined by what is needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice, and to play a contest. It is vital that each member understands and accepts their role on the team, as the number of roster positions is relative to the student's acceptance of their individual roles in pursuit of team goals. While contest participation over the course of a season is desirable, **a specified amount of playing time at the varsity level is never guaranteed**, since the outcome of the contest becomes a prime consideration at this level.

A sound attitude and advanced level of skill are prerequisites for varsity play. Athletes will be expected to practice 2 to 3 hours per day, six days per week, with commitment often extended into vacation periods for all sports seasons. While practices are rarely held on religious holy days and Sundays, the dedication and commitment needed to conduct a successful varsity program should be taken seriously. The expectation is the same for the starting player as it is for the limited role player, as every athlete involved on the team has a role in preparing the team for a demanding competitive schedule. The achievement of individual and team goals requires a full commitment on the part of every athlete on the roster.

One of the goals of a varsity team is to qualify for post-season play in sectional, regional or state competition. In the individual sports (cross country, tennis, wrestling, golf, and track), opportunities are presented to dedicated team members to represent the district in individual championship competitions at the league, county, and state levels. **These opportunities are only provided; however, to those individuals who show a complete and on-going commitment to their team.**

# CONDUCT AND EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES

## **Athlete's Code of Behavior**

To be a member of a Uniondale interscholastic athletic team is considered a privilege, and each student-athlete should strive to perform to the best of his/her athletic and academic abilities. All members of the team should conduct themselves in a manner that reflects positively upon their school and promotes good health.

Schools afford athletes special programs and rewards not given to the general population. Therefore, athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and legal manner. One of the services provided by our interscholastic athletic program is to promote health, and to prevent health problems, which in turn enhances individual and team performance. Because the use of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco prevent the normal development of a healthy mind and body, the following tenets must be accepted by those that participate in our interscholastic athletic programs:

- Student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and legal manner. Similarly, a school has a right to expect athletes to lead healthy lifestyles that exclude the use of illegal drugs and alcohol. Athletes must abide by our school policies, which support a drug and alcohol-free environment. In accordance with the school code of conduct, no person may manufacture, use, possess, sell or distribute alcohol or any other drug, on school grounds or at school-sponsored events. Additionally, any person exhibiting behavior, conduct, personal or physical characteristics that are indicative of having used or consumed alcohol or any other drug, are prohibited from school grounds or school sponsored events.
- In accordance with school code of conduct, smoking, or the use of tobacco products is prohibited on school grounds, and at school sponsored events. According to the American College of Sports Medicine, cigarette smoking is a major coronary risk factor. Also, current research shows a dramatic increase in oral cancer for individuals who *chew tobacco*. Nicotine, the major drug in tobacco, is a widely known stimulant that is highly addictive. Therefore, for obvious health, safety and conditioning reasons, athletes should not use tobacco products. The use of tobacco in any form is in direct conflict with an athlete's goal of excellence, which, in turn, can adversely impact the potential success of a team.
- The inappropriate use of prescription and over-the-counter drugs shall also be prohibited. Student-athletes are expected to use prescription drugs only with the consent of a physician and/or parent during the sport season. Parents are expected to notify coaches when their child is taking prescription medication.
- In accordance with the school policy regarding drug and alcohol use, students who violate the policy on drug/alcohol use will lose privileges for extracurricular activities.

**To promote a healthy lifestyle, it is recommended that student-athletes adhere to the tenets listed above. All students should be prepared to accept serious consequences if school officials, teachers, and/or coaches find that school district policies pertaining to drugs, alcohol, and tobacco have been violated. Furthermore, since alcohol, illegal drugs, and tobacco interfere with effective learning, the health and well being of the athlete, and the goals of the individual and team, the athlete who is involved with the use of such substances must understand that they are seriously jeopardizing their status as a member of the team!**

## **Prohibited Conduct**

The following discipline code applies to the behavior of all district students while attending school, and/or on school grounds, in school buildings, and/or participating in school-sponsored activities. Serious or flagrant violations of the District's code of conduct can result in an immediate hearing with the Superintendent or Board of Education. Students may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including suspension from school, if they engage in conduct that is disorderly, insubordinate, disruptive, and violent or endangers the safety morals, health or welfare of others. Examples include but not limited to:

1. fighting or engaging in violent behavior
2. threatening another with bodily harm
3. intimidating students or school personnel
4. making unreasonable noise that disrupts the instructional and learning environment
5. using abusive language or gestures, including racial, ethnic, or sexual remarks which are improper
6. obstructing vehicular or pedestrian traffic
7. creating a hazardous or physically offensive condition
8. failing to comply with the lawful directions of teachers, school administrators or other school employees in charge of the student
9. tardiness
10. missing or leaving school without permission
11. plagiarism,
12. vandalism or any destruction of real and/or personal property (including graffiti or arson),
13. libel and/or slander
14. theft or robbery
15. truancy
16. smoking
17. possession/use/sale/being under the influence of drugs or alcohol
18. possession or use of weapons or fireworks
19. possession or use of tobacco or tobacco products
20. lewd behavior
21. possession or use of obscene materials
22. stealing
23. gambling
24. throwing objects in classrooms, cafeteria, halls, etc.,
25. hazing, or
26. trespassing
27. displays or threatens to use what appears to be a weapon or facsimile of a weapon
28. computer/electronic communication misuse.

## **SPORTSMANSHIP AND FAIR PLAY**

- Visiting team members, students and adult spectators are guests, to be accorded all the courtesy and consideration that a friendly, well-mannered and well-intentioned host would normally give.

- The visitors, in turn, are to act as invited guests, using the home school's facilities with care, while respecting the rules and customs of the home school.
- Officials are the proper authorities to make decisions regarding rules and their interpretation; these decisions should be accepted.
- Spectators, student-athletes and coaches must recognize that their conduct plays an important role in establishing the reputation of their school and that their actions can relate directly to the success of their team.

## SPECTATOR CONDUCT

Spectators are an important part of the game and shall conform to accepted standards of good sportsmanship and behavior.

Spectators shall at all times respect officials, coaches and players, and extend all courtesies to them. While wholesome cheering is encouraged, taunting, foul and abusive language, inflammatory remarks and disrespectful signs and behavior are not acceptable. The school expects our adults and parents to set the tone for all spectators, and serve as appropriate role models for all of our student-athletes. Please assist the school officials and coaches in providing a healthy educational climate that our school can be proud of, and by maintaining an appropriate competitive perspective throughout the contest.

Spectators shall observe and obey the rules and regulations of the school, concerning tobacco, smoking, food and soft drink consumption, use of lavatory facilities and the parking of their vehicles on school grounds.

New York State law prohibits smoking and alcoholic beverages of any kind on school property. The law further prohibits any person under the influence of alcohol to be on school property.

Spectators shall respect and obey all school officials, supervisors, security and police at all athletic contests.

**Spectators who fail to adhere to conduct expectations during a contest should be prepared to accept consequences for their inappropriate behavior. These consequences may include ejection from the contest site.**

### **NYSPHSAA MISCONDUCT RULE**

Any member of a squad removed from a contest for unsportsmanlike conduct or for a flagrant foul shall not participate in that sport in the next scheduled contest or in NYSPHSAA tournament play. Disqualifications from one season carry over to the next season of participation.

Any member of the squad, who strikes, shoves, kicks or makes other physical contact with the intent to do so, to an official, shall be expelled from the game immediately and banned from further participation in all sports for one year from the date of the offense. Note: Member of the squad includes coach, player, manager, scorekeepers, timers, and statisticians.

A player or coach who has been suspended from play may not be present on the school grounds where the contest is played. **There is no appeal to the NYSPHSAA Misconduct Rule.** The official's ruling is final, and not subject to question.

***Note: The Uniondale School District reserves the right to impose an additional consequence, which may result in school disciplinary action, a longer period of suspension from practice and contests, and/or dismissal from the team by the coach and/or administration.***

## **ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT POLICIES**

### **Academic Expectations**

The Athletic Department recognizes that the primary responsibility of student-athletes is educational. Therefore, the Athletic Department supports the concept that student-athletes should work to their potential in the classroom and be committed to achieving maximum academic success. The district has an academic eligibility requirement, so coaches and administrators will require athletes to cooperate with the guidelines established for those individuals who need to focus on greater academic responsibility and achievement.

### **Classroom and School Attendance**

No student-athlete may participate in a practice; scrimmage or contest on a day when the student is absent from school, unless a school administrator grants special permission for the absence.

**No student-athlete excused for medical reasons from a physical education class may participate in a practice, scrimmage, or contest on that same day.** Note that Commissioner's Regulations dictate that a student-athlete is ineligible if he or she is medically excused from participation in a physical education class. *Any contest that an ineligible athlete participates in is deemed forfeit.*

Students who demonstrate problems with school absences, tardiness, either excused or unexcused, are subject to suspension and/or dismissal from the team. Athletes are expected to get to school on time, and make a commitment to classroom attendance.

Students who are suspended either "in or out of school" may not practice or compete during the suspension period. Students will not be permitted to play in their next regularly scheduled contest without adequate practice before the contest.

### **Commitment to Practices/Games**

Athletes are expected to attend every practice and contest, unless excused by their coach. If an athlete is in school attendance, he or she is expected at practice. There are no unexcused absences from practices or games. Excused absences are permitted for extra help, death in the family or family illness, family emergencies, medical reasons, and religious observances. Timely communication between the coach, parent and/or athlete in this situation is essential.

Opportunities exist for many Uniondale student-athletes, especially at the high school level; to participate on non-school sponsored teams, while participating on school-sponsored teams. When these situations occur, sound communication between the student-athlete, parent or guardian, coach and athletic administrator is expected.

As discussed in the philosophy portion of this handbook, membership on a junior varsity or varsity team requires a considerable time commitment. The school district is responsible for monitoring the wellness and safety of each of our student-athletes. With this in mind, each situation involving outside school competition must be carefully evaluated on a case-by-case

basis. Furthermore, any anticipated conflicts with regard to school commitment and program expectations must be brought to the attention of the coaching staff prior to tryouts. An athlete's first commitment must be to the school program. Coaches are not expected to excuse athletes from school practices and/or contests due to conflicts or commitments with outside community club or travel team practices, contests and/or tournaments. Parents and athletes should not expect coaches to compromise their commitment expectations.

## **Family Vacations**

When parents and student-athletes choose to take their family vacation during a sport season, **it must be understood that the time missed by the student-athlete could affect team chemistry, personal conditioning, the performance level of individual, and the overall performance of the team.** Each and every individual on the team has a role, not just in the game, but in the practice climate as well, regardless of how much playing time the athlete is experiencing. Commitment during the vacation periods involves self-sacrifice, not only on the part of the athlete, but the family as well.

During the fall season, high school athletes are expected to be at tryouts during the summer vacation period. For football, this means at least two weeks prior to Labor Day, and for all other high school sports, the start date begins at least one week prior to Labor Day. Fall athletes should be prepared to practice twice a day (morning session and evening session) prior to the start of school.

In the winter, high school athletes should be prepared to give up time during the Thanksgiving recess, Christmas vacation, and again, for post season play at the varsity level during the February winter break.

During the spring season, high school athletes should be prepared to practice and compete during the spring vacation period.

**All athletes should be expected to plan ahead and attend these practices and/or competitions, if they wish to remain on the team, maintain playing eligibility, and earn a varsity letter.**

Parents who ask for the exception to our practice policy present the coach with an uncomfortable dilemma. Coaches need to set the same standards of expectations for all participants, and asking them to make exceptions for some, and not for others, is unfair to the team. Furthermore, making such exceptions, without consequence, sets the tone for others in the future. Commitment is a critical component for success. Keep in mind that the school district has a commitment to the contest schedule, and to our opponents, who are also committed to playing a particular contest during the vacation period. A forfeiture of a contest scheduled over vacation impacts the opponent, who is expecting to be provided with a quality competitive experience as well.

**Student-athletes are expected to make a full commitment to the season, and notify the coach of any potential commitment conflicts at the start of the season, as soon as tryouts begin.** In some sports, a problem with commitment may impact the selection process. In other sport programs, depending upon the circumstances, the coach may adjust the player's position and/or playing time, to best meet the needs of the program. If an athlete does not inform the coach during the tryout period of potential conflicts in commitment, the athlete will be subject to dismissal from the team.

Once selected for a team, an athlete is expected to finish the season. As a general rule, an individual who drops out once selections have been made may not try out for another team that season. If the coaches of both teams involved make an appeal to the Athletic Director, and are both in agreement that a change would be beneficial, the appeal can be considered. A student dismissed from a team for disciplinary reasons may not try out for another team that season.

## **SCHOOL-SANCTIONED ACTIVITIES AND FIELD TRIPS**

There are numerous educational opportunities for students in our school system. The athletic department supports school-sanctioned programs and trips, but also realizes that student-athletes who choose to participate in school trips or school exchange programs may miss substantial amounts of practice time, which affects personal athletic goals and team goals. As stated in the **Family Vacations** section, student-athletes who miss practice or competitions for any reason can expect to have their playing time or playing role adjusted. The same can be said for the planning of college visitations.

*Coaches, parents and student-athletes have a responsibility to each other, and parents are expected to plan and communicate well in advance of each sport season when considering participation in school-sanctioned programs and/or trips. All attempts should be made to consider the practice and/or game schedule, and seek the advice of the coach before making commitments to plans. If an athlete's personal commitments compromise team goals, or present a conflict with respect to the standards and expectations defined for all involved in the program, the athlete should be prepared to make a choice between their continued relationship with the team and their commitment to other personal goals.*

## **NYSPHSAA TRANSFER RULE AND ELIGIBILITY**

In accordance with the NYSPHSAA Transfer Rule, the eligibility of a high school athlete is impacted if the athlete transfers from one high school to another **without** a corresponding change of address of the parent. The rule states the following:

**If a student transfers after attendance begins in their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, from one high school to another, without a corresponding change of address of the parents, the athlete is ineligible to participate for a period of one year in any sport that he or she participated in within the last year.**

This eligibility policy governs transfers between private, parochial and public schools. In essence, if an athlete leaves the Uniondale School District to attend a private or parochial school, and returns after their ninth grade year has begun, and there is no change of address of the parents, the athlete may be ineligible to participate in any sport that they played in the preceding year. The rule is sport specific. A written request for appeal can be submitted to Section VIII for a student-athlete who transfers due to circumstances of undue hardship. Supporting documentation must be provided upon request. Please call the Athletic Office if your child is considering transferring to or from Uniondale to get the facts on athletic eligibility.

**Section VIII deems any contest that has been played by a team with an ineligible player a forfeit. There is no appeal to the forfeiture.**

## **POST-SEASON PLAY ELIGIBILITY**

To be eligible for post-season play (sectional, regional, intersectional or state competition), a team must have competed in six (6) school-scheduled contests, which occurred on six (6) different dates, during the season. An individual is eligible to compete for the team if he or she has been an *eligible participant* on a team in that sport in that school for a minimum of six (6) scheduled contests during the regular season.

For football, a student must be an eligible participant for a minimum of three contests. Contestants in individual sports (cross-country, golf, gymnastics, swimming and diving, tennis, track and wrestling) *must have represented their school* in six (6) scheduled contests during the season to be eligible. These required contests must occur on six different dates and must be completed prior to the conclusion of the team's regular schedule.

An athlete, who comes out late and/or misses part of the season due to injury, cannot come back and participate in post-season play without a medical waiver.

*Note:* In all cases, the number of contests referred to above must be officiated contests.

## **REQUIRED MEDICAL CLEARANCE**

The Commissioner's Regulations mandate that all athletes must be given a physical examination prior to their participation in interscholastic athletics.

The school nurse will arrange for physical examinations to be given, free of charge, by a school physician. Exam dates are listed on the school calendar. Student-athletes are advised of examinations in advance of the season through school public address announcements, posted signs, and announcements in physical education classes.

Students should take advantage of the district's physical examination, as it is free of charge, and administered in the nurse's office in the school setting. Parents are not inconvenienced with cost factors or scheduled time. Furthermore, when the athlete is examined "in school" by the district physician the medical clearance process is simplified and timely. In order for an athlete to be scheduled for a school exam, appropriate forms must be picked up in advance from the school nurse, completed, and returned to the health office in a timely manner.

If the athlete misses the scheduled exam and make-up dates, he/she must make an appointment at the office of the school physician and the responsibility of expense lies with the athlete's family. Students will not be permitted to participate in any practice or contest unless the coach has appropriate medical clearance from the school nurse. **There is no exception to this policy.**

### **Updated Interval Health History Form**

If medical clearance was given during the previous 12 months, each athlete is required to present a completed health history form that will be provided by the coach at the pre-season meeting or can be obtained at the school nurse's office. No athlete will be able to tryout without the signed form.

## **REQUIREMENTS FOR TRYOUTS**

**Athletes are expected to participate on the first day, and all other dates of tryouts. Athletes who miss the official start date, and express a late interest in tryouts may be denied the opportunity to participate in the program. In those programs where cuts are made coaches are expected to make their final selections from those who are in attendance at tryouts. Exceptions to this policy can be considered for those athletes that have a documented medical illness or injury. Consideration will only be given to those that notify the coach or Director of Athletics in advance of the tryouts.**

As mentioned previously in this guide, commitment is vital to the success of all involved. There is undoubtedly a sacrifice to be made here, not only on the part of the athlete, but on the family as well. Athletes and parents are expected to make certain that personal plans, work schedules, and/or vacation plans are adjusted so as not to conflict with tryout dates, practices, and contests.

Each year is viewed as independent of another, with respect to tryouts, and the tryout is open to all. Athletes who were involved with the program the year before are not “guaranteed” a place on the team roster in the next season. All athletes should be prepared to “compete” for membership every year. Some students mature from one year to the next, and may be included on the team after having been cut the year before. Athletes can gain a potential advantage when they make more of a visible commitment to the program and improve significantly after having been involved in summer camps, summer league play, or community and organized club programs out of season. As was mentioned previously, as the level progresses to the varsity level, the size of a team becomes more a function of those needed to conduct an effective and meaningful practice and to play the contest.

**A NOTE TO SENIORS:** One of the most difficult situations coaches face is the dilemma of the senior who has been in the program for years, and now is viewed as a limited role player. Seniors will not be accommodated with a junior varsity experience, as this is considered a developmental program. At the varsity level, the best will play, regardless of age, as long as program expectations are met. Coaches are encouraged to be honest with seniors, and if it is clear to the coach during tryouts that the role of the senior will be limited, that information needs to be communicated. The senior presented with the opportunity to remain in the program with a limited role must be prepared to accept this role, and still meet all the expectations of the program with respect to attendance and work ethic, while showing support for the team. This is a difficult challenge, and the senior must be willing to meet this challenge with a positive attitude if he or she wishes to remain a part of the team. If a coach feels that the senior has reached the limits of his or her potential, and the athlete is incapable of adjusting to limited role expectations with a positive attitude, the coach may not provide the senior with the option of staying on the team.

### **SENIOR DAY**

It is common in most sports to participate in Senior Day recognition. The sole purpose of Senior Day is to **acknowledge** and **show appreciation** for senior athletes who have been a part of an athletic program. It is the Coach’s discretion as to the appropriate forum for this honor. In the past there has been a **misconception** that Senior Day guarantees that all seniors will participate in the contest. While coaches will be sensitive to the playing time concerns of seniors and their parents, team **goals must come before individual goals**. Coaches should communicate their philosophy about Senior Day playing time prior to the contest to avoid misunderstandings.

## **NYSPHSAA ATHLETIC PLACEMENT PROCESS**

The Athletic Placement Process is a process for screening student-athletes to determine their readiness to compete in interscholastic athletic competition by evaluating their physical maturity, fitness and skill. The intent of this program is to provide athletes in grades 7-12 an opportunity to safely participate at an appropriate level of competition based upon readiness, rather than age and grade. This program has been designed to assess a student-athlete's physical maturation, physical fitness, and skill, so that the athlete may be placed at a level of competition which should result in increased opportunity, an appropriate competitive environment for the ability level and maturity of the student-athlete, and greater personal satisfaction.

The Athletic Placement Process was designed for mature and exceptionally skilled students to advance to a more challenging level of play, and to provide an opportunity for less developed students to participate at an appropriate lower level that is suited to their development and ability. It is aimed at the few select student-athletes who can benefit from such a placement because of their level of readiness.

Criteria have been formulated by the State Education Department, which gives an accurate measurement for eligibility, and highlights the inherent differences in the various individual and team sports. The Commissioner of Education (Section 135.4) governs rules, regulations and guidelines for this program.

Normally, a student is eligible for high school athletic competition in a sport during each of four **consecutive** seasons, commencing with the youngster's entry into the ninth grade. However, by satisfying the requirements of the Athletic Placement Process, a student may receive extended eligibility to permit:

- a) Participation during five consecutive seasons in the approved sport after entry into the eighth grade; or
- b) Participation during six consecutive seasons in the approved sport after entry into the seventh grade.

### **Implementation of the Athletic Placement Process**

The Uniondale School District participates in the Athletic Placement Process and provides an opportunity for exceptional middle school athletes to move up in all sports, **with the exception of football.**

In football, a high contact sport, all boys will compete on level, for reasons of safety and physical maturity. A huge difference in physical maturity exists between a seventh or eighth grade middle school athlete and the boys that participate at the junior varsity level. This mismatch in size, speed and strength could potentially endanger the safety and well being of the athlete.

### **Moving Up and Bypassing a Modified Program**

For those sports where a seventh or eighth grader is presented with an opportunity to participate in a modified program at the middle school level (basketball, soccer, cross country, baseball, softball, spring track, volleyball, wrestling and lacrosse), the **Athletic Placement**

**Process applies to only those students who are considered to be “elite” athletes.** In order to bypass a middle school experience, the particular athlete must be a very gifted individual, someone who would be viewed by our coaching staff to be a “blue chip/scholarship” athlete. In most cases, this evaluation would be based upon the athlete’s performance level in our middle school program as a seventh grader. This athlete would be expected to potentially play a major role **at the varsity level** as an eighth grader, and would be viewed as a youngster that would potentially qualify for post season play as a competitor in an individual sport. Please be advised that it is **rare** that an athlete is approved to skip the eighth grade middle school experience to play in a high school program. Skill is not the only measure used to determine “readiness” for a middle school student to play at the high school level. **Social, emotional and physical maturity are all vital components to the success of the transition to varsity or junior varsity athletics.** Also note that in most cases, athletes are not moved ahead to participate at the junior varsity level. The athlete should demonstrate exceptional skills that would be on par with those of a varsity athlete.

The head coach in each sport, in consultation with the athlete’s middle school coach and physical education teacher, recommends those individuals for the Athletic Placement Process. It is expected that those athletes recommended for participation in the Athletic Placement Process demonstrate a commitment to academic achievement. The competitive demands of a high school program are greater than those at the middle school level, and participation at a higher level will present a challenge with respect to time management skills and a student’s commitment to academic achievement.

### **Standards of Performance and SED Fitness Testing**

If the youngster is approved to participate in the Athletic Placement Process, the following procedures apply:

- a) The **school physician, or a private physician**, must administer a physical examination and determine the athlete’s physical health and readiness through a state-mandated examination and a physical maturity evaluation.
- b) An authorized physical education teacher, appointed by the Director of Athletics, must administer an Athletic Performance Test, as required by the State Education Department. The specific tests mandated and qualifying scores are sport specific. No one else other than the designated district staff member may administer the required tests.
- c) If the school physician gives an athlete medical clearance, and the physical performance standards are met, the athlete will be permitted to participate in tryouts for a three-day period (possibly longer for those trying out for golf or tennis). At the end of the tryout period, the high school head coach must give a final evaluation to the Director of Athletics.
- d) The athlete will be contacted with the final decision, immediately after the three-day tryout period. If the athlete is denied the opportunity to participate in the high school program, he or she will still be eligible to participate in that sport, if offered at the modified level. (Note: There is an exception with boys’ basketball due to the conflict in start dates for the modified program and high school program). **Once an athlete is selected on the high school team, that individual is no longer eligible to participate in that sport at the modified level.** In addition, once the athlete becomes involved with the high school program, they cannot reverse the process, change their mind, and return to the modified program in that sport once the tryout period (three days) has elapsed, and the selection has been made.

## **Timeline for Completion of the Athletic Placement Process Testing**

Since the Athletic Placement Process takes a considerable amount of time, evaluation must begin early enough for the athlete to complete all testing before the first day of scheduled high school tryouts. Communication with the school nurse and the middle school physical education designee who completes the testing is all that is required. Communication with the high school varsity coach is also essential in helping to determine program demands and requirements before such a decision is made. However, be advised that **any student-athlete expressing an interest to tryout for a sport which bypasses one of our district modified programs must bring their request to the District Director of Athletics, well in advance of the season. Approval must be given before the athletic placement process is initiated.**

The high school fall sports season begins before school starts, and it is critical that the Athletic Placement Process be completed before the second week in June. The student-athlete must make certain to see the school nurse at the end of May, to find out when the school physical examination will be scheduled. The athlete and parent must make certain that the school nurse and the school doctor are advised of the intent to participate in the Athletic Placement Process. The school doctor must give the athlete medical clearance before any athletic performance tests can be conducted.

Parents and students should make certain to ask the nurse for the name of the instructor (Physical Education teacher or Athletic Director) who is authorized to conduct the performance tests. An appointment must be made in advance with this individual to arrange to complete these fitness tests. Since this individual may have teaching and/or coaching responsibilities, it is critical that this communication occurs early enough to complete the tests before the middle of June for participation in a fall sport.

It is the responsibility of the athlete and parent to **make certain that the physical examination and maturity evaluation by the school physician** and the athletic performance test by the authorized physical education teacher or Athletic Director is completed by the middle of June for fall sports participation eligibility. Authorized staff members will not be available for the administration of performance tests during summer vacation. Therefore, an athlete who does not complete this process as defined above will not be eligible to participate in tryouts for a high school sport beginning in August.

## **Moving Up when a Modified Program Opportunity is Not Provided**

In those sports where an athlete is not presented with the opportunity to participate in a modified program (i.e., tennis), athletes are given more latitude with respect to qualification for participation in these high school programs. If the athlete has had extensive training and an appropriate competitive background in the sport, and demonstrates the academic, social and emotional maturity for play at the high school level, the student will be recommended for athletic placement process testing. Since the district does not field junior varsity teams in all sports (i.e., tennis & badminton) the students must meet athletic placement process standards for the varsity level of play. In tennis students can become eligible for play at the varsity level.

## **WELLNESS AND SAFETY**

### **Coaching Certification**

All Uniondale coaching personnel are certified in accordance with NYSPHSAA standards. As per state mandates, all coaches employed in our district are certified in CPR/AED and First Aid. In accordance with state mandates, Uniondale will always look to find qualified, certified educators to fill coaching assignments. If such a qualified educator is not available, the district may appoint a non-certified teacher as a coach.

Each coach is responsible for guiding their student-athletes through practices, scrimmages, and games appropriate for their age and level of play. These activities are conducted so that the physical welfare, health, and safety of the participants are protected and fostered. The coach is responsible for teaching physical skills, sportsmanship, ethical conduct and fair play, in accordance with school philosophy. All activities should always be conducted in an appropriate educational environment.

### **The Role of the High School Athletic Trainer**

Athletes and parents must recognize the risk of injury that may occur during physical activity. Our staff is prepared to address injury needs, and is trained to provide appropriate first aid in an emergency.

Uniondale School District provides (when possible) a certified Athletic Trainer at the high school level, to provide medical services for injured and rehabilitating athletes. This professional is qualified to develop prevention and rehabilitation strategies through appropriate training methods and physical conditioning programs. The Athletic Trainer insures proper follow-up care after an injury, and consults with the parents, school nurse, coach, and the school district physician when such communication is beneficial to the well being of the athlete. It is vital for our athletes and/or **parents to bring illness, medical problems or injuries** to the attention of the athletic trainer, school nurse and coach as soon as possible.

### **Emergency Plan**

Please be advised that the Uniondale School District has a comprehensive emergency medical plan in place, in the event of an accident or injury that occurs during practices or games. If the injury or illness requires a high level of care, the EMS system will be activated and emergency services called. If the athlete is injured in a practice or game on the home site, and transported to a medical facility, the athletic trainer, a member of the coaching staff, or school personnel will accompany the athlete in the ambulance, wherever possible. The coach is expected to follow up with the parent/athlete after the practice and/or game ends. The coach shall notify the school nurse, and an accident report will be initiated within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

**When an emergency occurs at an away contest, and there is only one coach, the decision made must protect the interests of all the athletes involved. In these circumstances, if the parent or guardian is not present, it is appropriate to send the assigned teacher/supervisor, if available, with the injured player to the hospital. In this case, the head coach should remain with the team. Parents should not expect coaches to leave their team unsupervised. Therefore, it is critical that coaches have emergency contact numbers where a parent, family member, or designee can be reached during practices and contests.**

## **Student-Athlete Accident/Insurance Claims**

The Uniondale School District provides *reasonable and customary coverage for claims in excess of a parent's underlying health insurance coverage.*

Coaches will direct athletes and parents to use their family HMO, PPO, etc. program as required, in order to be eligible for reimbursement of benefits payable under our excess coverage medical plan. In some cases, total costs for medical expenses will not be reimbursed, as the plan is based upon reasonable and customary coverage.

Parents and athletes should communicate with the school nurse to insure full compliance with district procedures.

## **Return To Play After Injury**

Any student-athlete under treatment by a private physician must have written permission from his/her physician in order to return to active status in the sports program. If an athlete misses multiple days of practice due to illness or injury, he or she must be given clearance by a private and/or school physician before returning to play. The school physician has the final authority to determine the physical capability of a student to participate in a sport.

## **Head Injuries**

It is well known that participating in sports can be a highly rewarding experience. However, there are certain risks an athlete must face while involved in competitive athletic situations. One of these risks is the potential for injury. While most injuries are minor and heal over time, one cannot overlook the seriousness of head injuries.

Head injuries may occur in a number of ways: Contact with another player, contact with the ground or other equipment, or a sudden movement or rotation of the head without a force. A mild brain injury may produce various signs and symptoms, which include dizziness, headache, nausea, and blurry vision. A more serious trauma to the head may result in loss of memory and/or brain function. Other types of head injuries can cause small tears and result in bleeding in the brain, a sub dermal hematoma. If a player returns to competition too soon, he or she may also be in danger of second impact syndrome, in which a mild head injury can become potentially fatal.

Head injuries in school interscholastic athletic programs have increased in numbers as the level of competition has risen. Therefore, Uniondale has taken special precautions to insure the safety of all athletes:

- 1) The pre-participation examination health questionnaire screens all athletes for a history of their head injuries. Please give as much information as possible about any head injury that may have occurred in the past.
- 2) The Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer and/or school nurse addresses each coach and team about the dangers of head injuries and monitors all athletes who sustain any head injuries during the season.
- 3) All coaches make certain that an athlete who has experienced a head injury is immediately brought to the attention of the school nurse and/or Athletic Trainer. Head injury instructional guidelines are followed, with appropriate parental notification.
- 4) Return to play (RTP) guidelines after a head injury/concussion

- a) Any athlete still exhibiting signs/symptoms of a head injury will not be allowed to return to play. NO athlete may return to play on the same day of exhibiting concussive signs/symptoms.
- b) RTP will be allowed after the athlete is symptom free, has received clearance from an appropriate health care provider, passes adequate neurological testing and is cleared by the school nurse.
- c) After medical clearance, RTP will follow a stepwise protocol with provisions for delaying RTP based on return of any signs or symptoms.
- d) PROTOCOL for RTP:
  - 1) NO exertional activity until asymptomatic
  - 2) The athlete must remain asymptomatic for 24 hours to progress to the next level.
  - 3) If symptoms return, the athlete must wait 24 hours and return to the previous level.
  - 4) If the athlete remains without symptoms through all levels tested, they may return to play.
  - 5) Return to play testing requirements will vary based on sport.

**Level I-** Low impact activities such as balance activities, walking, stationary biking, etc.

**Level II-** Aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport (sprinting, running, jumping) and increased complexity of balance activities.

**Level III-** Non-contact skill based drills specific to the sport, weight room activities, and challenging balance activities.

**Level IV-** Non- contact in a practice setting

**Level V-** Full contact in a practice setting

## Safety Concerns for Male Athletes

Although not required by the rules of all specific sports, it is recommended that all athletes consider wearing an athletic supporter and protective cup for all sports defined by the State Education Department as Contact/Collision (football, soccer and wrestling), and for those sports defined as Limited Contact/Impact (basketball).

While coaches will advise their players to wear an athletic supporter and protective cup, they will not physically check to see that the athlete is, in fact, wearing one. Since there is potential for serious injury without wearing this protection, *it is imperative that all parents reinforce this safety concern*, and make certain that the athlete has these personal items of protection with them, and wears them, at all practices and contests.

## Nutrition

In order to approach peak performance in athletics, student-athletes, parents, and coaches need accurate information on how to properly fuel and nourish the body. Karen Sossin, M.S., a prominent certified nutritionist who specializes in sports nutrition, recommends the following dietary guidelines, which are emphasized by the coaching staff and trainers on an on-going basis:

- 1) Eat **more** complex carbohydrates. By ingesting carbohydrates, athletes maximize glycogen storage. Glycogen is the primary source of energy for muscles. Recommended sources of carbohydrates are grains, cereals, breads, potatoes, pasta, vegetables, and fruits. As an added bonus, most carbohydrate sources are also high in vitamins and minerals.

- 2) Eat **moderate** amounts of protein. Athletes must understand that eating excess protein is not beneficial. While athletes have a slightly increased protein requirement, the normal athletic diet is composed of more than adequate amounts of protein. Eat more complex carbohydrates, not more protein!
- 3) Eat **less** high-fat foods. Foods high in fats include fried foods, cookies, cakes, luncheon meats and whole milk dairy products. This **does not** mean avoid these foods totally. However, we must learn to choose **low fat** versions such as skim milk, lean beef, chicken and fish (minus the skin), and **low fat** snacks, such as pretzels.
- 4) Stay **hydrated**, especially in hot weather. Studies clearly show that performance suffers in a dehydrated athlete. Drink before, during and after exercise. Plain cold water is usually the best. However, sports drinks may provide an edge if you exercise continuously over one hour. Thirst is not a good measure of when to drink fluids. A thirsty athlete is already in early stages of dehydration.
- 5) Maintain a **healthy body composition**. Avoid quick weight loss. Within reasonable guidelines, a leaner athlete is a more efficient athlete. A normal range of percent body fat for males is 7-18%, while a healthy range for females is 15-25%. Your body fat is determined by heredity, and of course, diet and exercise.
- 6) **Replace carbohydrates used for energy during training and competition**. In order to refuel your body to prepare for the next practice or game, carbohydrate rich foods need to be ingested soon after exercise. Eating 200-400 carbohydrate calories within 1-2 hours of exercise is best.
- 7) Eat an **appropriate pre-competition meal**. Three to four hours before practicing or playing a game, athletes need to 'fuel' their bodies with a high carbohydrate, medium sized meal composed of familiar food. However, within an hour of exercise, always avoid foods high in sugar such as candy bars.
- 8) **Don't be tempted by nutritional supplements or other supposed 'performance-enhancers'**. Athletes should be able to properly fuel their bodies through a normal well-balanced diet that is especially rich in complex carbohydrates. Nutritional supplements such as amino acids, protein and high doses of vitamins and minerals may actually be harmful.

### **Female Athlete Triad**

The level of participation by women of all ages in competitive and recreational sport has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. In most cases, these athletes have experienced significant health benefits, and enhanced their state of mental and physical well being. Under certain circumstances, some active females and athletes experience the detrimental effects of a condition known as the **Female Athlete Triad**. The triad acknowledges the interrelated nature of **disordered eating, amenorrhea, and osteoporosis**, which is being increasingly recognized by the medical community. Although the prevalence of the triad is uncertain, various studies have found amenorrhea in athletes to be as high as 40%, and most clinical reviews cite the prevalence of disordered eating among female athletes to be between 15 and 62%. Decreased estrogen appears to cause skeletal demineralization in amenorrheic athletes. We need to give serious consideration to the triad, for it can lead to a number of illnesses, from minor problems to life threatening medical conditions.

**Disordered eating** refers to the spectrum of abnormal patterns of eating, including bingeing, and/or purging; food restriction; prolonged fasting; misuse of diet pills, diuretics, or laxatives; and other abnormal eating behaviors. Preoccupation with food, dissatisfaction with one's body, fear of becoming fat, and a distorted body image play an important role in these conditions. At the extreme end of the spectrum are the eating disorders, including anorexia or bulimia. While many athletes do not meet the "strict" medical definitions for anorexia or bulimia, a number of these female athletes may still have disordered eating patterns and may be at risk for the **Female Athlete Triad**.

The female athlete can experience **menstrual irregularities**. These include primary amenorrhea (the absence of menstruation by age 16 in a girl with secondary sex characteristics), secondary amenorrhea (the absence of three or more consecutive menstrual cycles after menarche) or oligomenorrhea (3-6 menstrual cycles per year at intervals greater than 36 days). By the age of 20, a woman has acquired 60-70% of her peak bone mass. The loss of estrogen resulting from amenorrhea or oligomenorrhea will affect the body's ability to absorb and utilize calcium. This may lead to premature bone loss, which can be irreversible and result in osteoporosis.

The American College of Sports Medicine believes the **Female Athlete Triad** exists not only in elite athletes, but also in physically active girls and women who participate in a wide range of sports and other physical activities. An important risk factor known to trigger disordered eating is dieting at a young age, sometimes as a result of a comment or suggestion made by a parent, coach, teammate or peer, about body image and/or weight. Other risk factors include frequent weight fluctuations, a sudden increase in training volume, and emotional circumstances such as injury or loss of a coach. Females who are found to have one component of the triad should be screened for the other two. For example, if an irregular menstrual cycle is present, the athlete should be questioned about her eating patterns, weight loss history, and stress fractures. On the other hand, if this athlete has repeated stress fractures, she should be questioned if there are irregularities in her eating pattern and menstrual cycle. Although the **Female Athlete Triad** may begin with a pattern of disordered eating, this may be difficult to identify initially. If this pattern of eating is allowed to progress, it may result in hormonal imbalances and may lead to cessation of regular menstrual periods and loss of bone density. Amenorrhea is not a natural consequence of athletic training. When symptoms of the triad exist, a multidisciplinary approach to treatment is necessary. In addition to the female athlete, parents, coaches, physicians, nutritionists, athletic trainers, school nurses, and mental health professionals are all potential participants in the treatment process.

## **Food Supplements**

In the past several years, a variety of performance-enhancing substances and medications have become available without prescription in the form of dietary supplements. As their use increases, we find that some of the supplements can cause health problems that outweigh any benefit they may provide.

The problem with these performance-enhancing substances, such as creatine, androstenedione, ephedrine, etc., is that there is no requirement for testing for efficacy or for side effects because these are considered to be natural foods. They are not regulated by the FDA, which places a substance under extreme scrutiny over several years before allowing the product to become available. Dietary supplements have not been tested in clinical trials to determine if they actually do what they claim to do. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the actual product contains the contents stated on the label.

The long-term effects of creatine supplementation are not known at this time. If we are to err, especially with high school athletes, we must err on the side of safety. While creatine may modestly improve athletic performance in high-intensity activity of short duration, creatine supplements have no recognized formula or standards to follow, and there is little known at this time about the potential long-term effects. In addition, there is no recommended dosage for the substance. Reported adverse effects from taking creatine supplements include vomiting, nervousness, migraine, seizures, and atrial fibrillation.

Androstenedione, an anrogen, can increase blood testosterone, but any effect on muscle mass is not clearly established, and once again, this substance is not regulated or tested. Known adverse effects are documented and include early closing of growth plates and a resulting height limitation in teenage users. Other adverse effects are similar to those of anabolic steroids, which include acne, fits of rage, baldness, hormonal imbalance, and the development of breasts in men. No one clearly knows, at this time, the effects of androstenedione on the liver or cardiovascular system.

Other problem supplements include those where the active ingredients are ephedrine and caffeine. Ephedrine is a close relation to adrenaline and causes elevated blood pressure, stimulating the heart and increasing its pumping action. Knowing that adrenaline will enhance performance, and that ephedrine (called Ma Huang) is one of the naturally occurring relatives of adrenaline, student-athletes look to this substance to improve athletic performance. The negative effects of ephedrine are well described. They include abnormal heartbeats, hypertension, stroke, and heart attack, due to constriction of coronary arteries. Ephedrine has been associated with heart muscle damage in several medical case reports, likely due to the over stimulation of the heart muscle cells. Ephedrine is frequently found teamed with caffeine in over the counter performance-enhancing supplements, and this combination of uncontrolled substances can be life threatening.

In response to the recent focus on the use of food supplements, specifically creatine, the National Federation of State High School Associations has issued a position statement on the use of drugs, medicine and food supplements in interscholastic sports. The Uniondale Athletic Department supports the text of the committee's statements listed below:

- “School personnel and coaches should not dispense any drug, medication or food supplement except with extreme caution and in accordance with policies developed in consultation with parents, health-care professionals and senior administrative personnel of the school or school district.
- “Use of any drug, medication or food supplement in a way not prescribed by the manufacturer should not be authorized or encouraged by school personnel and coaches. Even natural substances in unnatural amounts may have short-term or long-term negative health effects.”
- “In order to minimize health and safety risks to student-athletes, maintain ethical standards and reduce liability risks, school personnel and coaches should never supply, recommend or permit the use of any drug, medication or food supplement solely for performance-enhancing purposes.”

## **NYSPHSAA HEAT INDEX PROCEDURES**

Administration of Heat Index Procedures:

Heat index will be checked 1 hour before the contest/practice by a certified athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee when the air temperature is 80 degrees (Fahrenheit) or higher.

The athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee will use the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website to determine the heat index for the area of the contest/practice. The [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website can be reached through the NYSPHSAA website. Once a person is on the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website, they will put in the zip code for the location of the contest/practice and the website will give them the air temperature as well as the RealFeel temperature (heat index).

If the RealFeel temperature (heat index) is 90 degrees or above, the athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee must re-check the RealFeel (heat index) at halftime or midway point of the contest. If the RealFeel (heat index) temperature is 96 degrees (Fahrenheit) or more, the contest will be suspended.

## **NYSPHSAA WIND CHILL PROCEDURES**

Administration of Wind Chill Procedures:

Wind Chill will be checked 1 hour before the contest/practice by a certified athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee when the air temperature is 39 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower.

The athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee will use the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website to determine the heat index for the area of the contest/practice. The [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website can be reached through the NYSPHSAA website. Once a person is on the [accuweather.com](http://accuweather.com) website, they will put in the zip code for the location of the contest/practice and the website will give them the air temperature as well as the RealFeel temperature (wind chill).

If the RealFeel temperature (wind chill) is 10 degrees or below, the athletic trainer, athletic director, or school designee must re-check the RealFeel (wind chill) at halftime or midway point of the contest. If the RealFeel (wind chill) temperature is -11 degrees (Fahrenheit) or lower, the contest will be suspended.

## **STUDENT-ATHLETE POSSESSIONS**

All athletes are provided with a locker for their personal use located in the physical education locker room or team room facility. Since this area is used by numbers of students throughout the course of an afternoon, and teams dismiss their athletes at varying times, it is impossible to make certain that the locker room facility is secured at all times.

Therefore, it is essential that each athlete assume the responsibility for locking up and securing their books, clothing, and personal possessions prior to leaving the facility for practice and contests each day.

**If the athletes leave their personal possessions and belongings unlocked, or out on the team bench in the locker room facility, they are inviting theft.**

**Athletes are to be discouraged from bringing valuable personal items to school, where they will be left in the locker room facility. Excess cash, expensive jewelry and electronics should be left at home!**

Coaches will attempt to provide adequate supervision within the facility, but athletes are expected to do their part as well. More often than not, when personal belongings are taken, the athlete has not assumed their responsibility to secure them in an appropriate manner. Despite our best efforts at supervision, thefts sometimes occur.

## **TEAM UNIFORMS AND SCHOOL ISSUED EQUIPMENT**

Athletic equipment becomes more costly each year. It is the responsibility of the student-athlete to secure all school issued equipment items and uniforms in a **locker that is locked** during the course of a season. Please do not keep the team uniforms in the locker room facility for long periods of time. They are best laundered and left at home until the day of a game. The expense of a uniform is significant, and if the athlete forgets to lock his or her locker, the athlete will be expected to pay for the school issued athletic equipment and/or uniform.

### **Care and Maintenance of Uniforms and Equipment**

All athletes and parents are responsible for the cleaning and maintaining of all uniforms and equipment issued to them during the course of a season. Some of our most costly items may shrink, fade, or bleed color if washed in hot water. In addition, our logos, numbers, and screens may crack and peel off if temperature settings for washing and drying are too hot. Therefore, **do not wash uniforms in hot water and avoid drying on hot temperature settings**. Please wash uniforms in cold water and hang to dry! Be sure to read the tags on the cloth for washing and drying instructions, and when in doubt, speak to the coach before laundering uniforms. If the uniform needs to be replaced, the athlete will be expected to pay for the replacement item.

### **Return of School Issued Uniforms and Equipment**

**It is the responsibility of the athlete to personally return all school issued equipment to their coach at the end of their season.** All team uniforms and equipment are to be returned to the coach immediately after the last practice or contest where the item is needed. Turning in equipment and uniforms “on time” insures that all items in the team inventory are available for reconditioning.

Athletes should never give their school issued equipment or uniform to anyone else to return for them. Coaches keep accurate records of school issued inventory, and if there are any items not returned at the end of the season, the athlete will be placed on an indebted list.

### **Indebted Policy**

Once a coach has signed off with the Director of Athletics at the end of their season, they can no longer accept the return of equipment or uniforms from an athlete. At this time, to clear indebtedness, an athlete will have to return their inventory items to the Athletic Director. In order

to insure full accountability on the part of all, no one at building level is authorized to take a returned uniform from an indebted athlete, as inventory records must be updated when items are returned or paid for. If an athlete or parent leaves the uniform with someone else at building level, the student will not be cleared from the indebted list.

Athletes are not permitted to keep their uniforms at the end of a season. In an interscholastic athletic program, "jerseys are never retired". Uniforms are costly to replace in small quantity, and allowing student-athletes to keep their uniforms would be fiscally irresponsible. In addition, many of our uniforms are custom made, and cannot be matched. All parents are asked to support our inventory policies, and make every effort to see to it that their child's uniform and protective equipment is returned to the coach immediately following the last game of the season.

Please be advised that it is more beneficial to have the inventory item returned than to have the item paid for. Family cooperation is essential. Please make all attempts to locate and return all school issued athletic inventory at the end of the season.

**Athletes who are indebted will not be issued any other school uniform or protective equipment for another sport season until they clear their indebtedness with the Director of Athletics. If the uniform is lost, or ruined, the athlete will be held responsible. Coaches will also be instructed to withhold the presentation of athletic awards until the missing items of inventory have been returned or paid for. Building Administrators may take additional action such as holding report cards or distribution of graduation cap and gown for those indebted athletes.**

## **ATHLETIC AWARDS**

### **School Awards**

Coaches Awards (Varsity & JV) and Most Valuable Player Awards are presented to those athletes deemed worthy by the coach. Please be advised that the coach may choose **not** to present a Coaches Award or Team MVP Award at the end of a given season if they feel the team does not have a worthy candidate who fits the criteria for the award. *County and State Championship Awards* are presented to team members at the Section VIII or State Finals, or at the Coaches Association Dinner. They are not purchased or presented by the school.

### **Coaches Associations and County Awards**

Many of the sports in Nassau County have organized Coaches Associations that raise funds for various awards, which are presented at County banquets. Such awards may include Honorable Mention, All-League, All-Conference, All-Division, and All-County Awards. Coaches Associations have no affiliation with the school district or Section VIII. They are an independent body, governed by their own by-laws and officers. Therefore, these post-season awards, presented by the coaches, may vary from sport to sport, and year to year. The members of the County Coaches Association determine the selection criteria for awards, pay for the awards, and fund the banquet. Neither the school, nor Section VIII, has any influence with regard to the selection of those individuals who receive these awards.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Athletes are expected to use transportation provided by the school “to” and “from” all athletic contests. Student-athletes are expected to arrive for bus departures on time, and may not drive to the site. If a student does not make the bus, and arrives at the site without administrative approval in advance, the athlete should not expect to participate.

In special cases, a parent may need permission to transport their child to a game site on a given date. In such cases, the request must be made to the Director of Athletics or a building administrator, in writing, in advance of the contest. These shall be considered only as the “rare exception” and should be reserved for emergency situations.

Athletes at away contests are expected to remain “on site” and *under the direct supervision of the coach* at all times. All students will be expected to conduct themselves appropriately when traveling with the team. All athletes are expected to return to school **with the team** after contests as a continuation of the team experience. Parents should not expect to take their athlete home from the game site unless it is the rare exception. In any case, the coach can only approve such a request if the parent personally approaches the coach at the game site. This is the only way we have of making certain that the athlete is, in fact, leaving with their parent. Under no circumstances will a parent be allowed to take any other child home but their own. Nor will a child be permitted to leave an away site with anyone other than his or her parent. Failing to comply with our transportation and supervision policies at away contests may jeopardize an athlete’s team eligibility.

Transportation will not be provided for athletes after contests. Parents are expected to pick up athletes in a timely fashion after home games, or when the athlete returns from an away contest. Athletes should check with the coach for the estimated time of pick up.

In almost all cases at the middle school level, athletes will be finished with practice in time to use school district transportation to return home at the end of the school day. At the high school level, junior varsity and varsity teams will finish practice in time to use district transportation as well. However, in some sports, such as volleyball and basketball, the boys and girls share facilities, which require flexible practice times. The district will not be able to accommodate these athletes with district transportation. Transportation arrangements need to be made for travel home after late practices. This requirement also applies to weekend practices.

## **COLLEGE RECRUITMENT AND ATHLETIC ELIGIBILITY**

Please refer to the “Student-Athlete Game Plan” on the [www.uniondaleschools.org](http://www.uniondaleschools.org) website

Many of our student-athletes express an interest in continuing their athletic participation at the collegiate level. While there are many opportunities for our athletes to play at the next level, athletic scholarships are limited, and are available primarily for the “elite athlete”.

The term “scholarship” very often has been used in an all-inclusive way. It should be noted that the term “scholarship” is referred to in different ways throughout varied sources. It could include any one or combination of other terms, such as financial aid, grants, loans, work-study program, and aid from private or government sources. Very often the amount and method

of scholarship is dependent on the level or division of play at which a particular college competes. It is important for the student-athlete and parents to understand:

1. The type of financial package (if applicable) being discussed; and,
2. The obligations, terms, conditions and longevity of such arrangements; and,
3. How the financial package compares to the actual cost of attending the institution.

The following associations govern the conduct of collegiate athletics, the eligibility of the student-athlete, and the availability of athletic scholarships:

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)  
The National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)  
The National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

There are other associations of colleges and conferences that may or may not affiliate with larger associations and abide by their rules. It is important to inquire about the school's affiliation, to insure that eligibility standards are met, and that appropriate recruitment guidelines are followed.

Athletes who aspire to participate at the collegiate level, and their parents, should discuss potential collegiate opportunities for play with the head varsity coach and guidance counselor, in order to determine the "best fit" with respect to schools that match a student-athlete's academic and athletic potential. Although the appropriate time to discuss college options should be at the end of the athlete's junior year, planning for collegiate participation begins much earlier.

### **Academic Preparation for the Collegiate Bound Athlete**

The process is a long and selective one, and the athlete must be fully prepared for the expectations and demands of participation at the collegiate level. Academic eligibility must be planned for well in advance. Athletes need to be aware of the academic requirements for collegiate eligibility when they enter the ninth grade. Communication with guidance counselors is essential, as core course requirements and standards for academic eligibility at the collegiate level must be met.

Student-athletes must have eligibility for practice and competition in their freshman year certified by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility process. Information brochures/forms have been made available to each high school. The NCAA Clearinghouse reviews required core courses and high school transcripts for all prospective Division I and Division II student-athletes (not Division III). An athlete must submit a "Student Release Form", along with their official high school transcripts, ACT and/or SAT scores, and a payment fee, to the Eligibility Center. After review, a preliminary certification report will be made available to the student-athlete and the colleges that he or she has selected to receive this information. After graduation, the Eligibility Center will review the final transcript and make a final certification decision. This process must be initiated, through the Guidance Counselor, at the beginning of the student-athlete's senior year.

The standards established for NCAA eligibility by the Eligibility Center are different for Division I and Division II. The GPA for 16 core courses, as defined by the NCAA core-course definition, is used in a sliding scale format with corresponding ACT or SAT total scores. The core-courses require at least 4 years of English; at least 3 years of math (at the level of Algebra I or above); at least 2 years of natural or physical science (including I lab course); at least 1 year of additional courses in English, math, or natural or physical science; at least 2 years of social

science; and 4 years of additional academic courses in any of the above areas, and/or foreign language, computer science, philosophy, or comparative religion.

It is essential that parents and student-athletes meet with their counselors to discuss future goals, plan the academic portfolio, and obtain the following:

- Freshman-Eligibility Standards for NCAA institutions
- A copy of the “Guide For College-Bound Student-Athletes and Their Parents”
- NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete (beginning of their senior year)

### **Athletic Participation for the Collegiate Bound Athlete**

Playing at the collegiate level requires an intense commitment to a sport. “Scholarships” only come to those that are considered to be “elite” athletes with outstanding accomplishments. Some of the things that an athlete can do to increase their potential as a collegiate recruit are as follows:

- Participate on other interscholastic teams year-round if possible. This gives the student-athlete a wider overall perspective and a more impressive resume.
- Participate in summer sport camps.
- Try out for all-star or Select Teams, such as the Empire State Games teams, etc., to gain added exposure and visibility.
- Have your current skills evaluated on an on-going basis.
- Participate on outside community and recreational teams.
- Participate in effective strength and conditioning programs year-round to insure peak performance.
- Maintain peak performance standards with a commitment to appropriate nutrition.

When an athlete begins play at the varsity level, he or she should begin to develop a sports resume that includes a listing of their athletic achievements, awards, and media coverage, etc., in addition to their academic accomplishments. This resume should be updated periodically.

More specific information about the recruiting process, eligibility guidelines, the athletic profile, campus visitations, and planning for the college-bound athlete is available in “The Guide For College-Bound Student-Athletes and Their Parents” which can be obtained from high school guidance counselors.

### **PARENT-COACH RELATIONSHIP**

Both parenting and coaching are extremely difficult vocations. By establishing an understanding of each position, we are better able to accept the actions of others and provide greater benefit to the students. As parents, when your children become involved in a school’s programs, you have the right to understand what expectations are placed on your child. This begins with clear communication between coach, parent and student-athlete.

### **Communication Parents Should Expect from Their Child’s Coach**

- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as the players on the squad.
- Location and times of all practices and contests.
- Team requirements (i.e., special equipment, off-season conditioning responsibilities, etc.)

- Procedure should your child be injured while participating
- Team rules and guidelines, and lettering requirements.

### **Communication Coaches Expect from Athletes**

- Notification of any schedule conflicts in advance.
- Special concerns in regard to the coach's philosophy and/or expectations.

As your children become involved in an athletic program, 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 that your child wishes. At these times, discussion with the coach is encouraged.

### **Appropriate Concerns to Discuss with the Coach**

- The treatment of your child – mentally and physically.
- Ways to help your child improve.
- Concerns about your child's behavior.

It is very difficult to accept your child not playing as much as you desire. Coaches are professionals. They make judgment decisions based on what they believe to be in the best interests of the team and for all students involved. Certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach. Other things, such as the following, must be left to the discretion of the coach.

### **Issues Not Appropriate to Discuss with the Coach**

- Playing time
- Team strategy
- Play calling
- Other student-athletes

There are situations that may require a conference between the coach and the parent. These are to be encouraged. It is important that both parties involved have a clear understanding of the other's position. When these conferences are necessary, the following procedures should be followed to help promote a resolution to the issue of concern.

### **Procedures to Follow to Discuss Concerns with the Coach**

- Call the coach to set up an appointment.
- If the coach cannot be reached, call the Athletic Director to ask for assistance in setting up the meeting.
- Please do not attempt to confront a coach before or after a contest or practice. These can be emotional times for the parent and the coach. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution. Please take into consideration the coach's responsibilities at this time, as the coach is responsible for the supervision and safety of all athletes involved in the program, before, during and after activity.

**If meeting with the coach does not provide a satisfactory resolution to your concerns, call and set up an appointment with the Athletic Director to discuss the situation.**

## **SOME RULES FOR PARENTS**

The following is a suggested “code of conduct” for parents:

- Remain seated in spectator areas during competition.
- Do not yell instructions or criticisms to the children.
- Make no derogatory comments to players, coaches, other parents or fans, officials or administrators.
- Do not interfere with your child’s coach.
- Be willing to let the coach be responsible for your child during the duration of the contest.
- If necessary, remind those around you of the rules.
- Provide unconditional love, acceptance and emotional support, regardless of the game’s outcome.
- Filming video for personal use is permitted as long as it does not interfere with other spectators’ view of the event.
- Videos produced by school District personnel are the property of the District, and will not be distributed to parents/guardians or student athletes. However, District videos may be made available at a specified website. Elite junior and senior athletes, as determined by their varsity head coach, will have highlight videos of their performances made for the sole purpose of college recruitment. Highlight videos will be forwarded directly to colleges.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR ELIGIBILITY POLICY**

All students in the Uniondale School District must make learning their primary goal. Students having difficulty in course work as noted on academic progress reports are required to seek assistance to avoid ineligibility. To continue participation in athletics, an athlete must maintain an acceptable level of academic performance.

### **REFERENCE**

Miller Place Panthers’ Athletic Handbook for Student-Athletes and their Parents 2010-2011