

To: School Administrators/Coaches of MSHSL Adapted Athletic Teams

From: Rich Matter, MSHSL Adapted Athletics

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Subject: **Eligibility Requirement Clarifications**

ADAPTED ATHLETICS – ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

The MSHSL has two competitive interscholastic divisions: Physically Impaired (PI) and Cognitively Impaired (CI). Participation in the interscholastic program of a high school is limited to students in grades 7 through 12. Students in an ungraded setting are first eligible when their age peers are in the 7th grade. Student will be eligible for 12 consecutive semesters (6 years), beginning with their or their peers initial entrance into the 7th grade.

The MSHSL requires a sports qualifying exam every three (3) years for participants in competitive athletics. The MSHSL acknowledges that some students with disabilities, like some students without disabilities, will be unable to participate in adapted athletics due to the competitive nature of the programs and for reasons unrelated to their disability. Like other students who do not "make the team", these students should be directed to alternative programs which are less competitive and more recreational in nature.

Students may not participate in both PI and CI divisions. If a student participates in both divisions, the penalty for the use of an ineligible player will be enforced and result in an automatic forfeiture of the game.

A. **PI Division** – The MSHSL Adapted Athletics PI Division program is specifically intended for students with physical impairments who have medical clearance to compete in competitive athletics. A student is eligible to compete in the PI Division with one of the following criteria.

The student must have a diagnosed and documented impairment specified from one of the two sections below: (Must be diagnosed and documented by a Physician and/or Physicians Assistant):

- 1) Neuromuscular, postural/skeletal, traumatic, growth, or neurological impairment that affects motor function, modifies gait patterns, or requires the use of a prosthesis or a mobility device including but not limited to, canes, crutches, or wheelchairs.
- 2) Cardio/respiratory impairment that is deemed safe for competitive athletics but limits the intensity and duration of physical exertion such that sustained activity for over five minutes at 60% of maximum heart rate for age results in physical distress in spite of appropriate management of the health condition.

Note: A condition that can be appropriately managed with appropriate medications, which eliminate physical or health endurance limitations, will NOT be considered to be eligible for adapted athletics.

Specific exclusions to PI competition:

The following health conditions without coexisting physical impairments as outlined above do not qualify the student to participate in the PI Division even though some of the conditions below may be considered Health Impairments by an individual's physician, student's school, or a government agency. This list is not all-inclusive and the conditions are examples of non-qualifying health conditions; other health impairments that are not listed below may also be non-qualifying for participation in the PI Division.

- Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD)
- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Emotional Behavioral Disorder (EBD)
- Autism Spectrum Disorders (including Asperger's Syndrome)
- Tourette's Syndrome
- Neurofibromatosis
- Asthma
- Reactive Airway Disease (RAD)
- Bronchopulmonary Dysplasia (BPD)
- Blindness
- Deafness
- Obesity
- Depression
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder
- Seizure Disorder
- Other Similar Disorders

- B. CI Division** – The MSHSL Adapted Athletics CI Division program is specifically intended for students with cognitive impairments who have medical clearance to compete in competitive athletics. A student is eligible to compete in the CI Division by meeting criteria 1 or 2 below:

Criteria 1. Minnesota Rule:

3525.1333 DEVELOPMENTAL COGNITIVE DISABILITY.

Subpart 1. Definition. "Developmental cognitive disability (DCD)" means a condition resulting in significantly below average intellectual functioning and concurrent deficits in adaptive behavior that adversely affects educational performance and requires special education and related services. DCD does not include conditions primarily due to a sensory or physical impairment, traumatic brain injury, autism spectrum disorders, severe multiple impairments, cultural influences, or inconsistent educational programming.

Subp. 2. Criteria. The team shall determine that a pupil is eligible as having a DCD and is in need of special education instruction and related services if the pupil meets the criteria in items A and B.

A. The pupil demonstrates below average adaptive behavior in school and home, and, if appropriate, community environments. For the purposes of this item, "below average" means:

(1) a composite score at or below the 15th percentile on a nationally normed, technically adequate measure of adaptive behavior; and

(2) documentation of needs and the level of support required in at least four of the seven adaptive behavior domains across multiple environments. Systematic observation and parent input must be included as sources to document need and level of support. All of the following adaptive behavior domains must be considered:

(a) daily living and independent living skills;

(b) social and interpersonal skills;

(c) communication skills;

(d) academic skills;

(e) recreation and leisure skills;

(f) community participation skills; and

(g) work and work-related skills.

Other sources of documentation may include checklists; classroom or work samples; interviews; criterion-referenced measures; educational history; medical history; or pupil self-report.

B. The pupil demonstrates significantly below average general intellectual functioning that is measured by an individually administered, nationally normed test of intellectual ability. For the purposes of this sub item, "significantly below average general intellectual functioning" means:

(1) mild-moderate range: two standard deviations below the mean, plus or minus one standard error of measurement; and

(2) severe-profound range: three standard deviations below the mean, plus or minus one standard error of measurement.

Significantly below average general intellectual functioning must be verified through a written summary of results from at least two systematic observations with consideration for culturally relevant information, medical and educational histories, and one or more of the following: supplemental tests of specific abilities, criterion-referenced tests, alternative methods of intellectual assessment, clinical interviews with parents, including family members, if appropriate, or observation and analysis of behavior across multiple environments.

Criteria 2. Students will also be eligible for the CI Division if they meet the following criteria:

The student must have a diagnosed and documented cognitive impairment. Cognitively impaired refers to students with sub-average intellectual function defined by a **Full Scale** intelligence quotient of 70 or below, using a standardized, nationally-normed, technically adequate, and individually administered intelligence test.

Specific exclusions from CI competition:

A student becomes ineligible to participate in Adapted Athletics when they have attained a level of cognitive performance that exceeds the eligibility requirements. A student who has reached a level of cognitive performance that exceeds the eligibility requirements after the start of a season will be permitted to complete that sports season.

Challenges to a student's eligibility to participate in PI and CI adapted athletics:

A school may file a written challenge regarding a student's eligibility to participate in Adapted Athletics based on the qualifications stated above. Challenges must be submitted within 24 hours of the end of the game in which an alleged ineligible player participated. A challenge submitted after the deadline will not be honored. The student shall remain eligible during the review process. The committee's findings will be final and follow the student through the remaining years of eligibility unless there is a change in physical or cognitive status.

Upon receipt of a written challenge the MSHSL will activate the following review process:

- A. Request of a brief statement from the school/coach supporting the eligibility of the athlete.
- B. Review of the school's/coach's submission and the school's supporting data (testing, medical history, school documentation) by one reviewer who will submit a brief written statement regarding the eligibility status.
- C. Appeal Process: If the initial finding is appealed, a panel of three (3) reviewers will be convened. Two (2) of these reviewers must be from different disciplines (MD, Adapted PE teacher, PT, etc). The school/coach will be asked to submit a video of the player during a game or during PE class that will best demonstrate the disability. The video will be at the schools expense.