

**OVAC BY-LAWS
and REGULATIONS
2015 - 2016**



**Adopted 1943
Rewritten/Revised 2013**

**Approved by OVAC Executive Board
April 18, 2012**

INTRODUCTION

In 1943, nine visionaries from eight Ohio Valley schools, gathered to create an athletic conference for the purpose of competition in football, basketball, and track. Those men were:

F. W. Bowen, Martins Ferry

J. E. Ewing, Wheeling

J. C. Greer, Weir

M. S. Hattala, Yorkville

B.G. Lockhart, Linsly

J.V. Nelson, Bellaire

C. Petty, Linsly

C. F. Walker, Wellsburg

C. S. Wiseman, Union

On April 3, 1943, twenty schools approved the Consitution, and the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference was born. Those original charter schools included: Bellaire, Follansbee, Linsly, Martins Ferry, Moundsville, Powhatan, Shadyside, St. John, Steubenville, Steubenville Catholic, Tiltonsville, Triadelphia, Union, Warwood, Weir, Wellsburg, West Liberty, Wheeling, Wheeling Central Catholic, and Yorkville.

Little did they realize, that seventy-three years later, the OVAC would be one of the nation's premier scholastic Conferences, comprised of fifty-two schools covering twenty counties in two states. Nor that it would sponsor ten boys' sports, nine girls' sports, and award seventy-six championship banners and trophies.

The original Constitution has been replaced by more up-to-date By-Laws, governed and reviewed by an Executive Board consisting of eight administrators, five class representatives, and seven commissioners. Additionally, input is gathered from a staff of thirty-six meet directors who constantly evaluate each meet and all-star contest to keep them current with state policies as well as challenging and unique for our athletes and coaches.

So as it enters its seventieth-third year of existence, the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference continues to be a pioneer in scholastic conferences.

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ARTICLE 1 - NAME

1.1.1 The name of this organization shall be the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference (OVAC). The name, abbreviation, and logo are registered trademarks of the United States Patent and Trademark Office (10.04.11) and are protected as such.

ARTICLE 2 - OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSES

2.1.1 The objectives of this Conference, a voluntary organization, shall be to formulate and maintain policies, rules, and regulations that will safeguard the educational values of inter-scholastic athletic competition.

2.1.2 To cultivate high ideals of sportsmanship and to develop, direct, and supervise a program that will promote, protect, and conserve the health and physical welfare of all participants.

2.1.3 To encourage equality of competition in the classification of schools by enrollment, to adopt point rating systems and regulations for determining team championships in various sports, to recognize outstanding ability of team members by the selection of Conference All-Star Teams, and to sponsor scholarship awards for outstanding achievement in scholarship, athletics, and citizenship.

2.1.4 To encourage the involvement of booster clubs, civic-minded organizations, and individuals from within the geographic area which compromises the membership of the OVAC.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

3.1.1 Membership in the Conference shall be institutional and shall be restricted to secondary schools which are members of the Ohio High School Athletic Association, to private and parochial secondary schools, and member secondary schools of the West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission. [EXPLANATION: As used in these By-Laws, "Secondary School" means a school which includes grades 10, 11, and 12.]

3.1.2 All member schools shall abide by the Constitution and By-Laws of their respective State High School Athletic Association, and shall pay the annual dues assessed by the Conference. In order to qualify for Conference rating and championship, schools must be in good standing. Failure to comply will result in that school(s) forfeiting all membership rights immediately.

3.1.3 Any school violating these By-Laws, or refusing to abide by the decisions of the Conference, passed at a regular meeting, shall immediately and automatically forfeit its membership and may be readmitted only under the same requirements as prevail for new members.

2 - Initial Membership

3.2.1 A school desiring membership in the Conference shall make application through its principal or administrative head on a form which will be provided by the Conference Executive Secretary. All applications for membership shall be voted on at a regular meeting of the Conference and a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote shall be required for membership.

3 - Continuing Membership

3.3.1 Members are automatically renewed each year with the submission of the annual dues/entry fee form and payment.

4 - Withdrawal/Rentry

3.4.1 Should a school withdraw from the Conference and wish to rejoin at a later time, they must re-apply and be voted upon. In addition, they must pay an \$1000.00 re-entry fee which must accompany their application.

ARTICLE 4 - CONFERENCE-SPONSORED EVENTS

4.1.1 Any activities, programs, banquets, awards, etc. that in any way pertain to the OVAC must first be presented to and approved by the OVAC Executive Board. [11.29.08]

4.1.2 A new sport will be sanctioned by the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference when twenty-five percent (25%) of its member schools sponsor that sport and request recognition from the Executive Board. Upon request to the Executive Board, a classification may be considered. [02.01.09]

4.1.3 If a school has participation in a specific sport, they will be expected to participate in that sport's tournament or meet. Failure to participate will result in penalties as set forth in Article 11.1.2 of these By-Laws.

4.1.4 Any scheduled regular-season contest which is not started due to unforeseen circumstances as determined by the Executive Board (such as failure of a team to arrive, strike, school closing) shall not be included in won-lost statistics. The parties affected by this event will have their accumulative points divided by one less game. Questions and appeals regarding this can be sent to the Executive Board for their review.

ARTICLE 5 - MEETINGS

5.1.1 There will be three (3) regular meetings of the Conference during the school year. [4.25.00] The business meetings of the Conference shall be held during

the second Wednesday in August,

the first Wednesday in November, and

the second Tuesday in April. [4.25.00]

One dinner only, the Banquet of Champions, will be held in May.

5.1.2 Member schools of the OVAC are required to attend OVAC meetings in the course of the year (special meetings and business meetings). Member schools must attend three (3) regularly scheduled meetings per year and any special meetings called. Member schools who miss a meeting will immediately be placed on probation. If this occurs twice, that school will be suspended from the Conference the school year following the infraction(s). To be readmitted to the Conference, the school must apply to the Executive Board for readmission.

To be removed from probation status, a member school missing a meeting may pay a fine of \$100 within thirty (30) days from the notification of the treasurer. Should the fine not be paid by this date, the school will remain on probation. [4.25.00]

5.1.3 Special meetings may be called by the President and must be called upon the written request of ten (10) member schools of the Conference.

5.1.4 A quorum shall be declared when 50% plus one (1) of the member schools are represented.

5.1.5 **Roberts' Rules of Order** shall be used for determining parliamentary procedure.

The usual order of business shall be:

Meeting called to order by President (or the Executive Secretary)

Roll Call of Conference schools

Approval of minutes of previous meeting

Old business

New business

Adjournment

ARTICLE 6 - DUES, ENTRY FEES, FINANCES

6.1.1 The annual dues of each member school of the Conference shall be three hundred dollars (\$300.00). This fee will also include the entry fees for the teams making it into the semi-finals of the volleyball, basketball, softball, and baseball championships. [4.20.06]

6.1.2 The annual dues are due and payable on or before October 1. [8.23.09]

6.1.3 The membership year shall begin on September 1 and end on August 31.

6.1.4 Entry fees shall be set at forty dollars (\$40) per championship. [02.22.12]

6.1.5 Additional finances will be procured by securing sponsorships and television production. [4.20.06]

ARTICLE 7 - CLASSIFICATION OF SCHOOLS

7.1.1 The member schools of the Conference shall, according to the number of students enrolled in grades 9, 10, and 11 (total boys and girls), be divided into Class 1A, Class 2A, Class 3A, Class 4A, and Class 5A. Every attempt will be made to divide member schools into five (5) classes of ten (10) schools each.

7.1.2 In the event that a tie should occur between two classes, the Executive Board shall break the tie by using the following criteria: 1. the total number of students enrolled in the junior class for that year; 2. if still tied, the total number of students enrolled in the sophomore class for that year; 3. if still tied, the total number of students enrolled in the freshman class for that year; 4. if still tied, the Executive Board will consider the past history of the schools' classifications. Should it reach that point, the decision of the Executive Board shall be final. [01.22.14]

7.1.3 The OVAC shall reclassify its member schools each year. Schools shall report to the Executive Secretary the FIRST FULL WEEK IN NOVEMBER the enrollment in three grades (9, 10, 11) as per the State Report which was filed the past October. Schools shall be asked to verify enrollments by submitting to the Executive Secretary a copy of the October enrollment report submitted to the State. Ohio will be asked to submit their Ohio high school athletic report figures, and West Virginia will be asked to submit their State Board of Education student report figures.

7.1.4 Upon the written request from the principal of a member school, a school may request to play up a class or more than where it is classified. However, in so doing, all sports, male and female, must also play in that class. No school will be permitted to play down a class. It is the total prerogative of the Executive Board as to grant the request based on the need and best interest of the Conference. [4.20.06]

7.1.5 Schools will be notified prior to December 31 as to the classification of the schools for the upcoming year.

ARTICLE 8 - RULES OF ELIGIBILITY

8.1.1 The Ohio High School Athletic Association Rules of Eligibility shall govern the eligibility of students competing in athletics for a member school located in Ohio. The West Virginia Secondary Schools Activities Commission Rules of Eligibility shall govern the eligibility of students competing in athletics for a member school located in West Virginia.

8.1.2 Schools that are not members of a state organization must still abide by the dates designated for each sport for the state they're located. [4.20.06]

ARTICLE 9 - ADMINISTRATION

9.1.1 The administration of the Conference shall be vested in the principals, vice-principals, athletic directors, and other designated administrators of its member schools.

9.1.2 Each member school shall have one vote. Voting shall be done by the principal, vice-principal, athletic director, other designated administrator, or a designated individual representing that school. Recommendations must be made by the school's principal or his/her designated representative. [9.28.05]

9.1.3 The principal, vice-principal, athletic director, or other designated administrator of a member school may appoint a bona fide member of its faculty to represent him at meetings of the Conference. However, any measure enacted by the Conference during the absence of the principal, vice-principal, athletic director, or other designated administrator shall be binding upon that particular school and shall not absolve the principal, vice-principal, athletic director, or other designated administrator of his responsibility under the By-Laws of the Conference.

9.1.4 Should the Executive Secretary or Executive Board deem it necessary, a written ballot may be mailed to the member school to be acted upon and signed by that school's principal.

2 - Executive Board

9.2.1 There shall be an Executive Board consisting of the President, Vice-President, and the Immediate Past President. There shall also be five (5) appointed Executive Board members.

9.2.2 The President and three Executive Board members shall be from the same State. The Past President and Vice-President and two Executive Board members shall be from the same State.

9.2.3 The President's and Vice-President's positions will be elected every two (2) years. The President will officially take control at the regularly scheduled August Board meeting.

9.2.4 The Executive Board shall meet at the call of the President and shall have the authority to act for the Conference in the interim between meetings of the Conference. Two (2) or more members of the Executive Board may petition the President to call a special meeting. However, Constitutional action taken by the Executive Board shall be subject to the approval of the Conference at its next regular meeting.

9.2.5 The Executive Board shall meet ten (10) times a year (the fourth Wednesday of each month). It will not meet in December and July.

9.2.6 When a vacancy occurs for an Executive Board member, the Executive Board shall review the candidates from the schools in that state and select one to serve.

9.2.7 The Executive Board member should be an administrator or past administrator of the member school in the state he/she represents.

9.2.8 Should an Executive Board member miss 30% of the Board meetings within a given year, he/she shall be replaced by the remaining members. Extenuating circumstances shall be taken into consideration.

3 - Class Representatives

9.3.1 The Executive Board shall have the authority to appoint class representatives, one (1) from each classification.

9.3.2 The class representative should be an athletic director or assistant athletic director of the member school in the class he/she represents.

9.3.3 When a vacancy occurs for a class representative, the Executive Board shall review the candidates from the schools in that class and select one to serve.

4 - Commissioners

9.4.1 The Executive Board shall have the authority to appoint commissioners as it deems necessary.

9.4.2 There shall be a Commissioner appointed for football and basketball to assign game officials for Conference contests, as well as a Commissioner for baseball, softball, volleyball, track/cross country, and wrestling. This Commissioner does not have to be a bona fide member of the faculty of any member school. The Commissioner is directly responsible to the Executive Board in all matters related to the Conference.

9.4.3 **All member schools must use Conference-assigned officials in regular season Conference football and boys'/girls' basketball contests.** This includes all invitational tournaments, holiday tournaments or events sponsored by any promoter. Events held outside the geographical area of the Conference are excluded from this requirement. However, ALL games contested will count in the standings. [10.23.13]

Failure to do so will result in a \$1,000 fine which must be paid prior to the start of the next sporting season. Should the fine not be paid by this time, the school would be ineligible to re-

ceive any Conference championships or compete in any all-star games until the fine is paid.

Should this violation occur again (including within that season after they have been notified), that school would immediately be expelled from the Conference, with no appeal or opportunity to re-enter for a period of five (5) years from the date of infraction. [04.18.06]

5 - Chain of Command

9.5.1 The following OVAC chain of command is to be used regarding any concerns in Conference-related events:

VARSITY HEAD COACH
to
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR
to
PRINCIPAL
to
CLASS REPRESENTATIVE
to
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
to
EXECUTIVE BOARD

[NOTE: No concerns should be registered from an assistant coach or jayvee coach. It should only be initiated by the head varsity coach. Obviously, athletic directors can go straight to the Executive Secretary with their concerns. However matters concerning coaches should go through the chain of command.] [9.28.05]

ARTICLE 10 - SCHEDULES [09.28.11]

10.1.1 Schedules for the upcoming year are to be submitted, in writing, to the following people on the following dates:

February 1	Football	Dave Clutter
February 1	Volleyball	Pegi Bannan
February 20	Baseball	Steve Wojcik
March 13	Softball	Tom Bechtel
June 1	Soccer	Chuck Robinson
June 1	Basketball	John Howell
September 1	Wrestling	Sean Smith
October 28	Swimming	Bill Brubaker

10.1.2 Should the schedule not be complete, what IS COMPLETE at that time must be submitted. Changes can still be made after the schedule is submitted.

10.1.3 Should the schedule not be **POSTMARKED BY THAT DATE**, the school will be assessed a \$500.00 penalty which **MUST BE PAID WITHIN TWO WEEKS OF THE POST-MARK DATE**. If it is not paid, the school will be ineligible for all championships and all-star contests until that fine is paid.

10.1.4 Schools will be notified (through the athletic director) several times prior to the date, either by e-mail or phone, that the schedule is due.

10.1.5

SPORT	DATE SCHEDULE DUE	GEM#1	GEM#2	OCN
FOOTBALL for 2016 season	FEBRUARY 1, 2016 Send to Dave Clutter	01.04.16	01.18.16	01.25.16
VOLLEYBALL for 2016 season	FEBRUARY 1, 2016 Send to Pegi Bannan	01.04.16	01.18.16	01.25.16
SOCCER for 2016 season	JUNE 1, 2016 Send to Chuck Robinson	05.04.16	05.18.16	05.25.16
BASKETBALL for 2016 - 2017 season	JUNE 1, 2016 Send to John Howell	05.04.16	05.18.16	05.25.16
WRESTLING for 20145 - 2016 season	SEPTEMBER 1, 2015 Send to Sean Smith	08.04.15	08.18.15	08.25.15
SWIMMING for 2015 - 2016 season	OCTOBER 28, 2015 Send to Bill Brubaker	09.30.15	10.14.15	10.21.15
BASEBALL for 2016 season	FEBRUARY 20, 2016 Send to Steve Wojcik	01.23.16	02.06.16	02.13.16
SOFTBALL for 2016 season	MARCH 13, 2016 Send to Tom Bechtel [GEM: Group E-Mail; OCN: One Call Now]	02.14.16	02.28.16	03.06.16

ARTICLE 11 - COMPETITION [09.28.11]

11.1.1 In the past, the policy of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference regarding schools who did not compete in championships was to make them ineligible for that year and the following year. However, due to the turnover in coaches and athletic directors and schools changing their minds regarding competing, the Executive Board has created the following policy starting with the 2012-2013 school year.

11.1.2 Should a school **choose** not to compete for a championship in a sport that they sponsor, they will be ineligible for that school year only. [Compete means failure to schedule the minimum number of games, leave required dates open, or just choose not to take part.] However, in doing so, they will also:

- Forfeit the right to have athletes for that sport gain All-Conference recognition;
[Effective 2012-2013]
- Forfeit the right to earn “sports specific” scholarships. [Effective 2012-2013]
- Forfeit the right to participate in any All-Star game for that sport; [Effective 2013-2014]

11.1.3 Additionally, the school will have the entry fee for participation accumulated each year they do not participate and will not be permitted to participate until that fee is paid. [Example: Don't compete this year; next year entry fee is \$80. Don't compete until following year, \$120. And so forth.] [Effective 2012-2013]

11.1.4 The minimum requirements have been seriously reduced to accommodate schools with dual affiliations, schools that are located on the fringe of the Conference, and schools that have trouble scheduling. However, in fairness to the majority of the schools who compete year in, year out, this policy has been created. **Please keep in mind that the choice not to compete is exactly that: a choice.**

ARTICLE 12 - FORFEITURE/ELIGIBILITY REGARDING CHAMPIONSHIPS [03.23.22]

12.1.1 With the increase of forfeitures due to student eligibility, the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference has adopted the following guidelines in dealing with these issues. The **FINAL DECISION**, regardless of guidelines, will rest with the Executive Board.

12.1.2 **INDIVIDUALS** - Generally speaking, an individual athlete will not be stripped of a medal or plaque that he/she received, unless the Executive Board deems it necessary. If time permits, the student will be ruled ineligible for All-Conference recognition and the ability to play in the all-star game should there be one. However, if the results have already been released or awarded, or the all-star game has been played, the recognition will stand.

In the event of a meet such as cross country, track, golf, swimming, or wrestling, the individual will be removed from the standings and that place declared vacated. No other place finisher will be elevated. Should the points earned by that individual affect the team awards, the standings (championship/runner-up) will be adjusted accordingly.

12.1.3 **TEAMS** - Should time permit, the tournament pairing will be redone to eliminate the team in question. This will be determined by the Executive Board, the Executive Secretary, and the sport committee/director. Should schools already have buses in place, venues prepared, and the time frame will not allow reasonable restructuring, the pairing will remain.

12.1.4 **HEAD-TO-HEAD COMPETITION** - If the competition has been head-to-head (basketball, volleyball) the following will occur. The school in question will forfeit their trophy, their overall points, and any monetary reimbursement they might receive.

If they were the winner, the defeated team will be elevated and their former position declared vacant.

If they were the loser, their position will be declared vacant.

12.1.5 **STANDINGS** - In the event of softball and baseball (no head-to-head competition past champion/runner-up), the team in question will forfeit their position and the remaining teams will be moved up to fill the vacated slot.

12.1.6 **OVERALL CHAMPIONS** - Since five places are necessary to fairly determine the overall champion, the Executive Board will review each case in question and award the points in accordance with these guidelines.

12.1.7 **ALL MEMBER SCHOOLS ARE ENCOURAGED TO CAREFULLY, CAREFULLY, CAREFULLY CHECK THE ELIGIBILITY OF EVERY ATHLETE.** If any doubt exists, the safest procedure is to contact your State association and request a ruling **BEFORE** the student/athlete even participates. Student/athletes **SHOULD NOT BE PUNISHED** for an adult not carefully doing his/her job.

2 - Game/Match Forfeits

12.2.1 **FORFEITS - [06.26.13]** While forfeits are not recognized by the OHSAA or the WVSSAC, the OVAC reserves the right to grant a school a forfeit should a contest not be played for less than justifiable reasons.

In no way does this forfeit affect either school's records or standings in the State; it only affects the records and standings in the OVAC.

The decision to grant the forfeit will be made by the commissioner or meet director after consulting with the Executive Secretary and both schools involved. Any appeal must be made to the Executive Secretary to be addressed by the Executive Board within forty-eight (48) hours or before the cutoff date, whichever occurs first.

The **offended school** shall receive BOTH the first level points and the bonus points it would have received for defeating the offending school. Their total divisor shall include that game as if it had been played.

The **offending school** shall receive no points as if they had lost the game. Their total divisor shall include that game as if it had been played.

Additional penalties for the school and/or the coach may be assessed at the discretion of the Board.

NOTE: This policy supercedes any policies currently written in the formats. As each format is reviewed for the 2014-2015 year, it will be incorporated in it.

3 – All-Star Games/Matches

12.3.1 **ELIGIBILITY** - In order for an athlete to be eligible to participate in an OVAC All-Star game/match, he or she must be currently enrolled* in OR a graduate of the school that he or she represents and must have participated in that sport at that school. [10.23.13]

*"the student must have participated in accordance with the OHSAA by-laws [4-3-1] during the regular season at the school attendance area where they reside." [12.04.13]

ARTICLE 13 - RATINGS

13.1.1 The Executive Board shall, at its discretion, appoint people to determine ratings for all championship teams. This person shall be responsible for gathering the records of each school, figuring the ratings as determined by Board-approved policy, and releasing those ratings through the media and Conference website.

13.1.2 A committee appointed by the Executive Board shall meet on an annual basis to review and modify the rating system for each sport. Modifications to each system must be approved by the Executive Board before being implemented.

13.1.3 Each sport's rating system, as well as the formats used to implement each rating system, shall be posted on the website for schools to review.

ARTICLE 14 - COACHES' CODE OF ETHICS

14.1.1 The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. An interscholastic program should be designed to enhance academic achievement and should never interfere with opportunities for academic success. Each student should be treated with the utmost respect, and his or her welfare should be considered in decisions by the coach at all times. Believing this, the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference has adapted this Code of Ethics from the model set forth by the National Federation of State High Schools Association.

- The coach shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, **shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.**

- The coach shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession.** In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, **the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.**

- The coach shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.

- The coach shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.

- The coach shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.

- The **coach shall master the contest rules and shall teach them** to his or her team members. **The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.**

- The **coach shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship** by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.

- The coach shall respect and support contest officials.** The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.

The Executive Board of the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference expects its member schools and their coaches to abide by all rules set forth in the OVAC By-Laws and those reviewed and updated each year in the various formats for each sport.

The OVAC also expects each school's athletic director and coach of each sport to read and adhere to the guidelines and regulations for each sport, all-star team, all-conference selection, and rating system that are posted on the OVAC website (www.ovac.org).

Schools and coaches who violate these guidelines or seek to circumvent the spirit or letter of the rules may face disciplinary action from the Executive Board. Such actions could include, but are not limited to:

- Denial of participation in championship meets/all-star games
- Probationary status imposed on the coach, team, or entire athletic program
- Forfeiture of game or match
- Fines

Multiple occurrences of infractions from a school could lead to that school being denied membership in the Ohio Valley Athletic Conference. The school could re-apply for admission the following year, but would be required to follow the process outlined in the OVAC By-Laws (3.4.1).

Violations not specifically addressed in the formats will be dealt with on an individual basis by the Executive Board.

Athletic Directors are expected to monitor the actions of their coaches, both head and assistant, see that they are aware of all guidelines, and hold them accountable for their actions.

ARTICLE 15 - AMENDMENTS

15.1.1 The By-Laws of the Conference may be amended by a two-third (2/3) affirmative vote of the member schools.

15.1.2 Before a proposed amendment may become a part of the By-Laws, it must be read at a regular meeting immediately preceding the regular meeting at which it is adopted.

15.1.3 Amendments that are adopted shall become effective at the date specified in each amendment, or the amendment shall become effective at the beginning of the following school year.

REVIEWED AND UPDATED: 06.18.15