



Ohio High School Athletic Association
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GUIDANCE ON BYLAW 4-10- AMATEUR – 2020-2021

Maintaining compliance with the Amateur Section within Student Eligibility Bylaw 4 is fundamental to the mission of education based athletics. It is expected that a student who represents his or her school in one of the 26 interscholastic sports sponsored by the OHSAA shall be an amateur in that sport. An “amateur” is one who participates for the physical, mental, social and educational benefits interscholastic sports competition has to offer and not for any present or future monetary or commercial gains. Thus, a clear line must exist and be maintained between education-based sports and professional sports. It is the shared responsibility of school personnel, parents and students to maintain this clear line of distinction.

Bylaw 5-1-1 allows for awards, gifts and/or prizes resulting from participation **in any sport in which the student is an interscholastic athlete** to be accepted by the student from any source provided the award, gift or prize does not exceed **\$400.00** in value. Cash can never be accepted by virtue of one’s participation in a sport. **See Bylaw 4-10-2 a)**

Just as with any other eligibility situation, principals and athletic administrators (or other school administrators) should direct questions concerning this section 10 to the OHSAA compliance staff: Senior Director of Compliance Roxanne Price or Senior Director of Compliance Deborah Moore

Q1. Who is subject to the amateur section of bylaw 4?

A1. All students desiring to participate in one of the OHSAA’s 26 recognized sports beginning in grade seven and continuing through high school are subject to the amateur bylaw.

Q2. What acts shall cause a student’s amateur status to be forfeited?

A2. There are several specific prohibitions discussed in Bylaw 4-10-2 that place a student’s amateur status in jeopardy:

1. **Competing for money or other remuneration.** An exception to this prohibition can be made if a student, who is competing in the amateur division within a competition where prize money is available, signs a **written declaration prior to the competition** in which the student agrees that he or she will not accept any prize money. A student may accept allowable travel, meals and lodging expenses provided that these expenses are not contingent upon the student’s individual or a team’s finish or performance or given as an incentive to achieve a specific goal or performance. Receipt of expenses received by the athlete shall be reported to the OHSAA so as to determine whether or not the expenses are in excess of those reasonable amounts for travel, meals and lodging. Click here to access the written declaration form: <http://www.ohsaa.org/Portals/0/Eligibility/Bylaw4-10-2RequestRetentionofAmateurStatus.pdf>
2. **Capitalizing on the athlete’s fame by receiving money, merchandise or services of value.** Some examples of this would be an athlete who, because of his or her “athletic fame,” accepts money, merchandise, such as sports equipment, or services of value, such as a membership to a club or free

admission to entertainment venues based in whole or in part upon the notoriety the athlete received through his/her athletic skills and achievements. This includes using the athlete's skill, directly or indirectly, for pay in any form in that sport. "Pay" includes, but is not limited to, any direct or indirect remuneration, gratuity or other economic benefit in either the present or future, or any division or split of surplus (bonuses, games' receipts, etc.). Scholarships to institutions of higher education are specifically exempted.

3. **Signing a contract or making a commitment** of any kind to play professional athletics, regardless of its legal enforceability or any payment received. This prohibits signing a contract during the interscholastic athletics season that is dated after the completion of the athlete's interscholastic athletic eligibility;
Receiving, directly or indirectly, a salary, reimbursement of expenses, merchandise or services or any other form of financial assistance or benefits from a professional sports organization based upon athletics skills or participation. EXCEPTION: An athlete may receive reimbursement of expenses as per item #1 for a professional tryout;
5. **Competing with any professional athletics team**, even if no pay or remuneration for expenses was received; or
6. **Entering into an agreement with a sports or marketing agent** (O.R.C. §§4771.01 et seq.).

Q3. Can you describe activities that do not jeopardize amateur status (Bylaw 4-10-3)?

A3. Here is a list that includes but is not limited to the following activities:

1. **Accepting a fee** for instructing, supervising or officiating in an organized youth sports program or recreation, playground or camp activities;
2. **Receiving school-sponsored membership or participation fees** in youth serving agencies, athletic clubs, community recreation centers, instructional programs or camps, etc. provided such fees are paid directly to the agency;
3. **Receiving an award, gift, playing equipment or prize of monetary value** which does not exceed the awards amount authorized by the Association – the current value of such items is **\$400**. (Bylaw 5-1-1)
4. **Receiving all non-monetary benefits and awards provided to members of an Olympic team** beyond actual and necessary expenses, including entertainment, equipment, clothing, long distance telephone service, Internet access, and any other item or service for which it can be demonstrated that the same benefit is available to all members of the nation's Olympic team or the specific sport Olympic team in question;
5. **Accepting funds that are administered by the United States Olympic Committee** pursuant to its Operation Gold Program; or
6. **Participating in member school, charitable or educational promotions** or fund-raising activities that involve the use of athletic ability by student-athletes to obtain funds (e.g., swim-a-thons, lift-a-thons, shoot-a-thons) from donors provided the student-athletes receive no compensation or prizes for their participation.
7. **Accepting scholarship funds that are administered by a national governing body**, e.g. the United States Bowling Congress' Scholarship Program, provided such funds are paid directly to a postsecondary institution and the funds are not available until after the student has graduated from high school.

Q4. Is it a violation to accept money or merchandise with a value greater than \$400 for activities such as a Slam-Dunk Contest, a Hole in One Contest or a Three-point shooting contests?

A4. OHSAA amateur rules do not consider these contests to be the same as the sports which they may represent. Thus, it is permissible for a basketball player, for example, to retain OHSAA amateur eligibility for accepting cash for a slam dunk contest. However, it is worth cautioning all students that accepting such prizes may compromise future athletic eligibility at the collegiate level. Therefore, the OHSAA recommends that monetary prizes never be accepted for any sports-related participation.

4/8/2020

Q5. A student wishes to accept money for professional rodeo participation. Will this affect his eligibility for baseball?

A5. No. The amateur rules apply only to the 26 OHSAA sports and to those sports in which the individual student wishes to retain amateur status. Rodeo is not an OHSAA sponsored sport. Therefore, the amateur rules do not apply to this student.