



Rules & Regulations

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Section I: Purpose of VHAC

The specific purpose of the Virginia Homeschool Athletic Conference (VHAC) is to support homeschool athletes and their families throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia by providing a Christ-centered, structured, and consistent framework for competitive sports. VHAC is committed to establishing leagues and tournaments for traditional middle and high school sports, tailored specifically to the needs of home-educated students. The overarching goal is to expand and promote homeschool athletics across the state, offering a viable and organized, God-honoring alternative to public school sports programs.

2025–2026 VHAC Officers

- Ben Whittemore, President
- Shaun Alexander, Vice President
- Clark Jones, Treasurer
- Lynn Conroe, Board Member
- David Bishop, Board Member
- Alexander Auwarter, Board Member
- Lane Lockard, Board Member

Board Members—excluding the President, Vice President, and Treasurer—serve two-year terms. All Board Members are elected by VHAC member organizations. The VHAC Board is entrusted with maintaining the overall structure, governance, and integrity of the VHAC program. Individuals interested in serving on the board may apply online at www.vhaconference.com.

Tournament Subcommittees

A dedicated Tournament Subcommittee is established for each sport and season. Each subcommittee consists of three volunteers who are appointed and approved by the VHAC Board. These members are responsible for determining tournament structures and voting on waiver requests. Subcommittee members serve on a rotating basis until the full pool of approved volunteers has been utilized. Individuals interested in serving on a subcommittee are encouraged to apply notify VHAC via email at vha.sports@gmail.com. Please advise the sport and season you are interested in participating as a subcommittee member.

Section II: Team Registrations & Requirements

Online Registration

Season registration must include:

1. Sports organization website
2. Team head coach's email and phone number
3. A designated primary representative to act as the point of contact on behalf of organization
4. Organization's division
5. Season/State Tournament rosters (player name, date of birth, jersey number)
6. State Tournament registration

Season Registration Deadlines:

- Fall Sports – August 15
- Winter Sports – November 15
- Spring Sports – April 1

Tournament Roster Change Deadlines:

- Fall Sports – September 15
- Winter Sports – January 10
- Spring Sports – April 15

Full team roster will be distributed to organizations designated representatives a week prior to tournament start. Any rule violation may result in automatic forfeit per each game subject to the ruling of the subcommittee.

Player Eligibility

Players must be actively homeschooled in accordance with Virginia law. Proof of a filed "Notice of Intent" or proof of religious exemption may be requested. Players may be dual-enrolled in college or secondary school but must not have graduated from highschool. Participation in a college team terminates VHAC eligibility.

Age Divisions

"VHAC will follow **HSPN age restrictions for all volleyball and basketball** (see below).

Age Divisions: VOLLEYBALL Only

1. **Middle School**

- No older than 14 years of age as of September 26, 2025. (A player can turn 15 years old after September 26, 2025.)

2. **Junior Varsity**

- No older than 17 years of age as of September 26, 2025. (A player can turn 18 years old after September 26, 2025.)

3. **Varsity**

- No older than 18 years of age as of August 1, 2025. (A player can turn 19 years old after August 1, 2025.)

Age Divisions: BASKETBALL Only

1. **Middle School**

- No older than 14 years of age as of March 6, 2026. (A player can turn 15 years old after March 6, 2026.)

2. **Junior Varsity**

- No older than 17 years of age as of March 6, 2026. (A player can turn 18 years old after March 6, 2026.)

3. **Varsity**

- No older than 18 years of age as of August 1, 2025. (A player can turn 19 years old after August 1, 2025.)

For all other sports, the following age restrictions apply:

1. **Middle School**

1. **Fall Sports** – No older than 14 years of age as of August 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year.
2. **Winter Sports** – No older than 14 years of age as of October 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year.
3. **Spring Sports** – No older than 14 years of age as of January 1, 2026, for the 2025-2026 school year.

2. **Junior Varsity**

No older than 16 years of age as of August 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year. (A player can turn 17 years old after August 1, 2025.)

3. **Varsity**

No older than 18 years of age as of August 1, 2025, for the 2025-2026 school year. (A player can turn 19 years old after August 1, 2025.)"

Recruiting Prohibition

VHAC prohibits recruiting players from other homeschool teams. The decision to change teams must originate from the family, not coaches. If a coach does poach a player, first offence, one-year suspension, second offense; three year suspension.

(Release Request) Before a player can join another team in their area, the player must submit a release request to their original homeschool team. The original team has the right to refuse the release in any situation where the original team believes that another team was recruiting the player. The VHAC board should be notified and may serve as a mediator in such a situation, if there is a disagreement.

Waiver Requests

Teams may request waivers for players who do not meet eligibility criteria. All waivers are reviewed by the tournament subcommittee or VHAC Board and will be granted in very rare circumstances on a case-by-case review. The Board may request

Possible waiver reasons include:

1. Age exception - If granted, a player may only play one division below their appropriate age level.
2. Private school students without a school team - Additional documents and proof may be requested by the Board for consideration of such a request.
3. New team formation - A new team may play exhibition games in the conference at one age division lower than their oldest player, if approved by the Board. Any game played at a division below a teams appropriate age division shall not count towards conference standings / tournament placement. If such a team wishes to play in the state tournament, the team will be required to follow the appropriate rules, with no exception to age limitations, unless approved by the Board.

Dual Rostering

In season play, a player may be dual rostered on a team only one level below the highest competitive division in which the player actually plays. This does not include a situation where a player sits on the bench for game observation experience. The player will be limited to six total quarters of play between the rosters in a single day.

Section III: Game Play and Tournament Participation

All official Junior varsity and varsity VHAC games must be reported to **MaxPreps** under VHAC for tournament seed placement. In order to qualify for tournament play, teams must play a minimum of VHAC sanctioned games, according to their respective level and where applicable.

- Varsity teams must play:
 - 4 games against 4 different teams *or*

- 6 games with a minimum of 3 teams
- JV: 4 games minimum
- Middle School and JV Girls: No minimum currently

Games must be played against other **homeschool organizations located within the state of Virginia**, regardless of their conference or association membership. Only **two games against a single opponent** will count toward VHAC tournament qualification.

Note: At present, there is **no required number of games** to participate in **volleyball or soccer** tournaments.

Game Cancellations and Forfeits:

- If a team cancels a game and it cannot be rescheduled, the canceling team will **receive a forfeit** unless agreed upon by both teams.
- In cases of **inclement weather**, both teams must make a reasonable effort to reschedule. If rescheduling is not possible, **no forfeit will be issued**.

Game Location Policy: All VHAC league games must be played **within the Commonwealth of Virginia**, unless **both teams mutually agree** to play at an out-of-state location.

Tournaments

To hold a VHAC State Tournaments a minimum of 5 qualified teams must participate.

- Tournament and VHAC fees:
 - Tournament Fees: assessed each season based upon venue/location
 - VHAC Members Fee: \$10/player/season
 - Non-VHAC Member Fee: \$225/team ***(This is in addition to the tournament fee.)***

Refund Policy:

No refunds will be issued after State Tournament registration. In cases of weather or other uncontrollable events, refunds will be based on unused funds.

Playing Different Sports for Different Homeschool Organizations

Athletes are permitted to play another sport for a Homeschool Athletic Organization if their regular organization does not have the “second sport” that the player wishes to participate in. For example, the player plays for team A for basketball but the organization does not offer baseball. The player may play baseball for another organization. (see release protocols above in other circumstances.)

Section IV: Competition Rules

Seeding and Game Rules

Unless otherwise noted, VHAC follows **NFHS** (National Federation of State High School Associations) rules: www.nfhs.org. Please see www.vhaconference for individual sport rules and regulations.

Tournament General Guidelines

- Fans may not use the courts/ fields during breaks.
- Home team wears white uniforms.
- Home team must provide a scorekeeper and manage the game clock
- Unruly spectators may be removed.
- A player can only play on one team in a tournament. If this rule is violated, all games in which the player participated will be subject to forfeiture.
- Seeding will be based on overall conference record against teams in appropriate divisions, overall record (including non-conference games), and head-to-head records (in case of a tie). Conference teams will be seeded first and then non-conference teams.

Bench Restrictions:

Only rostered players, coaches, and team staff may be in the bench area.

Section V: Code of Ethics

VHAC coaches agree to uphold:

- Christ-centered leadership
 - Respect for players, officials, and opponents
 - Mastery and honest implementation of the rules
 - Positive influence on player behavior and spectator sportsmanship
 - No use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco when working with players
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Applies to: Coaches, athletic officials, parents, and players.

Expectations:

1. No confrontational/verbal assaults
2. Disqualifications and ejections can result from:
 - Fighting, taunting, obscene gestures
 - Cursing or spitting
 - Leaving the bench to fight
 - Speaking disrespectfully to officials

Penalties:

- **Ejection** = suspension from current and next game

- **Disqualification** = removal from current game only
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Private School Athlete Participation in Homeschool Organizations

Private school athletes may petition to play for a homeschool organization only if their private school does not offer the particular sport that the player is requesting to play. ***(This is treated like a waiver request and must be submitted to the VHAC Board for consideration. VHAC may request documentation and proof to aid in deliberations.)***

No more than 25 percent of a team roster for any sport may be comprised of private school students that do not have that specific sport. A formal letter from the private school must be submitted to VHAC stating they do not have the specific sport. No homeschool athletes may be cut in order to accept private school athletes.