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550 MIDDLE SCHOOL VARSITY ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

Brainerd Public Schools – Independent School District #181

The Brainerd High School Activities Department believes that with few exceptions, high school athletic teams should be made up of high school students in grades 9-12. Every attempt will be made by coaches to recruit high school students for participation in activities. However, there are rare situations where upward movement of 7th or 8th grade students may occur.

When an exception is made, the 7th or 8th grade student will not deny a student in grades 9-12 the opportunity from participating at the high school level. In addition, consideration will be made for the following for each child that is being considered for acceleration:

Advantages of Acceleration:

- Need to challenge athletes by playing with and against better competition.
- The athlete would play a varsity schedule with a longer season
- The athlete may experience frustrations due to the disparity in skill level if they continue to play at present level.
- More opportunities will exist for athletes from the team the player leaves. A nonstarter now becomes a starter.
- The competition for positions on the team they are moved to is increased, which improves intensity and skill development for everyone.
- Athletes will be given an opportunity to advance their skill level in a team sport just as they can in an individual sport.

Disadvantages of Acceleration:

- Athletes/parents of the team the athlete is moving to may feel they are being displaced.
- Athletes/parents from both the team the athlete is leaving and the team they are going to could disagree with the promotion causing socialization issues for the accelerated athlete in school and community.
- Athletes will sometimes feel they are not connected to any team. • The team the athlete leaves loses a role model and an extra teacher to help other players develop better skills.
- The accelerated athlete may not realize that there will be greater expectations of them by coaches, parents and fans, thus a sense of failure may emerge.
- Increased time commitment, split shifts in practice, transportation issues, etc. may negatively impact school work and parent responsibilities.

- Continuity of grade level team and team accelerated to could be highly disrupted.
- Open athlete up to scrutiny by parents, classmates and community members.
- Injury risk factor increased due to participation against bigger, faster, and stronger athletes.

Procedure for Acceleration:

In the rare instances where acceleration will be considered from a middle school program to senior high program, these procedures must be followed:

1. The head coach will initiate in writing the proposed acceleration to both the Middle School and High School Activities Directors.
2. The two Activities Directors will conduct a review with affected coaches, counselors and administration to determine the feasibility of the proposed acceleration according to the guidelines established. The decision to accelerate must be reached through consensus.
3. If the recommendation is to further consider acceleration, the parents and the student will then be notified by the Activities Director. If the parents and student do not concur with the recommendation, the process ends. If the student and his/her parents concur with a recommendation to accelerate, the student will be moved to the appropriate level.

Once the student has been accelerated, the student will have a two-week evaluation period. At the end of that time, a final decision on placement for the season shall be made.

The following conditions apply to the 7th and 8th grade athlete:

- The student will not be permitted to leave Forestview Middle School prior to the established dismissal time for practice purposes.
- Dismissal for participation in regularly scheduled contests will be permitted when necessary.
- Transportation from Forestview Middle School to the high school for practice and scheduled contests will be the responsibility of the parent or legal guardian when shuttle services are not available.
- All Minnesota State High School League eligibility guidelines will be in place for the student.
- All fee requirements of the high school program will be applicable.

The High School Activities Director will provide an annual report of 7th and 8th grade participation in each activity to their building Principal, Superintendent and School Board on a yearly basis.