

Hearing Request on Athletic Ineligibility

Background:

A high school boy open enrolled from Belmond-Klemme to Eagle Grove on August 7 of this year, well after the March 1 deadline. Of course, the March 1 deadline went away when the law changed over the summer to allow immediate open enrollment without due dates.

Although the deadline went away, the eligibility rules remain in place. High school student athletes who open enroll are ineligible to compete for the first 90 school days (the first semester) at their new school.

The boy wanted to play baseball in Eagle Grove next summer. This fall he decided he also wanted to play basketball for Eagle Grove, but of course, he is ineligible until January.

Unfortunately, Eagle Grove ignored the rule and allowed the athlete to play basketball until he competed against us and we notified them.

The 90-day athletic ineligibility period can be waived by the resident school board for good cause. We have not done this in the past. Two boys quit the football team in October because they did not like their play time for our team. They wanted to immediately play for West Fork, but we did not agree to waive the ineligibility rule for them.

Recommended Action:

I have no recommendation in advance of the hearing as we should all keep an open mind prior to the appeal hearing. However, the board needs to remain aware of its past decisions, and that a change in this one practice could precipitate a whole change in policy later on.

I suggest to the board handle this one agenda item in two parts. In the first part, the appeal, the parents should be allowed to fully voice their request. However, the parents should be informed that they will not have the opportunity to speak again later during the meeting. During the appeal, board members should feel free to ask questions and discuss options with the parents, but board members are asked to avoid taking sides during the appeal.

The second part of this agenda item is for the board to deliberate and decide. Since this is a meeting of the board, no one has the right to debate or argue with the board while it is trying to decide an issue. The only debate should be among board members. Likewise, I encourage the board to refrain from asking questions of the parents during the time of deliberation and decision making.