



OKLAHOMA  
**PANHANDLE STATE**  
UNIVERSITY

Student-Athlete Handbook

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This handbook is designed to provide student-athletes with essential information on their rights and responsibilities as Oklahoma Panhandle State University students and participants in the University's intercollegiate athletic programs. It is not intended to replace the College Catalog or Student Handbook. Thus, student-athletes are expected to be familiar with the policies and expectations set forth in the Catalog and Student Handbook, as well as other official publications.

Questions related to the contents of the Student-Athletes Handbook should be conveyed to the director of athletics (see appended directory for contact information).

Please note that OPSU reserves the right to change the policies, procedures, and expectations contained herein.

## **ATHLETICS AT OPSU**

Oklahoma Panhandle State University is committed to established NAIA, and Sooner Athletic Conference rules and regulations for governing its intercollegiate athletic program. It acknowledges and affirms the concept of institutional control, requiring appropriate participation in the development and review of athletic policies by the President, the Chief Academic Officer, the Director of Athletics, the Athletics Committee, and the Faculty Athletic Representative. Alumni, athletic staff, and other individuals who represent OPSU's athletic program are expected to abide by the policies and procedures established by OPSU for governance of its intercollegiate athletic program.

## **OPSU ATHLETICS MISSION**

Intercollegiate athletics at OPSU exists to further the mission and goals of the University by committing to provide a positive identity for the University through athletic endeavors and by encouraging a competitively diverse, equitable sports program in compliance with appropriate policies that encourage students-athletes to earn their degrees, develop socially, and to achieve their athletic potential.

## **ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Student-athletes must meet the requirements of the NAIA, OPSU, and the institution's Athletic Department, including all admission and satisfactory progress requirements, in order to be eligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics and to receive athletic scholarships (grants-in-aid).

### **Basic Definitions:**

Identification: Representing an institution in a contest OR enrolling in 12 or more institutional credit hours as of the institution's official census date.

Term of Attendance: Any semester in which a student becomes identified at an institution.

### **Guidelines:**

A student may participate in intercollegiate athletics during:

- The student's first 10 terms of attendance at an institution of higher education (please note the definition of a term of attendance above).
- The student's first 4 seasons in the same intercollegiate sport. A season is "used" when a student participates, in any intercollegiate contest, regardless of quantity.
- The time the student retains amateur status in the sport, as defined by the NAIA.

### **Participation:**

Current Participation:

- Student must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 institutional credit hours to be eligible for competition.

Incoming Freshmen:

- The NAIA National Eligibility Center (EC) evaluates and makes eligibility determinations on all new freshmen.
- Students must meet two of the following three criteria:
  - Composite ACT score 18 for tests taken beginning May 1, 2019, (or 16 for tests taken before May 1, 2019) or SAT (Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math) of 970 (or 860 for tests taken before May 1, 2019). (Only scores from tests taken on a national testing date are valid; residual scores are not acceptable. A student cannot become eligible in the same semester as the ACT test is taken.)

- High school GPA of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale.
- Graduate in the top 50% of their graduating class.
- Any student who does not meet these standards will be ineligible for participation until he/she has successfully completed two terms of attendance with a total of at least 24 credits earned.
  - Exception: Student whose school does not provide a class rank, may take 9 hours of credit with a 2.0gpa prior to the fall term to satisfy this requirement.

**Continuing Students:**

- The following rules for continuing eligibility are applied independently to each student and apply to transfer students.
- The 9-hour Rule: the continuing student must successfully complete a minimum of 9 credits in the first term of attendance and, thereafter,
- The 24-Hour Rule:
  - 24 credits total must be completed in the last two terms of attendance.
  - Up to 12 credits completed in a non-term that follows either the fall or spring terms may be added to the student's total in order to reach 24.
- The Progress Rule:
  - To play a second season, the student must have successfully completed 24 institutional credit hours AND have a minimum GPA of 2.00.
  - To play a third season, the student must have successfully completed 48 institutional credit hours.
  - To play a fourth season, the student must have successfully completed 72 institutional credit hours and have a minimum GPA of 2.00. 48 of the credit hours must be on the student's majors checklist.

**Transfer Students:**

- All transfer students-athletes must register with the NAIA EC.
- A "notification of contact" must be sent to the current school of student-athletes who have identified with a four-year institution or who have not completed one season at a two-year institution within ten days of the initial contact with the prospective transfer student-athlete. Notification should be made by the Athletic Director in the form of an email sent to the Athletic Director of the other school.
- For transfers coming from another four-year institution, OPSU must request a release from the Athletic Director of the other institution. This release should be sent by the OPSU Athletic Director.

**Evaluation by the NAIA Eligibility Center:**

- The 24-hour Rule: credits are taken from the transcripts of other institutions at face value, irrespective of whether the credits are accepted in transfer at OPSU.
- The Progress Rule: credits are taken from the transcripts of other institutions at face value, irrespective of whether the credits are accepted in transfer at OPSU only for the first semester at OPSU. Thereafter, students may count only credits accepted in transfer and placed on the OPSU transcript. This has the effect that a student may be eligible during one semester and become ineligible the next, no matter what the student does academically in the first term of attendance at OPSU.
- A student who has participated in an intercollegiate contest at their immediately previous four-year institution and then transfers to OPSU must sit in residence for a period of 16 weeks (not to include any breaks between semesters) before being eligible in the sport in which they previously participated. The student will have the residency requirement waived provided the student has a 2.00 GPA and a written release from the athletic director at the immediately previous four-year institution.

EXCEPTION to the 12 credit hour enrollment rule: A student who will complete requirements for graduation within 10 semesters, or less may retain eligibility during the last term of the senior year by enrolling in fewer than 12 institutional credit hours. Official verification must be provided by the registrar that the student has completed all other academic requirements for graduation except for the currently enrolled credits. It is understood as a condition of the use of this exception to the 12-hour enrollment rule that the intercollegiate eligibility of the student using the exception shall be terminated automatically at the end of the term, or term extended, in which less than 12 credits are carried.

EXCEPTION: A transfer student who has met the graduation requirements for an associate degree from a

junior college and who has not been identified with any institution(s) of higher learning for more than five semesters or seven quarters will be exempt from meeting the 24-hour rule of the first term upon transferring to an NAIA institution provided: the transferring student passed all hours required for graduation in the term in which graduation occurs and less than 24 hours were required for graduation during the last two terms. Students receiving this exception must pass at least 12 hours in their first term at the four-year school, with a cumulative 2.0 or higher GPA, to retain eligibility for a second term. The last term at the junior college shall count as a term of attendance.

### **GOOD ACADEMIC STANDING**

Good Academic Standing is required of all student-athletes. The institution and its governing boards determine the definition of Good Academic Standing. At OPSU, following the rules of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, good academic standing is determined by retention/graduation GPA. A minimum GPA of 2.000 is required for all student-athletes with over 30 hours attempted.

### **INCOMPLETES (“I”)**

The Grade of “I” (Incomplete) shall be neutral in the calculation of the cumulative grade point average. If it is not removed within a maximum of one year, it will change on the transcript to the grade assigned by the instructor of the class. *A grade of “I” does not count as an earned credit hour for eligibility. It cannot be used for eligibility certification until it is properly removed and recorded in the school’s normal manner.* Questions about the removal of an incomplete and the posting of a regular grade, can be addressed by the FAR or the Registrar. Incompletes (I’s) are often a problem when determining eligibility. Student athletes should avoid requesting I’s if at all possible, particularly if they have not completed a majority of the work in the class.

### **UNIVERSITY ATHLETIC STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

In compliance with the university and athletic mission statements, athletic staff members are to seek the following strategic priorities regarding student-athletes:

- A student-athlete is a “student” before an “athlete.” Academic success is both the priority and the requirement for collegiate athletic participation and privileges. To ensure academic success, athletic staff may support student-athletes by:
  - Assisting in academic advising, time management skills, and student mentorship
  - Encouraging or placement of student-athletes in various tutoring programs (group or one on one) to aid in a better understanding and comprehension of course material
  - Reviewing academic records after each term to monitor progress toward graduation and to check satisfactory standards for athletic eligibility.
- Improving the athletic talent of student-athletes through constructive coaching, a high-level practice environment, and competitive schedule
- Conducting team-building activities to foster close relationships, respect for coaches and fellow teammates, and instill the values of trust and reliability on and off the field of play.

### **UNIVERSITY REQUIREMENTS**

Student-athletes are ineligible to participate in intercollegiate athletics and will forfeit their athletic scholarships under the following conditions:

- Failure to meet OPSU or NAIA requirements for admission.
- Failure to remain enrolled in at least 12 or more hours during any regular semester.
- Suspension from school.

Upon the recommendation of the head coach and with the approval of the director of athletics, student-athletes may be dismissed from the team and/or have their athletic scholarships reduced or cancelled under the following conditions:

- Being placed on academic probation by OPSU.
- Failure to maintain academic eligibility.
- Excessive or habitual class absenteeism.
- Unexcused absences from scheduled games, meetings, or practice sessions.

- Violations of team, training, or other rules of the athletic program.
- Possession, sale, or use of illegal drugs.
- Violation of College's and/or athletic program's alcohol policy.

### **FINANCIAL AID POLICIES**

There are many sources of financial aid available through the Financial Aid Office in the form of grants, scholarships, work-study, and loans. Student-athletes are also eligible for aid from any of these sources as long as the total dollar value of their aid "package" does not exceed the maximum established by the NAIA and OPSU.

### **ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS**

Athletic scholarships, the values of which are varying combinations of tuition, fees, room, and board are available to student-athletes who demonstrate outstanding athletic ability. These scholarships are granted for a period of one academic period (may be semester or year), and may be continued, reduced, or discontinued in accordance with NAIA regulations and OPSU policy after each period of participation. At the completion of the season, student-athletes will meet individually with his/her coach to discuss athletic aid. The coach will then notify the Director of Athletics and Financial Aid office with the award amount for the upcoming year. This can be an increase or decrease in amount.

### **NON-RENEWAL OF ATHLETIC SCHOLARSHIPS**

A student-athlete becomes ineligible\* for athletic aid under one or more of the following circumstances:

- The student fails to maintain satisfactory academic progress required to receive financial aid at OPSU.
- The student voluntarily ceases participation in varsity athletics.
- The student-athlete loses his/her amateur status.
- The student is suspended from the athletic program or from the University for disciplinary reasons.
- The student-athlete fails to follow team regulations and/or does not exhibit in practice an effort to improve his/her skills and level of performance.

\*Ineligibility in these cases is determined by the Athletic Director in consultation with the appropriate head coach, Registrar, FAR and Dean of Students.

In all cases, a letter (an email to the student-athletes' OPSU email address) will be sent from the Athletic Director providing the student-athlete the right to appeal the cancellation before the cancellation occurs. Coaches wishing to cancel or reduce the aid of a student-athlete must send a request, with details about the reason for the reduction/cancellation, to the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director will then send a letter to the student-athlete (at his/her OPSU email address) informing the student-athlete of the reduction/cancellation with information concerning the appeal procedure. Copies of this letter will be sent to the head coach, financial aid director, FAR, and VPAA. Additionally, copies may be sent to the Athletic Trainer and Counseling center if deemed necessary. These letters may come at any time during the playing season, but should be done as soon as possible once the decision is made. Cancellations during the semester of a season generally should not occur if the student-athlete has competed or practiced for the majority of the season. Cancellations for the following semester may be done at any time.

In order to cancel or reduce athletically related aid, the head coach of a team will notify the Athletic Director when a scholarship is to be removed (for quitting the team, becoming ineligible, involvement in serious misconduct, etc.) or reduced for a specific student-athlete. The Athletic Director will write a letter to the student-athlete (an email to his/her OPSU email address) stating the reason for the removal. If the student-athlete wishes to appeal this removal of financial aid, he/she must write a letter within seven (7) days of the date of the letter to the Director of Financial Aid who notify the Athletic Director who will set up a meeting of the Athletic Committee.

### **ATHLETIC COMMITTEE**

The Athletic Committee will serve as a review and supervisory body of the intercollegiate sports program. It will endeavor to insure conformity to the various rules and regulations by which such programs are normally subjected. It will make general and/or specific recommendations to the president. Membership shall consist

of: the athletic director, faculty athletic representative, coach representing men athletics, coach representing women athletics, five faculty or staff members, and one student. A quorum shall consist of anything over half of the committee being present with > 50% of those present being non-athletic representatives.

**Members:**

Victor Esparza - AD  
Shawn Joy - Assistant AD  
Stacy Nordquist - FAR  
Maria Wiltzius – SWL & Women’s Basketball  
Charles Belt – Men’s Basketball  
Student SAAC President  
Erin Moore - Registrar  
Justin Collins – Faculty  
Sarah Green – Faculty  
Steve Martin – Faculty  
Laci Unruh - Director Counseling & Placement

The Athletic Committee will meet within ten (10) days of the receipt of the letter of appeal by the student-athlete.

- The student-athlete must be present and will be allowed to present his/her reasoning for the appeal. He/she will then be dismissed from the meeting.
- The Athletic Director will be present, but will not vote in the meeting since the student-athlete is appealing the letter from the Athletic Director.

The Athletic Committee will either affirm or deny the appeal. Following the appeal meeting, the Director of Athletics will notify the student-athlete in a letter stating the decision of the Athletic Committee. The head coach and the FAR will receive a copy of the letter.

The decision of the Athletic Committee will be final.

**ATHLETIC PROGRAM POLICIES**

Student-athletes and athletic staff are expected to abide by the following policies.

**OPSU Guidelines**

OPSU has established the below policies in order to promote the educational mission of the college and educational welfare of the student athletes:

- A 24 week practice and playing season established and on file in the Department of Athletics prior to the beginning of the season.
- The institution will regulate its original practice activities, the length of its playing seasons and the number of its regular-season contests and/or dates of competition in all sports, as well as the extent of its participation in non-collegiate sponsored athletic activities, to minimize interference with the academic progress of its student-athletes.
- No class time is missed for practice activities except when a team is traveling to an away-from-home contest and the practice is in conjunction with the contest.
- No class time missed for team functions not associated with athletic contest without prior approval of Director of Athletics.
- Student-athletes sign a release granting permission to publish semester and cumulative GPA's.

**ON CAMPUS-OFF CAMPUS**

All student-athletes should also familiarize themselves with the Student Handbook especially, in regards to Student Violations. The basic philosophy of university discipline is one of re-education. The total effort is directed toward corrective discipline. For this reason, the main concern lies with consideration of the individual as well as an individual's actions. Central to this individual approach to discipline is the emphasis placed on due process to insure a fair hearing. No matter who deals with a particular disciplinary situation, consideration is given to all factors and information in the case. At no time are arbitrary or authoritarian actions sanctioned in the OPSU disciplinary structure.

**Student athletes should understand that anyone involved in any on-campus or off-campus occurrence that involves illegal drugs and/or alcohol will be considered a “corresponding positive substance abuse level” and that Reasonable Cause Testing (pg. 38) will be enforced. Further, the penalties outlined in III. PROCEDURES AND PENALTIES TO BE FOLLOWED IN RESPONSE TO A POSITIVE DRUG TEST AND/OR SUBSTANCE ABUSE OCCURRENCE (pg. 42) will be enforced.**

**Student athletes involved in any on- or off-campus activity that disrupts the operation of the University; potentially embarrasses the University; unnecessarily engages police, fire or EMT services; or requires police engagement or intervention in for any reason will be immediately suspended from their team pending resolution.**

**If found guilty of a misdemeanor charge (such as theft, public disturbance, assault and battery, etc.), they will be placed at the “corresponding substance abuse level (pg. 42)” and will be subject to the procedures and penalties of the appropriate level (pg. 42).**

If a student is found guilty of a felony charge, the student will be immediately suspended from school. If the student is in a car or dorm room/apartment or other area where alcohol or drugs are present, he/she will be placed on university conduct probation-even if he/she is not cited by the authorities. Procedures of appealing these actions will follow the same as on page 44.

### **SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM**

The first priority of this policy is the student-athlete’s health, welfare, and safety. The approach is from a medical perspective, with an emphasis on prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and rehabilitation.

The Department of Athletics at Oklahoma Panhandle State University advocates the development of healthy and responsible lifestyles for OPSU student-athletes during their years of eligibility as a long-term enrichment and enhancement of their lives. Therefore, OPSU has also developed and is implementing the OPSU Alcohol and Drug Program.

Substance abuse, chemical dependency, crimes and other situations, which occur while under the influence of mood-altering substances, are a major health and safety hazard in our society. The use of illegal substances (even if legal in other states) and the illegal use of drugs are crimes in Oklahoma and cannot be condoned. The use of performance enhancing drugs is detrimental to student health and, as a form of cheating, constitutes unacceptable and unethical behavior. Alcohol use by OPSU student-athletes who are under the legal drinking age in Oklahoma is against the law; for those student-athletes who are of legal drinking age in Oklahoma, alcohol use is ill advised and is strongly discouraged.

Use, possession, and/or distribution of any state or federally controlled drugs or other substance except when authorized by law is strictly prohibited and may result in removal from their respective sport and possible suspension from school.

**For the purposes of imposing sanctions concerning substance abuse, OPSU has chosen to define a “substance abuse occurrence” as being arrested or ticketed for an illegal drug or substance or alcohol. However, OPSU also extends this definition to anyone in the vicinity of the citation or arrest. If you are in a car whose driver is arrested or ticketed, you will be considered to have violated OPSU’s policy and will receive the sanctions for the first occurrence, if it is your first occurrence. Please see APPEALS at the end of this section for your notice of appeal.**

The OPSU Athletic Department Alcohol and Substance Abuse program includes:

- Education of student-athletes about mood and body altering substances and pertinent OPSU Policy
- Evaluation
- Substance Abuse Testing
- Treatment
- Discipline

#### **I. Education**

##### **A. Mood- Altering Substances**

###### **1. Alcohol:**

- a. Alcohol consumption is illegal and unacceptable for student-athletes under the**

- age of twenty-one.
  - b. Alcohol consumption is not recommended and ill-advised for student-athletes twenty-one years of age or older.
  - c. Teams will institute training rules which restrict alcohol usage by student-athletes.
  - d. Alcohol-related offenses (DUI, public intoxication, assaults while under the influence of alcohol, underage possession of alcohol, etc.) are violations of this policy.
  - e. Coaches will submit team rules to the Athletic Administrative Committee.
2. **Illicit Substances** The Athletic Department Drug Program will:
- a. Educate the student-athlete about mood-altering substances and the dangers associated with their use.
  - b. Deter the use of these substances
  - c. Identify student-athletes with chemical dependency and other problems for which substances use may be an indicator early in the course of the disease or problem; so that treatment can be instituted in a timely manner;
  - d. Solidify the role of OPSU student-athletes as representatives of the University and role models for the youth who look up to them.
- B. **Performance Enhancing Substances:** The Athletic Department Substance Abuse Program will:
- 1. Educate the student-athlete about which substances are performance enhancing drugs, their effects and dangers;
  - 2. Deter the use of these substances;
  - 3. Identify student-athletes who use these substances and address issues and problems surrounding their use;
  - 4. Solidify the role of OPSU athletics and student-athletes as representatives of the University in sending the message that fair play and following the rules are of prime importance.

#### **ALCOHOL AND OTHER SUBSTANCE ABUSE TESTING**

Tests will primarily be conducted for mood-altering and performance enhancing substances. All tests will be performed on urine. These tests will include all student-athletes and may include cheerleaders and all students with an official sports team association, including student managers, student coaches and student athletic trainers.

**On-site, immediate substance abuse testing can and will be used for the entire OPSU Athletic Department; no notification is required by the administration for substance abuse testing to occur.**

#### **Types of Testing:**

Random Testing--Periodic testing of a portion of the total student-athlete population will occur at regular intervals. This list will be randomly generated from each active squad list. All athletes are eligible for every test.

Total Team Testing--An impartial medical committee may test total teams upon the recommendation of the head team physician or at the request of the head coach with the approval of the Athletic Director and the Appeal Committee or after an anonymous review.

Just Cause Testing--Student-athletes may be tested individually or as part of a regularly scheduled test. This test will be used for student-athletes who demonstrate symptoms or behaviors, which are indicative of substance abuse. No notice of testing is required.

Reasonable Cause Testing--Student-athletes who have previous violations of the Athletic Department Substance Abuse Policy or convictions for possession or use of controlled substances will be tested individually or as part of a regularly scheduled test. This test will be used as part of the Athletic Department Substance Abuse Policy and the management plan.

#### **Failure to Appear:**

Failure to appear for a scheduled University substance abuse test, or refusing to give a urine specimen, will be cause for immediate suspension of the student-athlete from competition and/or practice and provides a basis for reasonable cause testing. This suspension will be in force until

reinstated by the Appeal Panel.

**Guidelines for Substance Abuse Testing** (These guidelines are in force for all OPSU urine testing.)

1. The student-athlete will be informed by the certified athletic trainer of the sport *within*, but not more than, 24 hours of a scheduled test. This means that on-site, immediate testing is allowable and will be conducted at OPSU.
2. The student-athlete must report to the designated testing site within the time frame of the test.
3. The student-athlete must sign in and select a sealed specimen bottle. The validator inspects the specimen bottle and the student-athlete proceeds to the collection site.
4. The collector/validator will visually observe while the student-athlete provides the sample.
5. The student-athlete will re-seal the collection bottle and place it on the designated sample site.
6. The student-athlete will then sign out and leave.

A deliberate effort to substitute, dilutes, or adulterates a specimen or to alter a test result will constitute as a positive test and result in a one-year ban from all OPSU athletics (Second Level).

**Post Collection Procedures:**

1. Testing personnel will check the roster of scheduled student-athletes and submit to the Director of Athletics or designee and the head coach of the sports team the names of those persons not reporting.
2. The samples will be taken from the designated site to be tested according to the policy of the substance abuse testing company guidelines as assigned to the designated personnel of the athletic department, the Head Certified Athletic Trainer and/or Substance Abuse Testing Representative.
3. The results will be recorded and kept on file in the Athletic Department and in the student-athletes permanent medical file in the Athletic Training Department.
4. Following the verification of a positive test, the student-athlete will be notified of the outcome by the designated Athletic Department Personnel and/or the Director of Athletics.

**Responsibilities of the Student-Athlete:**

Student-athletes are responsible for knowing and abiding by OPSU's and the athletic program's policies on the use/abuse of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco products. They are also expected to actively participate in the substance abuse educational programs offered through the athletic program. Additionally, they are expected to complete the anonymous survey on substance abuse conducted by the athletic program

**Procedures and Penalties to be Followed in Response to a Positive Substance Abuse Test and/or Occurrence:**

NOTE: All positive substance abuse test results and/or substance abuse occurrences are considered cumulative for the career of the OPSU student-athlete. A deliberate effort to substitute, dilutes, or adulterate a specimen, or to alter a test result will constitute a positive test and result in the penalties following.

- A. First Level/First Occurrence
  1. The Director of Athletics, selected university administrators, team physician, head athletic trainer, head coach and student-athlete will be informed of a positive substance abuse test and/or substance abuse occurrence, e.g., DUI, misdemeanor drug or alcohol arrest, alcohol related assault, underage possession of alcohol, etc.
  2. A substance abuse counselor approved by the Athletic Department will evaluate the student-athlete.
  3. The Athletic Director, head team physician, head athletic trainer, head coach and designated counselor of the Athletic Department and if indicated the academic counselor will determine a management plan for the student-athlete.
    - a. The student-athlete will be required to contact the OPSU Counseling Center within ten days of the date of the letter sent to him/her from the Athletic Director.
    - b. Failure to contact the OPSU Counseling Center and beginning his/her management plan within ten days will immediately move the student-athlete to a Second Level status and will result in a one-year suspension from the sport or activity.
    - c. Additionally, failure to complete the assigned management plan in a timely manner (3-4 weeks) will also result in the immediate movement to a Second Level status and a one-year suspension.
  4. The student-athlete will be eligible for reasonable cause testing, as detailed above.

5. The student-athlete will receive a twenty percent of the season's competition suspension beginning from the date of the positive test. If no contest is to be held or if more than 80% of the season's contests have been completed, the suspension will carry over to the next season of competition. This notification will come from the Athletic Director and will be sent to the student athlete's permanent address.

B. Second Level/Second Occurrence

1. The Director of Athletics, selected university administrators, team physician, head athletic trainer, head coach and student-athlete will be informed of a positive substance abuse test and/or substance abuse occurrence.
2. The student-athlete will be re-evaluated by a substance abuse counselor approved by the Athletic Department.
3. The Director of Athletics, team physician, substance abuse counselor, head coach, head athletic trainer and when the academic counselor indicated, will determine a management plan for the student-athlete.
  - a. The student-athlete will be required to contact the OPSU Counseling Center within ten days of the date of the letter sent to him/her from the Athletic Director.
  - b. Failure to contact the OPSU Counseling Center and beginning his/her management plan within ten days will immediately move the student-athlete to a Third Level status and will result in a permanent suspension from the sport or activity.
  - c. Additionally, failure to complete the assigned management plan in a timely manner (3-4 weeks) will also result in the immediate movement to a Third Level status and permanent suspension.
4. The student-athlete will be suspended for one calendar year from all team and athletic department student-athlete functions and Athletic Financial aid (scholarships) will be discontinued immediately at this time.
5. Re-instatement will be considered by the Director of Athletics and or designee in consultation with the management plan team.

C. Third Level/Third Occurrence

1. **A third positive substance abuse test and/or substance abuse occurrence will result in the student being permanently banned from participating in athletics at OPSU.**
2. **Coaches may impose more rigid penalties for these offences according to their written team rules.**
3. **Off or on campus alcohol, drug use, and arrests or police reports may also subject the student-athlete to penalties listed for all students in the OPSU student handbook.**

**Substance Abuse Testing/Occurrence Appeal**

As soon as the Athletic Director is informed of a substance abuse violation (see definitions and examples above), a letter to the student-athlete's home address (and an email to the student-athlete's OPSU email account) will be sent stating the disciplinary action, depending upon the level of the occurrence (first level, second level, etc.) for the student-athlete.

A student-athlete may appeal either the finding of the presence of a prohibited substance, or the sanction imposed as a result of a positive finding.

The appeal of the positive test results must be based on one of the following:

- Evidence of procedural error.
- Evidence that refutes the positive finding.
- Belief that the OPSU test was inaccurate—to appeal under this section, the student-athlete must immediately, upon notice of the positive test, arranges for and takes a second test administered by a physician in Guymon. The second test will be a blood test rather than a urine test. If the test confirms the OPSU result, the student-athlete is responsible for the cost of the second test.

The appeal of the sanction imposed as a result of a substance abuse occurrence must be based on one of the following:

- Evidence of procedural error.
- Evidence that refutes the substance abuse finding.
- Evidence that the sanction imposed is unreasonable, harsh or inappropriate.

To appeal either a positive finding or the sanction imposed, the student-athlete must file an appeal in writing within seven (7) working days of the date of the letter from the Athletic Director to the Chairman of the

Athletic Committee who will set up a meeting with the Athletic Committee within ten (10) days of the receipt of the appeal letter. The letter of appeal must be accompanied by supporting evidence.

The appeal hearing will consist of a review of all available evidence related to the initial finding as well as new evidence or documentation provided by the student-athlete.

The student-athlete must be present and will be allowed to present his/her reasoning for the appeal. He/she will then be dismissed from the meeting.

The Athletic Director will be present, but will not vote in the meeting since the student-athlete is appealing the letter from the Athletic Director.

The head coach of the student-athlete may be present, but he/she will not vote in the meeting.

The Athletic Committee may affirm or deny the appeal. They also have the opportunity to recommend retesting of the student-athlete or alternative disciplinary actions, which may be neither less nor harsher than the original. Following the appeal meeting, the Chairman of the Athletic Committee will notify the student-athlete in a letter stating the decision of the Athletic Committee. All parties copied on the original "consequence" letter to the student-athlete will receive a copy of this letter.

The decision of the Athletic Committee concerning an appeal will be final.

#### **Types of drugs to be screened:**

Alcohol

Amphetamines

Barbiturates

Cannabinoids

Cocaine Metabolites

Benzodiazepines

Methadone

Methaqualone

Opiates

Phencyclidine

Propoxyphene

#### **Alcohol and Tobacco Products**

The use of alcohol, tobacco, and other tobacco products is not permitted by participants, coaches, trainers, game administrators, or officials in the playing areas during all NAIA sanctioned competition and practices for such competition. OPSU's coaching staff, games committee, administrator or game day manager shall enforce this policy through the following steps.

- On the first offense, the individual(s) shall receive an official warning.
- A second offense will cause expulsion from the game, tournament, or event.

#### **INSURANCE -- OPSU Athletic Injury Insurance Protocol**

1. The OPSU Athletic Department provides secondary athletic medical insurance for any injury sustained by a student-athlete while competing in intercollegiate athletics.
2. It is the policy of OPSU and/or the NAIA that all student-athletes are required to have primary insurance. You may not practice or compete without proof of primary insurance.
3. OPSU Athletic Department insurance may carry a deductible as described by the policy.
4. Student-athletes can discuss and see the policy by visiting with the Head Athletic Trainer.
5. All rules, regulations, policies, and procedures regarding the OPSU Athletic Department insurance are found in the insurance policy.
6. OPSU Athletic Department Insurance Policy includes the following guidelines:
7. Student-athlete must be referred by the Head Athletic Trainer in order for the school to be financially responsible. Otherwise, the student-athlete takes all financial responsibility regardless of whether the injury occurred in intercollegiate athletics.
8. Student-athlete must obtain an insurance claim form from the Head Athletic Trainer prior to their medical visit to an outside medical provider.
9. Student-athlete must fill in and sign the claim form.
10. Student-athlete is responsible for bringing to the Head Athletic Trainer all medical bills and primary insurance explanation of benefits that are received from the outside medical provider.

11. OPSU, Athletic Training Department, Athletic Department, and its staff cannot be held accountable for medical bills assessed to the student-athlete that become delinquent. This is the student-athlete's responsibility.
12. Any request for a second opinion must be verified and approved through the Head Athletic Trainer and the Athletic Department insurance prior to the physician visit.
13. Any student-athlete who bypasses the Athletic Department Policies on physician treatment will be held completely responsible for any bills incurred due to injury.
14. The student-athlete should realize that the department does not have coverage for non-athletic related illnesses or injuries. Non-athletic related injuries will be the financial responsibility of the student-athlete, therefore it is highly recommended that the student-athlete have personal hospitalization, accident and prescription insurance.
15. The university's insurance carrier cannot accept the responsibility for any pre-existing conditions or injuries. Any such situation will be documented in the student-athlete's medical file.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Due to the increasing incidences of discussions of social networking websites at the national level, the OPSU Athletic Department has implemented a policy regarding the use and/or abuse of social networking websites, such as Facebook and other similar websites, in order to prevent potentially damaging and embarrassing situations for you the student-athlete, your family, the OPSU Athletic Department, and Oklahoma Panhandle State University.

OPSU asks that student-athletes please remember first and foremost they are an ambassador of Oklahoma Panhandle State University, and are always in the public eye. Student-athletes should not post information or pictures on-line, which would embarrass themselves, their team or OPSU. Content posted by student-athletes at other institutions or even other students on campus may not be acceptable on personal on-line profiles.

- OPSU asks that each student-athlete keep this information along with the following guidelines in mind when posting personal information and photos on-line.
- OPSU student-athletes may not use any proprietary information gathered about the athletic department or any specific sport program and may not use the official marks (logos, photos, work marks, etc.) of OPSU, the Sooner Athletics Conference and/or the NAIA.
- Student-athletes may not use any team, action or headshots depicting their role as a student-athlete at OPSU.
- Student-athletes may not link their personal websites to the official OPSU websites or OPSU player profiles.
- Do not post personal information (cell phone, address, class schedule) for safety reasons.
- Do not post or participate in any inappropriate photographs or other content, or engage in any topics that are potentially offensive or degrading.
- Do not post comments about fellow student-athletes, coaches, administration, or faculty from OPSU or any other institution or opponent.
- Also, remember to keep these potential hazards for on-line posting in mind:
- Be mindful that on-line content is not private and there could be long-term ramifications.
- On-line communication puts one at greater risk for stalking.
- Fans and opposing teams can use this information to taunt and humiliate a student-athlete at any given contest.
- Coaches and the athletic department staff will be checking these sites on a regular basis.
- Students have lost jobs and potential interviews after college due to inappropriate content on personal websites that future employers have checked prior to the hiring process.

## **OPSU POLICY ON ATHLETIC SANCTIONED ABSENCES**

Prior to a scheduled athletic event, the appropriate coach or Director of Athletics, will submit via email to the Office of Academic and Student Affairs (abby@opsu.edu) a list of participating students, dates/times they will be gone, and a request to notify faculty of student absences from class. The Office of Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for sending out the list of athlete's missing class to all OPSU faculty.

Only those absences that are submitted under the above procedure are considered sanctioned by the university. If you are not on the absence list, the absence is not sanctioned as a university activity.

It is the **student's responsibility to meet with the instructor prior to departure** for information given in class such as notes, assignments, or to schedule a make-up test. It is the student's responsibility to make up work as per each individual instructor's requirements.

The **instructor will determine** whether work must be made up prior to departure or how many days after the return that the work is due. Laboratories may have to be arranged to be made up at a later date. If the instructor's policy is not in the syllabi, the instructor may open the door for allowing for makeup work/labs/exams to be decided by the Dean of that school or the Department Chair. If work is completed according to instructor's policy, instructors cannot penalize a student for being absent for OPSU sanctioned activities.

### **MEDICAL TREATMENT**

A doctor's appointment or off-campus physical therapy appointment for athletics reasons is considered excused for a reasonable period of time surrounding the appointment. Every effort, however, should be made to schedule these appointments to cause the least interference possible with your classes. Additionally, "treatment" in the on-campus training room does not excuse a student-athlete from class attendance. On-Campus treatments should be scheduled around classes. Be sure to find out if an instructor requires an excuse from the trainer or doctor if missing class for medical treatment or illness.

## **STUDY HALLS AND TUTORING**

All student athletes are encouraged to take advantage of study halls and tutorial services. Each coach will define study hall procedures as necessary. However, students who are new to the university or are experiencing academic difficulties should review the list of student services available in the OPSU *General Catalog*.

Free tutorial services for all OPSU students are available. All student-athletes are encouraged to take advantage of these services.

## **SELECTING AND REGISTERING FOR COURSES**

Every student is assigned a faculty advisor when he or she enters OPSU. Students are responsible for knowing who serves as their advisor. Advisors should be a faculty member in the student's major area or school. Once a major is declared, students should acquire an advisor in their major area. The FAR, Athletic Director, or a member of the coaching staff may also provide advice about courses that should be taken in light of eligibility requirements and practice and competitive schedules once classes have been selected with an advisor. Coaches should not be used as a primary advisor and may not enroll student-athletes in classes. Likewise, student-athletes should discuss dropping any classes with an academic advisor and coach. Advisors are aware of many of the requirements for student-athletes. For questions regarding how a schedule might affect eligibility, consult the FAR.

## **DEGREE PLAN AND MAJOR**

Be sure to register only in general education courses or courses listed on the official degree plan on file with assigned faculty advisor; these are the only courses that will count toward fulltime enrollment status for athletic eligibility. To ensure that the best class times are available to student-athletes, The student-athlete is responsible for registering for classes for each semester at the earliest possible time available for the appropriate level of academic study. Each coach will coordinate practice schedules around classes requiring afternoon labs. Student-athletes can visit the records office to declare a major program of study after their 4<sup>th</sup> semester. Be aware that most majors and schools require a "C" in certain courses for them to count for degree credit. If at least a "C" is not obtained, the course WILL NOT be countable toward athletic eligibility. For example, if a "C" is required in all major courses, and a "D" is received, even though 12 hours have been passed for the semester, only the nine with a "C" or better will count toward eligibility. Please review the requirements for chosen major with an advisor and in the General Catalog.

## **REMAINING ELIGIBLE AND GRADUATING**

Student-athletes are responsible for meeting with an assigned advisor, selecting courses and registering, meeting all academic obligations, and being aware of academic situation as it relates to eligibility and graduation. Student-athletes are responsible for being aware of current academic status. Academic advisors and/or the (THE WHAT?) can provide information of the progress made toward meeting eligibility requirements. The mid-term and final grade report received each semester will give an account of the past semester and a summary of academic standing. Given the amount of information available in this semester grade report, one should have no excuse for being unaware of your academic status.

## **TRANSFERRING**

Occasionally, a student-athlete may wish to leave OPSU and transfer to another institution. A number of situations affect the ability for a student-athlete to transfer and be immediately eligible. Please see the FAR to discuss individual situations. The information below is to help student-athletes understand some of the general rules about transferring.

### **TRANSFER RELEASES**

*NOTE: All regulations discussed here pertain to NAIA transfer regulations. Any student transferring within the same NAIA conference may be subject to additional conference transfer regulations and/or residency requirements. Students should contact the conference eligibility chair to learn about a specific conference's transfer rules.*

### **When does a student need a transfer release?**

In general, a transfer student is subject to a 16-week residency period if the student participated in intercollegiate athletics at the student's most recent four-year institution. A transfer student must have a written release from the student's previous athletics director and a minimum 2.0 GPA in order to waive the residency

period and participate immediately upon identification at the new institution.

A student is not subject to the 16-week residency period in the following situations:

- The student has never participated in intercollegiate athletics.
- The student has only participated in intercollegiate athletics at a two-year institution (Junior College, trade school).
- The student previously participated in intercollegiate athletics at a four-year school, but did not participate in intercollegiate athletics at the four-year institution where the student most recently identified.
- The student previously participated in intercollegiate athletics at a four-year school, but subsequently participated in intercollegiate athletics at the two-year institution where the student most recently identified.

#### **How does a student get a release?**

A transferring student-athletes receives a release by requesting that the future institution send a request to the previous institution. A tracer will then be sent by the future institution requesting the release. This can be requested by contacting the compliance office.

#### **Does a student need a release to speak with other schools?**

No, NAIA student-athletes are not required to obtain a release prior to contacting potential transfer institutions with NAIA membership. NAIA rules do require that the potential transfer institution give written notice of the contact to the student's current institution within 10 days.

#### **Is a release required for non-scholarship athletes?**

The release requirement is solely based on prior participation. Athletic or other financial aid does not play a part in the determination of whether a student is subject to the 16-week residency period. It is not sufficient for a coach or associate/assistant athletics director to issue a release.

#### **Can an athletics director refuse to grant a release?**

An athletics director has sole authority in deciding whether to issue or deny a release waiving the 16-week residency period. Institutional policy or state law, in some cases, may supersede or otherwise govern an athletics director's authority to make a decision on denying a release. The NAIA national office does not have authority to force any institution to grant a transfer release under any circumstances.

### **STUDENT TRANSFER RULE WITHIN THE SOONER ATHLETIC CONFERENCE**

#### **Section 1.**

A student who has previously identified with a conference member (either by signing a letter of intent, enrolling or participating in a sport) who then transfers to another conference member will not be eligible to compete in any sport for one academic year. The student also will be charged with a season of competition.

#### **Section 2.**

A student who has been previously identified with a member who then transfers to a junior college, may then transfer to a different conference member and be immediately eligible provided the student was identified with the junior college and completed one academic year there. If the student was at the junior college for less than one academic year, then the student will be ineligible at the second conference school for an additional 16 weeks/semester. In addition, the student will be charged with a season of competition.

#### **Section 3.**

A student who has been previously identified with a conference member who then transfers to a non-SAC four-year institution and then transfers to another conference member must satisfy the existing NAIA transfer regulations before becoming eligible to participate, provided the student was identified with the non-SAC four-year institution and completed one year there. If the student was at the non-SAC four-year institution for less than one academic year, then the student will be ineligible at the second conference school for an additional 16 weeks/semester. In addition, the student will be charged with a season of competition.

#### **Section 4.**

A student who has been previously identified with a conference member who then does not attend any institution (four-year or junior college) for a full academic year may be immediately eligible at another conference member so long as all NAIA transfer regulations are satisfied. In addition, the student will be charged with a season of competition.

### **APPEAL IF TRANSFER IS DENIED.**

The student-athlete will receive a letter (and email to their OPSU email address) from the AD stating transfer request is approved or denied. If denied, the student-athlete has seven (7) days from the date of the written letter to appeal to the Chairman of the Athletic Committee.

Upon receipt of the appeal, the Chairman of the Athletic Committee will call and conduct a meeting of the Athletic Committee within Ten (10) days.

The coach of the team may be present for this meeting, but will not have a vote.

The Athletic Director will be present for this meeting, but will not have a vote since the student-athlete is appealing his/her letter.

The student-athlete may be present for this meeting to give his/her reasoning for the appeal, but will be dismissed prior to discussion and vote of the committee.

The Athletic Committee will either affirm or deny the appeal. Following the appeal meeting, the Chairman of the Athletic Committee will notify the student-athlete in a letter stating the decision of the Athletic Committee. The coach and the Athletic Director will receive copies of this letter.

The decision of the Athletic Committee concerning an appeal will be final.

### **SOONER ATHLETIC CONFERENCE LETTER OF INTENT PROGRAM**

#### **Regulations and Procedures**

1. This SAC Letter of Intent is to be used for all sports (e.g., scholarship or non-scholarship).
2. By signing the SAC Letter of Intent, the student athlete and/or parents certify that they have not signed another such letter with an institution which is a member of the Sooner Athletic Conference (SAC).
3. The signature of the parent or guardian is not required on the SAC Letter of Intent for athletes who are 18 years or older. Students who are 18 years or older are considered legal adults for the purpose of contracting. The SAC believes, however, that obtaining the parent or guardian's signature to be an excellent practice.
4. The student athlete must be at least a senior in high school to sign a SAC Letter of Intent. A senior would be anyone who has started attending class in the fall of his or her senior year.
5. There are no date restrictions for signing the SAC Letter of Intent other than those mentioned above in #4.
6. Violations of a SAC Letter of Intent would be handled the same as a transfer within the SAC, with a one-year sitting out period and a one-year loss of eligibility.

### **RECOGNITION AND AWARDS**

Visibility as a successful student-athlete may lead to requests from the news media for interviews or statements. Student-athletes who are recognized for these achievements, will remember that they are representing themselves, team, the athletics program, and OPSU.

#### **Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)**

This is a committee composed of student-athletes from each sport. It advises the athletics department on student-athlete welfare, conducts community service and engagement activities, raises money for charity, and promotes OPSU athletics and student athletes. If interested in serving and willing to serve on this committee as a representative, please see a coach or the current president of the SAAC.

#### **Chi Alpha Sigma**

OPSU sponsors the Oklahoma Beta Chapter of Chi Alpha Sigma, an honor society for collegiate student-athletes in NAIA programs. Currently the requirements for membership are:

- Junior Standing by the 5th semester,
- Varsity letter or its equivalent,
- 3.4 grad retention GPA, and
- Completed at least two full time semesters at OPSU.

Those to be inducted will be notified by letter in April. Please contact the chapter advisor, Dr. Patrick Maille for more information.

#### **Conference Honor Rolls**

The Sooner Athletic Conference sponsors an honor roll each year for student-athletes in Sooner Athletic Conference Sports. To be eligible for the distinction, student-athletes must have been a member of a SAC-

sponsored sport team and maintained a cumulative grade point average of 3.00 or higher throughout the academic year.

### **CHAMPIONS OF CHARACTER**

OPSU participates in the Champions of Character program of the NAIA. The “program is designed to instill an understanding of character values in sport and provide practical tools for student-athletes, coaches and parents to use in modeling exemplary character traits.”

The program’s core values are respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership, and sportsmanship.

### **TEAM RULES**

OPSU coaches will establish certain rules about attending class, curfew, behavior on road trips, study hall, employment, practice, etc. Coaches may also establish penalties for breaking these rules. These penalties may include dismissal from the team. As a member of a team, student-athletes are expected to adhere to these rules. Each coach will review these rules with the team at the beginning of each semester. He or she will provide those rules in writing at the beginning of the year. If dismissed from a team, it may affect scholarship/waiver for the semester/year. A Student-athlete has the right to appeal the loss of financial aid. An appeal for removal of scholarship must be provided to the Chairman of the Athletic Committee within seven (7) working days of the removal of scholarship.

### **MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES**

Student-athletes may be asked by the press to comment on various aspects of the University and its Athletic programs. OPSU strongly suggest contacting the Sports Information Director (SID) whenever contacted by a member of the media and refer all reporters and requests for interviews to the SID. The sports information office will then arrange all interviews and press releases.

### **EXIT INTERVIEWS AND END OF SEASON EVALUATIONS**

Two exit interviews occur with OPSU student-athletes. In the first, coaches will discuss overall participation and performance with each student-athlete at the end of the season and academic year. Second, each student-athlete is given the opportunity to evaluate his or her experience of the previous year through a confidential evaluation similar to those done by students for their academic classes and instructors. Coaches will notify student-athletes of the location and meeting time for this evaluation shortly after the season ends.

### **GENDER EQUITY POLICY**

#### **Athletics Department Statement of Policy on Gender Equity**

*Gender equity in athletics extends the doctrine of fairness to all areas of athletic activity at the university level. It is activated by a sense of moral obligation that exceeds any specific duty to comply with legal requirements, although it also recognizes the necessity of observing the tenets of Title IX. Its desired effect is to offer women and men equal opportunities to participate in sports for which there is a demonstrated interest among student-athletes at Oklahoma Panhandle State University and to provide equitable levels of support for coaching, travel, scholarships, operating expenses, and facilities used.*

*Beyond these specific goals, gender equity also fosters an attitude and establishes an environment in which men’s and women’s sports are encouraged in comparable ways.*

*Those who support gender equity are willing to cooperate in frequent self-evaluations and to implement change so that all student-athletes can have the same opportunity to realize the highest level of their abilities.*

OPSU reaffirms its commitment to each of the principles contained in this policy statement:

***Fairness:*** The principle of fairness is the underpinning of all sports. Fairness is also the foundation of the University’s sports programs, it goes beyond legal requirements, and serves as the prime motivation for efforts in gender equity.

***Activation:*** The principle of activation requires a vigorous, proactive, and actuated plan to create an equitable program of sports and activities and opportunities free of gender bias.

***Moral obligation:*** Laws cannot dictate every detail of gender equity. The motivation of moral obligation inspires the Oklahoma Panhandle State University Athletics Department to go beyond strict legal requirements to seek out and do what is right, not simply conform to the minimum requirements of the law. As guidance for doing what is right, we affirm our support of gender equity efforts and requirements of the Sooner Athletic

Conference and the NAIA.

***Legal Requirements (Title IX):*** The Oklahoma Panhandle State University Athletics Department complies with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which holds that if an institution receiving federal monies sponsors an athletics program, it must provide equal Athletics opportunities for members of both sexes.