REQUESTS FOR ACCOMMODATIONS DUE TO DISABILITIES

One of the purposes of PIAA, as stated in ARTICLE II, PURPOSES, Section 1C, of the PIAA Constitution, is "To promote uniformity of standards in all interscholastic competition." To that end, PIAA generally requires adherence to the rules adopted for each individual sport. PIAA is also cognizant, however, of the need to accommodate individuals with disabilities to the extent that reasonable accommodation will not (1) fundamentally alter essential elements of a sport, (2) increase the risk of injury to other participants, and/or provide the student-athlete with an unfair advantage. Therefore, evaluation of requests by students or Coaches for exemption from, or modification of, applicable sport rules and regulations due to a physical, mental, or emotional disability will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Guidelines for handling such requests are set forth below.

A. Authority to Grant Accommodation Requests:

Requests for accommodations due to disabilities shall be submitted to the Executive Director, who shall have the authority to consider and rule on (1) whether the student is disabled within the meaning of the Americans With Disabilities Act (see Sub-Section G below), (2) whether an accommodation is necessary for participation, and (3) what accommodation, if any, should be granted, taking into account the essential elements of the sport, risk of injury to other participants, and/or fairness to other participants. If an accommodation would fundamentally alter an essential element of a sport, would increase the risk of injury to other participants, and/or would provide an unfair advantage to the student, the accommodation is not a reasonable one and should not be granted. Appeals from decisions of the Executive Director may be submitted to the PIAA Board of Directors.

D. Requests for use of other Special Equipment:

Requests for use of special equipment otherwise prohibited by the rules of a particular sport will be considered and granted where, (1) due to a disability, the equipment is necessary for participation, (2) the said equipment does not pose a cognizable increased risk of harm to teammates and/or opponents, and (3) the equipment does not provide the student, Coach, and/or school with an unfair advantage. Accommodations may be granted for specific Contests, specific sports, and/or for a specific period of time.

E. Information to be Provided with Request for Accommodation:

Requests for accommodations should include the name, contact information, specific accommodation requested, reason for the requested accommodation, and medical documentation supporting the request.

F. Consultation with Experts:

The applicable decision-maker may consult with appropriate medical personnel to assess the severity of the disability and the relationship between the disability and the requested accommodation. The decision-maker may also consult with sport-specific experts to assess the affect of the accommodation on the nature of the sport and on whether the accommodation would provide an unfair advantage to the participant.

G. Determining Whether a Student is Disabled:

Under the Americans With Disabilities Act, a person with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; who has a record of substantially limiting impairment; and/or who is perceived to have such an impairment. Major life activities would include such things as seeing, hearing, speaking, walking, breathing, performing manual tasks, learning, caring for oneself, and working. An individual with epilepsy, paralysis, HIV infection, AIDS, a substantial hearing or visual impairment, mental retardation, or a specific learning disability would be covered, but an individual with a minor, non-chronic condition of short duration, such as a sprain, broken limb, or the flu, generally would not be covered.
H. **Illustrations:**

1. A request to accommodate a tennis player confined to a wheelchair by allowing the student two bounces to get to a ball should be denied as such accommodation would fundamentally alter an essential rule of the game of tennis.

2. A request to allow a wheelchair track athlete to compete against able bodied runners in a distance event over 400 meters should be denied since wheelchair athletes have a significant and unfair advantage in distance events over 400 meters.

3. A base Coach who requires the use of crutches, canes, or braces may be granted an accommodation provided that the Coach can demonstrate that, with the devices, that Coach is sufficiently mobile would be able to avoid contact with players during the course of a Contest.

4. A deaf swimmer may be granted an accommodation, such as the use of hand signals by a teammate, to assist the swimmer in the start of a race.
PENNSYLVANIA INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION, INC. (PIAA)
MEMBER SCHOOL REQUEST FOR STUDENT-ATHLETE
TO MODIFY EQUIPMENT, CONTEST RULES, OR UNIFORM FORM
(Effective September 1, 2016)

The purpose of this Form is to permit expeditious processing of requests from PIAA member schools for
student-athletes to modify the equipment or uniform in a sport. Such authorization may be granted only
under limited circumstances, as set forth in the “Requests for Accommodations Due to Disabilities” policy
of PIAA. Accommodations may be granted for specific Contests and/or for a specific period of time.

To obtain consideration of such request, please complete the following:

(PLEASE PRINT OR TYPE)  DATE: __________________

SECTION 1. MEMBER SCHOOL INFORMATION

A. Full Name of Principal: ________________________________________________
B. Member School: ______________________________________________________
C. Member School Address: ______________________________________________
D. Member School Phone No.: (    )___________ Member School Fax No.: (    )___________

SECTION 2. STUDENT INFORMATION

A. Full Name of Student: ________________________________________________  Grade __________
   (First)  (Middle)  (Last)
B. Place of Residence: ________________________________________________
   (Street Address)  (City)  (State)  (Zip Code)
C. Name(s) of the head of household in which the student resides:
   ____________________________________________________________  Relationship to the student: ______
D. Residence is located within the boundaries of the ___________________ Public School District
E. Date of Student’s Birth: ____/____/_____  F. Age of Student on Last Birthday: _________
G. Date Student Enrolled for the Current School Year: ____/____/____
H. Disability Related Information
   1. This request is for the sport of: ____________________________________________
   2. Identify the nature of the student's disability and extent of the disability and explain why it would
   be necessary for the student to request the modification of equipment or uniform.
3. Please attach a statement from the student's attending physician, prepared within the past thirty (30) days.

4. For what time period is the accommodation sought: _____/____/____ to _____/____/____.  
   [This request is only per school year.]

5. If the disability is temporary, when will it be sufficiently resolved to permit the student-athlete to use equipment and/or uniform as outlined in the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Rules Book: _____/____/____.

SECTION 3. PRINCIPAL CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that (1) I am Principal of _____________________________ High School; (2) I have reviewed the above request with the student-athlete; (3) the information contained herein is accurate and complete, to the best of my knowledge, information, and belief; (4) the requested accommodation is needed for the student to participate in the sport listed in Section 2, Student Information, H; (5) I do not believe the accommodation will give the student-athlete an unfair advantage over his or her competitors; and (6) I support the request for the accommodation.

_____________________________  __________________________
(Signature of PIAA Member School Principal)  (Date)

PIAA Member School Principal’s E-mail Address: ________________________________