WVSSAC Media Policies and Regulations

(Updated October 25, 2026)

1. **Purpose and Scope**

The West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC) is committed to supporting fair and responsible media coverage of high school sports. These policies are designed to guide credentialing, access, conduct, and content usage by media representatives at WVSSAC Events, with specific procedures for regular season, regional, playoffs, and the final site of state championship competitions.

1.1. **"Regular Season"** includes all WVSSAC competitions that occur prior to the start of postseason competition.

1.2. **"WVSSAC Events"** includes state championship postseason competitions, including Preliminary Rounds and Final Sites.

1.3. **"Preliminary Round(s)**" include regional rounds of competition, and the first/second/third rounds of the football playoffs before schools advance to the Final Site in a WVSSAC Event.

1.4. "**Final Site(s)**" include the final rounds of competition in WVSSAC state championship competitions held at one venue or city. For instance, the final two days of competition in golf championships, quarterfinals/semifinals/finals in basketball and baseball championships, semifinals/finals in soccer championships, and/or finals in football championships.

1.5. "**Media Partners**" are media organizations or businesses licensed by the WVSSAC and include the NFHS Network and MetroNews. (See Section 3).

1.6. **"Commercial License(s) and Licensee(s)**" include commercial and media entities granted certain defined and limited non-exclusive rights by the WVSSAC. (See Section 10).

2. **Credentialing Overview**

2.1. Regular Season and Preliminary Round Events

2.1.1. Credentialing is managed at the local level. Host school are solely responsible for granting access to media for Regular Season and Preliminary Rounds.

2.1.2. The WVSSAC encourages Host schools to follow consistent standards with regards to credentials for both home and visiting media.

2.1.3. Media members seeking credentials and access to Regular Season and Preliminary Rounds should contact the Host school principal or athletic director in advance of any competition. This includes print, television, online, social media, photography, radio, audio, and/or video streaming.

2.1.4. Radio/Audio and Television/Video streaming rights for Preliminary Rounds must be secured in advance by registering and making payment at wvssac.online. This is a separate process from requesting credentials. (see Section 9).

2.2. Final Site Events (Championships)

2.2.1. All media must apply directly to the WVSSAC for access to a WVSSAC Final Site competition. All applications must be submitted through the WVSSAC credentialing portal. Credentials from Regular Season or Preliminary Rounds **do not** transfer or guarantee approval by the WVSSAC for Final Site competitions.

2.2.2. Participating schools may receive one (1) credential for school media use only (yearbook, school newspaper, official school media social accounts, internal promotion). (see Section 3.3.)

3. **Credential Eligibility for Final Site Events**

Credentials may be issued to the following groups based on established criteria. However, credentials are not guaranteed and are provided at the sole discretion of the WVSSAC based upon, but not limited to, eligibility, demand, and available working space. The WVSSAC may deny a request for credentials for any reason.

3.1. **Newsgathering Media** that meet the following criteria:

3.1.1. Full-time staff member from newspapers, magazines, television, and radio.

3.1.2. Members of the West Virginia Sportswriters Association.

3.1.3. Provide regular coverage of high school athletics.

3.1.4. Freelancers (writers and photographers) requested by the news/sports editor.

3.1.5. Radio stations that have covered a school throughout a season will be granted a maximum two (2) non-broadcast credentials

3.2. **Websites/Social Media Platforms** that meet the following criteria:

3.2.1. A consistent history of year-round high school sports coverage and original reporting.

3.2.2. Produce content on the site that is original, objective, and newsgathering in nature.

3.2.3. Have an active domain (URL) and a valid business license.

3.2.4. Adhere to WVSSAC media policies and requirements and intellectual property rights.

3.3. **Student/School Media**

3.3.1. Each qualifying school may receive one (1) credential for school-owned media use (yearbook, school newspaper, social media, internal promotion). The designee must be a student or adult volunteer. The credential is non-transferable. This request must be made by the principal or athletic director.

3.3.2. Designees **may not sell photos,** and content may not be posted to personal social media accounts, including the designee's own. Designees must follow all WVSSAC media and photo guidelines. (See Sections 5 and 6.)

3.4. Licensees

3.4.1. Radio/Audio Rights holders (see Section 9).

3.4.2. Television/Video Rights holders (see Section 9).

3.4.3. Commercial Content licenses (see Section10).

3.5. Social Media and Online Outlets with Newsgathering Content
Social media-based content (including but not limited to YouTube, X, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, and podcasts) that is not formally affiliated with a newspaper, magazine, radio station, television station, or news gathering website may be **considered** for media credentials by meeting the following criteria:

3.5.1. Demonstrated history of original, sport-specific coverage (e.g., live updates, event recaps, athlete interviews).

3.5.2. Year-round focus on West Virginia high school sports.

3.5.3. No promotional or financial ties to individual schools, athletes, or brands.

3.5.4. Account must operate independently and not serve as a marketing platform for an athlete, school, business, or NIL entity.

3.5.5. Must provide sample content upon request and show consistent engagement or audience reach upon request.

3.5.6. Must comply with all intellectual property and broadcast rights policies.

3.6. **The following organizations will not receive media credentials:**

3.6.1. Social media or online outlets that primarily serve as promotional or marketing platforms on behalf of specific schools, athletes, or brands are not eligible for media credentials.

3.6.2. Social media or online outlets whose coverage consists only of posting final scores or graphics without accompanying original reporting.

3.6.3. Recruiting services, athlete ranking platforms, NIL-focused outlets, and similar entities are not recognized as media outlets for credentialing purposes.

3.6.4. Message board sites, outlets that lack original reporting, website or social media platforms that do not consistently cover high school sports.

4. Credential Application Procedure

4.1. **For Regular Season and Preliminary Rounds[1]:** All media must contact the Host school for credential and access.

Radio/audio Rights and Television/video Rights for Preliminary Rounds must be secured in advance by registering at wvssac.online and is a separate process from requesting credentials. (See Section 9).

4.2. **For Final Site Events:** All applications must be submitted through the WVSSAC credentialing portal. Approval for credentials is at the discretion of the WVSSAC. Access may be limited based on demand and venue capacity.

Commercial Content Rights for Final Site competitions must be secured in advance by registering at wvssac.online and is a separate process from requesting credentials. (See Section 10).

5. Photographer and Videographer Guidelines

5.1 Photographer access will follow NFHS safety and positioning guidelines for each sport.

5.2 Flash photography is prohibited in specific sports (e.g., basketball free-throw area, volleyball, swimming).

5.3 One (1) school-assigned photographer may be credentialed with use limited to school-owned media. (See Sections 3.3 and 6.)

5.4 Use of drones is prohibited at all Preliminary Round and Final Site events, including parking areas and non-playing surfaces. The WVSSAC retains the right to grant permission for limited drone usage by its Media Partners or public safety officials.

5.5 Remote cameras must be pre-approved and may not interfere with play or obstruct views.

6. Social Media and Content Use Guidelines

6.1 Credentialed media may post on social media real-time editorial updates.

[1] Fully implemented in 2026-27

6.2 Use of video highlights are limited to ten (10) seconds (:10) per post and a total of two (2) minutes (2:00).

6.3 Live video or audio streaming is prohibited without prior written approval by the WVSSAC.

6.4 Photos, video and audio captured with a credential issued by the WVSSAC may be published only on the platforms and official accounts of the media outlet for which the credential was issued. Posting this content on personal social media accounts, personal websites or personal business pages is not permitted.

6.5 These provisions apply to all credential holders, including staff, freelancers and student/school media designees. (See Section 3.3.)

7. Intellectual Property and Rights

7.1 The intellectual property, corporate, broadcasting, streaming, and media rights to all WVSSAC Events are the exclusive property of the WVSSAC, including titling agreements and sponsorships.

7.2 No credentialed media outlet or individual may sell or distribute any content secured at WVSSAC Final Site competitions without obtaining a Commercial Content Rights license (see Section 10).

7.3 The naming of a "Player of the Game," MVP, or similar individual or team recognition is not permitted by any media outlet or representative at WVSSAC Events. All formal recognitions or awards are reserved solely for the WVSSAC and/or its Media Partners.

7.4 Only WVSSAC Media Partners, or licensees when applicable, may video stream, or broadcast WVSSAC Events live and/or delayed. The WVSSAC does not own media rights to regular season competitions in any sport,

7.5 The copyright to all video and audio produced at a WVSSAC Event is owned by the WVSSAC. The right to any future use, reproduction or distribution of the accounts and descriptions of the WVSSAC Event, or any films, videotapes, audiotapes, or other recordings thereof, for commercial purposes, together with all rights and privileges under the United States copyright laws, hereby are reserved to the WVSSAC, and express written permission shall be obtained from WVSSAC prior to any such use thereof.

7.6 While photographers and videographers own the intellectual property rights to individual images, the WVSSAC owns the intellectual property rights to all WVSSAC Events. Therefore, images secured during WVSSAC Events must adhere to the Commercial Content license policies.

8. Photo Sales and Availability

8.1 The WVSSAC has the right to designate an official photo service(s) that may promote and sell photos from WVSSAC Events to the public.

8.2 Freelance photographers and other content creators must secure a non-exclusive Commercial Content Rights license for any Final Site competition (see Section 10).

8.3 Licensee is solely responsible for securing any permissions and approvals, including use of school logos and marks, and individuals, including student-athletes, coaches and staff, prior to the sale of photos and images.

9. Radio/Audio Rights, Television/Video Rights

9.1 The WVSSAC has designated the NFHS Network and MetroNews as Media Partners who have been licensed certain live and delayed radio/audio and television/video rights to WVSSAC Events.

9.2 MetroNews has the exclusive Radio/Audio Rights to the football championship games, basketball state tournament games (quarterfinals, semifinals, and championship games), softball semifinals and championship games, and baseball quarterfinals, semifinals, and championship games. In addition, MetroNews has first-right for radio/audio coverage to all other WVSSAC Final Site events.

9.3 Radio/Audio Rights to Preliminary Rounds may be licensed to radio stations at the discretion of the WVSSAC under a published rights agreement and fee schedules.

9.4 Registration and payment for available Radio/Audio Rights to Preliminary Rounds is available at wvssac.online.

9.5 The NFHS Network and MetroNews have the exclusive television/video rights to the football championship games, basketball championship games, and baseball championship games. For all other WVSSAC Preliminary Rounds and Final Sites, the NFHS Network has the exclusive right to all television/video coverage.

9.6 If the NFHS Network declines to produce any Preliminary Round competition, the WVSSAC may license television/video coverage of the game at its discretion under a published rights agreement and fee schedule.

9.7 Registration and payment for available Television/Video Rights to Preliminary Rounds is available at wvssac.online.

10. Commercial Content Rights

10.1 Commercial content creators (photographers, videographers, graphic specialists, etc.) may obtain a fee-based credential to Final Site competitions, if space is available, by securing a non-exclusive Commercial Content License from the WVSSAC. Credentials and commercial content policies for Preliminary Rounds are at the discretion of the Host school.

10.2 Commercial Content licenses to Final Sites may be licensed to content creators at the discretion of the WVSSAC on a per WVSSAC Event basis under a published rights agreement and fee schedules. The limited rights and access guidelines are defined in the Commercial Content license agreement.

10.3 Registration and payment for a Commercial Content license to WVSSAC Final Site competitions is available at wvssac.online. The registration and payment process must be completed in advance for each Final Site competition.

10.4 Freelance photographers and videographers not affiliated with an established news media outlet but are providing professional services are defined as content creators.

10.5 Commercial Licensees are permitted to resell photos or videos, provided that:

- The content is not branded with WVSSAC marks or logos.
- The content is not used in commercial advertisements or endorsements.
- The Commercial licensee complies with all WVSSAC policies regarding professional conduct and positioning.
- Licensee secures any permissions or approvals, including the use of school logos and marks, and individuals, including student-athletes, coaches, and staff, prior to commercial distribution of content.
- The Commercial licensee complies with WVSSAC intellectual property policies.

10.6 The WVSSAC reserves the right to deny requests for a Commercial Content license for any reason, and to determine that a request of a media credential should be classified as Commercial Content.

11. Media Conduct

11.1 All credentialed personnel must maintain professional and neutral behavior at all times.

11.2 Credentials are non-transferable and do not include or permit guest access.

11.3 Violation of conduct expectations, including misuse of content under Section 6, may result in revocation and future denial of credentials.

11.4 The WVSSAC reserves the right to grant or deny any request for credentials on an individual basis.

11.5 The WVSSAC reserves the right to revoke a credential for any reason.

11.6 By accepting a credential, the holder agrees to all WVSSAC policies and regulations.

11.7 The WVSSAC reserves the right to make changes to its Media Policies and Regulations at any time.