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REGIONAL MEMORANDUM
No. 1507 s. 2026

DISSEMINATION OF SUPPLEMENTAL PROVISIONS TO MEMORANDUM NO. OM-OUGOPS-2026-05-03056 [CLARIFICATION ON SECTION 7(PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3) OF THE GUIDELINES ON ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE DIVISION, REGIONAL, AND PALARONG PAMBANSA

To: Schools Division Superintendents
Assistant Schools Division Superintendents
Division Sports Officers
All Others Concerned

1. This refers to OM-OUGOPS-2026-05-03374 titled *"Supplemental Provisions to Memorandum No. OM-OUGOPS-2026-05-03056 [Clarification on Section 7 (Paragraphs 2 and 3) of the Guidelines on Athlete Eligibility for the Division, Regional, and Palarong Pambansa"* dated October 12, 2026 from the Office of the Undersecretary for Governance and Operations.

2. Attached is the referenced memorandum which includes Guidelines on Athlete Eligibility for the Division, Regional , and Palarong Pambansa.

3. Be guided accordingly.

ESTELA P. LEON-CARIÑO, EdD, CESO III
Director IV/Regional Director

Encl.: As stated
Reference: None
To be indicated in the Perpetual Index:
under the subjects:

SPORTS

ESSD/smp/jp(RM/GuidlinesofAthleteElgibilityonDivision,Regional,PalarongPambansa)
November 10, 2026

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Republika ng Pilipinas
Department of Education
OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

MEMORANDUM
OM-OUGOPS-2026- 10 - 03374

TO : **REGIONAL DIRECTORS**
ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTORS
MINISTER OF BASIC, HIGHER, AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, BARMM
SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
REGIONAL AND DIVISION SPORTS OFFICERS
NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND DIVISION SCREENING AND ACCREDITATION COMMITTEES
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

FROM : **MALCOLM S. GARMA**
Undersecretary for Governance and Operations
Secretary General, Palarong Pambansa

SUBJECT : **SUPPLEMENTAL PROVISIONS TO MEMORANDUM NO. OM-OUGOPS-2026-05-03056 [*CLARIFICATION ON SECTION 7 (PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3) OF THE GUIDELINES ON ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE DIVISION, REGIONAL, AND PALARONG PAMBANSA*]**

DATE : **12 October 2026**

To further ensure the uniform interpretation and implementation of Section 7 of the *Guidelines on Athlete Eligibility for the Division, Regional, and Palarong Pambansa*, as clarified under the enclosed Office of the Undersecretary for Governance and Operations (OUGOPS) Memorandum No. OM-OUGOPS-2026-05-03056, the following supplemental provisions are hereby issued:

I. Definition of Terms

The following terms are operationally defined in accordance with the intent of this Memorandum:

a. **Core Team** – refers to the team comprising student-athletes enrolled in the same school bearing the same unique School ID, regardless of whether the school fields the minimum or maximum number of student-athletes.

b. **Complementary Athletes** – refers to student-athletes who are included in an undersized Core Team to complete the maximum allowable number of

athletes in the roster, in accordance with the applicable technical requirements of the sport.

c. **Modified +3 Athletes** – refers to the three (3) additional student-athletes who may be included in the final team roster, apart from the Core Team and Complementary Athletes, pursuant to the Modified Winner-Take-All Policy, provided that such student-athletes fall under either of the following:

   c.1. student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or

   c.2. student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule

d. **Unforeseen Events** – refer to unexpected personal circumstances beyond the student-athlete's reasonable control that materially prevent participation in the competition, including but not limited to:

   - death or serious illness of the student-athlete or an immediate family member requiring the athlete's presence;
   - sudden accidents involving the student-athlete that prevent participation;
   - unexpected academic, judicial, or government obligations that cannot legally be deferred;
   - migration of the student-athlete to another country; and
   - security or safety concerns specific to the student-athlete's location.

e. **Force Majeure** – refers to extraordinary events or circumstances beyond the control of the student-athlete that render participation impossible or impracticable, including:

   - natural disasters such as typhoons, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, landslides, or tsunamis;
   - public health emergencies, epidemics, pandemics, or government-imposed quarantine measures;
   - war, armed conflict, invasion, terrorism, civil unrest, riots, or insurrection;
   - government actions preventing participation, including travel bans, evacuation orders, or suspension of transportation services;
   - widespread power outages or failures of critical infrastructure that significantly disrupt travel or competition activities; and
   - other Acts of God and events recognized under applicable laws, rules, or regulations as force majeure.

II. Preservation of Team Composition

Consistent with the principle of preserving the integrity of the champion team, all members of the Core Team and all Complementary Athletes who have been

duly included in the final roster shall, as a general rule, remain part of the team for the entire duration of the competition cycle.

Accordingly, members of the Core Team and Complementary Athletes shall not be replaced or removed, except in cases expressly allowed under the Guidelines, including compliance with the Home Region Representation Rule, medical incapacity, unforeseen events, force majeure, or other meritorious circumstances duly approved by the appropriate authority.

III. Modified Winner-Take-All Policy

To ensure flexibility in maximizing regional representation and competitive opportunities, the regional athletic associations may replace student-athletes included under the Modified Winner-Take-All Policy as the team advances from one level of competition to another, subject to compliance with eligibility requirements and applicable screening and accreditation procedures.

For this purpose, the concerned Regional Director, Schools Division Superintendent, or authorized Head of Delegation shall execute a Waiver and Certification, signifying that:

a. the student-athlete forms part of the Modified +3 Athletes under the Modified Winner-Take-All Policy;
b. the student-athlete, together with his/her parent/s or guardian/s, understands and voluntarily accepts, and shall submit an undertaking that his/her inclusion may be subject to replacement in subsequent levels of competition; and
c. the Region reserves the right to modify the composition of the Modified +3 Athletes in accordance with the applicable rules, policies, and strategic considerations.

IV. Academic Eligibility for the Three-Term School Calendar

Recognizing the implementation and transition to the Three-Term School Calendar, official report cards, grades, or other academic records may not yet be available at the time of screening and accreditation for the division meets.

Accordingly, a student-athlete who is otherwise qualified may be provisionally allowed to participate upon submission of a certification issued by the School Head or Registrar stating that the official academic records have not yet been released due to the school's transition to the Three-Term School Calendar.

Provided, however, that:

a. the student-athlete shall submit the required academic records immediately upon its release by the school;
b. student-athletes advancing to the succeeding level of competition shall submit such academic records prior to screening and accreditation for the next level;

c. upon verification of the academic records, the student-athlete must comply with the academic eligibility requirements under existing *Palarong Pambansa* rules and guidelines; and

d. failure to submit the required academic records or to satisfy the applicable academic eligibility shall constitute aground for disqualification from further participation.

This provision is intended to ensure that no student-athlete is unduly deprived of the opportunity to participate solely because the release of academic records has been affected by the implementation or transition to the Three-Term School Calendar.

This supplemental memorandum is issued to address concerns raised by field offices regarding team composition, student-athlete replacement, and academic eligibility during the transition to the Three-Term School Calendar and to further clarify and provide additional guidance on the implementation of Section 7 of the *Guidelines on the Eligibility of Athletes in the Division, Regional, and Palarong Pambansa.*

Immediate dissemination and strict compliance of this Supplemental Memorandum is hereby directed.

Republika ng Pilipinas
Department of Education
OFFICE OF THE UNDERSECRETARY FOR GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

MEMORANDUM
OM-OUGOPS-2026- 05. 03052

TO : **REGIONAL DIRECTORS**
ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTORS
MINISTER OF BASIC, HIGHER, AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION, BARMM
SCHOOLS DIVISION SUPERINTENDENTS
REGIONAL AND DIVISION SPORTS OFFICERS
NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND DIVISION SCREENING AND ACCREDITATION COMMITTEES
ALL OTHERS CONCERNED

FROM : **MALCOLM S. GARMA**
Undersecretary for Governance and Operations
Secretary General, Palarong Pambansa

SUBJECT : **CLARIFICATION ON SECTION 7 (PARAGRAPHS 2 AND 3) OF THE GUIDELINES ON ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY FOR THE DIVISION, REGIONAL, AND *PALARONG PAMBANSA***

DATE : **11 August 2026**

The Department of Education (DepEd), through the Office of the Undersecretary for Governance and Operations (OUGOPS) and the *Palarong Pambansa* Secretariat, issued the enclosed OUGOPS Memorandum No. OM-OUGOPS-2026-05-08594 entitled *Key Updates on the 2026 Palarong Pambansa*, which contains the **Guidelines on the Eligibility of Athletes in the Division, Regional, and *Palarong Pambansa* 2026**.

In connection with the foregoing, this Office issues this Clarificatory Memorandum to address queries regarding the implementation of **Section 7 of the Eligibility Rules** on the **Modified Winner-Take-All Policy for Team Sports**, which provides among others:

> *"The final team roster for all team sports advancing to the Palarong Pambansa shall be composed principally of a "Core Team," consisting of the student athletes who comprise the main roster of the regional champion team that qualified for the Palarong Pambansa. The core team shall have a maximum of twelve (12) players for Basketball, Volleyball, Sepak Takraw, Futsal, Softball, and Baseball, and a maximum of eighteen (18) players for Football, as determined by the technical requirements of each sport. Such*

core team roster shall, as a rule, be preserved in its entirety throughout the duration of the competition.

Where the roster of the regional champion team that qualified for the Palarong Pambansa is less than the maximum allowable Core Team complement, the Core Team may be completed up to such maximum through the inclusion of student-athletes who qualified and participated in the lower-level meets and who fall under either of the following: (1) student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or (2) student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule.

In the event that any member of the Core Team is required to represent his or her home region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule, as defined above, such player shall be replaced by (1) a player from the winning team's school; (2) a player from any school within the same region; or (3) a player required to represent their home region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule, as the case may be, in order to preserve the integrity and required number of the Core Team.

In accordance with the Modified Winner-Take-All Policy, the final team roster may further include not more than three (3) "Additional Players", who are student-athletes not part of the Core Team, who qualified and participated in the lower-level meets, and who fall under either of the following:

1. *Student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or*
2. *Student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule.*

All student-athletes integrated pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule shall be counted within the allowable Additional Players limit, unless they are replacing a Core Team player removed due to compliance with the Home Region Representation Rule or are integrated to complete the maximum allowable Core Team complement pursuant to this Section."

To avoid any confusion and ensure the uniform interpretation and implementation of the foregoing guidelines, the following clarifications are hereby issued:

1. **Composition of the Core Team**. The final team roster for all team sports advancing to the *Palarong Pambansa* shall be composed principally of a "Core Team," consisting of the student-athletes who comprise the main roster of the Regional Champion that qualified for the *Palarong Pambansa*. The Core Team shall consist of the athletes representing the winning school in the district, division, regional meets, and *Palarong Pambansa*, subject to the maximum allowable complement of **twelve (12) players** for Basketball, Volleyball, Sepak Takraw, Futsal, Softball, and Baseball, and **eighteen (18) players** for Football, as determined by the technical requirements of each sport.

The minimum roster for each core team shall be determined in accordance with the sports' respective technical guidelines, provided that the required number of players in the field of play and substitute player/s are included.

2. **Preservation of the Core Team**. As a rule, the Core Team roster shall be preserved in its entirety throughout the duration of the competition. An athlete who has become a member of the Core Team shall not be replaced, except when required under the Home Region Representation Rule, or when the athlete is unable to participate due to medical reasons, unforeseen events, or force majeure, subject to applicable rules.

3. **Completion of an Undersized Core Team**. Where the Core Team roster is less than the maximum allowable complement, the Core Team may be completed up to such maximum through the inclusion of student-athletes who qualified and participated in the lower-level meets and who are either: (1) student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or (2) student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule. In no case, however, shall such replacement or inclusion displace any existing member of the Core Team from participating in the Division, Regional, or *Palarong Pambansa*.

4. **Additional Players**. In accordance with the Modified Winner-Take-All Policy, the final team roster may further include not more than three (3) "Additional Players," who are student-athletes not part of the Core Team, who qualified and participated in the lower-level meets, and who fall under either of the following: (1) student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or (2) student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule. All student-athletes integrated pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule shall be counted within the allowable Additional Players limit, unless they are replacing a Core Team player removed due to compliance with the Home Region Representation Rule or are integrated to complete the maximum allowable Core Team complement pursuant to this Section.

All other provisions under this Section that are not affected by these clarifications shall remain in full force and effect.

Immediate dissemination and strict compliance with this Memorandum are directed.

GUIDELINES ON THE ELIGIBILITY OF ATHLETES IN THE DIVISION, REGIONAL AND *PALARONG PAMBANSA* 2026

RULE I

Section 1. *Scope and Application.* – These rules shall apply to the conduct of the *Palarong Pambansa*, Regional, Division, District, and School Meets.

RULE II

Section 2. *Composition.* –

a. Pursuant to Section 13 of Republic Act No. 10588[1] known as "An Act Institutionalizing the Conduct of the *Palarong Pambansa* and Appropriating Funds Therefor" and Section 17 (a) of DepEd Order No. 43, s. 2016, known as "The Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act No. 10588," [2] the Board shall constitute the National Screening and Accreditation Committee (NSAC) composed of the following:

   i. A representative from the Department of Education (DepEd) Legal and Legislative Affairs;
   ii. Two (2) government physicians;
   iii. Two (2) government dentists; and
   iv. One (1) authorized representative from each Regional Athletics Association (RAA), preferably the Chairperson of the Regional Screening and Accreditation Committee (RSAC).

The *Palaro* Board may designate a Data Group/Secretariat that will assist the NSAC in preparing and reproducing the master lists, identification, photo galleries of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones, and other works as deemed necessary.

b. The Regional Director shall create a Regional Screening and Accreditation Committee (RSAC) composed of the following:

   i. A representative from the Regional Legal Unit or a representative authorized by the Regional Director, who will act as the Chairperson;
   ii. One (1) government physician;
   iii. One (1) government dentist;
   iv. One (1) authorized representative from each Division Screening and Accreditation Committee (DSAC); and

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1 RA 10588
2 IRR of RA 10588

v. Data Group that will serve as the secretariat and assist the RSAC in the preparation and submission of the master list, identification, photo galleries, and other documents of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones.

c. The Schools Division Superintendent shall likewise create a Division Screening and Accreditation Committee (DSAC) composed of the following:

i. A representative from the Legal Unit or a representative authorized by the Schools Division Superintendent, who will act as the Chairperson;
ii. One (1) government physician;
iii. One (1) government dentist;
iv. One (1) authorized representative from each district or cluster; and
v. Data Group that will serve as the secretariat and assist the DSAC in the preparation and submission of the master list, identification, photo galleries, and other documents of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones.

d. No teaching personnel engaged in classroom instruction shall be designated as NSAC, RSAC, or DSAC members.

Section 3. ***Duties and Functions of the NSAC.*** – The NSAC shall:

a. Interview, evaluate, and verify the authenticity of the documents of athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones submitted by the Head of Delegation for the *Palarong Pambansa*;
b. Accredit qualified athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones and submit the master list to the Board at least two (2) months before the conduct of the *Palarong Pambansa;*
c. Consider replacements for disqualified athletes during the period of screening;
d. Re-check and monitor with the proper technical officials the athletes fielded by coaches during the actual competition based on the final official master list and photo gallery;
e. Monitor the conduct of the screening and accreditation of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones during the Division, Regional and *Palarong Pambansa*;
f. Have an appellate jurisdiction on decisions rendered by the RSAC; and
g. Other functions that the Board may delegate.

Section 4. ***Duties and Functions of the RSAC and DSAC.*** – The RSAC and DSAC shall:

a. Evaluate and verify the authenticity of the documents of athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones submitted by the

Head of Delegation for the Regional Meet in the case of RSAC and Division Meet in the case of DSAC;

b. Accredit qualified athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones and submit the master list to the NSAC and RSAC, as the case may be;
c. Monitor with the proper technical officials the athlete fielded by the coaches during the actual competition; and
d. Provide technical assistance in the screening and accreditation of athletes, coaches and chaperones.

RULE III

Section 5. *Rules on Participation in the Palarong Pambansa.* –

5.1 Eligible Participants. Subject to Section 7 of these Guidelines, eligible participants in the *Palarong Pambansa* shall be bona fide elementary and secondary student-athletes from both public and private schools who have participated in the School, District, Division, Regional, and other lower qualifying meets; Provided, that "secondary athletes" shall refer to both junior and senior high school learners

5.2 Division classification. Generally, Kindergarten to Grade 6 athletes shall play in the Elementary Division, and Grade 7 to Grade 12 athletes shall play in the Secondary Division. However, an elementary athlete who has been declared over age at the elementary level may be allowed to play at the secondary level.

5.3 Event Classification. Events in the *Palarong Pambansa* shall be classified as either Individual or Team Events. Individual Events shall refer to events competed in by student-athletes individually, or by contingents composed of less than five (5) student-athletes, while Team Events shall refer to events competed in by contingents composed of five (5) or more student-athletes.

5.4 Representation Rules. Student-athletes participating in the *Palarong Pambansa* shall be subject to the following representation rules:

A. **Representation of Region of Enrolment and Home Region.**

Student-athletes shall represent either their Region of Enrolment or their Home Region, as provided in these Guidelines.

The **Region of Enrolment** refers to the region where the student-athlete maintains academic residence as evidenced by official enrolment during the current school year and as reflected in the DepEd Learner Information System (LIS) and corresponding school records. As a general rule, the Region of Enrolment shall

govern representation in School, District, Division, and Regional Meets, as well as in Individual Events at the *Palarong Pambansa*.

The **Home Region**, on the other hand, refers to the region determined pursuant to the academic residency rules set forth in this Section, and shall govern representation in Team Events at the *Palarong Pambansa*.

For the avoidance of doubt, the Home Region and the Region of Enrolment may or may not be the same, and shall not be presumed identical. A student-athlete's representation in School, District, Division, and Regional Meets or individual events shall not be determinative of his or her Home Region for purposes of team representation at the *Palarong Pambansa*.

B. **Representation Rules for Team Events**

i. **Home Region Representation Rule.** Student-athletes participating in team events shall represent their Home Region, determined primarily on the basis of the longest and most substantive period of academic residency immediately preceding the *Palarong Pambansa*, as follows:

1. If the student-athlete is enrolled in his or her first school in the Philippines, the student-athlete's Region of Enrolment shall be deemed the Home Region.

2. If the student-athlete has maintained an academic residence in one region for at least four (4) consecutive years immediately preceding the opening ceremony of the *Palarong Pambansa*, the student-athlete's Home Region shall be that Region of Enrolment.

3. If the student-athlete's current academic residence is for less than four (4) consecutive years in a region, the immediately preceding Region of Enrolment shall be deemed the student-athlete's Home Region, provided that the student-athlete has academically resided in such region for at least four (4) consecutive years.

4. If the student-athlete's academic residence is not covered by the three (3) preceding paragraphs, the Home Region shall be the region corresponding to the student-athlete's longest cumulative period of academic residency. In the event that such cumulative periods are equal among two or more regions, the student-athlete shall represent the most recent among such regions.

ii. **Evidence of Academic Residence.** Academic residence shall be verified primarily through the DepEd LIS, Form 137 or SF-10, or other official school records. Secondary documents or affidavits may be accepted solely to resolve ambiguities.

iii. **Integration into the Home Region.** A student-athlete shall be integrated into the qualified team of his or her Home Region for a *Palarong Pambansa* cycle when any of the following occurs:

1. **Initiated by the Home Region.** The Regional Director (RD) of the Home Region issues a formal written notice of intent to field the student-athlete to the RD of the Region of Enrolment, after consultation with the concerned Home Region head coach, not later than thirty (30) days before the opening of the *Palarong Pambansa*; or

2. **Upon inquiry by the Region of Enrolment.** Upon a formal written request from the RD of the Region of Enrolment seeking confirmation as to whether the student-athlete will be fielded, the RD of the Home Region issues a written confirmation that the student-athlete will be fielded, after consultation with the concerned Home Region head coach, within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of such request.

iv. **Continuation with the Region of Enrolment and Waiver by the Home Region.** Notwithstanding the Home Region Representation Rule, the student-athlete shall continue to represent the Region of Enrolment for a *Palarong Pambansa* cycle, and the Home Region shall be deemed to have waived its right to field the student-athlete for that cycle, when any of the following occurs:

1. The RD of the Home Region fails to issue a written notice of intent to field the student-athlete not later than thirty (30) days before the opening of the *Palarong Pambansa*; or

2. After the RD of the Region of Enrolment submits a formal written request seeking confirmation as to whether the student-athlete will be fielded, the RD of the Home Region:

   (i) issues a written certification that the student-athlete will not be fielded; or

   (ii) fails to issue any written response within fifteen (15) calendar days from receipt of the request.

Any notice, confirmation, or certification issued beyond the periods herein prescribed shall not be recognized. Any waiver arising under this Section shall be final and irrevocable for that *Palarong Pambansa* cycle.

v. **Service of Notices.** All notices, requests, certifications, confirmations, and other official communications required under this Section shall be served either (a) electronically through email, addressed to the official email address/es of the concerned Regional Office with copy furnished to the Palarong Pambansa Secretariat, or (b) by personal service upon the Regional Office concerned.

For service by email, the date and time of transmittal indicated in the sender's email system, in Philippine Standard Time (PST), shall be deemed the date and time of service and shall be the reckoning point for the computation of all periods prescribed under this Section. The sending party shall retain and, when required, produce proof of transmittal, which may consist of the sent email showing the date and time of sending, recipients, and attachments.

For personal service, service shall be deemed complete upon actual receipt by the concerned regional office, as evidenced by an acknowledged receiving copy bearing the name, signature, position, and date and time of receipt of the receiving personnel, which shall likewise be the reckoning point for the computation of all periods prescribed under this Section.

vi. **Coach Discretion and Roster Limits**. Nothing herein shall be construed as authorizing any increase in the maximum allowable number of players for the Core Team and Additional Players under Section 7 hereof, nor as restricting the head coach's authority over tactical line-ups, player rotation, or the actual playing time of student-athletes representing the region in the *Palarong Pambansa*.

vii. **Exemptions, special circumstances, and appeals.** Should unique circumstances arise—such as frequent relocations, reassignment of government personnel, or verified humanitarian reasons—that may justify an exemption to the Home Region Representation Rule, or should there exists any dispute regarding a student-athlete's home region, a *Palarong Pambansa* Board Appeals Committee shall be constituted to hear the dispute or request for exemption and to decide on the appropriate relief, subject to future guidelines to be issued by the *Palarong Pambansa* Board.

viii. **Applicability.** The Home Region Representation Rule shall apply only to the *Palarong Pambansa* or the national level. Athletes shall continue to represent their schools of enrolment in the School, District, Division, and Regional Meets.

C. **Representation Rules for Individual Events.**
Student-athletes participating in Individual Events shall represent the Region of Enrolment, as reflected in the DepEd Learner Information System (LIS) and corresponding school records.

D. **Representation Rules for Philippine Schools Overseas (PSOs).**
Student-athletes from Philippine Schools Overseas (PSOs) shall participate under the banner of PSOs.

Section 6. *Eligibility of Athlete.* – To be eligible in the *Palarong Pambansa*, Regional Meet, Division Meet, and other lower meets, the athlete must be:

a. A Filipino citizen

b. Enrolled in a public, private recognized school (schools with recognition/permit to operate) or PSOs or National Academy of Sports (NAS) in the current school year, regardless of the delivery mode of learning, except those enrolled under Alternative Learning System.

For athletes under the Alternative Delivery Mode (Home Study Program/ Home Schooling Program, Modified Out School Approach, Open High School Program), they shall be allowed to participate in the *Palarong Pambansa*, Regional Meet, Division Meet, and other lower meets, provided that they shall represent their home region, subject to the applicable representation rules for team or individual events under these Guidelines

c. Athletes who are members of the National Team, National Training Pool, or National Developmental Team, as well as those who have previously competed in international competitions, whether or not they receive stipends from the Philippine Sports Commission, shall be eligible to compete in the *Palarong Pambansa*.

For combative sports, in view of their access to high-level coaching, training facilities, resources, and exposure to more rigorous competition, the entry level of members of the National Team, National Training Pool, and National Developmental Pool

shall be the Regional Meet, provided that they comply with all applicable eligibility requirements.

d. In case of transfer of a student-athlete from one school to another, the transferee shall be allowed to participate in the School, Division, and Regional Meets, as well as in the *Palarong Pambansa*, whether in individual or team events, provided that the transfer was effected prior to the conduct of the school intramurals of the receiving school, and that the learner-athlete has otherwise complied with all eligibility and participation requirements under these Guidelines.

   However, for purposes of the ***Palarong Pambansa***, the playing region of student-athletes participating in **team events** who transfer from **one region to another** shall be determined in accordance with the Home Region Representation Rule under Rule III, Section 5 of these Guidelines.

e. For athletes in the **elementary level**, the athlete must have been born on or after January 1, 2013. For *Palarong Pambansa* 2027, elementary athletes must have been born on or after January 1, 2014; for 2028, on or after January 1, 2015; and so on and so forth for the succeeding years.

   For those in the **secondary level**, the athlete must have been **born on or after January 1, 2008**. For *Palarong Pambansa* 2027, secondary athletes must have been born on or after January 1, 2009; for 2028, on or after January 1, 2010; and so on and so forth for the succeeding years. Athletes born before said date shall be immediately disqualified from the School Meet, Division Meet, Regional Meet, and in the *Palarong Pambansa*.

f. **Filipino athletes enrolled in PSOs** may be allowed to participate in the *Palarong Pambansa* without playing in the Division Meet and Regional Meet, provided that the athlete:

   i. Shall compete only in the individual sport;
   ii. Shall meet the other requirements for qualification and accreditation;
   iii. Shall meet the qualifying standards in the individual sports where they are playing; and
   iv. Shall shoulder their expenses.

Section 7. Modified Winner-Take-All Policy for Team Sports. – The final team roster for all team sports advancing to the *Palarong Pambansa* shall be composed principally of a **"Core Team"**, consisting of the student-athletes who comprise the main roster of the regional champion team that qualified for the *Palarong Pambansa*. The core team shall have a maximum of twelve (12) players for Basketball,

Volleyball, Sepak Takraw, Futsal, Softball, and Baseball, and a maximum of eighteen (18) players for Football, as determined by the technical requirements of each sport. Such Core Team roster shall, as a general rule, be preserved in its entirety throughout the duration of the competition.

Where the roster of the regional champion team is less than the maximum allowable Core Team complement, or where any member of the Core Team is required to represent his or her Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule, the Core Team may be completed or such player replaced, as the case may be, through the inclusion of student-athletes who qualified and participated in the lower-level meets and who fall under either of the following:

1. Student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or
2. Student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule.

In accordance with the Modified Winner-Take-All Policy, the final team roster may further include not more than three (3) "**Additional Players**", who are student-athletes not part of the Core Team, who qualified and participated in the lower-level meets, and who fall under either of the following:

1. Student-athletes from the same region who are not from the winning school; and/or
2. Student-athletes who are required to represent their Home Region pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule.

All student-athletes integrated pursuant to the Home Region Representation Rule shall be counted within the allowable Additional Players limit, unless they are replacing a Core Team player removed due to compliance with the Home Region Representation Rule or are integrated to complete the maximum allowable Core Team complement pursuant to this Section.

Section 8. *Grounds for Disqualification.* – Unless otherwise provided by the *Palarong Pambansa* Board, the following athletes shall be disqualified or shall not be allowed to play in the *Palarong Pambansa*, Regional, Division, or other lower meets:

a. Athletes who have been declared over age;

b. Elementary athletes with third (3rd) molar tooth;

c. For the Division Meet and lower meets, athletes with three (3) or more failing grades in any learning areas in the First Grading Period. For the Regional Meet and *Palarong Pambansa*, athletes

with failing grades in three (3) or more learning areas in the second grading period; *Provided*, that in the case of Grades 11 to 12, athletes with three (3) or more failing grades in any learning areas in the First Semester shall be disqualified.

d. Athletes who fail to submit the required documents, physically appear during the screening and interview, and play in the Regional Meet, Division Meet, and other lower meets, unless his/her failure to appear is justifiable or due to a fortuitous event beyond his/her control;

e. Athletes banned during the previous *Palarong Pambansa* or disqualified during the preceding lower meets; and

f. Other grounds including but not limited to falsification of documents, misrepresentation, and use of prohibited drugs.

Section 9. *Documentary Requirements.* - The following are the required documents to be submitted by athletes who intend to participate in the *Palarong Pambansa* and other lower meets:

a. Athlete's Record (AR) signed by the athlete, coach, and authorized Division Sports Officer and/or Coordinator;

b. Original Copy of Philippine Statistic Authority (PSA)/National Statistics Office (NSO) Birth Certificate. Late registration of the Birth Certificate of an athlete shall be accepted; Provided, the Birth Certificate is registered one (1) year before the current *Palarong Pambansa*;

c. In the case of foreign-born Filipino athletes, in lieu of an NSO/PSA Birth Certificate, the Original Birth Certificate issued by the country where he was born and a valid passport or a document issued by the Bureau of Immigration or Department of Foreign Affairs showing his or her Filipino nationality.

The age eligibilities are subject to the specific technical rules of each sports discipline.

d. Certified true copy from original or computer printed of Learner's Permanent Academic Record or SF 10 (Form 137) with entries of Learner Reference Number (LRN) duly signed by the Teacher-Adviser and Registrar or School Heads.

e. Certificate of Enrolment and Attendance duly signed by the School Registrar or School Head:

i. For Grades 1 to 10, a Certificate of Attendance and Completion stating that the athlete had attended and completed the Curriculum Year.

ii. For Grades 11 and 12, a Certificate of Completion issued by the school where the athlete was enrolled in the 2nd Semester, stating that the athlete had attended and completed the Curriculum Year. The foregoing requirements apply to *Palarong Pambansa.*

f. Parental Consent

i. ***For Combative sports, including gymnastics*** - Parental Consent signed by both parents duly verified by the school head where the athlete is enrolled.

1. In case one or both parent/s is /are residing in a place other than the athlete's residence, signed parent consent from both parents must be submitted and verified by the school head where the athlete is enrolled. Copy of the signed parent consent of any parent may be in electronic form (*i.e.,* sent to the school head or coach through email or other electronic means.)

2. In case of de facto separation, legal separation, annulment of marriage, or declaration of nullity of marriage of parents, the consent of the parent with actual care and custody of the athlete duly verified by the school head where the athlete is enrolled.

ii. ***For Non-combative sports*** - Parental Consent of at least one parent duly verified by the school head where the athlete is enrolled.

1. In case one or both parent/s is/are residing in a place other than the athlete's residence, signed parental consent from one parent must be submitted and verified by the school head where the athlete is enrolled. Copy of the signed parental consent of any parent may be in electronic form (*i.e.,* sent to the school principal or coach through email or other electronic means.)

iii. If the athlete is orphaned, has no known parents, or any other similar circumstances, the parent-substitute shall execute a Notarized Affidavit of Actual Care and Custody, which shall include a statement of his/her consent, in lieu of the Parental Consent.

g. Medical certificate issued within three (3) months before the opening of each level of competition, stating that the athlete is physically fit. The complete name and signature of the physician shall appear on the medical certificate, with the license number and date of examination.

h. Dental certificate with a universal entry issued within six (6) months before each level of competition is opened. The complete name and signature of the dentist shall appear on the dental certificate, with the license number and date of examination. For Secondary Athletes, No Dental Certificate is required.

i. Passport of the athlete.

RULE IV

Section 10. ***Qualifications and Documentary Requirements for Coach and Assistant Coach.*** – Any school (private or public) personnel may be allowed/designated as a coach or assistant coach, provided he meets and submits the following documentary requirements:

a. He must be a Filipino citizen;

b. Certificate of Relevant sports training of twenty-four (24) hours for non-combative sports and forty (40) hours for combative sports/ gymnastics;

c. Certificate of Relevant experience of one (1) year for non-combative sports and two (2) years for combative sports/ gymnastics;

d. Coach Track Record of participation in the division and regional meet;

e. Educational or professional attainment of at least 2nd-year college, preferably sports-related course;

f. Certificate of Membership in any relevant sports association; OR License or certifications/ accreditation issued by the National/International Sports Association, authorized organization, or by the DepEd (Division, Region, or Central Office);

g. Medical Records (Medical Certificate of Fitness);

h. Employment/Appointment Paper or duly Notarized Contract of Service that shows at least six (6) months of

employment/engagement in the public or private school before the Division meets; and

i. Omnibus Affidavit.

In the case of coaches and assistant coaches of the National Academy Sports (NAS), items a to h shall be complied with, and in lieu of item i, Section 9 herein, an authorization from NAS shall be submitted.

Section 11. ***Qualification and Documentary Requirement for Chaperone.*** - (Certificate or any documents): a chaperone may be designated to accompany the athlete provided she meets the qualifications and submits the following documents duly issued by competent authorities, showing the following:

a. Competence, integrity, capability, and relation to a school (i.e., Employment/ Appointment or Contract of Service showing at least six (6) months of employment/engagement in the public school or private school before the Division Meets;

b. Commitment that she will nurture female athletes only and shall not coach the athletes;

c. Physically fit; for this purpose, a medical certificate is required;

d. Other eligibility requirements that the *Palaro* Board may require.

RULE V

Section 12. Special Cases Regarding Discrepancies in the Livebirth of the Athlete. –

a. In case of discrepancy in the date of birth indicated in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate and SF 10 (Form 137), the date of birth indicated in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate shall prevail. As a remedy, the following additional requirements shall be submitted:

   i. Certificate of Live Birth issued by the Local Civil Registrar (LCR);
   ii. Joint Affidavit of two (2) disinterested persons attesting to the true date of birth of the athlete;
   iii. Resolution issued by the Head of the Delegation correcting the discrepancy in the SF 10 (Form 137).

b. In case of discrepancy in the name indicated in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate and SF 10 (Form 137), the name indicated in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate shall prevail. As a remedy, the following additional requirements shall be submitted:

i. Certificate of Live Birth issued by the LCR;
ii. Joint Affidavit of two (2) disinterested persons attesting to the true name of the athlete;
iii. Resolution issued by the Head of the Delegation correcting the discrepancy in the SF 10 (Form 137).

c. In case the first or last name is not found at the portion of the first or last name entered in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate but indicated in the box below of said portion, the following additional requirements shall be submitted:

i. Certificate of Live Birth issued by the LCR;
ii. Copy of the application/petition duly received by the LCR (supplemental report to the LCR/Court);
iii. Affidavit of the parents, attesting to the true first or last name of the athlete;
iv. Joint Affidavit of two (2) disinterested persons attesting to the true first or last name of the athlete;
v. Resolution issued by the Head of the Delegation attesting the athlete s true first or last name as shown in the foregoing records.

d. In case an illegitimate child (athlete) uses the surname of his / her father as indicated in the SF 10 (Form 137), the following additional requirement shall be submitted:

i. PSA/NSO Birth Certificate with the second page showing acknowledgment by the father or a notarized acknowledgment signed by the father.

e. In case of unreadable entries in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate, the following additional requirements shall be submitted:

i. Certificate of Live Birth issued by the LCR;
ii. Affidavit of the parents, attesting to the true and correct entries;
iii. Joint Affidavit of two (2) disinterested persons attesting to the true entries;
iv. Resolution issued by the Head of the Delegation attesting the true and correct entries as shown in the foregoing records.

f. In case the biological sex/gender of the athlete is not indicated in the PSA/NSO Birth Certificate, the following additional requirements shall be submitted:

1. Certificate of Live Birth issued by the LCR;

2. Affidavit of the parents, attesting to the true and correct biological sex of the athlete;
3. Certification issued by the NSAC Medical Team attesting to the true and correct biological sex of the athlete after conducting a physical examination.

The above-mentioned Resolutions or Certification issued by the Head of Delegations or the NSAC shall be for purposes of *Palaro* only.

RULE VI

Section 13. Period of Screening, Interview, and Evaluation. - Screening of athletes for the *Palarong Pambansa* may be conducted after the Regional Meet or within seven (7) days before the *Palarong Pambansa*. The screening and evaluation of documents of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones may be conducted during the Regional Meet, or at the venue of the *Palarong Pambansa*.

For this purpose, the Head of the Delegations shall submit to the NSAC within fifteen (15) days after their Regional Meet the following, specifically:

a. A letter request indicating the schedule of the interview, screening, and evaluations of documents of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones;

b. Master list and photo galleries (soft and hard copies) of athletes coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones; and

c. A certification stating that: "They had screened and evaluated the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches and chaperones of the subject regional athletic delegation and shall certify that the attached documents are true, complete and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief, and they understand that any false information given, or any true information withheld from said documents may provide grounds for administrative disciplinary action.

The NSAC shall consolidate and finalize the Official Master List of qualified and accredited athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones and submit the same to the *Palaro* Board before the opening of the *Palarong Pambansa*.

Section 14. Posting of Master List to Websites. - The master lists and picture galleries of the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones shall be posted on the DepEd website or any available website upon submission by the delegation concerned. The published

master lists shall be the basis for the filing and/or receiving complaints or protests, if any, within the period prescribed therein.

The Communication Division of this Department shall facilitate the immediate posting on the DepEd website or to any available website of the submitted master lists and/or photo galleries of athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones upon receipt of the said master lists and galleries subject to the provision of Data Privacy Act.

Section 15. Protest on Eligibility and Appeals on Disqualification. –

a. Complaints or protests shall be in writing duly signed by the coach and the Head of the Delegation and filed before the NSAC within three (3) days from publishing the master list of qualified athletes in the DepEd Websites. The complaint or protest shall be resolved within three (3) days from receipt hereof;

b. Complaint/Protest shall be accompanied by affidavit/s of witnesses and/or pieces of evidence in support thereof;

c. Protests that do not comply with (a) and (b) hereof shall not be given due course;

d. The decision on the complaint or protest shall be appealable to the Board within two (2) days from the issuance of the decision, and the Board shall resolve the appeal within two (2) days from receipt of the appeal. The decision of the Board shall be final and executory.

Section 16. Replacement of athletes, Coaches, and chaperones. – Replacement of athletes may be allowed based on meritorious grounds two (2) days before the *Palarong Pambansa*, subject to eligibility and documentary requirements.

Replacements particularly in team sports shall be drawn from registered alternates that emanate from the regional team.

Section 17. Fielding of the NSAC members to the *Palarong Pambansa* Venue. – The NSAC members shall be at the *Palarong Pambansa* venue within five (5) days before the schedule of the opening of the *Palarong Pambansa* to continue the performance of their duties and responsibilities and during the period of the *Palarong Pambansa* events to re-check and monitor the athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones fielded during the games by the delegations.

Section 18. Sanctions against Athletes, Technical Officials, and other persons. – Unless otherwise provided for by the Board, the following sanctions shall be imposed against the athletes, coaches,

chaperones and team of the Region who will violate the rules on eligibility:

a. In team competitions, the games where the ineligible and/or disqualified athlete has taken part shall be declared forfeited in favor of the opposing team;
b. In individual competitions, the games where the ineligible and/or disqualified athlete played shall be forfeited in favor of the opposing athlete;
c. Individuals who violate the rules on eligibility may be suspended or banned from participating in future sports competitions, depending on the gravity of the offense;
d. These sanctions shall be without prejudice to the filing of appropriate administrative and/or criminal charges against the erring officials and/or athletes in accordance with existing laws, rules, and regulations.

Section 19. Non-Discriminatory Clause – No athlete shall be denied participation in the Division Meet, Regional Meet, or *Palarong Pambansa* on account of sex, gender identity or expression, religion, ethnicity, language, disability, or socio-economic status, nor on the basis of the province, city, municipality, or locality where the student athlete is enrolled or resides, provided that all eligibility and documentary requirements under these Guidelines are satisfied.

No athlete who is otherwise qualified at the division or regional level shall be barred from competing in those levels solely on the ground that he or she may not be eligible to play in the *Palarong Pambansa*.

All screening and accreditation bodies, including the NSAC, RSAC, and DSAC, shall strictly observe this policy of equal opportunity and shall not impose additional qualifications or restrictions beyond those expressly provided in these Guidelines.

No school, sponsor, or athletic association shall suspend, revoke, or modify a learner's scholarship, athletic grant, or participation privilege solely for representing his/her home region in compliance with the Home Region Representation Rule. Any school that shall violate this provision shall be subject to administrative sanctions by DepEd, in coordination with the PSC.

Section 20. Transitory Provision. - These guidelines shall fully take effect beginning the 66th *Palarong Pambansa* (2026). However, current Grade 12 athletes under School Year (SY) 2025-2026 shall remain covered by the 2025 eligibility rules to avoid disruption.

Section 21. Repealing Clause. - All DepEd issuances regarding the eligibility of athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and chaperones or

part thereof which are inconsistent with these Guidelines are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 22. Effectivity. These Rules shall take effect immediately upon posting on the DepEd Website.

ANNEX A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ON ATHLETE REPRESENTATION

1. *What is the Home Region Representation Rule?*

Answer: The Home Region Representation Rule requires a student-athlete to represent his or her home region in team events at the *Palarong Pambansa*, notwithstanding his/her participation during the Division or Regional Meets. The purpose of the Home Region Representation Rule is to uphold fairness and integrity in the *Palarong Pambansa* by ensuring that student-athletes compete for the region where they are academically residing for a specified period of time. This rule also helps preserve the authentic identity of each region's team.

2. *What is the "Home Region"?*

Answer: The Home Region refers to the region determined based on the student-athlete's academic residence and enrolment history, applying the longest and most substantive period of enrolment rules under Section 5, Rule III of these Guidelines.

3. *What is meant by "Region of Enrolment"?*

Answer: The Region of Enrolment is the region where the student-athlete maintains academic residence as evidenced by official enrolment during the current school year and as reflected in the DepEd Learner Information System (LIS) and corresponding school records.

4. *How is academic residence computed?*

Answer: Academic Residence shall be computed by the academic years the student-athlete has officially enrolled in.

Illustration: A student-athlete was enrolled in National Capital Region (NCR) from Kindergarten to Grade Six, and is enrolled in Region IV-A from Grade 7 to Grade 10. The student-athlete has an academic residence in NCR for seven (7) years, and in Region IV-A for four (4) years.

5. *How is academic residence computed if the student-athlete transfers regions middle of the academic year?*

Answer: The academic residence shall be computed based on the academic period (*i.e.*, quarter, semester) where he or she is graded.

Illustration: A student-athlete was enrolled in NCR for one semester, and then transferred to Region IV-A the next semester. The student-athlete has an academic residence in both National Capital Region (NCR) and Region IV-A for half a year each.

6. *Does the Home Region Representation Rule apply to both individual and team events?*

Answer: No, the Home Region Representation Rule only applies to team events. Student-athletes participating in individual events will continue to represent their Region of Enrolment.

7. *If a student-athlete is still enrolled in his or her first school in the Philippines, what is his/her home region?*

Answer: If the student-athlete is enrolled in his/her first school in the Philippines, his/her Home Region shall be the Region of Enrolment.

8. *If a student-athlete, who transfers from a foreign school, and is a first-time enrollee in a school in the Philippines, what is his/her home region?*

Answer: The Home Region shall be the Region of Enrolment.

9. *If a student-athlete transfers to a new school in another region and has studied there for four (4) years, which region will he or she represent to the Palarong Pambansa?*

Answer: If the student-athlete has maintained academic residence for at least four (4) consecutive years in one region immediately preceding the opening ceremony of the *Palarong Pambansa*, the student-athlete's Home Region shall be the current Region of Enrolment.

Illustration: X, a student-athlete, has been enrolled in a school located in the NCR for four (4) consecutive years. Prior to that, he studied in the Bicol Region for ten (10) years. In this case, X shall represent the NCR because he has maintained at least four (4) consecutive years of academic residence in NCR immediately preceding the opening of the Palarong Pambansa.

10. What if the student-athlete has been enrolled in his or her current school or region for less than four (4) years but was previously enrolled in a prior region for at least four (4) years, what is his or her home region?

Answer: If the current academic residence of the student-athlete is less than four (4) years in a region, the previous region of enrolment shall be the student-athlete's home region, provided that he/she has academically resided therein for at least four (4) consecutive years.

Illustration: X, a student-athlete, has been enrolled in a school located at the NCR for two (2) years now. Prior to that, he was enrolled in a school located at Bicol Region for ten (10) years. In this scenario, X shall be allowed to represent the Bicol Region because he has no academic residence in NCR for at least four (4) years and have resided in the Bicol Region for more than four (4) years.

11. What if the student-athlete has not stayed in any region for four (4) consecutive years?

Answer: If the academic residence of the student-athlete is not covered by the three (3) preceding situations, the Home Region shall be the region corresponding to the student-athlete's longest cumulative period of academic residency.

Illustration: X's, a student-athlete, current academic residence is in NCR for one (1) year. X previously academically resided in Region VI Region for three (3) years. X shall represent Region VI as his/her home region.

12. A student-athlete is enrolled in a school in NCR for one (1) year immediately preceding the Palarong Pambansa. Prior to this, the student-athlete studied in the Bicol Region for two (2) academic years, and thereafter in CAR for two (2) academic years. What is the student-athlete's home region?

Answer: Where a student-athlete's cumulative periods of academic residency are equal among two or more regions, the student-athlete shall represent the most recent among such regions. Therefore, the student-athlete's Home Region is CAR.

13. What if the student-athlete experiences unique circumstances—such as frequent relocations, parents being regularly reassigned due to government service, or other

verified humanitarian reasons? Can he or she request an exemption from the Home Region Representation Rule?

Answer: Yes, the student-athlete facing unique circumstances may submit a request to the Palaro Board Appeals Committee for an exemption from the Home Region Representation Rule, which would determine if the circumstances warranted such an exemption.

14. May a student-athlete who recently transferred from a school located in a different region from their previous one participate in the Division, Regional, and Palarong Pambansa 2026 competitions?

Answer: The transferee shall be allowed to participate in the School, Division, and Regional Meets, as well as in the *Palarong Pambansa*, provided that the transfer was effected prior to the conduct of the school intramurals of the receiving school, and that the learner-athlete has otherwise complied with all eligibility and participation requirements under these Guidelines.

However, for student-athletes participating in team events who transfer from one region to another, the student-athlete's playing region for the *Palarong Pambansa* shall be determined in accordance with the Home Region Representation Rule under Rule III, Section 5 of these Guidelines.

15. Does this policy prevent a student-athlete from joining UAAP, NCAA, or other school-based leagues?

Answer: No. The policy applies only to representation in the Palarong Pambansa at the national level and does not affect participation in school-based or external competitions.