



VARSITY EXTRA

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Transfer denied: Family move puts prep QB's senior season in jeopardy under murky rules

BY RACHEL ROBERTS
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One of the top high school quarterbacks in the Treasure Valley might not be able to play his senior season this fall because his family moved from Boise to Meridian.

Former Boise High QB Will McMullin suited up for Rocky Mountain at the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl Football Challenge last weekend, directing the Grizzlies to a runner-up finish in the 7-on-7 competition. McMullin enrolled at Rocky last spring, but he said the Idaho High School Activities Association denied his initial transfer request. The IHSAA will rule on his appeal at its next board meeting, on Aug. 2.

The IHSAA says it handles about 400 transfer requests per year — and some result in controversy.

ADVERTISING

 An advertisement for a medical device. It features a large yellow outline of a human figure with a heart icon on the chest. To the left, there is a diagram of a human torso with a highlighted area on the chest, and a box containing the text "Prescribing Information" and "HEART FAILURE". The background is light gray with some abstract shapes.

“We look at each case individually. It doesn’t matter to our board how talented a person is,” IHSAA Executive Director Ty Jones said. “It should be: ‘These are the rules. We are applying the rules.’ So whether you’re a potential four-year starter ... or you’re a potential four-year-sit-on-the-bench kid, hopefully the rules will be applied exactly the same and based on the circumstances that each individual kid has.”

Girls basketball player Da... hardship transfer after sta... of directors denied the Al

An advertisement for Adorama. It shows a row of various electronic equipment, including a camera, a printer, a scanner, and a laptop. The Adorama logo is visible on the right side of the ad.

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family’s appeal.

White chose to transfer anyway and sit out a year. She will be a junior at Mountain View this fall and eligible to play.

“We personally feel this was designed more to hurt the athlete rather than assist the student,” Derrick White said. “If there were some disagreements in all of this, what concerned me the most was everyone involved, I don’t feel they really seek out the truth. I don’t think they were concerned about the truth. I just think that some people were upset about the move, and they were going to punish her and the family as well.”

[Related: ‘Life-threatening’ turf at an Idaho high school?]

Jones says the IHSAA can’t comment on individual transfer cases.

Two pages of the IHSAA’s 15-page rules and regulations manual are dedicated to transfer rules. The rules exist, Jones said, to maintain a level playing field. About half of the transfer requests based on hardships are denied.

“The purpose is to stop people from playing the system,” Jones said. “We don’t care where they go to school, but you just can’t pick and choose where you get to play without any rules and regulations. The vast majority of our coaches and athletic directors are beyond reproach. I don’t have an issue with it at all.

“It is usually parent-generated, because they want their kid to play at a particular school and they don’t understand, ‘Why can’t I just move my kid to this other school and still live in another town?’ ”

When a star athlete switches schools, it can change the direction of a team and the balance of a conference.

So what makes a transfer legitimate in the eyes of the IHSAA, and when is it deemed athletically motivated?

It’s not always so black and white.



Boise High football walks to battle

The Boise football team began walking to games at Dona Larsen Park in 2012 out of necessity. Now it's tradition.

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BONA FIDE MOVE

Talon Pinckney was a key player off the bench when the Capital boys basketball team went undefeated and won a 5A state championship in 2014. As a starter the following season, Pinckney led the Eagles to a third-place finish at state.

Pinckney's senior season came with yet another state run, but it wasn't with the Eagles. Centennial ended a three-year state tournament drought and advanced to the semifinals for the first time since 2011 with Pinckney in the lineup.

Pinckney's transfer received the green light based on the IHSAA's "bona fide move" rule. That's one of the three ways the IHSAA will approve an athlete's transfer from one school to another. A bona fide move is defined as the "physical relocation by the parents or legal guardians of a student at a new residence and termination of all occupancy of the previous residence."

When Pinckney and his family moved into Centennial's boundaries ahead of his senior year, he applied for a transfer under the bona fide move clause.

Although he could have finished his prep career at Capital, Pinckney said it made more sense for his family if he went to Centennial along with his younger brother, who was entering the ninth grade.

"Other people thought that I wasn't going to get approved, but I didn't really think that. I was expecting to play," Pinckney said. "My athletic directors and coaches really took care of it and helped me out."

Pinckney, who now plays for College of Idaho, was required to fill out an athletic transfer form and provide proof of address to the activities association.

The policy is different for families who rent, however.

If the parents of a student move less than 50 miles and rent a new residence, they must write the IHSAA with a letter explaining the move, a letter of support from the school filing the request, a letter of support from the student's previous school and a copy of the rental agreement.

According to IHSAA rules, "the board of directors may approve or deny varsity competition if circumstances warrant," even if a student provides the required documentation.

If a bona fide move isn't possible, there are still other ways for a student to transfer.



SIT OUT A YEAR

Drew Korf attended West Junior High — a feeder school for Borah High — as a ninth-grader. He played on West's ninth-grade football team in the fall and split time between the junior varsity and varsity track teams in the spring.

Korf scored a handful of points for the Lions' varsity track team, rendering him ineligible for varsity competition for one year when he transferred to Capital his sophomore year without a bona fide move.

Korf said he wanted to attend Capital to play football, and the IHSAA approved Korf's transfer based on the waiver of transfer rule, which allows a student to transfer to a new school as long as he or she sits out of varsity competition for one year.

"It was kind of a huge fiasco, but it all worked out," Korf said. "I had to fill out a bunch of paperwork, but it was super quick and super easy to do. I think it's a great fit for kids who want to make a change like that."

Students approved under the waiver of transfer rule can compete in sub-varsity athletics their first year at the new school, which Korf did his sophomore year at Capital. He went on to become the Eagles' starting varsity quarterback his junior and senior years.

HARDSHIP TRANSFER

When Tyler Hollow's dad resigned as the Capital baseball coach after the 2013-14 season under contentious circumstances, the freshman shortstop felt he no longer had a place with the Eagles.

Some Capital parents celebrated Jerry Hollow's resignation, making Tyler uncomfortable.

"There were a few problems with certain parents that were trying to do anything they could to get (my dad) out of there," Tyler said. "They were saying stuff like he misused funds. There were threats saying: 'We're going to get you fired from your teaching job. We're going to take your house.'"

"There were letters written to my mother through the mail. When all that stuff came, I just thought, 'Well, it's not worth putting my mom through that by staying (at Capital).'"

The Hollow family lived inside the boundaries for Rocky Mountain, so Hollow applied for a hardship, or eligibility regulation waiver, with the IHSAA to attend Rocky.

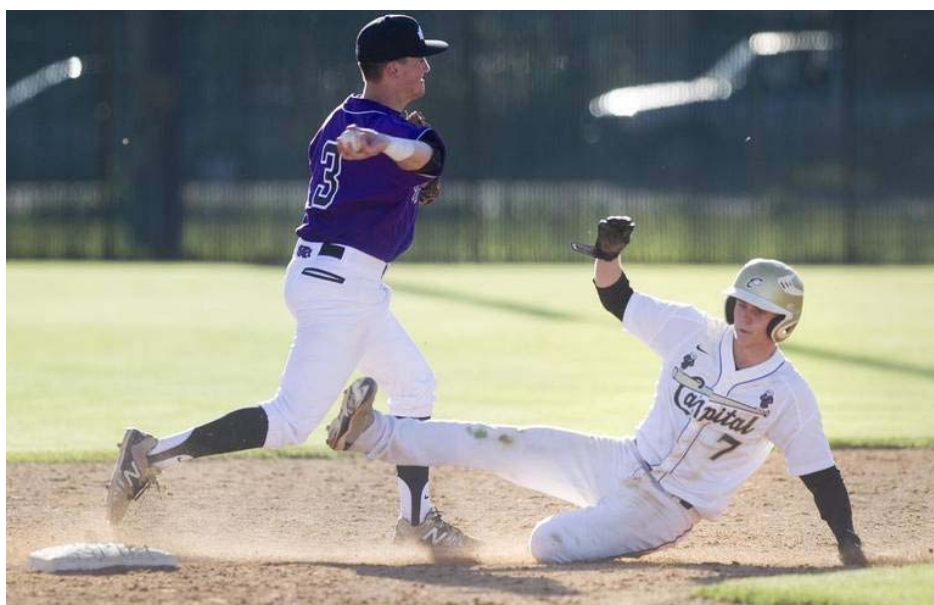
"It worked out in my favor, but if I didn't get that hardship, I honestly don't know," Hollow said. "I don't even know what would have happened if I had stayed again (at Capital) that next year. I'm just thankful that it got accepted."

Hollow started for three years with the Grizzlies and has signed to continue his baseball career at Dixie State University in Utah.

Jones, the IHSAA's executive director, estimates that about half of the 400 or so transfer requests his organization receives each school year are filed as a hardship. Last year, the IHSAA approved 88 hardship transfers.

"Unfortunately, you have to take worst-case scenarios into this, so parents in prison, parents pass away, you're homeless. Think worst-case scenario for a true hardship," Jones said. "But then there are other things that people will try to say, 'Well, this is a hardship.' And I'm not saying that it's not, but that is why we have our board to take a look at those things."

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Rocky Mountain's Tyler Hollow (left, 3) played varsity baseball at Capital as a freshman. He transferred to Rocky for his final three years of high school. **Kyle Green** - kgreen@idahostatesman.com

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