

State legislature could alter Indiana high school sports transfer eligibility rules

[Lawrence Fernandez](#)



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Indiana high school sports could drastically change when a bill filed in the state legislature becomes law. Representative Cory Criswell filed House Bill 1492 which removes limitations for students from enrolling in a school for athletic reasons.

Before the bill, the Indiana High School Athletic Association does not allow transfers due to athletic reasons. Likewise, current IHSAA bylaws state that athletes without a real change of residence are designated to junior varsity. However, they can join the main varsity squad via a waiver or by winning an appeal.

As shared with the [Indianapolis Star's Kyle Neddenriep](#), Criswell said that there have been growing concerns regarding student-athletes being denied eligibility when switching schools. Ultimately, that decision is comparable to families choosing the best educational opportunities for their children.

This bill is close to Criswell's heart because of his previous experience as a basketball coach for [New Castle High School](#). In addition to being an educator, he was also an assistant athletic director for the Trojans. Aside from being Indiana's District 54 representative, Criswell is also the Indiana Basketball Hall of Fame's development director.

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While Criswell's bill will be subject to debate, IHSAA Commissioner Paul Neidig isn't in favor of a one-time restriction-free transfer. Neidig pointed out that only 30 percent of Indiana athletic directors agree with a one-time transfer after an athlete's freshman year. That number drops to a 13 percent approval rate in any Indiana high school sports year.

Despite those sentiments, Neidig said that change regarding transfer rules is inevitable, and they would welcome the changes. If he could have it his way, he'd rather have the IHSAA draft the guidelines than the state legislature.

But with the bill already in place, the IHSAA will engage their member schools in conversation regarding these changes. One possibility is a

one-time transfer before an athlete enters his or her junior year but with a chance to return to the original school.