

# Northwest Ohio Athletic League

Ohio's Oldest -- Since 1926

## 94 Years of Competition

The Northwest Ohio Athletic League was formed in 1926 with six (6) charter member schools: Bryan, Delta, Liberty Center, Montpelier, Napoleon, and Wauseon. The NWOAL is recognized as the oldest league in the state of Ohio.

After five (5) seasons, in 1931, Defiance replaced Delta, leaving six member schools until 1955, when Defiance dropped out. The five (5) remaining charter schools played as a five-team league until the 1957-58 school year when Delta and Swanton became members of the NWOAL.

After three (3) years as a 7-school league, in 1960, Archbold entered the NWOAL. In 1969, Delta and Swanton dropped out, and Evergreen entered the NWOAL for two school years, 1969-71. Also, a new 8-team league, the Northern Border League was formed with Archbold, Evergreen, Liberty Center, Montpelier, and Wauseon competing in both the NWOAL and NBL, Bryan and Napoleon competing in the NWOAL only, and Delta, Patrick Henry, and Swanton competing in the NBL only. Beginning with the 1971-72 school year Evergreen competed only in the NBL.

In 1978, Napoleon dropped out of the NWOAL, and the league re-organized as a 9-team league with member schools: Archbold, Bryan, Delta, Evergreen, Liberty Center, Montpelier, Patrick Henry, Swanton, and Wauseon. The league has had these nine schools since.

Football championships have been contested since 1926, boys cross country since 1969, girls cross country since 1981, golf since 1954, and volleyball since 1975. Boys basketball championships have been contested since 1927, girls basketball since 1976, and wrestling since 1960. Baseball championships have been contested since 1954, softball since 1987, boys track and field since 1927, and girls track and field since 1972. Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, girls soccer was added as a league sport in the fall and boys and girls bowling in the winter season. Boys soccer was added in the fall of 2013.

Montpelier dropped out of the NWOAL in football in 2015, and other sports except wrestling after the 2016-17 school year. Montpelier will continue to compete in wrestling in the NWOAL.

## League History and Timeline

(Compliments of Wikipedia)

### 1920s and 1930s

- The NWOAL began competition in 1926 with charter members **Bryan, Delta, Liberty Center, Montpelier, Napoleon, and Wauseon**. The inaugural sports of competition are football, boys basketball, and track.
- A dissatisfied Delta left in 1931 and was replaced by **Defiance**.

### 1950s

- Baseball and golf are offered as sports for league competition in the 1953-54 school year.
- Defiance was voted out of the league in 1954 for having an enrollment over twice the average of the smaller schools and for being dominant in league titles. They left at the end of the 1954-55 school year.
- Fairview and Paulding apply and are denied league membership in the 50s.
- **Swanton** and Delta are invited to join and enter the NWOAL in 1957 after a tenure in the Maumee Valley League.
- **Archbold** is also invited at the same time and joins in 1960.
- Wrestling becomes a league sport for the 1959-60 school year.
- Ottawa Hills was considered for membership in 1959, but they never officially joined the NWOAL. It was around this time that it became obvious that the smaller schools were not satisfied with the dominance Napoleon (and to a lesser extent, Bryan) were displaying in acquiring all-sports crowns.

## 1960s

- In spring 1968, Defiance re-applied and was denied admission for NWOAL membership, making it evident schools of that size were not welcome in the league. Talk began of Bryan, Defiance, and Napoleon joining up in another league separate from the NWOAL.
- In 1969, the **Northern Border League** was formed by the smaller members of the NWOAL as a way for them to compete for league titles. Delta and Swanton withdrew from the NWOAL completely while Archbold, Liberty Center, Montpelier, Wauseon and the recently-joined **Evergreen** become dual members of both the NBL and the now 7-member NWOAL. Competition between the five dual-league members counted in the standings for both the NWOAL and the NBL.
- Cross country becomes a league sport in the 1969-70 school year.

## 1970s

- Consolidated in 1969, Patrick Henry joined the NBL in 1970.
- In 1971, Evergreen left the NWOAL to solely compete in the NBL.
- In February 1973, more tensions arose when Liberty Center considered leaving the NWOAL completely to compete solely in the NBL. Napoleon also displayed intention of leaving the league they felt they were not wanted in, and it was widely believed that Archbold, Montpelier, and Wauseon would follow Liberty's suit. This would have caused Bryan and Napoleon to be left without a league home. Community support kept Liberty in the NWOAL, and the league sat on shaky ground for a few more years.
- In the spring of 1978, Napoleon finally left the NWOAL and sought competition from larger schools in the [Great Lakes League](#). Upon Napoleon's departure, the NBL folded and was absorbed by the NWOAL in the fall of 1978. **Patrick Henry** joined for the first time while Delta, Evergreen, and Swanton returned again.

## 1980s

- Girls cross country begins in 1981.
- Softball became a league sport in the spring of 1987.

## 2010s

- For the 2011-12 school year, girls soccer and bowling for both boys and girls begin as league sports.
- Prior to the 2013-14 school year, the NWOAL made an alteration to the league constitution in order to make football scheduling easier on member schools. The first option allows a 10th school to join the league without becoming a full member of the league, while the second option allows a current member to leave the NWOAL to play football in another league or as an independent.
- In May 2014, the [Toledo Area Athletic Conference](#) approved adding Montpelier to its league for football only beginning with the 2016 season.<sup>1</sup> In early June 2014, Montpelier's school board voted to remain in the NWOAL for 2014-15, compete as a football independent in the 2015 season, and then for the 2016-17 school year, they joined the TAAC for football only, became a full-member of the [Buckeye Border Conference](#), and remained an NWOAL affiliate for wrestling only.

