

PA DeMolay Sports and Obligation Cards

Many Chapters have asked for clarification of the PA DeMolay sporting tournament requirement about Obligation Cards. According to PA DeMolay Uniform Athletic Rules, any participant in a PA DeMolay Athletic Tournament "must have already earned their Obligation Card!" Some individuals or Chapters may have hesitated to enter Tournaments based on this requirement. We feel it is important to remind our members of our policy on Obligations Cards, and the importance of this requirement for Tournaments.

In the past, some Chapters were in the practice of Initiating local "star athletes" just before an athletic event, thereby providing themselves with a "ringer" in the competition. It was apparent that these athletes were not involved in DeMolay in any way before or after. Clearly, this is not consistent with the purposes of DeMolay athletic competitions. It was, in part, to prevent this problem, that the Obligation Card requirement was introduced as a way of showing that participants in tournaments had indeed invested some time and effort into DeMolay prior to the tournament.

Although we have not had significant problems with Chapters using "ringers" in some time, we still feel the Obligation Card requirement is valuable, not only to prevent problems, but also as another means of emphasizing the teachings of DeMolay, and encouraging members to give time to learning about the organization. Many men, later in life, have credited the ritual and teachings of DeMolay with having a great influence on their moral and social development. We should take every opportunity to solidify those teachings in the minds of our members.

That being said, it is not the intent of this regulation to bar individuals or Chapters from athletics because they are not good at memorizing, or perhaps are very new to DeMolay. All Chapters should review and understand the Executive Officer's policy on **Issuance of Obligations Cards**, which says:

*In accordance with Section 315.13 of the DeMolay International Rules and Regulations which allows and Executive Officer to specify the requirement for an Obligations Card, the following policy shall be observed in all PA DeMolay Chapters: An Obligations Card shall be issued to any active DeMolay who can prove a **working knowledge** of the Obligations and Examination Queries of the Order. A working knowledge is defined as the ability to name the **important concepts** in each Degree Obligation, to prove an **understanding of the promises made**, and to demonstrate the Step, Signs, Password and Token of the Order. The method followed must be consistent for all Chapter members, and may be decided by Advisory Council policy or by amendment to the Chapter's bylaws.*

In the Jurisdiction of Pennsylvania it shall NOT be necessary to hold an Obligations Card in order to vote or hold office. Members shall NOT be denied the right to vote on applications for membership, motions, or election of officers. In particular, members should first be encouraged to learn the ritual work assigned to their office, to ensure that the Chapter can properly open and close its meetings, and confer degrees.

This is not to minimize the value of memorization of the Obligations. Members should be encouraged to memorize the Obligations, prior to running for an elective office, as a demonstration of their leadership

and ability to serve. However, in no case shall a Chapter take time in a Stated Meeting to hear and vote on Obligations proficiency. It is recommended that the Chairman of the Advisory Council assign to an Advisor the duty to examine and approve the issuance of Obligations Cards.

Briefly stated, no one will be quizzing your athletes at a competition to see if they can recite the Obligations. Your athletes may never be asked to show an Obligation Card ... an Advisor's certification (by registering them) that they hold one is sufficient. More to the point, Chapters should realize that although memorization of the Obligations is important, it is not the requirement for receiving a card. The card is given in recognition of a member's **UNDERSTANDING** of the promises they took. Memorization can (and generally should) come later.

If you need further clarification on this policy, you may contact the [Director of Athletics](#), the [Executive Secretary](#), or the [Executive Officer](#).