

# Cross Country Manual



**SY26**



## Introduction

Please review the contents of this document for key program information, requirements, and rules and regulations as it relates to the Chicago Public League (CPL) season, and to the Illinois High School Association ([IHSA Boys Cross Country](#) / [IHSA Girls Cross Country](#))

Non-compliance with any of the following information may result in the forfeiture of coaches' season stipend.

Any and all questions can be directed to the Athletic Program Administrator (APA) listed below.

Athletic Program Administrator:

Name: Tony McCoy  
Email: [tmccoy10@cps.edu](mailto:tmccoy10@cps.edu)  
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Assignor of Officials:

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## OSA Mission Statement

The Office of Sports Administration oversees the equitable implementation of sports programs across all elementary schools and high schools within the Chicago Public School District (CPS). Through effective sports policy creation and program management, OSA helps create an environment for schools to provide essential athletic and academic development for each student-athlete. It is the goal of OSA to promote sportsmanship, teamwork, integrity and a sense of community as we prepare students for the next level in athletics and in life. Our students will be able to learn the importance of Academics, Athletics, and Social Awareness as they advance through our program and become leaders in their communities.



## League Governance & Key Links

The official rules of the National Federation of High School Associations shall govern all Public League competitions. Any exceptions to these rules are listed in these Terms and Conditions.

The Chicago Public League is governed by the [Chicago Public Schools Athletics Constitution and By-laws](#). All coaches must read this document in order to be informed about CPL policies, procedures and expectations.

Whereas specific terms, conditions and protocols are listed in this document, the [General Chicago Public League Rules](#), is an appendix to this document listing issues of general governance, coach expectations, roster management/vertical movement/eligibility and eligibility certificates, and other issues of league contest management. consistent with all CPL Sports.

The [2025 Cross Country Resource Sheet](#) contains other logistical information regarding the season for coaches and athletics directors, including the coaches' directory.

## Calendar

|  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| Season Starts - 1st Practice                                   | August 11, 2025           |
| Team Roster Loaded To ASPEN Deadline                           | August 17, 2025           |
| First Contest Allowed  | August 25, 2025           |
| Hard Copy Central Office Record Sheets (CORS) Due              | September 21, 2025 (Fall) |
| CPS Regular Season Competition Starts                          | August 28, 2025           |
| CPS Regular Season Competition Ends                            | October 18, 2025          |
| Mandatory Make-up Day for competition                          | n/a                       |
| <b>CPS Calendar - Post Season and Championship Information</b> |                           |
| Team/Individual Rosters for Qualifier Rounds Due               | October 9, 2025           |
| CPL Championships (Girls)                                      | October 18, 2025          |
| CPL Championships (Boys)                                       | October 18, 2025          |
| Championship (Boys/Girls) Rain Date                            | October 20, 2025          |
| <b>IHSA Series Calendar</b>                                    |                           |
| List of Participants Due On-Line (Wed. Week 12)                | October 14, 2025          |
| Regionals (Wed. Week 13)                                       | October 25, 2025          |
| Sectionals (Mon. Week 14)                                      | November 1, 2025          |
| State Final (Fri.-Sat. Week 14)                                | November 8, 2025          |

## Team Approval and Expectations

Team Approvals consist in a series of tasks that must be completed by the Athletics Director and Head Coach from each team. Failure to complete the following tasks will result in the resignation of coaching stipends or delayed payments. Anticipated team approval will be reflected in the [Inventory](#). It is the responsibility of the school Athletics Director (assisted



by the head coach) to communicate with the appropriate Athletic Program Coordinator regarding the confirmation of team approval.

- A. All Cross Country Teams/Levels must have at least 7 student-athletes registered per team and submit a hard copy [Central Office Record Sheet](#) to the Office of Sports Administration by the specified deadline.
- B. Teams must compete in all CPL-sponsored contests, and the CPL Championships
- C. Teams looking to join the League for the 2025 season must complete the google form, [School Request to Add a Sport/Level](#).
- D. Teams are expected to compete in the IHSA Series, if signed up. Teams that sign up but do not show up to compete in the meet will be mandated to pay a \$500 penalty fee paid directly to the IHSA. [Online Entry Process for the IHSA Series](#)

**Note:**

If your program does not have the minimum number of 7 student-athletes by August 22, 2025, the team/level will lose its approval.

If your program did not have a recognized lower-level team (freshmen), you are not allowed to field one, unless approved by the APA in charge of Cross Country.

Coaches of unrecognized teams will not be eligible to receive the coaching stipend.

## Host Arrangements

Guidelines regarding steps that need to be taken to successfully host a meet can be found [here](#).

## Coach Expectations

- A. [Chicago Public League Coaches' Code of Conduct and General Expectations](#)
- B. Coaches must complete IHSA and CPS certification requirements before coaching student-athletes.
- C. [Certifications for all coaches](#) - Note, all coaches must be 21 years old.
  - 1. All coaches (paid or volunteer) must register with OSA as coaches of record for the team/level for which they work through the [CPL High School Coach Registration Form](#).
  - 2. The Chicago Public League requires all of its students, officials, coaches, spectators and school staff to promote sportsmanship before, during and after every game. Offensive language, including profanity and/or derogatory or intimidating remarks of any kind directed at officials, event staff, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated. In order for sportsmanship to prevail, all coaches, students, staff, and spectators must display respect and civility in an effort to enthusiastically support our student-athletes to create a safe and inclusive environment. [Sportsmanship Guidelines](#)
- D. The coaching staff is expected to organize and prepare athletes through consistent practice/workouts specifically designed to enhance their performance at meets.
- E. At least one representative of the coaching staff must register for an account at [athletic.net](#) which is the official data reporting and collecting (meet entry and results) platform for CPL meets.
- F. The coaching staff is responsible for the following Contest Management for every contest:
  - 1. Preparing a printout (preferably laminated) of emergency contact information identified for each student for quick reference by medical personnel.
  - 2. Possessing an ASPEN Generated Eligibility Certificate. *Only students listed on this certificate are eligible for that contest.*
  - 3. Ensuring that the results of all meets are reported to [athletic.net](#).
  - 4. Rating the IHSA officials assigned to the contest through the IHSA Schools Center. It is highly recommended to wait 12 hours after the game before submitting an official's rating report.



- 5. Coaches shall not use tobacco products or drink alcoholic beverages or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or any illegal substance at any time while performing their coaching duties.
- G. The coaching stipend will be forfeited if a team holds and records less than 5 meets as submitted to athletic.net by October 19, 2025.

### Playing/League Regulations

|  | Varsity              | Soph                 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| Contest Limitations exclusive of the IHSA Series | 15 meets or 18 dates | 15 meets or 18 dates |
| Minimum Meets for Team Approval                  | 5 <sup>^</sup>       | 5                    |
| Maximum Students on the Roster                   | Unlimited            | Unlimited            |
| Minimum Students on Roster                       | 7                    | 7                    |
| Minimum Students Needed on Meet Day              | 5                    | 5                    |

<sup>^</sup>A sanctioned meet is one that is previously approved by the APA in charge of Cross Country and the races conducted at distances greater than the recognized minimum.

- A. An AED must be onsite for all practices and meets with personnel trained to operate the machine.
- B. Uniforms:
  - 1. Contestants in the complete meet series will be required to wear the regulation uniform as described in the current National Federation Track & Field and Cross-Country Rule Book.
  - 2. Uniforms must be SCHOOL ISSUED, have the school name or mascot, and be of similar color and design.
- C. Distance for Races:
  - 1. Varsity-level races are 3.0 miles. Races less than 2.0 miles will not be recognized as a formal race.
  - 2. Freshman-level races are 2.0 miles.
- D. All non-conference meets should be contracted with the opposing school.
- E. Meets affected due to a work stoppage will be managed according to the IHSA Constitution and Bylaws.

### Officials

Officials will be paid through Arbiter and confirmed for payment by the assignor.

- A. Selection of Officials
  - 1. The APA for Cross Country shall designate an assignor of referees for all Chicago Public League Championship meets. Schools/Coaches will contract their referees for all other meets, from a list of approved officials, provided by the APA from OSA.
- B. No official is permitted to work a meet in which one of the teams is from the school, which he or she is employed, or coached with in the past.
- C. The coaches shall rate and evaluate each official on the official eligibility certificate and on-line to the IHSA Schools Center ([www.ihsa.org](http://www.ihsa.org) – see Athletic Director for assistance) after each meet.



- D. For varsity dual meets the fee for the official is \$50.
- E. In the event of a meet day forfeit, the scheduled official should be paid as if she/he officiated the meet.

### Student Eligibility

- A. A student is eligible to participate in a contest when listed as “Eligible” on an ASPEN generated Eligibility Certificate (or otherwise documented pertaining to Charter Schools).
  - 1. [Student-Athlete Eligibility](#)
  - 2. [Home School Student Eligibility](#)
  - 3. [Newcomer Student Eligibility](#)
- B. Students that have transferred to your school since the end of the previous season are ineligible for interscholastic competition without a ruling from the Office of Sports Administration or the IHSA.
- C. Competitive Levels:
  - 1. Varsity teams shall consist of students in the first, second, third, or fourth year of attendance who will not reach their 20<sup>th</sup> birthday any time during the sports season.
  - 2. Freshmen teams shall consist of students in their first year of attendance and shall not have reached their sixteenth (16<sup>th</sup>) birthday prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current school year.
  - 3. Varsity and Freshmen teams must have separate eligibility sheets.
- D. Lower-level teams will not be recognized unless the minimum number of participants appears on the varsity roster. An official recognized team shall have a minimum of seven (7) athletes.
- E. Coaches must distinguish between varsity and freshmen competitors on ASPEN rosters. Once a student appears on the varsity eligibility certificate, that student is ineligible for the lower level.
  - 1. While a member of a school team, a player shall not be allowed to represent any other organization in that sport during the official sport season.
- F. Meet results can be protested according to [Article XI – Infractions and Protests of the Chicago Public Schools Athletics Bylaws](#) if there is some irregularity or infraction of the rules occurring during the contest.

### League Structure

- A. Chicago Public League Cross Country is open to all Chicago Public District-Managed and Charter Schools.
- B. A school forfeiting conference meets due to lack of availability will lose team recognition. Whenever a program loses its recognition, the Department of Sports Administration will send a letter to the Principal, Athletics Director, and Coach, notifying the school of the impending action. Consequently, there will be a forfeiture of the coaching stipend.

### Chicago Public League Championship Structure

- A. All teams are invited to the CPL Championships. Championship races are formally recognized by the Sports Administration Office as Varsity and Freshmen competitions, but additional levels are contested at this event. Every team in the CPL program is expected to compete at the Championship site/date.
- B. The Championships will consist of the following races:
  - 1. Freshmen – 2 miles, unlimited entries, only the top 7 factors into team score
  - 2. Frosh/Soph. – 3 miles, up to 10 entries, only top 7 will factor into team score
  - 3. Junior Varsity – 2 miles, unlimited entries, only the top 7 factors into team score
  - 4. Varsity – 3 miles, up to 10 entries, only top 7 will factor into team score
- C. Seven (7) team members will retain their order of finish. The team score will be determined by totaling the points scored by the first five (5) finishers. First place shall count as one (1), second place as two (2), and third place as three (3), etc. The team with the lowest number of points shall be declared the winner. The top 15 overall in each race are deemed All-City by the XC Coaches Committee and will receive a t-shirt.



- D. Ties in team scoring shall be resolved by comparing the sixth-place finishers from the tying teams. The team with the best sixth-place finisher shall prevail.
- E. Varsity teams may enter up to 10 runners. Of these 10, teams may enter up to 7 as their “scoring 7” that will factor into team scoring. The additional 3 entries will be considered “individual entries” and will not factor into team scoring. A team’s individual entries should wear different uniforms than their scoring 7, to distinguish scoring runners from individuals during the race. While individual entries will not count towards team scoring, they will be eligible for All-City Honors if they finish in the top 15 of their respective races.
- F. Awards:
  - 1. To be eligible for team scoring, and a team trophy, a school must have contestants (5-7) who finish the race in their division.
  - 2. Shields shall be awarded to the first and second place teams for each recognized level ONLY of the City Championship Meet.
  - 3. Medallions will be given to the top fifteen (15) individual place winners at each recognized level ONLY of the City Championship Meet.
- G. Appeal of Decisions at the Championship
  - 1. Results of the City Championship races will be posted within 30 minutes of the conclusion of the race. Coaches then have 30 minutes to file a written protest in the event that a runner is missing from the results, or the coach feels that the interpretation of a rule was incorrect.
  - 2. In the event that a runner is believed to be misplaced or missing, the Coach will review, with the IHSA official, the official finish line video, as well as the F.A.T system picture (if available). The decision of the IHSA official is final.
- H. Immediately upon completion of each race, when chip/bib timing is not used, coaches shall turn into the judges the scoring envelope, which lists their runners in the order of finish. Use the first and last names of the runners. Finishing numbers must be enclosed in the envelope for verification.

## 1. Media and Social Media Policies

### Media Expectations:

The Chicago Public League (CPL) is proud to offer in-depth coverage of all our student-athletes across each sports season. In order to continue to tell these stories, the CPL Sports Communications Team asks the following of all participating coaches and student-athletes:

- A. Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet.
- B. Make coaches/players available as requested for pre and post-game interviews
  - 1. [Media Relations Guidelines Linked Here.](#)
- C. Share accomplishments and milestones with the CPS Sports Communications Team so they can highlight your school.
- D. Follow all CPL Athletics content via our website [cpsathletics.com](http://cpsathletics.com) and on CPL social media sites.
- E. Interact with our [CPS Sports Communications Team](#) (below) for all media relations activities:
  - Communications Manager - Joey Gelman - [jdgelman@cps.edu](mailto:jdgelman@cps.edu)
  - Communications Specialist- Dominic Scianna - [dscianna@cps.edu](mailto:dscianna@cps.edu)
  - Communications Specialist - Michael Wojtychiw - [mmwojtychiw@cps.edu](mailto:mmwojtychiw@cps.edu)

### Digital Citizenship:

Being a good digital citizen on social media means that you are positively contributing to the digital space, respecting other people’s views even if you do not agree and reporting issues that disrupt a positive digital environment. Your digital footprint and reputation are left online when you post on blogs, upload videos and pictures or leave comments on websites and



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social media. You must consider the temporary and or permanent effect your actions online can have for yourself and your community both in the digital space and in person. That is why we at the Chicago Public League ask all athletic staff, coaches and student-athletes to engage in respectful and positive social media interaction. Should there be any inappropriate social media being created or shared in your community, please report it to CPS administration within your school building so they can assess the situation and take appropriate action if necessary to ensure a safe environment for all those involved in athletics.