

# Flag Football Manual



**SY26**



## Introduction

Please review the included manual document for key program information, requirements, and rules and regulations as it relates to the season, to the Chicago Public League (CPL), and to the Illinois High School Association ([IHSA Flag Football](#)).

Non-compliance with any of the following information may result in the forfeiture of coaches' season stipend. All questions can be directed to the Athletic Program Administrator (APA) listed below.

**Athletic Program Administrator:**

Name LyVonna Brown  
 Email lbrown10@cps.edu  
 Phone

**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) and Chicago Public League (CPL). 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 Academic, Athletic 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 Schools Association** 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 to be informed about CPL policies, procedures and expectations.*

Whereas the specific Terms and Conditions are listed in this document, the following links that make up the [General Chicago Public League Rules](#) is an appendix to this document which lists issues of general governance, coach expectations, roster management/vertical movement/eligibility and eligibility certificates, and other issues of league contest management.

The 2025 Girls Flag Football Resource Sheet contains other logistical information regarding the season for coaches and athletic directors including the coaches directory.

## NEW IN 2025

- **TIME (4 quarters, clock stops last two-minutes of the 2nd & 4th quarter 1 minute break between quarters and 5 minute half-time)**
- **HEAD GEAR (Soft shell helmets or headbands with a 4 or 5 rating using the [STAR evaluation system](#))**
- **BOWLS (ONLY Championship & Tochito will be offered)**

## CPS Calendar

Season Starts - 1st Practice	Monday, Aug 11
Team Roster Loaded to ASPEN Deadline	Friday, Aug 22
First Contest Allowed	Monday, Aug 25
Hard Copy Central Office Record Sheets (CORS) Due	Friday, Sept 20
CPS Regular Season Competition Starts	Monday, Aug 25
CPS Regular Season Competition Ends	Wednesday, Sept 24
Mandatory Make-up Day for competition by	Wednesday, Sept 24
<b>CPS Calendar - Post-Season and Championship Information</b>	
Team/Individual Rosters for Qualifier Rounds Due	Tuesday, Sept 23
CPL Playoffs Start	Wednesday, Sept 24
Championship Seed Meeting Virtual Live Brackets	Tuesday, Sept 23
Playoff Dates (3 Rounds)	Sept 24, Sept 27, Sept 30
CPL Championships and Tochito Bowl	Friday, Oct 3
<b>IHSA Series Calendar</b>	



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On-Line Season Summary Form Deadline (Week12) On-Line Team Seeding Deadline (week 12)	September 22 September 24
Regionals (Week 14)	October 6-9
Sectionals (Week 15)	October 14 & 15
State Final (Fri.-Sat. Week 15) Willowbrook High School	October 18 & 19
Season Ends (Week 15)	October 19

### Team Approval and Expectations

Team Approval consists of a series of tasks that must be completed by the Athletic 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 Athletic Director (assisted by the head coach) to communicate with the appropriate Athletic Program Coordinator regarding the confirmation of team approval.

- A. Teams must have at least 12 Varsity, 10 Sophomore, 8 Frosh 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, this includes conference games, and the CPL playoffs (2 forfeits in a season result in loss of team approval).
- C. Teams are expected to compete in the IHSA Series, if signed up. Teams that sign up but do not show up to games will be mandated to pay a \$500 penalty fee paid directly to the IHSA. [Online Entry Process for the IHSA Series](#)
- D. Teams looking to join the League for the 2025 or 2026 season must complete the google form, [School Request to Add a Sport/Level](#).

### Host Arrangements

- A. For Chicago Public League contests, it is the responsibility of OSA to procure the playing facility/field using available CPL Stadiums and assisted by schools with appropriate facilities (ie. school fields, park districts, etc.)
- B. The coach is responsible for all players until they have left the playing site.
- C. In the case where a school is playing at their home site, the home school must provide the following equipment in good condition:
  1. Field length: 100 yards. Field Width: 45-53.5 yards
  2. 1 official scorer (adult preferred) and 1 timer. The coach may select teachers or regularly enrolled students to act as scorekeepers. These individuals must be properly trained before the games are played.
  3. Field markers or 8 cones on each side of the field to mark the downs and 4 cones to mark the goal line. The ball starts at the 20-yard line; the first down lines are the 40-yard line, opposite 40-yard line, 20-yard line and goal line
  4. A down box is required
- D. Schools that do not have the specified regulation equipment will not be allowed to host home games and must travel until equipment is repaired or replaced and deemed safe.



## 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](#)
- D. Coaches must use the [CPL High School Coaches Registration Link](#) to register prior to acting in a coaching capacity.
- E. The Chicago Public League requires all its students, officials, coaches, spectators, and school staff to promote sportsmanship before, during, and after every game. Offensive language, including profanity and derogatory or intimidating remarks directed at officials, event staff, student-athletes, coaches, or team representatives, will not be tolerated. For sportsmanship to prevail, all coaches, students, staff, and spectators must display respect and civility to enthusiastically support our student-athletes to create a safe and inclusive environment. [Sportsmanship Guidelines.](#)
- F. The coaching staff is expected to organize and prepare athletes through consistent practice/workouts designed to enhance their performance in Flag Football contests. The coaching staff is responsible for the following management for every contest:  
 Confirm contest logistics with the opposing coach.
  1. Preparing a printout (preferably laminated) of emergency contact information identified for each student (name and jersey number) 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. Possessing an accurate numerical roster identifying student-athletes by jersey number.
  4. Reporting the game score to the Office of Sports Administration designated score reporting mechanism within 24 hours of the contest.
  5. Rating the IHSA officials assigned to the contest through the IHSA Schools Center. It is highly recommended to wait 12 hrs. after the game before submitting an official rating report. *In addition to reporting the score and schedule (Conference and Non-conference Games), the Head Coach is responsible for talking with officials after their game to confirm the names of all yellow/red carded players.*
  6. Coaches shall not use tobacco products, drink alcoholic beverages, or be under the influence of alcoholic beverages or any illegal substance at any time while performing their coaching duties.

## Playing/League Regulations

	Varsity	
Team Contest Limitations	Exclusive of the IHSA series	25 matches
Individual Contest Limitations		
Minimum Contests for Team Approval	League schedule and playoffs	7 games
Length/Time of Contests	Four 12 minute quarters (running clock), clock stops the final 2 minutes of the 2nd and 4th quarter. One minute break will occur after the 1st & 3rd quarters. A five minute break will occur during ½ time.	



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	Clock stoppages are limited to out of bounce, change of possession, timeouts, deadballs or incomplete passes.	
Maximum Students on the Roster	15	12
Minimum Students on Roster	12	25
Minimum on Game Day	8	7

A. Equipment and Uniforms

1. Flags: pop flag belts must be worn during all contest with two (2) pop-up flags (you MUST bring your own belts)
  - a. Flag Dimensions: ALL flags must be at least 15.5 inches long and 1.5 inches wide.
  - b. Flags CANNOT match the color of the players' shorts and must be a single solid color (manufacturer's trademark is allowed).
  - c. If the shorts have a stripe down the side, the flags CANNOT be the same color as the stripe or shorts.
  - d. Excess flag belt must be tucked into the shorts or secured to the flag belt with a manufactured belt loop or tape.
  - e. Flags must be placed one on each hip.
  - f. Altered flags- flags that once were legal but were structurally changed including, but not limited to cutting the flags, adding a substance to secure a flag, etc.
  - g. Any player with altered flags will be disqualified along with the head coach and a 15-yard penalty will be assessed.
  - h. Illegal Flags: flags that are rolled, or not altered but illegal unsportsmanlike conduct, illegal player equipment, 10 yards
2. Football Size: TDY football (You MUST bring your own footballs)
3. Shoes shall be made of canvas, leather, or synthetic material that covers the foot attached to a firm sole of leather, rubber, or composition material that may have cleats or be cleat less. Cleats are limited to studs or projections that do not exceed 1/2" in length.
4. Mouth guards are required to be worn at all times
5. Hair longer than shoulder length must be secured and controlled so it does not interfere with the waist and flag belt. Hair control devices, accessories, and other adornments in the hair that are securely fastened and appropriate for the activity are allowed.
6. Headgear: Soft shell helmets or headbands with a 4 or 5 rating using the [STAR evaluation system](#) are required to be worn by participating student-athletes CPL for game play. The headgear MUST be secured.

B. Required Uniforms

1. During scheduled football games, all team members are required to wear matching jerseys/similar color attire. The home team shall wear a dark jersey color that clearly contrasts to white. The visiting team shall wear jerseys that are: white, off-white, light-gray, and/or silver.
2. The visiting team is responsible for avoidance of similarity of colors, but if there is doubt, the referee may require players of the home team to change jerseys.
3. Jerseys require a number on the back. Approved 6/10/2024
4. Jerseys are allowed to have: a school's nickname, school logo, and/or player name within the body and/or on the shoulder.

C. Optional Player Equipment

1. Gloves: players may wear gloves that must consist of soft pliable, and nonabrasive material



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2. Full Shell helmets only.
  3. Xenith Loop type models are not permitted
  4. Players may wear a knit or stocking cap. The cap cannot have a bill.
  5. Play Books: players may wear a soft, pliable wrist/forearm band that contains plays
  6. Sunglasses: players may wear pliable and non-rigid sunglasses.
  7. Face Shield: players may wear a face shield molded to the face with no protrusions to protect against a facial injury
  8. Braces/Casts: hard and unyielding items (guards, casts, braces, splints, etc.) must be padded with a closed-cell slow recovery foam padding no less than 1/2" thick. Knee and ankle braces which are unaltered from the manufacturer's original design/production do not require any additional passing/covering
  9. Exposed undergarments: if worn, are considered a part of official uniform. All exposed undergarments shall be a solid single color: black, white, gray, or school color.
- D. Illegal Uniforms/Equipment: A player wearing illegal equipment shall not be permitted to play. Types of equipment or substances that shall always be declared illegal include the following:
1. Headwear containing any hard, unyielding, stiff material including billed hats, or items containing exposed knots (EXCEPTION: face shield).
  2. Jewelry
  3. Shoes with ceramic, screw in, detachable cleats, or any projecting metal (EXCEPTION: Screw-in cleats are allowed if the screw is part of the cleat. Approved 6/10/2024).
  4. Shirts or jerseys that do not remain tucked in. Any hood on a coat, sweatshirt, or a shirt that does not remain tucked in. Tear-away jerseys or jerseys that have been altered in any manner that produces a knot.
  5. Pants or shorts with any belt(s), belt loop(s), pocket(s), or exposed drawstring(s).
  6. Pants or shorts not contrasting in color of the flags
  7. Leg or knee braces made of hard, unyielding material, unless covered on both sides and all edges overlapped.
  8. Any slippery or sticky foreign substance on any equipment or exposed part of the body
  9. Equipment that includes computers and/or any electronic or mechanical devices for communication.
  10. Exposed metal on clothes or person
  11. Towels attached at the player's waist.
  12. Flags that can be detached from the flag belt
  13. Hand warmers worn around waist
- E. Contest Information
1. Penalties  
10 yards and player must be removed from the game for at least one play to correct before returning if the following occur:
    - a. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
    - b. Illegal Player Equipment
    - c. Roster and Start Time
  2. Rosters: Teams must have 7 players to start the game. If something happens during the course of the game and a player is unable to finish, the team can continue with 6 players.
  3. The official start time of contests during the week is 4:30 pm start for only Varsity games, and on Saturdays as listed on the game schedule, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Sports Administration. All games are to be played as scheduled. Games may not be canceled or changed without impunity for any reason without the authorization of the Office of Sports Administration
- F. The Coordination Athletic Program Administrator (APA) of Girls Flag Football must approve all rescheduled games.



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1. Some games may be scheduled to be played on the same day at an earlier time. Initial arrangements should be reported to the Coordinating APA of Girls Flag Football and included in the form of release of the final schedule. Changes in the order of games played on a given day must be reported to the APA at least 24 hours prior to matches.
- D. Forfeiture of Games
1. A school forfeiting two or more conference games, based on lack of players, will lose team recognition. A letter to the principal, athletic director, and coach shall notify the school of the impending action, which will include forfeiture of the coaching stipend.
  2. If a team and facility representative are not ready to play within thirty minutes of the scheduled time of the contest, the host school must contact the Coordinating APA of Girls Flag Football for a determination of the status of the game.
- E. Additional Information
1. All non-conference games should be contracted with the opposing school
  2. For use in the instance of league discipline, the team's remaining schedule will be determined as the immediate schedule upon access by Office of Sports Administration personnel. Any games added to schedule after this time will not be considered pertaining to League discipline.
  3. Games affected due to a work stoppage will be managed according to the IHSA Constitution and Bylaws.
  4. All signage intended to be posted in CPS municipal stadiums must have approval from the Office of Sports Administration prior to posting
  5. IHSA Rules and Regulations Document: Varsity Girls Flag Football

**Officials**

	Varsity	Varsity Playoff
Number of Game Officials	2 minimum 3 preferred	3 minimum 4 preferred
Fees	\$65.00 each	\$75.00 each

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

- A. Selection of Officials
1. The APA for Flag Football shall designate an assignor of referees for all Chicago Public League conference and playoff games. Schools/Coaches will assign their referees for all non-conference games from a list of approved referees provided by the APA from OSA.
  2. No official is permitted to work a match in which one of the teams is from the school in which he or she is employed, coached in the past, or officiate any of the Varsity playoffs.
  3. The coach shall rate and evaluate each official on the official eligibility certificate and online to the IHSA ([www.ihsa.org](http://www.ihsa.org) – see Athletic Director for assistance) after each match. [IHSA Schools Center](#)
- B. What if Officials do not Show?
1. If neither official arrives, coaches can officiate or mutually agree on an official. Contact the APA in charge of flag football or the assignor to try to find a resolution to the issue.
  2. If there is only one official, the match must be played, and the official will be paid an additional \$20.00 for each match officiated. Two (2) officials shall be assigned to all Chicago Public League matches.
  3. In the event of a game-day forfeit, the scheduled officials will be paid as if they officiated the game.



## 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](#)

Students who 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.

- A. 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 during the sports season.
- B. 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.
- C. Contest 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 and Conference Standings

### League Alignment

- A. Once the league schedule begins any adjustments to the final schedule must be communicated to OSA, but *administrative responsibility will not fall on the Office of Sports Administration. The home team of the games in question must procure the alternative site, confirm the new date with the opposing team, and hire the officials.*
- B. Each team is assigned to a conference for single round robin play.
  1. In the event a scheduled match is not played, the match will be recorded as “no-contest,” and neither team will be awarded a win or loss. *Rescheduled games shall be played on dates approved by the Coordinating APA of Flag Football.*
- C. Standings:
  1. Standings are determined by the ranking of teams according to the number of conference game wins.
  2. The Score of a Forfeit is 28-0
  3. In case of a tie in Division standings, the higher place shall be determined by:
    - a. Head-to-head competition results.
    - b. No contest vs Forfeit
    - c. Least number of points scored against.
    - d. Three way ties
      - i. Find out which team had the least number of points scored against to break the three way tie
      - ii. The two teams remaining, will be determined by head to head
      - iii. If the previous tiebreakers do not break the tie, two teams will be drawn by lot by the APA.

## Chicago Public League Championship Tournaments

- A. The Office of Sports Administration will support post-season tournaments/matchups for all Divisions, 3 Tournaments:



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1. CPL Championship Tournament will consist of 16 teams:  
Top 7 teams in Red North and South, and first place team in the White North and White South
  2. Tochito Bowl:  
8th place team in Red North and South, and Top 6 teams in White North and South, 1st place team in the Blue North and South
  3. Hard Work Bowl:  
8th place team in White North and South, and Blue and Green Conferences.
- B. In case of a forfeit during the League games the team will face further disciplinary action. Including probation to enter the CPL Tournament the following season.
- C. In case of a tie during the regular time, both teams will go into regular overtime rules.
- D. Overtime Rules: In case of a tie, games will go into overtime rules with both teams required to go for one (1) or two (2) points or their overtime attempt. An interception ends the possession and the defense cannot return the score for points. Each team will be awarded one timeout per timeout series.
- E. Championship Tournament Structure
1. The CPL Varsity Championship Playoff Tournament will be played with the sixteen (16) teams that meet the qualification criteria. The Tournament will consist of knock out games. "Knock out" games consist of 1 game elimination, and the winner advances on to the next round. In case of a tie, games will go into overtime rules with both teams required to go for one (1) or two (2) points or their overtime attempt. An interception ends the possession and the defense cannot return the score for points. Each team will be awarded one timeout per overtime series.
  2. Seeding for the Championship Tournament will be based on Conference record. The 16 teams entering the City Playoffs are: Top 7 teams in Red North and South, First place team in the White North and South.
  3. The round of 16 will be structured as designated in the resource sheet: CPL Championship Bracket
  4. The City Championship Series shall be played in four (4) rounds. OSA will designate the playoff sites
- C. Other Post Season Play
1. Tochito Bowl: 8th place teams in Red North and South, and 2nd - 7th place teams in White North and South, 1st place teams in Blue North and South.
- D. Special Rules
- If a team does not have its playoff roster, the game will be played under protest. The offending team MUST create a hand-written roster in front of their opponent and the referees. Each athlete will print and sign their name and write their date of birth and School ID number. This hand-written roster must be emailed to the APA in charge of Flag Football for comparison with the school team's Playoff Roster. If names on both rosters do not match, the offending team will lose the game by forfeit.

## Media / Social Media Expectations

The Chicago Public League (CPL) is proud to offer in-depth coverage of all of our student-athletes across each sports season.

To continue to tell these stories, the CPL Sports Communications team asks the following of all participating coaches and student-athletes:

- Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet.
- Make coaches/players available as requested for pre- and post-game interviews.



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- Share accomplishments and milestones with the CPS Sports Communications Team so they can highlight your school.
- Interact and follow all CPL athletics content via our website, [CPSAthletics.com](https://www.cpsathletics.com), or Twitter [@CPLAthletics](https://twitter.com/CPLAthletics).

CPS Sports Communications Team:

- Communications Manager - Joey Gelman - [jdgelman@cps.edu](mailto:jdgelman@cps.edu)
- Communications Specialist- Dominic Scianna - [dscianna@cps.edu](mailto:dscianna@cps.edu)
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Digital Citizenship Expectations

Being a good digital citizen means that athletic staff and student-athletes are positively contributing to the digital space, respecting other people's views even if in disagreement, and reporting issues that disrupt a positive digital environment.

A digital footprint and reputation is left online when videos and pictures are uploaded, and when posts and comments are made on websites and social media. Athletic staff and student-athletes must consider the temporary and/or permanent effect actions online can have for themselves and their community both in the digital space and in person.

That is why the Chicago Public League asks 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 the situation can be properly assessed and appropriate action can be taken as necessary to ensure a safe environment for all those involved