

Winter Cheer & Dance 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).

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

Athletic Program Administrator:

Name Cynthia Irvin
Email Ceirvin@cps.edu
Phone 773-553-6723

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OSA Mission Statement

The Office of Sports Administration (OSA) oversees the equitable implementation of sports programs across all elementary schools and high schools within the Chicago Public School District (CPS) and the 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 learn the importance of **Academic, athletic, and Social Awareness** as they progress through our program and become leaders in their communities.



League Governance & Key Links

The official rules of the National Federation of High Schools Association (NFHSA) 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 the specific Terms and Conditions are listed in this document, the following links that make up the [General Chicago Public League Rules](#) are 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 Spirit Resource Sheet](#) contains additional logistical information for coaches and athletic directors, including the coaches' directory.

Calendar

Event	Day/Date
25 Summer Contact Days Begin	June 9, 2025
25 Summer Contact Days End	July 31
Coaches Meeting	Tuesday, Aug 19
Fall Season Begins	Monday, Aug 11
Electronic CORS Check	Aug 21 Fall
CORS Hard Copy Due	Aug 28
FALL Season Begins	Wednesday, Aug 27
FALL Season Ends	Wednesday, Oct 25th
Winter Dance Season Begins	Monday, Oct 27th
Winter Cheer Season Begins	Monday, Oct 27th
Electronic CORS Check for Winter	Nov 7 (Winter)
CORS Hard Copy Due	Nov 19 (Winter)
First Contest May be held Dance	Monday, Nov 3
First contest to be held for Cheer	Monday, Nov 3
Deadline to Enter City Competition	TBA
Deadline to Withdraw from City	TBA
Dance City Championship	Saturday, January 17
IHSA Dance Sectionals	Saturday, January 24
Cheer City Championship	Saturday, January 24
IHSA Cheer Sectionals	Saturday, January 31
IHSA Dance State Finals	January 30 & 31
IHSA Cheer State Finals	February 6 & 7
End of Cheer Season	February 7
End of Dance Season	April 4



Team Approval (Protocol and Expectations)

Team Approvals consist in 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 **nine** students-athletes listed as “Eligible” in the ASPEN program and submit a hard copy [Central Office Record Sheet](#) to the Office of Sports Administration by the specified deadline.
- B. Seven performances and two competitions for the Winter Season, one of which is the CPL competition, to receive a stipend. All eligibility sheets must be emailed to APA Cynthia Irvin after each game.**

Coach Expectations

- A. Coaches are expected to review the [Chicago Public League Coaches’ Code of Conduct and General Expectations](#)
- B. Coaches must complete IHSA and CPS certification requirements before coaching student-athletes. [Certifications for all coaches](#) - Note, all coaches must be at least 21 years old.
- C. All coaches (paid or volunteer) must register with OSA as coaches of record for the team/level for which they are working through the [CPL High School Coach Registration Form](#).
- D. 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. For sportsmanship to prevail, all coaches, students, staff, and spectators must display respect and civility in their efforts to enthusiastically support our student-athletes, thereby creating a safe and inclusive environment. [Sportsmanship Guidelines](#).
- E. The coaching staff is expected to organize and prepare athletes through consistent practice/workouts specifically designed to enhance their performance.
- F. Refraining from using tobacco products, drinking alcoholic beverages, or being under the influence of alcoholic beverages or any illegal substance at any time while performing their coaching duties.



Playing Regulations

	Varsity
Team Contest Limitations	8 competitions
Individual Contest Limitations	Participants may not participate in both cheer and dance teams
Minimum Contests for Team Approval	7 * Seven performances and two competitions , one being CPL for the Winter Season. All eligibility sheets must be turned in after each game. You can participate at girls' and boys' basketball games. Dance and cheer teams should participate at halftime.
Maximum Students on the Roster	25
Minimum Students on Roster	9
Minimum on Game Day	7
Schedules	Cheer and dance schedules must be turned in by Nov 11, 2025

A. Equipment and Uniforms

1. Cheer: All team members must wear only school-issued uniforms during competitions. All uniforms shall be devoid of commercial advertising except for the manufacturer's logo/trademark, which shall not exceed two and one-quarter (2 1/4) square inches with no dimension exceeding 2 1/4 inches. It may appear only once on each piece of wearing apparel. All briefs should be a solid color and devoid of any markings, including but not limited to sequins, prints, wording, and symbols larger than NFHS specifications. Teams shall wear official school-issued uniforms that are of similar color and marking. All uniforms, including footwear, must comply with the NFHS Spirit Rules Book. Participants will not be permitted to perform in attire that is illegal. All uniforms must have some school designation (i.e., school name, logo, or mascot)
2. Midriffs cannot be shown when standing at attention.
3. **NO EARRINGS. No jewelry of any kind, and no hair ties on the wrist. The tape-covered earrings will not be permitted.**
4. No glitter that does not readily adhere to the hair, face, uniform, or body
5. Hair must be worn away from the face and off the shoulders.

B. What to Cheer During Contests

1. As your team enters the floor or the game
2. Your team or a player makes a great play
3. A substitution is made on your team
4. As encouragement or tribute to an injured player on your team or the opposing team
5. An opponent who has played well leaves the game
6. As an encouragement to your team in their drive to score
7. As an encouragement to your team in defense of its goal

C. When NOT to Cheer During Contests

1. A player is attempting a free throw, the quarterback is calling a play at the line of scrimmage, etc.
2. Any player is injured
3. An opposing player is being penalized
4. As announcements are being made

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](#)
 4. 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
- 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.

Special Rules and Regulations for Cheer/Dance

Special Sport Rules and Regulations:

By frequently attending conferences, clinics, and rules meetings, coaches should remain up-to-date on new techniques, progressions, and safety regulations. It is recommended that coaches belong to a professional sports organization that is appropriate for their discipline.

Coaches' Responsibilities and Safety Requirements:

- A. Spirit squads should be at least 3-4 feet from any boundary line if possible.
- B. When cheering at basketball games, squads must stand outside the free-throw lanes, which extend toward the sidelines throughout the game.
- C. As a reminder, NFHS Spirit Rule 2-1-10 prohibits spirit teams from coming onto the playing area/floor during a 30-second timeout in a basketball game.
- D. Stunting may be delayed until after halftime of the first game if halftime is the first time an appropriate warm-up area is available.
- E. The coach or other school-approved representative must be in attendance and accessible at all practices, games, performances, competitions, and other spirit activities.
- F. All spirit activities should be held in a location suitable for spirit activities with mats, free of obstructions, and away from excessive noise or distractions.
- G. All hard surface practice areas should be covered with adequate matting (a minimum thickness of 1 1/4”), particularly for tumbling activities and stunts over two (2) persons high.
- H. Participants must warm up before all performances.
- I. The coach should enlist others to stand between player warm-ups and stunting warm-ups on the sidelines to deflect balls or individuals.



- J. Coaches should recognize a squad's "ability level" and limit its activities accordingly. "Ability level" refers to the squads' talents as a whole and to individuals who should not be pressured to perform specific activities nor limited by the team's ability level.
- K. Coaches and participants should be trained in proper spotting techniques.
- L. Proper progression, spotting techniques, and matting should be used until stunts are mastered.
- M. Coaches must not permit loose, slick, baggy clothes or nylon hoses/tights that are inappropriate for stunting.

Media and Social Media Expectations

The Chicago Public League is proud to offer in-depth coverage of CPS teams and student-athletes across each sports season. To continue to publish these stories, the CPL Sports Communications team asks the following of all participating athletics staff members and student-athletes:

- A. Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet
- B. Ensure coaches and/or players are available as requested for pre- and post-game interviews
- C. Share accomplishments and milestones with the CPS Sports Communications team so your teams and athletes can be recognized.
- D. Interact and follow all CPL athletics content via our website CPSAthletics.com or via [Social Media](#).

CPS Sports Communications Team:

- A. Communications Manager: Joey Gelman – jdgelman@cps.edu
- B. Communications Specialist: Dominic Scianna – dscianna@cps.edu
- C. Communications Specialist: Michael Wojtychiw – mmwojtychiw@cps.edu

Digital Citizenship Expectations

Being a good digital citizen means that athletics staff members and student-athletes are positively contributing to the digital space, respecting other people's views even when they disagree, and reporting issues that disrupt a positive digital environment.

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

That is why the Chicago Public League asks all athletics staff members, coaches, and student-athletes to engage in respectful and positive social media interaction. If any inappropriate social media content is created or shared in your community, please report it to the CPS administration within your school building so that the situation can be properly assessed and appropriate action can be taken as necessary to ensure a safe environment for all those involved.