

# Girls Soccer Manual



**SY26**



## Introduction

Please review the included Boys Soccer 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.

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.

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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 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 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 [2026 Girls Soccer Resource Sheet](#) contains other logistical information regarding the season for coaches and athletic directors including the coaches directory.

## NEW IN 2024-2025 Updated Penalties for Team/Coach Participation Non-Compliance

The Chicago Public League (CPL) has updated rules and regulations for the 2024-25 sports seasons. CPL League schools will be accountable for penalties and possible financial consequences during the regular season and postseason during Illinois High School Association (IHSA) events for the following actions:

**SPORTSMANSHIP-** Any unsportsmanlike conduct resulting in fighting and/or abusive language including taunting during interscholastic contests is unacceptable. Players/coaches ejected from contests by officials for unsportsmanlike conduct, including leaving the bench area during an altercation must serve a one game suspension per IHSA rule. Coaches/players that are subsequently identified as exhibiting unsportsmanlike conduct and/or incidents determined to be more egregious, will be subject to further discipline according to the CPS Student Code of Conduct (SCC) and the Un-Sportsmanship and Misconduct for Student-Athletes and Coaches protocol. The CPL holds sportsmanship as our highest priority and expects our administrators, coaches, and players to abide by these standards as a model to ensure respect, dignity, and the safety for CPL participants in all sports-related activities that we oversee.

### IHSA

- A) **FAILURE TO WITHDRAW FROM IHSA CONTESTS BY THE DEADLINE** - CPL schools who agree to participate and/or host IHSA state series playoff competition and then default as a non-participant, will be assessed a \$500 fine to the school. This was recently approved by the IHSA Board of Directors at their June 2024 meeting.
- B) **RATING OFFICIALS** - The IHSA's officiating sub-committee, in a move to highlight ways their governing body can jointly improve the experience for officials and the overall quality of officials, has mandated a minimum number of officials' ratings that each varsity head coach must submit during their specific sports season beginning in 2024-25 or face the following action:
  - 1) Failure to submit ratings for officials will result in an IHSA member coach being put on notice in year one, with the potential for the coach to miss IHSA State Series playoff contests in year two and three. The IHSA will have more education on this process and reasoning throughout the upcoming school year with explanations on the numeric ratings thresholds in future communications to member schools.
  - 2) Schools are strongly encouraged to submit their Top 15 list of officials for each sport in the IHSA Schools Center. Rating our CPL officials promotes the chances for them having the opportunity to work IHSA Series contests.
- C) **POSTSEASON SEEDING** - It is required that all coaches who enter their schools in the IHSA state series must take part in the official seeding processes for your designated sport as guided by the IHSA.



**NON-CONFERENCE CONTESTS SUBMISSION** - It is required that all non-conference contests be submitted to the Office of Sports Administration in the Activity Scheduler for proper accounting and game season limitations. Most importantly games submitted to the Activity Scheduler will populate to MaxPreps according to our data agreement with these companies.

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**CPS Calendar - Regular Season Information**

Season Starts—1 <sup>st</sup> Practice	March 2, 2026
Team Roster Loaded to ASPEN Deadline	March 15, 2026
First Contest Allowed	March 16, 2026
Hard Copy Central Office Record Sheets (CORS) Due	April 17, 2026 (Spring)
CPS Regular Season Competition Starts	March 17, 2026
CPS Regular Season Competition Ends	April 28, 2026
Mandatory Make-up Day for competition	N/A

**CPS Calendar—Post Season & Championship Information**

Team/Individual Rosters for Qualifier Rounds Due	May 1, 2026
CPL Playoffs Start	May 4, 2026
Championship Seed Meeting	N/A
Playoff Dates	May 4 - May 13
(Different rows for secondary tournaments as needed)	May 5 - May 12
Phase Matches (Mini-Tournaments)	March 19 to April 29
CPL	May 4 - May 13
Windy City	May 6 - May 12
Midway Cup	May 5 - May 12
CPL Championships	May 13

**IHSA Series Calendar**

On-Line Season Summary Form Deadline (Wed. 10:00 am. Week 47)	April 29
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1A Regional Quarterfinals (Tue.-Wed. Week 45)	May 12-13
1A Sectional Finals (Tues.-Wed. Week 47)	May 26-27
1A State Final (Thur.-Sat. Week 48)	Jun. 4-6
Season Ends (Sat. Week 48)	Jun 6
The above information reflects the date for Class 1A. Visit the resources for Class 2A and 3A.	<a href="#">2026 Girls Soccer Resource Sheet</a>

## I. Team Approval (Protocol & Expectations)

- A. 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.
- B. Expectation to have at least 15 student-athletes registered per team and submit a hard copy CORS by the specified deadline.
- C. Expectation to compete in all CPL regulated matches, this includes conference games, phase matches and CPL playoffs ( *2 forfeits in a season result in loss of team approval*).
- D. Expectation to compete in the IHSA Series, if signed up. For teams who sign up and do not show up to games there is a \$500 penalty fee that must be paid directly to the IHSA. [Online Entry Process for the IHSA Series](#)
- E. New Teams will need to fill out a google form, [School Request to Add a Sport/Level](#). Once approved by OSA, then steps A through D must be completed.

## II. Host Arrangements

- A. For Chicago Public League contests, it is the responsibility of the school that is designated to be the home team to procure the playing facility/field. A legitimate option if the school does not have a home field is to schedule the game at the opponent's home site.
- B. The host school is responsible for assisting the visiting team on their departure. 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. A set of two official size (8 ft high by 24 ft wide) anchored soccer goals with nets.
  2. A set of four soccer corner flags/cones.
  3. Three (3) official game balls. Field markings should be specified as in the most current National Federation of High School Association [Soccer Rule Book](#).
- D. The home school should provide two (2) ball retrievers.
- E. 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.

## III. 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. [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 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. 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](#)
- E. The coaching staff is expected to organize and prepare athletes through consistent practice/workouts specifically designed to enhance their performance in soccer matches.
- F. The coaching staff is responsible for the following Game Management for every contest:
  1. Confirm contest logistics with the opposing coach.
  2. Preparing a printout (preferably laminated) of emergency contact information identified for each student (name and jersey number) for quick reference by medical personnel. *This must be presented to CPS Stadium management personnel for all games in CPS municipal stadiums.*
  3. Possessing an ASPEN Generated Eligibility Certificate. *Only students listed on this certificate are eligible for that contest.*
  4. Possessing an accurate numerical roster identifying student-athletes by jersey number.
  5. Reporting the score of the game to the Office of Sports Administration designated score reporting mechanism within 24 hours of the contest.
  6. 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's 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.*
  7. Coaches shall 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.

## IV. Playing/League Regulations

	Varsity	JV	Soph/Frosh
Contest Limitation exclusive of the IHSA Series	25	25	25
Minimum Contests for Team Approval	6	5	5

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Length/Time of Contests	Two-40-minute halves with 10 minute intermission	Two-35-minute halves with 5 minute intermission	Two-30-minute halves with 5 minute intermission
Maximum Students on the Roster	Unlimited but only 25 can dress per game	Unlimited but only 25 can dress per game	Unlimited but only 25 can dress per game
Minimum Students on Roster	15	15	15
Minimum Students Needed on Game Day	11	11	11

**A. Equipment and Uniforms**

1. Uniforms - [IHSA Approved](#)
2. Size 5 Balls
3. An AED must be onsite for all games with personnel trained to operate the machine.

B. The official start time of contests is 4:30 pm for Varsity & JV games, with a 5:00 pm start for only Varsity games, unless otherwise approved by the Office of Sports Administration.

C. 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.

1. The Coordinating Athletic Program Administrator (APA) of Soccer must approve all rescheduled games.
2. Varsity and JV games can be scheduled to be played on the same day at an earlier time. Initial arrangements should be reported to the Coordinating APA of Soccer and included with the formal 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 the matches.
3. All rescheduling requests must be submitted through the [Rescheduling](#) tab.

**D. Forfeiture of Games:**

1. A school forfeiting two or more conference games on the basis of 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 faculty representative is not ready to play within thirty minutes of the scheduled time of the contest, the host school must contact the Coordinating APA of Soccer for a determination of the status of the game.*

E. All non-conference games should be contracted with the opposing school.

F. Officials will wait on site an approximate of 30-45 mins if communication has been made by the home. If officials do not hear from the school, they will leave 15-20 mins past game time. If the game starts 30' past the agreed start time, the officials will be allowed to cut the 2nd half 10' short (or any other agreement between ALL parties involved on site). In order for a game to be considered officiated, the first half must be played. In case of a blowout, by a 7 goal differential, the remaining time will be cut in half. A 9 goal difference will result in the immediate termination of a game.

H. For use in the instance of league discipline, the teams' remaining schedule will be determined as the immediate schedule upon access by Office of Sports Administration personnel. Any games added to the schedule after this time will not be considered pertaining to League discipline.

I. Games affected due to a work stoppage will be managed according to the IHSA Constitution and Bylaws.

J. All signage intended to be posted in CPS municipal stadiums must have approval from the Office of Sports

Administration prior to posting.

## V. Officials

	Varsity	Varsity Playoff	JV	JV Playoff	Soph
Number of Game Officials	2	3	2	2	2
Fees	\$85.00 each	\$95.00 each for Semi and Final	\$75.00 Each	\$80.00 Each for Semi and Final	\$65.00 Each

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

### A. Selection of Officials

1. The APA for Soccer shall designate an assignor of referees for all Chicago Public League conference and playoff games. Schools/Coaches will contract 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 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 on-line 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, both coaches can officiate or mutually agree on an official (Assistant coach, JV coach). Contact the APA in charge of soccer or the assignor to try for a resolution to the issue.
2. If there is only one official, the game must be played and the official is to be paid an additional \$20.00 for each match officiated. Two (2) officials shall be assigned to all Chicago Public League games.
3. In the event of a game day forfeit, the scheduled officials will be paid as if they officiated the game.

## VI. 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 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.**

### B. 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 at any time during the sports season.
2. A Junior Varsity team (Freshman, Sophomores, Juniors, Seniors) shall consist of students eligible to play on the Varsity team. There shall be free movement of players between Varsity and Junior Varsity levels leading up to the Round of 32 of the CPL Championship and IHSA Championship tournaments.
3. Varsity and Junior Varsity players **must have separate** eligibility sheets. Players may **NOT** appear on both

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Varsity eligibility roster and a Junior Varsity eligibility roster on the same day.

4. Sophomore level players **will have separate** eligibility sheets.

**C. Vertical movement between Varsity/JV and Soph levels is not allowed.**

**Vertical movement between Varsity and JV levels on the same day is not allowed.**

\*There is flexibility for goalkeepers. JV gk can play with Varsity and JV on the same day. Fr/Soph gk can play with JV and still be eligible to play at the Fr/Sph level. A goalkeeper can't play with a lower level team.

1. If a player has game time and is ineligible for any of the above reasons mentioned, the responsible team automatically forfeits the game with a 3-0 defeat.

2. **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 fifteen (15) players.**

- D. Coaches must distinguish between varsity and JV players on ASPEN rosters. Once a student appears on the Varsity eligibility certificate, that student is ineligible for the lower levels. Once the student appears on the Varsity/JV eligibility certificate, the student is ineligible for the Sophomore level.

- E. While a member of a school team, a player shall not be allowed to represent any other organization in that sport during the official sports season. Cease non school practice and competition by March 9th, 2026.

- F. 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.

## VII. League Structure & 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. The playing format for all conferences shall be a single round robin format.
- C. In the event a scheduled game is not played, the game will be recorded as “no-contest” and neither team will be awarded any points. *Rescheduled games shall be played only on the assigned “make-up dates”, or otherwise approved by the Coordinating APA of Soccer.*
- D. Standings:
1. Standings are determined by the ranking of teams according to the number of points earned. +3 points for a win. +1 point for a tie. 0 points for a loss.
  2. The Score of a Forfeit is 3-0.
- E. **In case of a tie in Division standings, the higher place shall be determined by:**
1. Head-to-head competition results.
  2. Number of regulation time wins.
  3. Goal differential, with a maximum of five (5) goals per game.
  4. Most goals scored in favor.
  5. Greater number of shut-outs.
  6. Least number of goals scored against.
  7. Team with least number of cards.
    - a. Red Cards

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- b. Yellow Cards
- 8. Coin toss conducted by the APA (or Referee Assignor) in the presence of the tied teams.
- F. There is promotion & relegation across all CPL divisions. Each conference in each division will go through the promotion and relegation process (\*Premier teams cannot be promoted & Open Division teams cannot be relegated).

Promotion:**Premier:** Highest Division. No promotion.**First:** Teams with the most points from each conference will play a promotion match (first 1st vs 4th & first 2nd vs first 3rd). Winners will then play another promotion match to determine who becomes a premier team.**Second:** Team with the most points from each conference gets promoted to the First Division.**Open:** Team with the most points from each conference gets promoted to Second DivisionRelegation:**Premier:** Team with the least amount of points will get relegated to the first division. Open slot, First division realignment may happen depending on geographical location.**First:** Team with the least amount of points from each conference gets relegated to the Second division according to the conference.**Second:** Teams with the least points from each conference will play a relegation match (2nd N vs First NW & 2ndC vs First S).**Open:** Lowest division. No relegation.

## VIII. Chicago Public League Championship &amp; OSA Sponsored Tournaments

- A. Qualification Criteria
  - 1. The Office of Sports Administration will support post-season tournaments/matchups for all Divisions.
  - 2. All teams, from all divisions have a chance to compete in the CPL Tournament.
  - 3. Lower division teams must win their match ups in their mini-tournaments in order to earn a ticket for the CPL tournament.
  - 4. 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.
  - 5. In case of a tie during the regular time, both teams will go straight to penalty kicks. 5 shooters per team, best out of 5 wins. No overtime.
- B. 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, there will be a set of penalty kicks. 5 shooters per team, best out of 5 wins, in case of a tie, pks will continue in rounds of 1.
 

*\*\*\*The CPL Championship Match will go to two 10-minute halves OT in case of a tie. If the tied score still remains after OT, both teams will go straight to penalty kicks. 5 shooters per team, best out of 5 wins.*

2. Seeding for the Championship Tournament will be based on Conference record. The 16 teams entering the City Playoffs are: All Premier Division teams, and the 8 victorious teams from the phasemini-tournaments.

**In case of a tie in Conference standings, the higher place shall be determined by:**

- a. *Head-to-head competition results.*
- b. *Goal differential, with a maximum of five (5) goals per game.*
- c. *Most goals scored in favor, with a maximum of five (5) goals per game.*
- d. *Greater number of shut-outs.*
- e. *Least number of goals scored against, up to five (5) per game*
- f. *Team with least number of cards.*
- g. *Drawing lots by coaches' committee members.*

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 five (5) rounds.**

The winning coach has the responsibility of calling the game scores to the newspaper, and submitting the results to the [2026 Soccer Resource Sheet](#) immediately following the match.

- a. **Round of 16** - The higher seed will host.
- b. **QUARTERFINAL** - The higher seed will host.
- c. **SEMIFINAL** - The four winners of the quarterfinal games will advance. Both matches will be played at a CPS stadium. OSA will assign the stadium.
- d. **FINAL** – The two winners of the Semifinal games will advance. One field will be arranged by the Soccer Coordinator..

C. Other Post Season Play

1. Other post-season tournaments and matchups will be scheduled for teams that lose in Phase VII and CPL Champions Bracket round 1 (*Round of 16*) of the CPL tournament.
  - a. Midway Cup - Consists of teams that were eliminated in Phase VII. This tournament will start with Semifinals.
  - b. Windy City Cup - Consists of teams that were eliminated in Round 1. There will be an 8 team secondary knockout tournament. It will start at the Quarter finals phase.

D. Special Rules

1. If a team does not have their 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 Soccer for comparison with the field School team's Playoff Roster. If names on both rosters do not match, the offending team will lose the game by forfeit.

## IX. Media & Social Media Expectations

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

- A) Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet

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- 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 team and athletes can be recognized
- D) Interact and follow all CPL athletics content via our website [CPSAthletics.com](https://CPSAthletics.com) or via Twitter [@CPLAthletcs](https://twitter.com/CPLAthletcs)

#### CPS Sports Communications Team

- A) Communications Manager: Joey Gelman – [jdgelman@cps.edu](mailto:jdgelman@cps.edu)
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## X. 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.