

# Softball Manual



**SY26**



## I. 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 coaches' season stipend. All questions can be directed to the Athletic Program Administrator (APA) listed below.

**Athletic Program Administrator:**

Name: Eddie Curry  
Email: ecurry@cps.edu  
Phone: 773.553.6752

**Assignor of Officials:**

Name: Eugene Brown  
Email: sr\_b@sbcglobal.net  
Phone: 773-405-9041

## II. 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.

## III. 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 [2026 Fast Pitch Resource Sheet](#) / [IHSA Softball](#) / [USA Softball](#) contains other logistical information regarding the season for coaches and athletic directors including the coaches directory.



#### IV. 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.



V. Table of Contents

VI. League Calendar	3
VII. Team Approvals and Expectations	4
VIII. Host Arrangements	4
IX. Coach Expectations	5
X. Playing / League Regulations	6
XI. Officials	8
XII. Student Eligibility	8
XIII. League Structure and Conference Standings	9
XIV. Chicago Public League Championship Tournaments	10
XV. Media and Social Media Expectations	10
XVI. Misc Sports Information	11

VI. League Calendar

CPS Fastpitch Softball Important Dates

Event	Day/Date	Time	Location
Release of the Schedule	09/29/25		
Rules meeting	2/21/26		
Season Starts (First Practice Allowed)	2/23/26		
Team Roster Loaded To ASPEN	TBA		
Hard Copy Central Office Record Sheets (CORS) Due	TBA		
1st Contest	Monday, March 09, 2026		
Playoff Seed Meeting	TBA		
Playoff Rosters Due	5/07/26		
CPS Playoff Starts	5/08/26		Home Field
Playoffs (Second Round)	5/09/26		
Playoffs (Semi-Finals)	May 11, 2026		
Championship Events	May 13, 2026		

CPS Fastpitch Softball Conference Start/End Dates

Baseball 2025 CPL Manual

White South 4/60/26	White North 4/06/26	Red 3/30/26
Blue South 4/14/26	Blue West 4/14/26	Blue North 4/14/26
	White West 4/14/26	
<b>IHSA Fastpitch Softball Dates</b>		
	Class 1A & 2A	Class 3A & 4A
Regional Quarterfinals (Mon. Week 46)		
Regional Semifinals (Tues. & Wed. Wk 46)		
Regional Finals (Fri. or Sat. Week 46)		
Sectional Semifinal (Tues. & Wed. Wk 47)		
Sectional Final (Fri. or Sat. Week 47)		
Super-Sectional (Mon. Week 48)		
State Final (Fri.-Sat. Week 48)		
Season Ends (Sat. Week 49)		

**VII. Team Approvals 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, 12 Junior Varsity 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 season must complete the google form, [School Request to Add a Sport/Level](#).

**VIII. Host Arrangements**

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. A legitimate option if the school does not have a home facility is to schedule the game at the



opponent's home site. Adjustments to the schedule in certain situations may be necessary, regarding home and away games, so that each team is fairly accommodated relative to the numbers of home and away games.

- A. The home team is responsible for ensuring the playability of the field.
- B. Fields should be lined and cleared of debris, bricks and glass. Games shall be played as scheduled. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHALL GAMES BE POSTPONED WITHOUT THE SANCTION OF THE Athletic Program Administrator IN CHARGE OF FAST PITCH SOFTBALL. (Penalty: Any violation of this rule shall count as a double forfeit.)
- C. The coach of the home team is responsible for selecting the field site for the game, the condition of the field and the acquisition of the permit to use the field. The home team's coach must notify the visiting team of the location of the field to be played on at least one day in advance of the scheduled game.
- D. The home team coach must notify the visiting team coach by 12:00 noon, on the day of the game if conditions are unfavorable for playing the contest.
- E. The home team's coach is also responsible for notifying the Athletic Program Administrator in charge of Fast Pitch of the postponement by 1:00 p.m. on the day of the game. Failure to do so makes the home team responsible for the umpire's fee and bus fees for the visiting team. The athletic director should notify the opposing team by 1:00 p.m. Both coaches must agree upon the postponement of the game. Failure to do so will cause the home team to forfeit the game.
- F. If the weather is below 35 degrees all games are canceled and need to be rescheduled.
- G. The home team is responsible for field equipment, the use of a double first base, two official balls, adequate security for the teams' safety and two foul line cones.
- H. Have the provision for a scorekeeper for each contest.
- I. A faculty member, student aide, or student leader should welcome the visiting team on their arrival and should be available to always assist the visiting school during their stay at the host school. 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.

## IX. Coach Expectations

- A. [Chicago Public League Coaches' Code of Conduct and General Expectations](#)
- B. The coaching staff is expected to be well versed in the latest edition of the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) rules and regulations for the sport that they are coaching, the IHSA Constitution and Bylaws, and the Chicago Public Schools Athletics Constitution and Bylaws.
- C. Coaches must complete IHSA and CPS certification requirements before coaching student-athletes.
- D. [Certifications for all coaches](#)  
In order for coaches to receive the stipend, coaches must be formally hired/staffed as Level 1 volunteers, complete all certifications and professional development offerings and represent an approved program by the Athletic Program Administrator of Fast Pitch.
- E. Coaches must use the [CPL High School Coaches Registration Link](#) / [CPL Charter High School Coaches Registration Link](#) to register prior to acting in a coaching capacity.
- F. 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 umpires, event staff, student-athletes, coaches, or team representatives, will not be tolerated. For sportsmanship to prevail, all coaches, students, staff, and spectators



Baseball 2025 CPL Manual

must display respect and civility to enthusiastically support our student-athletes to create a safe and inclusive environment. [Sportsmanship Guidelines](#).

- G. The coaching staff is expected to organize and prepare athletes through consistent practice/workouts designed to enhance their performance in baseball games.
- H. The coaching staff is responsible for the following Game Management for every contest:
  1. The coach of the home team must contact the visiting team’s coach at least one day before the scheduled game to confirm the game arrangements which includes directions to the playing site, field conditions and expected time of the visiting team’s arrival. Otherwise, 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.
  3. Possessing an ASPEN Generated Eligibility Certificate. *Only students listed on this certificate are eligible for that contest. Making this information available upon request to the opponent.*
  4. An accurate numerical roster identifying student-athletes by jersey number represented in the official scorebook.
  5. Reaching out to the host school (coach, athletic director) if there are transportation issues which would delay the start of the game.
  6. Reporting the game score to the Office of Sports Administration designated score reporting mechanism within 24 hours of the contest.
  7. All scores should be submitted to the CPL Activity scheduler within 24 hours where the scores are electronically pushed over to MaxPreps (maxpreps.com) website. Athletic Directors must give access to coaches for this submission. Otherwise, scores can be directly submitted to Max Preps.
  8. The coach shall rate and evaluate each official on the official eligibility certificate and online to the IHSA (www.ihsa.org – see Athletic Director for assistance) after each game. [IHSA Schools Center](#) 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.
  9. 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.

**X. Playing / League Regulations**

	Varsity	JV
Team Contest Limitations	Exclusive of the IHSA series, 35 games	same
Minimum Contests for Team Approval	Completion of the League Schedule	8 games
Length/Time of Contests	7 innings A game will be ended anytime after five (5) complete innings when a team is behind by ten (10) or more runs and has completed its turn at bat.	7 innings or a two hour game time limit
Maximum Students on the Roster	27	N/A
Minimum on Game Day	9	9

**Coaches’ Uniforms**

- A. Head Coaches must wear a top that identifies the coach with the school uniform, shirt, pull-over, etc. as well as the team baseball cap.



### Players' Uniforms

- A. Uniforms of all team members should be of the same color and style. Caps and shoes are required equipment (no track spikes allowed). When a player is required to wear a head protector, it replaces the cap as mandatory equipment.
- B. [NFHS Fast Pitch Uniform Rules](#)

### Balls and Legal Bats

- A. The recommended ball is the Wilson 9011 WTA9011BSST (Poly Core)
- B. [Legal bats](#)

### League Play

- A. The official time of games is either 4:30 pm or 5:00 pm as indicated on the schedule.
- B. Games shall be played as scheduled. Under no circumstances shall games be rescheduled without the sanction of the Athletic Program Administrator, unless weather conditions, rain, etc., interfere. (Penalty for violation of this provision can result in a forfeit or double forfeit.) Games may not be canceled or changed without impunity for any reason without the authorization of the Office of Sports Administration.
- C. All games not played on the date originally scheduled become postponed games. All postponed games shall be rescheduled and reported to the Athletic Program Administrator in charge of Softball. Double header games must be approved by the Athletic Program Administrator. All league games must be completed by the end of the league calendar. All postponed games must be played in the order of their postponement. Games not played in postponement order will be subject to forfeiture.
- C. Each game shall be seven (7) innings. In the case of a tie, as many innings as necessary shall be played to determine a winner.
- D. Official Games
  - 1. *During the Regular Season*, a game is official after (4 ½) innings of play, and a team may be declared the winner if the game is suspended (weather, darkness, miscellaneous incident).
  - 2. *During the Playoffs*, if a game is called/suspended before five (5) innings, the game shall be considered incomplete. For incomplete games, play must be resumed the following day with line-up and actual play situation at the time of suspension.

### Forfeiture of Games

- A. A school forfeiting two or more conference games based on a lack of players will lose team recognition. A letter to the principal, athletic director, and coach shall notify the school of the impending action, including forfeiture of the coaching stipend. Forfeiting schools must reimburse expenses of non-forfeiting teams.
  - 1. 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 Baseball for a determination of the status of the game.
- B. In the event any team withdraws from the league during the first half of the schedule, the team forfeits all games scheduled and played. If any school withdraws during the second half, that team forfeits all games of second half play only.

### Special Considerations

- A. Games affected due to a work stoppage will be managed according to the IHSA Constitution and Bylaws.
- B. All schools that qualify for the Chicago Public League Playoffs must fully participate in their scheduled games throughout the tournament.
- C. If the weather conditions are at or below 38 degrees, all games shall be canceled and rescheduled by the Coordinating Athletic Program Administrator in charge of Softball.
- D. Unsportsmanlike conduct will not be tolerated. A player or coach ejected from a game for unsportsmanlike conduct must at least serve a suspension from in the next scheduled game.



**XI. Officials**

	Varsity	Varsity Playoffs	JV	JV Playoff
Number of Officials	2	4	1 or 2	1 or 2
Fees	\$80	\$85	\$70 for 1, \$50 each if 2	\$60 for 1, \$50 each if 2

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

**A. Selection of Officials**

1. The APA for Softball 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 game in which one of the teams is from the school in which he or she is employed, coached in the past.
3. When the game is rescheduled, first rights are given to the previously assigned umpires. If an umpire is not available for his/her rescheduled game, it is the responsibility of the two coaches to agree upon the umpires, who must be IHSA/CPS registered.

**B. What if Officials do not Show?**

1. If neither umpire arrives, contact the APA in charge of Softball or the assignor to try to find a resolution to the issue.
2. When an umpire arrives late and both schools agree to play, the game shall stand as played. If there is only umpire, the game can be played, and the umpire will be paid an additional \$10.00 for each match officiated.
3. In the event of a game-day forfeit, the scheduled officials will be paid as if they officiated the game.
4. Umpires will be paid from Arbiter by the end of each week of the weekly contest game, however if rain is imminent or the game is postponed due to weather, then the umpire that has already been paid must return to complete the game (rescheduled) until it becomes official.

**XII. 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 IHSA.

Baseball 2025 CPL Manual

- B. Competitive Levels: (Varsity and Junior Varsity)
  - 1. Varsity and Junior 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.
  - 2. Varsity and JV teams will have separate eligibility sheets. Players may NOT appear on both the varsity eligibility roster and a JV eligibility roster on the same day.
- C. Movement is allowed between levels.
  - 1. For playoffs and post-season tournaments, rosters by level are locked and vertical movement is not allowed while the teams are active in tournament play.
- D. 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.
- E. 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.

### XIII. League Structure and Conference Standings

#### League Alignment

#### CPL Fast Pitch Committee Members

- A. Once the league schedule begins any adjustments to the final schedule must be communicated to OSA, but the follow through of adjustments at this time *will become a school responsibility. The home team of the games in question must procure the alternative site and officials, and confirm the new date with the opposing team.*
- B. Each team is assigned to a conference for double round robin play.
  - 1. Games that are not played 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 Baseball.*
- 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 7-0.
  - 3. In case of a tie in Division standings, the higher place shall be determined by:
    - i. Head-to-head competition results.
    - ii. If head to head does not resolve the tie, the team with the greater number of runs scored in games played between tied teams will assume the higher position.
    - iii. If runs scored does not resolve the tie, the team that played the most league games will assume the higher position.
    - iv. If league games played do not resolve the tie, the Coordinating APA of Softball will flip a coin for the higher position
  - 4. In the case of a tie between three (3) or more teams, the two teams that have the greatest run differential in games played between tied teams will have the 2 team tie breaker applied to award the higher place.
    - i. If two teams are tied in this ranking, the tie breaker for two teams will be applied to resolve the tie. If more than two teams are tied in this ranking, the Coordinating APA of Baseball will determine what to do in this very rare situation.
- D. Promotion and Relegation



Baseball 2025 CPL Manual

1. The 1st place teams in White North conferences will be promoted to the Red conference. The 1st place teams in the White North will advance to the RED conference. The 1<sup>st</sup> place teams in the Blue South and Blue Central conferences will be promoted to the White conference.
2. The teams that finish in the last 1 places of the Red conference will be demoted to the White North conferences. The teams that finish in the last 1 places of the Blue conference will stay.

#### XIV. Chicago Public League Championship Tournaments

- A. There will be three (3) 16-team format single elimination tournaments. One to determine the Public League champion, one to determine the JV champion and the other as the consolation champion.
- B. Qualification Criteria  
Playoff Berths for the Public League Championship tournament and seeds shall be determined by the conference alignment and conference standings.
  1. CPL Championship  
The top 8 teams in the Red qualify for seeds 1 through 10 of the Varsity Championship Tournament based on conference standings. The top 3 teams in the White and Black conference will qualify for seeds 11 through 16 of the Varsity Championship Tournament. The seeds will alternate between the two conferences with the 1<sup>st</sup> place team from the Black conference obtaining the 12<sup>th</sup> seed, and so on.
  2. The qualifiers for the Sophomore tournament will follow the seeding procedures of the varsity tournament.
  3. A tournament for the teams in the Brown, Yellow, Purple, and Pink conferences will also be contested. The top 4 teams from each conference will be seeded for this tournament according to conference standings.
- C. Distribution of Seeds
  1. In the Championship tournament, the Red Division will take the odd seeds (1-8) and the White Division will take the even seeds (10,12, 14, 16).

#### XV. Media and 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.

- A. To continue to tell these stories, the CPL Sports Communications team asks the following of all participating coaches and student-athletes:
  1. Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet.
  2. Make coaches/players available as requested for pre- and post-game interviews.
  3. Share accomplishments and milestones with the CPS Sports Communications Team so they can highlight your school.
  4. Interact and follow all CPL athletics content via our website, [CPSAthletics.com](http://CPSAthletics.com), or Twitter [@CPLAthletcs](https://twitter.com/CPLAthletcs).

#### CPS Sports Communications Team:

1. Communications Manager - Joey Gelman - [jdgelman@cps.edu](mailto:jdgelman@cps.edu)
2. Communications Specialist- Dominic Scianna - [dscianna@cps.edu](mailto:dscianna@cps.edu)
3. Communications Specialist - Michael Wojtychiw - [mmwojtichiw@cps.edu](mailto:mmwojtichiw@cps.edu)

#### B. 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.

## XVI. Misc Sports Information

### A. Accessing Sport Schedules

There are a number of ways to access the schedules of the various levels.

1. Your GoFan School site: [District Managed Schools / Charter Schools](#)
2. The [CPS athletics site](#) - Choose the sport/level
3. The Rschooldtoday mobile app - download this app, change the settings to access different levels
4. The AD can go directly to the AS and print it for you or he can set you up with an administrative log in so that you can enter your team scores.
5. [cpsathletics.info](#) - go to school athletic calendar, choose your school and then the sport

### B. Protocol for Handling Fights on the Floor

Make sure to review this Guidance: [Protocol for Handling Fights](#).

Additionally we believe that it is important to provide you with guidance toward proactive preparation for these activities hoping to promote the safety of the student-athletes and likewise protect you in these situations.

1. The only person that should run onto the field to intervene with an altercation is the Head Coach.
2. Assistant coaches must work to control the dugout and keep players from running onto the field in order to keep them from potential danger.
3. Build your culture and instruct your players that the rules of engagement in regards to interscholastic competition requires absolute sportsmanship and that all fighting is unacceptable.
4. Retaliatory actions also have consequences.  
Instruct/train your players to respond in the moment that are not involved in an/the altercation to turn away and return to their dugout area rather than run toward the altercation. Coaches may face disciplinary action if there are on the field altercations involving multiple students as well as if students leave the dugout to join in and contribute to a melee.