



Soccer – Boys & Girls

Sport Handbook – Fall of 2026

Section 1: Rules

- A. All contests under the jurisdiction of the RIIL shall be played according to the National Federation of State High School Association Rules, except for any special rulings adopted by the RIIL and listed in this handbook below.
- B. The RIIL strongly recommends head coaches/officials obtain a copy of the most recent NFHS Rulebook.

Section 2: Mandatory Coaches Certification & Continuing Education

- A. ALL Coaches must be appointed by their School Administration and upload their valid certificates to the Coaches' Certification website below. A coach is any adult with access to student-athletes through an education-based athletic program.
 - a. Including, but not limited to: Volunteer Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Head Coaches.
- B. Coaching Requirements: Article 13
- C. Coaching Out of Season Rules: Article 7, Section 8
- D. Rules on Recruitment: Article 3, Section 11
- E. Sportsmanship Expectations for Coaches: Article 12, Section 3

Section 3: Medical Coverage/Emergency Action Plans

- A. Medical Coverage should be provided by the host school, be in attendance and on duty for the duration of all interscholastic scrimmages and games during the regular season and all tournament round games. The medical personnel must introduce themselves to both coaches and referee prior to the start of the game.
 - a. Pre-Game Safety Checklist
- B. Schools are responsible for providing Medical Coverage for their team throughout the playoffs, including the Semis and Finals/Championships.
- C. Home team medical coverage shall be responsible for both teams unless the visiting school provides its own medical coverage.

D. Levels of Medical Coverage:

<i>Medical Professional Legal Limitations</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. <i>Education/Schooling/Training & Licensure</i> B. <i>Scope of Practice</i> C. <i>Able to Return to Play</i>
Medical Doctors-MD/DO or Advanced Practice Provider-NP/PA
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Advanced degree (Medical School/Successfully passed the licensing board, and RI Licensed) B. Preventative Care, On field Evaluation, Immediate Care, Diagnosis C. Can they Return to Play – Yes
Athletic Trainer (RI Licensed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Minimum Bachelor's Degree (Successfully pass the BOC exam, and RI licensed) B. Preventative Care, On field Evaluation, Immediate Care, Assessment of injury, referral for further diagnosis C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – YES
Physical Therapist (RI Licensed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Degree varies from BS, MS to DPT (Successfully pass the board exam, and RI licensed.) B. Preventative Care, Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO
Physical Therapist w/ Orthopedic Clinical Specialist (OCS) credential (RI Licensed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Advanced Certification (Successfully pass the board exam, successfully complete requirements for and pass the OCS exam, and RI licensed) B. Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation. On the field coverage - not qualified, no emergency training incorporated into initial certification or required to be annually updated. C. Can they Return to Play – NO (During a Game/Contest), Yes (In Clinical Setting)
Physical Therapists w/ Sports Certified Specialist (SCS) credential (RI Licensed)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Advanced Certification (Successfully pass the board exam, successfully complete requirements for and pass the SCS exam, and RI licensed) B. Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation. On-the-field coverage – Qualified C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – YES
EMT - Basic, Intermediate & Paramedic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Successfully complete the EMT program, pass the board exam, and RI licensed) B. Emergency care C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? - NO, per RI EMS laws/regulations/protocols
School Nurse (RN)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Successful completion of a nursing program (Successfully pass the board exam, and RI licensed) B. Emergency care, referral for further treatment/diagnosis C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO

- E. The judgment of the medical person will be final with regard to the medical condition of a player. No player may continue to play against the medical person's advice under any circumstance.
- F. An Emergency Action Plan with clearly defined written and practice protocols as required by RI General Laws must be developed and in place at every high school.
 - a. When possible, an athletic trainer should be present at all practices and games. An athletic trainer is a key component in any strategy to minimize injury risk and optimize safety for all participants.
 - b. *Rationale:* An effective emergency action plan (EAP) must be in place as a prompt and appropriate response to any emergency situation that can save a life. The EAP should be designed and practiced to address all teams (freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) and all practice and game sites.

Section 4: General Regulations for all Sports

- A. Heat Acclimatization: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 3
- B. Definition of a Game/Scrimmage: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 2
- C. Coaching Out of Season Rules: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 8
- D. Use of Equipment During the Summer: RIIL R&R Article 6, Section 13
- E. Sportsmanship Expectations for Coaches, Student-Athletes, & Spectators: RIIL R&R Art. 12, Sect. 3
- F. Loyalty to Home School: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 7
- G. National Events: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 11
- H. Penalties for Ejections: RIIL R&R Article 6, Section 7
- I. Protest Procedure: RIIL R&R Article 5

Section 5: Sport Advisory Committee

- A. Each Sport Advisory Committee is comprised of Member School Administrators, Athletic Directors, Coaches, Officials, and other relevant individuals who work with and report to the RIIL on all matters concerning their sport.

B. Girls Soccer Sport Advisory Committee Membership:

Committee Role	Member	School	Position
Co-Director (RIIAAA)	Allen Huestis	Ponaganset	Retired Athletic Administrator
Athletic Director	Christy Belisle	Mt. Hope	Athletic Director
Athletic Director	Scott Rollins	Middletown	Athletic Director
Coach	Karen Lockhart	East Greenwich	Coach Representative
Coach	Kerri Giarrusso	Mt. Hope	Coach Representative
Coach	Brittney Godbout	Chariho	Coach Representative
Coach	Scott Bassette	Prout	Association President
Coach	Kabba Joof	North Providence	Coach Representative
Official	Al Ricci		Association President
Official	Aimie Adams		Assignor

B. Boys Soccer Sport Advisory Committee Membership:

Committee Role	Member	School	Position
Sport Director	Bob Cavanagh		Retired Athletic Administrator
PCOA Representative	Adolfo Costa	Cumberland	Principal
Co-Director (RIIAAA)	Mike Traficante	Cranston	Athletic Director
Athletic Director	Carl Africo	Central Falls	Athletic Director
Athletic Director	Ed Laskowski	BVP	Athletic Director
Coach	Derek Thayer	EWG	Coach Representative
Coach	Don Denham	Barrington	Coach Representative
Coach	Jim Peters	Mt. Pleasant	Coach Representative
Coach	Richard Grenier	Cranston East	Association President
Coach	Ryan Caferty	Classical	Association President
Official	Lou DiNobile		Assignor
Official	Frank Lombardi		Association President

C. The 2026-27 and 2027-28 Alignment received the following endorsements & approvals:

- a. Sport Committee Approval: 12/09/25
- b. Survey of all Member Schools: 12/17/25
- c. RIIAAA Executive Board Endorsement: 01/16/26
- d. Principal’s Committee on Athletics Approval: 01/27/26

Section 6: Season Schedule:

A. Important Dates:

School Year	2026-27	2027-28
Season	Fall of 2026	Fall of 2027
Sport	Soccer	Soccer
Start Date	Monday, August 17, 2026	Monday, August 16, 2027
Games Can Begin	Thursday, August 27, 2026	Thursday, August 26, 2027
Week #1 Begins On	Monday, August 31, 2026	Monday, August 30, 2027
Week #2 Begins On	Monday, September 7, 2026	Monday, September 6, 2027
Week #3 Begins On	Monday, September 14, 2026	Monday, September 13, 2027
Week #4 Begins On	Monday, September 21, 2026	Monday, September 20, 2027
Week #5 Begins On	Monday, September 28, 2026	Monday, September 27, 2027
Week #6 Begins On	Monday, October 5, 2026	Monday, October 4, 2027
Week #7 Begins On	Monday, October 12, 2026	Monday, October 11, 2027
Week #8 Begins On	Monday, October 19, 2026	Monday, October 18, 2027
Last Day of the Regular Season	Friday, October 23, 2026	Friday, October 22, 2027
Playoff Rounds/Events	4 rounds	4 rounds
Championships Concluded By	Sunday, November 8, 2026	Sunday, November 7, 2027

Soccer Playoff Schedule – Fall 2026 (tentative)	
Round	Date(s)
Preliminaries	Monday, October 26, 2026
Quarterfinals	Thursday, October 28 th – Friday, October 30 th
Semifinals	Tuesday, November 3 rd – Wednesday, November 4 th
Championships	Saturday, November 7 th & Sunday, November 8 th at RI College

B. Girls Soccer Divisions:

State Championship Division (Div. 1)	Division 2	Division 3
15 Teams	16 Teams	16 Teams
Cumberland	Ponaganset	West Warwick
LaSalle	Pilgrim	Cranston East
North Kingstown	North Providence	Davies
Chariho	Toll Gate	St. Mary's Bay View
Cranston West	Westerly	Providence Country Day
Mt. Hope	Scituate	Blackstone Valley Prep
Lincoln	Coventry	Central
East Greenwich	Burrillville	Johnston/AF Co-op
Prout	Classical	Woonsocket
Barrington	St. Raphael	Rogers
South Kingstown	Middletown	Pawtucket Co-op
Moses Brown	North Smithfield	Mt. Pleasant
Smithfield	Narragansett	Central Falls
East Providence	Exeter-West Greenwich	Hope
Portsmouth	Tiverton	Times2
	Lincoln School	Juanita Sanchez/PC/SPA Co-op

A. Boys Soccer Divisions:

State Championship Division (Div. 1)	Division 2	Division 3
15 Teams	16 Teams	16 Teams
LaSalle	Central	Ponaganset
Bishop Hendricken	North Providence	Toll Gate
North Kingstown	Classical	Burrillville
Barrington	Mt. Hope	Davies
Cumberland	Coventry	Johnston
Portsmouth	Pilgrim	Prout
Moses Brown	Central Falls	Woonsocket
South Kingstown	Tiverton	Middletown
Cranston West	Cranston East	Exeter/West Greenwich
East Providence	Smithfield	Mt. Pleasant
Pawtucket Co-op	Scituate	Blackstone Valley Prep
Lincoln	Westerly	Rogers
Chariho	Narragansett	Providence Country Day
East Greenwich	St. Raphael	Juanita Sanchez/PC/SPA Co-op
North Smithfield	West Warwick	Block Island
	Hope	Times2

B. Game Cap: 18 Regular Season Games prior to the start of the playoffs

- a. Game Cap includes all League and Non-League varsity competitions
- b. Assigned League Games:
 - i. Schools that select an 80% schedule will be assigned 12 league games vs. teams within their division
 - ii. Schools that select an 50% schedule will be assigned 8 league games vs. teams within their division

C. Score Reporting for all Regular Season and Postseason League Games: In accordance with Article 6, Section 14, all contest scores are to be reported on-line on the RIIL Website. Coaches obtain access to the system through their Athletic Director.

D. It shall be the responsibility of school officials/administrators/supervisors to provide a safe and secure environment for the teams and officials by ensuring the playing field and sidelines are continuously cleared of **everyone** except certified & appointed coaches, team managers/scorers, student-athletes, medical personnel, and school designated personnel. Media are allowed with prior permission of the host school.

- E. Home teams shall set a date/time for all contests.
 - a. If there is a conflict in the date/time of the contest with the visiting team(s) and mutual agreement cannot be reached, the visiting school Principal/Athletic Director shall submit a **written request** to the RIIL to review the circumstances of the disagreement and render a decision. **This must be done prior to the submission of the Home Confirmation Schedule.**
 - b. Once the Home Confirmation Schedule is submitted, changes will not be allowed unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- G. Postponement of Regular Season Varsity Games after the confirmation deadline:
 - a. Where unusual circumstances prevail or where weather conditions are unfavorable, a game may be postponed by mutual consent of the Principals and/or Athletic Directors
 - b. Postponed games shall be rescheduled to the next day when the teams, facility, and officials are available.
 - i. Includes weekends and/or school vacations.
 - ii. League games must take precedent over non-league games or lesser events
 - iii. Rescheduled games must be within all other guidelines contained in this handbook and the RIIL Rules & Regulations.
 - c. Additional Officials Fees for Games Changed within Two Weeks of original date/time:
Article 6, Section 5
- H. Practice Limitations:
 - a. Preseason Practice Limitations are also located in Heat Acclimatization: Article 7, Section 3
 - b. Scrimmages allowed after 5 days of practice
 - c. Games allowed after 10 days of practice

Section 7: Postseason Qualification & Format:

- A. League Games Required to Qualify for the Postseason: 15 league games**
- B. Teams will be ranked according to their RPI in all league games
- C. Postseason Qualification:
 - a. Championship Tournaments:
 - i. Division 1: 12 Teams qualify for the State Championship Tournament
 - 1. Preliminaries - Quarterfinals – Semifinals – Finals
 - ii. Div. 2 & Div. 3: Top-11 Teams qualify for the D2/D3 Championship Tournament
 - 1. Preliminaries - Quarterfinals – Semifinals – Finals
- E. **Postseason Tiebreaker**
 - a. Playoff Seeding will be determined by a team's RPI as calculated on the RIIL website.
 - b. RPI Tiebreaker:
 - 1) Head-to-Head result(s) in League Games between the tied teams
 - 2) Winning Percentage in all League Games vs teams in your division

- 3) Total Wins in all League Games vs teams in a higher division
- 4) Highest-rated win in Division (according to the final RPI standings)
- 5) Next-highest-rated win (exhaust all possibilities)
- 6) Coin Toss

Section 8: RIIL Rules & Regulations Specific to Soccer – Article 24

- A. **Rosters** shall be completed via the RIIL website and made available to the public no later than 10 days after the start of practice. Rosters must be updated when students are added/removed from the team. Rosters must include: full name, grade, and jersey number.
- B. **Uniforms:**
- a. Schools shall consult the NFHS Rulebook for specific regulations pertaining to uniforms
 - b. In soccer, the home team shall wear “dark” uniforms, while the away team shall wear “white” uniforms.
- C. **RI Interscholastic Injury Fund:**
- a. The Injury Fund is a non-profit organization separate from the RIIL.
 - i. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.injuryfund.org/>
 - b. The purpose of the nonprofit Injury Fund is to establish, raise, maintain and distribute funds to the athletic departments of high schools participating in the Rhode Island Interscholastic League. Distributions will be made to assist athletes, coaches or officials injured in sanctioned interscholastic competitions and practices with their medical expenses that exceed the amount paid by the injured party’s primary, required medical insurance. Any and all financial assistance rendered by the RI Injury Fund to RIIL Member Schools shall be given purely on a voluntary basis and in such amounts and in such manner as the Board of Directors in its sole discretion shall determine.
 - c. Non-League competitions scheduled to spread awareness of and benefit the Injury Fund are allowed by RIIL Rules in addition to any stated game caps contained herein.
 - d. Students, Coaches, and Officials whose teams participate in an Injury Fund event in a given sport are covered by the Injury Fund
 - e. **Injury Fund Format:** Teams will schedule one regulation Soccer game in the pre-season to provide schools the opportunity to participate. Double or triple headers at a single location are preferred.
- D. **Game Ball:** The official game ball is the Select Royale through the 2027-28 school year.
- E. In the event a “playoff game” must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue to play, the game will be rescheduled and restarted from the time of the suspension of play.
- F. **Playoff Warmup:** Teams must be allowed no less than 20 minutes to warm up on the field prior to the start of any playoff game unless mutually agreed upon by both Head Coaches.

G. During all Games, it shall be the responsibility of the home team to provide:

- a. Minimum of two student ball boys/girls for each game
- b. Adequate & equal team benches
- c. Scorer's table with seats setup between the team benches
- d. Working scoreboard

H. Game Clock:

- a. During the regular season the field clock will be used but turned off at the 2:00 minute mark. The game official will then be responsible for maintaining the clock until the end of the game. If the school requests an official timer (supplied by the RI Boys Soccer Officials Association, and paid for by the school) he/she will maintain the field clock and it will be the official clock.
- b. During all playoff games (quarterfinals, semifinals and finals) the RIIL will supply a game official to run the Official Field Clock
 - i. Note: In the event that a team is substituting players in blatant attempt to reduce the actual playing time the official may stop time during these substitutions.
 - ii. The home and away team **MUST** have a scorer located at mid-field with a table. If a scorer is not provided by the home team at mid-field, the home team coach will be issued a yellow card prior to the start of the game.

I. Overtime – Extra Periods (Boys and Girls)

- a. Teams that are tied at the end of regulation time will play two (2) **5-minute** overtime periods.
- a. After the first Five (5) minute period, the teams will switch goals and play a second five (5) minute period. The second 5-minute period starts immediately after the first overtime period.
- b. **Overtime periods are not “sudden death.”** In other words, even if a goal is scored, the period will continue for the full five (10) minutes.
- c. Penalty Kicks:
 - a. If a game remains tied after the (10) minutes of overtime, the outcome will be determined by penalty kicks.
 - b. In accordance with NFHS Soccer rules, **any player on the roster that is submitted to the officials prior to the game** is eligible to participate in the shootout.
 - c. A coin toss determines which goal will be used and which team will shoot first.
 - d. Five players are designated by each team to shoot in alternate order.
 - e. Each shooter takes one kick from the 12-yard line against the opposing keeper.
 - f. The shootout will end after five kicks, or fewer if one team builds an insurmountable lead, with the team scoring the most goals declared the winner.
 - g. While the kicks are being taken each goalkeeper must stand in the end line corner of the penalty area and on the field unless they are defending the goal.
 - h. Additional Penalty Kicks

- i. If the score is still tied after five shots per team, a second shootout phase will begin in which each set of kicks, one by each team, is taken until one team scores and one team misses as long as the same number of kick have been taken by each team. Example: Team A takes kick #7 and scores. Team B takes kick #7 and does not score. Team A is declared the winner. If Team A had missed and Team B scored Team B would be declared the winner and no more kicks would be taken.
 - j. Each kick must be taken by a different player. If the shootout continues past eleven (11) kicks per team, the original order shall be repeated.
- I. A player, coach, or bench personnel shall be disqualified (red card) for:
- a. Taunting
 - b. A subsequent caution
 - c. Leaving the team area to enter the field where a fight or altercation is taking place. Exception: the head coach may enter the field to aid the officials in controlling the players where a fight or altercation is taking place.
 - d. A disqualified player shall be ineligible to participate in the next League contest(s) as per Article 6, Section 6.
 - e. Whenever a referee ejects a player from a soccer game, s/he shall immediately designate whether the ejection was for flagrant conduct, verbally or active, or a technical violation. S/he will then notify the coach at once. Anytime a player receives a red card; the League Office shall be notified. See Article 9, Section 4, paragraph B1 (Reports from officials). If the ejection is for flagrant conduct, the player is automatically out of the next scheduled League game in accordance with Article 6, Section 6. If the ejection is for a technical violation, the provisions of Article 6, Section 6 shall not apply.
- J. Accrued Card Rules: the following rules apply to boys and girls:
- a. Referee game reports will include reasons for yellow and red cards.
 - b. Individuals:
 - A. After five cumulative yellow cards a player must sit out the next game. Note: A player has a clean slate for the playoffs except when a player is issued the 5th yellow card during the last regular season game. The player must sit out the first game of the playoffs. If the fifth card happens to be the second yellow in a game, the player must sit out the next two consecutive League games.
 - B. A player must leave the field of play when a yellow card is issued (including the goalie), but for no specified amount of time.
 - C. During all games if a coach is assessed a yellow card he/she must remain seated on the bench.
 - c. Teams:

- A. A varsity team that accumulates five (5) or more Red Cards during the regular season shall be:
 - A. Disqualified from RIII tournament play
 - B. Placed on probation
- B. A varsity team that accumulates a total combination of sixteen (16) Red and Yellow Cards during the regular season shall be:
 - A. Disqualified from RIII tournament play
 - B. Placed on probation
- C. If a team/coach is issued five (5) yellow cards during a playoff game, the team will lose one player and play the remainder of the game short-handed. Additionally, if the same team is issued two (2) more yellow cards they will lose another player and play two short.
- D. NOTE: The coach will no longer be ejected if his/her team accumulates five (5) cards.
- E. A varsity team that is placed on soccer probation, and accumulates a total of three (3) Red Cards or ten (10) Yellow Cards shall:
 - A. Remain on probation
 - B. The PCOA will determine the continuation/removal of varsity teams on probation each year
 - C. Be disqualified from RIII Tournament play
- F. Each team Head Coach shall enter accurate Red/Yellow Card data on the RIII designated website within 24 hours of the completion of each game.
- K. All players must remain seated on or behind a bench which is placed no less than 15 ft from the touchline when space allows at the facility. When there is not 15 ft of space available at the facility, the officials and home team head coach must clearly designate the bench area during the pregame conference. The exception is for those players warming up while wearing vests. Those players must warm-up behind the bench area or in an area clearly 15 ft from the touchline. (Already covered are those players substituting into the game reporting to the scorer's table). If there are no benches, the coach must designate a line 15 ft from the touchline and all players must remain behind it.
- L. Any player injured must leave the game. That player can only return to the game at the first stoppage of play.
- M. Players must have a complete uniform on until the referees have left the area.
- N. Speaking captains will talk to the referee only when asked by the referee.
- O. There shall be no negative, foul, or abusive dialogue between and/or among coaches, players and referees during the course of a game.

- P. A coach may only seek clarification of a referee's ruling at the conclusion of a game. The coach may seek this clarification at *midfield* after both teams have completely exited the field to their respective benches.

Section 9: Officials

- A. RIIIL assigned official's authority extends to pre and post-game oversight. Fighting and unsportsmanlike penalties will be within the authority of the officials at all times at the contest site.
- B. Police protection, when necessary, must be provided by the home school. The home school is responsible for all crowd control measures. There is an urgent need for increasing vigilance in this matter. Schools must make every effort to ensure that players, officials, and spectators are protected. Duties of the police will be determined and outlined by the home school.
- C. With the assistance of the home team supervision, it shall be the responsibility of the officials to see that benches are cleared of everyone except certified & appointed coaches, team managers, scorers, players, medical personnel, and school designated personnel.
- D. Officials must enforce the coaches' box. If a coach does not comply, he/she will be first warned. If he/she does not comply, he/she will then be issued a yellow card.
- E. The home team should provide an adult game supervisor at all home events. In particular, an adult game supervisor must be present at ice hockey, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, baseball, softball, football, soccer, volleyball and wrestling contests. The supervisor shall not be a student nor a coach involved with the game. The supervisor shall identify himself or herself to the game officials thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the game. The supervisor shall be responsible for game administration and crowd control. They should notify police, and rink representatives to seek appropriate assistance when applicable. In the event of a problem, the Principal/Athletic Director must notify the RIIIL office the next day and submit a written report detailing the incident(s).