



## **Cross Country – Boys & Girls Sport Handbook – Fall 2026**

### **Section 1: Rules**

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.

### **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:

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

- 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. Cross Country, Indoor T&F, Outdoor T&F Combined Sport Advisory Committee Membership:

Committee Role	Member	School
Sport Director	Jamey Vetelino	Westerly
PCOA Representative	Chip McGair	South Kingstown
PCOA Representative	Dan Richard	St. Raphael
Director of Cross Country	Keith Lawton	
Director of Indoor T&F	Ken Skelly	
Director of Indoor T&F	Todd Bayha	
Director of Outdoor T&F	Keith Lawton	
Out.T&F Assistant Director	Todd Bayha	
Athletic Director	Bobby Palazzo	Classical
Athletic Director	Marty Crowley	Cumberland
Athletic Director	Jamal Gomes	Hendicken
Athletic Director	Vin McGinn	La Salle
Coaches Representative	Bill Barrass	Barrington
Coaches Representative	Shaun Horgan	Portsmouth
Coaches Representative - XC	Sue Carlson	Lincoln
Coaches Representative - XC	Dan Brennan	Hendricken
Coaches Representative - Ind	Frank Notariani	Cranston West
Coaches Representative - Ind	James Lourenco	La Salle
Coaches Representative - Ind	Jeff Parenteau	West Warwick
Coaches Representative - Ind	Mark Piette	Woonsocket
Official	Elise Von Housen	

**Section 6: Season Schedule:**

## A. Important Dates:

<b>School Year</b>	2026-27	2027-28
<b>Season</b>	Fall of 2026	Fall of 2027
<b>Sport</b>	<b>Cross Country</b>	<b>Cross Country</b>
<b>Start Date</b>	Monday, August 17, 2026	Monday, August 16, 2027
<b>Scrimmages Can Begin</b>	Saturday, August 22, 2026	Saturday, August 21, 2026
<b>Days in the Preseason</b>	10	10
<b>Games Can Begin</b>	Thursday, August 27, 2026	Thursday, August 26, 2027
<b>Dual Meet #1 the week of</b>	Monday, September 14, 2026	Monday, September 13, 2027
<b>Dual Meet #2 the week of</b>	Monday, September 21, 2026	Monday, September 20, 2027
<b>Dual Meet #3 the week of</b>	Monday, September 28, 2026	Monday, September 27, 2027
<b>Dual Meet #4 the week of</b>	Monday, October 5, 2026	Monday, October 4, 2027
<b>Last Day of the Regular Season</b>	Tuesday, October 20, 2026	Tuesday, October 19, 2027
<b>Postseason Events</b>		
<b>RIL Class Championships</b>	Saturday, October 24, 2026	Saturday, October 23, 2027
<b>RIL State Championships</b>	Saturday, October 31, 2026	Saturday, October 30, 2027
<b>New England Championships</b>	Saturday, November 7, 2026	Saturday, November 6, 2027

B. Division Breakdown by Geography:

<b>Northern</b>	<b>Southern</b>	<b>Suburban</b>	<b>Metropolitan</b>
Blackstone Valley	Chariho	Bishop Hendricken	Barrington
Burrillville	Exeter-West Greenwich	Classical	East Providence
Central Falls	Narragansett	Coventry	LaSalle
Cumberland	North Kingstown	Cranston East	Lincoln School – Prov.
Davies	Prout	Cranston West	Moses Brown
Lincoln	Rogers	East Greenwich	Mt. Hope
North Providence	South Kingstown	Hope	Pawtucket Co-op
North Smithfield	West Warwick	Juanita Sanchez	Portsmouth
Ponaganset	Westerly	Johnston	Providence Country Day
Scituate		Mount Pleasant	St. Mary Bay View
Smithfield		Paul Cuffee	St. Raphael
Woonsocket		Pilgrim	Tiverton
		Toll Gate	

C. Class Breakdown by School Size:

<b>Class A</b>	<b>Class B</b>	<b>Class C</b>
Pawtucket Co-op	Barrington	South Kingstown
East Providence	North Providence	Westerly
Woonsocket	West Warwick	Burrillville
Cranston West	Chariho	Rogers
Cranston East	Lincoln High	North Smithfield
Mount Pleasant	Davies Voc-Tech	Exeter-West Greenwich
Cumberland	Ponaganset	Prout
North Kingstown	Johnston	Tiverton
Toll Gate	Mount Hope	St. Raphael's
Coventry	Central Falls	Moses Brown
LaSalle	Portsmouth	Blackstone Valley Prep
Hope	East Greenwich	Scituate
Pilgrim	Smithfield	Narragansett
Classical	Juanita Sanchez	Paul Cuffee
Bishop Hendricken		Providence Country Day
		St. Mary's Bayview
		Lincoln School – Prov.

- D. 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 RILL Website. Coaches obtain access to the system through their Athletic Director.
- E. 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.
- F. 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 RILL 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:
  - c. 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
  - d. 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 RILL Rules & Regulations.
  - e. 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. The championship meets will be conducted under the direction of the Director of Cross Country in a format determined by the Director of Cross Country, approved by the RILL, and published with the RILL Cross Country schedule.
- B. Post position for all major meets will be drawn by lot by the Meet Director. In order to be eligible to compete in the major meets, a team/individual must have competed in League competition.

- C. Entries to the Class/State Meets will be due to the Meet Director at a time/place as designated by the Director of Cross Country. Final declarations will be due 30 minutes prior to the start of a race.
- D. Class Meet: In the Class Meets, schools will compete in the assigned class as determined by a school enrollment submitted to the RILL. The Director of Cross Country shall insure that each class has approximately equal participation. The RILL reserves the right to adjust the classification formula, as it sees fit.
- E. The following are eligible to compete in the State Meet.
  - a. Top 3 teams from each Division.
  - b. Top team from each Class not included in number 1 above.
  - c. Meet Director will merge all three class meet results into one result and the next three teams excluding teams previously qualifying through number 1 and 2 will qualify
  - d. Once all teams have been qualified for the State Championship, individuals will qualify:
    - i. From teams not already qualified, the next fifteen (15) individuals will qualify based on finish times at the Class Meets
- F. A game committee composed of the Director of Cross Country and the Meet Directors shall rule on any petition to participate in the State Meet because of a failure of an individual/team to advance due to injury, illness or other extenuating circumstance (i.e. Death in family) at the Class Meet. Such an appeal must be made in writing no later than 30 minutes after the completion of the last varsity Class Race.
- G. Class/State Meet Scoring
  - a. Teams of fewer than five (5) finishing runners as well as individuals will not be figured into the team scoring results. Any such individual who may win or tie for a medal shall receive the award. Such individuals shall be included in the overall meet results.
  - b. Current NFHS Rules shall be employed to break any team tie.
    - i. For State Qualifying: In the event that a Tie in Division Standings cannot be broken using NFHS Rules, teams involved in the tie shall advance to the State Championships.
  - c. Schools entering teams in the Class Meets must field full teams (seven (7) runners) in the varsity Race before entering a team/individuals in the junior varsity Race.
  - d. Team and individual awards for Cross Country will be determined by the RILL.
- H. Qualifying Information for the New England Meet will be provided to coaches no later than the State Meet.

## **Section 8: RIIL Rules & Regulations Specific to Cross Country**

- 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 and grade.
- B. **Uniforms:**
  - a. Schools shall consult the NFHS Rulebook for specific regulations pertaining to uniforms
- C. **RI Interscholastic Injury Fund:**
  - f. The Injury Fund is a non-profit organization separate from the RIIL.
    - i. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.injuryfund.org/>
  - g. 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.
  - h. 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.
  - i. Students, Coaches, and Officials whose teams participate in an Injury Fund event in a given sport are covered by the Injury Fund
  - h. **Injury Fund Format:** Cross Country will schedule one pre-season event per gender at a single location for all schools to participate.
- A. The Cross Country course shall be no longer than 3.1 Miles (5,000 Meters) with the minimum length being 2.7 Miles. Cross Country races may not be held on hard surfaces or on heavy vehicular traveled roads. This shall not include courses where the hard surface constitutes only a crossing on a designated course.
- B. Each team member shall wear a uniform as it complies with current Federation rules. Also, no runner shall compete barefoot.
- C. Disqualification from a meet will be an ejection. Disqualification from an event will not be considered an ejection. (Event shall be defined as the cross country race).
- D. Regular Season Schedule:
  - a. The Director of Cross Country shall make up the schedules and order of the meets. The Director of Cross Country shall work with the Meet Directors, coaches and officials in executing the program.

- b. League schedules must end by the date stated unless added time is granted by the RILL because of extenuating circumstances. All non-league meets must be sanctioned by the RILL. No post season meets may take place.
- c. Triangular meets are to be scored as double dual meets with each team being scored separately against the other two teams. Each winning team will receive two (2) points (Max of four (4) points) towards the divisional standings. In the event of a tie, each team will receive one (1) point. (Ties will not be broken).
- d. Team scores will be based on the corrected placement of the first five (5) finishers from each school. Finishers six (6) and seven (7) will only hold place in scoring. A team with fewer than five (5) finishers will not be eligible for team points. In dual meets, each school will be allowed unlimited entries.

### **Section 9: Officials**

- A. A Meet Director shall be appointed by the Director of Cross Country for all postseason meets.
- B. The Meet Director shall act as director of all major meets. S/he will work under the authority of the Director of Cross Country and will have authority to make any changes in the prescribed order of events or in other details in connection with the meets. S/he will notify a coach of any changes at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of a given meet unless in his/her judgment the changes must be made at the scene of the meet and immediately prior to its start.
- C. In championship meets, the referee shall be assigned by the RILL. A jury of appeals will be appointed to review appeals of the referee's decision(s). The jury of appeals will be appointed by the Sport Director and the Meet Director(s). The jury of appeals will have the final decision on all technical decisions.
- D. RILL 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.
- E. 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 the competition areas are cleared of everyone except certified & appointed coaches, team managers, scorers, players, medical personnel, and school designated personnel.
- D. 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).