



Soccer – Boys

Sport Handbook – Fall of 2025

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

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: [Here](#)
- 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. The judgment of the medical personnel will be final with regard to the medical condition of a player. No player may continue to play against the medical personnel's advice under any circumstance.

E. Levels of Medical Coverage:

<u>Medical Professional:</u>	<i>A. Education/Schooling/Training & Licensure</i> <i>B. Scope of Practice</i> <i>C. Able to Return to Play</i>
Medical Doctors- MD/DO Advanced Practice Provider-NP/PA	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	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	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	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	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	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)	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

- 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: Article 7, Section 3
- B. Definition of a Game/Scrimmage: Article 7, Section 2
- C. Coaching Out of Season Rules: Article 7, Section 8
- D. Use of Equipment During the Summer: Article 6, Section 13
- E. Sportsmanship Expectations for Coaches, Student-Athletes, & Spectators: Article 12, Section 3
- F. Loyalty to Home School: Article 7, Section 7
- G. National Events: Article 7, Section 11
- H. Penalties for Ejections: Article 6, Section 7
- I. Protest Procedure: 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. Boys Soccer Sport Advisory Committee Membership:
 - a. Sport Director: Bob Cavanagh (Retired South Kingstown Athletic Director)
 - b. PCOA Representative: Adolfo Costa (Cumberland Principal)
 - c. RIIAAA Representatives: Mike Traficante (Cranston), Carl Africo (Central Falls), Ed Laskowski (Blackstone Valley)
 - d. Coaches Representatives: Don Denham (Barr), Richard Grenier (CE), Ryan Cafferty (Class), Derek Thayer (EWG), Jim Peters (MtPI)
 - e. Officials Representatives: Frank Lombardi, Lou DiNoble
- C. The 2024-25 and 2025-26 Alignment received the following endorsements & approvals:
 - a. Sport Committee Approval: 01/05/24
 - b. Survey of all Member Schools: 01/12/24
 - c. RIIAAA Executive Board Endorsement: 01/19/24
 - d. Principal's Committee on Athletics Approval: 01/22/2024

Section 6: Regular Season:

A. Important Dates:

a. Scheduling:

- i. Schedule Confirmation Deadline: Friday, June 6, 2025
- ii. Final Day to add a League Game: Friday, August 8, 2025

b. Preseason:

- i. First Day of Practice: Monday, August 18, 2025
- ii. First Day to schedule a Scrimmage: Saturday, August 23, 2025

c. Regular Season:

- i. First Day to schedule a Game: Thursday, August 28, 2025
- ii. Week #1: begins on Monday, September 1st
- iii. Week #2: begins on Monday, September 8th
- iv. Week #3: begins on Monday, September 15th
- v. Week #4: begins on Monday, September 22nd
- vi. Week #5: begins on Monday, September 29th
- vii. Week #6: begins on Monday, October 6th
- viii. Week #7: begins on Monday, October 13th
- ix. Week #8: begins on Monday, October 20th
- x. Last Day of the Regular Season: Friday, October 24, 2025

d. Postseason:

- i. Preliminary Games (11 total games): Monday, October 27th & Tuesday, October 28th
- ii. Quarterfinals: Thursday, October 30th & Friday, October 31st
- iii. Semifinals: Tuesday, November 4th & Wednesday, November 5th
- iv. Championships: Saturday, November 8th & Sunday, November 9th

B. 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.

C. 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.

D. Divisions:

- a. Boys Soccer has Three (3) Divisions

State Championship Division (Div. 1)	Division 2	Division 3
<u>15 Teams</u>	<u>15 Teams</u>	<u>17 Teams</u>
Barrington	Chariho	Blackstone Valley
Bishop Hendricken	Coventry	Block Island
Central	East Greenwich	Burrillville
Central Falls	Hope	Cranston East
Classical	Lincoln	Davies
Cranston West	Mt. Hope	Exeter-West Greenwich
Cumberland	North Providence	Juanita Sanch./PC/StP Co-op
East Providence	Pilgrim	Johnston
La Salle	Scituate	Middletown
Moses Brown	Smithfield	Mt. Pleasant
North Kingstown	St. Raphael	Narragansett
North Smithfield	Tiverton	Ponaganset
Pawtucket Co-op	Westerly	Prout
Portsmouth	West Warwick	Providence Country Day
South Kingstown	Woonsocket	Rogers
		Times ²
		Toll Gate

E. Game Cap: 20 Regular Season Games prior to the start of the playoffs

- a. Game Cap includes all League and Non-League varsity competitions
b. Scrimmages are strictly defined in Article 7, Section 2 and must be conducted in full compliance

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 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.
c. RI Interscholastic Injury Fund:
i. The RI Injury Fund is a non-profit organization separate from the RIIL.
1. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.injuryfund.org/>
ii. 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.

- iii. 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.

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, not including Sundays

I. Game Ball: The official game ball for the 2024 season is the Select Royale

J. 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.

- a. Rosters must include: name, grade, and jersey number.

Section 7: Postseason Qualification & Format:

A. League Games Required to Qualify for the Postseason: 16 league games

B. Teams will be ranked according to their RPI in all league games

C. Single Elimination throughout the playoffs

D. Straight Bracket, no reseeding

E. Postseason Qualification:

- a. Division 1: Top-12 Teams qualify (~80%)
 - i. Preliminaries (5 v. 12, 6 v. 11, 7 v. 10, 8 v. 9) - Quarterfinals – Semifinals – Finals
- b. Division 2 & Division 3: Top-12 Teams qualify (~70%)
 - i. Preliminaries (5 v. 12, 6 v. 11, 7 v. 10, 8 v. 9) - Quarterfinals – Semifinals – Finals

F. Postseason Tiebreaker

- a. Playoff Seeding will be determined by a team's RPI as calculated on the RIIL designated 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) Wins in all League Games vs teams in a higher division
 - 4) Win Percentage in all League Games
 - 5) Opponents' Win Percentage
 - 6) Highest-rated win (according to the final RPI standings)
 - 7) Next-highest-rated win (exhaust all possibilities)
 - 8) Coin Toss

G. 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.

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

D. 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.

B. 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.
- D. 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.
- E. 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:
 - i. 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.
 - ii. A player must leave the field of play when a yellow card is issued (including the goalie), but for no specified amount of time.
 - iii. During all games if a coach is assessed a yellow card he/she must remain seated on the bench.
 - c. Teams:
 - i. A varsity team that accumulates five (5) or more Red Cards during the regular season shall be:
 - 1. Disqualified from RIIL tournament play
 - 2. Placed on probation

- ii. A varsity team that accumulates a total combination of sixteen (16) Red and Yellow Cards during the regular season shall be:
 - 1. Disqualified from RIIL tournament play
 - 2. Placed on probation
- iii. 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.
- iv. NOTE: The coach will no longer be ejected if his/her team accumulates five (5) cards.
- v. A varsity team that is placed on soccer probation, and accumulates a total of three (3) Red Cards or ten (10) Yellow Cards shall:
 - 1. Remain on probation
 - 2. The PCOA will determine the continuation/removal of varsity teams on probation each year
 - 3. Be disqualified from RIIL Tournament play
- vi. Each team Head Coach shall enter accurate Red/Yellow Card data on the RIIL designated website within 24 hours of the completion of each game.

F. 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.

G. Uniforms:

- a. All socks worn by players must be the same dominant color
- b. NFHS rule 4-1 regarding uniforms and socks must be followed
- c. Exception – Jerseys and shorts that are not compliant will be allowed if the school does not have the funds to purchase new uniforms. Schools must conform to the new regulations at their earliest opportunity or when funds become available.

H. Any player injured must leave the game. That player can only return to the game at the first stoppage of play.

I. Players must have a complete uniform on until the referees have left the area.

J. Speaking captains will talk to the referee only when asked by the referee.

K. There shall be no negative, foul, or abusive dialogue between and/or among coaches, players and referees during the course of a game.

L. 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.

M. The home team shall provide a minimum of two student ball boys/girls for each game.

N. Game Clock:

- d. 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.
- e. 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.

Section 9: Officials

- A. RIIL 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 RIIL office the next day and submit a written report detailing the incident(s).