

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR REPORT

September 2026

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- 107 student-athletes are currently participating in middle school and high school athletics, including students participating through cooperative programs at other schools.
- Illini Central currently has approximately 400 students in grades 5–12.
- Participation by sport:
 - MS Baseball - 15
 - MS Softball - 17
 - HS Volleyball - 29
 - HS Golf - 11
 - MS Golf - 13
 - HS Cross Country - 4
 - MS Cross Country - 15
 - HS Soccer - 4

FALL ATHLETIC HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRAM GROWTH

- Fall sports are currently in full swing, and overall program success is currently ahead of where programs finished last year.
- Students participating in the Athens High School soccer cooperative program are part of a team that has a strong opportunity to make a deep postseason run.
- Two Illini Central Junior High girls golfers placed in the top half of their sectional.
- The volleyball program has shown significant growth early in the season and is currently on pace to win more matches than last year's team.
- The Middle School Softball team has surpassed last year's win total.
- The Middle School Baseball team has also surpassed last year's win total.
- Our high school cross country athletes are showing strong potential heading into the postseason, with opportunities to make deep postseason runs.
- Our high school golfers are also performing at a high level and have the potential for strong postseason finishes.
- Middle School Girls Basketball is getting underway.
- Both Middle School and High School Cheer programs are beginning their seasons.

LUXEDO VIDEO SYSTEM

- The Luxedo video system, generously donated by the Athletic Booster Club, has been a tremendous addition to Illini Central athletics.
- The system was previewed during the Meet the Cougars K–12 school assembly and was then utilized during the first home volleyball game.
- The system provides enhanced video, lighting, music, and presentation capabilities and has added a new level of excitement to the home-event experience.
- We have been informed that there are only approximately 10–12 systems currently being utilized in Illinois, making this a unique addition to our athletic facilities.

OTHER

- We have had media days to promote our athletes on the various social media outlets we utilize. Many thanks to Nicole Damm
- We are utilizing HUDL and the Illini Sports Network for our teams to connect with the community and other programs we participate against.

FACILITIES & EQUIPMENT

- The softball field is currently receiving an infield makeover to improve the playing surface and overall appearance of the facility.
- Plans are in place to complete a similar makeover to the baseball field next year.
- Individual athletic programs have also received equipment and facility upgrades, including new bases and other necessary equipment.
- The athletic department purchased a wet globe to assist with proper monitoring of environmental conditions and compliance with IHSA and IESA protocols.

HOSTING IESA EVENTS

- Illini Central is currently scheduled to host the IESA 7th Grade Boys Basketball Regional.
- We are exploring additional opportunities to host postseason and other athletic events at our facilities.
- Hosting postseason events provides an excellent opportunity to showcase our facilities, students, staff, and school community.

SCHEDULING & OFFICIALS

- The athletic department has transitioned to Arbiter for athletic scheduling and the scheduling of game officials.
- There continues to be a learning curve as Illini Central and many other schools adjust to the new scheduling process.
- We are continuing to work through the transition and improve our use of the system.

COMMUNITY & ATHLETIC PROMOTION

- Pocket athletic schedules were distributed to the public approximately two weeks ago.
- These schedules provide families and community members with an easy way to follow Illini Central athletic events throughout the school year.
- A new Middle School and High School Track & Field Record Board is currently in the proofing phase, with the goal of having it installed by spring.
- The record board will provide a permanent way to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of Illini Central student-athletes.

LOOKING AHEAD

- Continue supporting the growth and success of all athletic programs.
- Continue improving athletic facilities and equipment.
- Explore additional opportunities to host postseason events.
- Continue developing the home-event experience through technology and presentation.
- Continue recognizing and celebrating the accomplishments of Illini Central student-athletes.