

### 3.0 CIAC BY-LAWS

7. The school appealing the finding and judgment of the panel shall be subject to the application of Article III, E.1. and 2. of the CIAC [bylaws], regulations (q.v.). (Note: This article provides that any school which sues CIAC and loses pays CIAC's legal fees and costs.)
8. Punitive fines not to exceed \$10,000 may be imposed by the Board of Control against a school found to have engaged in recruiting as defined in Article IX, Section IV, C.2. and above. The superintendent of schools of the district shall be notified through the high school principal.

#### ARTICLE XI – COOPERATIVE TEAM SPONSORSHIP

The CIAC Board of Control shall have the authority to approve the formation of cooperative athletic teams of two or more member high schools under the following conditions:

1. The determination of the proper set of circumstances which will allow multiple schools to form a cooperative team will depend significantly on the issue of competitor displacement. When the CIAC believes that a cooperative arrangement will cause an unreasonable displacement of potential competitors from one of the schools, the request to form a cooperative will be denied. Schools having sufficient numbers of competitors are advised not to request the formation of a cooperative team in that sport. It is only when two or more schools are experiencing difficulty in obtaining the desired number of competitors to form a team that the request for a cooperative team should be initiated. Cooperative teams may not be formed for financial reasons.
2. Cooperative teams will not be permitted to add a school(s) if the total number of players on the existing co-op team exceeds the maximum determined sport participation limit. (See chart pg. 65) Co-op programs exist until they have finished the phase-out period or if the agreement between the schools involved ceased for at least one full season.
3. Multiple team cooperative programs cannot exceed two (2) times the maximum determined sport participation limit in each sport.
4. The schools are located in the same geographical area.
5. All schools participating in the cooperative must be members of the CIAC, Inc.
6. A cooperative team will be placed in the appropriate tournament classification using combined enrollments as follows:
  - a. 100% of the 9-12 boy or girl enrollment of the largest school in the co-op.
  - b. The % of players from the remaining school(s) in the co-op will be calculated and that % of the co-op school(s) 9-12 boy or girl enrollment will be added to the largest school enrollment.

Example:	School A – 9-12 boy enrollment	500	500
	School B – 9-12 boy enrollment	<u>250</u>	<u>250</u>
		750	750
	# of participants in co-op – 15		
	10 from school A – 100% enrollment	500	
	5 from school B – 33% enrollment of 250	<u>83</u>	
	Total enrollment for tournament classification	583	

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7. The cooperative sponsorship agreement is usually established for a period of two consecutive school years. However, approval may be granted for a one year period.
8. The governing boards of all schools participating in the cooperative team agreement jointly make application to the CIAC Board of Control for approval of the cooperative team agreement.
9. Written assurance that a “no cut” policy will govern the cooperative. **Note: Any attempt to stifle team growth or to discourage turnout to maintain lower numbers in order to co-op is considered a cutting policy and is prohibited.**
10. Cooperative team application must be filed on-line in the “eligibility center.” In addition to a completed application written approval from the league(s) of which the cooperating schools are members, or, in the event the cooperative team will not be affiliated with a league, written approval from a minimum of six schools included on the cooperative teams schedule must be submitted.

Application deadlines for cooperative teams during any school year are: (Schools are encouraged to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline.)

**Fall sports – May 1      Winter sports – September 15      Spring sports – January 15**

The principal of the host school will be designated as responsible for all CIAC-related correspondence concerning the cooperative team.

Note: The cooperative team application form must be completed and be accompanied by all necessary addenda.

11. The CIAC Co-op Committee reserves the right to investigate a co-op team which has a substantially different number of athletes reported on the co-op application than the number of athletes that actually participate in the co-op. The outcome of the investigation may result in recommendations to the CIAC Board of Control to take immediate action.

#### 12. Dissolution of Cooperative Teams

- a. When the decision of the CIAC co-op committee is to dissolve or discontinue a co-op program, there will be a maximum of a two (2) year phase-out, renewable yearly, and athletes will be eligible from their schools throughout the phase-out period. The cooperative team committee has the authority to reduce a phase-out period to one year if the number of participants from a school exceeds the maximum determined sport participation limit or the total number of participants in the co-op exceeds or is close to exceeding two times the maximum allowed in the specific sport. Eligibility is not restricted to only those athletes who were on the original co-op team roster at the time of discontinuation.

Note: When a co-op team has been put into a phase-out and it can be demonstrated that the school(s) affected have in good faith begun a process of creating some type of sustainable ongoing program, in the same sport and independent of the co-op which will provide opportunity to those new incoming underclassmen, the schools involved may request an extension of the phase-out period to insure the students who were in the original co-op may finish out their high school athletic career as a part of the original co-op.

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- b. During the phase-out, all schools must agree to remain in the co-op agreement on a yearly basis. League approval is not required. During the phase-out period all athletes are to be notified by their school that a limited period of eligibility exists because the program is in a phase-out period.
- c. A cooperative program which has completed a phase-out may apply for continued existence as a “non-CIAC competitive” program for the season immediately following the completed phase-out. The following requirements must be met:
  - 1) All CIAC student eligibility standards, seasonal and weekly limitations will be adhered to.
  - 2) Schools knowingly taking this path remove themselves from CIAC post-season competition.
  - 3) A win/loss record will be counted only for opponents of the “opt-out” program and to calculate any CIAC tournament pairings and power rankings.
  - 4) Schools applying to opt-out must submit to the CIAC Co-op Committee a letter of approval from their league and each non-league opponent.
  - 5) The opt-out accommodation is for one (1) year at a time.
  - 6) Once the opt-out accommodation request along with the required letters are received, the Co-op Committee will screen the documentation and determine if it should be forwarded to the CIAC Board of Control for approval.

The Co-op Committee often deals with one or more schools which have exceeded the allowable number of participants thus forcing the program to enter into a phase-out period. This is done to create optimum opportunity, prevent a co-op program from gaining a competitive advantage and avoid the displacement of students. When this occurs, the Co-op Committee works diligently to try and find other opportunities to allow students left behind without a program to participate. In cases where an alternative program cannot be found, it sometimes becomes a very emotional issue. The proposed opt-out accommodation is being recommended to provide schools an option that allows them to remain unified despite a phase-out period.

- d. Dissolving an active CIAC approved co-op lies solely between the schools involved. However, the cooperative team committee can deny a co-op application if ANY of the schools applying were previously part of a disbanded co-op that has left schools without a program in which to compete.

#### **Decision Making Power**

Decisions to approve or disapprove all cooperative team applications are relegated to the Cooperative Team Committee by the CIAC Board of Control. The Cooperative Team Committee shall consist of the chairperson of the CIAC, a minimum of two high school administrators, one representative of CAAD and one representative of CHSCA, all with voting privileges. The Cooperative Team Committee will meet a minimum of three times per year to act on all requests.

#### **Sport Participation Limits**

The following limits have been determined by each CIAC sport committee. When the number of potential participants in any school exceeds the limits listed below a cooperative team will not be approved.

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Fall Sports (9-12)(10-12)	Winter Sports (9-12)(10-12)	Spring Sports (9-12)(10-12)
Cross Country ... 5 / 4	Basketball ..... 8 / 6	Baseball ..... 14 / 10
Field Hockey ... 16 / 11	Gymnastics ..... 3 / 2	Golf ..... 4 / 3
Football ..... 32 / 25	Ice Hockey ..... 15 / 10	Lacrosse ..... 16 / 11
Soccer ..... 16 / 11	B. Swimming ... 14 / 10	Outdoor Track ... 14 / 10
G. Swimming .... 14 / 10	Indoor Track .... 10 / 7	Softball ..... 14 / 10
G. Volleyball ... 10 / 7	Wrestling ..... 13 / 9	Tennis ..... 7 / 5
		B. Volleyball ..... 10 / 7

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS CONCERNING COOPERATIVE TEAMS

1. Q. **When a school has a reasonably sufficient number of competitors to sponsor a team will that school be allowed to develop a cooperative arrangement with a school which does not have sufficient numbers to sponsor a team?**
  - A. *No. The determination of the proper set of circumstances which will allow two or three schools to form a cooperative team will depend significantly on the issue of competitor displacement. When the CIAC believes that a cooperative arrangement will cause unreasonable displacement of potential competitors from one of the schools, the request to form a cooperative will be denied. Schools having sufficient numbers of competitors are advised not to request the formation of a cooperative team in that sport. It is only when two or more schools are experiencing difficulty obtaining an adequate number of competitors to form a team that the request for a cooperative team should be initiated.*
2. Q. **How is the term “same geographical area” defined?**
  - A. *The term “same geographical area” will be defined by the boards of education forming each cooperative team. It is expected that the practical factors involved in arranging a co-op will create practical parameters to the geographical area any cooperative could serve.*
3. Q. **According to the regulations, league approval is required for each cooperative team. What constitutes league approval?**
  - A. *League approval is formal voted-upon action by a league, according to its own method of voting, granting formal approval by the league of the formation of a cooperative team involving one or more of its member schools.*
4. Q. **What requirements do schools which establish cooperative agreements have to meet with respect to defining the administrative details of a cooperative team?**
  - A. *Boards of education must adopt a formal intergovernmental agreement with the other district(s) involved in the formation of any cooperative team they establish. This agreement must be formally adopted by the boards of education of all cooperating schools.*
5. Q. **If a school adds a boys’ team by the formation of a cooperative team, must it also add a girls’ sport team to its program?**
  - A. *Simply adding a team for one sex of students by forming a cooperative does not require corresponding action to add a team for the other sex of students. However, schools are bound by the provisions of Title IX. Questions with respect to Title IX regulations should be referred to the State Department of Education.*

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6. Q. **May cooperative teams be formed with out-of-state schools?**
- A. *No.*
7. Q. **May a cooperative team be formed with a school which is not a member of CIAC, Inc.?**
- A. *No.*
8. Q. **May a school form more than one cooperative team in the same sport?**
- A. *No. A cooperative team will not be approved based upon level of play, such as a freshman team or JV team. Approval will be decided solely on permitting schools to engage in a sport cooperatively.*
9. Q. **May a school form a cooperative with one school in football, a different cooperative team with another school in cross country and even a third cooperative with yet another school in volleyball?**
- A. *Yes. The provisions of this rule permit formations of different cooperative teams with different schools on a sport-by-sport basis. However, each cooperative team formed must undergo the complete process of approval by the boards of education, the league, and the CIAC Board of Control.*
10. Q. **In light of the requirement that cooperative teams may not limit participation opportunities, must a no-cut policy be established for each cooperative team that is formed?**
- A. *Yes.*
11. Q. **May a school drop one sport, such as field hockey, in order to enter a cooperative team arrangement in another sport such as girls soccer?**
- A. *Yes. The decision as to which sports to offer is exclusively the prerogative of each board of education.*
12. Q. **Is there a deadline for filing cooperative team applications with the CIAC Board of Control?**
- A. *Yes. The deadline is May 1 for fall sports – September 15 for winter sports – and January 15 for spring sports.*
13. Q. **May a cooperative team be formed during a sport season, in order to accommodate participation in the CIAC tournament series that school year?**
- A. *No. All cooperative team applications must be submitted on or before the date deadline for each sport season. Applications received after these dates will be denied or considered only for implementation no sooner than one year hence.*
14. Q. **Must a cooperative team meet all of the qualifying regulations of a specific sport before being permitted to compete in the state tournament?**
- A. *Yes.*

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15. Q. **If two schools form a boys' cooperative team with each school having boy enrollments in grades 9-12 of 500 and 250, what enrollment will be used to determine classification for that sport.**

A. *A cooperative team will be placed in the appropriate tournament classification using combined enrollments as follows:*

- *100% of the 9-12 boy or girl enrollment of the largest school in the co-op*
- *The % of players from the remaining school(s) in the co-op will be calculated and that % of the co-op school(s) 9-12 boy or girl enrollment will be added to the largest school enrollment*

<i>Example:</i>	<i>School A – 9-12 boy enrollment</i>	<i>500</i>	<i>500</i>
	<i>School B – 9-12 boy enrollment</i>	<u><i>250</i></u>	<u><i>250</i></u>
		<i>750</i>	<i>750</i>

<i># of participants in co-op – 15</i>	
<i>10 from School A – 100% enrollment</i>	<i>500</i>
<i>5 from School B – 33% enrollment of 250</i>	<u><i>83</i></u>
<i>Total enrollment for tournament classification</i>	<i>583</i>

16. Q. **If two schools receive approval for a cooperative team, may they reapply their cooperative agreement and add a third school to the cooperative?**

A. *Co-op teams are not permitted to add a third school (if the total number of players on the existing co-op team exceed the maximum limit required per sport).*

17. Q. **If two schools form a cooperative agreement, and then after the season for that sport begins, interest wanes and there are not sufficient students participating to sustain the team, what are the eligibility implications for students who may have been participating in the cooperative team?**

A. *Students who begin participating on a cooperative team which is then disbanded after having competed in its first contest, may not compete in another CIAC sport during the remainder of the current sport season. Furthermore, if students from either of the schools enter the CIAC state tournament series as individuals in the sport for which the cooperative was established, they would have to be entered under the auspices of the cooperative team, not their own individual high school.*

18. Q. **A school after one year in a cooperative agreement is forced to discontinue the sport because of lack of support from the other schools in the cooperative. May that school petition to form a cooperative in the same sport with another school or schools?**

A. *Yes. In this case an appeal will be heard by the review committee to grant exception to the two year commitment.*

19. Q. **May two schools from a cooperative team then subsequently consolidate with each other the second year of the cooperative?**

A. *Yes. Consolidation of schools joined in a cooperative team agreement will simply supersede the cooperative agreement in such case.*

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20. Q. **In the event two schools, each of which is a member of a different league, form a cooperative team, how will the requirements for league approval be administered?**
- A. *According to the cooperative policy, cooperative teams must be approved by the leagues of which the participating schools are members. They must also be approved by the league in which the cooperative team will participate or by six schools on the cooperative team's schedule if it does not compete in a league.*
- A) *If the cooperative team competes in a league of which one of the schools has been a member, both that league and the league of which the other school(s) in the cooperative has been a member(s) will be required to approve the cooperative team.*
- B) *If the cooperative team competes in neither of the existing leagues but will compete in another league altogether, then both the previous leagues and the new league must approve formation of the cooperative.*
- C) *If the schools forming the cooperative have been league members but will compete as an independent, then the leagues of which they have individually been members, along with the six schools on the cooperative team's schedule, must approve the formation of the cooperative.*
- D) *If one school entering the cooperative has been a member of a league and the other has been an independent, and the cooperative will compete as an independent, approval of the cooperative team must be obtained from both the league of the one cooperating school and from six (6) schools on the cooperative team's schedule.*
21. Q. **How is the term six (6) schools defined with request to requiring approval by six (6) schools on its schedule?**
- A. *Six schools mean six different schools which appear on the cooperative team's schedule for the first season of play.*
22. Q. **If a cooperative team is dissolved or discontinued is the cooperative entitled to a phase-out period?**
- A. *Yes. Schools in the cooperative will be granted a phase-out period of up to two years to allow schools an opportunity to co-op with another school or to budget the necessary funds to establish their own program. The cooperative team committee has the authority to authorize a one year phase-out if the number of participants in the cooperative exceeds or are close to exceeding two times the maximum allowed in the specific sport. Additionally, a school may request an extension of a phase-out if they demonstrated they have begun a program independent of the co-op to accommodate any incoming underclassmen interested in the sport.*
23. Q. **May a school seek to form a co-op program for financial reasons or because they are eliminating their existing program due to budgetary constraints?**
- A. *No. The reasoning behind forming a co-op team is competitor displacement and is based solely on the number of athletes in the program and not financial hardships.*

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- 24.Q. **May two schools that each have 25 returning football players in the upper three (3) grades totaling 50, form a co-op team?**
- A. *Yes.*
- 25.Q. **May three schools that each have 25 returning football players in the upper three (3) grades totaling 75 form a co-op team?**
- A. *No. Any three (3) teams cannot exceed the maximum number derived by a two (2) team co-op and in this case that would be 50. When using the (10-12) option, all numbers and calculations in forming the co-op must be associated with the maximum number for each school to be 25.*
- 26.Q. **May two schools forming a football co-op each use a different option with one using the (10-12) = 25 option and the other using the (9-12) = 32 option?**
- A. *Yes. However, the total number of athletes 9-12 in the program may not exceed 64.*
- 27.Q. **At the conclusion of the hockey season I have 13 non-seniors on my roster but project I will only have 10 players without freshman for next season. Can I seek out another school to enter a co-op?**
- A. *The number of athletes submitted to co-op using the “no freshman” option should correspond directly to the eligibility list at the end of the previous season unless substantial documentation can be provided that indicates students have left the school.*
- 28.Q. **May two schools already in an existing co-op disband in order to reconfigure adding a third team?**
- A. *Schools may not disband in the middle of a co-op agreement but may disband at the end of their co-op agreement to reform with other schools.*
- 29.Q. **Can a co-op team that has been put into a phase-out and has finished the phase-out period and still has a number of athletes over the allowable limit apply for an extension?**
- A. *No, however the co-op team can request to be put into a co-op “opt-out” period for one year at a time which allows the team to remain together with the condition they will remove themselves from CIAC post-season competition. This “opt-out” status will be granted provided they have received approval from their league and opponents that the existing co-op has not reached a level of ability that is too competitive giving them an unfair advantage during the regular season.*
- 30.Q. **Can a team that receives “opt-out” status vie for a league title or be involved in a league tournament?**
- A. *Yes, the “opt-out” requirement is for CIAC post-season competition and the status within the league can be determined by the league.*