



NICA[®]

2023 HANDBOOK

RULES & GUIDELINES

WE BUILD STRONG MINDS, BODIES, CHARACTER,
AND COMMUNITIES THROUGH CYCLING.

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The following League Standards and Guidance Materials are derived from terms that previously appeared in the National NICA Rulebook. These materials are made available to NICA Leagues who must establish League Rules and guidance materials covering the subjects included herein. The Required Standards must be included at a minimum in the guidance Leagues provide to their participants. Leagues may modify the discretionary standards to accommodate the size, makeup, and other needs of their student population.

This edition of the NICA Handbook is made effective December 1st, 2022 (the “Effective Date”), for the Spring Season for the NICA Leagues. All prior rules and regulations are superseded as of the Effective Date.

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CHAPTER 1: APPLICABILITY, CONSEQUENCES, LEAGUE DISCRETION AND GRIEVANCE PROCESS

SECTION 1.1 APPLICABILITY OF RULES

1.1.A This Chapter 1 sets out the applicability for the Chapters presenting the rules that apply to participants in the Leagues, including Chapter 2 (the Student Rules) and Chapter 3 (the Coach, Parent and Guardian Rules). Throughout the Handbook, students registered with the Leagues are referred to alternatively as students, student-athletes, racers, riders, or registrants.

1.1.B The Student Rules (Chapter 2) should be observed by students at all times when cycling and will be enforced on students participating in all manner of NICA events, including races, trainings, camps, or any other occasion where coaches or students appear wearing NICA apparel.

1.1.C The Leagues in collaboration with the NICA Rules Committee will also adopt and provide to riders, coaches and family members, other Guidance Materials including the Code of Conduct (Chapter 4), governing the Leagues and League events. Violations of the Code of Conduct will be considered on a case by case basis and may result in a student's prohibition from participating in the League.

1.1.D Rules directed to Coaches, Parents & Guardians (Chapter 3) will be applied to all non-riders assisting or associated with a rider, and their failure to comply with the rules will cause their rider to be penalized as set out herein or at a League's discretion.

1.1.E The interpretation and application of the rule will be made at the League's discretion by representatives of the League as provided for in the League's Rulebook. This discretion may not be abused or applied unfairly, however the facts of individual cases may differ and NICA and its Leagues acknowledge that the specific facts of individual cases are likely to require the use of discretion. Appeals must first be exhausted within the League through the appeal process provided, if any, and only then will the National Rules Committee consider the appeal of a League's final application of the rules.

SECTION 1.2 RULE VIOLATION CONSEQUENCE LEVELS

1.2.A Standard Consequences: Unless otherwise specified, rule violations will result in consequences at one of the three following levels: Yellow, Orange, Red. Leagues have the discretion to impose additional penalties on a team wide basis as needed.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

First offense: Warning.

Subsequent offenses: 5-minute penalty.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

First Offense: 5-minute penalty.

Second offense: 10-minute penalty.

Third offense: Disqualification from a race.

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

First offense: Disqualification from the race of infraction, or the next race if the infraction occurs between races.

1.2.B Other Consequences and Applications: The standard consequences can be applied in other situations at a league official's discretion. Where standard consequences may not adequately address a specific rule violation, other consequences specific to the rule have been included in the language of the rule itself. Leagues are responsible for enforcing consequences and may sanction other penalties that are not specified in the rules, but are deemed appropriate.

1.2.C Coach, Parent or Guardian Level Consequences: League's may apply consequences to a student-athlete based on violations of the rules by a coach or family member, and the League may suspend the coach or family member(s) of a student-athlete based on violations of

the rules by the student-athlete, the coach or the family member(s), occurring at any time.

COACH, PARENT OR GUARDIAN LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

For all violations, team level penalties, consequences set out in the rule, or penalties imposed upon a student athlete, if appropriate, may be imposed at the League discretion.

1.2.D While the nature of the consequences for breaking these rules are tied to League events, coaches and parents are encouraged to enforce similar policies of safety, etiquette, and trail use during off-season rides.

SECTION 1.3 LEAGUE DISCRETION; APPEALS

1.3.A The League has discretion to suspend family members of a student-athlete based on red-level violations of the rules by that student-athlete or that student-athlete's family members, occurring at any time. Such discretion must be exercised by the League Rules Committee (LRC) and its decision provided in writing, providing the basis for and length of such suspension. The length of suspension may extend up to the point where the student-athlete is no longer eligible to participate.

1.3.B LRC is responsible for the interpretation of the rules and the resolution of any disputes regarding the application and enforcement of the rules. Student-athletes may appeal any rule decision or penalty assessed by an official to the LRC.

1.3.C A decision by the LRC may be appealed to the NICA Rules Committee (NRC). Such appeals to the NRC are submitted either by the League Director or the chairperson of the LRC.

1.3.D The League must form its own LRC. Pending the formation of the LRC, the League Director assumes all LRC responsibilities under these rules. LRC members are selected by the League's board of directors or, if a board is not yet formed, by the League Director. The LRC shall designate a member to participate as a member of the NRC.

SECTION 1.4 GUIDANCE FOR SHARING GRIEVANCES

1.4.A NICA recognizes that student-athletes, parents, coaches and volunteers have the right to raise grievances about any matter related to their volunteering with the organization. A grievance could be related to another community member, a member of the paid staff, or the manner in which they are being treated by the team/league. The grievance procedure is in place to ensure that all community members are treated in a fair and equitable manner.

1.4.B If a community member has a complaint against a member of staff, another volunteer, or the organization in general they should first discuss the issue with their head coach or Team Director. The volunteer may be accompanied by a colleague at this meeting.

1.4.C If the complaint is against the Head Coach, Team Director or other leadership position, the matter should be taken to and discussed with the League Director. If the matter cannot be resolved at this level, the complaint should be made in writing and submitted to NICA National Human Resources.

1.4.D At this point, the aggrieved party will be notified of the issue/concern/complaint and NICA National will make every attempt to have the issue resolved within fourteen days. This and all complaints will be treated in a confidential manner.

SECTION 1.5 NICA NO RETALIATION POLICY

No individual who reports a suspected violation of any NICA policy, rule, standard, code of conduct, regulation pursuant to law, or is in violation of a clear mandate or public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment to a superior, whether or not the allegation turns out to be true, shall be subject to any form of retaliation, including, but not necessarily limited to, harassment, suspension, expulsion, demotion, or firing.

CHAPTER 2: STUDENT-ATHLETE RULES

RULE 2.1 HELMETS

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.1.A Student-athletes must wear approved helmets at all times, with the exception that helmet rules are not applicable to riders warming up on bikes that are securely mounted to stationary trainers. Under no other circumstances may a student-athlete be on a bicycle without a properly worn and securely fastened helmet, even when riding a very short distance. Helmets must also be worn when walking or running on the course with a bike due to a mechanical problem. Additionally:

1. Helmet straps must be adjusted to the extent that two fingers can be pushed under the strap, whereas three fingers would be difficult.
2. Helmets should not have any cracks or dents from previous falls or mishandling.
3. Helmets should be the correct size with little to no side-to-side or front-to-back movement.

2.1.B Approved Helmets must meet one of the following standards:

1. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard for bicycle helmets.
2. Snell Memorial Foundation Standard "B" or "N" series.
3. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard F-1447.
4. European Committee for Standardization (CE EN1078) standard for bicycle helmets.

RULE 2.2 CONTROLLED RIDING AND WALKING THE BIKE

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.2.A Student-athletes must practice safe riding techniques and be in control of their bicycles at all times. Riding out of control or with excessive speed is not tolerated. Having a reckless attitude or taking dangerous risks is not tolerated. A dangerous risk is defined as willingly attempting anything that is beyond one's ability to control the bike or puts someone else in danger.

2.2.B All racers must walk their bikes in crowded areas such as the pit zone, spectator areas, or any other area designated as a "walk area." Student-athletes who demonstrate reckless behavior or create a risk of harm to other students or spectators will be penalized.

RULE 2.3 LEGAL MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS ONLY & APPLICATION OF RULES OUTSIDE OF RACE EVENTS

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.3.A As representatives of NICA, the League, and our sport, student-athletes must ride only on authorized trails. This rule applies at all times. It is the student-athlete's responsibility to know which trails are legal for bikes. Building unauthorized trails or adding unauthorized features, such as berms or jumps, is also unacceptable and carries the same consequences.

2.3.B Students must also make themselves aware of the NICA Athlete Code of Conduct, which applies at all times including outside of race events. The Code of Conduct sets out safety and other standards for respectful conduct with which student-athlete should comply. Student-athletes should familiarize themselves with the Code of Conduct and safety standards, available on the NICA website under Coach Resources https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CiF0EI2hAIBYhIxVExYBoxzvMeSPgBRZunKd7J_gaM/edit, and know that violations of these standards could, at the discretion of the League result in disqualification from participation or other consequences.

RULE 2.4 POSITIVE SPORTING ATTITUDE

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Student-athletes are expected to display an excellent sporting attitude during all NICA and League events and should treat all other students, coaches, spectators, and officials with respect. Fair play and respectful, kind, supportive behavior is expected of all students, coaches, and parents. Profanity in any situation is not acceptable.

RULE 2.5 ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR NOT TOLERATED

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

No student-athlete may inappropriately or unwelcomingly touch another person, or cause physical harm to, or engage in any behavior that may be considered abuse, assault, or do battery to any other student-athlete, official, spectator, or anyone connected with or attending any NICA or League event. An assault is an unlawful attempt, coupled with the present ability, to commit a violent injury on the person of another. A battery is any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another. Unsafe racing practices including swerving, suddenly stopping, willfully crashing into another rider, grabbing another student, or pushing another student may be abusive behavior, or possibly assault and battery.

RULE 2.6 LEAVE NO TRACE

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.6.A Student-athletes are required to practice low-impact cycling, recognizing that there are different types of soils and trail construction. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage. When the trail bed is soft, student-athletes should consider other riding options. Ride it, don't slide or skid. Ride through mud puddles, not around them widening the trail. Stay on existing trails and do not create new ones.

Don't cut switchbacks or otherwise modify the existing trail. Be sure to pack out at least as much as you pack in.

2.6.B Littering is not permitted at any NICA or League event.

RULE 2.7 MUSIC PLAYERS & HEADPHONES

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Student-athletes are not allowed to race or ride with headphones or other portable musical devices. Headphones are permitted while riding a stationary trainer.

RULE 2.8 CELL PHONES

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Student-athletes may not answer a cell phone or make cell phone calls while riding a bike. Student-athletes must safely come to a complete stop, have both feet on the ground, and be clear of traffic flow in order to use their cell phones.

RULE 2.9 PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES: A-LIST

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.9.A Student-athletes are prohibited from using performance enhancing or otherwise illegal substances as detailed below:

1. USADA Rules: Student-athletes are subject to all U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) rules pertaining to anti-doping. The use of performance enhancing substances, as listed by USADA, will result in the immediate disqualification from

one (1) full season or the equivalent number of races spanning two (2) seasons. A list of banned substances is available at the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency website — click on the Substances link at www.usada.org to find the current Prohibited List. Although it is already included in the banned substances identified by the USADA, for the sake of clarity, NICA emphasizes here that any product containing THC regardless of the means of consumption, is strictly prohibited.

2. **Tobacco**: Tobacco use by any means, including vaping or e-cigs, is not permitted. Only those students who provide evidence that they have enrolled in a stop-smoking (or chewing) class may continue to use tobacco during participation. Such student-athletes must provide proof to their coach of participation and when they have completed the class, and refrain from use in the future to avoid consequences for violating this rule.
3. **Alcohol and Drug Use**: Alcohol and drug use by any means are prohibited. At the League’s discretion, NICA recommends the following structure of consequences to violation of this rule.
 - a. **First violation**: The student-athlete will lose eligibility for one (1) race. The student-athlete must continue to attend and participate in regular practice with his/her team in order to remain eligible for future participation and must to attend a minimum of six (6) educational group sessions regarding alcohol and drug abuse.
 - b. **Second violation**: The student-athlete will lose eligibility for an additional three (3) races. The student-athlete must continue to attend and participate in regular practice with his/her team in order to remain eligible for future participation and must to attend an additional minimum of six (6) educational group sessions regarding alcohol and drug abuse.
 - c. **Third and subsequent violation**: The student-athlete will lose eligibility for participation for an additional

six (6) races for each subsequent violation. If the student becomes a participant in an alcohol and/or drug treatment program on his or her own volition, the student-athlete may be eligible for participation after a minimum of six (6) weeks.

RULE 2.10 PROHIBITED SUBSTANCES: B-LIST

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.10.A In addition to the A-List substances in Rule 9, the following substances are also prohibited.

1. Caffeine is an addictive substance that enhances performance. NICA and the Leagues deem caffeinated products as inappropriate for young student-athletes. Caffeinated sport products such as bars, gels, and sport drinks, are banned before or during League races, practices, and other activities. The consumption of products containing caffeine by student-athletes at NICA and League races and camps is banned.
2. Creatine, Guaraná Root, and Taurine are also substances banned from consumption at NICA and League races and camps.

2.10.B Student-athletes need to be very careful as many energy drinks contain these substances. Student-athletes are responsible for knowing the ingredients of the products they consume. Pleading ignorance will not constitute a defensible position.

RULE 2.11 SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.11.A NICA and the Leagues strictly prohibit sexual harassment in any form, including verbal, physical, and visual harassment. Sexual

harassment is defined as unwanted sexual advances, or visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. This definition includes many forms of offensive behavior and includes harassment of a person of the same sex or based on gender. Sexual harassment includes: unwanted sexual advances or visual conduct such as leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; verbal conduct such as making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs and jokes, verbal sexual advances or propositions; and physical conduct such as touching or blocking movements.

2.11.B Any student-athlete who believes he or she has been sexually harassed by an employee, agent, or another student should promptly report the facts of the alleged incident(s) and the name of the individual involved to any adult school staff member or League representative or other party with whom they feel comfortable. That person must report the incident to the school site administrator or, if the administrator is the alleged harasser, to the Superintendent. The initiation of an allegation of sexual harassment by a student-athlete will not adversely affect matters pertaining to his or her status in any League program or activity.

2.11.C If any student, coach, parent, volunteer, or employee feels they have been sexually harassed at a NICA or League event, they should report the incident immediately to their League director or NICA director. If any student, coach, parent, volunteer, or employee feels they have been a victim of abuse, assault, or battery at a League event, they should report the incident immediately to their League director or NICA director. All reports will be handled in a confidential manner.

RULE 2.12 RACING THE WRONG CATEGORY

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.12.A Student-athletes are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following the category placement rules and the placement criteria as applied by their League. Any questions should be directed to their League director.

2.12.B Student-athletes who race in the wrong category shall be disqualified from that race and in addition, at the League director's discretion, will be disqualified from participation in the next event.

RULE 2.13 COMPLIANCE WITH RACE GUIDELINES

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Student-athletes must register and pay for each League race and comply with all of the guidelines put in place by their League.

RULE 2.14 STAGING FOR RACE STARTS

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.14.A Racers must adhere to the following rules when lining up at the start line for the start of a race:

1. Racers must not stage or loiter around the start line until 15 minutes before the first start time of the corresponding race wave (e.g., all girl's categories can begin staging at 9:45 if the varsity girls start at 10:00 AM). Racers who line up at or near the staging area too early may be required to return to their team's pit area (or a time penalty of 1 minute may be applied).
2. Racers must enter the staging area at the designated entrance for their category. Racers cutting into the side or front of the group will be required to start in the last row.
3. If a coach assists a racer in cutting into the side or front of the group, a team point penalty of 200 points will be applied. Coaches are expected to support the staging rules. If a rider in clear view of his or her coach is breaking the staging rules without intervention, the 200 point penalty shall be applied to that rider's team.

4. Student-Athletes must follow the league staging protocol. There should be no changes to a racer's position after racers are staged. Racers may not change or trade the starting position they were given.

RULE 2.15 LISTEN TO PRE-RACE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Student-athletes must be present and attentive during pre-race announcements. Student-athletes that miss the pre-race announcements may be required to stay after the start to hear the announcements. Student-athletes that are being disruptive and/or talking over the announcements may be relegated to the back of the group.

RULE 2.16 PASSING SLOWER STUDENT-ATHLETES

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.16.A When overtaking a rider on the race course, the passing rider should do so respectfully and must:

1. Pass only when safe to do so and without rider contact;
2. Call out "On your left" or "On your right" or use other similar language to indicate whether the pass will be on the other rider's left or right side.

2.16.B Passing in a manner that compromises the safety of other riders will not be tolerated.

RULE 2.17 BIKE PUSHERS MUST YIELD

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.17.A Student-athletes must not progress on the race course unaccompanied by a bike. In the case of an inoperable bike, student-athletes may progress along the course with their bike to the finish line. However, they must stay on the course, and must not obstruct the progress of other racers.

2.17.B Racers riding bicycles have the right of way over racers pushing bicycles. When practical, racers pushing must stay on the *least rideable* portion of the trail when being passed. Racers pushing or carrying bicycles may overtake racers riding their bicycles provided pushing racers do not impede the progress of the riding racers.

RULE 2.18 LAPPED STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST YIELD

Lapped racers must yield to racers overtaking them. Lapped racers being passed must move over as quickly, efficiently, and as safely as possible.

RULE 2.19 LEADER OWNS THE TRAIL BUT CANNOT BLOCK

In the event two racers are vying for position, the leading racer does not have to yield to the challenging racer. However, a racer may not bodily interfere with the intent to impede another racer's progress. Traditional rules of racing apply: the leading racer "owns the trail."

RULE 2.20 CUTTING THE COURSE

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.20.A Except in the case of injury, racers are not allowed to intentionally cut the course, ride off course, or engage in any other behavior that would indicate an intention of unfair play.

2.20.B. Notwithstanding Rule 2.20.A, in the event a rider goes off course, whether intentionally, inadvertently, or to switch or repair a

bike, he or she is not permitted to gain advantage from leaving the course and must make best efforts to re-enter the course at the same location he or she went off-course. In the event a rider re-enters the course at a different location, if the League director determines that an advantage was gained as a result, without considering the time taken for a bike switch or bike repair, a time penalty shall be assessed against the rider.

RULE 2.21 DEVIATION FROM THE COURSE

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.21.A Racers must not deviate from the edge of the trails (as defined either by ribbons or an obvious change in surface or foliage characteristics) by more than three (3) feet.

2.21.B When the trail is clearly on one side of a pole, tree, or other obstacle, the racer must pass that feature on the trail side of the feature.

2.21.C A racer may not leave the prescribed course unless ordered or permitted to do so by public authorities or a race official. In the case of mechanical problems, racers shall walk along the course to the finish line. In the case of medical emergencies, racers shall remain still and wait for a course marshal or medical help.

RULE 2.22 JERSEY REQUIREMENTS

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.22.A Teams must have matching jerseys for their student-athletes and all team members must race wearing their team jerseys. Teams may use custom matching jerseys, but they may also choose some other appropriate jersey — such as a solid.

2.22.B Independent student-athletes must choose a distinct individual jersey and race wearing the same jersey design throughout a season.

RULE 2.23 PRE-RIDE DURING DESIGNATED TIMES ONLY

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Student-Athletes must pre-ride with a Coach and at least one other rider. Independent Student-Athletes may pre-ride with a guardian who is a level 2 coach or make arrangements to join a team or league-led pre-ride.

Pre-rides must be confined to the times designated by the League. Coaches and Student-Athletes must begin their pre-ride of the course at least 30-minutes prior to the first race-start of the day. After the 30-minute cutoff, no more pre-riding is allowed that day.

RULE 2.24 MODIFICATION OF THE COURSE PROHIBITED

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Intentionally adding obstacles or removing obstacles deemed by Officials to be part of the race course is prohibited. Report hazards to a Course Marshal or other race official.

RULE 2.25 RIDING THE COURSE BACKWARDS PROHIBITED

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Pre-riders must ride in the designated direction of the race during the pre-ride — no backtracking is allowed. If student-athletes must backtrack, they must walk with their bikes.

RULE 2.26 PENALTY FOR OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.26.A Student-athletes must repair their own flat tires and mechanical problems and carry their own tools, tubes, etc. If outside assistance, parts, or tools, are provided, a 5-minute penalty will be assessed. The student-athlete must report such an occurrence of outside assistance before the end of the protest period that precedes the award ceremony. The student-athlete must report to a Scoring Official, Course Marshal, or other Race Official.

2.26.B No penalty will be assessed for any prescription medical item or device (e.g., inhalers, EpiPens, etc.) given to a rider along the course or in the feed zone for safety or medical reasons.

2.26.C Student-athletes will be penalized for accepting food or drink outside of the feed zone boundaries, as further prohibited under the Rules for Coaches, Parents & Guardians.

RULE 2.27 SWITCHING BIKES

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

Student-athletes must complete the entire race on the same bicycle upon which the race was begun. A 10-minute penalty applies for switching bicycles in a race.

RULE 2.28 WEAPONS

Firearms or other weapons are expressly prohibited at all NICA events or activities, except by duly authorized law enforcement officers.

CHAPTER 3: COACH, PARENT & GUARDIAN RULES

RULE 3.1 HELMETS

COACH, PARENT OR GUARDIAN LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

All coaches, parents, guardians, and team assistants must comply with all helmet rules at all team practices, team events, and League races. In the event a parent, coach or other assistant is seen riding without a helmet, a 100-point penalty will be applied to his or her team's score at the race where the infraction occurred.

RULE 3.2 POSITIVE SPORTING BEHAVIOR

COACH, PARENT OR GUARDIAN LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

3.2.A It is required that all coaches, parents, and guardians demonstrate respect for and deference to the person and the decisions of the League officials as it relates to sporting behavior of student-athletes, themselves, and other League officials. A failure to exhibit respectful behavior may result in restrictions imposed on the coach, the parent, or a student-athlete's participation in the League. League officials have complete and total discretion for the implementation of the rules, especially in regard to sporting behavior.

3.2.B Coaches, parents, and guardians will also display mature and positive behavior during every event and in all interactions at all times with student-athletes, other parents, other coaches, and League officials. Coaches, parents, and guardians are role models to student-athletes, and must demonstrate a fair and calm response in the face of protests, complaints, conflicts, or emergencies. Coaches, parents, and guardians are expected to be focused on helping student-athletes develop positive character traits, learn life lessons, and grow into healthy young adults.

COACH, PARENT OR GUARDIAN LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

3.3.A The following rules apply to the rider and the rider's coaches, parents, or other volunteers who may assist in feeding the rider at the Feed Zone:

1. Stay in the Feed Zone: Feeders may only hand riders food and drinks in the feed zone. As set out in Student Athlete Rule 2.27.C, riders will be penalized for accepting food or drink outside of the feed zone boundaries.
2. Interference Prohibited: Feeding one student-athlete must not cause other riders to slow down or veer off course or otherwise interfere with other riders.
3. No Other Items & Cold Weather Exception: Riders may not accept items (such as tools, gear, or parts) within the feed zone boundaries during races. In the event of cold or inclement weather, clothing may be handed to racers in the feed zone only. Clothing may not be handed over anywhere else on the race course.
4. Hand Offs: All hand-offs must be conducted hand-to-hand only — from the hand of the feeder to the hand of the rider. No other physical contact between riders and feeders is allowed. It is not permitted for a feeder to place water bottles onto the bike or hydration packs onto riders nor may items be put into the rider's mouth or the pockets on the rider's jersey.
5. No Running: Running in the feed zone is not permitted under any circumstances. Running increases the risk of collisions and interference with riders and other feeders.
6. Stay to the Right: Feeding racers traditionally happens on the right side of the course. This allows those student-athletes not wanting a stop to pass through the feed zone unimpeded.

After feeding a rider, the feeder must move clear of the feeding zone to allow plenty of room for other feeders.

7. Feeder Identification: Feeders must wear a shirt, jacket, hat, vest, jersey, or adhesive name tag that identifies the team of the riders they are feeding.
8. Each team is allowed a limited number of feeders in the feed zone as indicated below. The number is based on the number of racers that are competing in the current wave.

# of Racers	# of Feeders
5 or Less	2
6 - 10	3
11-20	4
21-more	5

9. No Throwing Water: Throwing water on riders in the feed zone or the area immediately preceding the feed zone is not permitted.

RULE 3.4 RIDING AND SUPPORT ON THE COURSE

COACH, PARENT OR GUARDIAN LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

3.4.A For purposes of safety and fairness to the participants, the following rules must be observed by all parents, coaches and all other persons in attendance, other than racers during their race:

1. No riding on the course.
2. No running or riding alongside the course or alongside a student while they are racing.
3. No providing food, water, or support outside of the feed zones.

3.4.B A violation of this rule will result in an orange level penalty against the team that the League Director determines to be the intended beneficiary of such action.

1. **First Offense:** 25 point penalty deducted from team score on race day
2. **Second offense:** 50 point penalty deducted from team score on race day
3. **Third offense:** 100 point penalty deducted from team score on race day

RULE 3.5 WEAPONS

Firearms or other weapons are expressly prohibited at all NICA events or activities, except by duly authorized law enforcement officers.

RULE 3.6 CRIME-RELATED REVOCATION OF ATTENDANCE PRIVILEGE

Parents, students, spectators, volunteers and other members of the NICA community may not participate in team or league activities if they have a pending charge or adjudication equivalent to conviction, for charges of sexual crimes against children or human trafficking charges.

CHAPTER 4: CODE OF CONDUCT AND SAFETY STANDARDS

RULE 4.1 EYE PROTECTION

Eye protection is strongly recommended. Unless wet, foggy, and/or muddy lenses impair vision, student-athletes should ride and race with protective eyewear.

RULE 4.2 BIKE REQUIREMENTS; HANDS ON BARS

4.2.A Mountain Bikes Only: Student-athletes must compete using mountain bikes that have 26- to 29-inch wheels with tires not narrower than 1.75 inches. In addition:

1. Tires must have knobbies – no slick tires are permitted;
2. No road bikes or mountain bikes equipped with drop bars;
3. No cyclocross bikes.
4. If a student-athlete is unable to ride a mountain bike with 26- to 29-inch wheels due to his or her height or other limitations, competing on a mountain bike with smaller wheels is permitted with League approval.

4.2.B No Single Speed Bikes: Pushing big gears has been shown to be detrimental to the joints (specifically the knees) of young student-athletes. Bikes must have multiple gears including at least five cogs in the rear.

4.2.C Front and Rear Brakes: Bicycles must have fully operational front and rear brakes. Brakes must be adjusted to provide significant stopping power. Brake pads must not be worn below recommended limits. It is recommended that bicycles be inspected by a mechanic before every race.

4.2.D Hands on Bars; No Bar Ends: All riders must race with their hands holding the bars within reach of the brake levers. For safety reasons, no bar ends (forward pointing handle grip extensions) may be used.

4.2.E Handlebar End Plugs and Stem Caps Required: For safety reasons, handlebar end plugs and stem caps are required.

RULE 4.3 REPAIR BIKES OFF THE TRAIL

In the case of a broken bicycle, or a dropped chain, or other mishap, student-athletes must clear the way and not block the trail for other riders.

RULE 4.4 FOOTWEAR

Student-athletes must wear appropriate footwear. Footwear must be fully enclosed and fastened with either straps, buckles, or laces.

RULE 4.5 NUMBER PLATES

Student-athletes must affix an official League number plate to their bikes at League races. The number plate should be attached with at least three fasteners and must be on the bike at all times before and after competing, including the pre-ride, and should also remain on the bike at any time the student is riding at the event.

RULE 4.6 AVOID RIDING ALONE

Riders are encouraged to ride with at least one (1) other person whenever possible. If riding alone, student-athletes should alert someone to the general location of the ride, the planned route, and the approximate length of the ride and anticipated time of return.

RULE 4.7 OBEY TRAFFIC LAWS

Student-athletes are required to obey all traffic laws. You should always ride to the right side of the road and in bike lanes when available; stop at all stop signs and red lights; signal your turns; use required lights and reflectors at dusk/night; and do not ride on sidewalks. Specific laws that pertain to bicyclists in your state can be found at The League of American Bicyclists: <http://www.bikeleague.org>.

RULE 4.8 RESPECT DRIVERS, PEDESTRIANS & OTHER TRAIL USERS

Be respectful and courteous by staying as far to the right as practical and by riding single file while riding on roads and trails. Let your fellow trail users know you're coming. A loud and friendly greeting or bell is considerate and works well; don't startle others. Show your respect when passing by, slowing to a walking pace or even stopping. Anticipate other trail users around corners or in blind spots. Yield to uphill traffic. Yielding means slow down, establish communication, be prepared to stop if necessary and pass safely. You are riding slow enough when you can say 'hello' and the trail user can say 'hello' back.

RULE 4.9 PASSING HORSEBACK RIDERS

When approaching equestrians, call out or sound a warning and stop whether you are seen or not. Ask for instructions from the equestrian on how to pass safely.

RULE 4.10 REPRESENT YOUR NICA LEAGUE & MOUNTAIN BIKING

Recognize that, as a NICA student-athlete, you represent NICA, your League, school, and mountain bike racing and cycling in general. This is true at all times, not just at races, and particularly when you are at a bike shop, out on the trail, and regardless of whether you are wearing your team uniform, a NICA or League jersey, or any other cycling gear.

RULE 4.11 PLAN AHEAD

Know your equipment, your ability, and the area in which you are riding, and prepare accordingly. Be self-sufficient at all times, keep your equipment in good repair, and carry necessary gear for changes in the weather, the onset of darkness, or other inclement conditions. A well-executed trip is a satisfaction to you and not a burden to others. Always wear a helmet (see Rule 2.1) and appropriate safety gear.

RULE 4.12 RISK ACCEPTANCE

4.12.A All student-athletes who participate in any of the events associated with NICA and the League including, without limitation, races, training rides, clinics, camps, and practice skill sessions, do so

at their own risk. Whether or not you are registered with the League, no liability shall be attached to NICA, the League or any of its officials, coaches, parents, and participants with respect to any loss or injury sustained or caused by anyone participating in these events.

4.12.B By participating in a race or camp conducted by NICA or the League, a student-athlete, or a parent or legal guardian who permits a minor to participate, acknowledges understanding and acceptance of the regulations covering the event.

4.12.C If you suffer a concussion, you may not participate in team training or league competition before providing written clearance to return to such activities from a licensed healthcare provider.

RULE 4.13 CONCUSSION & RETURN-TO-PLAY

4.13.A NICA requires adherence to, at a minimum, the return-to-play policies and procedures for student-athletes who have suffered concussions advocated by the US Department of Health and Human Services Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

4.13.B Each league must also comply with its applicable state laws and its applicable state interscholastic federation or association return-to-play management protocols and procedures for a student-athlete who has sustained a concussion or head injury.

4.13.C In the event there are no such applicable laws or procedures, the League must comply with the following rules and protocols:

1. Immediate removal from Activity: An athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a league activity, or who is suffering the effects of a concussion sustained outside of league activity, shall be immediately removed from the activity for the remainder of the day.
2. Medical Evaluation Required: After being removed from the activity, the athlete shall not be permitted to return to the activity until he or she is evaluated by a licensed healthcare provider.

3. **Clearance Required:** The athlete shall not be permitted to return to the activity until he or she receives written clearance to return to the activity from a licensed healthcare provider.

4.13.D **7 Day Minimum Graduated Observation Period:** If the licensed health care provider determines that the athlete sustained a concussion or a head injury, the athlete shall also complete the 7-day minimum graduated return-to-play protocol provided by the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. See the CIF website or download the form here: [https://www.cifstate.org/sports-](https://www.cifstate.org/sports-medicine/concussions/CIF_Concussion_Return_to_Play_Protocol.pdf)

[medicine/concussions/CIF Concussion Return to Play Protocol.pdf](https://www.cifstate.org/sports-medicine/concussions/CIF_Concussion_Return_to_Play_Protocol.pdf). Following a review of the state protocols for current NICA leagues, it was determined that the 7-day minimum waiting period adopted by the CIF was the longest mandatory period applied to a graduated return-to-play protocol. While NICA recognizes that every student who has suffered a concussion must follow an individualized course of recovery overseen by a licensed medical professional and that time alone is not a determining factor in every recovery, studies have shown that although a majority of athletes will become asymptomatic within a week, longer periods of recovery of 7-10 days have demonstrated benefits in recovery of full cognitive function in younger athletes (see citations 104–108 in the *Clinical Report — Sports-Related Concussion in Children and Adolescents* in “Pediatrics” [Volume 126, #3, September 2010] published by the American Academy of Pediatrics).

RULE 4.14 DRONE POLICY

In an effort to maintain the safety of athletes and spectators, Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), also known as drones, may only be flown at races with the written permission of the League Director. Unmanned aircraft are excluded from NICA's liability policy. Operators must carry their own liability policies.

CHAPTER 5: PARTICIPATION AND LEAGUE REQUIREMENTS

PURPOSE AND STANDARD OF REVIEW BY NICA

All NICA Leagues must implement standards and practices consistent with or stricter than the standards provided for below. The following contains both administrative and record keeping standards to be observed by all NICA leagues.

RULE 5.1 STUDENT-ATHLETE ELIGIBILITY

5.1.A Each league's race series must be open to all students who attend public or private school, or who are homeschooled for high school (grades 9–12) and may be open to middle school (grades 6-8), within the league's region. League Directors are not required to allow Inter-League Participation or Out-of-Region student participation, however if they elect to do so, the standards for such participation must be consistently and fairly applied to all athletes that seeking such participation.

5.1.B Proof of school attendance may be requested for a student-athlete at any time. This proof may be in the form of a school ID, a report card, or some other form of proof.

5.1.B.1 STUDENT AGE AND GRADE

To be eligible to compete in either a spring or fall school-year season, a student-athlete must:

- a. For leagues that include middle schools, be enrolled in middle school (grades 6-8), or the homeschool equivalent, and be no younger than 10 and no older than 15 years of age at any time during the entire school year;
- b. Be in high school (grades 9-12), or the homeschool equivalent, and be no younger than 13 and no older than 19 years of age at any time during the entire school year; and
- c. Not have a high school diploma, general education diploma (GED), or otherwise be graduated from high school.

Student-athletes who have skipped or been held back:

- a. A single grade are placed into categories according to their grade levels; or
- b. More than one grade must consult with the League director regarding placement into the appropriate categories.

5.1.B.2 PLACEMENT FOR HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS

Homeschooled student-athletes shall be placed in categories that correspond to the grade level they would otherwise be enrolled in for public middle school (where applicable) or public high school based on their ages. The League director must consider such age-based placement in the event homeschooled student-athletes seek alternative placement under the Category Placement Standards adopted by the League.

5.1.B.3 COLLEGE CLASS ENROLLMENT

Student-athletes enrolled or otherwise taking classes in a college remain eligible to compete so long as they are enrolled or taking classes at the college as middle or high school students and not as college students.

RULE 5.2 STUDENT-ATHLETE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

5.2.A Student-athletes must register with the League. Leagues must communicate the registration process and requirements to participants in advance of the start of the season. Student-athletes must sign and submit the following registration forms and complete the following requirements:

1. Student Registration is conducted online through the NICA Pit Zone in order to ensure the student is covered by the League's insurance.
2. Registration Fee (except for scholarship eligible students)
3. Signed Agreement to Participate/Release of Liability
4. Signed Medical Form
5. Signed Media Form
6. Signed Code of Conduct Form

5.2.B Student-athletes must be registered for each race they enter.

5.2.C Only student-athletes officially registered with the League may practice or compete on the designated race course.

5.2.D The Code of Conduct form, must be agreed to and signed by the student-athletes regardless of their age, along with their guardian if the student is a minor. All other forms must be signed by a legal guardian unless the student-athlete is at least eighteen (18) years old or older. The forms will contain language indicating that parents or legal guardians who permit a minor to participate in League races or camps, acknowledge, understand and accept the rules and regulations covering the event and agree to the terms of the League's Release form which shall be binding even when no proper entry form for a student has been signed and submitted.

RULE 5.3 COACH REGISTRATION AND REQUIREMENTS

5.3.A All coaches must register with the League in order to be covered by League insurance. This registration for coaches at all levels carries a membership fee. Coaches are not fully insured until they are registered (Level 1 license at minimum). Registration is conducted online through the NICA Pit Zone.

5.3.B All adults participating in team rides must be at least 18 years of age, have a NICA coach's license and undergone an annual background check. Adults who switch leagues will need to repeat the background check before participation in the new league.

5.3.C Coaches have a duty of care to their student-athletes at every event. This duty of care begins at the time designated by the team for the students to arrive and it ends at the conclusion of the event. The Head Coach, or someone acting as interim head coach, must remain at the venue until the last student-athlete from his or her team has departed, except in the case that any remaining student is in the care of a parent or legal guardian.

5.3.D A Head Coach must attend each race. If the Head Coach cannot attend a race, an interim Head Coach shall be appointed, and the League Director must be notified as to who is serving as interim Head Coach.

RULE 5.4 TEAM DIRECTOR/HEAD COACH REQUIREMENTS

5.4.A To be eligible, all *NICA Teams* (that are members of a NICA league) must have a Team Director or Head Coach who satisfies the requirements in the schedule below. NICA takes risk management very seriously and our license requirements also reflect our commitment to supporting student-athletes. A NICA League is a community where the action of one team may affect the entire league. It's essential that all Team Directors or Head Coaches progress along a path to learning the best practices of coaching youth, managing rides, and building a sustainable program. The minimal license requirement increases over the team's first four years and there are discount incentives for surpassing those minimums. We strongly urge all Team Directors or Head Coaches to obtain a Level 3 License by their team's second season. Grace periods and other exception may be applied based on your league director's discretion. The requirements for each license level are detailed at the NICA website:

<https://www.nationalmtb.org/coaches-license-program/>

	Minimum Requirement	Requirement for Discount
First-Year Team	Level 1 License is required for the team to register as a NICA team	Level 2 License or above qualifies for team registration discount
Second-Year Team	Level 2 License is required for the team to register as a NICA team	Level 3 License or above qualifies for team registration discount
Third-Year Team	Level 3 License is required for the team to register as a NICA team	Discount applies to third year team and beyond if Team Director maintains Level 3 License

RULE 5.5 TEAM REGISTRATION AND FEES

5.5.A All teams must register annually with the League. Teams must not conduct any practices without registering and obtaining insurance

through the League, and no new teams will be added to the series scoring after the second race of the series.

5.5.B The deadline for online annual Team Registration is two (2) weeks before the opening race. A late fee may be applied to teams that register after the deadline.

5.5.C The deadline for teams to pay the annual team registration fee is within ten days from the registration deadline. A late fee applies if the fee received after the ten-day deadline.

5.5.D If a team changes from Division II to I before the first race, it must pay the difference in fees and if a team changes from Division I to II before the first race, it will receive a refund for the difference in fees.

RULE 5.6 TEAM TRAINING LIMITS AND PRE-SEASON

5.6.A NICA has strict training limits for NICA League Teams and NICA Indie Clubs. These limits protect student-athletes and create a supportive environment, as well as reduce exposure to physical risk and burnout. While NICA is 100% committed to supporting its students and coaches who suffer injuries, insurance coverage applies only to the allowable activities during the preseason and regular season. NICA insurance coverage is for NICA sanctioned events and practices only. Participation in any events outside of NICA is not covered by NICA insurance.

5.6.B League teams and clubs are limited to the number of weeks during which they can participate in, and conduct the allowable activities described below. Insurance coverage is not provided for any activities outside of these time limits.

5.6.C Any coach working with student-athletes during their off-season that is not sanctioned/insured under another non-scholastic organization may risk the eligibility of the coach, rider, and team to compete in NICA races.

5.6.D Each year is divided into a pre-season, a regular season, and an off-season. Although the dates may vary, Leagues must adopt a schedule otherwise consistent with the following:

5.6.D.1 PRESEASON

- a. **Start Date.** Teams and clubs can commence limited preseason team activities on the following dates:

Fall Leagues _____ April 1

Spring Leagues _____ October 15

- b. **Allowable Activities.** The team, club, and coaches must be registered with NICA to participate in, and conduct activities. Only the following pre-season activities are permitted and must be pre-approved by the league director:

- Bike checks, equipment inspections, and bike fit;
- Mechanical workshops;
- All-inclusive fun rides; and
- Skills clinics

- c. **Activities Limit.** The maximum number of pre-season activities is:

Fall Leagues _____ 6

Spring Leagues _____ 6

Idaho, Utah* _____ 8

**Due to unpredictable inclement weather conditions in mountain and high desert regions.*

5.6.D.2 REGULAR SEASON

- a. **Start Date.** Regular training, to include up to four practices per week, may commence on the following dates:

Utah _____ June 1

Fall Leagues _____ July 1

Spring Leagues _____ December 1

Tennessee _____ Monday of the
Week after the
Week of July 4*

- b. **Racing Limits.** Teams and clubs may participate in races only during the regular season. NICA insurance coverage is for NICA sanctioned events and practices only. Participation in any events outside of NICA is not covered by NICA insurance.

- c. **Allowable activities** – The team, club and coaches must be registered with NICA to participate in, and conduct activities including meetings, team practice, rides, team skills clinics, basic trail maintenance/upkeep and NICA sanctioned league events. NICA teams may not participate as a team in non-NICA activities at any time. If coaches and student athletes participate as a team at non-NICA events, it must be done under a separately organized, insured, and named team. The NICA team jersey should not be worn at non-NICA events when participating as a non-NICA team.
- d. **End of Season.** No team or club rides, or any other training activities, may take place following the 14th consecutive day after the final League race of the season. Special post-season activities and rides after this two-week period may be approved and allowed by the league director.

**The two-week period including the week prior to the week of July 4 and the week of July 4 is defined as the Summer Dead Period under the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Handbook, during which no regular season or pre-season or activities may take place and is part of the Tennessee League's off-season.*

5.6.D.3 OFF SEASON

The off-season is defined as periods not within the applicable pre-season and regular season periods. Organized team rides and races are strictly prohibited during the off-season. The following activities during the off-season will jeopardize a team or club's eligibility:

- a. A league team racing under any NICA Sanctioned team name;
- b. Using the NICA team jersey at races as a team;
- c. Having practices that meet on school grounds;
- d. Having regular meetings at school that organize activity for off-season training and racing;
- e. Using any league team property without a letter of permission from school administration; and
- f. Using the same league team website as an outlet for organizing off-season practices or racing.

NICA respects off-season non-league related racing activities. However, all off-season coaching activity must be done under a separately organized, insured, and named team. Teams found to be racing as a high school team during the off-season will be ineligible to compete in League races the following season.

RULE 5.7 NON-DISCRIMINATION IN PARTICIPATION STANDARDS

5.7.A NICA recognizes the value of participation in NICA and League events for all student-athletes. NICA prohibits all forms of discrimination, including discrimination based on a student-athlete's race, religion, actual or perceived sex and gender.

5.7.B TRANSGENDER STUDENT-ATHLETES

NOTE: The following provisions may be subject to applicable state laws as provided in 5.7.6.B.6. below.

5.7.B.1 **Philosophy of Gender-Identity Participation:** NICA and its leagues believe that athletic participation is valuable to all students' physical, intellectual, social, and character development; accordingly, we value and prioritize inclusion. Guided by this value, we are committed to permitting all students to participate in athletic activities and competitions in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

5.7.B.2 Policy

5.7.B.2.1 All students have the opportunity to participate in NICA-sponsored athletic activity and competition in a manner consistent with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on a student's records and without regard to their prior access to medical or mental health care.

5.7.B.2.2 NICA prohibits discrimination based on a student-athlete's actual or perceived sex and gender. Gender includes a person's actual or perceived sex as well as his or her gender identity and expression.

5.7.B.3 **Eligibility:** A student has the right to participate in NICA events and activities in a manner consistent with the sex listed on

their birth records. A student whose gender identity is different than the sex listed on the student's birth records may also participate in a manner consistent with their gender identity in accordance with the procedures below.

5.7.B.4 Procedure

5.7.B.4.1 Notice to team: The student and/or parent/guardian is to contact a Team leader or head coach indicating that the student has a gender identity different than the sex listed on the student's birth registration records and that the student desires to participate in activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity.

5.7.B.4.2 Notice to League: Upon receiving notices under subpart 5.7.B.4.1, a Team leader or head coach or parent shall inform the League Director of the student's intention to participate in activities in a manner consistent with their gender identity, as opposed to sex listed on the student's birth registration records.

5.7.B.5 Determination Proceedings: Should the League receive a petition from a student, team, or parent that challenges a student's participation in NICA-sponsored athletic activities or competitions consistent with their gender identity, the League will review that student's eligibility for participation through the following procedures:

5.7.B.5.1 The League Director will consider the petition along with any materials presented with the petition, and the student who is the subject of the petition must have the opportunity to submit any documentation or information in support of their continued participation, including but not limited to documentation of the student's consistent gender identification, such as affirmed written statements from the student, their parents or guardians, their healthcare providers, and the like.

5.7.B.5.2 The League director shall confirm the gender identity asserted by the student-athlete and if the League Director finds that the student's gender identity is sincere—i.e., is not motivated by an

improper purpose, then the student will be declared eligible to participate in sex-segregated activities consistent with their gender identity. Without revealing identifying information, the League Director may consult with physicians who work with transgender youth, licensed health providers, other NICA or League staff members, and other sources, and may conduct interviews of the petitioner and the student who is the subject of the petition, or their parents or guardians.

5.7.B.5.3 The League Director will make a decision as expeditiously as possible. During the pendency of the petition, the student may not be prevented from participating in NICA-sponsored athletic activities or competitions. If the petition is granted, the League may adjust competition results as necessary, consistent with the decision on the petition.

5.7.B.5.4 If a student-athlete has been deemed eligible to compete in a category consistent with his or her gender identity, the eligibility is granted for the duration of the student-athlete's participation in the League.

5.7.B.6 State laws: If a Team or League operates in a State with statutes or regulations that are inconsistent with these policies and receives notice under subpart 5.7.B.5, the Team or League will immediately notify the NICA Human Resources Manager, President, and/ or VP of Field Operations of the petition and seek further guidance from NICA.

5.7.B.7 Students affected by this policy have the right to confidentiality in all matters governed by this policy, and disclosures made in the course of implementing this policy (notices and eligibility determinations under subpart 5.7.B.4) must be limited to only persons necessary for that purpose. Teams, Leagues, and NICA personnel shall respect this confidentiality unless and to whatever extent it might be waived by the student or their parents or guardians. If the student-athlete and his or her family makes a specific request in writing to the League Director, the League Director will immediately

notify the national HR manager who will lead the process to fulfill this request.

5.7.B.8 When necessary, and without violating a transgender student's confidentiality or privacy, coaches should communicate with their counterparts at other teams, or Leagues, when a transgender athlete is participating about expectations for treatment of transgender student-athletes on and off the field, including to ensure access to appropriate changing, showering, or bathroom facilities, and to request the use of preferred names and pronouns by coaches, opponents, officials, announcers, fans, and media.

RULE 5.8 DESIGNATED REPORTER

Each team must assign an individual to be the Designated Reporter for the team, responsible for submitting all injury and incident reports online.

CHAPTER 6: DISCRETIONARY LEAGUE GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

PURPOSE AND STANDARD OF REVIEW BY NICA

1. The following are intended as guidance to be adopted or modified at the League's discretion.
2. NICA leagues should adopt participation standards consistent with the following, in seeking balance NICA's goals of inclusion and safety. To accommodate more student-athletes and teams, consistent with NICA's policy to include all students who wish to participate, Leagues may allow out-of-region teams to participate in events, and may divide race categories as needed to limit the field size for rider safety.
3. Adopted standards may be reviewed by NICA's Rule Committee to ensure that the team participation, category placement, conference, and division structure adopted by a League facilitates and promotes fair, safe, and challenging competition.

SECTION 6.1 CATEGORY PLACEMENT AND LEAGUE STRUCTURE

6.1.A DEFINITION OF TERMS

Category	A group of racers defined by grade-level, gender and/or ability.
Ability-based Category	A category that prioritizes athlete ability over grade-level.
Grade Based Category	Race categories based on grade-level of student athlete.
Conference	A sub-group of teams used to breakup categories into several fields. Grouping may be based on any factor, such as geography, first letter of the team, etc.

Division	A sub-group of teams based on team size, used to ensure that smaller teams compete against each other, and larger teams compete against other.
Field	The whole or portion of a single category. Multiple fields will make up one category if the category is larger than 50 - 100 athletes or multiple conferences exist in the league. Multiple fields are used to improve the student athlete experience and reduce risk of injury associated with many racers starting at the same time.
Wave	A group of fields that race during the same time period, usually limited to a total of 200 riders. Examples of waves are: Girls Wave, Boys Wave, and Middle School Wave.
Number Plate	The reusable vinyl sign affixed to each rider's bike that identifies the rider to Staging Officials, Course Marshals, Scoring, and if the rider is injured Emergency Medical Services. Number plates should be attached according to the instructions on the back of the plate. If a league is using chip timing, the chip is usually attached to the plate.
Number Series	The number that identifies and defines a Field, or a single Category. An example of a field is JV Boys Southern Conference which is assigned the 300s number series. Number Series assigned to Categories are generally standardized across NICA and are shown in the Race Flyer.
Race Flyer	Informational flyer for a particular race used as a reference for race start times, category numbers series, and wave times.

6.1.B CATEGORY PLACEMENT STANDARDS

6.1.B.1 Categories are based on grade level, gender and/or ability. A student-athletes prior performance may factor into placement. Individual race results and a student's end-of-season overall standings dictate placement from season to season. Separate rules apply for first-

year leagues that do not have a prior season's results. All race results and overall season standings are available at the League website.

6.1.B.2 To calculate the finishing percentile, for each separate race the finishing place is divided by the total number of riders, including DNFs, and the quotient is then multiplied by 100. Do not round off the percentile up or down.

6.1.B.3 Students should discuss their racing categories with their coaches well in advance of the racing season to determine if submitting a petition might be appropriate.

6.1.B.4 Students who did not compete in the prior year and have no results are placed into the category that corresponds to their grade level, except that 12th graders with no prior results are placed into Junior Varsity (JV).

6.1.B.5 Petitions for exceptions to the category placement criteria are limited for each grade level to certain categories.

6.1.B.6 In a League that permits middle-schoolers to participate, unless otherwise provided by state law that permits middle-schoolers to participate in high school categories in other interscholastic sports, middle-schoolers may not compete in or petition to upgrade into high school categories. Leagues that currently permit middle-schoolers to participate in high school categories are:

- Alabama Interscholastic Cycling League
- Arkansas Interscholastic Cycling League
- Indiana Interscholastic Cycling League
- Kentucky Interscholastic Cycling League
- Maryland Interscholastic Cycling League
- Montana Interscholastic Cycling League
- Nevada Interscholastic Cycling League
- Nevada South Interscholastic Cycling League
- New Jersey Interscholastic Cycling League
- New York Interscholastic Cycling League
- North Carolina Interscholastic Cycling League
- Oregon Interscholastic Cycling League
- Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League
- Tennessee Interscholastic Cycling League
- Texas Interscholastic Cycling League

- Virginia Interscholastic Cycling League
- West Virginia Interscholastic Cycling League
- Wisconsin Interscholastic Cycling League

SECTION 6.2 LEAGUE STRUCTURE: TIERS, FIELDS AND DIVISIONS

6.2.A LEAGUE TIERS

6.2.A.1 Depending on the number of registered athletes, a league will be classified as either Tier 1 (smaller leagues that can accommodate all registrants with no more than one field for each category) or Tier 2 (larger leagues that must run multiple fields for a single category). Tier 2 leagues accommodate league growth by adding fields, waves, divisions, and/or conferences.

6.2.A.2 The League Director shall make the final determination with regard to the league's fields, categories, waves, divisions, and conferences.

6.2.A.3 Tier 1 Leagues will have a single division with each category represented with only one field as follows:

Boys Categories

6th Grade
 7th Grade
 8th Grade
 Freshman
 Sophomore
 JV
 Varsity

Girls Categories

6th Grade
 7th Grade
 8th Grade
 Freshman
 Sophomore
 JV
 Varsity

Tier 2 Leagues will have multiple fields with the same grade level categories, for example:

Boys Categories

6th grade
7th Grade
8th Grade
Freshman, Div I or Conf West
Freshman, Div II or Conf East
Sophomore Div I or Conf West
Sophomore Div II or Conf East

Girls Categories

6th Grade
7th Grade
8th Grade
Freshman
Sophomore
JV
Varsity

Boys Categories Continued

JV Div I or Conf West
JV Div II or Conf East
Varsity

6.2.B TIER 2 LEAGUE STRUCTURING

6.2.B.1 Tier 2 League Fields

In order to control total field sizes, Tier 2 Leagues' teams are assigned to conferences or divisions, creating multiple fields within a category.

6.2.B.2 Tier 2 Leagues should attempt to create fields that allow riders from teams in the same conference or division to compete against each other. However, allocation into separate fields may be based on other factors to achieve a more balanced and fair competition than could be achieved from an allocation based solely according to team divisions.

6.2.B.3 Note: A single category may be split into two fields without splitting teams into conferences. For instance, a league with Division II Teams that are scored together may have the following fields:

Boys Categories

Middle School
Freshman
Sophomore Field 1
Sophomore Field 2
Junior Varsity Field 1
Junior Varsity Field 2
Varsity

Girls Categories

Middle School
Freshman
Sophomore
Junior Varsity
Varsity

Whenever separate fields of the same categories are run, separate medals must be awarded to each.

6.2.C TIER 2 LEAGUE DIVISIONS

6.2.C.1 Tier 2 leagues are divided into Division I, consisting of larger teams, and Division II, consisting of smaller teams. Divisions are scored independently. If a league division grows too large such that it can no longer reasonably accommodate all the students who wish to compete, the League may, at the League director's discretion, divide either the division or the League itself into separate, independently scored geographical sub-regions.

- a. Unless otherwise specified by the League, Tier 2 leagues are divided into Division I and Division II as follows:
 - Division I consists of teams with twelve or more registered racing student-athletes.
 - Division II consists of teams with eleven or fewer registered racing student-athletes.
- b. Teams that are short of the minimum required for Division I by two or fewer racing student-athletes may petition for placement in Division I. Teams that are over the minimum required for Division I by four or fewer racing student-athletes may petition for placement into Division II. To be considered, such petitions must be timely submitted no later than the 14th day prior to the first race of the season. Untimely petitions will not be considered.

6.2.C.2 Tier 2 League Geographical Sub-regions

- a. The League may, at the League director's discretion, create separate sub-regions that must be established based upon specified geographical areas within the League's defined region.
- b. The League director must maintain a written description specifying the geographical area for each sub-region that is made available to all League teams and riders through the league's website.

- c. For Tier 1 leagues: teams and riders are assigned to sub-regions as provided in subparagraph (e) below.
- d. For Tier 2 leagues: the division into sub-regions must be made according to the following, prior to team and rider assignment under subparagraph (e) below:
 - Applicable only to Division II, so that only Division II teams and riders are to be scored separately according to sub-region; or
 - Applicable to both Division I and II teams and riders, so that both Divisions are to be scored separately according to sub-regions; or
 - Each sub-region can be run as though it were a Tier 1 league so that teams and riders are scored solely according to sub-region with no regard to Division and team size.
- e. Teams and riders are assigned to a sub-region as follows:
 - For Single-School-Based Teams, the team is located in the sub-region where the school is located;
 - For County-Based Homeschool Teams, the team is located in the sub-region where the students, or a majority of the students primarily reside;
 - For Composite Teams, the team is located in the sub-region where the majority of its students go to school or, if the majority of the students are homeschooled, then where the majority of all of the students on the team primarily reside; and
 - Independent riders are located in the sub-region where they primarily reside.

Teams and riders may petition to the League director for reassignment to a different sub-region than the one dictated by the foregoing guidelines.

SECTION 6.3 PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR MULTI-YEAR

Placement criteria, excluding petitions, for multi-year leagues are as follows:

<i>Category</i>	
6th Grade	6 th graders only*
7th Grade	7 th graders only*
8th Grade	8 th graders only*
Freshman	9 th graders only
Sophomore	10 th graders only.
Junior Varsity	8 th *–10 th graders who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Placed in the top 10% for boys or top 20% for girls in any two Freshman races in the prior year, orb) Placed in the top 10% for boys or top 20% for girls in a single Freshman race and placed in the same top percentile (10% or 20%) in the overall Freshman season standings in the prior year, orc) Raced JV in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity. 11 th graders. 12 th graders who did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.

Varsity8th*–12th graders who:

- a) Placed in the top 15% for boys or top 30% for girls in any two JV races in the prior year, or
- b) Placed in the top 15% for boys or top 30% for girls in any single race and placed in the same top percentile (15% or 30%) in the overall JV season standings in the prior year, or
- c) Raced Varsity the prior year.

• *Criteria applicable to 6th–8th graders is limited to leagues that permit middle-schoolers to participate in high school categories.*

SECTION 6.4 PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR FIRST YEAR LEAGUES

6.4.A.1 Due to the smaller field sizes and the likelihood of a greater disparity in the student-athletes' racing experience typically characteristic of a league's inaugural season, the category upgrades identified in the chart below are intended to promote fair and challenging competition among riders with similar abilities.

6.4.A.2 To obtain a category upgrade, a written request must be made to, and approved by the League director. Evidence of prior experience is required. Students who request an upgrade not set forth in the chart below must follow the regular petition procedures.

6.4.A.3 Placement criteria, excluding petitions, for a league's inaugural season are as follows:

Category

6th graders 6th graders only*

7th graders 7th graders only*

8th graders 8th graders only*

Freshman 9th graders.

	6 th – 8 th graders with evidence of prior racing experience may be upgraded to Freshman with league director approval.*
Sophomore	10 th graders
Junior Varsity	11 th graders. 12 th graders who are not upgraded to Varsity. 7 th *-10 th graders with evidence of prior racing experience may be upgraded to JV with League director approval.
Varsity	12 th graders with evidence of prior racing experience may be upgraded to Varsity with League director approval.

* Criteria applicable to 6th-8th graders is limited to leagues that permit middle-schoolers to participate in high school categories.

6.4.A.4 For all seasons after a league's inaugural season, the Placement Criteria for Multi-Year Leagues apply.

SECTION 6.5 PETITIONING FOR A PLACEMENT CRITERIA EXCEPTION

6.5.A.1. In general, exceptions to the Placement Criteria are discouraged and should be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. Petition upgrade options are limited to the following:

- a. *Only for leagues that allow middle-schoolers to participate in high school categories:* Middle school students may only petition to race in the Freshman, Sophomore, or JV categories;
- b. 9th and 10th graders may only petition to race JV or Varsity;
- c. 11th and 12th graders may only petition to race Varsity.

6.5.A.2. Student-athletes must compete in appropriate competitive peer groups and to prevent strategic gamesmanship in category placement. Petitions for an upgrade in categories should, therefore, only be granted upon a showing that:

- a. The student-athlete's performance and experience level clearly exceeds the level of all other riders competing in

the rider's designated category. Placement Criteria — i.e., no other rider in the same category has a reasonable chance of being competitive with the student seeking the upgrade; and

- b. The upgrade will place the student into a more appropriate competitive peer group.

6.5.A.3. Successful petitions are subject to revocation at any time at the League director's sole discretion, in which event the student shall be placed in the appropriate category according to the Placement Criteria. Individual and team penalties may be assessed, at the League director's sole discretion, for any change in categories for a rider that is subsequently revoked on grounds that the change was contrary to NICA and League policies.

6.5.A.4. Petitions for an exception to the Placement Criteria and request for placement in another category may be submitted to the League director or the League's Rules Committee or any other individual or committee designated by the League director or the League's board of directors. To petition for such an exception, students must complete and submit the petition form found at the League's website according to the instructions provided on the form.

6.5.A.5. The petition requires a coach's comments and signature. If there is no coach, the student must contact the League director and a coach advisor will be appointed. A parent may be approved as the advisor. The League director or the League's Rules Committee shall consider the petition and render a decision in a timely manner.

6.5.A.6. Petitions must be submitted with sufficient time for consideration. Last-minute petitions cannot be rushed. Allow a minimum of five business days from the date of submission for a decision on the petition. Pending the outcome of the petition, the petitioning student must compete in the category determined by the Placement Criteria.

SECTION 6.6 STUDENT PLACEMENT AND TEAM COMPOSITION

6.6.A.1 ONE SCHOOL, ONE TEAM: Only one team may represent a school.

6.6.A.2 OFFICIAL SCHOOL STATUS NOT NEEDED School-based teams are not required to be officially or otherwise formally affiliated as a sports team with the school in which its members are enrolled.

6.6.A.3 Teams are responsible for obtaining permission from schools related to the team's use of school names, colors, mascots, logos, and other identifying school-related imagery or graphics.

6.6.A.4 STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST JOIN SCHOOL TEAMS

Student-athletes who are enrolled at a school that has a club or team in good standing with the League must join and compete as a member of that club or team. Such student-athletes may not compete as members of another team nor may they compete as independent riders.

6.6.A.5 INDEPENDENT RACERS

Student-athletes who do not have a club or team at the school that they attend may compete individually as "independent" racers.

6.6.B.1. TEAM TYPES

- a. **Single School-Based Teams:** Must be comprised of full-time students from the same school, public or private.
- b. **Composite Teams:** Must be comprised of full-time students from more than one school and must include "composite" in the team name. Homeschool students may also join Composite Teams according to the location of the school they would attend if not homeschooled. A Composite Team must be approved by the League director based upon a written proposal timely submitted to the League prior to team registration for the season in which the Composite Team wishes to compete. The proposal may include relevant information the organizers wish the League director to consider, but must include the following:
 - The proposed geographical region for its student-athletes;
 - The names of the schools the student-athletes attend and whether any of the student-athletes are homeschooled; and

- The names of the team organizer and coach. No two or more Composite Teams may overlap in geographical region nor may they draw student-athletes from the same schools.
- c. **County-Based Homeschool Teams:** Homeschoolers may organize teams of students (homeschoolers only) who live within the same county or other geographic proximity. Independent Study students must petition the League with the facts and circumstances of their situation to determine what type of team they are eligible to compete on. Homeschooled students who would otherwise be in middle school are scored in the same manner as Composite Teams set forth below (see B(2) and B(3)).

6.6.C. COMPOSITE TEAM LIMITATIONS

6.6.C.1 Composite Teams are intended to be temporary solutions only, allowing student-athletes to compete as members of a team in the League pending the establishment of Single School-Based Teams or County-Based Homeschool Teams that they can join. In furtherance of this policy, the following limitations apply to Composite Teams:

- a. The League director shall annually review and approve each Composite Team's eligibility. The League shall maintain approval forms on file for each Composite Team to include, at a minimum, the following:
 - A description of the team's geographical region;
 - A list of the names of all student-athletes indicating the schools they attend or whether they are homeschooled;
 - The name of the Composite Team; and
 - The signature of the team organizer and the approval signature of the League director.
- b. Composite Teams must comply, subject to the League's local state laws, with the following scoring restrictions:
 - Teams must compete in Division II but may, at the League director's discretion and to be determined

prior to the beginning of the season, be scored and awarded separately from Division I and II teams.

- In leagues that include middle schools, middle school riders' scores are excluded from the Composite Teams' scores — if more than one middle school rider is on the team, they may be scored as a subdivided team in the middle school category according to subsection (3)d below.
- Teams are limited to a maximum of eleven registered riders, excluding middle school riders. In addition to serving the above-stated policy to establish school-based teams, limiting such teams to eleven riders prevents any competitive advantage through the formation of large “super teams,” which NICA has determined constitutes unfair competition. However, in certain regions and rural areas, these policies may not be served and the team-size limitation may contravene policies to expand League ridership and to be inclusive to all riders. In the event the League's Rules Committee determines that NICA policies are not served and are contravened by the limitation, the League in its discretion may choose not to apply it and must also determine whether it is appropriate to score such larger teams in a separate category.
- A single Composite Team may be comprised of subdivided teams according to subsection (3) below.
- Each subdivided team shall be scored independently.

c. Composite Team subdivision rules:

- The League director must approve the subdivided teams that comprise a single Composite Team.
- If five or more student-athletes are from the same school, they must be subdivided into a separate team and scored as representatives of that school. These same-school student-athletes may submit a joint

petition, approved by each of them, to the League director for an exception to this rule.

- Teams of twelve or more student-athletes, excluding any middle school riders must be subdivided into separate, independently scoring teams of eleven or fewer riders each. Upon subdivision, student-athletes shall be placed on teams based on the following:
 - i. First — Student-athletes attending the same school must be on the same subdivided team; and
 - ii. Second — Student-athletes shall be placed on subdivided teams according to the proximity of their homes.
- MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

In leagues that include middle schools, if more than one middle school rider is on the team, they may be scored as a separate team in the middle school category.

- SUBDIVISIONS NOT ALLOWED

Teams may not be subdivided based on the experience and ability of the student-athletes. Doing so frustrates the policies that permit Composite Teams and creates an unfair advantage by avoiding the geographical limitations that apply to other teams.

6.6.D. SAME-SEX SCHOOL TEAM ASSOCIATIONS

A school-based team from a school whose attendance is made up of students of the same sex (“all boys” or “all girls”) may petition to be scored with a school-based team from an opposite sex school. A school-based team from a same-sex school may also petition to be scored with a group of independent riders who attend the same opposite sex school. This same-sex school association is for scoring purposes only and does not result in a composite club. The associated teams, regardless of the size or division of the component parts, shall compete in the same division they would compete in were they a single school club. The association exists on a season-by-season basis and

permission must be secured from the League Director ahead of the season. Once the season begins, the association shall remain in place until the season ends.

6.6.E. TEAM RECRUITING AND MID-SEASON TRANSFERS

6.6.E.1 Team efforts to recruit riders from other teams are strongly discouraged. Such conduct is contrary to NICA policies, interferes with team integrity for each school within the League, and undermines the competitive camaraderie between teams.

6.6.E.2 A student-athlete who transfers teams must meet all requirements to compete as a member of the new team.

6.6.E.3 A student-athlete who transfers teams mid-season shall retain all points earned that season prior to the transfer to be calculated with points earned after the transfer for determining individual standings.

6.6.E.4 The prior team shall retain all points earned by the student-athlete before the transfer for determining team standings.

6.6.E.5 The new team shall not be credited with points earned prior to the transfer and may, but only upon the new team's request and at the League director's discretion, accumulate points scored by the student-athlete after the transfer for determining team standings. The League director's discretion shall be exercised such that if the transfer has been determined to be more likely than not the result of team recruiting, the new team shall not accumulate points as a result of the transfer.

6.6.F. HOMESCHOOL AND COMPOSITE TEAM APPROVAL

6.6.F.1 Homeschool and Composite teams must state and gain approval of their geographic scope. Homeschool teams are scored in the same manner as Composite teams.

6.6.F.2 Large Homeschool and Composite teams (12+ riders) may be divided into smaller teams. Composite teams are considered short-term solution for student-athletes without access to school-based teams pending the establishment of teams at their schools. Combining existing school-based teams is not allowed, however, teams can combine resources and training activities — but will be scored

separately, wear separate jerseys, etc. Team and club founders must contact the League director for approval before registering.

SECTION 6.7 INTER-LEAGUE PARTICIPATION , AND OUT-OF-REGION STUDENT PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR MULTI-YEAR

6.7.A.1 Student-athletes and teams located outside of the League’s region and in a state where there is no NICA league, may be allowed to participate in League events and races.

6.7.A.2 Student-athletes and teams located in a state that has a NICA league may only participate in another NICA league’s events and races upon agreement between the leagues’ directors. Such agreements must be reviewed and approved annually by the directors. In reaching such an agreement, the league directors must consider (a) which league’s race series is closest to the students and teams seeking to participate in the other league, (b) policies of inclusivity for all students, and (c) policies of league development such that all students and teams can reasonably participate in events and races within the leagues in which they are located. Such an inter-league agreement must include, at a minimum, that the students and teams:

- a. Declare that they are committed to participating and scoring exclusively in the other league’s race series;
- b. Be scored and registered in the league in which they have declared their participation; and
- c. Participate in only one season, either spring or fall, per academic year and are subject to the Team Training Limits and race season limitations as applicable to the league in which they have declared their participation.

SECTION 6.8: RACE PRODUCTION GUIDELINES

6.8.A PURPOSE AND STANDARD OF REVIEW BY NICA

The following race production, safety and scoring standards are intended as guidance to be adopted or modified at the League’s discretion, and may be reviewed by NICA’s Rule Committee to ensure

standards adopted facilitate and promote fair, safe, and challenging competition.

6.8.B. CROSS-COUNTRY (XC) RACE DEFINITION

A cross-country mountain bike race is a mass start competition held on a circuit course comprised of forest roads, forest or field trails, and unpaved dirt or gravel roads.

6.8.C. COURSE LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY

The ideal NICA cross-country race course has a circuit short enough to require multiple laps for a race and includes terrain that can be completed by beginner riders. The number of laps should be determined according to the riders' ability to complete the race within a specific time. The event times should be:

1. Not to exceed 45 minutes for Middle School categories;
 2. Not to exceed 75 minutes, for High School categories;
 3. Not to exceed 90 minutes, for Varsity
- *to be implemented by Fall 2023 - Spring 2024

6.8.D. SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COURSES

NICA cross-country courses must be designed for maximal safety. Course guidelines are:

1. Uphill starts or some climbing in first half-mile;
2. 33-inch wide start lanes;
3. Uphill finishes;
4. Uphill feed zones;
5. Inspection and addressing of:
 - a. off-camber turns and ruts;
 - b. large or loose rocks;
 - c. sharp turns on fast sections;
 - d. water crossings;
 - e. areas where excessive speeds can be achieved; and
 - f. other obvious injury vectors.

6.8.E. COURSE SIGNAGE AND MARKINGS

Arrows signs, other signs, and ribbons should mark the directions along the entire length of the official race course. The signs and ribbons

indicate the course to follow, curves, intersections, and warn of situations that are potentially dangerous for the racers. Signs are posted along the course at least every kilometer to let the riders know that they are on course.

6.8.F. STANDARD TURN AROUND LOCATIONS

Arrow signs are to be placed before each intersection to indicate an upcoming turn, with a second arrow sign placed at the intersection. The direction of travel through the intersection is then confirmed by a third arrow sign located farther along the racecourse in the new direction. Wrong way signs are used to mark all potential wrong turns. Signs shall be placed at distances from the intersection determined by sight lines that afford the rider the best opportunity to see the markings at race pace while affording the rider ample opportunity to safely complete the turn or see the wrong way prior to inadvertently making a wrong turn.

6.8.G. RACE NOTIFICATION SIGNS

In the case of wrong turns that lead away from the course, the back of the wrong way sign shall be used to notify riders and passersby that a race is in progress. If the direction along a wrong way leads to the interior of the course, a notification on the back of the sign so indicating is optional.

6.8.H. HAZARD SIGNS

For all hazardous situations along a racecourse circuit, caution signs or two or three arrow signs placed upside down must be located preceding the hazard at a distance which affords the rider ample opportunity to react at race pace. A hazard on the circuit may be due to an obstacle, the quality of the surface, the angle of the track, or any other condition not specifically addressed that presents additional risk to riders.

6.8.I. STANDARD HEIGHT OF SIGNS

Course signage should, whenever possible, be placed on the right side of the course and raised so the bottom of the sign is 1.5 to 3 feet from the ground.

6.8.J. DISTANCE OF SIGNS

The course may be marked every kilometer with signs indicating distance remaining to the start/finish line.

6.8.K. USE OF RIBBON

Ribbon may also be use to mark turns, wrong ways, and other hazards. Ribbon should always be arranged parallel to the ground.

6.8.L. LIST OF SIGNS

Directional and warning signs for mountain bike circuits are:

1. Arrows indicating course direction, turns, and hazards;
2. Caution;
3. Wrong Way ;
4. EMS Course Access Point;
5. Alternate route on course; and
6. Dismount required (off bike).



6.8.M. PIT ZONE AND FEED ZONE

6.8.M.1 DESIGNATED PIT ZONE AREAS

Teams are randomly assigned predetermined areas in the race pit zone. Division I pit areas are larger than Division II pit areas to accommodate the larger teams. Large teams (30+) may request extra space ahead of time. All team equipment, including cars and trailers, must be set up within the assigned areas. Teams may not erect tents, tables, bike stands, or mechanical stations outside of their areas in the pit zone.

6.8.M.2 BIKE PARKING

Coaches and student-athletes must park their bikes out of the through ways to avoid obstructing cars, pedestrians, and other riders.

6.8.M.3 AUTOS IN THE PIT ZONE

To minimize congestion, the League reserves all rights to manage the flow of automobile traffic in and out of the pit zone. Parents, coaches, and student-athletes are encouraged to limit driving into the pit zone by pooling their efforts and cooperating with other parents, coaches, and student-athletes to transfer equipment.

Accommodations will be made for large and heavy items, though teams are encouraged to have their pit areas set up one hour before the start of the first race. Thank you for cooperating with the volunteer Parking Attendants.

Recreational Vehicles (RVs) are not permitted in the pit zone. Pick up trucks with camper shells are permitted. Gas powered generators (built in or external) are also not permitted in the pit zone.

6.8.M.4 FEED ZONE REQUIRED

A designated feed zone must be present and easily accessible at races. The feed zone shall have a well-marked start and end.

6.8.M.5 LIMITED FEEDERS PER TEAM

Each team is allowed a limited number of feeders in the feed zone as indicated below. The number is based on the number of racers that are competing in the current wave.

<u># Racers</u>	<u># Feeders</u>
5 or less	2
6-10	3
11-20	4
21 or more	5

6.8.M.6 NEUTRAL FEED ZONE

If conditions such as high temperatures exist, a neutral feed zone may be provided near the halfway point of the course. The neutral feed zone will be for all student-athletes and handouts will be provided by designated race staff and/or volunteers only.

6.8.M.7 INSPECTION OF SUPPLIES

Under Chapter 2 setting out the Rules for Student Athletes, certain substances are banned from consumption. To enforce this rule, race officials may request to inspect feed zone supplies at any time.

6.9. RACE OFFICIALS

The following duties shall be performed by NICA-approved officials who shall endeavor to uphold and enforce the NICA Rules and Guidelines and shall do so in an impartial manner. Race Officials must wear provided uniforms. The general conduct, safety, scoring, and enforcement of rules is managed at races by the following officials:

6.9.A CHIEF REFEREE

6.9.A.1 Chief Referees supervise the general conduct of each race and ensure that the event is run under the NICA Rules and Guidelines. Chief Referees have the authority to interpret and enforce these rules and the discretion to make rulings on any point that is not specifically covered herein. A decision by the Chief Referee can be appealed to the League's Rule Committee.

6.9.A.2 Chief Referees may neutralize, shorten, suspend, or cancel any race if dangerous conditions exist or hazardous weather arises.

6.9.A.3 Chief Referees have the authority to penalize or recommend suspension of any student-athlete, parent, coach, co-coach, or volunteer who refuses to follow instructions of officials or who commits other offenses. The Chief Referee shall consider the observations of course marshals, taking into account their vantage points relative to the incident and experience levels.

6.9.A.4 The Chief Referee will also handle any protests arising at the event. The Chief Referee may call a meeting of all available League Rule Committee members at an event to rule on any protests. If no members are available, the Chief Referee may defer a protest ruling until after the event and such a meeting can be convened. Such a deferred meeting must occur within five days after the race. If a meeting cannot be convened within five days, the Chief Referee shall act in its place to render a timely decision.

6.9.A.5 Chief Referees may assign duties and delegate authority to the other officials, below, for each event.

6.9.B START/FINISHLINE REFEREE

6.9.B.1 Start/Finish Line referees are responsible for managing the start and finish of each race. Start line duties include setting up and managing start waves, drawing start lines, keeping track of time, ensuring proper seeding, and assisting or managing pre-race announcements. Finish line duties include assisting the scoring crews by resolving close finish disputes, creating an independent backup document of finish order, sampling lap times, estimating the time of last finisher, managing finish chutes, and enforcing cutoff times.

6.9.B.2 Penalties, cutoff times, and last finisher time estimates must be communicated to the Chief Referee. In the event of close finishes, Spotters shall focus on the numbers whereas the Start/Finish Line Referee shall focus on the order of finish as determined by the front wheels. All penalties assessed shall be reported to the Chief Referee.

6.9.C CHIEF SCORING OFFICIAL

Chief Scoring Officials supervise the scoring crew comprised of Number Plate Spotters and Number Plate Recorders. Chief Scoring Officials are responsible for running the scoring program, investigating and troubleshooting discrepancies, posting preliminary results, fielding protests regarding preliminary results and scoring, and providing final results for the award ceremony. They also have the authority to interpret and enforce the rules pertaining to scoring. All penalties assessed shall be reported to the Chief Referee.

6.9.D NUMBER PLATE SPOTTERS

Number Plate Spotters report, in a loud clear voice, race plate numbers in order as they cross the line. Only one Number Plate Spotter will call numbers at a time. They shall rotate every hour to ensure quality reporting. In the event of close finishes, Spotters shall focus on the

numbers whereas the Start/Finish Line Referee shall focus on the order of finish as determined by the front wheels.

6.9.E NUMBER PLATE RECORDER

Number Plate Recorders enter the numbers called out by the Number Plate Spotter. Number Plate Recorders shall rotate every two hours to ensure quality reporting.

6.9.F CHIEF COURSE MARSHAL

Chief Course Marshals manage the operations of Course Marshals, which includes providing radios, vests, maps, whistles and flags, conducting Course Marshal meetings, assigning locations, and taking reports. Chief Course Marshals have the authority to interpret and enforce these rules pertaining to infractions that occur on the race course. All penalties assessed shall be reported to the Chief Referee.

6.9.G COURSE MARSHALS

Course Marshals are deputized race officials whose duties are primarily to increase safety on the course and increase communications, and secondarily to report incidents of student-athletes breaking these rules.

6.9.G.1 Course Marshals must:

- a. Carry a radio, a notepad and pen, and a course map;
- b. Wear a designated Course Marshal Vest;
- c. Carry a flag and whistle; the flag can be used to direct or slow down student-athletes; the whistle can be used to warn students who are riding in the wrong direction; and
- d. Report incidents by radio to the Chief Course Marshal at the time of the infraction. Course marshals must also report all incidents in writing when they return from duty.

6.9.H COURSE SWEEPER

Course Sweepers communicate with the Chief Course Marshal and the Start/Finish Line Referee. The Sweeper's responsibilities are to be aware of and ride behind the last rider on the race course at a distance, and report to the Chief Course Marshal and Start/Finish Line Referee the last rider's location, when the last rider finishes, and when the race course is clear. The Chief Course Marshal may also deputize the

Sweeper to relieve Course Marshals from duty, carry first aid, or act as a rolling Course Marshal.

SECTION 6.10: RACING SAFETY STANDARDS

6.10.A PRE-RIDE PROVIDED WHEN POSSIBLE

Student-athletes will be given the opportunity to walk the course and participate in a practice ride whenever possible.

6.10.B Pre-Ride is a regularly scheduled practice ride on the race course that takes place on the same weekend as the race. For practice rides on race courses at other times, the Pre-Ride Rules do not apply.

6.10.C. RACERS AND COACHES ONLY ON THE COURSE

6.10.C.1 Only student-athletes entered for competition in the event and their team coaches may ride the designated race course at times when no race is currently taking place. An event is taking place at all times after the start of a race until the time the last rider in that race finishes. No coach is permitted to ride the course during an event.

6.10.C.2 A violation of this rule will result in a team-level penalty against the associated team of the offender:

- a. First Offense: 25-point penalty deducted from team score on race day.
- b. Second offense: 50-point penalty deducted from team score on race day.
- c. Third offense: 100-point penalty deducted from team score on race day.

6.10.D. NUMBER PLATES ARE MANDATORY

Once number plates are distributed, students must have them properly affixed to their bicycles at all times they are on the course.

6.10.E. LEADER'S JERSEY

The student-athlete in each category with the most individual points for the season will be awarded the leader's jersey. Each points leader

is expected to wear the jersey at all League races, so long as they remain the top points holder. In the case of a tie, both student-athletes wear leader's jerseys. The overall winner of the series wears the leader's jersey during the first race of the next season.

Only the current leader may wear the leader's jersey. To avoid confusion, generic and similar looking jerseys may not be worn at a League race by competing student-athletes.

6.10.F. START LINE AND FIRST RACE CALL-UPS

6.10.F.1 Start line call-ups for top placed riders takes place at all races. The following number of riders will be called up for each race start:

- Field size of 24 or less riders: Top 5 are called up
- Field size of 25–49 riders: Top 10 are called up
- Field size of 50-74 riders: Top 15 are called up
- Field size of 75+ riders: Top 20 are called up

6.10.F.2 Call-ups at the first race of the season shall be based upon the overall points earned by each rider in the previous season. No adjustments will be made based on category changes or other circumstances. There are no call-ups for freshman riders at the first race.

6.10.F.3 At all subsequent races, the call-ups are based on the overall placing in that category in the current season.

6.10.F.4 Racers must position themselves in designated start lanes without overlapping the wheels of the rider in front of them.

6.10.F.5 CONCUSSION RECOVERY CALL-UP ACCOMODATION

To reduce pressure on Student-Athletes return to full participation and encourage lengthened healing time following a concussion, a student-athlete who has sustained a concussion may take-off multiple races and when they return, maintain the same call-up position held prior to their concussion. This will impact the rider in the same call-up position and following riders by moving them back one call-up position. To be granted this accommodation, a coach or guardian of a Student-Athlete must submit a request in writing with attached

doctor's note no sooner than 3 days prior to the race to the race director and chief referee.

6.10.F.6 AIR QUALITY SENSITIVITY CALL-UP ACCOMODATION

To reduce pressure to race for Student-Athletes who are sensitive to air pollution, any student-athlete may take-off any race held with an index over 100 fine particle or ground level ozone air pollution (as defined by Airquality.gov for the time and location racing) and maintain the same call-up position held previously. This will impact the rider in the same call-up position and following riders by moving them back one call-up position. To be granted this accommodation, a coach or guardian of a Student-Athlete must submit a request in writing with attached AQI measurement including time and location from airnow.gov no sooner than 3 days prior to the race to the race director and chief referee.

6.10.G. STUDENT-ATHLETES MAY BE PULLED

Lapped racers and racers outside the time limit may be pulled from the race at the finish line. At the League director's or a race official's discretion, a racer may be pulled from a race at any location on the course due to circumstances that make it unsafe for the racer to proceed. Racers that are pulled out of the race must not continue and will be placed according to their position at the time they are pulled.

6.10.H. TIME LIMITS MAY BE IMPOSED

6.10.H.1 Racers may be asked to withdraw at the finish line after time limits have been reached. Race officials reserve the right to determine these time limits at any time. Time limits may be imposed for reasons that include, among others: safety, heat, cold, rain, muddy conditions, clearing the course, and relieving course marshals. Course closures may be announced at any time without advance notice.

If a racer makes the time cutoff but does not complete the final lap due to a mechanical, crash, or other reason, it is considered a DNF.

6.10.H.2 Race Officials may also, when appropriate, opt to pull a racer who appears to be overheated, hypothermic, overly exhausted, or in any way injured, overstressed, or at risk of injury.

6.10.I. RACE COURSE BLOCKED BY VEHICLE OR EMERGENCY

In the event a race course is blocked by a vehicle or an emergency situation, all racers should stop in a single file row without changing position. Racers should remain in those positions until instructed to recommence racing.

6.10.J RACE FINISHES

6.10.J.1 Race Finishes: Under normal circumstances, all lap and finish positions will be determined by electronic timing chips (transponders).

6.10.J.2 In the event the electronic timing system fails to record a time or lap position for any rider, a video camera may be used at the finish line to aid the scorekeepers in determining laps completed or the finishing order of a close race. Should video footage from an league-designated camera be unavailable or inconclusive for any reason, the scoring of the laps or finish will be based solely on the scorekeepers' decision.

6.10.J.3 In the case of a visual tie or where a clear determination cannot be made, the riders concerned will be ranked in the order of the best lap time made during the race.

6.10.K RACE FINISHES CHAMPIONSHIPS

6.10.K.1 Overall Individual Series Champion: The overall series champion in each field will be decided based on the total of series points accumulated (best 4 of 5 results and inclusive of bonus points for completing all races).

6.10.K.2 In the event of a tie for the championship, the winner will be determined based on the number of wins.

6.10.K.3. Should a tie remain, finishes of second, third, etc, will be tallied until the tie is broken.

6.10.K.4. If a tie remains, the best finish in the last race will determine the champion.

SECTION 6.11: TEAM AND INDIVIDUAL SCORING

6.11.A. INDIVIDUAL SERIES SCORING

Student-athletes compete against other racers in the same category. Individual scoring is not divided into Divisions I and II, unless they are racing in separate categories, e.g., Freshman Boys Division I and Freshman Boys Division II are scored separately.

6.11.B. OVERALL INDIVIDUAL SERIES SCORING

6.11.B.1 Overall Series scoring for individuals is based on the best 4 of 5 in a five-race series or the best 3 of 4 in a four-race series. In other words, the lowest score is dropped.

6.11.B.2 A missed race would be the lowest score dropped. In the case of a race cancellation in a five-race series, the lowest score is still dropped (best 3 of 4). If there are fewer than four races in the series, no score will be dropped.

6.11.C. POINT SYSTEM

6.11.C.1 Points are awarded to all finishers. There is a 40-point bonus for JV racers and a 75-point bonus for Varsity racers. Racers that do not finish a race (DNF) will not be awarded any points for that race. A sample Individual Point Scale (See Appendix A).

6.11.C.2 In the event a student successfully petitions to change categories, individual points earned in one category do not transfer to another category. All points earned in the lower category are forfeited and the upgraded rider loses standing in the lower category. A student-athlete's points scored toward team standings prior to the change in categories remain unaffected. Students who successfully petition to be placed in a lower category are, by default, ineligible to score team points in that lower category for the duration of the season. A student who petitions to change to a lower category may state extenuating circumstances in the petition to be allowed to score points in the lower category.

6.11.D. POINT BONUS AT STATE CHAMPS

6.11.D.1 At the League director's discretion, the League may opt into a bonus points schedule for its State Championship event by submitting a timely petition. The petition must be timely due to the administrative scoring adjustments NICA staff must make to accommodate the alternative scoring.

6.11.D.2 In the event the opt-in petition is granted, all finishers at the State Championship are awarded Race Bonus Points as follows: 50 points for 1st place and sequentially for each place thereafter, one less point than is awarded the immediately preceding place, through 50th place, and one point for each finishing place thereafter (e.g., 49 points for 2nd, 48 points for 3rd, . . . 3 points for 48th, 2 points for 49th, 1 point for 50th, and 1 point for each finisher thereafter.)

6.11.E. POINT BONUS FOR COMPLETING ALL RACES

6.11.E.1 All student-athletes who complete each and every race in a season shall be awarded an additional 25 Season Bonus Points.

6.11.E.2 If a race is cancelled, it will not count as a season race and Season Bonus Points shall still be awarded if all other season races are completed. In the event a student does not complete a race due to a mechanical, crash, illness, or other similar circumstances out of his or her control, that is considered an incomplete and no Season Bonus Points will be awarded.

6.11.E.3 Season Bonus Points are awarded to individuals following the calculation of overall series points after the final race. Season Bonus Points are not added to points scored in the final race nor are they added into the team score.

6.11.E.4 Notwithstanding the forgoing, including rules 8.2 through this rule 8.4, leagues may at their discretion apply alternate point bonus systems, as long as the system is consistently applied to all league participants.

6.11.F. TIER 1 LEAGUE SCORING MATRIX

6.11.F.1 For Tier 1 leagues, all teams are considered Division II where scoring is based on the top four point-earners, with a maximum of three of those point-earners scoring in either the boys or girls category.

6.11.F.2 League directors, with approval of their Rules Committee, may make modifications to these scoring rules. Visit the TEAMS webpage to confirm the team scoring rules of the League.

6.11.F.3 The team's score is the highest score possible out the following boy-girl combinations:

BBBG
BBGG
BGGG

6.11.G. TIER 2 LEAGUE SCORING MATRIX

6.11.G.1 For Tier 2 leagues, Division I scoring is based on the top eight point-earners, with a maximum of six of those point-earners scoring in either the boys' or girls' categories.

6.11.G.2 For Tier 2 leagues, Division II scoring is based on the top four point-earners, with a maximum of three of those point-earners scoring in either the boys' or girls' categories.

6.11.G.3 League directors, with approval of their Rules Committee, may make modifications to these scoring rules. Visit the TEAMS webpage to confirm the team scoring rules of the League.

6.11.G.4 The team's score is the highest score possible out the following boy-girl combinations:

<u>Division I Teams</u>	<u>Division II Teams</u>
BBBBBBGG	BBBG
BBBBBGGG	BBGG
BBBBGGGG	BGGG
BBBGGGGG	
BBGGGGGG	

6.11.H. OVERALL TEAM SCORING

A team's overall placement is based on team point totals for an entire point series — the lowest score is *not* dropped.

6.11.I AWARDS AT EACH RACE

- a. Individual medals are awarded at least five places deep at each race, including the State Championships, except in the case of races with field sizes with fewer than 20 student-athletes, in which case medals are awarded at least three places deep.
- b. Team trophies are awarded at least three places deep in each division at each race, including the State Championships.

6.11.J. AWARDS FOR OVERALL SERIES

Individual overall series medals are awarded to finishers in the top 10% of the total number of scoring riders for the series (rounded up) plus at least two places deep. Team overall series trophies are awarded to at least three places deep in each division.

6.11.K. PROLOGUE RACE SCORING

6.11.K.1 Leagues may choose to begin their season with two Prologue Races. These races may occur on the same day in different venues, in which event the teams will be split into two groups based on each team's proximity to the venue. Independent student-athletes shall attend the Prologue Race closest to their homes.

6.11.K.2 Student-athlete will each receive a 50-point bonus for participating in the Prologue Race. As bonus points, they will be included in the overall individual scores for the season. Students that must DNF or are pulled due to time constraints in the Prologue, will still be awarded their 50-point bonuses.

6.11.K.3 There will be no team awards at the Prologue; however, there will be individual awards given.

6.11.K.4 The Prologue is not a qualifier for the state championships, nor does it count towards category placement the following year.

6.11.L. RACE RESULTS AND PROTEST PROCESS

6.11.L.1 PETITION FORMS – RACE DAY PROTEST

Petition forms are to be presented to the Chief Referee to raise rule violations and scoring issues. After each race and before the final results are posted, the Chief Referee must rule on and then submit all petition forms to the League Director.

6.11.L.2 PRELIMINARY AND OFFICIAL RESULTS

- a. *Preliminary results.* Preliminary race results and penalty assessments are posted at the race venue, at or near the scoring tent, as soon as possible after each event. The posting time shall be stated on the results and penalties sheets.
- b. *Protest period deadline on race day.* Protests to the preliminary results and opposition to penalties must be submitted, using the forms provided, to a race official at the scoring tent within 15 minutes of the posting time.
- c. *Official results.* After the timely protests and opposition to penalties are considered, ruled upon, and approved by the League Director or the Chief Referee, the results on race day shall be official and posted at the scoring tent. Unless otherwise stated in a decision or ruling, such decisions and rulings made on race day regarding protests and penalties are conclusive. Medals will be awarded based on the official results on race day.
- d. *Deferred rulings.* At the discretion of the League Director or Chief Referee, the decision and ruling on a protest or opposition to a penalty may be deferred until after race day. If such a deferred decision affects the podium results for an event, medals may be awarded at a later date following resolution of the dispute.

6.11.L.3 EXTENDED PROTEST PERIOD (discretionary)

- a. *Results posted online.* At the League Director's discretion, an extended protest period may be permitted after the results are posted online on the League's website, during which student-athletes may protest the results or oppose the assessment of penalties.
- b. *Extended protest period announcement.* Such an extended protest period must be announced along with the official results on race day, or must be announced simultaneously with the posting of the official results on the League's website. The online posting date of the results and the protest submission deadline shall be indicated on the website.

- c. *Extended protest period deadline.* In the event the announcement does not indicate the deadline by which protests are to be submitted, they must be submitted by no later than 5:00 pm on the second day after the results are posted on the website. Protests must be submitted to the League director, Chief Referee, or other League official designated by the League director to receive such protests.

6.11.L.4 PROTEST – AFTER RACE DAY

- a. *League officials.* Protests made on race day but deferred for later decision and protests submitted during an extended protest period shall be heard by the League Director, or Chief Referee, or members of the League Rules Committee, or any one or combination thereof.
- b. *Additional information.* League officials shall provide their best efforts to make reasonable inquiries and provide a timely decision and ruling. Student-athletes and coaches who are involved on either side of the dispute may submit statements within the applicable protest period. Submitting such statements after the protest period is permissible only if done at the request of League officials.
- c. *Hearing and vote.* In the event the protest or opposition is deemed significant by a League official, the student-athlete or coach shall be notified and three or more League officials shall be designated to rule on the matter by majority vote. The designated officials may, by majority vote, choose to conduct a telephonic hearing to occur within two weeks of the incident. League officials shall provide notice of the date and the specific procedures relative to the hearing to the affected student-athletes and other individuals, as they deem appropriate.

6.11.L.5 JUDGMENT CALLS

- a. League officials must decide and rule upon protests despite often having little direct, firsthand information available regarding the underlying incident. This is inherent to the sport of mountain biking due to the fact that most of the racing takes place on the race course out of the sight of race officials.

Nevertheless, every effort is made to reach the fairest and most informed decisions possible under the circumstances for each and every protest that is submitted.

- b. Student-athletes and their families and coaches are expected to understand these limitations and the challenges inherent to resolving disputes of this nature, and the difficult decisions League officials are required to make. It is further expected of students, family members, and coaches that they be willing to accept what they may consider to be an unfair result. Unfair results are part of every sport no matter the efforts to avoid them and accepting them when they go the other way is considered a sign of good sportsmanship and a strong character trait.

Accordingly, threatening or bullying officials, other riders, spectators, or anyone involved with the League or an event regarding protests may result in restrictions imposed on a student-athlete's participation in the League.

Appendix A– Individual Point Scale

APPENDIX A – INDIVIDUAL POINT SCALE

PLACE	FROSH-SOPH & MIDDLE SCHOOL	JV	VARSITY
1	500	540	575
2	490	530	565
3	481	521	556
4	472	512	547
5	464	504	539
6	456	496	531
7	448	488	523
8	441	481	516
9	434	474	509
10	427	467	502
11	420	460	495
12	414	454	489
13	408	448	483
14	402	442	477
15	396	436	471
16	390	430	465
17	385	425	460
18	380	420	455
19	375	415	450
20	370	410	445
21	365	405	440
22	360	400	435
23	356	396	431
24	352	392	427
25	348	388	423
26	344	384	419
27	340	380	415
28	336	376	411

Appendix A– Individual Point Scale

29	332	372	407
30	329	369	404
31	326	366	401
32	323	363	398
33	320	360	395
34	317	357	392
35	314	354	389
36	311	351	386
37	308	348	383
38	306	346	381
39	304	344	379
40	302	342	377
41	300	340	375
42	298	338	373
43	296	336	371
44	294	334	369
45	292	332	367
46	290	330	365
47	289	329	364
48	288	328	363
49	287	327	362
50	286	326	361
51	285	325	360
52	284	324	359
53	283	323	358
54	282	322	357
55	281	321	356
56	280	320	355

Appendix B– League Exceptions

Appendix B– League Exceptions Alabama

Alabama League Middle School Program

A. Middle School Racing Rules

There are three middle school categories for both the boys and girls based on their grade — 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

Each middle school category will have an individual race podium, but only the 8th grade category will have series overall standings and leaders' jerseys.

Middle school points will not apply to team points. However, if a middle school racer is granted an upgrade into a high school category, then that racer's individual points will apply to that racer's high school team points.

There is no moving between middle school grade categories.

Racers that finish in the top 10% of their middle school category will be allowed to submit a petition to upgrade to Freshman. Such a petition is not an automatic and must be supported by additional information to justify the upgrade.

B. Middle School Category Upgrades

At the beginning of each season all middle school athletes will be “reset” to their respective middle school categories in the Pit Zone. Middle school athletes will be allowed to petition for a category upgrade (subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school students) to race in one of the high school categories as follows:

- Any returning middle school student who upgraded and raced in a high school category during the previous season will be allowed to re-petition for an upgrade to either the Freshman or the JV category.
- Rules for Category Placement will be used to determine a middle school athlete's eligibility for a JV upgrade. Students not meeting the upgrade criteria for JV will only be allowed to petition for an upgrade to the freshman category.
- All other middle school athletes (new racers and those that did not upgrade and race in the previous season) must race at least one middle school category race prior to requesting an upgrade to the Freshman category. These students are

Appendix B– League Exceptions Alabama

only allowed to request an upgrade to the Freshman category.

Category upgrade decisions will be based on the following:

- Racers must finish in the top 15% for boys or top 20% for girls in at least one middle school race;
- All petitions must follow the same rules and deadlines as high school petition requests; and
- Racers with extensive outside race experience and at least five non-NICA podium finished may also petition to upgrade to the Freshman category.
- All petitions must be submitted through the Team Director to the League Director. A committee will review all petitions and either grant or deny the request based on the information provided.
- Any middle school student racing in a high school category will be allowed to compete for both the individual awards (race and series) as well as contributing points to his or her team's total.

Homeschooled Students

The strict application of the rules regarding homeschooled student eligibility conflicts with the provisions of the Alabama High School Athletic Association (AHSAA). In accordance with AHSAA, the following rules apply:

- A student that is legitimately enrolled in a homeschool, public charter school, online school, or district alternative school educational program in grades 9-12 may participate as a member of a team for a public school that is otherwise permitted to compete. The student must participate on the team for the public school
 - a) within whose boundary the permanent residence of the student's parent or guardian is situated, or
 - b) from which the student withdrew in order to enroll in his or her current educational program. The team's school must meet all legal requirements that allow its students to participate.
- Non-traditional students must compete on the school-based team they are zoned for if such a team exists. If no team

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exists, then they may compete on a local composite team subject to the standard composite team rules.

- Requests must be made by the Team Director of the school-based team for which an exception is being requested for approval by the league petition review committee no later than 1 week prior to the first race of each season.
- Non-traditional students must actively participate in practices and other team based activities and are not be allowed to be an inactive member of the team simply for scoring purposes at races.
- A homeschool student’s practice time must be equivalent to but not to exceed that of a traditional student during a school day.
- Any conflicts between the foregoing and the rules in this Handbook are to be resolved in favor of the provisions of the ASHAA.

Alabama limits the composite team size to 10 versus the national recommendation of 11.

- Composite team rule change 7.1 B (2) c. Maximum 10. Composite teams that will be impacted and need to follow up on subdivision rules.

Category Placement Alabama League

6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
Freshman	9th graders 6 th - 8 th graders that successfully petition to the category
JV 2	All 10 th , 11 th , and 12 th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories

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JV 1	<p>6th-9th grade Boys and Girls who successfully petition into the category.</p> <p>10th grade Boys and Girls who :</p> <p>a) Placed in the top 25% in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the Freshman overall season standings in the prior year</p> <p>10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who</p> <p>a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV2 overall season standings in the prior year, or</p> <p>b) Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.</p>
Varsity	<p>10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who:</p> <p>a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV1 overall season standings in the prior year, or</p> <p>b) Raced Varsity the prior year;</p> <p>c) Successfully petition into the category.</p>

CALL UP PROCESS

1. 100% call ups for each race, both for middle school and high school
2. Riders must be pre-registered to get a place in the call up
3. Call Ups will be calculated as follows:
 - a. First race call ups - by placement in Prologue Time Trial

Appendix B– League Exceptions Alabama

- b. Second race call ups - by placement in first place, with an option to fill out a petition to “hold your place” if you missed the first race due to unavoidable reasons (for example, family emergency)
- c. Third race call ups - based on the best of the first two race finishes
- d. Fourth race call ups - based on the top two finishes for the season so far
- e. Fifth race call ups – based on the top three finishes for the season so far

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Category Placement

There will be no tracking of team points for Junior Development Teams. Junior Development riders will be scored individually and race leaders will be recognized in each category at each race. The last race of the season (State Championship) a middle school champion will be recognized in each category. Junior Development points will not apply to high school team points, and junior development riders may not compete in or petition to upgrade into high school categories.

The scored categories are as follows:

Junior Development Boys

Party Lap (available to all grades)

6th Grade

7th Grade

8th Grade

Middle School Advanced (7th and 8th graders may petition in to this category)

Junior Development Girls

Party Lap (available to all grades)

6th Grade

7th Grade

8th Grade

Middle School Advanced (7th and 8th graders may petition in to this category)

High School Boys

Party Lap (available to all grades)

Freshmen

JV2

JV1

Varsity

High School Girls

Party Lap (available to all grades)

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Freshmen

JV2

JV1

Varsity

5.6.D.3 OFF SEASON The off-season is defined as periods not within the applicable preseason and regular season periods. Organized team rides and races are strictly prohibited during the off-season. The following activities during the off-season MAY jeopardize a team or club’s eligibility.

- a. A league team racing under any NICA Sanctioned team name;
- b. Using the NICA team jersey at races as a team;
- c. Having practices that meet on school grounds;
- d. Having regular meetings at school that organize activity for off-season training and racing;
- e. Using any league team property without a letter of permission from school administration; and
- f. Using the same league team website as an outlet for organizing off-season practices or racing.

NICA respects off-season non-league related racing activities. However, all off-season coaching activity must be done under a separately organized, insured, and named team. Teams found to be racing as a high school team during the off-season will be ineligible to compete in League races the following season.

6.6.A 4 STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST JOIN SCHOOL TEAMS

Student-athletes who are enrolled at a school that has a club or team in good standing with the League must join and compete as a member of that club or team. Such student-athletes may not compete as members of another team nor may they compete as independent riders. Petitions to the League Director will be accepted due to extenuating circumstances (example: Open enrollment to a school out of the zoning area, riders have the option to participate with either their school team or the team closest to their residence.) Proof of school attendance and home residence will be required in the petition process.

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RULE 2.22 JERSEY REQUIREMENTS YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.22.A Teams must have matching jerseys for their student-athletes and all team members must race wearing their team jerseys. Teams may use custom matching jerseys, but they may also choose some other appropriate jersey — such as a solid. Teams may put sponsor logos on team jerseys, the only allowed spot for sponsor logos is the back pocket. Prior to purchase a proof must be sent to the League Director for final approval.

2.22.B Independent student-athletes must choose a distinct individual jersey and race wearing the same jersey design throughout a season.

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ARKANSAS MIDDLE SCHOOL RULES

A. Middle School Racing Rules.

Each middle school category will have an individual race podium, but only the 8th grade category will have series overall standings. Middle school points will apply to team points for the middle school team award.

B. Middle School Category Upgrades. Middle school athletes will not be allowed to petition for a category upgrade to race in one of the high school categories.

HOMESCHOOL, CHARTER SCHOOL AND ONLINE SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES

A student that is legitimately enrolled in a homeschool, public charter school, online school, or district alternative school educational program in grades 9-12 may participate as a member of a team for a public school that is otherwise permitted to compete. The student must participate on the team for the public school within whose boundary the permanent residence of the student's parent or guardian is situated, or from which the student withdrew in order to enroll in his or her current educational program. The team's school must meet all legal requirements that allow its students to participate.

Non-traditional students must compete on the school-based team they are zoned for if such a team exists. If no team exists, then they may compete on a local composite team subject to the standard composite team rules.

Requests must be made for exception by the Team Director of the school based team for which an exception is being requested for approval by the league petition review committee no later than 1 week prior to the first race of each season.

Non-traditional students must actively participate in practices and other team based activities and are not allowed to be an inactive member of the team simply for scoring purposes at races.

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A homeschool student's practice time must be equivalent to but not to exceed that of a traditional student during a school day.

SPONSOR LOGOS

No sponsor logos will be allowed on custom team jerseys worn for races. Exceptions may be made for new teams before their jerseys arrive at the discretion of the Arkansas Rules Committee

STEWARDSHIP / TEEN TRAIL CORPS (TTC)

- A. Tracking: All bike-related volunteer hours must be tracked through the pit zone. Volunteer hours must be quantified by ¼ hour blocks. Hours must be submitted by the weekly deadline of 11:59pm Wednesday nights, beginning 10 days before the first race of the season. Hours can begin accruing a week after the previous NICA season and need to be entered in the pit zone once it opens in April. Annually, stewardship points tracking will conclude on the Wednesday 10 days before the originally scheduled date for the AR Finals weekend.
- B. Points
 - a. Individual Points: Riders can earn up to 25 bonus points toward their year-end individual score. By doing one of two things:
 - i. Hours accrued in trail maintenance work or bike-related volunteerism will award points in the following manner. 25 points max. Hour 1-4 = 5 points each Hours 5-9 = 1 point each. Volunteer hours may be completed during official team practices, at local trail club workdays, with local biking or bike-related races and events and must be verified by a coach and the trail work or event organizer.
 - ii. A Student Athlete can pursue the TTC Captain award and receive 2 bonus points

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- for each of the Speak, Respect, and Ride patches earned. This status must be achieved annually in order to qualify for bonus points in the current season.
- iii. All bonus points will be applied at the end of the season, along with the attendance bonus, to the rider's current race category and will be added to any race points totals in order to crown the end of season race champions.
 - b. Team Stewardship Ranking: Team Stewardship Points will be awarded based on the average amount of volunteer hours per student athlete team member. The calculation=total amount of hours the team riders work during the course of the current season divided by the number of riders on the roster as of September 1 of the current year. Middle School and High School Teams will be ranked based on the averages.

CALL UP PROCESS

- A. 100% call ups for each race, both for middle school and high school
- B. Riders must be pre-registered to get a place in the call up
- C. Call Ups will be calculated as follows:
 - a. First race call ups - Based on Prelude Time Trial, then by category placement last year if the rider did not attend the TT. The TT takes precedence.
 - b. Second race call ups - by placement in first place, with an option to fill out a petition to "hold your place" if you missed the first race due to unavoidable reasons (for example, family emergency)
 - c. Third race call ups - based on the best of the first two race results/points
 - d. Fourth race call ups - based on points for first 3 races

TEAM AWARDS

Appendix B – League Exceptions Arkansas

- A. Team awards will be awarded at each race for high school and middle school teams. Teams that have both middle school and high school student athletes will be separated administratively into two teams for scoring.
- B. The team award presented at each race will be a combination of the race performance award as calculated in the scoring system and the team stewardship award. Each team will be ranked for each component, then the rankings will be added and re-ranked lowest to highest to give the team award. In the event of a tie, the team with the higher performance award will be given the higher ranking.

COURSE LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY - MODIFY NATIONAL RULE 5.1

The race duration in the schedule below is based on total race time. The number of laps will be determined according to the riders' ability to complete the race within a specific time, course length, and course conditions on event day. Age/Category Race Duration 6th Grade 45 minutes or less 7th Grade 45 minutes or less: 8th Grade 45 minutes or less: Freshmen 45 to 70 minutes JV2 45 to 70 minutes JV 3 60 to 80 minutes Varsity 75-90 minutes +

ABILITY BASED RACING

Middle School Categories

- Girls Level 1, grades 6-8 (1 lap)
- Girls Level 2, grades 6-8 (2 laps)
- Girls Level 3, grades 7/8 (2 laps)
- Boys Level 1, grade 6 (1 lap)
- Boys Level 1, grade 7 (1 lap)
- Boys Level 1, grade 8 (1 lap)
- Boys Level 2, grades 6/7 (2 laps)
- Boys Level 2, grade 8 (2 laps)
- Boys Level 3, grades 7/8 (2 laps)

Middle School Placement (2020)

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Level 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys and Girls Grade 6th-8th new to racing; Boys and Girls Grades 6-8 who did not qualify for Level 2 or 3.
Level 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys grade 8 who finished any race between 10% and 70% Boys grade 7 who finished any race between 10% and 80% Girls grade 7 or 8 who finished any 6 or 7 grade girls race between 10% and 65%
Level 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boys grade 7 who finished any 6th grade boys race in the top 20% goes to Level 3. Boys grade 8 who finished any 7th grade boys race in the top 30% goes to Level 3 Girls grade 7 or 8 who finished any 6-8 grade girls race in the top 35% goes to Level 3.

Middle School Placement (2021 and Beyond)

Level 1	Boys and Girls Grade 6th-8th new to racing; MS Level 1 boy or girl who did not qualify for Level 2.
Level 2	MS Girl who finished any Level 1 race between 10%- 65% in the prior year; MS Girl Level 2 who did not qualify for Level 3; 7th grade boy who finished any MS Level 1 in top 11- 65% in prior year; 8th grade boy who finished any Level 1 race between 16- 70% in prior year; Returning 7th-8th grade Level 2 boys that did not qualify for Level 3.
Level 3	MS Girl who finished any Level 1 race in the top 10% in the prior year; MS Girl who finished any Level 2 race in top 35% in the prior year; 7th grade boy who finished any MS Level 1 race in top 10% in prior year; 8th grade boy who finished any MS Level 1 race in top 15% in prior year; 7th-8th grade MS Level 2 boys that finished in the top 50% of any races in the

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	prior year. Returning MS Girl or Boy that raced Level 3
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High School Defined

“High School” applies to student-athletes in grades 9-12 in the Fall of 2020. 9th graders in a “middle school” or “junior high school” compete in the freshman category at the high school level.

High School Categories

Freshman (for 9th graders, may include racers with limited or no racing experience, typically complete 2 laps, point value for individual and team scoring begins at 500 points and descends).

JV 2 (for 10th-12th grade boys beginning their racing career with little or no racing experience and/or those who have not qualified for and/or are not seeking higher levels of competition with heavier workloads, typically complete 2 laps, point value for individual and team scoring begins at 500 points and descends). There will be no JV2 for girls in 2020.

JV 3 (for 10th-12th grade boys and girls with racing experience who have qualified for and/or are seeking higher levels of competition with heavier workloads, typically completes 2 laps for girls and 3 laps for boys, point value for individual and team scoring begins at 540 points and descends, placement criteria below).

Varsity (for 10th-12th graders with racing experience who have qualified for and are seeking the highest levels of competition with heaviest workloads, typically complete 3 laps for girls and 4 laps for boys, point value for individual and team scoring begins at 570 points and descends, placement criteria below).

High School Placement

The following are mandatory rider placements based on past Arkansas League results. Riders may submit petitions for situations outside of these placements.

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FOR 2022 SEASON

Freshman	9th graders
JV2	All 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories
JV3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 10th-12th grade JV3 boys and girls who did not qualify for Varsity;● 10th grade boys and girls who finished any 2 Freshman races in the top 50% OR any 1 Freshman race in the top 50% AND finished Freshman Overall in the top 50%;● 11th – 12th grade boys and girls who finished any 2 JV2 races in the top 50% OR any 1 JV2 race in the top 50% AND finished JV2 Overall in the top 50%;
Varsity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 10th -12th grade boys and girls who finished any 2 JV3 races in the top 30% OR any 1 JV3 race in the top 30% AND finished JV3 Overall in the top 30%● Returning riders who raced Varsity in the previous season

FOR 2023 SEASON

Freshman	9th graders
JV2	All 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories
JV3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 10th-12th grade JV3 boys and girls who did not qualify for Varsity;● 10th grade boys and girls who finished any 2

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	<p>Freshman races in the top 50% OR finished Freshman Overall in the top 55%;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 11th-12th grade boys and girls who finished any 2 JV2 races in the top 45% OR finished JV2 Overall in the top 50%.
Varsity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 10th -12th grade boys and girls who finished any 2 JV3 races in the top 30% OR finished JV3 Overall in the top 35%;● Returning riders who raced Varsity in the previous season

High School Petition Path

- Girl or Boy grade 9 with proven Arkansas League Middle School and/or outside racing results can petition to race JV2
- Girl or Boy grade 10-12 placed in JV2 can petition to race JV3
- Girl or Boy grade 10-12 placed in JV3 can petition to race Varsity

ABILITY-BASED RACING RULES

Our racing programs will focus on fun, fitness, skills, responsible trail etiquette and sportsmanship. **OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE WILL BE TO KEEP IT FUN.** Our goal is to retain these boys and girls in our programs, and the best way to accomplish this is by providing them with a positive experience at practices and league events.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

There will be three middle school categories for boys and girls, based on their current grade. Each grade, when field sizes get above 50, will split into ability levels according. The number of levels is determined by the category size. (6, 7 and 8).

In cases where the combined field size for all middle school racers of one wave is small, the racers may be started together. The decision will be made by the Chief Referee and Race Director based on the venue characteristics and the number of racers, and only if combining the categories does not adversely affect the safety of the student athletes. Racers will be scored within their category, and there will always be separate podiums by category.

Moving between middle school grade categories is not permitted.

All middle school categories will have an individual race podium (1st - 5th place). Race day medals will be given to the top five finishers in each category, and a "Florida Strong" jersey will be awarded to each winner, which may be worn at any future middle school race at the student-athletes' discretion.

Middle school racers will typically complete one lap of the high school race loop, with an expected completion time between 25 and 45 minutes. In the instance where the high school loop is deemed to be inappropriate for middle school racers by the Race Director and Chief Course Marshal, middle school racers may compete on a different loop.

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There will be no tracking of series overall standings for the middle school categories and leaders' jerseys will not be awarded to middle school racers.

Middle school points will not apply to high school team points. Middle-school students may not compete in or petition to upgrade into high school categories.

Middle school club practices need not occur 3-4 times per week; 1 to 2 practices per week is acceptable and appropriate. Strict coaching ratios must be applied when managing middle school practices.

Middle school student parents are strongly encouraged to obtain NICA coach licenses (Level 1 at minimum) to assist in managing middle school programs.

TIER CATEGORIES

There are 14 ability-based categories:

Boys Categories	Girls Categories
6 th Grade	6 th Grade
7 th Grade	7 th Grade
8 th Grade	8 th Grade
Freshman	Freshman
JV2	JV2
JV1	JV1
Varsity	Varsity

CATEGORY PLACEMENT STANDARDS

Category placement guidelines and policies are designed to facilitate and promote fair, safe, and challenging competition. Student-athletes do not choose their category but are placed into categories according to the following standards and criteria.

Categories are based on grade level, gender and/or ability. A student-athletes prior performance may factor into placement. Individual race results and a student's end-of-season overall standings dictate placement from season to season.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Florida

To calculate the finishing percentile, for each separate race the finishing place is divided by the total number of riders, including DNFs, and the quotient is then multiplied by 100. Do not round off the percentile up or down.

Students should discuss their racing categories with their coaches well in advance of the racing season to determine if submitting a petition might be appropriate.

Students who did not compete in the prior year and have no results are placed into the category that corresponds to their grade level, except that 10th-12th graders with no prior results are placed into Junior Varsity 2.

Petitions for exceptions to the category placement criteria are limited for each grade level to certain categories.

Middle-school students may not compete in or petition to upgrade into high school categories.

CATEGORY PLACEMENT CRITERIA

Placement criteria, excluding petitions, are as follows:

6 th Grade	6 th graders only
7 th Grade	7 th graders only
8 th Grade	8 th graders only
Freshman	9 th graders only
JV 2	All 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories.
JV 1	10th grade Boys and Girls who: a. Placed in the top 25% in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or b. Placed in the top 30% of the Freshman overall season standings in the prior year. 10 th – 12 th grade Boys and Girls who:

Appendix B – League Exceptions Florida

	<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year, orb. Placed in the top 30% of the JV2 overall season standings in the prior year, orc. Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.
Varsity	10 th – 12 th grade Boys and Girls who: <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races in the prior year, orb. Placed in the top 30% of the JV1 overall season standings in the prior year, orc. Raced Varsity the prior year.

PETITIONING FOR A PLACEMENT CRITERIA EXCEPTION

In general, exceptions to the Placement Criteria are discouraged and should be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. Petition upgrade options are limited to the following:

1. 9th graders may petition to race Junior Varsity 1 or Varsity;
2. 10th, 11th and 12th graders may petition to race Junior Varsity 1 or Varsity.

Student-athletes must compete in appropriate competitive peer groups and to prevent strategic gamesmanship in category placement. Petitions for an upgrade in categories should, therefore, only be granted upon a showing that:

- The student-athlete’s performance and experience level clearly exceeds the level of all other riders competing in the rider’s designated category.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Florida

Placement Criteria — i.e., no other rider in the same category has a reasonable chance of being competitive with the student seeking the upgrade; and

- The upgrade will place the student into a more appropriate competitive peer group.

Successful petitions are subject to revocation at any time at the League director's sole discretion, in which event the student shall be placed in the appropriate category according to the Placement Criteria. Individual and team penalties may be assessed, at the League director's sole discretion, for any change in categories for a rider that is subsequently revoked on grounds that the change was contrary to NICA and League policies.

Petitions for an exception to the Placement Criteria and request for placement in another category may be submitted to the League director or the League's Rules Committee or any other individual or committee designated by the League director or the League's board of directors. To petition for such an exception, students must complete and submit the petition form found at the League's website according to the instructions provided on the form.

The petition requires a coach's comments and signature. If there is no coach, the student must contact the League director and a coach advisor will be appointed. A parent may be approved as the advisor. The League director or the League's Rules Committee shall consider the petition and render a decision in a timely manner.

Petitions must be submitted with sufficient time for consideration. Last-minute petitions cannot be rushed. Allow a minimum of five business days from the date of submission for a decision on the petition. Pending the outcome of the petition, the petitioning student must compete in the category determined by the Placement Criteria.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Maryland

MARYLAND Ability-based RACING RULES

Our racing programs will focus on fun, fitness, skills, responsible trail etiquette and sportsmanship. OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE WILL BE TO KEEP IT FUN. Our goal is to retain these boys and girls in our programs, and the best way to accomplish this is by providing them with a positive experience at practices and league events.

Middle School

There will be three middle school categories for boys and girls, initially based on their current grade, and each grade is split into ability levels according. The number of levels is determined by the category size. (6, 7 and 8).

In cases where the combined field size for all middle school racers of one wave is small, the racers may be started together. The decision will be made by the Chief Referee and Race Director based on the venue characteristics and the number of racers, and only if combining the categories does not adversely affect the safety of the student-athletes. Racers will be scored within their category, and there will always be separate podiums by category.

Moving between middle school grade categories will be permitted through petition process only.

All middle school categories will have an individual race podium (1st - 5th place). Race day medals will be given to the top five finishers in each category, and a "MD Strong" jersey will be awarded to each winner, which may be worn at any future middle school race at the student-athletes' discretion.

Middle school racers will typically complete 1-2 laps of the designated race loop, with earned lap cutoff times designed to ensure an expected completion time of 45 minutes for the average rider. In the instance where a high school loop is presented but deemed to be inappropriate for middle school racers by the Race Director and Chief Course Marshal, middle school racers may compete on a different loop.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Maryland

There will be no tracking of series overall standings for the middle school categories and leaders' jerseys will not be awarded to middle school racers.

Middle school points will not apply to high school team points. However, if a middle school racer is granted an upgrade into the JV3 or JV2 category (see section below), then that racer's individual points earned from that point forward will apply to that racer's high school team points.

Middle school team points will be tallied at each race using the HS points model, with team awards given to the top 3. Middle school team points shall not be cumulative; no season overall awards will be granted.

HS Staging

Staging for the first race of the season will be done via CPT for returning riders and random draw for new riders, and fields split approx. in half, and subsequent races will have call-ups for all riders based on overall results from the previous races. For any combined fields, call-ups will be based on the order of finish times from the previous race across all fields.

MS Staging

Call ups based on previous race results, not overall.

Middle school club practices need not occur 3-4 times per week; 1 to 2 practices per week is acceptable and appropriate.

Strict coaching ratios must be applied when managing middle school practices.

Middle school student parents are strongly encouraged to obtain NICA coach licenses (Level 1 at minimum) to assist in managing middle school programs.

Maryland Middle School Category Upgrades

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Middle school student-athletes in grades 7 and 8 will be allowed to petition for a category upgrade (subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school students) to race in the JV3 high school category as follows:

1. All petitions will be granted or denied at the discretion of the Petition Committee, based on the committee's assessment of a student-athlete's psychological and physiological readiness.
2. Minimum criteria to be considered for an upgrade petition to JV3 are:
 - Finish time would put you in top 20% of JV3 racers' first lap (at one or more NICA races);
 - Extensive racing experience outside of NICA (please provide race resume, national or regional)
3. All petitions must be submitted through the Team Director or Head Coach to the League Director and are subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school petition requests.
4. There will be no forced upgrade/category placement for middle school student-athletes.
5. At the beginning of each season all middle school athletes will be “reset” to the middle school category based on their current grade in the Pit Zone.
6. Any middle school student racing in a high school category will be allowed to compete for both the individual awards (race and HS series), as well as contributing points to his or her HS team's total.

Tier Categories

There are 14 ability-based categories - boys and girls: Varsity, JV1, JV2, JV3, 6A/B, 7A/B, 8A/B

Category Placement Rules

Category)	Ability-Based Rules
6 A/B	←-
7 A/B	←-
8 A/B	←-

Appendix B – League Exceptions Maryland

JV3	9th & 10th graders who are new; 7th – 8th graders who successfully petition into the category <i>7A and 8A riders MAY petition up to JV3 IF their lap times would fall within top 20% of JV3 category</i>
JV2	11th – 12th grade riders who are new to the league; or Raced JV2 in the prior year but did not qualify for JV1 or Varsity.
JV1	9th - 10th graders who: Placed in the top 20% in any two JV3 races in the prior year; or placed in the top 20% in the overall JV3 season standings in the prior year; or Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity; or Successfully petition into the category. 11th – 12th graders who: Placed in the top 30% in any two JV2 races in the prior year; or placed in the top 35% in the overall JV2 season standings in the prior year; or Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity; or Successfully petition into the category.
Varsity	9th – 12th graders who: Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races in the prior year; or placed in the top 30% in the overall JV1 season standing in the prior year; or Raced Varsity in the previous year; or Successfully petition into the category.

COURSE LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY

The ideal NICA cross-country racecourse has a circuit short enough to require multiple laps for a race and includes terrain that can be completed by beginner riders. The number of laps should be determined according to the riders' ability to complete the race within a specific time. The event times should be:

45 minutes or less for Middle School boys and girls;

45 to 90 minutes, JV3 and JV2 boys and girls;

60 to 100 minutes, JV1 boys and girls;

90 to 120 minutes, Varsity boys and girls.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Maryland

TEAM COMPOSITION

The following exceptions to team position apply to the MD league, with all other rules remaining in effect:

- If five or more student-athletes are from the same school, they must be subdivided into a separate team and scored as representatives of that school. These same-school student-athletes may submit a joint petition, approved by each of them, to the League director for an exception to this rule.

Following:

- Upon creation of a new school-based team within the geographic region of an established composite team, students who have completed a full season on the composite team prior to the subdivision may submit a petition to the League Director to “grandfather” into the composite team for one full season
- Petitions for exceptions to this rule are approved at the sole discretion of the league director, taking the impact on competition and best interest of the student into consideration.

POINT SYSTEM

Points are awarded to all finishers. There is a 40-point bonus for JV1 racers and a 75-point bonus for Varsity racers. Racers that do not finish a race (DNF) will not be awarded any points for that race. See Appendix A for the Individual Point Scale. In the event of a successful petition to change categories, individual points earned in one category do not transfer to another category. All points earned in the lower category remain intact for that rider. A student-athlete’s points scored toward team standings prior to the change in categories remain unaffected. Students who successfully petition to be placed in a lower category are still eligible to score individual and team points in that lower category for the duration of the season.

RACERS AND COACHES ONLY ON THE COURSE

Only student-athletes entered for competition in the event and their team coaches may ride the designated racecourse at times when no race is currently taking place. An event is taking place at all times after the start of a race until the time the last rider in that race

Appendix B – League Exceptions Maryland

finishes. No coach is permitted to ride the course during an event. A violation of this rule will result in a team-level penalty against the associated team of the offender: First Offense: 25-point penalty deducted from team score on race day Second offense: 50-point penalty deducted from team score on race day Third offense: 100-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

FEEDERS MUST USE THE ZONE

Coaches, parents, or other volunteers may only hand riders food and drinks in the feed zone. All feeders who are not certified coaches must be registered as volunteers at the event. Riders will be penalized for accepting food or drink outside of the feed zone boundaries. Riders must discard bottles in a safe manner and in the vicinity of the zone.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES NO INTERFERENCE WITH OTHER STUDENT-ATHLETES

Feeding one student-athlete must not cause other riders to slow down or veer off course. A violation of this rule will result in a team-level penalty against the associated team of the offender:

First Offense: 25-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

Second offense: 50-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

Third offense: 100-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

FOOD AND DRINK ONLY

Student-athletes may not accept items (such as tools, gear, or parts) within the feed zone boundaries during races, or the outside assistance penalty will apply (Rule 4.6). If a student needs to refill a hydration pack, they must do so without outside assistance and out of the travel lanes of the feed zone.

CLOTHING EXCEPTION

In the event of cold or inclement weather, clothing may be handed to or taken from racers at the start line or in the feed zone only. Clothing may not be handed over anywhere else on the racecourse.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Missouri

2022 Missouri Racing Rules:

Category placement for 2022 will be determined by Tables 1 and 2 for middle and high school respectively. 6th grade boys will be randomly assigned to waves for race #1. Race categories or category placement standards can be modified by the MICL Rules Committee based on the number of 2022 student athlete registrations.

Transfer between categories (A, B, C) within a grade level is allowed at any time. Transfers up or down grade levels will be considered by a coach initiated league petition only (missourimtb.org). Riders will be allowed to keep their series points if they transfer from C to B or from B to A. Points will be lost if they transfer from A to B or from B to C.

6th and 7th grade categories will have an individual race podium (1st - 5th place). Race day medals will be given to the top five finishers in each category, and a "Mighty MO" jersey will be awarded to each winner, which may be worn at any future middle school race at the student-athletes' discretion.

8th-12th grade categories will have an individual race podium (1st - 5th place) and a leader's jersey will be awarded to the current total series points leader that may be worn in the next race. The final leader's jersey at the last race in the series will be awarded to the athlete with the highest series points total with the lowest race score dropped.

Race Staging:

Mass start races will be staged with 100% call-ups for all categories. Call up order for race #1 will be determined by the series results from 2021 followed by bib number order for new racers. For all other races in the series, the series points total with one dropped race will be used to establish the call up order. 6th and 7th grade Mighty MO jersey winners will get the first position at the next race followed by the series ranking.

Team Scoring:

Appendix B – League Exceptions Missouri

9th-12th grade categories will receive points toward the team score according to Table 3. Middle school points will not count toward team scores. Composite teams will be scored as either Division 1 or Division 2 according to the number of high school students on the team. Trophies will be awarded to the top 3 scoring teams for each race. Series overall trophies will be awarded to the top 3 teams based on their series point total with the lowest race dropped (best 4 race scores).

Table 1. Category Placement Table for Middle School

6t Grade Boys (A)	6th grade boys who placed in the top 30% of race #1.
6th Grade Boys (B)	6th grade boys who placed in the top 70% of race #1 and don't qualify for A.
6th Grade Boys (C)	All 6th grade boys that do not qualify for A or B.
6th Grade Girls	All 6th grade girls.
7th Grade Boys (A)	7th grade boys who a. Raced in 6A the previous year, or b. Placed in the top 20% of 6B overall season standings the prior year.
7th Grade Boys (B)	7th grade boys who placed in the top 70% of 6B overall season standings the prior year and were not placed in 7A
7th Grade Boys (C)	All other 7th grade boys who do not qualify for A or B
7th Grade Girls	All 7th grade girls

Appendix B – League Exceptions Missouri

8th Grade Boys (A)	8th grade boys who a. Raced in 7A the prior year or b. Placed in the top 20% of 7B overall season standings the prior year.
8th Grade Boys (B)	8th grade boys who a. Raced in 7B the prior year, or b. Placed in the top 25% of 7C overall season standings the prior year.
8th Grade Boys (C)	All other 8th grade boys who do not qualify for A or B
8th Grade Girls (A)	8th grade girls who placed in the top 40% of 7th grade girls overall season standings the prior year
8th Grade Girls (B)	All 8th grade girls who do not qualify for A.

Table 2. Category Placement for High School:

Freshman Boys (A)	9th grade boys who a. Raced in 8A the prior year, or b. Placed in the top 20% of 8B overall season standings the prior year
Freshman Boys (B)	9th grade boys who a. Raced in 8B the prior year, or b. Placed in the top 25% of 8C overall season standings the prior year.

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Freshman Boys (C)	All 9th grade boys who do not qualify for A or B.
Sophomore Boys (A)	10th grade boys who a. Raced in Freshman A the prior year, or b. Placed in the top 20% of Freshman B overall season standings.
Sophomore Boys (B)	All 10th grade boys who do not qualify for A.
Freshman/Sophomore Girls (A)	9th - 10th grade girls who a. Placed in the top 50% of Freshman/Sophomore category overall season standings the prior year, or b. Placed in the top 50% of 8th grade girls overall season standings the prior year.
Freshman/Sophomore Girls (B)	All 9th and 10th grade girls who do not qualify for A.
JV Boys (B)	11th – 12th grade Boys who a) Placed in Sophomore B in the prior year, or b) Raced JV in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Missouri

<p>Varsity Boys (A)</p>	<p>11th – 12th grade Boys who: a) Placed in the top 20% of the Sophomore B category overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Placed in the top 20% of the JV category overall season standings in the prior year, or c) Raced Varsity the prior year, or d) Raced Sophomore A the prior year.</p>
<p>Varsity Girls (A)</p>	<p>11th and 12th grade girls</p>

Table 3. Points table

Place	A	B	C
1	500	300	200
2	490	294	196
3	481	289	192
4	472	283	189
5	464	278	186
6	456	274	182
7	448	269	179
8	441	265	176

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9	434	260	174
10	427	256	171
11	420	252	168
12	414	248	166
13	408	245	163
14	402	241	161
15	396	238	158
16	390	234	156
17	385	231	154
18	380	228	152
19	375	225	150
20	370	222	148
21	365	219	146
22	360	216	144
23	356	214	142
24	352	211	141
25	348	209	139
26	344	206	138
27	340	204	136
28	336	202	134
29	332	199	133
30	329	197	132

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31	326	196	130
32	323	194	129
33	320	192	128
34	317	190	127
35	314	188	126
36	311	187	124
37	308	185	123
38	306	184	122
39	304	182	122
40	302	181	121
41	300	180	120
42	298	179	119
43	296	178	118
44	294	176	118
45	292	175	117
46	290	174	116
47	289	173	116
48	288	173	115
49	287	172	115
50	286	172	114

Appendix B – League Exceptions Nebraska

Category Placement for Nebraska League

6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
Freshman	9th graders only
JV 2	All 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories
JV 1	<p>10th grade Boys and Girls who :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placed in the top 25% in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the Freshman overall season standings in the prior year <p>10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV2 overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity. <p>9th grade Boys and Girls who successfully petition into the category.</p>
Varsity	<p>10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV1 overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Raced Varsity the prior year; c) Successfully petition into the category.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Nevada North

Category Placement Rules

6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
Freshman	8th grade Boys and Girls who successfully petition into the category 9th graders
JV 2	All 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories
JV 1	8-9th grade Boys and Girls who successfully petition into the category. 10th grade Boys and Girls who : a) Placed in the top 25% in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the Freshman overall season standings in the prior year 10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV2 overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.
Varsity	10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who: a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV1 overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Raced Varsity the prior year; c) Successfully petition into the category.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Nevada South

Category Placement Rules

6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
Freshman	8th grade Boys and Girls who successfully petition into the category 9th graders
JV 2	All 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories
JV 1	8-9th grade Boys and Girls who successfully petition into the category. 10th grade Boys and Girls who : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placed in the top 25% in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the Freshman overall season standings in the prior year 10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV2 overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Raced JV1 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.
Varsity	10th – 12th grade Boys and Girls who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the JV1 overall season standings in the prior year, or b) Raced Varsity the prior year; c) Successfully petition into the category.

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

NEW JERSEY MIDDLE SCHOOL RACING RULES

Our middle school programs will focus on fun, fitness, skills, responsible trail etiquette and sportsmanship. OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE WILL BE TO KEEP IT FUN. Our goal is to retain these boys and girls in our programs, and the best way to accomplish this is by providing them with a positive experience at practices and league events.

There will be three middle school categories for boys and girls, based on their current grade (6, 7 and 8).

In cases where the combined field size for all middle school racers of one gender is small, the racers may be started together. The decision will be made by the Chief Referee and Race Director based on the venue characteristics and the number of racers, and only if combining the categories does not adversely affect the safety of the student-athletes. Racers will be scored within their category, and there will always be separate podiums by category.

Moving between middle school grade categories is not permitted.

All middle school categories will have an individual race podium (1st - 5th place). Race day medals will be given to the top five finishers in each category, and a "NJ Strong" jersey will be awarded to each winner, which may be worn at any future middle school race at the student-athletes' discretion.

Middle school racers will typically complete two laps of the designated race loop, with bonus lap cutoff times designed to ensure an expected completion time of 45 minutes for the average rider. In the instance where a high school loop is presented but deemed to be inappropriate for middle school racers by the Race Director and Chief Course Marshal, middle school racers may compete on a different loop.

There will be no tracking of series overall standings for the middle school categories and leaders' jerseys will not be awarded to middle school racers.

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

Middle school points will not apply to high school team points. However, if a middle school racer is granted an upgrade into the Freshman category (see section below), then that racer's individual points will apply to that racer's high school team points.

Middle school team points will be tallied at each race using the freshman points model, with team awards given to the top 3. Middle school team points shall not be cumulative; no season overall awards will be granted.

Staging for the first race of the season will be done via a random draw, but subsequent races will have call-ups for the first 20 riders based on the results from the previous races and the remaining field will be staged via a random draw. For combined fields, call-ups will be based on the order of finish times from the previous race across all fields. Middle school club practices need not occur 3-4 times per week; 1 to 2 practices per week is acceptable and appropriate.

Strict coaching ratios must be applied when managing middle school practices.

Middle school student parents are strongly encouraged to obtain NICA coach licenses (Level 1 at minimum) to assist in managing middle school programs.

New Jersey Middle School Category Upgrades

Middle school student-athletes in grades 7 and 8 will be allowed to petition for a category upgrade (subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school students) to race in the Freshman high school category as follows:

- All petitions will be granted or denied at the discretion of the Petition Committee, based on the committee's assessment of a student-athlete's psychological and physiological readiness.
- Minimum criteria to be considered for an upgrade petition to Freshman are:
- Finish time would put you in top 20% of Freshman racers' first lap (at one or more NICA races); OR

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

- Extensive racing experience outside of NICA (please provide race resume and national or regional ranking information with your petition).
- All petitions must be submitted through the Team Director or Head Coach to the League Director and are subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school petition requests.
- There will be no forced upgrade/category placement for middle school student-athletes.
- At the beginning of each season all middle school athletes will be “reset” to the middle school category based on their current grade in the Pit Zone.
- Any middle school student racing in a high school category will be allowed to compete for both the individual awards (race and series), as well as contributing points to his or her team’s total.

League Tiers

Not applicable in the New Jersey League

Tier Categories

There are 14 ability-based categories:

Boys Categories

6th Grade

7th Grade

8th Grade

Freshman

Junior Varsity 3 (JV3)

Junior Varsity 4 (JV4)

Varsity

Girls Categories

6th Grade

7th Grade

8th Grade

Freshmen

Junior Varsity 3 (JV3)

Junior Varsity 4 (JV4)

Varsity

Tier 2 Divisions

Not applicable in the New Jersey League

Category Placement Rules

B. Placement Criteria

Placement criteria are as follows:

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

Category

Eligible Riders

6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
Freshman	9th graders; 7th – 8th graders who: Successfully petition into the category.
JV3	10th – 12th grade riders who: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Are new to the league; or Raced JV3 in the prior year but did not qualify for JV4 or Varsity.
JV4	9 th – 10 th graders who: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Placed in the top 20% in any two Freshman races in the prior year; or Placed in the top 20% in any single Freshman race and placed in the top 20% in the overall Freshman season standings in the prior year; or Raced JV4 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity; or Successfully petition into the category. 11th – 12th graders who: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Placed in the top 30% in any two JV3 races in the prior year; or Placed in the top 35% in any single JV3 race and placed in the

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

	<p>top 35% in the overall JV3 season standings in the prior year; or</p> <p>c. Raced JV4 in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity; or</p> <p>d. Successfully petition into the category.</p>
Varsity	<p>9th – 12th graders who:</p> <p>a. Placed in the top 25% in any two JV4 races in the prior year; or</p> <p>b. Placed in the top 30% in any single JV4 race and placed in the top 30% in the overall JV4 season standing in the prior year; or</p> <p>c. Raced in Varsity the previous year; or</p> <p>d. Successfully petition into the category.</p>

COURSE LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY

The ideal NICA cross-country racecourse has a circuit short enough to require multiple laps for a race and includes terrain that can be completed by beginner riders. The number of laps should be determined according to the riders' ability to complete the race within a specific time. The event times should be:

- a. Middle school: 45 minutes or less for Middle School boys and girls;
- b. 45 to 90 minutes, Freshman and JV3 boys and girls;
- c. 60 to 100 minutes, JV4 boys and girls;
- d. 90 to 120 minutes, Varsity boys and girls.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The following exceptions to team position apply to the New Jersey league, with all other rules remaining in effect:

- If five or more student-athletes are from the same school, they must be subdivided into a separate team and scored

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

as representatives of that school. These same-school student-athletes may submit a joint petition, approved by each of them, to the League director for an exception to this rule. following:

1. Upon creation of a new school-based team within the geographic region of an established composite team, students who have completed a full season on the composite team prior to the subdivision may submit a petition to the League Director to “grandfather” into the composite team for the remainder of their time in the league.
2. Petitions for exceptions to this rule are approved at the sole discretion of the league director, taking the impact on competition and best interest of the student into consideration.
3. Teams of fifteen (15) or more student-athletes, excluding any middle school riders must be subdivided into separate, independently scoring teams of eleven or fewer riders each. Upon subdivision, student-athletes shall be placed on teams based on the following:
 - a. First — Student-athletes attending the same school must be on the same subdivided team; and
 - b. Second — Student-athletes shall be placed on subdivided teams according to the proximity of their homes.

POINT SYSTEM

Points are awarded to all finishers. There is a 40-point bonus for JV4 racers and a 75-point bonus for Varsity racers. Racers that do not finish a race (DNF) will not be awarded any points for that race.

See Appendix A for the Individual Point Scale.

In the event of a successful petition to change categories, individual points earned in one category do not transfer to another category. All points earned in the lower category remain intact for that rider. A student-athlete’s points scored toward team standings prior to the

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

change in categories remain unaffected. Students who successfully petition to be placed in a lower category are still eligible to score individual and team points in that lower category for the duration of the season.

RACERS AND COACHES ONLY ON THE COURSE

Only student-athletes entered for competition in the event and their team coaches may ride the designated racecourse at times when no race is currently taking place. An event is taking place at all times after the start of a race until the time the last rider in that race finishes. No coach is permitted to ride the course during an event.

A violation of this rule will result in a team-level penalty against the associated team of the offender:

First Offense: 25-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

Second offense: 50-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

Third offense: 100-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

FEEDERS MUST USE THE ZONE

Coaches, parents, or other volunteers may only hand riders food and drinks in the feed zone. All feeders who are not certified coaches must be registered as volunteers at the event. Riders will be penalized for accepting food or drink outside of the feed zone boundaries. Riders must discard bottles in a safe manner and in the vicinity of the zone.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

NO INTERFERENCE WITH OTHER STUDENT-ATHLETES

Feeding one student-athlete must not cause other riders to slow down or veer off course.

A violation of this rule will result in a team-level penalty against the associated team of the offender:

First Offense: 25-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

Second offense: 50-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

Third offense: 100-point penalty deducted from team score on race day

FOOD AND DRINK ONLY

Student-athletes may not accept items (such as tools, gear, or parts) within the feed zone boundaries during races, or the outside assistance penalty will apply (Rule 4.6). If a student needs to refill a hydration pack, they must do so without outside assistance and out of the travel lanes of the zone.

CLOTHING EXCEPTION

In the event of cold or inclement weather, clothing may be handed to or taken from racers in the feed zone only. Clothing may not be handed over anywhere else on the racecourse.

New Jersey Appendix A – Individual Points Scale

PLACE	MS (for team calcs), FROSH & JV3	JV 4	VARSITY
1	500	540	575
2	490	530	565
3	481	521	556
4	472	512	547
5	464	504	539
6	456	496	531
7	448	488	523
8	441	481	516
9	434	474	509
10	427	467	502
11	420	460	495

Appendix B – League Exceptions New Jersey

12	414	454	489
13	408	448	483
14	402	442	477
15	396	436	471
16	390	430	465
17	385	425	460
18	380	420	455
19	375	415	450
20	370	410	445
21	365	405	440
22	360	400	435
23	356	396	431
24	352	392	427
25	348	388	423
26	344	384	419
27	340	380	415
28	336	376	411
29	332	372	407
30	329	369	404
31	326	366	401
32	323	363	398
33	320	360	395
34	317	357	392
35	314	354	389
36	311	351	386

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37	308	348	383
38	306	346	381
39	304	344	379
40	302	342	377
41	300	340	375
42	298	338	373
43	296	336	371
44	294	334	369
45	292	332	367
46	290	330	365
47	289	329	364
48	288	328	363
49	287	327	362
50	286	326	361
51	285	325	360
52	284	324	359
53	283	323	358
54	282	322	357
55	281	321	356
56	280	320	355

Appendix B – League Exceptions Oregon

Middle School Categories

- MS-6 Girls
- MS-7 Girls
- MS-8 Girls
- MS-A Girls
- MS-6 Boys
- MS-7 Boys
- MS-8 Boys
- MS-7A Boys
- MS-8A Boys

Middle School Placement

MS-6 Boys and Girls	All 6 th Grade Boys and Girls
MS-7 Boys and Girls	All 7 th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for the Boys MS-7A or Girls MS-A category.
MS-8 Boys and Girls	All 8 th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for the Boys MS-8A or Girls MS-A category.
MS-A Girls	Any 7 th Grade Girl who finished in the top 25% of the Girls MS-6 category, plus any 8 th Grade Girl who finished in the top 50% of Girls MS-7 category.
MS-7A Boys	Any 7 th Grade Boy who finished in the top 25% of the Boys MS-6 category.
MS-8A Boys	Any 8 th Grade Boy who finished in the top 25% of the Boys MS-7 category, plus all boys in the MS-7A category.

High School Categories

Appendix B – League Exceptions Oregon

- Freshman Girls
- JV1 Girls
- JV2 Girls
- Varsity Girls
- Freshman Boys
- JV1 Boys
- JV2 Boys
- Varsity Boys

High School Placement

Freshman Boys and Girls	All 9th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for JV or other categories.
JV1 Boys and Girls	All 10 th , 11 th , and 12 th Grade Boys and Girls except those who qualified for other categories. 9 th Grade Boys and Girls who finished in the top 25% of any two MS-A races or finished in the top 30% MS-A categories.
JV2 Boys and Girls	10 th , 11 th and 12 th Grade Boys and Girls who finished in the top 25% of any two JV1 races or in the top 30% of the JV1 category. 10 th Grade Boys and Girls who finished in the top 25% of any two Freshman races or the top 30% of the Freshman category. 10 th , 11 th and 12 th Grade Boys and Girls who raced in JV2 in the prior year but are not racing Varsity in the present year.
Varsity Boys and Girls	10 th , 11 th and 12 th Grade Boys and Girls who finished in the top 25%

Appendix B – League Exceptions Oregon

	<p>of any JV2 race or finished in the top 30% of the JV2 Categories.</p> <p>10th, 11th and 12th Grade Boys and Girls who finished in the top 10% of any JV1 race or the top 15% of the JV1 category.</p> <p>10th, 11th and 12th Grade Boys and Girls who raced in Varsity in the prior year</p>
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Petition Paths

- 6th Grade Girls and Boys with a proven NCICL record and/or outside results may petition to race up to MS-A Girls or MS-7A Boys.
- 7th Grade Girls and Boys with a proven NCICL record and/or outside results may petition to race up to MS-A Girls or MS-8A Boys.
- 8th Grade Girls and Boys with a proven NCICL record and/or outside results may petition to race up to MS-A Girls or MS-8A Boys or Freshman.
- 9th Grade Girls and Boys with a proven NCICL record and/or outside results may petition to race up to JV1 or JV2.
- 10th, 11th, and 12th Grade Girls and Boys with a proven NCICL record and/or outside results may petition to race up to JV2 or Varsity.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Oregon

- Exceptions to Div 1 and Div 2 team size.
- Division I consists of teams with sixteen or more registered racing student-athletes.
- Division II consists of teams with fifteen or fewer registered racing student-athletes.

Exceptions for Composite team size

- Teams are limited to a maximum of fifteen registered riders, excluding middle school riders.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Pennsylvania

League Tiers

Not applicable in the Pennsylvania League

Tier Categories

There are 14 ability-based categories:

Boys Categories	Girls Categories
6th Grade	6th Grade
7th Grade	7th Grade
8th Grade	8th Grade
9 th Grade	9 th Grade
Junior Varsity 2 (JV2)	Junior Varsity 2 (JV2)
Junior Varsity 3 (JV3)	Junior Varsity 3 (JV3)
Varsity	Varsity

Tier 2 Divisions

Not applicable in the Pennsylvania League

Category Placement Rules

Note: upgrades are based only on points from race results and do NOT include bonus points for race attendance, Teen Trail Corps, or any other bonus structure.

Placement Criteria

Placement criteria are as follows:

Category	Eligible Riders
6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
9 th Grade	9th graders and 8th graders who successfully petition into the category
JV2	10th–12th graders.

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JV3

9- 12th graders who:

9th Grade Student-Athletes who:

- a) Placed in the top 10% in any two 9th grade races in the prior year;
- b) Placed in the top 15% of the overall 9th Grade season standings in the prior year; or
- c) Successfully petitions into the category.

JV2 student-athletes who:

- a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year;
- b) Placed in the top 30% of the overall JV2 season standings in the prior year;
- c) Successfully petitions into the category.

JV 3 student-athletes who:

- a) Raced in JV3 the previous year but did not automatically upgrade to Varsity; or

Varsity

9th Graders and JV2 student-athletes who successfully petition into the category.

JV3 student-athletes who:

- a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV3 races in the prior year;
- b) Placed in the top 30% of the overall JV3 season standings in the prior year; or
- c) Successfully petitions into the category.

Varsity student-athlete who raced Varsity the previous year.

Petitioning for a placement criteria exception

Petitions for an exception to the Placement Criteria and requests for placement into another category may be submitted to the league director. Petition forms are available from coaches or the league director.

Petitions require a race resume covering the past 12 months' race activities when requesting a move up in category.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Pennsylvania

The petition requires a coach's comments and signature. If there is no coach, the student must contact the league director and a coach advisor will be appointed. (A parent may be approved as the advisor.) Petitions must be submitted with sufficient time for consideration. Allow a minimum of five business days from the date of submission for a decision on the petition. No exceptions! 2017-2018 Rules & Guidelines 17 Pending the outcome of the petition, the petitioning student must compete in the category determined by the Placement Criteria.

Course Length and Difficulty

The race duration in the schedule below is based on total race time. The number of laps will be determined according to the riders' ability to complete the race within a specific time, course length, and course conditions on event day.

Category	Duration
6th Grade	45 minutes or less
7th Grade	45 minutes or less:
8th Grade	45 minutes or less:
Freshmen	45 to 70 minutes
JV2	45 to 70 minutes
JV 3	60 to 80 minutes
Varsity	75-100 minutes +

Individual Series Scoring

Student-athletes compete against other racers in the same category. Individual scoring is not divided by wave or staging. See categories.

Point System

Points are awarded to all finishers. There is a 50 point bonus for Freshman and Sophomore categories, a 90 point bonus for JV racers and a 125 point bonus for Varsity racers. A single point is awarded to all riders that start a race but do not complete the race.

In the event of a successful petition to change categories under Rule 3.6, individual points earned in one category do not transfer to another category. All points earned in the lower category remain intact for that rider. The upgraded rider does not lose standing in the lower category, and can earn new points in the new category. A

Appendix B – League Exceptions Pennsylvania

student-athlete's points scored toward team standings prior to the change in categories remain unaffected. Students who successfully petition to be placed in a lower category are still eligible score team points in that lower category for the duration of the season. Students who successfully petition to a lower category are eligible to score points in that new category standings for the duration of the season.

See Modified PENNSYLVANIA APPENDIX A below.

Point bonus for starting all races

All student-athletes who start each and every race in a season, regardless of category, shall be awarded an additional 25 Season Bonus Points.

If a race is cancelled, it will not count as a season race and Season Bonus Points shall still be awarded if all other season races are started.

Season Bonus Points are awarded to individuals following the calculation of overall series points after the final race. Season Bonus Points are not added to points scored in the final race nor are they added into the team score.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Pennsylvania

PENNSYLVANIA APPENDIX A

Place	Middle School	Freshman & JV2	JV3	Varsity
1	450	500	540	575
2	440	490	530	565
3	431	481	521	556
4	422	472	512	547
5	414	464	504	539
6	406	456	496	531
7	398	448	488	523
8	391	441	481	516
9	384	434	474	509
10	377	427	467	502
11	370	420	460	495
12	364	414	454	489
13	358	408	448	483
14	352	402	442	477
15	346	396	436	471
16	340	390	430	465
17	335	385	425	460
18	330	380	420	455

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19	325	375	415	450
20	320	370	410	445
21	315	365	405	440
22	310	360	400	435
23	306	356	396	431
24	302	352	392	427
25	298	348	388	423
26	294	344	384	419
27	290	340	380	415
28	286	336	376	411
29	282	332	372	407
30	279	329	369	404
31	276	326	366	401
32	273	323	363	398
33	270	320	360	395
34	267	317	357	392
35	264	314	354	389
36	261	311	351	386
37	258	308	348	383
38	256	306	346	381
39	254	304	344	379

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40	252	302	342	377
41	250	300	340	375
42	248	298	338	373
43	246	296	336	371
44	244	294	334	369
45	242	292	332	367
46	240	290	330	365
47	239	289	329	364
48	238	288	328	363
49	237	287	327	362
50	236	286	326	361

Awards at each race

Individual medals are awarded at least five places deep at each race, including the State Championships, except in the case of races with 2017-2018 Rules & Guidelines 48 field sizes with fewer than 20 student-athletes, in which case medals are awarded at least three places deep.

Team trophies are awarded at least three places deep in each division at each race, including the State Championships.

Teen Trail Corps awards will be awarded at each event.

Teen Trail Corps (TTC)

A. Tracking

All team hours must be tracked through the League's TTC google spreadsheet

Trail work hours must be quantified by ¼ hour blocks

Appendix B – League Exceptions Pennsylvania

Hours must be submitted by the weekly deadline of 11:59pm Wednesday nights, beginning 1 week before the first race of the season. No backlogged trail hours will count toward TTC awards. Annually, TTC points tracking will conclude on the Wednesday two weeks before the originally scheduled date for the PA Finals weekend.

B. Points

Individual Points

Riders can earn up to 25 bonus points toward their year end individual score. Hours accrued in trail maintenance work will award points in the following manner.

25 points max.

Hour 1-4 = 5 points each Hours 5-9 = 1 point each

Trail work hours must be completed during official team practices, as described in NICA TTC rules, or local trail club work days, and verified by a coach or the trail work organizer.

This status must be achieved annually in order to qualify for bonus points in current season.

b. TTC Captain Bonus

Points are awarded once Speak, Serve, Respect, and Ride patches are earned = 10 bonus points for TTC Captain status.

This status must be achieved annually in order to qualify for bonus points in current season.

All TTC bonus points will be applied at the end of the season, along with the attendance bonus, to the rider's current race category and will be added to any race points totals in order to crown the end of season race champions.

c. Team Points

Team TTC Points and championship will be awarded based on the average amount of TTC hours per team member.

The calculation = total amount of hours the team riders work during the course of the current season divided by the number of riders on the roster as of Sept 30 of the current year.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Pennsylvania

This average will be directly converted to points and multiplied by a factor of 1000. The team points will be capped at maximum of 10,000 points for the year.

C. Awards and Recognition

TTC Individual Leaders will be recognized with leaders jerseys presented on the podiums of the league events.

Individual Leader Jersey per Age Group (not racing category)

The leading team each week will be recognized each weekend of the season via announcements and social media and the top overall male, female, and team will be awarded a TTC Trophy at the year.

Race Venue Rules

No Dogs

No Open Fires

No Grills in Pit Zone — No exceptions to this unless a venue has a designated grill area. Any such area will be denoted on a venue map.

Appendix B – League Exceptions South Carolina

HOMESCHOOL, CHARTER SCHOOL AND ONLINE SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETES

A student that is legitimately enrolled in a homeschool, public charter school, online school, or district alternative school educational program in grades 9-12 may participate as a member of a team for a public school that is otherwise permitted to compete. The student must participate on the team for the public school within whose boundary the permanent residence of the student's parent or guardian is situated.

Non-traditional students must compete on the school-based team they are zoned for if such a team exists. If no team exists, then they may compete on a local composite team subject to the standard composite team rules.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Tennessee

Middle School Experience:

Middle school participation focuses on fun while developing skills, fitness and trail etiquette as the primary goals. Competition is a secondary goal.

All NICA rules, as published in the current handbook apply to the middle school races unless they are specifically addressed here.

Tennessee League Middle School Program

A. Middle School Racing Rules

- 1) There are three middle school categories for both the boys and girls based on their grade — 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.
- 2) Each middle school category will have an individual race podium with series overall standings and leaders' jerseys.
- 3) Middle school points will not apply to team points. However, if a middle school racer is granted an upgrade into a high school category, then that racer's individual points will apply to that racer's high school team points.
- 4) Petitioning to move between middle school categories is not allowed. Petitioning to move up to a high school category is allowed when meeting the upgrade criteria as defined below.
- 5) Racers that finish in the top 10% of their middle school category will be allowed to submit a petition to upgrade. Such a petition is not an automatic and must be supported by additional information to justify the upgrade.
- 6) First Race staging will be done via a random draw, but subsequent races will have call-ups according to current overall point standings.

B. Middle School Category Upgrades

At the beginning of each season all middle school athletes will be “reset” to their respective middle school categories in the Pit Zone. Middle school athletes will be allowed to petition for a category upgrade (subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school students) to race in one of the middle school or high school categories as follows:

Appendix B – League Exceptions Tennessee

- 1) Any returning middle school student who upgraded and raced in a high school category during the previous season will be allowed to re-petition for an upgrade.
- 2) Category Placement will be used to determine a middle school athlete's eligibility for a high school upgrade. Students not meeting the upgrade criteria for JV will only be allowed to petition for an upgrade to Freshman high school category.
- 3) All other middle school athletes (new racers and those that did not upgrade and race in the previous season) must race at least one middle school category race prior to requesting an upgrade to the Freshman category. These students are only allowed to request an upgrade to the Freshman category.
- 4) Category upgrade decisions will be based on the following:
- 5) Racers must finish in the top 15% for boys or top 20% for girls in at least one middle school race;
- 6) All petitions must follow the same rules and deadlines as high school petition requests; and
- 7) Racers with extensive outside race experience and at least five non-NICA podium finishes may also petition to upgrade to Freshman category.
- 8) All petitions must be submitted through the Team Director to the League Director. A committee will review all petitions and either grant or deny the request based on the information provided.
- 9) Any middle school student racing in a high school category will be allowed to compete for both the individual awards (race and series) as well as contributing points to his or her team's total.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Texas

RULE 5.7 Amendment - NON-DISCRIMINATION IN PARTICIPATION STANDARDS - The Texas League will comply with all Texas State laws governing student participation in interscholastic sports competitions.

Section 6.1 Amendments - Category Placement Standards

- High school categories will be ability based.
- Middle school categories will be age-based.

Boys Categories

HIGH SCHOOL

Varsity

JV1

JV2

Fun Lap

MIDDLE SCHOOL

8th

7th

6th

Fun Lap

Girls Categories

HIGH SCHOOL

Varsity

JV1

JV2

Fun Lap

MIDDLE SCHOOL

8th

7th

6th

Fun Lap

Section 6.2 Amendments - League Geographical Sub-regions

- Categories will be divided based on geographical sub-regions or Conferences.
- The Conferences will include: North Texas Conference and South Texas Conference. The written description of the geographical sub-regions will be provided on the League website prior to the start of the full season (Dec 1).
- Each sub-region will be run as though it were a Tier 1 league so that teams and riders are scored solely according to the sub-region with no regard to Division and team size.

Section 6.3 Amendments - Category Placement Criteria

- Middle school students will be placed in the category that corresponds to their grade level.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Texas

- Returning high-school students will be placed in the criteria based on the previous season’s performance pursuant to section 6.3 of the NICA handbook.
- New high-school students will be automatically placed in JV2. Riders or coaches can request a category upgrade based on evidence of prior racing performance prior to the first race. After the first race, students may be placed in a higher category based on performance. Requests for upgrades that do not meet the above criteria must follow the petition process.
- Prior to the first race, a form will be available for athletes to request to participate in the fun lap instead of the race category. No points will be awarded for Fun lap participation.

6th Grade	6th Graders only
7th Grade	7th Graders 6th Graders who have successfully petitioned into the category
8th Grade	8th Graders 6th or 7th Graders who have successfully petitioned into the category
MS Fun Lap	Any middle school student who elects to participate in the Fun Lap instead of their race category
JV 2	All high school students who have not qualified for other categories. Student-athletes may request upgrades based on demonstrated race results or through the official petition process.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Texas

JV 1	<p>10th grade students who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Placed in the top 25% in any two Freshman races the prior year, or2. Placed in the top 30% of the Freshman overall season standings the prior year. <p>10th - 12th grade students who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year, or2. Placed in the top 30% of the JV2 overall season standings the prior year, or3. Raced in JV1 the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity. <p>Student athletes who successfully petition into the category.</p>
Varsity	<p>10th - 12th grade athletes who:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Placed in the top 25% in any two JV1 races the prior year, or2. Placed in the top 30% of the JV1 overall season standings the prior year, or3. Raced Varsity the prior year; <p>Students who successfully petition into the category.</p>
HS Fun Lap	<p>Any HS athlete who elects to participate in the Fun lap instead of their race category.</p>

Section 6.5 Amendments - Category Upgrade Petitioning Guidelines

- Student athletes may upgrade a maximum of 1 level from their assigned category.
- Dependent on performance after the first race in a new category, the student athlete may petition for another upgrade.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Texas

- These are guidelines and exceptions may be approved based on a student athlete's extraordinary race resume.
- If a middle school student athlete is granted an upgrade to a high school category, that student's points will apply to the high school that student is slated to attend. For public schools, this will be determined by existing feeder patterns. For private or charter schools, this will be determined based on current enrollment. If no school team exists, the athlete would score for the composite team covering the geographic area in which the student resides. If neither a school nor a composite team exists, the athlete may race independently.
- Petitions must be submitted to the League Rules Committee by Monday 11:59 p.m. prior to a race weekend.

Section 6.1 Amendments - 6 Race Series Rules

Texas offers a 6-race series and the following rules apply. Individual and team scoring will be amended as follows.

Overall Individual Series Champion for HS

The series winner for each conference will be determined by the best 4 out of 6 races. The overall series champion in each field and conference will be decided based on the total of series points accumulated (Best 4 of 6 results and inclusive of bonus points for completing 5 races). In other words, the lowest 2 scores are dropped.

A missed race would be the lowest score dropped

In the case of a race cancellation in a six-race series, the series becomes a 5-race series. Scoring becomes best 4 out of 5. If a second race is canceled, the series becomes a best 3 out of 4 series; the lowest score is still dropped (best 3 of 4). If there are fewer than four races in the series, no score will be dropped.

State Championship Series Points, Podiums and Callups

Texas League does not opt-in for the State Championship bonus points option. All races in the series are weighted the same. However, at the State Championship race, both conferences will be combined with call-ups determined by each athlete's series score total (top 4 races). Podiums will be awarded for the top 10 athletes in each category and will determine the athletes named as State Champions.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Texas

Point Bonus for Competing in all Races

All student-athletes who complete 5 out of 6 races in a six races series shall be awarded an additional 25 Season Bonus Points after the final race of the season. In the event that one or more races are canceled, 25 Bonus Points will be awarded for completing all races. No additional points will be awarded for racing in a 6th race.

Overall Team Scoring

A team's overall placement is based on team point totals from the best five team finishes in a six-race series (lowest score is dropped). If one or more races are canceled, the overall score will be based on team point totals for the entire point series (lowest score is not dropped). Overall conference winners will be determined based on series points for each conference. State champion teams will be determined by the winners of the State Championship race.

Series Call Ups and Waves

- Maximum Field Size- Any category with 50 or more racers will be split into multiple waves not to exceed 50 per wave.
- As an example, an 80-rider field would be split into 2 waves. The top 40 call ups would be in the first wave, 40-80 call ups second wave.
- 100% Call ups for all categories.
- 1 podium for each category.
- At the League's discretion, conference categories of the same level may be combined into one category based on registration numbers.
- Call ups for the first race will use last season point totals. 6th graders will be random for the first race. JV2 category callups will be a random for the first race. New riders to the League will be assigned a random callup behind all returning riders.
- Subsequent race call ups will be based on the student athlete's overall points. This will be applied to both middle school and high school categories.

Series Awards

Appendix B – League Exceptions Texas

- Middle school athletes will follow the same call-up and series points protocol as high school athletes.
- Individual series awards will be given for middle-school students.
- Middle-school team awards will not be tracked or awarded.

Section 6.6.A.4 Amendment - Student Athletes must join school teams:

School teams must submit their intent to register to the league director prior to the student athlete registration opening for this rule to be enforced for that team. If a team registers after this deadline, any eligible student athlete who has already registered with a different team, will be given the choice to move to the school team or complete the season with the team they have already registered with.

Section 6.6.C.1 Amendment – Composite Team Limitations

High school Composite Teams are limited to a maximum of 20 student athletes.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Virginia

Placement criteria, excluding petitions, are as follows:

Category

MS Girls	6-8th graders placed in A or B category
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MS Boys	6-8 th graders placed in A,B or C category
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Freshman	9th graders only.
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Sophomore	10th graders only.
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JV	8th–10th graders who: Placed in the top 10% for boys or top 20% for girls in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or Placed in the top 10% for boys or top 20% for girls in a single Freshman race and placed in the same top percentile (10% or 20%) in the overall Freshman season standings in the prior year, or Raced JV in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity. 11th graders-12th graders who did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.
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Appendix B – League Exceptions Virginia

Varsity	<p>8th*–11th graders who: Placed in the top 5% for boys or top 10% for girls in any two Sophomore races in the prior year, or</p> <p>Placed in the top 5% for boys or top 10% for girls in a single Sophomore race and placed in the same top percentile (5% or 10%) in the overall Sophomore season standings in the prior year.</p> <p>8th–12th graders who: Placed in the top 15% for boys or top 30% for girls in any two JV races in the prior year, or</p> <p>Placed in the top 15% for boys or top 30% for girls in any single race and placed in the same top percentile (15% or 30%) in the overall JV season standings in the prior year, or Raced Varsity the prior year.</p>
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Appendix B – League Exceptions West Virginia

West Virginia Middle School Program

1. Middle School Racing Rules.

There are three middle school categories for both the boys and girls based on their grade — 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.

Each middle school category will have an individual race podium.

Middle school points will not apply to team points. However, if a middle school racer is granted an upgrade into a high school category, then that racer's individual points will apply to that racer's high school team points.

Racers that finish in the top 10% of their middle school category will be allowed to submit a petition to upgrade to Freshman. Such a petition does not result in automatic upgrade and instead must be supported by additional information to justify the request to upgrade. All petitions for upgrades are subject to League Director discretion and approval. First Race staging will be done via a random draw, but subsequent races will have call-ups as follows:

1. 6th, 7th, and 8th grade categories: results from previous race will determine call-ups and the remaining field will be staged via a random draw;
2. Middle School Category Upgrades.
3. At the beginning of each season, all middle school athletes will be “reset” to their respective middle school categories in the Pit Zone. Middle school athletes will be allowed to petition for a category upgrade (subject to the same rules and deadlines as high school students) to race in a higher race category.
4. Any returning middle school student who upgraded and raced in a high school category during the previous season will be allowed to re-petition for an upgrade to either the Freshman or the JV category. All petitions for upgrades are subject to League Director discretion and approval.

In 2022, WVICL's Rules Committee evaluated the makeup of composite teams throughout the State and determined that a modification to the rules governing composite team scoring is

Appendix B – League Exceptions West Virginia

appropriate. To encourage team growth and race participation, the threshold limits for composite team scoring have been increased, meaning there will be fewer instances in which composite teams will need to be subdivided and scored separately based upon team size on race days. Those changes are detailed below:

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6.6.C. COMPOSITE TEAM LIMITATIONS

6.6.C.1 Composite Teams are intended to be temporary solutions only, allowing student-athletes to compete as members of a team in the League pending the establishment of Single School-Based Teams or County-Based Homeschool Teams that they can join. In furtherance of this policy, the following limitations apply to Composite Teams:

a. The League director shall annually review and approve each Composite Team's eligibility. The League shall maintain approval forms on file for each Composite Team to include, at a minimum, the following:

- A description of the team's geographical region;
- A list of the names of all student-athletes indicating the schools they attend or whether they are homeschooled;
- The name of the Composite Team; and
- The signature of the team organizer and the approval signature of the League director.

b. Composite Teams must comply, subject to the League's local state laws, with the following scoring restrictions:

- Teams must compete in Division II but may, at the League director's discretion and to be determined 2022 Discretionary League Guidelines and Standards prior to the beginning of the season, be scored and awarded separately from Division I and II teams.

Appendix B – League Exceptions West Virginia

- In leagues that include middle schools, middle school riders' scores are excluded from the Composite Teams' scores — if more than one middle school rider is on the team, they may be scored as a subdivided team in the middle school category according to subsection (3)d below.
 - Teams are limited to a maximum of fifteen ~~eleven~~ registered riders, excluding middle school riders. In addition to serving the above-stated policy to establish school based teams, limiting such teams to fifteen ~~eleven~~ riders prevents any competitive advantage through the formation of large “super teams,” which NICA has determined constitutes unfair competition. However, in certain regions and rural areas, these policies may not be served and the team-size limitation may contravene policies to expand League ridership and to be inclusive to all riders. In the event the League’s Rules Committee determines that NICA policies are not served and are contravened by the limitation, the League in its discretion may choose not to apply it and must also determine whether it is appropriate to score such larger teams in a separate category.
 - A single Composite Team may be comprised of subdivided teams according to subsection (3) below.
 - Each subdivided team shall be scored independently.
- c. Composite Team subdivision rules:
- The League director must approve the subdivided teams that comprise a single Composite Team.
 - If nine ~~five~~ or more student-athletes are from the same school, they must be subdivided into a separate team and scored as representatives of that school. These same-school student-athletes may submit a joint 2022 Discretionary League Guidelines and Standards petition, approved by each of them, to the League director for an exception to this rule.
 - Teams of sixteen ~~twelve~~ or more student-athletes, excluding any middle school riders must be subdivided into

Appendix B – League Exceptions West Virginia

separate, independently scoring teams of fifteen ~~eleven~~ or fewer riders each. Upon subdivision, student-athletes shall be placed on teams based on the following:

- i. First — Student-athletes attending the same school must be on the same subdivided team; and
- ii. Second — Student-athletes shall be placed on subdivided teams according to the proximity of their homes.

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

In leagues that include middle schools, if more than one middle school rider is on the team, they may be scored as a separate team in the middle school category.

SUBDIVISIONS NOT ALLOWED

Teams may not be subdivided based on the experience and ability of the student-athletes. Doing so frustrates the policies that permit Composite Teams and creates an unfair advantage by avoiding the geographical limitations that apply to other teams.

Appendix B – League Exceptions Wisconsin

Placement criteria, excluding petitions, are as follows:

6th Grade	6th graders only
7th Grade	7th graders only
8th Grade	8th graders only
Freshman	9th graders only
JV 2	10th-12th grades
JV 3	<p>10th graders who: Placed in the top 10% in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or Placed in the top 15% of the overall Freshman season standing in the prior year, or successfully petitioned into the category.</p> <p>JV2 Student-Athletes who : Placed in the top 20% in any two races in the prior year, or placed in the top 30% of the overall season standings in the prior year, or</p> <p>JV3 Student-Athletes who: Raced JV3 in the previous year but did not automatically upgrade to Varsity or successfully petition into the category.</p>
Varsity	<p>JV2 Student-Athletes who: Placed in the top 5% in any two races in the prior year, or placed in the top 10% of the overall season standings in the prior year.</p> <p>JV3 Student-Athletes who: Placed in the top 10% in any two races in the prior year, or placed in the top 20% of the overall season standings in the prior year.</p> <p>Varsity Student-Athletes who: Raced Varsity in the previous year or successfully petitioned into the category.</p>

Appendix B – League Exceptions Wisconsin

6.6.A.6 Student-athletes enrolled in virtual schools outside their local school district will be placed on a team based on the following criteria, considered in this order:

- If the virtual school or school district has a NICA team and the driving distance to team activities is reasonable for the family, the student-athlete will participate on the virtual school/school district team, if allowed by the school.
- If the virtual school or school district has a NICA team and the driving distance to team activities is unreasonable for the family or there is not a NICA team at the virtual school, the student-athlete will participate on the composite team in the area, if one exists.
- If the virtual school or school district has a NICA team and the driving distance to team activities is unreasonable for the family or there is not a NICA team at the virtual school and none of the above options are available, the student-athlete will be categorized as Independent.

6.11.B. OVERALL INDIVIDUAL SERIES SCORING (used for staging and leader's jersey only)

6.11.B.1 Wisconsin follows a bye-week process for race scheduling. Although there may be more than five league races during a season, each team is limited to the five races they were assigned during the pre-season. The races they were not assigned become a bye-week(s) for the team. No member of any team may race during their team's bye-week(s).

6.11.B.2 Staging for middle school races will be based on place earned at each rider's previous race. In the event of tie for placement due to the bye-week schedule, athletes will be assigned to the same row for staging, positioned in random order.

6.11.B.3 Staging for and the determination of the leader's jersey for each category of high school races will be calculated for each race based on the average score of each athlete, based on the number of

Appendix B – League Exceptions Wisconsin

eligible races and points scored up to the start of each race. A scheduled (non-bye) race that was not attended is treated as a zero in the averaging process for staging and determining leader's jerseys.

6.11.B.4 All individual scoring for the season-based calculations will use 'drop one average' methodology. This methodology calculates the score for each student athlete's season results by dropping the single lowest score before creating the average. A scheduled (non-bye) race that was not attended is treated as a zero in the averaging process and is eligible to be dropped from the calculation as the lowest score. A race that is a bye-week is not included in the averaging calculation.

RULE 7.4 Wisconsin statute 118.133 requires school districts to permit students enrolled in home-based private educational programs (homeschools) to participate in interscholastic athletics in their school district on the same basis and to the same extent as students enrolled in the public school district. Therefore, homeschooled student-athletes may compete as members of the school-based teams in their school districts that they would be allowed to join under section 118.133 and in compliance with all team eligibility requirements



NICA Adult Code of Conduct

Welcome to the NICA community! Adults within the NICA Community agree to follow this code of conduct to maintain a culture of safety, responsibility and respect. You are asked to review and agree to this adult code of conduct during the registration process.

Maintain appropriate behavior for an adult leader associated with a youth development organization by:

- Follow your training and NICA Policies, Rules and Guidelines at all times.
- Follow athlete abuse prevention training, policies, rules and guidelines and particularly:
 - Never engage in behavior that could be interpreted as “grooming behavior” (further described in mandatory athlete abuse prevention training)
 - All 1:1 interaction between a student-athlete and coach must be observable & interruptible. That is, they must take place someplace where another adult can see what is happening and intervene if the interaction looks inappropriate. For example, unless immediate family members, NICA Coaches should never meet 1:1 with student-athletes for bike rides or other activities within or outside of the NICA season.
 - If deciding to use phone, social media, online or other virtual communications, the 1:1 policy still applies. Keep communications transparent, accessible, professional “T.A.P.” and only within your NICA role via your official NICA platforms.
- Sexual harassment by NICA community members will not be tolerated. These forms of harassment include, but are not limited to: offensive or unwelcome sexual flirtations, advances or propositions, repeated verbal abuse of a sexual nature, graphic or degrading comments about an individual

Appendix C – Code of Conduct

and/or their appearance. The display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures and any offensive or abusive physical contact will also not be tolerated.

- Discrimination by NICA community members will not be tolerated. NICA prohibits discrimination and harassment of any type with regard to race, color, religion, age, sex, national origin, disability status, genetics, protected veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.
- Participants' safety must be a priority at ALL times. It is imperative that we ensure that student-athletes are behaving in a safe, responsible and respectful manner. If you see or hear something that in any way compromises the safety of our community, it is your job to step in and intervene.
- Operate within your NICA training and experience while only providing NICA-approved activities.
- Use your best judgment. If you have concerns that a task, project or activity you are working on is dangerous, or is not going to meet the agreed-upon objectives let the person in charge know.
- Regardless of your specific role, you are a role model and authority figure.
- Your primary role is to ensure the safety of participants within each activity or event.
- Be supportive. If a fellow NICA community member is struggling, it is expected that you support them. If you are unable, let the person in charge know.
- Be transparent. If you have a concern, share it with the person in charge. If the person in charge is the person with whom you have a concern, share it with your league director.
- Always support each individual in their leadership role.
- Work as a team. Present a unified front to the student-athletes, their families and the broader NICA community.
- Communicate. Be open to giving and receiving feedback.
- Address all concerns brought to your attention, including any observed prejudice or discriminatory behavior.

Appendix C – Code of Conduct

- Ensure guardians know key aspects of your NICA activities including start-times, end-times, locations and other information
- When leading or promoting an activity or event not associated with NICA, be sure to communicate it is not.

I understand and will follow the NICA Policy, Rules and Guidelines as additionally described in my training, student-athlete code of conduct, NICA handbook, NICA Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies and NICA Guide to Electronic Communications. I also understand that failure to do so may lead to my immediate suspension or expulsion from national and/or state league and team activities.



Student-Athlete Code of Conduct

Welcome to the NICA community! As a representative of the community, student-athletes and parents/caregivers agree to follow this code of conduct to maintain a culture of safety, responsibility and respect.

Parents and guardians are asked to review and agree to the code of conduct with their children during the registration process.

Be Safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Always wear a helmet● Be prepared with additional safety gear: gloves, glasses, and extra clothes to match the weather● Be prepared with a working bike and perform an ABCDE bike check (Air, Brakes, Chain, Derailleur, Everything Else)● Ride within your limits● Ride with someone else in isolated areas● Never use any performance enhancing drug described in the NICA Handbook: https://www.nationalmtb.org/wp-content/uploads/NICA-Handbook.pdf● Plan ahead and let your family or caregivers know where you are going and when you plan to return● Avoid contact with wildlife● Understand the dangers of the native plants and avoid poisonous plants, stay on the trail
Be Responsible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Be prepared with the water, food, and clothing that you need to complete the ride● Come to practice with a clean and well-maintained bike● Be accountable for your actions and choices● Never consume alcohol or use any illegal drugs● Ride only on designated and legal trails and routes

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Follow additional rules that may be associated with team’s school or league affiliations
Be Respectful	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Respect coaches, teammates, competitors, trail users and other community members<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Treat everyone with dignity and respect○ Avoid language and actions that may be perceived as bullying or harassment.○ Be inclusive and welcoming to new athletes, coaches, competitors, and other trail users○ Use appropriate language● Move aside to allow others to pass you safely.● Announce your passing, intention, and specify the passing side.● Do your best when racing or riding your bike.● Ride with courtesy at races, at practice, and in the community.● Seek consent before touching, hugging and otherwise embracing teammates and coaches.● Slow down when approaching other trail users● Provide right of way to pedestrians and equestrians and stop and ask for passing instructions from equestrians.● Leave no trace or trash on the trail.● Ride on trails when the weather and surface conditions will not cause damage.● Perform trail maintenance on trails only with full permission and permits from the land owner/manager.

I acknowledge I will review this code of conduct with my Student-Athlete and they will follow the NICA Rules and Guidelines as additionally described in the NICA handbook. I also understand that failure to do so may lead to his or her suspension or expulsion from national and/or state league activities.