

CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE
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www.ciacsports.com

67th ANNUAL CIAC ICE HOCKEY INFORMATION

GENERAL INFORMATION

- Entry / roster forms must be submitted via the online eligibility center at www.ciacsports.com by Tuesday, March 3, 2026. Forms submitted after March 5, 2026 may be rejected.

Team Roster Form – Must be completed by March 3. You need an access log in from your athletic director to complete the form. To complete the team roster form:

- Go to the CIAC website at casciac.org
- In the left hand column select “Eligibility Center”
- Select Team Roster/Tournament Roster
- Check off each player that is on your roster.

Submit Regular Season Scores – All regular season scores must be entered online on the day of the game as soon as possible following the game’s completion.

- Scores must be entered on the new CIAC website at <https://ciac.fpsports.org/>
 - In the left hand column select “Schedules – High School”
 - At the top of the page select the school and Ice Hockey as the sport, then the team’s schedule will be displayed
 - Click on the green score entry button to make the entries
 - Only logged in users with security permission to enter scores for this sport will see the score entry button for their school’s meets
 - The system will display a score entry screen that is specific for ice hockey
 - Enter the team scores.
- Scores of games scheduled for March 3, 2026 through March 5, 2026 must be submitted the day of the game as soon as possible following the game’s completion. **All schools are required to complete the CIAC summation report of all majors and misconduct penalties at the conclusion of each. The summation report must be submitted no later than March 5, 2026.**

In order to ensure that standings and ranking on both the CIAC’s web site and other sites which draw their data from us are timely and accurate, all regular season scores must be entered online on the day of the game as soon as possible following the game’s completion.

- Entry fee \$150 per team
- Information regarding tournament rankings and pairings will be on the CIAC web site by 11:30 a.m. on March 6, 2026.

ALERT PAGE

PLEASE NOTE ANY DISQUALIFICATIONS MUST BE RECORDED UNDER THE TABS OF THE HOCKEY PENALTY AND DISQUALIFICATIONS IN THE ELIGIBILITY CENTER.

2025-26 NATIONAL FEDERATION ICE HOCKEY RULE CHANGES

3-8 Change: Art. 8 ... Electronic devices shall not be used by team personnel or spectators to communicate with on-ice players or goalkeepers during play. No player or goalkeeper shall wear any audio (microphone) or video (camera) device during the game.

Rationale: No player participating in the game will be allowed to wear any type of audio or video device to record or transmit audio or video.

5-4 Change: Section 4 Duties of the ~~Linesman~~ Linesperson

Rationale: The NFHS Ice Hockey Rules book has already replaced gender-specific language throughout the book. This specific title now needs to be changed as well. "Linesperson" has transitioned into several of the other rules bodies and hockey organizations and will no longer be gender specific, which now creates consistency in the hockey world.

9-8-4 New: Change: Art. 4 ... A puck on the outside of the goal netting below the crossbar shall be considered in play by both teams. A puck resting on top of the goal netting between the crossbar and goal frame shall be considered unplayable, resulting in an immediate stoppage.

***Note:** Current Rules 9-8-4 and 5 move to Rule 9-8-5 and 6.

Rationale: A puck on the goal netting is covered in all other rules books. A puck on top of the netting creates too many problematic scenarios if it is considered playable (high stick, closing hand, goalkeeper contact, player in goal crease, etc.).

POINTS OF EMPHASIS

The NFHS Ice Hockey Rules Committee continues in its belief that the main threat to the health of high school ice hockey is violent and reckless play. The safety and well-being of the participants is paramount and the primary focus of this committee. The committee has addressed the following areas to minimize dangerous, violent and reckless play.

1. Sportsmanship
2. Health and Safety
3. Officials: Game Management

1. **Scrimmages** – Teams must have a minimum of three (3) days of practice prior to scheduling a full team scrimmage. All sports teams and individual athletes must have a minimum of ten (10) physical/exertional practice days with their school before the date of the first scheduled competition. No team/athlete shall practice/compete with their school more than six (6) consecutive days to provide a day of rest. Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays may be used unless prohibited by local board policy. Sunday practices may be counted to fulfill the 10-day requirement.

2. **In an effort to promote good sportsmanship a reminder of two CIAC rules:** (4.0 Athletic Administration - 4.6.A. #3, #5 - Disqualification Rule)

- Upon receiving a second disqualification for initiating a fight or retaliating in a fight (as determined by the game official), that student-athlete will be declared ineligible for the remainder of the season.
- Any CIAC team that accumulates five (5) or more disqualifications during the regular season including the league's tournament will be barred from CIAC post-season competition. All disqualifications must be reported to CIAC. Any misconduct or disqualification of a coach will count towards the team's total number of disqualifications. Multiple disqualifications during CIAC tournaments are subject to disciplinary action by the CIAC sports committee and the CIAC Board of Control.
- Refer to Item II, for Rule 13 which is specific to ice hockey and affects tournament status.
- **NFHS Ice Hockey Progressive DQ Penalties** – The NFHS hockey rule book includes a progressive DQ penalty structure that applies to all regular season games, league tournaments and the CIAC tournament.

First Disqualification	-	That game plus the next game;
Second Disqualification	-	That game plus the next two games
Third Disqualification	-	That game plus the next three games, and so forth

Please read the complete disqualification/ejection rule on pages 95-100 in the online CIAC Handbook.

3. **Schedules - Regular Season** – Schedules for all sports in which the CIAC sponsors championships must be submitted, and kept current when game dates and/or time change, via the online eligibility center. No games may be added to the schedule that count for the tournament after the first play date in ice hockey – DECEMBER 15, 2025.

4. **Students with Special Needs** – Coaches are reminded to inform contest officials prior to each competition of any student with special needs who could be competing in the contest when his/her disability could impact the individual's performance or the conduct of the competition.

5. **Schools will be notified of the proposed 2026-2027 divisional placement by Friday, April 3, 2026.** The principal, athletic director, and coach of each ice hockey playing school will be notified of their team's divisional placement at the conclusion of each season. The criteria for divisional alignment will be included with the proposed 2026-2027 divisions.

6. **Regular Season Overtime Procedures**

Games / Tournaments Played in Connecticut Against In-state or Out-of-state Teams – When Connecticut schools host in-state or out-of-state teams, the game is treated like all regular season games, and the CIAC regular season overtime procedure would apply (one 8 minute sudden victory period – first goal wins). If no team scores in this overtime period, the game is recorded as a tie. If your out-of-state opponent is prohibited from playing overtime by their state association, the game can be ended after regulation and recorded as a tie.

If it is a tournament played in Connecticut, and no team scores in the first 8-minute overtime, the game is recorded as a tie for CIAC tournament purposes and rankings. Then, you are permitted to play extra overtime periods or participate in a shootout, but regardless of who wins, the game is recorded as a tie.

7. **Out-of-State Regular Season and Out-of-State Tournament Games** – When Connecticut ice hockey teams play a regular season or tournament game on the road against out-of-state teams, the end of the game result is determined by the rules of their state association school. **Therefore, if a winner must be determined, regardless of the overtime procedure used, including a shootout, the win, the loss, or tie is determined by the final score and the result counts for CIAC tournament purposes and rankings.**
8. **Suspended Game (CIAC Tournament)** – By state adoption, during tournament play, any suspended game will be completed under the direction of the CIAC Tournament Director.

Suspended Game (Regular Season) – If, before two periods have been completed, a game is interrupted because of events beyond the control of the responsible administrative authorities (i.e., not involving the players) it shall be continued from the point of interruption. By state adoption, if the interruption occurs after two or more periods, the game is considered completed and the score shall stand.

ICE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

I. Key Dates for 2025-2026 Season

First practice date		Monday, December 1, 2025
First contest date		Monday, December 15, 2025
Last game date to count for tournament		Thursday, March 5, 2026
Tournament play begins	Division III	Monday, March 9, 2026
	Division II	Tuesday, March 10, 2026
	Division I	Wednesday, March 11, 2026
Tournament Quarter-finals	Division III	March 12, 2026 – Site and Time TBA
	Division II	March 13, 2026 – Site and Time TBA
	Division I	March 14, 2026 – Site and Time TBA
Tournament Semi-finals	Division III	March 16, 2026 – Quinnipiac University / Time TBA
	Division II	March 17, 2026 – Quinnipiac University / Time TBA
	Division I	March 18, 2026 – Quinnipiac University / Time TBA
Tournament Finals	Division III	March 19, 2026 – Quinnipiac University / Time TBA
	Division II	March 23, 2026 – Quinnipiac University / Time TBA
	Division I	March 24, 2026 – Quinnipiac University / Time TBA

Tournament Director: Joseph Morrell
 Cell (203) 824-4547
 CIAC Fax (203) 250-1345
 E-mail – Joseph.Morrell@whschools.org

II. Ineligibility for 2026 Tournament

Rule 13 of the CIAC Ice Hockey Tournament Rules indicates that a team will be declared ineligible if during the regular season, including league playoffs:

- a. It commits seven (7) or more major and/or misconduct penalties;
- b. It commits five (5) or more major and/or misconduct penalties if it is on probation.
- c. The first level of “boarding” only (5 minute major), equipment penalties and five minor penalties by a player in one game are EXCLUDED from the team count and will not affect tournament status or probation.

NOTE: With the exception listed in c, all penalties other than minors count toward team totals and affect tournament status and probation.

III. **Probation** -- During the regular playing season, including league playoffs and state tournament matches major and/or misconduct penalties adding up to 5 or more will lead to a team's being placed on probation. For a team already on probation a total of four (4) penalties other than minors may lead to extension of probation.

IV. **CIAC Late Entry Policy**

- No tournament entries will be accepted after the established deadline except those approved by the CIAC Board of Control.
- Corrections requested by a school to an entry form that was submitted by the established deadline but prior to seeding/pairing data being published on the web site, will be assessed a fee of \$50 per correction to a maximum of \$250.
- All requests for corrections must be submitted on a support ticket via the online eligibility center. **No phone requests will be considered.**

Tournament Regulations Violations – If a school fails to comply with tournament regulations which requires the CIAC tournament sports committee, central office staff, or the CIAC Board of Control to redo any portion of the tournament pairings or such non-compliance adversely impacts the management of the tournament, an administrative violation fee of \$500 will be imposed upon the school before entry into the tournament will be allowed.

V. **CIAC Tournament Site Media Policy** -- The CIAC places tremendous value on the role the media plays in promoting and highlighting high school sports. To that purpose CIAC tournament venues and hosts should make every effort to provide a working environment conducive to all media (print, broadcast and internet based) covering our events. The following are **minimum standards**, developed in consultation with the CIAC Media Advisory Committee, which should be provided for working media at all CIAC tournament sites:

- 1) A minimum of one hour following the conclusion of post-game interviews to write in the press box, press area or a suitable facility in close proximity to the site of the event (i.e. office, classroom, etc.).
- 2) Access to electric power (shared power strip, etc.).
- 3) Access to wireless internet service.

Site directors should communicate these requirements to any staff person who may be responsible for the administration of the event. If for some reason a site will not be able to provide these items for a contest, a site representative should inform the CIAC in advance and work with the media on site before the game and work to provide a reasonable solution to the issue. Members of the media who will be covering events are directed to contact the appropriate site director as far in advance as possible to inform them they will be at the event and discuss what arrangements will be made for working media at the site.

VI. **Sportsmanship** -- **Member schools are expected to conduct their relations with each other at all levels of competition in a spirit of good sportsmanship.** The school administration is responsible for the athletic program, including the policies and procedures relating to sportsmanship and the conduct of activities in the school. The CIAC "Class Act" standards will be used in all CIAC contests. The CIAC Standards for Sportsmanship as defined in the Class Act program are found at http://ciacsports.com/site/?page_id=10438.

VII. **Coaches Disqualification Penalty** – All coaches who are disqualified at any level will be suspended for the next two games (see page 96 in the CIAC Handbook), take two NFHS coaching courses ("Teaching and Modeling Behavior" and "Sportsmanship" and the school will pay a \$50 fine. In addition to the two-game suspension and fine, the CIAC reserves the right to review any incident that results in a coach's disqualification and may assess additional game suspensions up to and including a one year ban. The fine and proof of taking the coaching courses must be submitted to the CIAC office before the coach can resume his/her coaching responsibilities.

2026 CIAC ICE HOCKEY TOURNAMENT RULES

Games played with non-member Connecticut schools shall **NOT** be considered in the rating of teams. CIAC member school must follow all other aspects of eligibility, discipline, etc., required by the CIAC. Games played against teams outside of Connecticut must be members of their respective state associations and this state association must govern the sport. A penalty report form of the governing body from the game site must be submitted with end-of-season report. All reportable/misconduct penalties shall be included in the end-of-season count.

1. Division Qualifications for 2026 Tournament

- a. The 2026 tournament will be operated in three (3) divisions.
 - b. A team must play a **minimum of twelve (12) games** and only the first two (2) games played with any single opponent will be included in the twelve games.
 - c. Only games officiated by certified officials will count toward CIAC tournament ranking. It is the responsibility of the home team to hire certified officials for all regular season games.
 - d. The principal, athletic director, and coach of each ice hockey playing school will be notified of their team's final divisional placement after the Fall ice hockey committee meeting.
 - e. A listing of tournament divisions is available on the ice hockey page at www.ciacsports.com.
2. Each year, the Ice Hockey Committee will publish a new three-division placement of teams that will determine "power points" based on wins, losses and ties against in-state and out-of-state opponents.
3. Regardless of regular season postponed games, the date of Thursday, March 5, 2026 must be the final day to count for the tournament.
- o The tournament bracket in each division will be filled with 16 teams, except for Division I.
 - o Teams with a .400 or greater win percentage qualify first, then the sub-.400 teams with highest win percentages will be added until the field has 16 teams.
 - o Once the sub-.400 teams to be included are designated, they will be ranked as a separate group by power points and seeded in order below the .400+ teams.
 - o No sub-.400 team will be ranked above any .400+ team in the tournament seeding, even if the sub-.400 team has more power points.

- a. Teams will be seeded in the tournament using the following formula:

Wins --	Versus a Division I team	6 points
	Versus a Division II team	4 points
	Versus a Division III team	2 points
	Versus an out-of-state team	6, 4, 2 points depending on placement
Ties --	Versus a Division I team	3 points
	Versus a Division II team	2 points
	Versus a Division III team	1 point
	Versus an out-of-state team	3, 2, 1 points depending on placement

Bonus points for wins versus tournament qualifiers and out-of-state teams

Versus Division I tournament qualifier/out-of-state team	3 points
Versus Division II tournament qualifier/out-of-state team	2 points
Versus Division III tournament qualifier/out-of-state team	1 point

No bonus points are awarded for wins vs qualifiers that do not meet the 40% standard.

b. This point system will produce a rank order list of the tournament qualified teams. The CIAC Ice Hockey Committee will use that rank ordered list of teams within each class for the annual post-season tournament that determines the three class champions.

c. In the event that two or more teams have identical placements in the rankings the following criteria will be used to determine tournament seeding:

- 1) Head-to-head competition – two teams only
- 2) Number of wins
- 3) Number of combined wins and ties
- 4) Electronic tie-breaker

d. Teams that receive a victory by virtue of a forfeit shall be awarded bonus points toward tournament placement or qualification.

4. a. All qualifying and first round tournament games will be played at the site of the higher ranked team's facility, unless it is determined by the Ice Hockey Committee that the facility does not meet reasonable standards.

The cost of the QUALIFYING AND FIRST ROUND GAMES will be borne by the higher ranked team with CIAC subsidizing each game at \$1,100 for all divisions. In addition, the CIAC will pay all game officials expenses and local site directors fees as predetermined by the CIAC.

The CT NIHOA will assign all on-ice officials and goal judges for the entire tournament. Host schools will assign only P.A., timer, etc. CIAC will assign three (3) on-ice officials (two referees, one linesman) per game.

b. For the playdowns and regular tournament games, the pairings will be as follows:

<u>First round</u>	<u>Quarter-finals</u>	<u>Semi-finals</u>	<u>Finals</u>
1 vs 16			
8 vs 9	1 vs 8		
4 vs 13		1 vs 4	
5 vs 12	4 vs 5		
2 vs 15			1 vs 2
7 vs 10	2 vs 7		
3 vs 14		2 vs 3	
6 vs 11	3 vs 6		

c. If for any reason there are fewer than 16 teams for any division the highest ranked team will draw byes for the first round.

d. If more than 16 teams qualify in Division I and/or Division II the preliminary pairings shall be as follows:

<u>If 17 teams</u>	<u>If 18 teams</u>	<u>If 19 teams</u>	<u>If 20 teams</u>
16 vs 17	15 vs 18	14 vs 19	13 vs 20
	16 vs 17	15 vs 18	14 vs 19
		16 vs 17	15 vs 18
			16 vs 17

e. Higher ranked teams will wear white and lower ranked teams will wear dark uniforms.

f. The higher ranked team will be designated as the home team and choose their bench.

g. Throughout the tournament teams will maintain their original ranking.

11. According to CIAC regulations, commercially manufactured throat guards designed specifically for ice hockey, are required equipment for all players, including goaltenders, during the regular season and tournament play. Any player who, after being warned, fails to wear a throat guard, shall receive a misconduct penalty. Such penalty shall be reported to the CIAC on the penalty report form.
 - a. Tooth and mouth protectors which comply with NFHS rules shall be worn by ALL players including goal keepers. Failure to comply, after a warning, will result in a misconduct penalty.
12. **Canceled Games / Forfeits** – Member schools will be required to submit regular season schedules for all sports controlled by CIAC in which member schools participate. Determination of forfeiture will be based on this schedule.

A forfeit game shall count as a victory for the team declared the winner and as a loss for the team declared a loser in determining tournament qualifications and ratings. For tournament qualifications only the following reasons for a forfeit shall be accepted.

 - 1) A team shall forfeit a game(s) if through a violation it is required to do so under the CIAC Rules of Eligibility.
 - 2) A team shall forfeit a game(s) if the game official declares the game a forfeit as a result of a National Federation rule violation, or a team refuses to play after being instructed to do so by the game official.
 - 3) Forfeitures will be honored by each CIAC sports committee when there is mutual agreement between the principals of the two schools involved in the game not played
 - 4) **Member schools must make every effort to complete their season as scheduled, including make-up games. Any effort to gain an advantage in tournament play by not playing a game is unacceptable and is subject to action by the CIAC Board of Control. Cancellation of any regular season contest/make-up to play in a league tournament will not be allowed.**
 - 5) All games listed on the original schedule and submitted to the CIAC which are not played and have not been forfeited in accordance with this policy will be considered by each sport committee as no contest and shall not count for tournament qualification and rating unless it affects the minimum number of games required to qualify for tournament participation. In this instance the sport committee shall review the evidence submitted by the teams involved and may grant an exception from the minimum game number requirement. The minimum winning percentage as determined by the individual sports committee must be met under all circumstances.
13. **Protests** – Protests arising from the decisions, interpretations and misapplication of the National Federation or CIAC game rules by officials during the contest will not be considered. The decisions and interpretations of the rules by game officials are final.
14. Any team leaving the contest area before the conclusion of the contest because of dissatisfaction with the officiating will render the school liable to disciplinary action by the conference.
15. On the eve of a tournament when there is not sufficient time for normal administrative procedures and Board of Control hearings, if a question of interpretation of tournament regulations or the operation of the tournament arises, the Chairman of the CIAC Board of Control, the Executive Director of CIAC, and the Chairman of the Tournament
16. Committee in question will make an appropriate ad hoc decision in consideration of the best interest of the tournament as a whole.

Administrators

Marc Balanda, Principal, Brookfield High School - Chair
Neil Cavallaro, Superintendent, West Haven Public Schools
Timothy Dee, Principal, Fairfield Prep. High School
Stafford Thomas, Principal, Staples High School, Westport
Thomas Brockett, Assistant Principal, Ansonia High School

Coaches

Ralph Russo, Guilford High School
Dave Harackiewicz, Newington High School
Mac Budd, Darien High School
Sal Follo, Foran High School – Ex officio

Athletic Directors

Jeff Farrell, Rockville High School, Vernon - CAAD
Mike Santangeli, Joel Barlow High School, Redding - CAAD

Tournament Director

Joseph Morrell – West Haven High School

Consultants

Steve Richetelli – Officials, National NIHOA President

HEALTH AND SAFETY

Coach Safety – It is recommended that all members of the coaching staff wear a HECC-certified helmet while on the ice for practice.

Player Safety/Dangerous Hits

- The purpose of a body-check is to gain possession of the puck, not to injure, punish or intimidate another player.
- Boarding and checking from behind are viewed as two of the most dangerous plays in the sport. Coaches and players must understand that the responsibility in this rule remains with the player approaching an opponent along the boards.
- The following are illegal and need to be eliminated from high school hockey:
 - Hits to the head
 - Fighting
 - Hits on defenseless players (blindsides hits)
 - Late hits and unnecessary body contact

Concussion Recognition and Management – The NFHS has been at the forefront of national sports organizations in emphasizing the importance of education, recognition and proper management of concussions.

- Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game.
- State association protocol pertaining to concussion management must be reviewed and followed.
- Please review Rule 2-6-1 and the Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussions. Additional concussion education can be found in the “Concussion in Sports” online course at www.nfhslearn.com.

Mouthguards

- Commercially manufactured mouthguards are widely accepted as effective and provide oral protection. This applies to all levels of contact sports. NFHS rules require mouthguards for no other reason than oral protection for student-athletes.
- For this concept to work, it requires buy-in from all constituents within education-based athletics.
- This includes students, parents, coaches, officials and school administrators.
- Enforcement of mouthguard rules primarily rests with the coaches and officials working cooperatively, emphasizing player safety.

Neck Laceration Protectors – All players and goalkeepers are required to wear neck laceration protectors. For the health and safety of all participants, all parties need to do their part that this piece of equipment is properly worn.

CERTIFICATIONS / COACHING CERTIFICATIONS

For a list of all coaching certifications and links to forms go here:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1KnzXy81GK9x88bY1-5JBSuP-8SY34sdc/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=104830910406558409235&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Volunteer Coaches – The State of Connecticut Department of Education does not distinguish between volunteer or paid coaches when considering certifications or responsibilities. All coaches who are responsible for, or instruct students in any way must follow Connecticut State Law for certifications and responsibilities. Therefore, volunteer coaches are required to obtain the same certifications as all other coaches.

CIAC TOURNAMENT SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS (Including Parents)

Positive Cheering and Behavior

- Spectators will cheer positively to support their team, not negatively against the opponent. “No Negatives, No Names, No Numbers”.
- Spectators will show respect for the game officials and their decisions.
- Spectators will respect CIAC tournament/site directors, tournament staff, and security when behavior is addressed and if asked to leave the event.

Dress Code

- For CIAC tournament contests, all spectators should be appropriately attired according to their school’s policy. No attire with visible degrading or demeaning writings/logos is permitted.

Signs, Banners, Flags and Powder

- Any signs must be positive in nature, reference only the school supported by the sign maker, be small enough not to obstruct the view of other spectators and be pre-approved by the school’s athletic director reference in the sign. Spectators are not permitted to bring flags for safety reasons. When asked to remove a sign, banner, or flag, participating schools will respect and follow the direction of any CIAC tournament/site director, tournament staff, or security personnel.
- All signs, banners and flags may be restricted pending facility usage requirements or at the discretion of the CIAC tournament director. CIAC tournament directors/staff will notify the athletic director when such restrictions are necessary.
- Powder or powder-like substances are prohibited at all visiting and neutral sites.

Noisemakers

- Outdoor – No air horns, horns of any kind, or whistles will be used. Any other noisemakers may be allowed with approval from the host athletic/site director and the spectator’s school athletic director. Noisemakers can only be used during “dead ball” situations to celebrate good play.
- Indoor Sports – No noisemakers will be allowed. Pep bands are allowable with the prior approval of the CIAC tournament and site director, provided the school band has adult supervision, and the band only plays during “dead ball” situations.

Tailgating

- Tailgating is prohibited on the grounds of any CIAC tournament or championship event.

Streaming

- CIAC championships are streamed on the NFHS Network. Any streaming, broadcasting, or reproduction of a CIAC tournament game or championship without the expressed written consent of the CIAC is strictly prohibited.