

SUBURBAN PAROCHIAL LEAGUE CROSS COUNTRY



Rules and Procedures

Instituted in 1986 - Revised August 2026



Suburban Parochial League - Cross Country RULES AND PROCEDURES

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Rules and cross country meet administration will conform to the standards published in *Track and Field and Cross Country Rules Book* as published by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), except where specified differently within these **Rules & Procedures**.

SECTION 1 – League Membership

The Suburban Parochial League - Cross Country (the “League” a/k/a SPLCC) is comprised of those schools that have agreed to abide by these Rules and Procedures and have paid their initiation fee and annual membership dues as determined by the League.

Annual league membership will be established at the preseason meeting.

It shall be the responsibility of each member school to:

- (a) conduct its cross country program in compliance with the *Rules and Procedures* of the League;
- (b) protect the health of and provide for a safe environment for each participating student-athlete; and
- (c) promote the character and the development of the values of fairness, honesty and respect for its student-athletes, coaches, school administrators and meet officials and sportsmanship.

New or rejoining member schools must submit their request for membership or reentry to SPLCC in writing, which is subject to approval by a simple majority of the League schools and pay their initiation / reentry fee and annual dues. When considering a new school for membership, consideration must be given to the safety of the student-athletes when competing at a given venue: i.e., are meet venues able to safely host the number of runners competing without the potential for injury, most especially at the start of a race.

Note: (1) If two or more schools wish to merge to create a “team,” merger is subject to approval by a simple majority of the membership and will be brought up on an individual basis, discussed and voted upon at a League meeting. Merged teams must be approved annually at the preseason summer meeting.

Universal List: The universal list is comprised of the League’s member schools and is utilized when members do not volunteer to assume positions of responsibility to include the appointment of executive officers, meet hosts, etc. should the need arise to do so. Additions to the list are to be made at the bottom of the list in (a) the order of a member school’s admittance to the SPLCC, (b) a representative of the school assumes a league officer position, (c) is the principal meet host or (d) a representative of a member school assumes an extraordinary position, such as the League’s webmaster.

SECTION 2 – Officers / Committees

A. *League Officers:* The administrative authority of the League shall be vested in an Executive Board comprised of a President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary and two Safety Officers who are either (a) elected by a simple majority of the membership after volunteering to fill the position or (b) appointed in the order specified from the Universal List of member schools. Responsibilities of the League Officers include, but are not limited to the following:

- **President:** The chief executive officer of the Suburban Parochial League Cross Country (SPLCC) is its president, who is entrusted by the member schools with the direction of the League and the administration of the SPLCC's *Rules and Procedures* and administration documents. The president presides at the League's preseason summer (July) and postseason Fall (October) general meetings, conducted pursuant to *Robert's Rules of Order*. The president sets the agenda for each meeting with input from the membership and/or on their own initiative, which is: (a) reflective of the goals for the coming season; and (b) opportunities for improving the student-athlete's experience.
- **Vice President:** The principal responsibility of the League's Vice President is to (a) support the president in the performance of his/her duties and responsibilities and (b) replace the president on an interim basis in the event the president is incapacitated or unable to fulfill their responsibilities.
- **Secretary:** The League's secretary maintains all the League's written records, to include changes to the *Rules and Procedures*, the SPLCC's preseason and postseason meeting minutes, Universal List and member school's Contact List. The League's secretary serves as the principal communications officer.
- **Treasurer:** The Treasurer is the League's financial officer, managing the finances of the League. The treasurer's duties include, but are not limited to, (a) recommending the amount of annual dues based on previous and anticipated expenses, (b) issuing invoices for, and collecting, annual dues and fees from League members, (c) collecting monies from other authorized fund raising activities, (d) paying bills for authorized expenses, (e) maintaining the League's checking and savings accounts and (f) providing semi-annual financial reports at the preseason summer (July) and postseason winter (October) meetings. Financial reports are to be in writing and provide a detailed accounting of the cash inflows and outflows in a standardized bookkeeping format.
- **Safety Officer:** The SPLCC requires two (2) safety officers. Their responsibilities are:
 - Reviewing team tents are for compliance with the League's "tent safety protocols" set forth Section 6.B. Instruct teams to take down tents when severe weather conditions or wind would cause a hazardous environment when tents could become airborne.
 - Monitor weather conditions and recommending implementation of the League's *severe weather policy* set forth Section 6.C when threatening weather is approaching.

B. *Term / Election:* Officers serve for an indefinite term. When a member of the Executive Board decides to vacate their position, the retiring officer should give sufficient notice (6 months is suggested) to ensure the timely transfer of responsibilities to the new officer.

Vacant positions will be filled by: (a) volunteering with confirmation by the League members, (b) nomination by any League member school or (c) by appointment from the Universal List should no one volunteer to stand for election at one of the League's semi-annual meetings and voted upon by the member schools present. Voting will be via a simple majority vote.

The SPLCC is a volunteer organization that is wholly dependent on its members' willingness to assume positions of leadership, whether through volunteering, nomination and election or appointment from the Universal List. Failure to assume one's leadership responsibility, especially if chosen from the Universal List where a school is responsible, will result in: (1) a member school's membership in the SPLCC being suspended for a period of one full calendar year (i.e. two full seasons) at which time the suspended school may petition for reinstatement; or (2) in lieu of suspension, and so that a school's student-athletes are not penalized, the member school will be assessed a fee equal to two-years annual dues, plus the normal annual dues for that season and placed on probation.

League Officers, meet hosts or members that make other significant contributions as determined by the League are exempt from the list. Such exemptions shall continue for two years after the members would otherwise be eligible to be included on the list.

When, and if necessary, the League and all member schools will reference the Joliet Diocesan Policies.

C. Rules and Event Committee: The Rules and Events Committee will be comprised of League Officers and experienced coaches who volunteer or are appointed by the League President with the concurrence of the other League Officers. There are no specified terms for the Rules and Events Committee members and members will be replaced as they opt to vacate their position. Experienced coaches are considered to have at least a minimum of 1 year of SPLCC coaching or administrative experience.

Committee members meet when necessary to discuss issues raised during the season or at League meetings and make recommendations to the Members regarding resolution of those issues. In addition, the members of the Committee are meant to draw on their collective experience and serve to share information, make jobs less confusing and/or intimidating to new volunteers and provide guidance on how to run a meet. The Committee is a resource to be utilized by all members of the SPLCC.

D. Ad Hoc Committees: From time-to-time specific issues related to the operation of the League will arise and need to be addressed. In this eventuality, the President will solicit volunteers or appoint representatives from member schools to examine research and make recommendations to be voted on by the membership. In cases where an immediate solution or action is needed, the members of the Executive Board and/or Rules and Events Committee will be empowered to implement an action plan.

SECTION 3 – Dues and Fees

- A. *Initiation Fee*: New member schools will pay, upon acceptance into the League a \$100 initiation fee.
- B. *Annual Dues*: Each member school will pay annual dues based on a recommendation by the Treasurer at the preseason meeting, taking into consideration the previous season's expenses and anticipated expenses for the current season, plus any surplus.
- C. *Other Fees*:
- (1) Reentry - Schools who have opted to drop their membership for one or more season and want to rejoin the League will be required to pay a \$100 reentry fee plus annual dues, subsequent to submission of their written intent to rejoin the League and approval by a simple majority of the League members.
 - (2) Suspension Waiver - Not wishing to punish student-athletes of a suspended member school, the school may pay a reinstatement fee equal to double the annual dues.
 - (3) There are no additional fees assessed member schools placed on probation.
- D. *Payment*: The League Treasurer will prepare and distribute invoices for the annual dues and any outstanding amounts owed the League. Annual dues and any outstanding fees are due and payable prior to the first meet of the season.

SECTION 4 - Meetings

- A. *League General Meetings*: There are two mandatory annual meetings: 1 preseason and 1 postseason. The preseason meeting will be scheduled on or before the last Monday in July while the postseason meeting will be held on the fourth (4th) Tuesday in October.
- All member schools are required to have a representative at BOTH League meetings. This rule is meant to ensure that (a) all member schools proactively contribute their expertise and leadership through their active participation at League meetings; and (b) assure the League continues to provide a quality cross country program and experience for its member schools and their student-athletes.
- B. *Coaches*: There will be a coaches' meeting 45 minutes prior to the first race of each meet. All teams should have at least one coach in attendance at this meeting where any questions regarding the meet or course can be asked and answered. The meetings will be held at the scorer's tent, or an area designated by the meet's host school(s).
- C. *Other*: When deemed necessary, the Rules and Events Committee (REC) will meet prior to the July preseason and/or the October postseason meetings to discuss issues brought up at SPLCC general meetings. The REC will in turn discuss those issues, make recommendations regarding those issues, and present those recommendations to the League members for further action.
- D. *Penalties*: Failure to attend a general League meeting will place the member school on probation for one (1) year. Failure to attend two meetings in a row will result in the suspension of that school from the League for a period of one (1) year. Should a member school be placed on probation or suspended, the League will notify the team's head coach, athletic director, and principal. Note: So, as to not punish a school's student-athletes for the failure of its athletic administration, on the first occurrence of non-compliance and suspension the member school can opt to pay a fee equal to double the annual dues in order to participate for that season.

SECTION 5 – Student Athlete Participants

A. Eligible Participants: Any boy or girl in grades 5 – 8 and in regular attendance at a member school, in good academic standing as determined by their respective school or is enrolled in the member school's Religious Education (RE) Program, to include home schooled students who are enrolled in or have completed a parish's religious education program's requirements, is eligible to compete in SPLCC activities. It is specifically noted that such participation by religious education students is at the option of the member school and that participation by Religious Ed students is allowed **ONLY** for Cross Country; RE students **CANNOT** participate in SPL T&F activities. For IESA member schools, Religious Ed students are barred from participating on the school's team.

SPL student-athletes compete by grade and gender but may compete at a higher grade level than their own grade but are limited to competing with their gender and allowed only one race per meet. Runners are, however, allowed to compete at either their own grade level, or higher, at different meets. They may **not** compete at a grade-level level lower than their own.

To compete in the SPL Championship, Meet, a student-athlete must have run and finished at least **one** of the four SPL sponsored meets prior to the Championship Meet. Note: A special waiver may be granted to a student-athlete by the League's president if the student-athlete was unable to compete in any of the four meets that precede the Championship due to injury or illness. Such waiver is subject to clearance by a physician, who authorizes the student-athlete to compete and the athlete's coach as to his/her ability to safely race.

B. Special Needs Student-athletes: Participation by special needs student-athletes is welcome and encouraged by the SPLCC. However, competing in meets is subject to certain provisos: (1) the safety and well being of **all** student-athletes is of paramount importance, most especially when starting and finishing a race. Where possible, the special needs athlete will start with his/her team as long as their safety and those of other competitors is not impacted; (2) race time limits (See Section 8.E) will be adhered to, and arrangements should be made by the student-athlete's coach to provide a finish time if they are unable to finish their race within the allotted time. For those special needs students who require a running companion, said companion will wear distinguishing clothing provided by the League so they are not mistaken for someone "pacing" the runner.

C. Ineligible Participants: Fourth (4th) grade students are ineligible and not permitted to compete in SPLCC meets. In addition, runners who are not a member of a SPLCC member school's team are also ineligible to compete in SPLCC meets. Students who are determined to be academically ineligible, as determined by their respective school, are unable to participate in practices and meets.

SECTION 6 – Safety & Risk Management

Risk management is one of the best tools we have to keep our athletes, coaches and spectators safe and secure and protect our meets from accidents, injuries and the potential for financial loss. A proactive, preventive approach is always the best method for minimizing risks and ensuring safety! We are all in this together!

A. Concussion Education Requirements: The League fully supports full compliance with [Illinois] Public Act 099-0245, the *Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act* (the Act) requiring all youth sports coaches in the State of Illinois to complete a 2-hour concussion education program and successfully "test out" every two years. The League acknowledges that the selection of the education program and testing methodology that is compliant with the Act, as well as confirmation of compliance with the Act is the sole responsibility of each individual member school.

SECTION 7 – Uniforms, Equipment, Accessories

C. Uniforms: All runners must wear a team uniform consisting of a t-shirt, jersey or singlet that identifies their school that is of the same design and color. In cold weather, undergarments or sweats can be worn but the uniform top must be worn on the outside to allow easy identification of the competitor. There is no specific restriction on the shorts and/or tights or undergarments worn by competitors. However, teams are encouraged to wear shorts and/or tights or undergarments that are identical, to complete / complement the uniform top and make identification easy.

C. Shoes:

(1) Each competitor shall wear shoes on both feet that have an upper and recognizable sole and heel, which can be securely fastened to the foot. In cross country, the sole may contain grooves, ridges, or spikes. Permitted shoes for competitors include spikes (subject to next paragraph), trainers, cross trainers, trail runners and racing shoes which include shoes with rubber nubby soles commonly known as flats or racing flats. Shoes worn in other sports with protrusions, such as soccer or football cleats, are prohibited in all SPL cross country competitions.

(2) All competitors are allowed to wear “spikes” provided that: (i) the length of the spike or pin is no longer than 5/8”; (ii) spikes must be inserted into the sockets; i.e. spikes may not be worn with empty spike sockets; and (iii) the use of spikes, and their length, at any meet is subject to approval by the venue’s host organization and any prohibition on spikes will be communicated to the competing teams in the meet letter provided by the meet host(s). For the purposes of the SPL, “**spikes**” are defined as racing shoes with sockets in the sole in which metal spikes are inserted and designed to provide grip.

Note: (1) There are many types of “spikes” and it is suggested that the student-athlete and their parents make the initial purchase from a specialty running store, as the staff will help guide you through the fitting process, and make sure you end up with the best shoe for your feet and event. If purchasing via the Internet, be sure to discuss your needs before purchasing with your coach or another knowledgeable running-shoe person. (2) Middle Distance track runners who compete in both cross-country and track can sometimes use the same spikes for all seasons. There are spikes designed specifically for cross-country, which tend to have a rubber sole with a better grip on rough or muddy cross-country surfaces vs. those for track & field.

C. Jewelry / Headsets / Ear buds: Runners cannot wear excessive or large amounts of jewelry, to include headsets or ear buds of any kind. The starter and / or League officials will decide disputes about the validity of shoes and / or jewelry. It is strongly suggested that a coach (or parent) inquire prior to the start of a race so as to not delay the race or cause the student-athlete to miss the race. (Note: Possession of a cell phone by an athlete during a race is cause for disqualification per NFHS Rules.)

SECTION 8 – Team Requirements

A. Insurance: Each school hosting a meet must order Certificates of Insurance. The phone number for the Joliet Diocese is (815) 838-2142. If a host school is outside the Joliet Diocese, then the appropriate Diocese office should be contacted.

B. Enrollments: School enrollments for grades 5 thru 8 are to be submitted to the League President prior to the first meet of the season so as to determine whether a school is assigned to Division A, AA or AAA. (See #5 below.)

SECTION 9 – Season Structure

- A. *Divisions*: Effective July 2018, the SPLCC added an additional Division to create three Divisions; A, AA and AAA. As previously, assignment to a specific Division is based on a school's and/or merged team's combined grades 5 – 8 enrollments. Division assignment is utilized for the Championship Meet and dues structure.
- B. *Preseason Meeting*: Member schools will meet on or before the 4th Monday in July in preparation for the upcoming season. This is a **mandatory** League meeting.
- C. *Racing Season*: There will be four regular season meets and one Championship Meet.
- a. The first SPL CC meet will be held on either the last weekend of August or first weekend of September, attempting to avoid a race on Labor Day weekend.
 - b. The season will continue every Saturday for five weeks ending with the Championship Meet. The League's start of competition on the Saturday prior to the Labor Day weekend avoids a conflict with the Championship Meet falling on the Columbus Day weekend or on the date of the IESA Sectional Meets.
 - c. *Greg Vogler Memorial Co-Ed Meet*: This meet is traditionally the third meet of the season and is so named to honor a long time [SMG] coach and former SPL President who made significant contributions to the League and sport of Cross Country.
- D. *Awards –Meets 1 thru 4*:
- a. Individual – Individual place ribbons will be awarded and distributed in the chute to the top 25 finishers in each of the eight races run on a meet day.
 - b. Team – Team ribbons will be awarded to the first 7 runners of each team placing first thru sixth. Ribbons will be distributed to coaches the week following a meet and placed with the team's folder holding tags for the current meet. No team scoring will be completed for the GVM Co-Ed Meet and consequently no team ribbons will be awarded at this meet.
- E. *Championship Meet*: All attendant Rules and Procedures noted for Meets 1-4 apply equally to the Championship Meet.

SECTION 10 – Championship Meet

A. Individual Awards:

- a. Individual ribbons will be awarded the same as for the first four meets with the exception that places 11-25 will be handed out in the chute as the runner completes their race. Individual places 1-10 will receive ribbons and Championship T-Shirts at a post-race Awards Ceremony.
- b. The winners of the 8th grade boys and 8th grade girl's races will be automatically admitted to the SPLCC Hall of Fame. Subsequent to admittance to the Hall of Fame the 8th grade boy and 8th grade girl will be awarded the **Morello Medal**.

- B. Divisions & Division Awards:** Teams will be divided into three divisions for the Championship Meet only; Division A for smaller schools, Division AA for mid-sized schools and AAA for the larger member schools. If a team is comprised of more than one school, then the enrollment of grades 5 through 8 of all schools making up said team will be totaled to determine its Division placement. In determining which Division a team is to be assigned to, the total student enrollment for grades 5 through 8 is added together and the medians being the point of division provides the basis for determining each school's Division assignment. If there are an odd number of *schools* participating in cross country, then the school with the lower median enrollment shall participate in Division A or AA. All enrollment numbers shall be forwarded to the League President prior to the first meet of the season. In the eventuality that a team has an insufficient number of runners for a team score, teams will be made "whole" with ghost runners to determine the winners of the Championship Division A, AA, and AAA awards.

Overall Division Champions: A first-place plaque or trophy differentiated from all other awards and plaques shall be awarded in all three Divisions; A, AA and AAA for each gender, for a total of six awards:

- Division A Boys Champions
- Division A Girls Champions
- Division AA Boys Champions
- Division AA Girls Champions
- Division AAA Boys Champions
- Division AAA Girls Champions

Division Grade & Gender Champions: There will be a plaque for each 1st place boys' and girls' team at the individual grade levels 5 through 8 in each Division. No awards will be distributed for 2nd and 3rd place teams.

Overall SPL Champions: A championship trophy or plaque will be awarded to the overall SPL Boys Champion and overall SPL Girls Champion, as determined by the combined scores of 5th grade thru 8th grade, with a smaller trophy or plaque awarded for the overall 2nd and 3rd place teams.

C. Scoring Formula for Division Awards Only:

- a. Record the lowest 5 finishers for each school.
- b. If a school has less than 5 finishers, each missing runner will receive a "ghost runner" value calculated as follows:
 - i. Take the total number of runners in a race and add 1. For example, if there are 100 competitors in a race, add 1 for a "ghost runner" value (i.e., 101).
 - ii. The total number of runners + 1 becomes the "ghost runner" value and is added for each missing runner on a team.

Example: Team A has 3 runners who compete, finishing 10, 20 and 30 = 60. Add to that score, 101 twice, for a team score of 262.

- D. Records:** League records will be kept only for the Championship Meet. If meet hosts want to establish their own course record that is acceptable and encouraged but will not qualify for League record status.

SECTION 11 – Hall of Fame

The *Suburban Parochial League - Cross Country Hall of Fame* was established to honor those who have made a positive impact on the Suburban Parochial League and the sport of cross country through individual, team performance or those individuals who have provided outstanding service to the League, its student-athletes, teams, and member schools.

Eligibility for the Hall of Fame:

- ❖ The winner of the 8th grade boys' and the 8th grade girls' race at the SPL – CC Championship Meet.
- ❖ Any runner that has set a Championship Meet time record for his or her grade.
- ❖ Any deserving runner or team approved by a simple majority of SPL coaches (one vote per school) after a motion is made by a coach to nominate them for entry.
- ❖ Coaches, administrators, and other persons who have performed outstanding service to the League, approved by a simple majority of SPL coaches (one vote per school). Active members of the SPLCC generally are not to be considered for Hall of Fame membership, until the candidate retires as an active coach or administrator and is no longer actively involved with the SPLCC.

The League will (a) provide individual Hall of Fame inductees with a specially commissioned medal inscribed and known as the Morello Medal and have the name of the inductee registered as a Hall of Fame member on the League's website. The **Morello Medal** is named after League co-founder Ray Morello and recognizes his long-term contributions, distinguished excellence and commitment to the Suburban Parochial League and the sport of cross country. If a coach desires **Morello Medals**, be awarded to all members of a team, the coach and/or respective school will bear the expense of those medals. (Medals are issued to individual inductees and are provided at no cost to the individual athlete or school.) Except for the boy's and girl's 8th grade Championship Meet winners, who receive their Morello medals at the post Championship Meet awards ceremony, all other Hall of Fame nominations and inductions are to be made at the post-season (October) meeting.

Each school has **one** vote to be cast by the head coach or their designee.

SECTION 12 – Extraordinary Circumstances

From time-to-time conditions may require temporary suspension or changes to the League's *Rules and Procedures*, that affect the operations of the League. When these conditions exist, the League's Officers and members of the *Rules and Events Committee* will meet and draft an addendum to the *Rules and Procedures*, that will be (a) temporary in nature and (b) designed to address a specific extraordinary circumstance.

As time is of the essence in addressing an extraordinary circumstance, approval of the temporary changes to the *Rules and Procedures* will be approved by a simple majority of the League's Rules and Events Committee and will not require a vote by the full membership. Said changes to the *Rules and Procedures* will be **temporary** and will not be in effect for any longer than one season. Should implementation of the changes be deemed necessary for more than one season, approval of the change as a formal amendment to the *Rules and Procedures* shall be subject to a roll call vote by the full League membership.

UNIVERSAL SCHOOL ABBREVIATIONS

All Saints Catholic Academy	ASCA	St. Mary of Gostyn	SMG
Ascension	AS	St. Mary Immaculate	SMI
Everest Academy	EA	St. Mary – Mokena	SMM
Holy Family	HF	St. Mary Nativity	SMN
Holy Trinity	HT	St. Michael	MIKES
Immaculate Conception	IC		
Kingswood Academy	KA	Sts. Peter & Paul	SSPP
Notre Dame	ND	St. Petronelle	PETS
Our Lady of Charity	OLC	St. Pius X	PIUS
St. Cletus	CLETUS	St. Raphael	RAPH
St. Francis Xavier	SFX	St. Scholastica	SS
St. Giles	GILES	Visitation	VIS
St. Isaac Jogues	SIJ		
St. James the Apostle	SJA		
St. Joan of Arc	ARC		
St. John of the Cross	SJC		
St. John the Baptist/St. Isadore	SB/SI		
St. Joseph – Downers Grove	JOES		
St. Joseph – Manhattan	SJMAN		
St. Jude	JUDE		
St. Leonard	LEO		
St. Luke	LUKE		

ADDENDA to SPL – CC Rules & Procedures

Please see the additional addenda regarding the:

- (a) Co-Ed Meet Rules and Procedures
- (b) Finish Chute diagram
- (c) Suggested Checklist for hosting a SPLCC meet
- (d) Universal List

~ All are available on the SPLCC website ~