

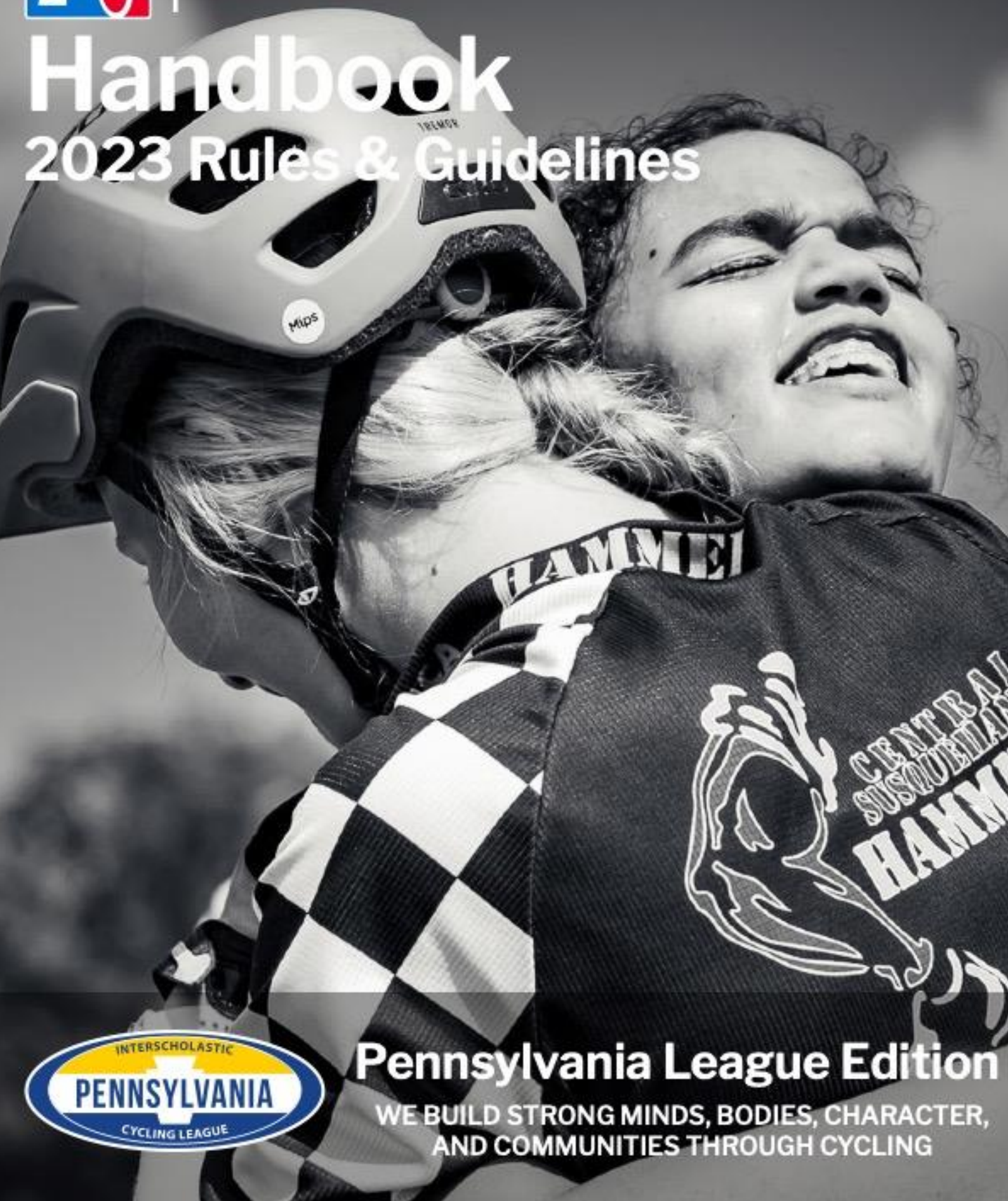


NICA

NATIONAL
INTERSCHOLASTIC
CYCLING ASSOCIATION

Handbook

2023 Rules & Guidelines



Pennsylvania League Edition

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 PA Handbook is made effective July 1, 2023 (the “Effective Date”), for the Fall Season for the PA League. All prior rules and regulations are superseded as of the Effective Date.

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NATIONAL INTERSCHOLASTIC CYCLING ASSOCIATION
21 Orinda Way Suite C-368, Orinda, CA 94563
Tel (510) 524-5464 www.nationalmtb.org

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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 and know that violations of these standards could, at the discretion of the League result in disqualification from participation or other consequences. (See Appendix B)

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 ecigs, 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

-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.

-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 course pre-ride at least 30 minutes prior to the end of the designated pre-ride time.

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 High school 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.

RULE 3.3 RULES FOR FEEDERS

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 riders' 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.

<u># Racers</u>	<u># Feeders</u>
5 or less	2
6-10	3
11-20	4
21 or 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.
10. Inclement Weather: In cases of inclement weather conditions, the League may decide to add supplementary feed zone areas to the course in order to assist riders. In those cases, the League will communicate those plans to Head Coaches/Team Directors on site. In such cases, it should be assumed that all above rules pertain to any supplementary feed zones.

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.

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 a minimum graduated return-to-play protocol under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. For NICA-specific concussion resources including a sample graduated return-to-play protocol, please see the NICA Concussion Resource Webpage: <https://nationalmtb.org/concussion-resources/>.

RULE 4.14 DRONE POLICY

Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS), also known as drones, may only be flown at event venues if approved by the Event Director. To be approved, the pilot must first obtain permission from the land manager and any other appropriate agencies. The pilot must also have appropriate liability coverage. Proof of permission and liability must be provided to the Event Director at least 5 days in advance of the event. The Event Director will then determine whether to grant approval. 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. 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/>.

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 [N/A PICL]

RULE 5.6 TEAM TRAINING LIMITS AND PRE-SEASON

5.6.A NICA has strict training limits for NICA League Teams. 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 April 1.

- 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 using the [Pre-season Activities Sign Up Form](#):
- 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 6.

5.6.D.2 REGULAR SEASON

- a. **Start Date.** Regular training, to include up to four practices per week, may commence on July 1st.
- 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.

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 will jeopardize a team or club's eligibility:

- A league team racing under any NICA Sanctioned team name;
- Using the NICA team jersey at races as a team;
- Having practices that meet on school grounds;
- Having regular meetings at school that organize activity for off-season training and racing;
- 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 group 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 groups. 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.
Group	The whole or portion of a single category. Multiple groups will make up one category if the category is larger than 50-100 athletes or multiple conferences exist in the league. Multiple groups are used to improve the student-athlete experience and reduce risk of injury associated with many racers starting at the same time.
Wave	One or more groups that race during the same time period, usually limited to a total of 200 riders. Examples of waves are: MS Girls, HS girls.
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 single Category. An example of a Category is JV Boys Southern Conference which is assigned the 300s number series. Number Series assigned to Categories are generally standardized across NICA.

Race Flyer	Informational flyer for a particular race used as a reference for race start times, category numbers series, and wave times. PICL's race flyer can be found at pamtb.org under Event Schedule.
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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. 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. 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. This calculation, in conjunction with the Placement Criteria (below), is used to form the Category Placement Table (CPT). The CPT is used to determine first-race staging for the subsequent season.

6.1.B.3 [N/A PICL]

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 10th - 12th graders with no prior results are placed into Junior Varsity 2 (JV2).

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 Pennsylvania currently permits middle-schoolers to participate in high school categories.

SECTION 6.2 LEAGUE STRUCTURE: TIERS, GROUPS AND DIVISIONS

6.2.A LEAGUE TIERS

6.2.A.1-2 [N/A PICL]

6.2.A.3 Pennsylvania's current season categories can be found in 6.3 below.

6.2.B [N/A PICL]

6.2.C TIER 2 LEAGUE DIVISIONS

6.2.C.1 Teams 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. Teams 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 by emailing petition@pamtb.org. 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 – e. [N/A PICL]

SECTION 6.3 PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR MULTI-YEAR

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

Category	
1-Lap MS Open	6 th -8 th graders who successfully petition into the category
6th Grade	6 th graders only
7th Grade	7 th graders only
8th Grade	8 th graders only
3-Lap MS	6 th -8 th graders who successfully petition into the category
1-Lap HS Open	9 th -12 th graders who successfully petition into the category
9th Grade	9 th graders and those who successfully petition into the category
JV2	10 th - 12 th graders and those who successfully petition into the category
JV3	9 th - 12 th graders who: a) Placed in the top 10% in any two 9 th grade races in the prior year; or b) Placed in the top 15% of the overall 9 th grade season standings in the prior year; or c) Successfully petition into the category. JV2 student-athletes who: a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV2 races in the prior year; or b) Placed in the top 30% of the overall JV2 season standings in the prior year; or c) Successfully petition into the category. JV3 student-athletes who raced in JV3 the previous year and did not automatically upgrade to Varsity.
Varsity	JV3 student-athletes who: a) Placed in the top 25% in any two JV3 races in the prior year; or b) Placed in the top 30% of the overall JV3 season standings in the prior year; or c) Successfully petition into the category. Varsity student-athletes who raced Varsity the previous year.

SECTION 6.4 PLACEMENT CRITERIA FOR FIRST YEAR LEAGUES

[N/A PICL]

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. [a - c: N/A PICL]

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 exceed 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 Petition Committee's 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 Petition Committee's 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 requests for placement into another category for the first race of the season must be submitted by the Head Coach or Team Director via the [Category Petition Form](#) at least two weeks in advance of race one and all requests after the first race are due by the close of registration for the race.

6.5.A.5. The petition requires a Head Coach or Team Director's comments and signature, as well as justification for the petition. If there is no coach, the student must contact the Petition Committee at petition@pamtb.org and a coach advisor will be appointed. A parent may be approved as the advisor. The Petition Committee shall consider the petition and render a decision in a timely manner.

6.5.A.6. 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. Last-minute petitions will not be rushed. 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. No two or more Composite Teams may overlap in geographical region nor may they draw student-athletes from the same schools. A Composite Team must be approved based upon submission of the [Composite Team Application](#) on or before February 14 for the season in which the Composite Team wishes to compete.
- 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.

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’s Rules Committee 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 Rules Committee-
- 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.
- 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.
- Each subdivided team shall be scored independently.

c. Composite Team subdivision rules:

- The League’s Rules Committee 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.

** With experience, we have learned that school-based teams are the most successful model for getting more kids on bikes. Therefore, the rules pertaining to Team Types, including Composite Team Limitations, will be modified and enforced beginning on January 1, 2024.

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 not permitted. 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's Rules Committee's discretion, accumulate points scored by the student-athlete after the transfer for determining team standings. The League's Rules Committee'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 a 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's Rules Committee 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

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 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 may be made for large and heavy items, though teams are encouraged to use the pit zone drop-off area for such items. Thank you for cooperating with the volunteer Parking Attendants.

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.

# Racers	# Feeders
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.

SECTION 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 and Roving 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 Roving 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 and coaches must have them properly affixed to their bicycles at all times when they are on the course.

6.10.E. LEADER'S JERSEY

The student-athlete in each category, except 1-lap categories, 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

[N/A PICL]

6.10.F.5 CONCUSSION RECOVERY STAGING 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 staging position held prior to their concussion. This will impact the rider in the same staging position and following riders by moving them back one staging position. To be granted this accommodation, a Head Coach or Team Director of the Student-Athlete must submit an email request to petition@pamtb.org with attached doctor's note by the close of event registration for the race in which the student plans to participate.

6.10.F.6 AIR QUALITY SENSITIVITY STAGING 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 staging position held previously. This will impact the rider in the same staging position and following riders by moving them back one staging position. To be granted this accommodation, a Head Coach or Team Director of the Student-Athlete must submit an email request to petition@pamtb.org with attached AQI measurement including time and location from airnow.gov by the close of event registration for the race in which the student plans to participate.

6.10.G. STUDENT-ATHLETES MAY BE PULLED

Lapped racers and racers outside the time limit will be pulled from the race at the finish line. At the race official's discretion, a racer may be pulled at any location on the course due to unsafe circumstances. Pulled racers may not continue and will be placed according to their position at the time they are pulled. 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. TIME LIMITS AND COURSE CLOSURES

6.10.H.1 Race officials have the authority and permission to impose time limits at any time. Course closures may be announced at any time without advance notice.

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: Race finishes are determined by the finish line staff, including the Chief Scorer and Chief Official and their supporting crew, which uses a variety of rider tracking methods.

6.10.J.2 [N/A PICL]

6.10.J.3 In the case of a tie, 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 [N/A PICL]

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.

6.11.B. OVERALL SERIES SCORING

6.11.B.1 Overall Series scoring for individuals is determined by dropping the student-athlete's lowest race finish score, then adding together all of their other race finish scores. Any bonus points earned during the season are added to the student-athlete's series score at the end of the season to determine final ranking.

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 50-point bonus for 9th-grade and JV2 racers, a 90-point bonus for JV3 racers, and a 125-point bonus for Varsity racers. A single point is awarded to all riders that start a race but do not finish (DNF) the race. (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 remain intact and the upgraded rider does not lose 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

[N/A PICL]

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.

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 [N/A PICL]

6.11.F POINT BONUS FOR TEEN TRAIL CORPS (TTC)

6.11.F.1 All TTC hours must be submitted through Pit Zone by the close of event registration and quantified by ¼ hr blocks in order to be counted for TTC awards. No backlogged trail hours will count toward TTC awards. Annually, tracking for TTC hours will conclude at the close of registration for the final event of the season.

6.11.F.2 Student-athletes can earn up to 25 TTC Bonus Points. Only those trail work hours accrued during the current season will qualify for TTC Bonus Points. Trail work hours must be completed during the official team practices, as described by NICA TTC rules, or local trail-club work days, and verified by a coach or the trail work organizer. TTC Bonus Points are awarded to the individual following the calculation of overall series points. TTC Bonus Points are not added to points scored in the final race nor are they added to the team score.

6.11.F.3 Hours accrued in trail work will award points in the following manner:

- a. 25 points max
- b. Hours 1 – 4 = 5 points each
- c. Hours 5 – 9 = 1 point each

6.11.F.4 Team TTC Points are awarded based on the average amount of TTC hours per team member. The calculation = total amount of hours the team's student-athletes work during the course of the current season divided by the number of student-athletes on the roster by the close of registration for the last race of the season.

6.11.F.5 Individual TTC Leaders will be recognized with jerseys and are presented to the leading male and female in each grade (not race category) on the podiums of league events. Team TTC Leaders will be recognized at the final league event of the season.

6.11.G. TIER 1 LEAGUE SCORING MATRIX

6.11.G.1-3 [N/A PICL]

6.11.H. TIER 2 LEAGUE SCORING MATRIX

6.11.H.1 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.H.2 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.H.3 The League Rules Committee may make modifications to these scoring rules.

6.11.H.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.I. OVERALL TEAM SCORING

Team series scoring is based on team points totals for an entire series - the lowest score is not dropped.

6.11.J AWARDS AT EACH RACE

- a. Individual student-athlete medals are awarded five deep for male and female for each category, except for 1-lap categories.
- b. Leader's jerseys are presented to the male and female high school points leader in each category, except 1-lap categories.
- c. TTC jerseys are presented to the leading male and female in each grade (not race category) with the highest number of cumulative trail work hours by the close of registration for the event.
- d. If the awards ceremony is missed due to circumstances including weather or results delays, it will not be made up at a subsequent event.

6.11.K. AWARDS AT END OF SEASON EVENT

- a. Individual student-athlete series leaders are awarded five deep for male and female for each category, except for 1-lap categories.
- b. Team series leaders are awarded to the top 3 teams in each division.
- c. Team TTC leaders for the season are awarded to the top 3 teams in each division.
- d. Super Teams are awarded to the top team in each division. The calculation is determined by the ranked finish of Team Series Points plus the ranked finish of Team

TTC Points. The winner is the team with the lowest combined rank. Ties are determined by Team TTC.

6.11.L. RACE RESULTS AND PROTEST PROCESS

6.11.L.1 RACE DAY PROTEST

Protest 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 protest forms to the League Director.

6.11.L.2 PRELIMINARY AND OFFICIAL RESULTS

- a. *Preliminary results.* Preliminary race results and penalty assessments are posted on the website as soon as possible after each event.
- 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 Monday after the event. 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

Place	Middle School	9th & 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
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
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

Appendix B - Code of Conduct



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 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.
- 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, PA 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.

Appendix B - Code of Conduct



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 PA Handbook • 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 • 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.
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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 PA 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.