

Texas Charter School Academic & Athletic League TCSAAL



2025-2026 Handbook

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Mission & Vision

Mission

The Texas Charter School Academic & Athletic League works to aid the individual growth of Texas' charter school students, through academic and athletic competition, to promote teamwork, a healthy lifestyle, and the constant pursuit for academic excellence.

Vision

TCSAAL will develop and maintain annual sports leagues and academic competitions as a venue to showcase charter school students in Texas.

TCSAAL Goals

- It is the goal of TCSAAL to facilitate safe, professional, and fun competitions.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to promote and value sportsmanship above all other aspects in all TCSAAL Activities.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to develop a competitive league that is available to all charter schools in the state of Texas.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to promote a sense of community among Texas' charter schools and to help build a stronger sense of charter school unity.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to promote the progression of Texas Charter Schools.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to provide a program that is an incentive to help foster the development of a student's good behavior, good grades, and their overall character.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to provide activities that promote a healthy lifestyle.
- It is the goal of TCSAAL to provide competitions that promote the lifelong lessons that are obtained through teamwork.

Competition Codes/Sportsmanship

Competition Codes are established in order to ensure that any participating school, athlete, coach, fan, participant, or any other individual associated with our member schools, conduct themselves in a manner that is in the same spirit as the TCSAAL Mission & Vision. Individuals, campuses, and other entities failing to meet the standards set forth by the following competition codes may be subject to penalty.

- All opponents are to be treated as guests, emphasizing the value of sportsmanship over the result of a competition.
- Winning participants and their supporters are to display good sportsmanship in their victory, while participants that do not win and their supporters are expected to display good sportsmanship in their loss. Boasts, insults, or displays of poor behavior as a result of a loss is counterproductive in the individual participant's growth and development, as well as contrary to TCSAAL's Mission & Vision.
- Coaches are expected to keep safety as the top priority while coaching, and as well, are expected to teach tactics in a manner that are both ethical and in the spirit of competitive integrity. In addition, coaches are expected to coach in a manner that is conducive to the educational value of the respective competition and should not resort to skirting the rules or employing unethical tactics.
- Participants and their supporters are expected to accept rulings of competition officials in a mature and humble manner, and are further expected to treat all officials, spectators, and attendants at TCSAAL events with courtesy and affable character.
- Coaches are expected to remember that they set the example for students. Acting unprofessionally after feeling wronged does not contribute anything positive to the competitive environment, and certainly does not correct any wrongdoing that might have occurred.

- Removing teams from competition as a means of protest is counterproductive to the fundamental aspects of both competition and team sports, and such action is likely to stunt rather than encourage personal growth for those individuals participating.
- Coaches are also expected to set a good example for his/her team by demonstrating affable and professional rapport with officials, opposing team members, coaches, and spectators.
- During the most trying times of competition, coaches are expected to lead their team in maintaining a positive attitude and in appreciating the value of the lessons learned through competition, rather than focusing on the negative aspects of a result.
- Coaches are expected to encourage core school academics above and beyond any aspect of competition.
- Participants and all affiliated individuals are expected to respect the facilities being used and are to clean up after themselves prior to exiting.

School Eligibility

- Any open enrollment or district charter school in the state of Texas is eligible to participate in TCSAAL.
- Where appropriate unique non-charter schools such as private schools may be allowed to participate in TCSAAL. Admittance to the league will be determined at the sole discretion of TCSAAL.
- TCSAAL Schools are not allowed to participate in other charter specific athletic leagues in Texas without permission of TCSAAL.

League & Regional Structure

- TCSAAL will be divided into 6 different age groupings for athletic competitions.
Grouping 1: 4th–6th Grade - Grouping 2: 6th-8th Grade Premier (under 15) - Grouping 3: 6th-8th Grade Secondary (under 15) Grouping 4: 9th-10th Grade (Under 17) - Grouping 5: Junior Varsity (Under 19) - Grouping 6: Varsity (Under 19)

Athletic Areas Being Offered:

North Texas (Dallas / Tarrant),
South / West Texas (Texas Valley / Corpus Christi), (El Paso, Midland, Amarillo),
Central Texas (Austin / San Antonio)
and East Texas (Houston / College Station).

Academic, Art, Wrestling, Cheer, Tennis, Golf & ESports Activities: Due to the structure of these competitions, all schools, regardless of their location around the state, will be able to participate.

Please note that our 4th – 6th Grade, 6th-8th Grade Secondary, 9th-10th Grade, and Junior Varsity groupings do not advance to state playoffs. They will participate in a regional playoff tournament, but they will not advance to state.

- 6th-8th Grade Secondary Registration Requirements
 - Any campus fielding a 6th – 8th Grade Secondary team in an activity without fielding a 6th – 8th Grade Premier team, should their secondary team win the Regional Championship, the

school will be required to field a team in the Premier grouping the following year. The campus will be eligible to also field a secondary team in said activity provided that they also field a team in the Premier grouping.

- Exception: Campuses only serving students up to 7th grade or lower will not be required to participate in the Premier Age grouping unless otherwise mandated by TCSAAL.
- The following year, should said campus' Premier team finish the season in said activity with a divisional winning percentage below .500, said team will be eligible to participate in MSS groupings exclusively the following year.
 - This new rule will take effect with the Winter registrations for the 2023-2024 school year starting with basketball season.
- Junior Varsity Registration Requirements
 - Any campus fielding a Junior Varsity team in an activity without fielding a Varsity team, should their Junior Varsity team win the Regional Championship, the school will be required to field a team in the Varsity grouping the following year. The campus will be eligible to also field a Junior Varsity team in said activity provided that they also field a team in the Varsity Age Grouping.
 - Exception: Campuses only serving students up to 11th grade or lower will not be required to participate in the Varsity Age grouping unless otherwise mandated by TCSAAL.
 - The following year, should said campus' Varsity team finish the season in said activity with a divisional winning percentage below .500, said team will be eligible to participate in Junior Varsity groupings exclusively the following year.
 - Seniors can participate in the Junior Varsity Level.
 - Charter Districts can decide at the District level if they wish to limit JV teams to max of 11th grade.

Registration Requirements

- All schools must complete and submit an annual registration form.
- By completing this registration form, the school agrees to comply with the policies and standards set forth in this document and all other TCSAAL Rules & Regulations for any activities in which they participate.
- By completing this registration form, the school consents to students' names, accounts of his/her performances, photographs and video recordings being used for TCSAAL website and other materials. For instances where a specific student needs to be exempt from this consent, schools are required to notify TCSAAL Administration prior to Contest date.
- All schools must pay their base fee upon submitting their registration forms.
- All schools must pay for each activity fee at least 30 days before the start of the activity.
- In the instance where an event deadline has passed (activities schedules already released), late entries will be permitted at the sole discretion of TCSAAL. Factors taken into consideration when adding a team after the deadline include but are not limited to: The logistical implications for those campuses already participating, the potential number of participants should a new division be necessary, and the amount of time in between the deadline and the team's attempted entry. For all late entries, a late entry fee of \$50 will be charged if the team is accepted.
- In addition to late entry fees for a specific activity, campuses failing to register for the upcoming year by the posted deadline for the upcoming year may incur a \$50 fee for late campus registration.
- Schools dropping a team and adding a different team (changing groupings) after schedules have been released may incur a \$100 fee for the change.

- In our Varsity and Middle School Premier groupings registrations for the whole year are due at the same time. These schedules are released for the entire upcoming school year by the end of the previous school year. Other groupings have a rolling timeline. Please review registration form for more details.

Refund & Payment Policies

Payment Policies

- Base fees are charged for a 2-year cycle along with a schools' 2-year Registration. All schools must pay their annual base fees at the time of registering.
- All schools must pay their activities fee 30 days before the start of the activity.
- Any school with over 30-day outstanding payments may be suspended from participation until payment is up to date.
- In the instance a campus or team gets banned from a rental facility the team may be responsible for the current facility rental fees, and the facility fees to secure a different facility.
- In many cases schools can hire TCSAAL to secure facilities. If this is done within 2 weeks of the season starting schools will be subject to an additional \$100 late fee.

Refund Policies

- If a specific sport league in your region does not make (ex. 9th -12th flag football), your school will be refunded in full for the activity fee.
- If you have registered for an activity and choose to cancel your registration, the following refund policies will apply:
 - If you cancel 61 days or more before the start of the activity, then you will receive a 90% refund (or only be charged 10% of the entire cost).
 - If you cancel between 60 and 31 days before the start of the league, then your charter school will receive a 50% refund for activities canceled.
 - If you cancel 30 days or less prior to the start of the activity you will be charged the entire amount.

General Contest Rules

Participant Eligibility

- No pass, no play. (Applies to all classes) Students can become eligible again based on progress reports as handled by the schools.
- A student must be under the age of 19 as of September 1, of the current school year to be eligible to participate in the high school (Varsity and Junior Varsity) age group.
- A student must be under the age of 17 as of September 1, of the current school year to be eligible to participate in the 9th – 10th Grade age group.
- A student must be under the age of 15 as of September 1, of the current school year to be eligible to participate in the 6th – 8th Grade age group.
- A student must be under the age of 13 as of September 1, of the current school year to be eligible to participate in the 4th – 6th Grade age group.
- In rare cases over-age students classified 504 or with other disabilities may be deemed eligible through the appeals process. We utilize the same form from University Interscholastic League. Please fill out forms and submit to tcsaal@texascharter.org. [8th grade form](#) (see UIL section 1400 (a) (3), [12th grade form](#) (See UIL Section 446 Age),

- Any student can play up in age, but they cannot play down. Any student can play up in grade, but they cannot play down in grade.
- Any athlete, coach or spectator, suspended / removed from a contest will receive at a minimum a 1 game suspension from the next played contest not to include forfeited games.

Rosters

- Teams are required to submit rosters through Rspartz website, unless otherwise specified.
 - Rosters must be **submitted online before the first game of the season.**
 - Rspartz rosters **must include a headshot of each athlete (Varsity, Junior Varsity and Middle School Premier groupings only).** (They can be taken with phone). Please note that in some cases kids have received privacy waivers to not include a picture.
 - Rosters must include jersey numbers and birthdates.
 - Rosters lock at the halfway point of each athletic season. Please see TCSAAL Roster Lock Date document for specific days.
 - Any game played by a team without a roster submitted properly after week 1 of the official season start date will be penalized.
 - If the team played with a player not on the roster that team will not be eligible for a victory and the game will be marked a double loss.
 - If all players were on roster but the roster was not submitted properly then,
 - The first infraction will result in a formal warning and the team will have 24 hours to make any roster fixes.
 - The second infraction will result in the team not being eligible for victory. If the team without a roster wins then the game will be marked a double loss.
 - Warnings will not be given after Roster lock date and penalty will go straight to second infraction status.
- **Any protest to eligibility of a player including roster protests must be brought immediately. Please notify your Regional Director.**
- A student cannot play on multiple teams in the same activity. For example, a 6th – 8th grader is allowed to play on either the 6th – 8th grade team or the 9th-12th grade team but not both. Also, if your school, for example, has two 6th - 8th grade flag football teams, a student will not be allowed to play on both teams.
 - Students are permitted to change teams (1 time) during the first half of the season (see calendar for roster lock dates). For example, A participant can be moved from either the 6th-8th grade team to the 9th-12th grade team. If the participant was an 8th grader playing up into the 9th-12th grade team, the participant can be moved back down to the 6th-8th grade team. Schools with 2 teams in the same activity, gender and age grouping are allowed to have their students switch teams 1 time as well if before the roster lock date.
 - A player can only switch teams 1 time during a particular season. Whether they are switching teams at the same school or they are a transfer student to a new school. And all changes must be sent into TCSAAL for confirmation before the change happens. A player cannot play on the same team on the same day even if this is their only switch.
- Girls are eligible to participate in all boys sports with the exception of Track & Field, Cross Country, Golf, Tennis, and Boys Volleyball.

- Boys cannot participate on girls' teams.
 - As of 2021 with the passage of House Bill 25 in the 87th Second Special Session and with Governor Greg Abbott signing the bill into law this rule is negated. The law impacts Public Charter Schools so please discuss implementation of the law with your schools' in-house lawyers.
- Athletes must be a full-time student at the team's school to play for that team.
 - If a student is participating in an activity and they graduate they will be allowed to finish the current activity that they are already participating in. They will not be allowed to participate in any new activities. This only applies to graduating students. Students that leave the school for any reason other than graduation will not be allowed to participate in TCSAAL activities. For example, a student on the basketball team that graduates in January will be eligible to finish out the basketball season but not start any new activities with TCSAAL.

Unique Roster Guidelines for JV and Varsity

- JV and Varsity Rosters lock at roster lock date like other age groups. However, JV players can be moved up at any time in the regular season or specific times throughout the playoffs. PLEASE NOTE: once they are moved up, they cannot go back down.
- Once a regional or Area playoff tournament begins rosters lock until the end of the Area or Regional tournament. Meaning if your school has a JV and Varsity team in the regional playoffs players cannot be pulled up to varsity during the Area or regional tournament.
- Varsity players cannot be moved down after the roster lock date and they can only be moved down 1 time before the roster lock date. Varsity players can be moved down 1 time only to JV if it is before the roster lock date. If they are moved back to varsity (following JV rules) they must stay up.
- Varsity players can only switch teams 1 time during a particular season. Whether they are switching teams at the same school or they are a transfer student to a new school. And all changes must be sent into TCSAAL for confirmation before the change happens. A player cannot play on the same team on the same day even if this is their only switch. Players must switch before the roster lock date.
- JV players can be pulled up to varsity at any point during the **regular season**. (Please note that they cannot move back down after the roster lock date). They are not restricted in moving up by the roster lock date.
 - PLEASE NOTE: Once a Area or regional playoff tournament begins, rosters lock until then end of the Area or regional tournament. Meaning if your school has a JV and Varsity team in the regional playoffs players cannot be pulled up to varsity during the regional tournament.
 - Anybody on the Junior Varsity team regardless of if they have moved during the regular season and are locked they will be eligible to join varsity team for Area, regional or state playoffs. See restrictions above. Please contact Regional Director before making any changes. During playoffs a jv player lock for Area, and Regional tournaments but can be moved up between these tournaments.
 - Tie-breaker games are considered regular season and therefore will follow regular season guidelines.
- Final team rosters are due before the roster lock date. No changes to rosters will be allowed after the final rosters are due. (See JV exceptions above).

Penalties for using an ineligible player

Penalties for using an ineligible player can include, but are not limited to:

- Suspension of a player
- Suspension of coaches
- Forfeiture of previous victories
- Suspension of team
- Suspension of School

Transfer Students

- **Recruiting.** Recruiting students for the purpose of extracurricular participation is not only a violation by the student who has been recruited, but it is also a violation by the school and/or the school district personnel who recruited the student. It is a violation to recruit at all grade levels.
- **Eligibility Burden of Proof.** If a student's eligibility to compete in a league contest is questioned, the student has the burden in any proceeding to establish that he or she is eligible. If TCSAAL Administration determines that a complaint or report against a school, district and/or district personnel has enough validity or substance to warrant an investigation, the burden to disprove the allegations rests with the participant school, member school district, or covered school district personnel charged with the violation.
- **Post-Transfer Eligibility & Previous Athletic Participation Form.** Students transferring into a new TCSAAL member school, having participated in extracurricular competitions at their previous TCSAAL member school during the current academic year, are ineligible to participate in TCSAAL Contests starting with their first date of instruction at the new school, and ending 60 calendar days after their first date of instruction. Exceptions to this rule can be granted solely by TCSAAL Administration, potentially with the help of TCSAAL Advisory Board Members, and will be dependent on the successful submission and approval of the PAPF found on TCSAAL website, and its respective contents satisfying the burden of proving student-athletes transfer satisfies TCSAAL policy prohibiting recruitment as determined by TCSAAL Administration.
- **Minimum Penalty.** If a PAPF was not filed prior to competition and it was an inadvertent error and the student is actually eligible per the policies detailed in the *TSCAAL Handbook*, TCSAAL Administration is not required to demand forfeiture or to rule the student ineligible. In these instances, TCSAAL Administration is permitted to determine if any penalty is necessary.
- **Find the PAPF from on our website.**

Videotaping and Filming

- A non-competing school shall not film, videotape or otherwise make a visual recording of an athletic contest without the prior written consent of the schools competing in the contest.
- A school does not have to obtain permission to film or tape, or otherwise make a visual recording of an athletic contest in which it is competing.

Noisemakers

- Noisemakers are prohibited at League athletic events held indoors. Releasing balloons is prohibited at League athletic events held outdoors.
- Noisemakers may be banned at outdoor activities at the discretion of the facility, administration and the officials.

Volunteers

- Many of our activities require volunteers. Volunteer roles must be filled by adults 18 years of age or older and not a current student at the school.

For additional policies, please see the specific activities' rules.

Athletic Scheduling and Regular Season Format

General Scheduling & Regular Season Format

Teams will play each team in their division twice (with the exception of Cross Country, Track & Field, Golf, tennis, and Tackle Football). In the event that the number of divisional games is less than 8 (or 10 for Varsity Basketball and Varsity Volleyball), teams in the division will be scheduled non-divisional games in order to supplement their schedule as necessary. (Please note that non-divisional games do not contribute towards playoff seeding or divisional ranking as detailed below) In the event that TCSAAL is unable to provide an 8-game schedule for each team (or 10 games for varsity Volleyball and Varsity Basketball), TCSAAL will credit the school the difference at a rate of \$50 per game not scheduled. In some areas it might be difficult to split the teams into separate divisions or find supplementary non-divisional games, TCSAAL will work with the respective schools to find the most conducive structure for their teams. Which may result in some divisions playing each other more than twice. TCSAAL also reserves the right to have larger division sizes if necessary to accommodate an area. Please note this could result in extra costs.

Exceptions for Activities Ending at Area and/or Regional Level

For all instances where a grouping does not advance to the state level (Junior Varsity, 4th-6th Grade, 9th-10th Grade, 6th-8th Grade Secondary), regions and areas may adopt different season structures and playoff criteria based on the needs of the area and region and its respective schools at the sole discretion of the Regional Director.

See competition Scheduling specifics below:

Flag Football/Soccer

- Teams participate in a regular season within a division of 2-5 teams. Teams will play each team in their division twice, with division capacity capped to a maximum of 5 teams in most cases. All regular season games will take place within that team's division. Note that in some cases, the season may be less than eight games. If such occurs, TCSAAL will inform all teams in the respective division. If possible, TCSAAL will still schedule your team non-division games to bring your game total to 8 when possible.
- The top two teams from each division will advance to the playoffs, with the exception of divisions consisting of 3 or less teams, in which case only one team from said division will advance to the playoffs.
- Schools signing up for TCSAAL to provide facilities for soccer night games are subject to extra fees for lighting to be billed to the school.
- TCSAAL also reserves the right to have larger division sizes if necessary.

Sub-Varsity Volleyball & Basketball

- Teams participate in a regular season not to exceed 8 games. Teams will play each team in their division twice, with division capacity capped to a maximum of 5 teams. All regular season games will take place within that team's division. Note that in some cases, the season may be less than eight games. If such occurs, TCSAAL will inform all teams in the respective division. If possible, TCSAAL will still schedule your team non-division games to bring your game total to 8.
- Schools must provide their own facilities for home games. (If a school does not have the facilities then they are required to rent or otherwise secure the use of a regulation facility)
- The top two teams from each division will advance to the playoffs, with the exception of divisions consisting of 3 or less teams, in which case only one team from said division will advance to the playoffs.
- TCSAAL also reserves the right to have larger division sizes if necessary.

Varsity Basketball & Varsity Volleyball

- Teams participate in a regular season not to exceed 10 games. Teams will play each team in their division twice, with division capacity capped to a maximum of 6 teams. All regular season games will take place within that team's division. Note that in some cases, the season may be less than ten games. If such occurs, TCSAAL will inform all teams in the respective division. If possible, TCSAAL will still schedule your team non-division games to bring your game total to 10.
- Schools must provide their own facilities for home games. (If a school does not have the facilities then they are required to rent or otherwise secure the use of a regulation facility)
- The top two teams from each division will advance to the playoffs, with the exception of divisions consisting of 3 or less teams, in which case only one team from said division will advance to the playoffs.
- TCSAAL also reserves the right to have larger division sizes if necessary.

11-Man/6-Man Football

- Facilities and officials must be arranged and provided by host school or designated home team for all regular season and playoff games except for the State Championship games.
- Teams play division opponents once.
- The top team from each division will advance to the playoffs.
- Additional playoff berths may be awarded to the remaining teams by virtue of division ranking policies detailed in TCSAAL Football plan found on website.

Track & Field

- Teams will participate in a Regional Qualifier meet. Individuals that advance out of the Regional Qualifier will participate in the State Track meet representing their school. (See playoff format)
- Teams must participate in the meet that is offered in their region and are not eligible to participate in another region's meet.
 - Exception, Track & Field is not Offered in West Texas therefore West Texas Schools can participate in the track meet of their choosing. They can only participate in 1 regional.

Baseball & Softball

- Teams participate in a regular season not to exceed 8 games. Teams will play each team in their division twice, with division capacity capped to a maximum of 5 teams. All regular season games will take place within that team's division. Note that in some cases, the season may be less than eight games. If such occurs, TCSAAL will inform all teams in the respective division. If possible, TCSAAL will still schedule your team non-division games to bring your game total to 8.
- Schools must provide and pay for their own officials from an approved list of TCSAAL assignors. (unless you registered with alternate options).
- Schools must provide their own facilities for home games. (If a school does not have the facilities then they are required to rent or otherwise secure the use of a regulation facility)
- The top two teams from each division will advance to the playoffs, with the exception of divisions consisting of 3 or less teams, in which case only one team from said division will advance to the playoffs.
- TCSAAL also reserves the right to have larger division sizes if necessary.

Cross Country

Students will participate in a Regional Meet and State Meet for Varsity and 6th-8th Grade Premier groupings. Sub-varsity groupings not including 6th-8th Grade Premier are only eligible to participate in the Regional Meet.

- Teams must participate in the meet that is offered in their region and are not eligible to participate in other regions meet.

Golf, Tennis, Cheer & Wrestling

Teams will participate in a state tournament. If our participation size increases TCSAAL will consider adding additional competition levels or a regional tournament. Green fees are included in TCSAAL golf dues.

Athletic Divisioning

TCSAAL divisions will be composed of anywhere from 2 to 5 teams (with the exception of Varsity Volleyball and Varsity Basketball, which can have up to 6 teams within a division) within the same gender and age grouping. TCSAAL reserves the right to have larger division sizes if necessary. TCSAAL may choose to make larger division sizes at their discretion.

Teams are placed into a division by TCSAAL. Factors for placement include, but are not limited to:

- Campuses entering multiple teams in the same activity and age grouping.
- Campuses needing to transport multiple teams among different gender and/or age groupings.
- Geography and proximity of teams among a division.
- Teams registering after the deadline.
- TCSAAL may opt to diversify divisions by virtue of sister school affiliations

Reschedules and Forfeits

Game Rescheduling Requests

- **Once we transition schedules from draft to official, they will lock and we will only allow games to be rescheduled for weather, or an Act of God. If schedules are locked and you request to reschedule for reasons not outlined above, they will not be granted.**
- You will be notified of the official schedule lock date with the release of each season's schedules.

Penalties for Forfeiture

- Teams forfeiting within 7 calendar days of their game will be fined \$150 for forfeiture. The \$150 fee will be used towards paying for the officials which were contracted for the game, and the TCSAAL playoff budget. Failure to pay these fines will negate said team from participating in playoffs and/or participating next year in that specific activity until fines have been paid. Schools can petition their fine to the league if they feel they have justification for not having to pay the fine. In addition, forfeitures are weighed differently in the event of a tie-breaker scenario (see **Athletic Tie-Breaker Scenarios** below).
- Administrators of any team forfeiting will be notified upon notice of forfeiture.
- If a team forfeits a tie-breaker game, they will be responsible for 100% of the cost.

Team Responsibilities

- Teams must take measures to ensure there is always a safe environment for the competition.
- In the 88th Legislative Session **HB 2484** was signed into law. It is designed to ensure safety for officials at school competitions. This bill requires that *"An Open Enrollment Charter School... shall provide a peace officer, a school resource officer, an administrator, or security personnel to ensure the safety of*

a referee, judge, or other official of the activity or competition until the official departs district or school property if: 1)a participant or spectator of the activity or competition engages in, attempts to engage in, or threatens violent conduct against the official or otherwise disrupts the duties or free movement of the official; or (2)the district or school reasonably suspects that an incident described by Sub division(1)may occur at the activity or competition.”

1. TCSAAL will support equivalent penalties to any person or fan interfering with officials as outlined in HB 2484.
 2. **The law impacts Public Charter Schools so please discuss implementation of the law with your schools’ in-house lawyers.**
- We encourage each team to have a non-coach representative present at all home games.
 - The representative may be any coach (other than the game coach), teacher, administrator, or staff member associated with the school.
 - The representative works to ensure a safe environment.
 - The representative assists the officials in any manner necessary to discourage improper conduct by players, coaches, or fans.
 - Host Team is responsible for reserving their own facility for all home games in which facilities are needed.
 - Host Team must take measures to ensure that prohibited activities do not occur during game play; warm-up or wrap up of the game.
 - Prohibited activities shall be defined as any activities that are against the rules and regulations of the home team’s school or facility.
 - Additionally, prohibited activities include any activities that are against TCSAAL rules and regulations. Or any activity prohibited by law.
 - Teams are required to submit rosters through Rsportz website, unless otherwise specified as specified in Rosters section above.
 - Teams are encouraged to record and keep all official game books and/or official scorecards and other gameday documentation for the entirety of the academic year. These records may help in the instance of confusion or concerns specific to eligibility and/or discipline.
 - For any TCSAAL athletic contest hosted at your school (ex. a home basketball game), TCSAAL strongly recommends both an administrator and security guard be present. For any TCSAAL athletic contest not hosted at your school (ex. an away basketball game, regional playoffs) TCSAAL strongly recommends an administrator travel with the coach/instructor and students.
 - **Winning teams are required to input scores into the website via their login immediately following completion of each game or match. All scores not submitted by end of the 2nd business day after the game will be marked as a loss for both teams including the winning team.**
 - Both teams must ensure that the home team as well as the visiting team is adhering to all TCSAAL rules and regulations, including, but not limited to, sportsmanship, competition codes, as well as the rules and guidelines for each individual activity.
 - See individual activity’s Rules and Guidelines for more detail.

Athletic Playoff Formats

6th – 8th Premier, and Varsity Groupings

Playoff format:

Flag Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer, Baseball, and Softball:

- The top 2 teams from each division will advance to the playoffs except in divisions with 3 or less teams. If a division has 3 or less teams, only the top team will advance to the Regional Playoffs.
 - This will make sure that every playoff team has advanced on merit.
 - In the event that a 3 or less-team division also constitutes the entirety of a region, then both teams will play each other in a Regional Championship game.

Regional & Area Playoff Seeding (See Athletic Seeding & Tie-Breaker Scenarios)

State Playoff Tournament Matchups:

Based on school voting at the 2017 Coaches Conference, TCSAAL adopted the following format for state matchups. Starting in 2023-2024, we will begin a 3-year rotation for state semi-final matchups. This option received 75% of the votes out of 3 options available.

The semi-final matchups will be pre-determined by region. See chart below:

The winners of the semi-final games will advance to the state championship.

Semi Final Matchups at the state tournament (Flag Football, Volleyball, Basketball, Soccer, Baseball & Softball)

| Semifinal Matchups | 6-8 Grade and Varsity BOYS | 6-8 Grade and Varsity GIRLS |
|--------------------|--|--|
| 2023-2024 | North Texas vs. Central/West Texas East Texas vs. South Texas | North Texas vs. South Texas Central/West Texas vs. East Texas |
| 2024-2025 | North Texas vs. East Texas Central Texas vs. South / West Texas | North Texas vs. Central Texas East Texas vs. South / West Texas |
| 2025-2026 | North Texas vs. South / West Texas Central Texas vs. East Texas | North Texas vs. East Texas Central Texas vs. South / West Texas |

If we only have 3 regions in an activity the matchups above will remain for the semi-finals and one team may receive a bye in the first round.

Flag Football/Volleyball/Basketball/Soccer/Baseball/Softball:

- In all activities where we have at least 2 regions participating in that activity in the same age/gender grouping, we will have a Regional Round of the playoffs as well as a State Round. TCSAAL will divide all participating divisions into regions, North, South, East and Central Texas. **Regions will be assigned before the start of each season.**
 - In State advancing categories the Area champion from West Texas will play the Area champion from South Texas in the South/West Texas Regional Championship Game. The winner of that game will earn a spot in the State Tournament.
 - In state advancing Categories the Area champion from Tarrant will play the Area Champion from Dallas in the North Texas Regional Championship game. The winner of that game will earn a spot in the State Tournament.
 - In state advancing Categories the Area champion from Austin will play the Area Champion from San Antonio in the Central Texas Regional Championship game. The winner of that game will earn a spot in the State Tournament.

- The remaining Region is East Texas.
- The top two teams from each division (unless it is a division of 3 or less teams, where only 1 team advances) will advance to the Regional / Area round of the playoffs in their respective region.
- **This playoff format can be revised at any time by TCSAAL League Director.**

Regional & Area Rounds

- Regional & Area rounds will be structured as a single-elimination tournament with the winner advancing to the next round of playoffs.
- For regional seeding procedure, please see Athletic Seeding & Tie-Breaker Scenarios section.

State Round (Applicable to 6th-8th Grade Premier & Varsity Groupings Only)

- This round will be a single elimination tournament with the Regional Champions advancing to the State Round. The winner will be crowned the State Champion. In most cases the State Round will take place in one day with teams playing an early game and a late game. Varsity Basketball, soccer, baseball, and softball is a two-day tournament.
 - TCSAAL reserves the right to alter the schedule.
- For state semi-final matchups, please see *Playoff Format* above.
- Teams will not play for third place. State teams will finish either: State Champion, State Runner-Up, or Regional Champion.

Playoff Format when less than 4 REGIONS are participating

- In the event that we have an activity with only 3 (Regions) the winner from each of the 3 Regionals will advance to the state round. Matchups will follow 4 region structure as outlined above with one team earning a bye.
- In the event that we have an activity with only 2 Divisions (Regions) the top 2 teams from each division will play each other in a Regional Championship game. The winner from each of the 2 Regionals will advance to the state round. The Regional Champions will then play each other for the State Championship game.
- In the event that we have an activity with only 1 division in the state then the top 2 teams from the division will play each other for the championship.
 - TCSAAL reserves the right to schedule games earlier in the week for state groupings of less than 4.

4th – 6th Grade, 6th-8th Grade Secondary, 9-10 Grade, & Junior Varsity Grouping Playoff Structure:

- Our 4th – 6th Grade, 6th-8th Grade Secondary, 9-10 Grade, and Junior Varsity activities will not participate in a state round of the playoffs. The top 2 teams from each division will advance to a single-elimination Area or Regional Playoff where they will compete to become Area or Regional Champions (see exceptions for a division of 3 or less teams). Contact Regional Director for specifics in your area.

6 Man Tackle Football/11-Man Tackle Football Playoff Procedures

- The top team from each division will advance to the playoffs.
- Additional playoff berths may be awarded to the remaining teams by virtue of division ranking policies detailed in TCSAAL Football plan found on website.
- Post-season matchups may be structured in order to help plan for post-season travel. Barring necessary exceptions, 6th-8th Grade teams will be scheduled to minimize post-season travel.
- See website for Tackle playoff plan.

Track & Field Advancement

- At the Regional Qualifiers the top two relay teams and the top 6 individuals in all running activities except for the 3200 meter (HS Only), 2400 (MS Only), 1600 meter, and 800 meter (only the top three individuals advance in the long distance races) will advance to the State Track Meet.
- At the Regional Qualifiers the top 3 individuals in all field events will advance to the State Track Meet.
- Teams must participate in the meet that is offered in their region and are not eligible to participate in another regions meet.
 - Exception, Track & Field is not offered in West Texas therefore West Texas Schools can participate in the track meet of their choosing. They can only participate in 1 regional.

Golf, Cheer, Wrestling & Tennis Playoff Procedures

TCSAAL will have a State tournament. In the event that our numbers grow beyond the capacity of a tournament we will have regional rounds. TCSAAL will announce Playoff Structure for regionals if needed.

Playoff Details

- TCSAAL will arrange playoff facilities for Area, and Regional Championship games as well as the State Tournament. Other playoff rounds will take place at the higher seeded facility. TCSAAL will also arrange for all referees for the playoffs.
 - TCSAAL reserves the right to change this format.
 - **Divisions working with their Regional Director will set up and arrange their own divisional tie-breaker games.**
 - Tackle football teams are responsible for all fees including facilities and officials until the State Championship games.
- TCSAAL will charge a door fee for all playoff rounds. Regional playoffs will cost \$5 a day, and State will cost \$10 a day. All players, coaches, and trainers on rosters will be allowed entrance for free. Cheerleading teams that have made arrangements with TCSAAL to perform and are in uniform will also receive entrance for free. Also, all guests 8 and under will be allowed free entry. Schools will be given 2 Administrator passes to enter for free.
 - Track & Field & XC regional and state Meets will have a \$5 entry fee.
- No others will be admitted for free.
- Upon releasing playoff brackets and schedule information, schools will be given a timeframe in which they can raise concerns or protests if they feel the bracket and matchups are not correctly assembled according to the policies detailed in the TCSAAL Handbook. Following this timeframe, brackets are considered finalized and cannot be protested or altered. Time Frame will be 24 hours before the tournament begins.

Standard Playoff Warm-up & Celebration Time

- Playoffs warm-up time:
 - Volleyball: 10 minutes
 - Basketball: 10 minutes
 - Flag: 5 minutes
 - Soccer: 10 minutes
 - Tackle: 15 minutes
 - Baseball / Softball: 15 minutes
 - Track / XC: 30+ minutes before meet
 - Tennis: 5 minutes before each match
 - Golf: you can play course ahead of time.

- Do not contact state playoff sites (except golf) to practice ahead of time.
- Playoff celebration time:
 - 10 minutes after an area / regional / state championship. Awards, pictures, and bench cleared off by end of time.
 - Warm up time to follow for next game.
 - All can be abbreviated by Tournament Director at their discretion.
 - Teams should not be warming up during half time on court/field
 - TCSAAL tournament director reserves the right to alter these times as necessary.
- State Champions should have an Admin (or AD or head coach at a minimum) join TCSAAL Tournament Administration on the field to help present medals to champion athletes.

Playoff Awards

- For awards given out to teams that advance to the playoffs, please see the individual activity's rules.
- In general teams will be awarded for Regional Champion, Regional Runner-up, State Champ, State Runner-up. We also give out plaques for Division Champion. Division champ Plaques will be awarded at the regional championship game to the 2 finalists if they are eligible for the award. All other division champs will fill out an online form to request their plaque. Plaques are included but will require a shipping fee. Also, individuals will receive medals for winning a state championship or state runner-up on a team sport. Track gives out individual medals, we do not give out team medals for Track & Field.
- In instances where student-athletes and/or teams leave prior to receiving their award, a campus representative is permitted to have their award(s) shipped to them, shipping will incur a fee of \$10 per plaque and current cost per trophy. Medals requiring shipping will be initially charged \$5 and may incur an additional fee dependent on the number of medals being shipped.

Athletic Seeding & Tie-Breaker Scenarios

Division Ranking Procedures for Applicable Team Sports:

- Teams are ranked within their division by virtue of the numbered criteria below.
 - For all instances where more than 2 teams are tied for a ranking, the procedure below is utilized to isolate a lower-ranked team (or teams if applicable).
 - For all instances where 2 or more lower-ranked teams are isolated and teams are still in contention for a playoff advancing position, the procedure is restarted among isolated teams and the process repeats as necessary.
 - For all instances where goal, run, or point-differential (set-differential for volleyball) is utilized as criteria, losses by virtue of forfeiture will be weighed more heavily than otherwise legitimate losses.
1. Division Winning Percentage
 2. Division Losing Percentage
 3. Aggregate Head-to-Head Winning Percentage among tied teams
 - a. For all instances here where 2 or more teams remain tied for the #1 division ranking, said teams will be recognized as *Division Co-Champions* for ceremonial purposes and Texas Cup tabulation. Said teams will still be ranked beyond these criteria as necessary for seeding.
 - b. For all instances here where only 2 teams remain tied for a singular playoff-advancing position (*in most cases this would be for the 2 seed*), in the state advancing groupings, Varsity

and Middle School Premier a Tiebreaker game will be played. In all other groupings tiebreaker games will not be played and the tiebreaker scenarios will continue below. *There will be only 1 tie breaker game per division max. If it is a 3 way or more tie using our division ranking procedures teams will be eliminated until only 2 teams remain for a playoff advancing spot and then those teams will be placed in the tiebreaker game. We do not play tiebreaker games among teams that have earned a playoff spot.*

4. Aggregate goal, run, or point-differential (set-differential for volleyball, if tied we will go to point differential across matches) in head-to-head matchups among tied teams.
 - For all instances here where only 2 teams remain tied for #1 division ranking, proceed to step 7 below.
5. If divisional #1 seed has been determined, tied teams' aggregate head-to-head winning percentage versus #1 seed.
6. If divisional #1 seed has been determined, tied teams' aggregate goal, run, or point-differential (set-differential for volleyball) in head-to-head matchups versus #1 seed.
7. Overall winning percentage including TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games.
8. Overall losing percentage including TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games.
9. Overall number of wins including TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games.
10. Average sets or points conceded in division games.
11. Average sets or points conceded in all TCSAAL sanctioned games, including non-division games.
12. Average sets or points won in division games.
13. Average sets or points won in all TCSAAL sanctioned games, including non-division games.
14. Coin flip.

For Varsity and MSP tiebreaker games, each tied team is responsible for paying \$100 to TCSAAL to cover the expense of the tiebreaker game. If admission is charged, admission earnings will be applied equally to the tiebreaker fees. If there is still a balance, teams will cover the remaining expense.

1. In the instance of forfeiture for a tiebreaker game, the losing team will be responsible for the entirety of tiebreaker fees.

2. Hosting opportunity for the tiebreaker game will be awarded to the higher-ranking team as determined by virtue of division ranking procedures listed above.

- If the higher-ranked team is unable to secure a facility in a reasonable time as determined solely by TCSAAL administration, the lower-ranked team will then be awarded hosting opportunity.

Tournament Seed Ranking Procedures for Applicable Team Sports at the Area and Regional playoff level:

- NOTE: State Playoff match-ups are determined prior to the school year; However, this ranking procedure may be used to designate premier facilities and/or start times for state tournaments.
- Teams are ranked within their Area or region by virtue of the numbered criteria below.
- For all instances where more than 2 teams are tied for a ranking, the procedure below is utilized to isolate a lower-ranked team (or teams if applicable).
 - For all instances where 2 or more lower-ranked teams are isolated, the procedure is restarted among isolated teams and the process repeats as necessary.
 - For all instances where goal, run, or point-differential (set-differential for volleyball) is utilized as criteria, losses by virtue of forfeiture will be weighed more heavily than otherwise legitimate losses.
 - All division #1 Seeds are ranked among each other and are awarded the top half of bracket seeds.

- Exception: For any advancing division #1 Seed from a division consisting of three or less teams, said division #1 Seed may be moved down in rank to ensure division opponents can be placed on opposite bracket halves.
 - All division #2 Seeds are first isolated to the opposite bracket half of their Division #1 Seed.
 - Division #2 Seeds are then ranked among each other within their respective bracket-half among the remaining seeds by virtue of the criteria and procedure detailed below.
1. Division Winning Percentage
 2. Division Losing Percentage
 3. If tied teams have played an equal number of head-to-head TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games, teams will be ranked by virtue of aggregate head-to-head winning percentage among tied teams.
 4. If tied teams have played an equal number of head-to-head TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games, teams will be ranked by virtue of aggregate goal, run, or point-differential (set-differential for volleyball, if tied we will go to point differential across matches) among tied teams.
 5. Overall winning percentage including TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games.
 6. Overall losing percentage including TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games.
 1. For all instances here where Division #1 Seeds are still tied with 100% overall winning percentage and 0% overall losing percentage including TCSAAL Sanctioned non-division games, Division #1 seeds will be drawn randomly for their respective bracket position.
 2. For all remaining instances here, tied teams will be drawn randomly for their respective bracket position.

Academic, Arts and Esports Competitions Structure

Math Olympiad/Chess/Spelling Bee

- Teams/Individuals will participate in a Regional Qualifier and those that qualify will advance to the State Competition. See event rules for qualifying criteria.

All Other Academic & Arts Competition

- Currently, teams will participate directly in the State Round. Please note that as an activity grows, we will add Regional Qualifiers as necessary.

State Advancement

- See the individual activities rules.

ESPORTS

TCSAAL will be participating with PlayVs We will follow their outlined structure. See our website for more information. Currently Esports is only offered at the High School Level.

TCSAAL Advisory and Disciplinary Action Board (Regional Representatives)

The TCSAAL Director will appoint an advisory board with a minimum of 1 Regional Representative for our four core Regions (North, South, Central and East). The Advisory and Disciplinary Action Board will serve as an advisory panel to the TCSAAL Director on discipline matters that need further review. They will also make recommendations to TCSAAL on league structure and format. This panel will only have an advisory role and will not have any final decision-making authority. Any representative whose school has a Disciplinary Investigation under review must recuse themselves from the advisory discussion.

Members will serve in 1-year terms. They will be appointed by the TCSAAL Director and are eligible to serve consecutive terms.

Regional Representatives will also aid TCSAAL Staff on Regional Playoff sites and other miscellaneous playoff details.

Protests/Appeals Process

All protests, appeals and inquiries to the league must come from a school official. TCSAAL does not interact with parents and non-school officials.

Any protest to eligibility of a player including roster protests must be brought immediately. Please notify your Regional Director.

- Schools that wish to make an appeal or protest must submit the appropriate form from our website which can be found under the “Rules & Documents” link.
- Schools will have 5 business days to submit their appeal/protest. Any appeals or protests for games scheduled within 2 weeks of the end of the season must be made within the following business day.
- Playoffs must be submitted before the next round.
- Schools must pay a \$50 fee to submit their appeals/protest (If teams win their appeal then they will be refunded the money). Please note that no appeal/protest will be reviewed without funding in hand within 5 business days of the appeal. (This fee can be given to a TCSAAL Site Manager)
- In addition to filling out the form protests should be directed to either the Academic or Athletic Director via email.
- Appeals should be directed to the State Director.
- Schools may protest a student’s eligibility.
- Schools may protest possible cheating.
- Schools should bring to the attention of TCSAAL all acts of un-sportsmanlike behavior.
- Schools **may not** protest a referee’s judgment or ruling. TCSAAL will not overturn a referee’s ruling or judgment.
- TCSAAL will not change results or scores except in the event of un-sportsmanlike behavior, an ineligible student, or cheating. (Please note that penalties will be handled on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of TCSAAL)
- The TCSAAL State Director reserves the right to act on all protests and appeals and serves as the final authority on all disputes. At the TCSAAL Director’s discretion, the Director may send an appeal to the Advisory board for their opinion on the issue.

Varsity Student Athlete Awards

All-State Tournament Team

All-State Recognition is reserved to State-Qualifying teams in the Varsity Grouping only. Coaches are to select their own student-athletes (number varies based on the sport) to represent the All-State Tournament Team. If a student earns the recognition in the Semi-Final game, they will not be eligible to be nominated during the championship game, as they already are represented on the All-State Tournament Team.

- Number of Nominations Per Team / Per Game/Per Sport:
- 6 Man Tackle – 2 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship

- 11 Man Tackle - 3 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship
- Flag Football - 2 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship
- Volleyball - 2 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship
- Basketball - 2 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship
- Soccer - 3 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship
- Baseball & Softball - 3 in Semi-Final, 3 in Championship

All-Region Team

All Varsity teams will select up to 2 student athletes to be awarded All-Region team at the coaches' discretion.

All-Academic Team

All Varsity Student Athletes who have a 90 plus GPA are eligible for All Academic team. Coaches will use the following form to award All-Academic Team Athletes.

College Acceptance Tracker

We want to help celebrate your student athlete successes! If you have a student athlete earning a college scholarship, we would love to hear about it. Please fill out the following form so our community can share in their celebration!

Health & Wellness

Hot Weather

- It is the policy of TCSAAL to not initiate or continue outdoor events when the Heat index is at 105 or higher. The heat index is determined when factoring temperature and humidity together.
 - TCSAAL uses the National Weather Service Heat Index Chart to determine the current heat index: As of publication of this year's Handbook, a copy of this chart can be found at the National Weather Service website.
 - TCSAAL uses the websites accessing the National Weather Service, such as weather.com, to determine the temperature and humidity of an area.

Cold Weather

- It is the policy of TCSAAL to not initiate or continue outdoor events when the weather is 33 degrees or a wind chill of 28 or below **and it is wet (with precipitation).**
- It is the policy of TCSAAL to not initiate or continue outdoor events when the weather is 30 degrees or a wind chill of 25 or below **and it is dry (no precipitation).**
 - We will utilize weather.com.
- Road conditions should also be considered.

General Health and Safety

- Please remember to provide sunscreen and shading for your teams at all outdoor activities.
- Please always bring plenty of water and food for your team. **Please never assume that water and food will be provided.**

Game Suspension

- Games that get called before completing the first half due to weather will be rescheduled and they will start from the beginning of a new game not from the suspended point.

Concussions Training and Guidelines

- To learn how to keep student athletes safe and how to comply with HB No. 2038 from the Texas 82 Legislative session, attend annual coaches conference for more information or contact your school legal team.
- Annual training provided at TCSAAL Coach's Conference.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) Training

- Passed in the 89th Legislative Session SB 865 - Requires school nurses, assistant school nurses, athletic coaches or sponsors, PE instructors, marching band directors, and any other school employee specified by the Commissioner of education to complete CPR training. It also requires schools receiving defibrillator's to establish cardiac emergency response teams and various plans for responding to cardiac emergencies.

Rules and Guidelines for TCSAAL Competitions

Please see all rules and guidelines for competition on our website www.texascharter.org.

Updates and Changes to the Handbook

TCSAAL reserves the right to add or modify general rules and guidelines at any time. Notification will be done via the website. Once a rule is posted on website it will immediately take effect. TCSAAL will try to notify schools of the changes but it is the responsibility of all participants to check regularly with the website in order to stay up to date. TCSAAL will not excuse failure to comply with rules because an individual claim to be unaware of the rules and regulations.

Handbook Understanding Agreement

All TCSAAL PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS MUST FILL OUT THE HANDBOOK UNDERSTANDING AGREEMENT FOUND ON OUR WEBSITE.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf-NegZfiFmOc_FzwLj1drZSTR1egcGN9VINb7c5kp2CijwDQ/viewform?usp=sf_link

All schools participating in TCSAAL activities are bound by the rules of this Handbook whether they fill out the Handbook Understanding Agreement or not.

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