LUTHERAN SPORTS ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS
STATE CHAMPIONSHIP VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

GRADE SCHOOL RULES

(Latest Revision: October, 2026)

FORMAT

1.01 There shall be one division of girls' competition and one division of boys' competition, as further defined herein.

1.02 The Girl's division shall consist of no more than twenty-four teams, and the Boy's division shall consist of no more than 12 teams, depending upon the number of entries received.

1.03 The state tournament shall be conducted on a "pool" basis with a championship bracket, in which a team may continue to play after qualification by means of "pool" play. The state tournament may also have a consolation bracket as the LSA Board of Directors sees fit in each division.

1.04 Each team will be guaranteed to play a minimum of three matches; the final round will be played on Sunday. Teams submitting entry applications must be prepared to play on Friday, possibly as early as 9:00 A.M.

1.05 The state tournament shall be conducted annually during the month of November.

TEAM SELECTION CRITERIA

2.01 The LSA Board of Directors shall select, or cause to be selected by whatever means in their opinion is appropriate in the circumstances, the most representative teams in the state (also see Rule 2.03) for participation in the state tournament.

2.02 The LSA Board of Directors reserves the right to require preliminary playoffs in circumstances where, in the sole opinion of the Board of Directors, more entry applications are received than can be accepted for participation.

2.03 Team selection preference will be given to tournament and league champions in determining which entry applications are to be accepted.

2.04 Teams that have not won championships, especially tournament or league runners-up, are encouraged to submit entry applications for consideration and possible acceptance in order to round out the state tournament field.

TEAM ELIGIBILITY

3.01 Teams must be established squads which have represented a Lutheran grade school in an established league or tournament during the current scholastic year. (Exception: In the case that a school participates in volleyball competition during the school year, but after the completion of the state tournament, the provisions of Rules 3.01, 3.03, 4.02, 9.04 and 9.05 shall apply to the previous scholastic year and/or future competition during the current scholastic year, as appropriate.)

3.02 Each team is allowed a maximum of three persons to function as coach, manager or statistician. Each team must have at least one person who must be at least twenty-one years of age to function in one of the above capacities.

3.03 A team must have played a minimum of seven official league, tournament and/or non-conference matches in order to be eligible for the state tournament. Certification of the entry application by the chairman of the tournament or league represented and, if necessary to meet the minimum seven match requirement, also by the chairman(men) of such other established league(s) and/or tournament(s) in which such minimum number of matches are played may be required.

3.04 The Board of Directors of the Lutheran Sports Association (LSA) shall have the authority to approve the formation of cooperative athletic teams. The governing boards of all schools participating in the cooperative team agreement jointly need to make the application to the LSA for approval of the cooperative team agreement. In addition to the governing boards approving the formation of the cooperative team, written approval from the conference(s) of which the cooperating schools are members, and/or in which the cooperative team will participate, or, in the event that the cooperative team will not be affiliated in a conference, written approval from a minimum of three schools included in the cooperative team's schedule of competition must be secured. The cooperative sponsorship agreement is

established for a period of one school year. One trophy or award will be given per team. Duplicate team awards may be ordered through the LSA at the request of a non-sponsoring cooperative team. The cost of the extra awards shall be the responsibility of the requesting school. An additional school may be added to an existing co-op agreement after the one year provided they complete a new application and receive the approval of the LSA. *When a school renews the co-op application, conference or opponent approval is not required if no changes have been made to the original agreement.*

Illustrations for Section 3.04
The following are provided for illustrative purposes only and are neither binding nor to be construed as having the effect of the By-laws or Constitution of the Lutheran Sports Association of Illinois

Q. What are the deadlines for making a cooperative team application?
A. The application deadline for cooperative teams during a given school year is as follows: Volleyball -September 1; Basketball – December 1; Cheerleading – December 1.

Q. If a school adds a boys sport team by formation of a cooperative team, must it also add a girls sport team to its program?
A. Simply adding a team for one gender of students by forming a cooperative does not require corresponding action to add a team for the other gender of students.

Q. May a cooperative team be formed with out-of-state schools?
A. No.

Q. May cooperative teams be formed with non-LSA member schools from Illinois?
A. No. All schools involved in the cooperative agreement must be members.

Q. May a school form more than one cooperative team in the same sport?
A. No.

Q. May a school form a cooperative team with one other school in basketball and a different cooperative team with another school in volleyball?
A. Yes. The provisions of this rule permit the formation of different cooperative teams with different schools on a sport-by-sport basis. However, each cooperative team formed must undergo the complete process of approval by the Boards of Education and the LSA.

Q. Must a "no-cut" policy be established for each cooperative team that is formed?
A. Yes. The purpose and intent of the establishment of the cooperative team is provide an opportunity for schools interested in participating in STATE competition and not deny involvement in cases of players with lesser ability. The LSA does not want schools to combine for the purposes of being more competitive at the expense of denying participation of players with lesser abilities from a cooperative team school.

Q. May a cooperative team agreement be formed during a sport season, in order to accommodate participating in the state tournament series that school year?
A. No. All cooperative teams for each school year must have applied to the LSA for approval no later than the initial entry deadline for that activity. Applications received after that particular date will be denied for that school year.

Q. If two schools form a cooperative team for any school year, may they redraft their cooperative agreement and add a third school to the cooperative at the end of one year?
A. Yes, provided they file a new one year agreement, and with approval of the conference (if applicable) and the LSA.

Q. May two schools form a cooperative team for any school year, then subsequently consolidate with each other?
A. Yes. The cooperative team agreement is valid for one school year. The consolidated (or "association" school) does not need to re-apply.

Q. Will the LSA automatically approve a cooperative team application?
A. Each application will be considered on a case by case basis.

Q. If two schools have established a cooperative team, and the cooperative dissolves prior to the end of its one year agreement, may either of the schools participate as an individual school in that activity before the termination of the cooperative agreement?

A. Yes, provided the reasons for dissolution of the cooperative team are extenuating circumstances accepted by the LSA Board of Directors. However, a school in this situation may not enter another cooperative agreement with another member school in this activity until the end of the time period of the original cooperative agreement.

Q. Which school will receive mail for the cooperative activity from the LSA?
A. Both schools will receive mail from the LSA.

Q. Does the initial cooperative application need approval of my conference?
A. Yes, provided you are a member of a conference. If you are not a member of a conference, then you need approval from three (3) of your opponents. Co-op renewals do not require conference approval if no changes have been made to the original agreement.

Q. Do "association" schools (schools that are owned and operated by more than one sponsoring congregation) need to complete a cooperative team application?
A. No.

Q. We have an approved cooperative team agreement from either the IESA or the SIJHSAA. Do we need to complete a cooperative team agreement for the LSA?
A. No.You will need to send copies of the approved IESA or SIJHSAA agreements to the LSA for approval.

PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

4.01 Players must be students of the sponsoring grade school and have complied with the eligibility rules of their league(s) and/or tournament(s). A student is defined as a full-time student of the participating school. To participate in the STATE Tournament, players must have been full-time students before September 10 of the given tournament year.

Illustrations

Q: A home-schooled student is taking PE and choir at our school. They want to compete in athletics. Our School Board has granted her permission to play. Is she eligible for STATE events?
A: Your school will need to complete the homeschool application before the application deadline.

Q: Our school offers an open gym program for the local public school students. They often practice with us. Are they eligible for STATE events?
A: No. They are not full-time students at your school.

4.02 Students who are receiving their education through homeschooling may be eligible for participation at the STATE Tournament to complete a team in case of roster shortages. A homeschool application will need to be completed and reviewed on a case-by-case basis by the LSA Board of Directors by the application deadline.

4.03 No student is eligible to participate in the same sport for two different schools during the same academic year. A student becomes a member of the school team when he/she participates in a practice or athletic contest.

4.04 No student is eligible to participate at the same academic level for two different school years in the same activity. This is true whether the student attended a member or non-member school. Participation in one interscholastic contest in any activity constitutes one season of eligibility in that activity.

Illustrations:

Q: My son played volleyball at a local public school while enrolled in the 7th grade. He transferred to our Lutheran school and enrolled in the 7th grade. How many years of participation does he have?
A: He has 1 (one) year of eligibility remaining. He may play as a 7th grader and not play as an 8th grader, or not play as a 7th grader and then play while in 8th grade.

Q: Our school has 5th grade students on its team. How many years of eligibility do they have?
A: The students have 1 year of eligibility per grade level. In this illustration, the student has a total of 4 years of eligibility.

4.05 A student who transfers his/her attendance from one school to another shall become eligible upon completing the

eligibility requirements.

Illustrations:

Q: My daughter played volleyball in the spring at one school. She transferred schools and played volleyball in the fall at another school. Is she eligible?
A: Yes. It is a new school year.

Q: My son started the volleyball season at one school. Due to circumstances, we transferred him to another school. He would like to play volleyball there. Is he eligible?
A: No, but if you believe special circumstances may apply an exemption letter for the Board of Directors consideration and acceptance will need to be written as per the directions in rule 9.07.

4.06 All students shall be in grades three (3) through eight (8) and shall not have passed eighth grade standing. Students who have met or completed the requirements for the eighth grade are not eligible.

4.07 For the purpose of meeting the requirements of Rules 4.01 and/or 4.02, a school will be considered to have had one 7th and/or 8th grade volleyball roster, whether that be a single team or a combined school roster for boys and/or one 7th and/or 8th grade volleyball roster, whether that be a single team or a combined school roster for girls during the current season.

Illustrations:

Q: Our school would like to combine our teams for the state tournament. We would like to have our 5&6 team suit up and play with the 7&8 team. What do I need to do?
A: All of these athletes are eligible. You will need to list all of the players on the tournament application.

4.08 Any individual unable to comply with Rules 4.01 through 4.06, as applicable, will not be permitted to participate in the STATE Tournament .

4.09 No student shall be a member of a high school team.

Illustrations

Q: I have a player who is playing on a "high school feeder team." This team is comprised of students in grades 7-8. Is he eligible?
A: Yes

4.10 A player must not have reached the age of fifteen (15) prior to the first day of September.

4.11 If a player turns fifteen (15) years old prior to the first day of STATE competition, the principal must send a letter using the school letterhead that verifies that the player has been a student for the entire school year. The letter should be sent to the event chairperson.

Illustrations

Q: I have a player who is turning fifteen in October. What steps do I need to follow to insure his eligibility?
A: The principal must send a letter using the school letterhead that verifies that the player has been a full-time student for the entire school year. The letter should be sent to the event chairperson.

Q: I have a player who will be turning fifteen on the second day of the STATE competition. Is she eligible?
A: Yes.

Q: I have a player who will turn fifteen a few days after the STATE tournament. Is he eligible?
A: Yes.

TEAM ENTRY APPLICATION

5.01 Each team is required to submit by the entry deadline date, which shall be four weeks prior to the first playing date of the state tournament, an entry application and the tournament entry fee in the form of a check or money order made payable to the Lutheran Sports Association of Illinois, Inc.

5.02 All entry applications must be approved by the principal of the sponsoring school and must bear the official school seal.

5.03 The official roster must contain the following information for each player: full name (for program book), date of birth, uniform numbers, certification by the school's principal, and other information specified on the official application.

5.04 Any application received or not completed until after the entry deadline date will be accepted only if a state tournament berth is available.

5.05 Acceptance of entry applications shall be final and entry fees accompanying approved applications shall not be refundable.

EQUIPMENT

6.01 Each team is required to supply its own practice volleyballs and other match and locker room equipment.

6.02 Each team is required to have one set of numbered shirts, all which must be of the same basic colors. Teams may use the uniforms of one of their local area teams that is not participating in the state tournament in order to fulfill this requirement.

6.03 Under no circumstances will a player be allowed to participate in a match without a numbered team shirt, conventional shorts and conventional indoor gym shoes.

PLAYING RULES

7.01 The National Federation of State High School Associations' volleyball rules shall govern play, except where specifically superseded by these rules. (The use of the libero is effective with 2012 STATE Tournament.)

7.02 The net height used in the girls' competition shall be 7'0"; the net height for the boys' competition shall be 7'6".

7.03 All matches shall have two registered officials and one scorekeeper. The Home team will furnish one person as the official scorekeeper during its matches. Teams using the libero must provide the required libero tracker. If both teams are using a libero the visiting team's libero tracker shall be considered official. Officials shall be members of state volleyball officials' associations selected by the Board of Directors.

7.04 Any player, coach, manager, statistician or cheerleader ejected from a game shall automatically be ineligible to participate in the team's next game. Before such next game, the Board of Directors shall review the event of ejection and gather or require any other information that the Board deems necessary to determine if a further penalty should be assessed. Such further penalty, if any, shall be assessed before the team's next game and may not be appealed.

7.05 Any protest must be submitted to the match officials in accordance with National Federation of State High School Associations' volleyball rules immediately following the incident being protested. The officials shall immediately deliver the protest to the Board of Directors and play shall be suspended while the directors adjudicate the protest. The judgment rendered by the directors may not be appealed and play shall resume upon such judgment.

7.06 [removed]

7.07 Rally scoring shall be used in tournament play with a point being awarded on each serve.

7.08 Games shall be played to 25 points. A team must win by two points. A match shall consist of the best two-out-of-three games. The third game shall not be played unless it is necessary to determine the winner of the match.

AWARDS

8.01 In each division, one team award shall be awarded to each participating team.

8.02 **In each division, one award shall be presented to the team that best exemplifies the true spirit of Christian fellowship and sportsmanship both on and off the playing court.**

8.03 **In each division, one individual award shall be presented to each player, coach, manager, statistician, principal and athletic director on the Championship and second place teams (the first and second place teams in the championship bracket).**

GENERAL

9.01 **The Principal, and the Principal's designees, shall be responsible to the LSA and STATE hosts for matters pertaining to all athletic and non-athletic activities of their school at the STATE tournament. In addition, they shall be responsible to insure that their school is properly represented at all STATE events and shall be responsible for the conduct of their participants and other persons from their school, including spectators. Coaches, managers and squad captains shall also be responsible for team conduct both on and off the playing court.**

9.02 **It is the clear obligation of students, school staff, boards of education and all other official representatives of participating schools to practice and promote the highest principles of Christian behavior, sportsmanship and ethics of competition. It is also their obligation to maintain proper crowd control at all STATE activities. The LSA, its directors, volunteers, host schools, tournament sites and tournament officials shall have no responsibility for crowd control nor of the actions of school representatives, including spectators. The Board of Directors shall have full authority over all schools, their representatives and spectators and shall have full authority, at its sole discretion, to penalize any school, any of whose representatives or spectators may be adjudged upon competent evidence to have violated these obligations.**

9.03 **Housing accommodations, transportation and meals shall be the responsibility of participating teams, except that all teams not commuting from their home towns for each day's match schedule must stay in LSA-approved lodging facilities.**

9.04 **Match schedules will be available to participating teams approximately ten days prior to the first playing date.**

9.05 **Requests for granting of exceptions to published rules must be submitted in writing to all members of the LSA Board of Directors no less than fifteen (15) days prior to the date by which a ruling on such requests is required.**