2015

Rules & Guidelines

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NATIONAL
INTERSCHOLASTIC
CYCLING ASSOCIATION

NICA

2015 Rules & Guidelines

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An official publication of the
National Interscholastic Cycling Association
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EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of these Rules and Guidelines is January 1, 2015.

As of the effective date, these Rules and Guidelines apply to all NICA league events and activities, and all prior rules and regulations are superseded.

The publication date of these Rules and Guidelines is October 15, 2014

Rule 1: CONSEQUENCES

1. CONSEQUENCE LEVELS

Some rule violations pertaining to individuals' behavior will result in consequences at one of the three following levels. However, the consequences can also be applied in other situations at NICA league officials' discretion. Not all rules have consequences that fall within these three levels. The Chief Referee and the Rules and Appeals Committee are responsible for enforcing consequences, and may also sanction other penalties that are not specified in the rulebook, but are deemed appropriate.

See Rule 12 for more information.

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.

2. APPLICABILITY

General student-athlete rules apply to practices, races, individual training rides, and student-athletes riding their bikes at all times during their tenure as students and participants in the leagues of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association (NICA), including the off-season and summertime. Student-athletes are referred to alternatively as students, racers, and riders throughout these rules. While a NICA league's enforcement of the rules is limited to the race season, we encourage coaches and parents to enforce a similar policy of safety, etiquette and trail use during the off-season.

2.1. WEARING HELMETS STRICTLY ENFORCED

NICA student-athletes must wear an approved helmet at all times (see Rule 4 for list of approved helmet standards). Under no circumstances shall a student be on their bicycle without a helmet fastened to their head, even when riding a very short distance. Student-athletes must also keep their helmet on when walking or running on the course with a mechanical problem. See Rule 4 for additional details regarding helmets.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.2. PRACTICE CONTROLLED RIDING

NICA student-athletes must practice safe riding techniques and be in control of their bicycles at all times. Riding out of control and/or with excessive speed will not be tolerated. Student-athletes that have a reckless attitude or are witnessed taking dangerous risks will not be tolerated. A dangerous risk is defined as willingly attempting anything that is beyond one's ability to control the bike and/or puts someone else in danger.

2.3. AVOID RIDING ALONE

If possible, ride with at least one other person. If you plan to ride alone, alert someone to your general location, the route you plan to take and your approximate time of return.

2.4. LEGAL MOUNTAIN BIKING TRAILS ONLY

As representatives of a NICA league and our sport, NICA student-athletes must ride only on authorized trails. NICA student-athletes found to be riding on illegal trails at ANY time, whether on team rides or on their own, will face consequences. 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.

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.5. OBEY TRAFFIC LAWS

Student-athletes are required by law to obey all traffic laws. Always ride to the right side of the road and in bike lanes if available. Stop at stop signs and red lights. Signal turns. Use required lights and reflectors at dusk/night. 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/action/bikelaws/state_laws.php

2.6. RESPECT DRIVERS, PEDESTRIANS AND OTHER TRAIL USERS

Be respectful and courteous by staying as far to the right as practical and riding single file while riding on roads and trails. Let your fellow trail users know you're coming. A 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. Yielding means slow down, establish communication, be prepared to stop if necessary and pass safely. A student-athlete is going slow enough when you can say 'hello' and the hiker can say 'hello' back.

2.7. 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.

2.8. REPRESENT YOUR NICA LEAGUE AND MOUNTAIN BIKING

Recognize that, as a NICA student-athlete, you represent high school mountain bike racing, NICA, your NICA league, cross-country mountain biking, and cycling in general. This is true at all times, not just at races — particularly when student-athletes are at a bike shop, out on the trail, and regardless of whether you are wearing your team, a NICA league jersey, or any other cycling gear.

2.9. POSITIVE SPORTING ATTITUDE

NICA student-athletes are expected to display an excellent sporting attitude during all NICA league events and should treat all other student-athletes, coaches, spectators, and officials with respect. Fair play and respectful, kind, supportive behavior is expected of all NICA student-athletes. Profanity in any situation is not acceptable.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.10. LEAVE NO TRACE

Be sensitive to the dirt beneath you. Recognize different types of soils and trail construction; practice low-impact cycling. Wet and muddy trails are more vulnerable to damage. When the trail bed is soft, consider other riding options. Ride it, don’t slide or skid. Ride through mud puddles, not around them widening the trail. This also means staying on existing trails and not creating new ones. Don't cut switchbacks. Be sure to pack out at least as much as you pack in. Never build a new trail, jumps, or other riding features without the written permission of the land managers.

2.11. 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 weather, darkness or other conditions. A well-executed trip is a satisfaction to you and not a burden to others. Always wear a helmet and appropriate safety gear.

2.12. MUSIC PLAYERS & HEADPHONES

NICA student-athletes are not allowed to race or ride with headphones or other portable musical devices. Headphones are permitted while riding a stationary trainer.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.13. CELL PHONES

NICA student-athletes may not answer a cell phone or make cell phone calls while riding their bike. Student- athletes must *safely* come to a complete stop *and have both feet on the ground* in order to use their cell phones.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.14. RISK ACCEPTANCE

All student-athletes who participate in any of the events associated with a NICA league, including but not limited to races, training rides, clinics, camps and practice skill sessions, do so at their own risk. Whether or not they are registered in a NICA league, no liability shall be attached to the NICA 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.

By participating in a race or camp conducted by the NICA league, a student-athlete or a parent or legal guardian who permits a minor to compete, acknowledges understanding and acceptance of the regulations covering the event.

If a student-athlete suffered a concussion, he or she may not participate in team training or league competition before providing written clearance to return to such activities from a licensed health care provider.

2.15. RELEASE FORMS

All student-athletes must submit their NICA league's registration forms, which include a General Release Form, Code of Conduct agreement, a Medical Form and a Media Form. The forms must be signed by a legal guardian, except in the case of student-athletes who are at least 18 years old or older. A parent or legal guardian who

permits a minor to participate in NICA league races or camps, acknowledges understanding and acceptance of the regulations covering the event and agreement to the terms of their NICA league's Release forms and those terms shall be binding even when no proper entry form has been signed and submitted for a student-athlete.

2.16. USADA BANNED SUBSTANCES

NICA student-athletes are subject to all U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) rules pertaining to anti-doping (a list of banned substances is available at:

http://www.usantidoping.org/files/active/what/usada_guide.pdf

The use of performance enhancing substances (as listed by USADA) will result in the immediate disqualification from one- full season or the equivalent number of races (spanning two seasons).

2.17. SUBSTANCE USE

NICA leagues places a high priority on early recognition and treatment of alcohol and/or drug problems. Consequently, any student who requests help (or is referred by others voluntarily) prior to a violation will not be suspended from participation if he/she successfully completes the appropriate in-school educational program or community treatment program.

A. *Tobacco Use*:

Students who choose to use tobacco products will remain eligible for participation IF they provide evidence that they have entered a stop-smoking (or chewing) class immediately. They must participate satisfactorily, provide proof to their coach when they have completed the class, and refrain from use in the future. Continued use will result in the consequences laid out below for Alcohol and Drug Use.

B. *Alcohol and Drug Use*:

(1) First violation:

a. After confirmation of the first violation, the student will lose eligibility for three races.

b. If the student wishes to continue participation, he or she must continue to attend and participate in regular practice with his/her team.

c. In addition to the above conditions, the student will be required to attend a minimum of six educational group sessions regarding alcohol and drug abuse.

(2) Second violation:

On the confirmation of the second violation, the student will lose eligibility for an additional three races. Sections 1.b and 1.c above must also be honored if the student chooses to continue participation.

(3) Third and subsequent violations:

a. On the confirmation of the third or subsequent violations, the student will lose eligibility for participation for an additional six races.

b. On the third or subsequent violations, if the student becomes a participant in an alcohol and/or drug treatment program on his/her own volition, the student may be eligible for participation after a minimum of six weeks.

c. Any decisions made by the Rules and Appeals Committee will supersede these consequences if their deliberations determine that more severe penalties are required. The committee may also decide to defer all disciplinary action to the administration of the student-athlete's school.

2.18. LIST OF OTHER BANNED SUBSTANCES (B-LIST)

Caffeine is an addictive substance that enhances performance. NICA leagues deem caffeinated products as inappropriate for young student-athletes. Caffeinated sport products (bars, gels and sport drinks) are banned from NICA league races and activities (including practices). Soda or coffee products containing caffeine are also banned from being consumed by NICA student-athletes at NICA league races and camps.

Creatine, Guaraná Root and Taurine are also substances banned from consumption at NICA league races and camps.

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.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.19. ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR NOT TOLERATED

No student-athlete may assault (an unlawful attempt, coupled with the present ability, to commit a violent injury on the person of another) or do battery (any willful and unlawful use of force or violence upon the person of another) to anyone connected with any event (including but not limited to student-athletes, officials, spectators, public officials, etc.). Unsafe racing practices including swerving, suddenly stopping, willfully crashing into another student-athlete, grabbing another student-athlete, or pushing another student-athlete may be deemed as abusive behavior, or even assault and battery.

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

2.20. SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

NICA 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 gender-based harassment of a person of the same sex. Sexual harassment includes: unwanted sexual advances, visual conduct: leering, making sexual gestures, displaying of sexually suggestive objects or pictures, verbal conduct: making or using derogatory comments, epithets, slurs and jokes, verbal sexual advances or propositions, and physical conduct: touching or blocking movements.

Any student who believes he or she has been sexually harassed by an employee, agent, or 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 NICA league representative with whom they feel comfortable. That person shall 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 will not adversely affect matters pertaining to his or her status in any league program or activity.

If any student, coach, parent, volunteer, or employee feels they have been sexually harassed at a NICA league event, they should report the incident immediately to their NICA 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 NICA league event, they should report the incident immediately to their NICA league director or NICA director. All reports will be handled in a confidential manner.

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

3. CATEGORY PLACEMENT

Category placement and division rules are designed to facilitate and promote fair, safe, and challenging competition. Placement of student-athletes is based primarily on their NICA league race results and end-of-season rankings from the preceding year. Student-athletes do not choose their category, but are placed into categories according to the rules below. Student-athletes seeking an alternative placement may petition to their league director for an exception (see Rule 3.5). All references to middle school teams and student-athletes are applicable only in leagues that include middle schools.

3.1. LEAGUE TIERS

The number of individual categories in a league is based on the number of registered student-athletes in the league. A league that can accommodate all student-athletes with no more than a single category for each grade level is a Tier 1 league. A league that must run multiple events for a single grade level to fairly accommodate all student-athletes is a Tier 2 league. The guidelines for a NICA league's tier is as follows:

Tier 1: Up to 249 registered student-athletes

Tier 2: 250 or more registered student-athletes

The league director shall make the final Tier 1 or Tier 2 status determination.

3.2. TIER CATEGORIES

Under Tier 1, there is a single division with up to ten separate grade-level categories:

Boys Categories	Girls Categories
Middle School	Middle School
Freshman	Freshman
Sophomore	Sophomore
Junior Varsity	Junior Varsity
Varsity	Varsity

Under Tier 2, there are multiple divisions with the same grade-level categories, for example:

Boys Categories	Girls Categories
Middle School	Middle School
Freshman, Div. I	Freshman
Freshman, Div. II	Sophomore
Sophomore, Div. I	Junior Varsity
Sophomore, Div. II	Varsity
Junior Varsity, Div. I	
Junior Varsity, Div. II	
Varsity	

In either the boys or girls categories, if there are less than ten Freshman or less than ten Sophomore registrants, or both, the two categories are to be combined into a single Frosh-Soph category.

3.3. TIER 2 DIVISIONS

Tier 2 teams are assigned to a division based primarily on team size so that smaller teams compete against each other and larger teams compete against other. Other factors, e.g., geographical limitations, may be considered.

If required to comply with race field size limitations, the same categories in different divisions may be run in separate races. The goal is to have riders from teams in the same division competing against each other in the same races, however, at the league director's discretion, the allocation into separate races may be based on other factors to achieve a more balanced and fair competition than could be achieved from an allocation based solely according to team divisions.

Whenever separate races of the same categories are run, separate medals must be awarded

3.4. CATEGORY PLACEMENT RULES

A. *Summary*

• Although categories are based primarily on grade-level, a student-athlete's prior performance will factor into placement. Individual race results and student-athletes' end-of-season overall standings dictate placement from season to season. Separate rules apply for first-year

leagues that do not have a prior season's results. All race results and overall season standings are available at your NICA league website.

• To calculate the finishing percentile, for each separate race the finishing place is divided by the total number of racers (including DNFs) and then multiplied by 100. Do not round off the number up or down.

• Student-athletes should discuss their racing categories with their coaches well in advance of the racing season to determine if submitting a petition might be appropriate.

• Student-athletes 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 12th graders with no prior results are placed into Junior Varsity (JV).

• Petitions for exceptions to the category placement criteria are limited for each grade level to certain categories. See Rule 3.5 for the permissible petition upgrades.

B. *Placement Criteria for Multi-Year Leagues*

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

Category	
Middle School	6th – 8th graders only.
Freshman	9th graders only.
Sophomore	10th graders only.
Junior Varsity	8th–10th graders who: a) Placed in the top 10% for boys or top 20% for girls in any two Freshman races in the prior year, or b) Placed in the top 10% for boys or top 20% for girls in a single Freshman race and placed in the same top percentile (10% or 20%) in the overall Freshman season standings in the prior year, or c) Raced JV in the prior year but did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity. 11th graders. 12th graders who did not qualify to upgrade to Varsity.

Varsity	8th–11th graders who: a) Placed in the top 5% for boys or top 10% for girls in any two Sophomore races in the prior year, or b) Placed in the top 5% for boys or top 10% for girls in a single Sophomore race and placed in the same top percentile (5% or 10%) in the overall Sophomore season standings in the prior year. 8th –12th graders who: a) Placed in the top 15% for boys or top 30% for girls in any two JV races in the prior year, or b) Placed in the top 15% for boys or top 30% for girls in any single race and placed in the same top percentile (15% or 30%) in the overall JV season standings in the prior year, or c) Raced Varsity the prior year.

See Appendix: Rule 3.4 for exceptions applicable to the Arizona and SoCal Leagues.

C. *Placement Criteria for First-Year Leagues*

Due to the smaller field sizes and the likelihood of a greater disparity in the student-athletes' racing experience typically characteristic of a league's inaugural season, the category upgrades identified in the chart below are intended to promote fair and challenging competition among student-athletes with similar abilities.

To obtain approval for a category upgrade, a written request must be made to, and approved by the league director. Evidence of prior experience is required. Student-athletes who request an upgrade not set forth in the chart below must follow the regular petition procedures under Rule 3.5.

Placement criteria, excluding petitions, for a first-year league's inaugural season are as follows:

Category	
Middle School	6th – 8th graders only.
Frosh-Soph	9th and 10th graders. 6th – 8th graders with evidence of prior racing experience may be upgraded with league director approval to race Frosh-Soph.

Junior Varsity	11th graders. 12th graders who are not upgraded to Varsity. 7th–10th graders with evidence of prior racing experience may be upgraded with league director approval to race JV.
Varsity	12th graders with evidence of prior racing experience may be upgraded with league director approval to race Varsity.

For all seasons after a league's inaugural season, the Placement Criteria for Multi-Year Leagues apply.

3.5. PETITIONING FOR A PLACEMENT CRITERIA EXCEPTION

A. In general, exceptions to the Placement Criteria are discouraged and should be granted only under extraordinary circumstances. Petition upgrade options are limited to the following:

(1) Middle-school students may only petition to race in the Freshman, Frosh-Soph, or JV categories;

(2) 9th and 10th graders may only petition to race JV or Varsity;

(3) 11th and 12th graders may only petition to race Varsity.

See Appendix: Rule 3.5 for exceptions applicable to the Arizona and SoCal Leagues.

B. It is NICA's and the league's policy that student-athletes 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 exceeds the level of all other student-athletes competing in the category designated under the Placement Criteria — i.e., no other student-athlete in the same category has a reasonable chance of being competitive with the student-athlete seeking the upgrade, and

b. The upgrade will place the student-athlete into a more appropriate competitive peer group.

C. Successful petitions are subject to revocation at any time by the league director at his or her sole discretion, in which event the

student-athlete shall be placed in the appropriate category according to the Placement Criteria. Individual and team penalties may be assessed, at the league director's sole 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.

D. Petitions for an exception to the Placement Criteria and request for placement in another category may be submitted to the league director or the league's Rules Committee or any other individual or committee designated by the league director or the league's board of directors. To petition for such an exception, student-athletes must complete and submit the petition form found at their league's website according to the instructions provided on the form.

E. The petition requires a coach's comments and signature. If there is no coach, the student-athlete must contact the league director and a coach advisor will be appointed. A parent may be approved as the advisor. The league director or the league's Rules Committee, as the case may be, shall consider the petition and render a decision in a timely manner.

F. Petitions must be submitted with sufficient time for consideration. Last-minute petitions cannot be rushed. Allow a minimum of five business days from the date of submission for a decision on the petition. Pending the outcome of the petition, the petitioning student-athlete must compete in the category determined by the Placement Criteria.

See Rule 8.2 regarding the non-transfer of individual points incident to a student-athlete's mid-season change in categories.

3.6. RACING THE WRONG CATEGORY

Student-athletes are responsible for knowing, understanding, and following the category placement rules and the Placement Criteria. Any questions should be directed to the league director, the league's board of directors, or to NICA at rules@nationalmtb.org.

Student-athletes who race in the wrong category shall be disqualified from that race.

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

4. WEARING HELMETS STRICTLY ENFORCED

A. NICA student-athletes must wear an approved helmet at all times (see below for list of approved helmet standards). Under no circumstances should a student be on their bicycle without a helmet fastened to their head, even when riding a very short distance. Student-athletes must also keep their helmet on when walking or running on the course with a mechanical. In addition:

- Helmet straps must be adjusted to the extent that two finger can be pushed under the strap, whereas three fingers would be difficult.
- Helmets should not have any cracks or dents from previous falls or mishandling of helmet.
- Helmet should be the correct size with little to no side-to-side or front-to-back movement.
- Full-face helmets are not allowed without written permission from the Rules and Appeals Committee.
- The helmet rule is not enforced when riders are warming up on bikes that are securely mounted to stationary trainers.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

B. Approved Helmets meet one of the following standards:

a. American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Standard Z90.4.

b. Snell Memorial Foundation Standard "B" or "N" series.

c. American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standard F-1447.

d. U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard for bicycle helmets.

e. European Committee for Standardization (CE EN1078) standard for bicycle helmets.

4.1. MOUNTAIN BIKES ONLY

NICA student-athletes must compete using mountain bikes that have 26 (or 29) inch wheels (or between 26 and 29 inches) and the tires must not be narrower than 1.75 inches. In addition:

- Tires must have knobbies – no slick tires are permitted
- No road bikes (or mountain bikes with down-drop handle bars)
- No cyclocross bikes

4.2. NO SINGLE-SPEED BIKES

Pushing big gears has been proven 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.

4.3. 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 looked at by a mechanic before every race.

4.4. NO BAR ENDS

For safety reasons no bar ends (forward pointing handle grip extensions) may be used. NICA student-athletes must race with their hands holding the bars within reach of the brakes.

4.5. HANDLEBAR END PLUGS AND STEM CAPS REQUIRED

Handlebar end plugs and stem caps are required as these are important safety features.

4.6. PENALTY FOR OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

Flat tires and mechanical problems should be repaired by the racer, and the racer must carry their own tools, tubes, etc. If outside assistance, parts or tools, are required, a five-minute penalty will be assessed. The student- athlete must report 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. If a student-athlete does not self-report the penalty may be doubled.

4.7. REPAIR BIKES OFF THE TRAIL

In the case of a broken bicycle, or a dropped chain, student-athletes must clear the trail for other competitors.

4.8. SWITCHING BIKES

Racers shall complete the entire race on the same bicycle upon which the race was begun. A 30-minute penalty applies for switching bicycles.

4.9. BRING THE BIKE

Competitors may make no progress on the racecourse 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.

4.10. FOOTWEAR

Footwear must be fully enclosed and fastened with either Velcro straps, buckles, or laces.

4.11. 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.

4.12. NUMBER PLATES

Student-athletes must affix an official NICA league number plate to their bikes at NICA league races. The number plate should be attached with at least three fasteners and must be on the bike for the pre-ride and should also remain on the bike at anytime the student-athlete is riding the bike at the event (before and/or after competing and including the pre-ride).

5. CROSS-COUNTRY (XC) RACE DEFINITION

A mass start competition that is held on a circuit course comprising forest roads, forest or field trails, and unpaved dirt or gravel roads.

5.1. COURSE LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY

The ideal high school team XC course should be short enough to require multiple loops and composed of terrain that can be completed by beginner student-athletes. The length should be based on the ability of student-athletes to complete the course within specific time frames. The event times should be:

- 45 minutes or less for middle school boys and girls
- 45 to 90 minutes, Freshman and Sophomore boys and girls, and JV girls
- 60 to 100 minutes, JV boys and Varsity girls
- 90 to 120 minutes, Varsity boys

5.2. SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR COURSES

High school cross-country mountain bike courses should be designed for maximal safety, guidelines include:

- Uphill starts or some climbing in first half mile
- 33 inches per start lane
- Uphill finishes
- Uphill feed zones
- Inspection and addressing of:
    - off-camber turns
    - ruts
    - large or loose rocks
    - sharp turns on fast sections
    - water crossings
    - areas where excessive speeds can be achieved
    - other obvious injury vectors

5.3. COURSE SIGNAGE AND MARKINGS

Where needed, arrows and ribbons mark the directions along the entire length of the official course. The signs indicate the course to follow, curves, intersections and warn of situations that are potentially dangerous for the competitors. Signs are posted along the course at least every half-mile to indicate to competitors that they are on course.

5.4. STANDARD TURN ARROW LOCATIONS

An arrow placed 30 meters before the intersection should mark each intersection. Another arrow is placed at the intersection. The direction of travel is then confirmed by another arrow located 10 meters further in the new direction. A wrong way sign is used to mark all potential wrong ways.

5.5. RACE NOTIFICATION SIGNS

In the case of wrong ways that lead away from the course, the back of the wrong way sign shall be used to notify passers by that a race is in progress. If a wrong way leads to the interior of the course, a notification to passers by is optional.

5.6. HAZARD SIGNS

In all hazardous situations, two or three arrows placed upside down must be located 30 meters before any obstacle on a circuit. A hazard on the circuit may be an obstacle, quality of the surface, or angle of the track, or any other condition not specifically addressed.

5.7. STANDARD HEIGHT OF SIGNS

Course signage should, whenever possible, be placed on the right and 1.5 to 3 feet from the ground.

5.8. DISTANCE SIGNS

The course may be marked every half-mile with signs indicating distance remaining to the start/finish.

5.9. 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.

5.10. LIST OF SIGNS

Directional and warning signs for mountain bike circuits are:

- Arrows indicating straight ahead, left, or right;
- Caution;
- Wrong Way;
- EMS Course Access Point;
- Alternate route on course; and
- Dismount required (off bike).

6. ELIGIBLE STUDENTS

A NICA league race series is open to all students who attend public or private school or who are home-schooled for high school (grades 9–12) and, in some leagues only, middle school (grades 6-8), within the league's region, defined as follows:

NorCal High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2001)*
North of the east-west line across the state of California comprised of the northern boundaries of San Luis Obispo, Kern, and San Bernardino counties (Fresno is in NorCal and San Luis Obispo is in SoCal).

SoCal High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2009)*
South of the east-west line across the state of California comprised of the northern boundaries of San Luis Obispo, Kern, and San Bernardino counties (Fresno is in NorCal and San Luis Obispo is in SoCal).

Colorado High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2010)*
The entire state of Colorado (student-athletes and teams located within the state of Wyoming may participate in the Colorado League's events and races, and the Colorado League may host events within the state of Wyoming).

Minnesota High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2012)*
The entire state of Minnesota.

Texas High School Mountain Biking League *(inaugural season 2012)*
The entire state of Texas.

Utah High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2012)*
The entire state of Utah.

Arizona High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2013)*
The entire state of Arizona.

New York High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2013)*
The entire state of New York.

Tennessee High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2013)*
The entire state of Tennessee.

Alabama High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2014)*
The entire state of Alabama.

Georgia High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2014)*
The entire state of Georgia.

Virginia High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2014)*
The entire state of Virginia.

Wisconsin High School Cycling League *(inaugural season 2014)*
The entire state of Wisconsin.

6.1. INTER-LEAGUE PARTICIPATION AND OUT-OF-REGION STUDENTS

A. At a league director's discretion, student-athletes and teams located outside of that league's region and in a state where there is no NICA league, may be allowed to participate in that league's events and races.

B. 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 student-athletes and teams seeking to participate in the other league, (b) policies of inclusivity for all student-athletes, and (c) policies of league development such that all student-athletes 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 student-athletes and teams:

(1) Declare that they are committed to participating and scoring exclusively in the other league's race series;

(2) Be scored and registered in the league in which they have declared their participation; and

(3) Participate in only one season, either spring or fall, per academic year and are subject to the Team Training Limits and race season limitations under Rule 7.16 and as provided in Appendix B, as applicable to the league in which they have declared their participation.

6.2. STUDENT AGE AND GRADE

To be eligible to compete in either a spring or fall school-year season, a student-athlete must:

- For leagues that include middle schools, be enrolled in middle school (grades 6-8), or the home-schooled equivalent, and be no younger than 10 and no older than 15 years of age at any time during the entire school year;
- Be in high school (grades 9-12), or the home-schooled equivalent, and be no younger than 13 and no older than 19 years of age at any time during the entire school year; and
- 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 single grade are placed into categories according to their grade levels as provided under the Category Placement Rules (Rule 3.4); or
- Have skipped or been held back more than one grade must consult with the league director regarding placement into the appropriate categories.

6.3. AGE-BASED PLACEMENT FOR HOME-SCHOOLED STUDENTS

Home-schooled 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 home-schooled student-athletes seek alternative placement under the Category Placement Rules (Rule 3.4).

6.4. 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.

6.5. REGISTERED NICA STUDENT-ATHLETES ONLY ON RACE COURSES

Only student-athletes officially registered in their respective NICA league may practice or compete on the designated racecourse, and they must attach their number plates while pre-riding.

6.6. REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETE REGISTRATION

Student-athletes must be registered in the NICA league. NICA league registration requirements include:

- Online Registration Forms
- Registration Fee
- Signed Release of Liability
- Signed Medical Form
- Signed Media Form
- Signed Code of Conduct Form

Student-athletes must register for each race they enter.

6.7. RACE REGISTRATION

Student-athletes must register and pay for each NICA league race, prior to the race. There is pre-registration available via your NICA league website. There is also on-site registration, but student-athletes will have to pay a late fee in addition to the race registration fee. Penalties apply if racers compete without registering and paying.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

6.8. LEADER'S JERSEY

The top points earner at any time will be awarded the Leader's Jersey. The Leader is expected to wear the jersey at NICA league races, so long as they remain the top points holder. In the case of a tie, both student-athletes wear the Leader's Jersey. The overall winner of the series should wear the Leader's Jersey to the first race of the next season.

6.9. EASY LEADER RECOGNITION

Only the current leader shall wear the leader's jersey. In addition, generic (and very similar looking) NICA league jerseys shall not be worn at a NICA league race by competing student-athletes.

6.10. WALK THE BIKE THROUGH CROWDED AREAS

All racers shall walk their bikes in crowded areas such as the pit zone or spectator areas. Student-athletes who demonstrate reckless behavior and/or risking the harm of other student-athletes and spectators will be penalized.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

6.11. STAGING FOR RACE STARTS

Riders must adhere to the following guidelines when lining up at the start line for the start of a race:

- Riders must not stage or loiter around the start line until 15 minutes before the first start time of the corresponding race wave (for example all girl's categories can begin staging at 9:45 if the varsity girls start at 10:00 AM). Riders who line up at or near the staging area too early may be required to return their team's pit area (or a time penalty of 1 minute can be applied).
- Riders must position themselves in designated start lanes without overlapping the wheels of the rider in front of them.
- Riders must enter the staging area at the designated entrance for their category. Riders cutting into the side or front of the group will be required to start in the last row.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

- If a rider's coach assists a rider cutting into the side or front of the group, a team point penalty of 200 points will be applied. Coaches are expected to support NICA staging rules. If a rider in clear view of their coach is breaking the staging rules without intervention, that 200-point penalty shall be applied to that team.

6.12. 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.

6.13. START LINE CALL-UPS

Start line call-ups for top placed riders takes place at all races. At the first race of the season the call-ups are based on the points from the previous season, regardless of the category where the points were earned. At all subsequent races, the call-ups are based on the overall placing in that category. The following number of riders will be called for each race start:

- Field size of 24 or less riders: Top 5 are called up
- Field size of 25–49 riders: Top 10 are called up
- Field size of 50-74 riders: Top 15 are called up
- Field size of 75+ riders: Top 20 are called up

6.14. FIRST RACE CALL-UPS

Call-ups at the first race of the season shall be based upon the overall points earned by each student-athlete in the previous season. No adjustments will be made based on category changes or other circumstances. The number of riders called up at the first race is listed in Rule 6.13. There are no call-ups for freshman racers at the first race.

6.15. PASSING SLOWER STUDENT-ATHLETES

When overtaking a rider on the racecourse, the passing rider is encouraged to do so respectfully and must:

- Pass only when safe to do so and without rider contact;
- 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.

Passing in a manner that compromises the safety of other riders will not be tolerated.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

6.16. BIKE PUSHERS MUST YIELD

Racers riding bicycles have the right of way over racers pushing bicycles. When practical, racers pushing shall stay on the *least rideable* portion of the trail when being passed. A racer pushing or carrying his/her bicycle can overtake a racer riding their bicycle provided they do not interfere with the student-athlete's progress.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

6.17. LAPPED STUDENT-ATHLETES MUST YIELD

Lapped riders must yield to overtaking student-athletes. Lapped riders being passed must move over as quickly, efficiently and as safely as possible.

6.18. LEADER OWNS THE TRAIL BUT CANNOT BLOCK

In the event two student-athletes are vying for position, the leading student-athlete does not have to yield his/her position to the challenging student-athlete. However, a student-athlete may not bodily interfere with the intent to impede another student-athlete's progress. Traditional rules of racing apply: the leading student-athlete owns the trail.

6.19. LAPPED STUDENT-ATHLETES MAY BE PULLED

Lapped student-athletes may be pulled from the race at the finish line. At the league director’s or a race official’s discretion, a student-athlete may be pulled from a race at any location on the course due to circumstances that make it unsafe for the student-athlete to proceed. Student-athletes that are pulled out of the race must not continue and will be placed according to their position at the time they are pulled.

6.20. TIME LIMITS MAY BE IMPOSED

Student-athletes may be asked to withdraw at the finish line after time limits have been reached. Race officials reserve the right to determine

these time limits at anytime. Time limits may be imposed for reasons that include, among others: Safety, heat, cold, rain, muddy conditions, clearing the course, and relieving course marshals. Course closures may be announced at anytime and do not need to be announced in advance.

If a student-athlete makes the time cutoff but does not complete the final lap due to a mechanical, crash, or other reason, it is considered a DNF.

Race Officials may also, if deemed appropriate, opt to pull an individual student-athlete who appears to be overheated, hypothermic, overly exhausted, or in anyway injured, over-stressed, or at risk of injuring themselves.

6.21. CUTTING THE COURSE

A. Except in the case of injury, NICA student-athletes are not allowed to cut the course, ride off course, or engage in any other behavior that would indicate an intention of unfair play.

RED LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

B. Student-athletes 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 3 feet.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

C. When the trail is clearly on one side of a pole, tree, or other characteristic, then the student-athlete is required to pass that feature, on the trails side of the feature.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

D. A student-athlete 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, student-athletes shall walk along the course to the finish line. In the case of medical emergencies, student-athletes shall remain still and wait for a course marshal or medical help.

6.22. OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE, ETC.

Refer to Rules 4.6 to 4.9 regarding outside assistance, repairing bikes, switching bikes and finishing with the bike.

6.23. FIELD SIZE LIMITS

Each race is limited to the first 100 riders that register.

See Appendix: Rule 6 for additional rules applicable to the NorCal League.

6.24. RACE-COURSE BLOCKED BY VEHICLE AND/OR EMERGENCY

In the case of a racecourse being blocked by a vehicle an/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 commence racing.

7. LEAGUE DIVISIONS AND SUB-REGIONS

A. *Inclusiveness and Safety*

To accommodate more student-athletes and teams consistent with NICA's policy of inclusiveness for all riders who wish to participate, and in the interest of rider safety and field size limitations, rider categories are divided into separate divisions and thereafter into separate sub-regions (each league's region is defined under Rule 6).

Tier 2 leagues 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 student-athletes 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.

B. *Tier 2 Divisions*

(1) Unless otherwise specified in the Appendix, Tier 2 leagues are divided into Division I and Division II as follows:

a. Division I consists of teams with twelve or more registered racing student-athletes.

b. Division II consists of teams with eleven or fewer registered racing student-athletes.

(2) Teams that are short of the minimum required for Division I by two or fewer student-athletes may petition for placement in Division I. Teams that are over the minimum required for Division I by four or fewer student-athletes may petition for placement on 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. Untimely petitions shall not be considered.

See Appendix: Rule 7 for exceptions to the foregoing rules for the NorCal, Colorado, and Utah Leagues.

C. *Geographical Sub-Regions*

(1) Leagues 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 (see Rule 6).

(2) 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.

(3) For Tier 1 leagues, teams and riders are assigned to sub-regions as provided in subparagraph (5) below.

(4) For Tier 2 leagues, the division into sub-regions must be made according to the following rules, prior to team and rider assignment under subparagraph (5) below:

a. Applicable only to Division II, so that only Division II teams and riders are to be scored separately according to sub-region; or

b. Applicable to both Division I and II teams and riders, so that both Divisions are to be scored separately according to sub-regions; or

c. Each sub-region can be run as though it were a Tier 1 league so that teams and riders are scored solely according to sub-region with no regard to Division and team size.

(5) Teams and riders are assigned to a sub-region as follows:

a. For Single-School-Based Teams, the team is located in the sub-region where the school is located;

b. For County-Based Homeschool Teams, the team is located in the sub-region where the students, or a majority of the students primarily reside;

c. For Composite Teams, the team is located in the sub-region where the majority of its students go to school or, if the majority of the students are home-schooled,

then where the majority of all of the students on the team primarily reside; and

d. Independent riders are located in the sub-region where they primarily reside.

Teams and riders may petition to the league director for reassignment to a different sub-region than the one dictated by the foregoing rules.

7.1. TEAM COMPOSITION

A. *Team Types*:

(1) **Single School-Based Teams**: Must be comprised of full-time students from the same school, public or private.

(2) **Composite Teams**: 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. A Composite Team must be approved by the league director based upon a written proposal timely submitted to the league prior to team registration for the season in which the Composite Team wishes to compete. The proposal may include relevant information the organizers wish the league director to consider, but must include the following:

a. The proposed geographical region for its student-athletes;

b. The names of the schools the student-athletes attend and whether any of the student-athletes are homeschooled; and

c. The names of the team organizer and coach. No two or more Composite Teams may overlap in geographical region nor may they draw student-athletes from the same schools.

(3) **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 their NICA league with the facts and circumstances of their situation to determine what type of team they are eligible to compete on. Home-schooled student-athletes who would otherwise be in middle school are scored in the same manner as for Composite Teams set forth below (see (2)b and (3)d).

B. *Composite Team Limitations*

Composite Teams are intended to be temporary solutions only, allowing student-athletes to compete as members of a team in their 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:

(1) The league director 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. A description of the team's geographical region;

b. A list of the names of each student-athlete indicating the school he or she attends or whether he or she is home-schooled;

c. The name of the Composite Team; and

d. The signature of the team organizer and the approval signature of the league director.

(2) Composite Teams must comply, subject to a league's local state laws, with the following scoring restrictions:

a. 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.

b. 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 according to subsection (3)d below.

c. Teams are limited to a maximum of eleven registered riders, excluding middle-school riders, if any.

d. A single Composite Team may be comprised of subdivided teams according to subsection (3) below.

e. Each subdivided team shall be scored independently.

(3) Composite Team subdivision rules:

a. The league director must approve the subdivided teams that comprise a single Composite Team.

b. If five or more student-athletes are from the same school, they shall 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.

c. Teams of twelve or more student-athletes, excluding any middle-school riders, if any, 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 shall be on the same subdivided team; and

ii. Second — Student-athletes shall be placed on subdivided teams according to the proximity of their homes.

d. 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.

e. 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.

See Appendix: Rule 7 for exceptions to the foregoing rules for the Colorado and Utah Leagues.

C. *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 school whose attendance is made up of students of the same sex may also petition to be scored with a group of independent riders who attend the same opposite sex school. This grouping is for scoring purposes only and does not result in a composite club. The resulting grouping, regardless of the size or division of the component parts, shall compete in the same division it would compete in were it a single school club. The grouping 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 grouping shall remain in place until the season ends.

7.2. PROOF OF ATTENDANCE

Proof of school attendance may be requested at any time. This proof may be asked in the form of a school ID, and/or a report card, and/or some other form of proof.

7.3. NO HOMESCHOOLERS ON SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

Homeschoolers are not allowed to compete for (score for) Single School-Based teams.

See Appendix: Rule 7 for exceptions to the foregoing rules for the Arizona, Colorado, and Utah Leagues.

7.4. HOMESCHOOL AND COMPOSITE TEAM APPROVAL

Homeschool and Composite teams must state and gain approval of their geographic scope.

Large Homeschool (12+) or Composite teams (12+) may be required to compete broken down into smaller teams. Composite teams are considered short-term solution for helping school-based teams form. 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/club founders must contact their NICA league director for approval before registering.

7.5. INDEPENDENT RACERS

A student who does not have a club/team at the high school that he/she attends may compete as an "independent."

7.6. 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 participate as a member to that club or team. Such student-athletes may not participate in the league as members of another team nor may they participate as independent riders.

7.7. ONE SCHOOL, ONE TEAM

Only one team may represent a school.

7.8. ACTIVE TEAMS MUST REGISTER

All teams must register annually with their NICA league. Teams must not conduct any practices without registering and obtaining insurance through their NICA league.

7.9. REQUIREMENTS FOR TEAM REGISTRATION

Online annual Team Registration must be completed by two weeks before the opening race. A late fee applies to teams that register after that time.

7.10. TEAM REGISTRATION FEE

Teams must also pay the annual team registration fee within ten days of registration.

- If teams change from Division II to I before the first race, they must pay the difference
- If teams change from Division I to II before the first race, they can receive a refund
- A late fee applies to payments received after ten days

7.11. TEAM REGISTRATION DEADLINE

No new teams will be added to the series scoring after the second race of the series.

7.12. ALL STUDENT-ATHLETES, COACHES, ASSISTANT COACHES, AND RIDE LEADERS MUST REGISTER

All team student-athletes, coaches, assistant coaches, and ride leaders must register with their NICA league. Student-athletes, coaches, assistant coaches and ride leaders that are not registered are not fully insured.

- Student-athletes must pay a registration fee, unless they are eligible for a scholarship.
- There is a grace period – all student-athletes are automatically insured at practices until the first race, so long as a signed release is on file with the coach.
- Registration for Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Ride Leaders carries a fee.
- There is no grace period for Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Ride Leaders — they are not fully insured until they are registered (with General Volunteer license at minimum)
- All registration is conducted on the NICA online Pit Zone.

7.13. OFFICIAL SCHOOL STATUS NOT NEEDED

School-based teams are not required to be officially or otherwise formally affiliated as a sports team from that school.

7.14. MATCHING JERSEYS REQUIRED

Teams must have matching jerseys and all student-athletes must race wearing their team jersey. Teams may use custom jerseys, but they may also choose some other appropriate jersey — such as a solid color or a local shop jersey.

See Appendix: Rule 7 for additional rules regarding racing apparel applicable for the Arizona League.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

7.15. INDEPENDENT JERSEYS

Independent student-athletes must choose a distinct jersey and race wearing the same jersey design throughout the season.

7.16. TEAM TRAINING LIMITS

NICA league teams are limited to the number of weeks they can have practice. In addition, teams are not insured for activities outside of these limits. More details and specific dates can be found in Appendix B of this rulebook.

- Teams can commence limited activities during the preseason. Allowable preseason activities are bike checks, mechanical workshops, "fun rides," or skills clinics.
- During the preseason teams are allowed to have up to 6 scheduled preseason activities (bike checks, mechanical work shops, "fun rides," or skills clinics).
- During the regular season teams may conduct up to 4 practices per week.
- Teams may not conduct any organizational activity aimed towards competing at races during the off-season
- Any coach working with student-athletes during the off-season that is not sanctioned/insured under another non-scholastic organization may risk the eligibility of the coach, rider and/or team to compete in NICA races

7.17. NICA COACHES LICENSE AND BACKGROUND CHECKS

All adults riding participating in NICA team rides must have a NICA coach's license and a background check. Adults who switch teams will need to repeat the background check.

7.18. TEAM DIRECTOR REQUIREMENTS (HEAD COACHES LICENSING)

All teams must have a Team Director that complies with the Team Director Requirements. *The specific Team Director Requirements are detailed in Appendix C of this rulebook*. Team registration discounts may apply for coaches with a higher license level. Teams that do not have a team director that meets the minimal requirements may not

register and compete as a team. Team Directors are encouraged to discuss their professional development plan with the league director.

7.19. ASSISTANT COACHES LICENSING

Requirements for Assistant Coaches Licensing are up to the discretion of the Team's Director. All adults riding with a NICA high school team must at least have a General Volunteer License.

7.20. RIDE LEADERS LICENSING

Requirements for Rider Leaders Licensing are up to the discretion of the Team's Director. All adults riding with a NICA high school team must at least have a General Volunteer License.

7.21. GENERAL VOLUNTEER LICENSING

All adults riding with a NICA high school team must at least have a General Volunteer License.

8. INDIVIDUAL SERIES SCORING

Individuals compete against racers in their same category. Individual scoring is not divided into Divisions (I and II), unless they are racing in separate categories (For example Freshman Boys Division I and Freshman Boys Division II are scored separately). See categories in Rule 3.

8.1. OVERALL INDIVIDUAL SERIES SCORING

Overall Series scoring for individuals is based on the best 4 of 5 in a five race series or the best 3 of 4 in a four race series. In other words, the lowest score is dropped. A missed race would be the lowest score dropped. In the case of races being canceled, the lowest score is still dropped (best 3 of 4) unless there are less than 4 races in which case no score will be dropped.

8.2. POINT SYSTEM

Points are awarded to all finishers. There is a 40-point bonus for JV racers. There is a 75-point bonus for Varsity racers. If a student-athlete does not finish a race (DNF) he or she will not be awarded any points for that race.

In the event of a successful petition to change categories under Rule 3.5, individual points earned in one category do not transfer to another category. A student-athlete's points scored toward team standings prior to the change in categories remain unaffected. Student-athletes 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-athlete who petitions to change to a lower category may state extenuating circumstances in his or her petition to be allowed to score points in the lower category. See Appendix A for full list of point values.

8.3. POINT BONUS AT STATE CHAMPS

At the league's discretion, the league may opt in to a bonus points schedule for its State Championship event by submitting a timely petition to NICA. The petition must be timely due to the

administrative scoring adjustments NICA staff must make to accommodate the alternative scoring. In the event the opt-in petition is granted, additional points shall be awarded as follows:

All finishers at the State Championship are awarded Race Bonus Points as follows: 50 points for 1st place and sequentially for each place thereafter, one less point than is awarded the immediately preceding place, through 50th place, and one point for each finishing place thereafter (e.g., 49 points for 2nd, 48 points for 3rd, . . . 3 points for 48th, 2 points for 49th, 1 point for 50th, and 1 point for each finisher thereafter.

See Appendix: Rule 8 for additional rules applicable to the NorCal and Colorado Leagues.

8.4. POINT BONUS FOR COMPLETING ALL RACES

All student-athletes who complete each and every race in a season shall be awarded an additional 25 Season Bonus Points.

If a race is cancelled, it will not count as a season race and Season Bonus Points shall still be awarded if all other season races are completed. In the event a student-athlete does not complete a race due to a mechanical, crash, illness, or other similar circumstances out of his or her control, that will be considered an incomplete and no Season Bonus Points will be awarded.

Season Bonus Points are awarded to individuals following the summation 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.

8.5. TIER 1 LEAGUE SCORING MATRIX

For Tier 1 leagues all teams are considered Division II where scoring is based on the top 4-point earners, with a maximum of 3 of those point earners being the same gender.

League directors, with approval of their Rules Committee and Board of Directors, may make modifications to these rules. Visit the TEAMS webpage to confirm the team scoring rules of your league.

The team's score is the highest score possible out the following boy/girl combinations:

BBBG
BBGG
BGGG

8.6. TIER 2 LEAGUE SCORING MATRIX

For Tier 2 leagues, Division I scoring is based on the top 8-point earners, with a maximum of 6 of those point earners being the same gender.

For Tier 2, leagues Division II scoring is based on the top 4-point earners, with a maximum of 3 of those point earners being the same gender.

League directors, with approval of their Rules Committee and Board of Directors, may make modifications to these rules. Visit the TEAMS webpage to confirm the team scoring rules of your league.

The team's score is the highest score possible out the following boy/girl combinations:

Division I Teams

BBBBBBGG
BBBBBGGG
BBBBGGGG
BBBGGGGG
BBGGGGGG

Division II Teams

BBBG
BBGG
BGGG

8.7. OVERALL TEAM SCORING

A team's overall placement is based on team point totals for an entire point series (lowest score is *not* dropped).

8.8. AWARDS AT EACH RACE

Individual medals are awarded five places deep at each race, including the State Championships, except in the case of races with field sizes with fewer than 20 student-athletes, in which case medals are awarded three places deep.

Team trophies are awarded three places deep in each division at each race, including the State Championships.

8.9. AWARDS FOR OVERALL SERIES

Individual overall series medals are awarded to finishers in the top 10% of the total number of scoring riders for the series (rounded up) plus two places deep. Team overall series trophies are awarded to a minimum of three places deep in each division.

8.10. PROLOGUE RULES

Leagues may choose to begin their season with two Prologue Races. These races may occur on the same day in different venues, in which event the teams will be split into two groups based on each team's proximity to the venue. Independent student-athletes shall attend the Prologue Race in closest proximity to their homes.

Each student-athlete will receive a 50-point bonus for participating in the Prologue Race. As bonus points, they will be included in the overall individual scores for the season. Also, if a student-athlete must DNF or is pulled due to time constraints in the Prologue, they will still be awarded their 50-point bonus.

There will be no team awards at the Prologue; however, there will be individual student-athlete awards.

The Prologue is not a qualifier for state champs, nor does it count towards category placement the following year.

9. PRE-RIDE PROVIDED WHEN POSSIBLE

Student-athletes will be given the opportunity to walk the course and participate in a practice ride whenever possible.

9.1. STUDENT-ATHLETES AND COACHES ONLY ON THE COURSE

Only student-athletes entered for competition in the event and their team coaches may ride the designated racecourse 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 finishes). No coach is permitted to ride the course during an event. Student- athletes must have their number plates properly affixed to their bicycles at all times they are on the course.

9.2. PRE-RIDE DURING DESIGNATED TIMES ONLY

Race-day pre-rides must be confined to the time designated by their NICA league. Pre-rides that are conducted prior to race day must comply with the rules and regulations regarding trail use, which exist at the race venue. Student-athletes who are caught in the act of pre-riding outside of the allowable time designated will be penalized. Student-athletes must begin their pre-ride of the course at least 30-minutes prior to the first race-start of the day. After the 30-minute cut-off, no more pre-riding is allowed that day.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

9.3. DO NOT MODIFY THE COURSE

Intentionally removing or adding obstacles deemed by Officials to be part of the character of the racecourse is prohibited. Report hazards to a Course Marshal or other race official.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

9.4. DO NOT RIDE THE COURSE BACKWARDS

Pre-riders must ride in the designated direction of the race (no back tracking). If student-athletes must back track, they must walk with their bikes.

ORANGE LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

9.5. PRE-RIDE WITH A COURSE MAP

Student-athletes shall pre-ride with a course map, if available, and understand that they do so at their own risk. There is no guarantee that the course is fully marked or modified to NICA.

Rule 10: PIT ZONE AND FEED ZONE RULES

10. DESIGNATED PIT ZONES ONLY

Teams are assigned pre-determined pit areas in a random fashion. Division I pit areas will be larger than Division II pit areas. Extra large teams (30+) may appeal for extra space ahead of time. All team equipment (including cars and trailers) must be set up within the determined space assigned. Teams must not erect tents, tables, bike stands, or mechanical stations outside of their pit zone.

10.1. BIKE PARKING

Coaches and student-athletes must park their bikes out of the through ways so as not to obstruct cars, pedestrians and other riders.

10.2. AUTOS IN THE PIT ZONE

To minimize congestion in the pit zone, a NICA league reserves the rights to manage the flow of automobile traffic in and out of the pit zone. Whenever possible parents, coaches and student-athletes are encouraged to limit driving into the pit zone and employ student-athletes, parents or coaches to transfer equipment.

Accommodations will be made for large and heavy items, though it is highly appreciated if teams set up their pit areas by one hour before the start of the first race. Thank you for cooperating with the volunteer Parking Attendants.

Recreational Vehicles (RVs) are not permitted in the Pit Zone. Pick up trucks with camper shells are permitted. Gas powered generators (built in or external) are also not permitted in the Pit Zone.

10.3. 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.

10.4. FEEDERS MUST USE THE ZONE

Coaches, parents, or other volunteers must use the feed zone to hand racers food and drinks. Student-athletes will be penalized for accepting food or drink outside of the feed zone.

YELLOW LEVEL CONSEQUENCES

10.5. NO INTERFERENCE OF OTHER STUDENT-ATHLETES

Feeding one student-athlete must not cause other student-athletes to slow down or veer off course.

10.6. FOOD AND DRINK ONLY

Student-athletes must not accept items (such as tools, gear or parts) inside the feed zone, or the outside assistance penalty will apply.

10.7. CLOTHING EXCEPTION

In the event of rain or cold weather, clothing may be handed over in the feed zone only. Clothing may not be handed over anywhere else on the racecourse.

10.8. NO PHYSICAL CONTACT

All hand offs must be conducted hand-to-hand only. No physical contact between student-athletes and feeders is allowed. This will be considered as outside assistance.

It is also not permitted for a feeder to place water bottles on to the bike or hydration pack onto a student-athlete. Food or other items must be handed to the student-athlete. They may not be put into the student-athletes mouth or the pockets on the student-athletes jersey.

10.9. NO RUNNING IN THE FEED ZONE

Running in the feed zone is not permitted under any circumstances, so as to prevent collisions and interference with other feeders.

10.10. FEED ON RIGHT HAND SIDE

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 student-athlete, the feeder must move clear of the feeding zone, which allows plenty of room for other feeders.

10.11. VISIBLE TEAM IDENTITY IN THE FEED ZONE

Feeders must wear a shirt, jacket, hat, vest or jersey that identifies their team. Adhesive nametags are also accepted.

10.12. LIMITED FEEDERS PER TEAM

Each team is allowed a limited number of feeders in the feed zone. The number is based on the number of student-athletes that are competing in the current wave.

- 5 student-athletes or less: 2 feeders
- 6-10 student-athletes: 3 feeders
- 10+ student-athletes: 4 feeders
- 20+ student-athletes: 5 feeders

10.13. 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 feed zone will be for all student-athletes and handouts will be provided by designated race staff and/or volunteers only.

10.14. FEED ZONE IS CAFFEINE FREE

As caffeine is a banned substance feeders must not hand off any caffeinated products. Student-athletes will be penalized for accepting caffeinated products. Race officials may request to inspect feed zone supplies at any time.

10.15. NO THROWING WATER ON RIDERS IN FEED ZONE

No one may throw water on riders in the feed zone or the area immediately preceding the feed zone.

11. APPROVED NICA OFFICIALS

The duties of the chief officials shall be performed by NICA-approved officials.

11.1. IMPARTIALITY

All officials shall endeavor to uphold and enforce the rules of NICA and shall do so in an impartial manner.

11.2. RACE OFFICIAL POSITIONS

The general conduct, safety, scoring and enforcement of rules is managed at races by the following officials:

- Chief Referee
- Start/Finish Line Official
- Chief Scoring Official
- Number Plate Spotters
- Number Plate Recorder
- Chief Course Marshal
- Course Marshals
- Course Sweeper
- Rules and Appeals Committee Members

11.3. OFFICIALS UNIFORMS

Race Officials shall wear uniforms as provided.

11.4. CHIEF REFEREE

The Chief Referee supervises the general conduct of each race, and ensures that the event is run under the rules and guidelines of the National Interscholastic Cycling Association. The Chief Referee is empowered to interpret and enforce the rules and to make a ruling on any point that is not specifically covered in the rules. A decision of the Chief Referee can be appealed. These appeals are handled by the Rules and Appeals Committee.

11.5. ADDITIONAL POWERS OF CHIEF REFEREE

The Chief Referee may neutralize, shorten, suspend, or cancel any race if dangerous conditions or hazardous weather arises.

The Chief Referee has the power 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 take into consideration the observations of course marshals, taking into account their viewing positions and experience levels.

11.6. DUTIES AND POWERS OF OTHER OFFICIALS

The Chief Referee will assign duties for each event to the other officials and may delegate authority to them.

11.7. START/FINISH LINE REFEREE

The Start/Finish Line referee is responsible for managing the start of races, as well as managing the finish line. 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 work by scoring close finishes, creating an independent back-up document of finish order, sampling lap times, estimating time of last finisher, managing finish shoots, and enforcing cut-off times.

Penalties, cut-off times, last finisher time-estimates must be communicated with the Chief Referee. In the event of close finishes, Spotters shall focus on the numbers whereas the Start /Finish Line Referee will focus on the order of finish (by focusing on the front wheels). All penalties issued shall be reported to the Chief Referee.

11.8. CHIEF SCORING OFFICIAL

The Chief Scoring Official supervises the scoring crew comprised of Number Plate Spotter and Number Plate Recorders. The Chief Scoring Official is responsible for running the scoring program, investigating and trouble shooting discrepancies, posting preliminary results, fielding protests (regarding preliminary results & scoring), and providing final results for the award ceremony. The Chief Scoring

Official is empowered to interpret and enforce the rules pertaining to scoring. All penalties issued shall be reported to the Chief Referee.

11.9. NUMBER PLATE SPOTTER

Number Plate Spotters report (in a loud clear voice) race plate numbers in the order that they cross the line. Only one Number Plate Spotter is calling out at any given time. Number Plate Spotters 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 will focus on the order of finish (by focusing on the front wheels).

11.10. NUMBER PLATE RECORDER

Number Plate Recorders enter the numbers called out by the Number Spotter. Number Plate Recorders shall rotate every 2 hours to ensure quality reporting.

11.11. CHIEF COURSE MARSHAL

The Chief Course Marshal manages the operations of Course Marshals, which includes providing radios, vests, maps, whistles and flags, conducting a meeting, assigning locations, and taking reports. The Chief Course Marshal is empowered to interpret and enforce the rules pertaining to infractions that occur on the racecourse. All penalties issued shall be reported to the Chief Referee.

11.12. COURSE MARSHALS

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 rules.

Course Marshals must:

- carry a radio, a notepad and pen, and a course map.
- wear a designated Course Marshal Vest.
- carry a flag and whistle; the flag can be used to direct and/or slow student-athletes. The whistle can be used to warn student-athletes that are riding in the wrong direction.

- report incidents by radio, at the time of the infraction to the Chief Course Marshal. Course marshals must also report the incident in writing when they return from duty.

11.13. COURSE SWEEPER

The Course Sweeper communicates with the Chief Course Marshal and the Start/Finish Line Referee. The primary responsibility of the Sweeper is to be aware of the last student-athlete on the course and ride behind that student-athlete (200 meter minimum) and report to the Chief Course Marshal and Start/Finish Line Referee their location, and when they are finished (and the course is clear). The Chief Course Marshal may also deputize the Sweeper to relieve Course Marshals from duty, carry first aid, and/or act as a rolling Course Marshal.

11.14. RULES AND APPEALS COMMITTEE

The Rules and Appeals Committee is comprised of a NICA league appointed body of five NICA league coaches, board members and/or staff. All student-athletes have the right to appeal decisions and penalties to the Rules and Appeals Committee. The Chief Referee may call together any three members of the Rules and Appeals Committee to rule on a protest at races, or the protest ruling may be delayed until after the race. A league may choose to create a separate Rules Committee and Appeals Committee.

11.15. INCIDENT REPORTS

The Chief Referee must file any appropriate incident report with the NICA league's director immediately following the race event and within five days. Incidents include rule violations, scoring issues, and injuries. All rule violations and penalties must also be reported to the Rules and Appeals Committee.

11.16. ON SITE PROTESTS

The Chief Referee will handle any protests arising at the event, calling together a body of three members of the Rules and Appeals Committee to handle disputes. The Chief Referee, and/or the Rules and Appeals Committee may postpone any discussion or decision to a later date, but no later than five days after the race.

12. PRELIMINARY AND OFFICIAL RESULTS (MANDATORY)

Preliminary results. Preliminary race results and penalty assessments are posted at the race venue, at or near the scoring tent, as soon as possible after each event. The posting time shall be stated on the results and penalties sheets.

Race-day protest period deadline. 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.

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 race-day results 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 race-day results.

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.

12.1. EXTENDED PROTEST PERIOD (DISCRETIONARY)

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.

Extended protest period announcement. Such an extended protest period must be announced along with the official race-day results, 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.

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 the second day after the results are posted on the website. Protests must be submitted to the league director, Chief Referee, or other league official designated by the league director to receive such protests.

12.2. POST RACE-DAY PROTEST DECISIONS

League officials. Protests made on race day but deferred for later decision and protests submitted during an extended protest period shall be heard by league officials to include the league director, or Chief Referee, or members of the league's Rules Committee, or any one or combination thereof.

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 under Rules 12 or 12.1. Submitting such statements after the protest period is permissible only if done at the request of league officials.

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.

12.3. JUDGMENT CALLS

League officials must decide and rule upon protests despite having scant 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 racecourse out of the sight of race officials. Despite this, every effort is made to reach the fairest and most informed decisions as possible under the circumstances for each and every protest that is submitted.

It is expected that student-athletes and their families and coaches understand these limitations and the challenging nature of the

decisions officials have to make, and it is expected 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 widely considered a sign a good sportsmanship and a strong character trait. Accordingly, threatening or bullying officials, other riders, spectators, or others involved with the league or an event may result in restrictions imposed on a student-athlete's participation in the league.

13. COACHES' HELMETS

NICA league coaches and team assistants are expected to comply with helmet Rule 4 at all team practices, team events, and league races. In the event a coach is seen riding without a helmet, a 25-point penalty will be applied to his or her team's score for noncompliance.

13.1. DUTY OF CARE

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 student-athlete arrival. It ends at the very end 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/her team has departed, except in the case that a student-athlete's parent or legal guardian is present.

13.2. RACE ATTENDANCE

A Head Coach must attend each race. If the Head Coach cannot attend a race, an interim Head Coach shall be appointed and the NICA league must be notified as to who is serving as interim Head Coach.

13.3. POSITIVE SPORTING BEHAVIOR

It is expected that all coaches will display mature and positive behavior during every event. Coaches must serve as role models to student-athletes, thereby demonstrating fair and calm response in the event of protests, complaints, conflicts, or emergencies. Coaches are expected to be focused not only on winning, but on helping student-athletes develop positive character traits, learn life lessons, and grow into healthy young adults.

14. PARENTS' HELMETS

Parents shall comply with the helmet rule at all races (Rule 4). Parents riding bicycles without helmets shall be given two warnings. After a third infraction, the parent's student-athlete will be penalized 25 points at the race where the infraction occurred. Parents are also expected to wear helmets for the following reasons:

- To set an example for the student-athletes
- There are limited emergency services on site
- All spectators at a NICA event are on the NICA permit/insurance and contribute to the overall liability
- It is not always possible for race officials to differentiate between parents and coaches
- NICA is concerned about the safety of all our participants and spectators

14.1. HANDLING PROTESTS

Parents must handle protests, complaints, and/or conflicts with a positive and respectful attitude.

14.2. PARENTS RIDING ON THE COURSE

During a race, parents must not ride (or run) on the course in the proximity (within 200 meters) of any competitors. Parents cannot run along the course with a student-athlete for more than 50 meters.

14.3. POSITIVE SPORTING BEHAVIOR

It is expected that all parents will display a mature and positive sporting attitude during every event.

What parents can do to encourage positive sporting behavior:

- Keep your comments positive. Don't bad-mouth coaches, student-athletes, or officials. If you have a serious concern, discuss it privately with your child's coach or a NICA league official.

- Commend good effort and performance, no matter who it comes from—especially when it's student- athletes from a "rival" team
- Remember that you are the parent, not the coach (unless you are both). Shout encouragement, not directions, from the sidelines
- Set a good example with your courteous behavior towards the parents, coaches, and student-athletes from other teams
- Look for examples of good sporting behavior in professional student-athletes and point them out to your child. Talk about the bad examples, too, and why they upset you
- Emphasize values like teamwork, responsibility, and discipline. Winning comes and goes, but values should be ever-present.

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Alabama High School Cycling League
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Arizona High School Cycling League
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Mike Perry, League Director (mike@arizonamtb.org)
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NorCal High School Cycling League
www.norcalmtb.org
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Colorado High School Cycling League
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Texas High School Cycling League
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Utah High School Cycling League
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Virginia High School Cycling League
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Wisconsin High School Cycling League
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Don Edberg, League Director (don@wisconsinmtb.org)
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PLACE	FROSH-SOPH	JV	VARSITY
1	500	540	575
2	490	530	565
3	481	521	556
4	472	512	547
5	464	504	539
6	456	496	531
7	448	488	523
8	441	481	516
9	434	474	509
10	427	467	502
11	420	460	495
12	414	454	489
13	408	448	483
14	402	442	477
15	396	436	471
16	390	430	465
17	385	425	460
18	380	420	455
19	375	415	450
20	370	410	445
21	365	405	440
22	360	400	435
23	356	396	431
24	352	392	427
25	348	388	423
26	344	384	419
27	340	380	415
28	336	376	411
29	332	372	407
30	329	369	404

PLACE	FROSH-SOPH	JV	VARSITY
31	326	366	401
32	323	363	398
33	320	360	395
34	317	357	392
35	314	354	389
36	311	351	386
37	308	348	383
38	306	346	381
39	304	344	379
40	302	342	377
41	300	340	375
42	298	338	373
43	296	336	371
44	294	334	369
45	292	332	367
46	290	330	365
47	289	329	364
48	288	328	363
49	287	327	362
50	286	326	361
51	285	325	360
52	284	324	359
53	283	323	358
54	282	322	357
55	281	321	356
56	280	320	355

TEAM TRAINING LIMITS

NICA has strict training limits for NICA League Teams and NICA Indie Clubs. 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 student-athletes and coaches who suffer injuries, insurance coverage applies only to the allowable activities described below.

League teams and clubs are limited to the number of weeks in 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.

Each year is divided into a pre-season, a regular season, and an off-season. Unless otherwise specified for a particular league, Fall Leagues are leagues with races in the fall, and Spring Leagues have races in the spring.

PRE-SEASON

- **Start Date**. Teams and clubs can commence limited pre-season team activities on the following dates:

  Fall Leagues ..... April 1
  Spring Leagues ..... October 15

- **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 (approval form attached below):

  1. Bike checks and bike fit;
  2. Mechanical workshops;
  3. All-inclusive fun rides; and
  4. Skills clinics

- **Activities Limit**. The maximum number of pre-season activities is:

  Fall Leagues 6
  Spring Leagues 6
  Colorado, Utah* 8

**Due to unpredictable inclement weather conditions in mountain and high desert regions.*

REGULAR SEASON

- **Start Date**. Regular training, to include up to four practices per week, may commence on the following dates:

Fall Leagues	July 1
Spring Leagues	December 1
Colorado	August 1
Tennessee	Monday of the Week after the Week of July 4*

- **Racing Limits**. Teams and clubs may participate in races only during the regular season.
- **End of Season**. No team or club rides, or any other training activities, may take place following the 14th consecutive day after the final NICA league race of the season. Special summer or post-season activities and rides after this two-week period may be approved and allowed by the league director (use the approval form below).

**The two-week period including the week prior to the week of July 4 and the week of July 4 is defined as the Summer Dead Period under the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association Handbook, during which no regular season or pre-season or activities may take place, and is part of the Tennessee League's off-season.*

OFF-SEASON

The off-season is defined as periods not within the applicable pre-season 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:

1. A league team racing under the school name;
2. Using the school jersey at races as a team;
3. Having practices that meet on school grounds;
4. Having regular meetings at school that organize activity for off-season training and racing;
5. Using any league team property without a letter of permission from school administration; and

6. 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 NICA league races the following season.

PRE-SEASON ACTIVITY APPROVAL FORM

During the pre-season period teams are allowed to have up to six (6) scheduled activities (bike checks and/or fits, mechanical workshops, fun rides, or skills clinics).These activities must be pre-approved by the League Director. Please send the following information to the League Director at least five (5) days in advance of the first activity. Thank you.

1. Team Director Name:_____

   Phone/email:_____

2. Team Name:_____

3. Dates of each activity:

   a._____

   b._____

   c._____

   d._____

   e._____

   f._____

4. Description of each activity (what, where, how far, etc.) (attach more sheets if necessary):

   a._____

   b._____

   c._____

   d._____

   e._____

   f._____

5. Number of adults expected at each activity:_____

6. Number of students expected at each activity:_____

7. Do you have current NICA waivers for all student and adults?_____

8. Are all adult riders joining club/team rides licensed by NICA? (General Volunteer, Ride Leader, Assistant Coach or Head Coach). NICA requires that all adults regularly participating in sanctioned rides hold NICA licenses. Adults without licenses are not insured.

   _____

Please complete this form and mail or fax to your league director. Please check your league website for the fax number or address. Please contact your league director if you have any questions about these requirements or the insurance coverage.

TEAM DIRECTOR REQUIREMENTS

All *NICA Teams* (that are members of a NICA league) must have a Team Director that satisfies the following requirements. NICA takes risk management very seriously and our Team Director 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 great whole. It's essential that all Team Directors 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 and there are discount incentives for surpassing those minimums. We strongly urge all Team Directors to complete their Head Coach 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 (http://www.nationalmtb.org/coaches-license-program/).

	Minimum Requirement	Requirement for Discount
First-Year Team	**General Volunteer License** is required for the team to register as a NICA team	**Ride Leader License** or above qualifies for $125 team registration discount
Second-Year Team	**Ride Leader License** is required for the team to register as a NICA team	**Assistant Coach License** or above qualifies for $125 team registration discount
Third-Year Team	**Assistant Coach License** is required for the team to register as a NICA team	**Head Coach License** qualifies for $125 team registration discount
Fourth-Year Team	**Head Coach License** is required for the team to register as a NICA team	$125 discount applies to fourth year team and beyond that if Team Director maintains Head Coach License

INDIE CLUB DIRECTOR REQUIREMENTS

All *NICA Indie Clubs* (these are clubs that do not participate in a NICA league http://www.nationalmtb.org/nica-leagues/) must have a Team Director that satisfies the following requirements. NICA sets the bar high for starting a NICA Indie Club as founding and managing a high school mountain bike club is a tremendous responsibility and NICA Indie Clubs do not have the oversight of a local league director. In order to start and register a NICA Indie club founding Team Directors must acquire an Assistant Coach License which can only be obtained by attending a NICA Leaders Summit, in addition to satisfying other requirements (http://www.nationalmtb.org/coaches-license-program/). NICA is working hard to bring leaders summits to more regions. Check the event schedule at the NICA Website for upcoming conference locations and dates.

	Minimum Requirement	Requirement for Discount
First-Year Club	**Assistant Coach License** is required for the team to register as a NICA Indie Club	**Head Coach License** qualifies for $125 team registration discount
Second-Year Club	**Head Coach License** is required for the team to register as a NICA Indie Club	$125 discount applies to fourth year team and beyond that if Team Director maintains Head Coach License

RULE 3

SoCal

Rules 3.4 and 3.5. Middle school riders in the SoCal league cannot compete in, or petition for an upgrade into the high school categories.

RULE 6

NorCal

Rule 6.23. NorCal League teams will be limited to thirty (30) entries to each NorCal race. Head coaches will decide who from their program will participate on the race team for each race. Any team that had over thirty (30) racers participate in the NorCal League in a season will need to reduce their race entry participation numbers by 10% for the following season.

RULE 7

Arizona

Rule 7.3. Per state statute, homeschooled and online students who are enrolled in an Arizona online charter school or are homeschooled and who are domiciled within the attendance zone of a member school or composite team, may compete on the member school or composite team. If neither of these options is available to the student-athlete, then the online or homeschool student may compete as an independent rider. Although this policy varies from the NICA Rulebook, it aligns with the Arizona Interscholastic Association's student eligibility rules.

Rule 7.14. Only high school names, area names, logos and/or mascots may be featured on student-athlete's racing apparel (jerseys & shorts) used in Arizona League races. No company or manufacturer names or logos other than those of the apparel manufacturer are allowed. In addition to Yellow Level Consequences applicable to Rule 7.14, riders or coaches using racing apparel that violates this rule will be subject to disqualification. For additional information, please see: http://www.arizonamtb.org/teams/az-league-racing-apparel-policy/.

NorCal

Rule 7. To create balanced fields and account for many large teams, the NorCal League division split is as follows:

a. Division I consists of teams with sixteen (16) or more registered racing student-athletes.

b. Division II consists of teams with fifteen (15) or fewer registered racing student-athletes.

Colorado

Rule 7. The Colorado Rules Committee will announce the team size dividing point for each division as soon as practicable following the anticipated conference split in 2015. To create balanced fields and account for many large teams, the Colorado League division may be divided as follows:

a. Division I consists of teams with sixteen (16) or more registered racing student-athletes.

b. Division II consists of teams with fifteen (15) or fewer registered racing student-athletes.

Rules 7, 7.1, and 7.3. The strict application of Rules 7, 7.1, and 7.3 conflict with Colorado Revised Statutes § 22-32-116.5 regarding extracurricular and interscholastic activities. The Colorado statute permits students, *inter alia*, to participate as members of another school's team for a sport not offered at the student's school of attendance or nonpublic home-based educational program. The Colorado League proposed a solution to the conflict, which has been accepted by the NICA Rules Committee and incorporated herein for purposes of enforcement in the Colorado League only, as follows:

1. Any student attending a public or private school or who is enrolled in a nonpublic home-based educational program (each a "school") that does not have a NICA League team may petition to the Colorado League Director to participate and register as a student-athlete member of the team ("hosted student-athlete") for the public school in closest proximity to the student's place of residence within that student's school district ("host school"), or if no schools within that district have teams, then the closest public school within a contiguous school district.

2. If there are **five (5)** or more hosted student-athletes from a single school registered at a single host school, those hosted student-athletes *shall* be scored separately as a team

representing the school they attend. The League Director will encourage, but not require, the hosted team members to form a team at their school of attendance. The League Director may modify the scoring for hosted teams at any time prior to the first race of the season.

3. A hosted student-athlete must actively participate in the host school's team practices and activities and be considered a member of the team. If a hosted student-athlete does not so participate, then he or she shall compete as an independent and points scored shall not be applied to the host school's team.
4. The two-year limitation under Rule 7.1 for Composite Teams does not apply within the Colorado League. In the event a hosted team is established, a hosted student-athlete's points may be transferred from the host school's team to the hosted team.

Utah

Rule 7. To create balanced fields and account for many large teams, the Utah League division split is as follows:

c. Division I consists of teams with sixteen (16) or more registered racing student-athletes.
d. Division II consists of teams with fifteen (15) or fewer registered racing student-athletes.

Rule 7, 7.1, and 7.3. The strict application of the rules regarding homeschooled student eligibility conflicts with the provisions of the Utah School Activities Association Handbook (USAAH). In accordance with those provisions, the following rules apply to the Utah League only:

A student that is legitimately enrolled in a homeschool, public charter school, online school, private school, or district alternative school educational program in grades 9-12 may participate as a member of a team for a school that is otherwise permitted to compete. The student must participate on the team for the school (a) within whose boundary the permanent residence of the student's parent or guardian is situated, or (b) from which the student withdrew in order to enroll in

his or her current educational program. The team's school must meet all legal requirements that allow its students to participate.

Any conflicts between the foregoing and the rules in this Rulebook are to be resolved in favor of the provisions of the USAAH.

RULE 8

NorCal

Rule 8.3. The California State Championship Race is open to qualified student-athletes who have competed in at least 50% of the series races in the same season as the State Championships. Team scoring at the State Championships is based on the student-athletes that are eligible and compete.

- All individual Varsity category student-athletes automatically qualify for the State Championships.
- All individual Freshman, Sophomore, and JV category student-athletes who have placed in the top percentile, as established by the League Director for that season, in a series race qualify for that season's State Championships.
- The State Championship Race is not part of the NorCal or SoCal point series.
- The State Championship scoring matrix is set forth in Appendix A.

Colorado

Rule 8.3. The Colorado League State Championship qualification criteria shall include a percentage, to be established by the Colorado Rules Committee for each season to include no more than the top 85% and no fewer than top 50%, of all student-athletes who competed in at least two (2) races in the series for that season.

EDIT PROCEDURE

The NICA Rules Committee, which is comprised of NICA board members, staff, and individuals selected from each league, updates the NICA Rules & Guidelines annually. Edit suggestions are gathered throughout the year, compiled and then discussed in a series of Rules Committee meetings that take place in July and August. Only edits that are submitted by the announced deadline are considered for the next edition of the rulebook. Following committee discussion and review, new rules are drafted and voted upon by designated voting members of the Rules Committee. Proposed changes are accepted upon a majority of the votes actually cast prior to the announced voting deadline (non-votes are null).

To review current updates or to request a change or comment on a rule, please visit the NICA website at www.nationalmtb.org and click on Rulebook Updates under the Coaching menu.

EDIT HISTORY

The National Interscholastic Cycling Association reserves the right to modify the rules/procedures/standards to accommodate changes and unforeseen problems; and also sanction penalties that are deemed appropriate.

Modification History Notes

January 2009

3.5 The category placement rules were adjusted to account for splitting freshman and sophomore boys categories and also for larger girls fields.

February 2009

3.1 Freshman and sophomore girls are given distinct categories unless the combine number of registrants is less than 55.

4.4 Improved language concerning lowest gear (rule did not change)

6.17 Added this clarification: If a student-athlete makes the time cutoff but does not complete the final lap due to a mechanical, crash, or other reason – it is considered a DNF.

6.19 Added a reference to rules 4.7–4.10 since these are arguable race rules.

7.2 Clarified homeschool teams must be comprised only of homeschoolers.

7.5 Added this clarification: Composite teams are considered short-term solution for helping teams form, whereas combining existing teams is not allowed. Teams can combine resources and training rides – but will be scored separately, wear separate jerseys, etc.

8.2 Added language to clarify the series overall is based on best 4 of 5 races in a five race series.

8.5 Added this clarification: Bonus points are awarded to individuals following the summation of overall series points after the final race. Bonus points are not added to points scored in the final race nor are they added into the team score.

8.9 and 8.10 Added these rules to specify how many medals and trophies are awarded

10.3 Added RV rule: Recreational Vehicles (RVs) are not permitted in the Pit Zone. Pick up trucks with camper shells are permitted. Gas powered generators (built in or external) are also not permitted in the Pit Zone.

February 2009 Notes:

Adding boxes to the Feed zone was voted down 5-0.

December 2009

7.2 Homeschoolers allowed on composite teams. 2 year limit for all student-athletes scoring on composite teams.

7.4 Updated: removed composite teams from the rule.

Improved the language.

Removed "is enrolled at a school" so as to include homeschool or independent study students

January 2010

NorCal, SoCal and Colorado rules combined to form NICA 7 (rule numbering adjustments made). Rules 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.6, 3.7, 8.6-8.9 expanded to accommodate differences for NorCal and SoCal.

August 2010

Rule 7.2 modified so if 5 or more student-athletes on composite team are from the same school they must be scored separate from the rest of the composite team.

Rule 4.6 was separated into two rules. One for bar ends and ones for end plugs. The previous language was confusing (sounded like "no endplugs") Stem caps were also added as they are as important as bar ends. The rules were re-numbered accordingly.

Rules 8.4 and 8.5 language was improved for clarity.

January 2011

Rule 3.2 was modified to account for growing SoCal fields and two divisions in 2011. Washington League was added to the rulebook.

Colorado category placement was changed to second year league category placement rules. Added 6.20 Category field limit.

7.2B Pulled out the composite team limitation from 7.2.

7.10 Made relative to first race.

7.10 Added rule to clarify all adults must have a NICA coaches license and background check

7.19-7.22 Changed certification to licensing. Clarified that Assistant Coach and Ride Leader license requirements are up to Team Directors and that all adults riding with team must have at least a General Volunteer license.

Added 7.22 NorCal League team size rule.

Modified 8.4 to account for state champs not being part of the California point series. Add 8.4B California State Champ qualification criteria.

Modified 8.5 to remove bonus for completing all races for NorCal only (due to team size limit). Added 8.13 Prologue rules for NorCal.

October 2011

Reconciled use of "a NICA league" instead of (generally) "the League."

2.20 Updated sexual harassment policy language2.5 Updated to reference all state bicycle laws 3.1–

3.3 replaced old league-by-league scoring system with two-tier system

Made additional clarifications such as previously unwritten rule that Freshman cannot petition to race Sophomore

Changed category placement rules to be percentage based

Specified this rule is for “first year leagues only”

Added consequences for racing in the wrong category

4.1 Clarified that helmet rule is not enforced on stationary trainers

4.3 Removed requirement for 2 chain rings

4.8 Clarified that outside assistance includes using outside parts or tools

6.1 Added TX, MN, UT

6.3B Added clarification about students enrolled in college courses

6.11 Added staging rules

Added call-up rules

Added first race call-up rules

6.24 Added rule to address a blocked race-course

Removed exception for new teams

B Specified that composite teams cannot race Division I and some details about how they are split up

8.4B State Champ qualifications was changed to be based upon individual results only, not team results 7.1B Added NorCal division rules, were approved in February 2011

Modified team training limits to refer to team training limits document, added TTL document to appendix

Modified Team Director Requirements to refer to Team Director Requirements document, added TDR document to the appendix

8.6–8.7 replaced old league-by-league team scoring with two-tier system

14.1 Added specific penalty and expanded language of parent helmet rule

October 2012

7.2 Added that Composite teams must be approved by the league director based upon a written proposal. Further direction about what to include in proposal is included.

7.2B Added annual review of Composite Team's eligibility status.

8.4 State Championship Bonus points are now optional and per the leagues' discretion. Default is to *not* have State Championship Bonus points. To opt-in, a league must submit a petition to NICA.

3.7B Removed that riders who place in the top three of their category are promoted to the next category. 7.1A Defined registered racing members. No team may change divisions during a season.

7.2C Added rule on same sex school scoring.

8.3 Clarified that if a rider downgrades during a season, points already earned for the team are unaffected. Added that after a downgrade, a league director can use his or her discretion to deem the downgraded rider ineligible to score team points in that lower category during the season.

3.5 Clarifying language of NICA and league's petition policy.

3.7A Clarifying language regarding how results from previous year are used to calculate a rider's category. 8.4B Added that all Varsity category student-athletes automatically qualify for CA State Championships.

8.5 Clarified when Season Bonus points are added.

4.4 Deleted lowest gear roll-out rule.

6.19 Clarified when a rider can be pulled.

9.2 Clarified coaches and student-athletes are allowed to ride out on course, took out line that parents and guardians ride at their own risk.

10.16 Added new rule.

13.1 Clarified language.

December 2013

2.14 Added that students that incur concussions must obtain written clearance from a licensed health care provider.

3.7B Added new rule revising criteria to determine category placement

6.14 Removed that callups were to be based on groups of 10, based on plate numbers

Added that JV riders to be awarded 50 bonus points and Varsity riders to be awarded 100 bonus points 8.4B Added that riders must ride in 50% of races in the same season to qualify for State Champs.

B, Bullet 2, added that League Director determines percentile for that season for qualifiers for State Champs. 8.4B, Bullet 4, added that the State Championship scoring matrix is set forth in Appendix A

Added that season bonus points will only be awarded to those who compete in each and every race. Appendix A removed fields of 20 or less and increased points to be earned by JV and Varsity riders

Team Training Limits added 2 more training days for CO leagues due to weather, clarified dead period for Tennessee League

Appendix 7 Added new rule that CO league athletes could participate on another school's team if sport not offered at their school, per Colorado statute.

October 2014

3.0–3.6 Category Placement – includes new middle school category.

5.1 Course length and difficulty – edits for middle school events.

5.8 Distance Signs – Removed reference to kilometers.

5.10 List of Signs – Updated old signage with new signage; descriptions.

6.0 Eligible Students – Edits for middle school categories and addition of new leagues.

6.1 Inter-league participation and out-of-region students – student-athletes and teams located outside of that league's region, may be allowed to participate in that league's events and races.

6.2 Student age and grade – requirements to be eligible to compete (including middle school requirements).

6.3 Age-based placement for home-schooled students – Home-schooled student-athletes to be placed in categories corresponding to applicable grade level.

6.4 College class enrollment – Student-athletes remain eligible to compete if enrolled in college classes as middle or high school student.

6.15 Passing slower student-athletes – language updated when passing other student athletes.

6.17 Lapped student-athletes must yield – lapped riders must yield.

6.23 Field size limits – Each race limited to first 100 riders that register (league exceptions).

7.0 League divisions and sub-regions – Move NorCal rules to addendum section; allows discretion to league directors to accommodate more riders and maintain safety with smaller field sizes. Divisions are created according to team size. Adding sub-regions based on geographical areas provides a new mechanism for directors to divide categories.

7.1 Team Composition – 2-year composite team limitation removed; middle school requirements included.

7.3 No Homeschoolers on school-based teams – Exceptions added for Arizona and Colorado leagues in appendix.

7.6 Student-athletes must join school teams – Student-athletes must join their respective school based teams.

7.13 Official School status not needed – School-based teams are not required to be official or formally affiliated as sports teams.

7.14 Matching Jerseys required – Additional rules applicable to Arizona league added to the appendix.

8.3 Point bonus at state champs – Additional rules applicable to NorCal league added to the appendix.

12.0 Preliminary and official results (mandatory) – Updated language for protests during preliminary results, race-day deadlines, official results and deferred rulings.

12.1 Extended protest period – Updated language summarizing protest period for online results, extended protest period announcement and extended protest period deadline.

12.2 Post race-day protest decisions – updated language regarding post-day protest decisions for league officials, hearings and votes.

12.3 Judgment calls – updated language regarding decision-making process of league officials.

Appendix A: Individual Point Scale – Individual point scale revised.

Appendix B: Team Training Limits – Fall leagues to begin their season April 1st.