



Field Hockey

Sport Handbook – Fall of 2026

Section 1: Rules

- A. All contests under the jurisdiction of the RIIL shall be played according to the National Federation of State High School Association Rules, except for any special rulings adopted by the RIIL and listed in this handbook below.
- B. The RIIL strongly recommends head coaches/officials obtain a copy of the most recent NFHS Rulebook.

Section 2: Mandatory Coaches Certification & Continuing Education

- A. ALL Coaches must be appointed by their School Administration and upload their valid certificates to the Coaches' Certification website below. A coach is any adult with access to student-athletes through an education-based athletic program.
 - a. Including, but not limited to: Volunteer Coaches, Assistant Coaches, and Head Coaches.
- B. Coaching Requirements: Article 13
- C. Coaching Out of Season Rules: Article 7, Section 8
- D. Rules on Recruitment: Article 3, Section 11
- E. Sportsmanship Expectations for Coaches: Article 12, Section 3

Section 3: Medical Coverage/Emergency Action Plans

- A. Medical Coverage should be provided by the host school, be in attendance and on duty for the duration of all interscholastic scrimmages and games during the regular season and all tournament round games. The medical personnel must introduce themselves to both coaches and referee prior to the start of the game.
 - a. Pre-Game Safety Checklist
- B. Schools are responsible for providing Medical Coverage for their team throughout the playoffs, including the Semis and Finals/Championships.
- C. Home team medical coverage shall be responsible for both teams unless the visiting school provides its own medical coverage.

D. Levels of Medical Coverage:

<i>Medical Professional Legal Limitations</i>
A. <i>Education/Schooling/Training & Licensure</i> B. <i>Scope of Practice</i> C. <i>Able to Return to Play</i>
Medical Doctors-MD/DO or Advanced Practice Provider-NP/PA
A. Advanced degree (Medical School/Successfully passed the licensing board, and RI Licensed) B. Preventative Care, On field Evaluation, Immediate Care, Diagnosis C. Can they Return to Play – Yes
Athletic Trainer (RI Licensed)
A. Minimum Bachelor's Degree (Successfully pass the BOC exam, and RI licensed) B. Preventative Care, On field Evaluation, Immediate Care, Assessment of injury, referral for further diagnosis C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – YES
Physical Therapist (RI Licensed)
A. Degree varies from BS, MS to DPT (Successfully pass the board exam, and RI licensed.) B. Preventative Care, Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO
Physical Therapist w/ Orthopedic Clinical Specialist (OCS) credential (RI Licensed)
A. Advanced Certification (Successfully pass the board exam, successfully complete requirements for and pass the OCS exam, and RI licensed) B. Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation. On the field coverage - not qualified, no emergency training incorporated into initial certification or required to be annually updated. C. Can they Return to Play – NO (During a Game/Contest), Yes (In Clinical Setting)
Physical Therapists w/ Sports Certified Specialist (SCS) credential (RI Licensed)
A. Advanced Certification (Successfully pass the board exam, successfully complete requirements for and pass the SCS exam, and RI licensed) B. Rehabilitation, Orthopedic exam evaluation. On-the-field coverage – Qualified C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – YES
EMT - Basic, Intermediate & Paramedic
A. Successfully complete the EMT program, pass the board exam, and RI licensed) B. Emergency care C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? - NO, per RI EMS laws/regulations/protocols
School Nurse (RN)
A. Successful completion of a nursing program (Successfully pass the board exam, and RI licensed) B. Emergency care, referral for further treatment/diagnosis C. Can they Return to Play during a game/contest? – NO

- E. The judgment of the medical person will be final with regard to the medical condition of a player. No player may continue to play against the medical person's advice under any circumstance.
- F. An Emergency Action Plan with clearly defined written and practice protocols as required by RI General Laws must be developed and in place at every high school.
 - a. When possible, an athletic trainer should be present at all practices and games. An athletic trainer is a key component in any strategy to minimize injury risk and optimize safety for all participants.
 - b. *Rationale:* An effective emergency action plan (EAP) must be in place as a prompt and appropriate response to any emergency situation that can save a life. The EAP should be designed and practiced to address all teams (freshman, junior varsity, and varsity) and all practice and game sites.

Section 4: General Regulations for all Sports

- A. Heat Acclimatization: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 3
- B. Definition of a Game/Scrimmage: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 2
- C. Coaching Out of Season Rules: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 8
- D. Use of Equipment During the Summer: RIIL R&R Article 6, Section 13
- E. Sportsmanship Expectations for Coaches, Student-Athletes, & Spectators: RIIL R&R Art. 12, Sect. 3
- F. Loyalty to Home School: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 7
- G. National Events: RIIL R&R Article 7, Section 11
- H. Penalties for Ejections: RIIL R&R Article 6, Section 7
- I. Protest Procedure: RIIL R&R Article 5

Section 5: Sport Advisory Committee

- A. Each Sport Advisory Committee is comprised of Member School Administrators, Athletic Directors, Coaches, Officials, and other relevant individuals who work with and report to the RIIL on all matters concerning their sport.

B. Field Hockey Sport Advisory Committee Membership:

Committee Role	Member	School & Position
Sport Director	Jean Angell	Retired Scituate Athletic Director
Co-Director (RIIAAA)	Greg O'Connor	Lincoln HS Athletic Director
Athletic Director	Casie Rhodes	East Greenwich
Athletic Director	Cindy Blodgett	Lincoln School
Athletic Director	Justin Cahoone	Chariho
Head Coach	Traci Fairchild	East Greenwich
Head Coach	Delaney Cavanagh	Cumberland
Head Coach	Matt Davis	Cranston
Head Coach	Stephanie Shields	Pilgrim
Head Coach	Anna Saccocio	
Head Coach	Scott Sunaz-Lods	
Head Coach	Jeanie Records	

C. The 2026-27 and 2027-28 Alignment received the following endorsements & approvals:

- a. Sport Committee Approval: 12/15/25
- b. Survey of all Member Schools: 12/23/25
- c. RIIAAA Executive Board Endorsement: 01/16/26
- d. Principal's Committee on Athletics Approval: 01/27/26

Section 6: Season Schedule:**A. Important Dates:**

School Year	2026-27	2027-28
Season	Fall of 2026	Fall of 2027
Sport	Field Hockey	Field Hockey
Start Date	Monday, August 17, 2026	Monday, August 16, 2027
Scrimmages Can Begin	Saturday, August 22, 2026	Saturday, August 21, 2026
Days in the Preseason	10	10
Games Can Begin	Thursday, August 27, 2026	Thursday, August 26, 2027
Week #1 Begins On	Monday, August 31, 2026	Monday, August 30, 2027
Week #2 Begins On	Monday, September 7, 2026	Monday, September 6, 2027
Week #3 Begins On	Monday, September 14, 2026	Monday, September 13, 2027
Week #4 Begins On	Monday, September 21, 2026	Monday, September 20, 2027
Week #5 Begins On	Monday, September 28, 2026	Monday, September 27, 2027
Week #6 Begins On	Monday, October 5, 2026	Monday, October 4, 2027
Week #7 Begins On	Monday, October 12, 2026	Monday, October 11, 2027
Last Day of the Regular Season	Tuesday, October 20, 2026	Tuesday, October 19, 2027
Playoff Rounds/Events	3	3
RIIL Championships Concluded By	Sunday, November 1, 2026	Sunday, October 31, 2027

Playoff Round	Fall 2026 Playoff Round Dates (Tentative)
Quarterfinals	Friday, October 23, 2026 or Saturday, October 24 th
Semifinals	Tuesday, October 27 th or Wednesday, October 28 th
Championships	Saturday, October 31 st or Sunday, November 1 st at Roger Williams University

D. Divisions:

State Championship Division (Div. 1)	Division 2	Division 3
5 Teams	6 Teams	5 Teams
East Greenwich	Lincoln HS	Chariho/Prout Co-op
LaSalle	Cumberland	Toll Gate
Moses Brown	South Kingstown	Pilgrim
Barrington	Lincoln School	Smithfield
North Kingstown	Classical	Tiverton/BVA Co-op
	Cranston Co-op	

E. Game Cap: 18 Regular Season Games prior to the start of the playoffs

- a. Game Cap includes all League and Non-League varsity competitions
- b. Assigned League Games:
 - i. Div. 1 teams play all other teams in their division twice for 8 assigned league games
 - ii. Div. 2 teams play all other teams in their division twice for 10 assigned league games
 - iii. Div. 3 teams play all other teams in their division twice for 10 assigned league games

F. Score Reporting for all Regular Season and Postseason League Games: In accordance with Article 6, Section 14, all contest scores are to be reported on-line on the RIIL Website. Coaches obtain access to the system through their Athletic Director.

G. It shall be the responsibility of school officials/administrators/supervisors to provide a safe and secure environment for the teams and officials by ensuring the playing field and sidelines are continuously cleared of **everyone** except certified & appointed coaches, team managers/scorers, student-athletes, medical personnel, and school designated personnel. Media are allowed with prior permission of the host school.

H. Home teams shall set a date/time for all contests.

- a. If there is a conflict in the date/time of the contest with the visiting team(s) and mutual agreement cannot be reached, the visiting school Principal/Athletic Director shall submit **a written request** to the RIIL to review the circumstances of the disagreement and render a decision. **This must be done prior to the submission of the Home Confirmation Schedule.**
- b. Once the Home Confirmation Schedule is submitted, changes will not be allowed unless there are extenuating circumstances.

- F. Postponement of Regular Season Varsity Games after the confirmation deadline:
- a. Where unusual circumstances prevail or where weather conditions are unfavorable, a game may be postponed by mutual consent of the Principals and/or Athletic Directors
 - b. Postponed games shall be rescheduled to the next day when the teams, facility, and officials are available.
 - i. Includes weekends and/or school vacations.
 - ii. League games must take precedent over non-league games or lesser events
 - iii. Rescheduled games must be within all other guidelines contained in this handbook and the RIIL Rules & Regulations.
 - c. Additional Officials Fees for Games Changed within Two Weeks of original date/time:
Article 6, Section 5
- G. Practice Limitations:
- a. Preseason Practice Limitations are also located in Heat Acclimatization: Article 7, Section 3
 - b. Scrimmages allowed after 5 days of practice
 - c. Games allowed after 10 days of practice

Section 7: Postseason Qualification & Format:

A. League Games Required to be eligible for the Postseason:

- a. Division 1: 14 league games**
- b. Division 2: 14 league games**
- c. Division 3: 12 league games**

B. Postseason Qualification:

- a. Championship Tournaments:
 - i. All eligible teams qualify for their respective Division Championship Tournament
 - ii. Teams will be seeded according to RPI in all League games
 - iii. Single Elimination, Straight Bracketing (no reseeding)

C. Postseason Tiebreaker

- a. Playoff Seeding will be determined by a team's RPI as calculated on the RIIL website.
- b. RPI Tiebreaker:
 - 1) Head-to-Head result(s) in League Games between the tied teams
 - 2) Winning Percentage in all League Games vs teams in your division
 - 3) Total Wins in all League Games vs teams in a higher division
 - 4) Highest-rated win in Division (according to the final RPI standings)
 - 5) Next-highest-rated win (exhaust all possibilities)
 - 6) Coin Toss

Section 8: RIIL Rules & Regulations Specific to Field Hockey – Article 18

- A. **Rosters** shall be completed via the RIIL website and made available to the public no later than 10 days after the start of practice. Rosters must be updated when students are added/removed from the team. Rosters must include: full name, grade, and jersey number.
- B. **Uniforms:**
 - c. Schools shall consult the NFHS Rulebook for specific regulations pertaining to uniforms
 - d. In field hockey, the home team shall wear “dark” uniforms, while the away team shall wear “white” uniforms.
- C. **RI Interscholastic Injury Fund:**
 - a. The Injury Fund is a non-profit organization separate from the RIIL.
 - i. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.injuryfund.org/>
 - b. The purpose of the nonprofit Injury Fund is to establish, raise, maintain and distribute funds to the athletic departments of high schools participating in the Rhode Island Interscholastic League. Distributions will be made to assist athletes, coaches or officials injured in sanctioned interscholastic competitions and practices with their medical expenses that exceed the amount paid by the injured party’s primary, required medical insurance. Any and all financial assistance rendered by the RI Injury Fund to RIIL Member Schools shall be given purely on a voluntary basis and in such amounts and in such manner as the Board of Directors in its sole discretion shall determine.
 - c. Non-League competitions scheduled to spread awareness of and benefit the Injury Fund are allowed by RIIL Rules in addition to any stated game caps contained herein.
 - d. Students, Coaches, and Officials whose teams participate in an Injury Fund event in a given sport are covered by the Injury Fund
 - e. **Injury Fund Format:** Teams will schedule one regulation Field Hockey game in the pre-season to provide schools the opportunity to participate. Double or triple headers at a single location are preferred.
- D. **Game Ball:** The official game ball shall be Penn Monto through the 2027-28 school year.
- E. In the event a “playoff game” must be suspended because of conditions which make it impossible to continue to play, the game will be rescheduled and restarted from the exact point of the suspension of play.
- F. **Playoff Warmup:** Teams must be allowed no less than 20 minutes to warm up on the field prior to the start of any playoff game unless specific warmup procedures are contained elsewhere in this handbook.
- G. **Sub-Varsity**
 - a. Sub-Varsity shall be scheduled at the discretion of each Athletic Director/Head Coach.
 - b. Sub-varsity games will not be allowed after the final day of the varsity regular season.

- H. **Score Differential Rule:** During regularly scheduled RIIL games and playoff games, a team ahead by five (5) or more goals, the official game clock will not stop after a goal is scored.
- I. During all Games, it shall be the responsibility of the home team to:
- e. Supply the time clock, scorer and table at mid-line.
 - f. Supply score book and score sheet.
 - g. Mark the field with restraining lines and cones.
 - h. Report results to the Director of Field Hockey.
 - i. Mouth-pieces must be worn by all players at all games and practices..
- J. Field Hockey Goalie Equipment Progression:
- j. Days 1 & 2: Goalie helmet may be worn on the first two days.
 - k. Day 3 and beyond: Full protective (field hockey goalie) gear is permitted
- K. **Protective Gear:**
- a. Facemasks:
 - i. A face mask must be worn by those field players defending the goal on a penalty corner and may be worn throughout the game.
 - ii. The face mask shall be smooth, rounded, preferably transparent or single colored and fit flush with the face. It shall not be attached to any hard, unyielding headgear (even if padded). A wire-caged face mask that is smooth and rounded may be worn for defending penalty corners.
 - iii. Players shall remove the wire-caged masks at the completion of the penalty corner. If no suitable opportunity to remove the mask arises, they may continue to wear it within the 25-yard area.
 - iv. Players wearing safety equipment for the purpose of defending a penalty corner shall put on the equipment and prepare to defend a corner in a timely fashion without delaying the game. It is the responsibility of the head coach to assure that their team sets up for penalty corners without delay.
 - b. All field players are encouraged to wear goggles at their discretion.
- L. **Penalty Corners** allowed 20 seconds
- a. Regarding penalty corner administration in Rhode Island RIIL contests, a team shall take no more than 20secs between the time the penalty corner was called and insertion.
 - i. If a team is attempting to play and moving towards setting up the penalty corner, officials will not card
 - ii. If 15 secs have already passed and a team is still in a huddle, the officials are instructed to give verbal cues and encourage players to "please be ready to play".
 - iii. IF the team is STILL huddling after the 20secs has elapsed with no effort to insert, the penalty card progression will be as follows:

1. 1st infraction = green card administered for "delay of game" to head coach (no player leaves the field), the penalty corner will still be administered.
2. 2nd infraction = yellow-5 (remove 1 field player for 5mins) "delay of game" to head coach, the penalty corner will still be administered.
3. 3rd infraction = Yellow-10 (remove 1 field player for 10mins), "delay of game" to head coach, the penalty corner will still be administered.
4. 4th infraction = Red (ejection of Coach and team plays short for remainder of the game), "delay of game" to head coach, the penalty corner will still be administered.

M. Overtime Procedures:

a. Regular Season

- iv. During the regular season, overtime will become a 10 minute 7 on 7 sudden victory OT. If teams are still tied after 10 minutes, it is a tie. The visiting team will call the flip to start the overtime and the winner of the coin toss will choose whether or not to take possession of the ball.

b. Playoff Overtime Format:

- v. During the play-offs, the first overtime will be a 7 on 7 sudden victory OT (10 minutes). If teams are still tied after the first overtime, a second 7 on 7 sudden victory OT (10 minutes) will be played. The visiting team will call the flip to start the first overtime and the winner of the coin toss will choose whether to take possession of the ball or not. Teams will then alternate ball for the second overtime.
- vi. If teams are still tied after the second overtime, a series of five shots on goal shall be taken by individual players in a one on one situation (attacker vs. goalkeeper). To begin this procedure, the attacker stands on the 25-yard line and the goalkeeper stands on the goal line. Play continues for 10 seconds with follow-up shots permitted.
 1. A foul or violation by the attacker ends the procedure.
 2. For an unintentional foul by the goalkeeper, the one on one shall be retaken.
 3. For an intentional foul by the goalkeeper, a penalty stroke shall be awarded.
 4. Any player on the approved roster may take the penalty stroke
 5. The procedure also ends when:
 - a. The 10 seconds has elapsed.
 - b. A goal is scored.
 - c. The ball goes out of play over the end line, sideline.
 6. Each coach will present a list of five players to the official and the shots will be taken in the order they are listed. The team attempting the first shot will be decided by a coin toss. On subsequent overtime shootouts, teams will alternate going first. If a player participates out of order, that one-on-one is

over and no goal is awarded. The next correct player is to play the team's next one-on-one.

7. The first five players listed for each team will attempt the shots on goal on an alternate basis and the team scoring the most goals is declared the winner.
8. If the game is still tied, a list of any five players from the roster will be submitted to attempt "sudden victory" shots on an alternating basis. This procedure will continue until the tie is broken.

Section 9: Officials

- A. RIIIL assigned official's authority extends to pre- and post- game oversight. Fighting and unsportsmanlike penalties will be within the authority of the officials at all times at the contest site.
- B. Police protection, when necessary, must be provided by the home school. The home school is responsible for all crowd control measures. There is an urgent need for increasing vigilance in this matter. Schools must make every effort to ensure that players, officials, and spectators are protected. Duties of the police will be determined and outlined by the home school.
- C. With the assistance of the home team supervision, it shall be the responsibility of the officials to see that benches are cleared of everyone except certified & appointed coaches, team managers, scorers, players, medical personnel, and school designated personnel.
- D. The home team should provide an adult game supervisor at all home events. In particular, an adult game supervisor must be present at ice hockey, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, baseball, softball, football, soccer, volleyball and wrestling contests. The supervisor shall not be a student nor a coach involved with the game. The supervisor shall identify himself or herself to the game officials thirty (30) minutes prior to the start of the game. The supervisor shall be responsible for game administration and crowd control. They should notify police, and rink representatives to seek appropriate assistance when applicable. In the event of a problem, the Principal/Athletic Director must notify the RIIIL office the next day and submit a written report detailing the incident(s).