



Massachusetts Interscholastic
Athletic Association
33 Forge Parkway
Franklin, MA 02038
Phone: 508-541-7997

June 2022

COOPERATIVE TEAMS

Background

1. In an effort to increase participation with interscholastic athletics, various positive factors motivated schools to create ways of saving existing programs and of establishing new ones. The initial purpose of cooperative teams was to combine the participation of multiple schools to build and develop athletic opportunities for students.
2. There may be need, to increase participation within schools, for cooperative agreements to be a long term commitment.

Deadlines, Policies and Considerations

The MIAA Board of Directors has delegated the approval or disapproval of cooperative team applications to the host school District Athletic Committee (DAC).

The Board intends that these policies:

- ◆ Respect the goals of the petitioning school districts.
- ◆ Protect competing schools from competitive disadvantage.
- ◆ Guarantee increased participation.
- ◆ Ensure that no displacement of athletes occurs.
- ◆ Rest on a firm financial commitment by the schools involved to support a viable team.

Deadlines

Any application to form a cooperative team should be in complete form and submitted to the District Athletic Chair at least **three months** in advance of the initial practice date for that sport. **If submitted with less than three months in advance, it is expected that the host school explain with greater detail the reason for not meeting the 3 month deadline.**

Cooperative teams cannot be applied for after the first possible day of competition for each season.



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Policies

1. An application must demonstrate that the cumulative student participation in the combining schools will be greater under the cooperative team plan than it was during each of the previous two years. If either school has a sufficient number of students, then a request for a cooperative team will be denied.
2. No consideration will be given to cooperative team applications which result from the elimination of the sport due to financial cutbacks during the two years immediately prior to the request.
3. Cooperative team requests will not be approved unless necessary to sustain a previously existing team or to create a new team, based solely on numbers, and not at all on specialized player positions.
4. If a cooperative team already meets or exceeds the published Cooperative Team Maximum team numbers, a school cannot apply to add an individual player or players.
5. The host school configuration will continue to determine eligible grades for the cooperating school that included more than grades 9 through 12.
6. In relation to Maximum Team Numbers: Leagues and DAC's can take age/grade considerations into account during the application process. Age and safety considerations, especially sports that require a medical professional in attendance at contests, can also be taken into consideration.
7. Cooperative teams would only be approved if such was required to support a single varsity program. If sub-varsity opportunities presented themselves subsequently, then that would not interfere with the approval status of that varsity cooperative team.
8. A "sub-varsity level only" cooperative team application may be submitted. The DAC can only approve this request for one year at a time. Student-athletes participating on an approved sub-varsity cooperative team cannot be grandfathered once the team is disbanded. Student-athletes on an approved sub-varsity cooperative team can only be moved up to the varsity team for the school they attend.
9. A school may not send students to two different cooperative programs in a single sport.
10. One school will be the host for all levels which are to be sponsored in that



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sport. (This does not preclude one host for a girls' sport and a different host for the boys' sport.)

11. A cooperative team cannot result in the displacing of students from the host school; i.e. host school students may not be cut from participation in that sport (at any level).
12. All liability associated with the formation and conduct of approved cooperative team rests with the host school which exempts the MIAA and its agents from all liability and responsibility.
13. Cooperative team applications must be limited to MIAA member schools.
14. Cooperative team applications will be granted for only one or two years.
15. With the approval of the DAC, students of a disbanded cooperative team will have an opportunity to be grandfathered for their remaining years of high school participation.

Grandfathering of Cooperative Team Student-Athletes

When a cooperative team is dissolved, or not renewed, the host school District Athletic Committee may consider a request to allow continued participation of guest school students provided they participated through the conclusion of the final season of the approved cooperative team. The request to the District Athletic Committee must be initiated by the host school principal/athletic director, but only for those guest school students who participated throughout the entire final season of the cooperative program. In the request, these students should be listed by name and grade. The District Athletic Committee may grandfather these students for one or more years up, to their original graduation date. The request must be supported by the guest school principal/athletic director. This request should be submitted six (6) months prior to the start of that sport's season. (Clarified - 11/10/10)

Academic Eligibility

All cooperative team athletes must meet the eligibility standards of their own school as well as the host school.



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Considerations when forming a Cooperative Team

The principal of the **host school** should assure that during preliminary local discussions adequate attention was given to the following:

1. An appropriate name for the cooperative team
2. Suitable practice arrangements
3. Safe and adequate transportation arrangements
4. The setting and monitoring of academic standards for eligibility
5. Source and control of finances
6. Guidelines for the termination of a given program
7. Coordination of class/school schedules
8. Ticket prices and sales, disbursement of gate receipts
9. Student spectator and fan control and supervision
10. Cooperative team identity: mascot, colors, etc.
11. Governance for the resolution of disputes

Application Process

The principal of the **host school** must:

1. Complete the online MIAA form: Cooperative Team Application in the Members Only section of the MIAA website.
2. The District Athletic Committee(s) will not act on any request that is not supported by the majority of the league schools or the majority of the opponents (if competition in that sport does not occur within a league structure).

Decisions

The decision on each request will be rendered by the host school's District Athletic Committee. Approved cooperative teams will be listed on the MIAA home page and in Members Only.