

**2.141** The Executive Director shall have the authority to approve the formation of cooperative athletic teams or activity programs by two or more member schools in the following activities: girls softball, boys baseball, boys & girls cross-country, girls basketball, boys basketball, boys wrestling, girls volleyball, boys & girls bowling, speech, cheerleading, scholastic bowl, golf, and boys & girls track and field under the following conditions:

- The combined enrollments of all schools involved in the cooperative team shall be utilized to determine the classification for the cooperative team.
- The cooperative sponsorship agreement is established for a minimum period of two consecutive school years and shall designate the sponsoring school. An additional school may be added to an existing co-op agreement after one year provided:
  - they complete a new application for a two-year period,
  - the conference (if applicable) approves of the new school being added, and
  - the approval of the Executive Director has been given.
- The governing boards of all schools participating in the cooperative team agreement jointly make the application to the IESA for approval of the cooperative team agreement. In addition to the governing boards approving the formation of the cooperative team, written approval from the conference(s) of which the cooperating schools are members, and/or in which the cooperative team will participate, or, in the event that the cooperative team will not be affiliated in a conference, written approval from a minimum of five schools included in the cooperative team's schedule of competition must be secured. When a school renews the co-op application, conference or opponent approval is not required if no changes have been made to the original agreement.
- The Executive Director has the authority to dissolve a co-op after one year provided a letter requesting to do so is signed by the President of the Boards of Education involved in the co-op and the principals of the schools involved in the co-op. All schools must agree to dissolve the co-op after one year for this to occur.

**2.142 Application Procedures**

A statement signed by the administrators of all cooperating schools designating the name under which the cooperative team will compete.

A statement expressing the reasons for the formation of a cooperative team.

The signatures of the administrator and Board of Education presidents of each of the schools involved in the cooperative.

One application form must be completed and filed with the IESA office for each cooperative team a school wishes to establish. Application forms are available from the IESA office or the IESA website.

The application deadline for cooperative teams during a given school year in a given sport shall be determined by the Board of Directors and will be published in the official calendar.

Any school participating in a cooperative team agreement may not form an individual team representing its own school in that activity.

Any member school participating in a cooperative team agreement is required to pay the IESA activity entry fee for that activity by the initial entry deadline for that activity and prior to participation in the cooperative agreement.

Duplicate team awards may be ordered by the IESA office at the request of a non-sponsoring cooperative team. The cost of the extra awards shall be the responsibility of the requesting school.

Prior cooperative agreements may be renewed for a minimum of two years by signature of an administrator from each school after approval of the Boards of Education of the cooperating schools. If there are changes in the interschool agreement, a new cooperative application must be filed. Conference approval or opponent's approval is not required when a school renews the cooperative agreement and no changes have been made to the original agreement.

For school districts with more than six IESA member schools that form one district team in all activities, a district co-op team may be entered in the IESA state series when all of the following requirements are met:

- All schools involved in the co-op must be a member of the Illinois Elementary School Association;
- The co-op school team is the only team representing the schools involved in the co-op;
- All students participating for the co-op team must meet all eligibility guidelines;
- An application is filed with the Association listing all participating schools;
- Only one activity fee is required

### **Illustrations for Section 2.140**

***The following are provided for illustrative purposes only and are neither binding nor to be construed as having the effect of the By-laws or Constitution of this organization. In the event of a conflict, whether actual or believed, between an illustration contained in this section and any by-law or constitutional provision then in effect, the by-law or constitutional provision, as interpreted by the Board of Directors pursuant to Section 1.420 of the Constitution of this organization, shall control.***

**Q.** If a school adds a boys sport team by formation of a cooperative team, must it also add a girls sport team to its program?

**A.** Simply adding a team for one sex of students by forming a cooperative does not require corresponding action to add a team for the other sex of students. However, schools are bound by the provisions of the Illinois Sex Equity Rules, published by the Illinois State Board of Education. Questions in respect to these rules and the implications of cooperative teams in light of them should be referred to the Illinois State Board of Education.

**Q.** May a cooperative team be formed with out-of-state schools?

**A.** No.

**Q.** May cooperative teams be formed with non-IESA member schools from Illinois?

**A.** No. All schools involved in the cooperative agreement must be members. Membership is open to all schools in Illinois with grades five through eight.

**Q.** May a school form more than one cooperative team in the same sport?

**A.** No.

**Q.** May a school form a cooperative team with one school in basketball, a different cooperative team with another school in cross-country, and even a third cooperative team with yet another school in volleyball?

**A.** Yes. The provisions of this rule permit formation of different cooperative teams with different schools on a sport-by-sport basis. However, each cooperative team formed must undergo the complete process of approval by the Boards of Education and the IESA office.

**Q.** May schools that form a co-op make cuts and/or limit participation opportunities?

**A.** While the goal of forming a co-op is to increase opportunities for students, it may become necessary to make a cut if the co-op team has too many members for the given activity. These decisions are up to the local districts to work out the details of who will be allowed to try-out and participate on the co-op team.

**Q.** May a school drop one sport such as fall baseball, in order to enter a cooperative team arrangement in another sport, such as cross-country?

**A.** Yes. The decision as to which sports to offer is exclusively the prerogative of each local Board of Education.

**Q.** Is there a deadline for filing application with the IESA office for approval of cooperative teams for each activity for each school year?

**A.** Yes, the deadlines are published in the official IESA calendar.

**Q.** May a cooperative team agreement be formed during a sport season, in order to accommodate participating in the state tournament series that school year?

**A.** No. All cooperative teams for each school year must have applied to the IESA for approval no later than the cooperative agreement deadline for that activity. Applications received after that particular date will be denied for that school year.

**Q.** If two member schools, whose enrollments for a given year are 70 and 80 respectively, form a cooperative team, what enrollment will be used to determine the classification of the cooperative team?

**A.** Classification of the cooperative team will be based on the combined enrollment of the cooperating schools. In this case, 70 plus 80 equals a total of 150. This figure of 150 will determine classification for the cooperative team only. The individual schools will still be classified on the basis of their individual enrollments of 70 and 80 respectively for other sports.

**Q.** If two schools form a cooperative team for any school year, may they redraft their cooperative agreement and add a third school to the cooperative at the end of one year?

**A.** Yes, provided they file a new two-year agreement, and with approval of the conference (if applicable) and the Executive Director.

**Q.** If two schools form a cooperative agreement, and then after the season for that sport begins, interest wanes and there are not sufficient students participating to sustain the team or if the co-op simply is not working out between the schools, what is the status of the agreement if the administration and Board of Educations by mutual consent terminate the team's existence?

**A.** Each cooperative agreement must be written for a minimum of two years. It is possible that a co-op can dissolve after one year PROVIDED the **administrators and Board of Education Presidents** of all the schools in the co-op sign a letter requesting that the co-op dissolve listing the reasons why the cooperative arrangement is not working. The reasons for dissolution of the cooperative team are extenuating circumstances accepted by the IESA Board of Directors.

### **Illustrations for Section 2.140 (continued)**

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

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

**Q.** May two schools form a cooperative team for any two school years, then subsequently consolidate with each other effective for the second year of the cooperative?

**A.** Yes. Consolidation of schools joined in a cooperative team agreement will simply supersede the cooperative agreement.

**Q.** Will the IESA approve a cooperative team application in the event all questions pertaining to contracts with other schools and/or officials are not mutually resolved?

**A.** It is not likely, though a judgment will be made in each individual case.

**Q.** If schools A and B form a cooperative team and then school B consolidates with or annexes to school C, is the cooperative team still in effect? In other words, is school C obligated to continue the cooperative which B had entered with A?

**A.** Consolidation and/or annexation actions may negate existing cooperative team agreements. Situations like this should be discussed when the possibility of consolidation or annexation exists.

**Q.** Which school will receive mail for the cooperative activity from the IESA office?

**A.** Only the school sponsoring the activity.

**Q.** Can cooperating schools renew their agreements if they have changes?

**A.** No. They must submit a new application form and interschool agreement for approval.

**Q.** Does the initial cooperative application need approval of my conference?

**A.** Yes, provided you are a member of a conference. If you are not a member of a conference, then you need approval from five of your opponents. Speech, cheer, and bowling co-ops do not need conference approval. Co-op renewals do not require conference approval if no changes have been made to the original agreement.

**Q.** If two schools have established a cooperative team and during the season for that sport, one of the two cooperating schools experiences a teacher strike may the cooperative team continue to participate during the strike or is it restricted under the terms of the IESA strike By-Laws?

**A.** The cooperative team will be affected by the strike By-Laws. Therefore, if either cooperating school experiences a strike, the students from the striking school will be restricted from competition for the duration of the strike. Students from the non-striking school may continue to participate. If the non-striking school is unable, due to insufficient numbers, etc., to fulfill the terms of contracted obligations, the cooperative team will be held in breach of contract.