

2025-2026 Middle School Sports Season Calendar

FALL	First Practice	First Scrim./Jamb.	Pre-Season	First Contest	Last Contest
Football	7/31	8/27		9/10	11/6
Volleyball	7/31	8/18	8/22	9/1	10/21
Competitive Cheer	7/31	8/18		9/8	11/8
WINTER					
Basketball	11/3	11/10	11/21	12/1	2/13
Wrestling	11/3	11/10	11/21	12/1	1/30
SPRING					
Soccer	2/2	2/9	2/20	3/2	5/1
Baseball	2/2	2/9	2/27	3/9	5/2
Softball	2/2	2/9	2/27	3/9	5/2
Golf	2/2	2/9	2/27	3/9	5/9
Track & Field	2/2	2/9	2/20	3/2	4/25

Dead Week June 28 - July 4, 2026

OPEN SEASON/CLOSED SEASON PRACTICE SCHEDULE 2025-26

Fall Sports - March 1-31, 2026 AND May 1 - 31, 2026

Winter Sports - September 1-30, 2025 AND April 1-30, 2026

Spring Sports - October 1-31, 2025 AND January 1-28, 2026.

NOTE: All sports have from June 1 through their July Closed season for practice. (Except for the July Dead Week) FALL SPORTS WILL ENTER A CLOSED SEASON JULY 27-30. WINTER AND SPRING SPORTS WILL BE CLOSED BEGINNING July 31, 2025

Ten days of competition (except 7 on 7) are permitted June 1 - July 26, 2025. Participation at team camps and other outside organizations is included in these 10 days. No school will be permitted to attend or participate in team camps between July 28, 2025 and In-Season.

NOTE:

- Competitive Cheer can hold try-outs in May.

Penalties for Violating the Open and/or Closed Season Schedule

Any school allowing an illegal practice will be subject to the following penalties: may include the placing of the sport on probation.

1 day in violation / 1st occurrence per sport - \$500 fine and team loses one day of practice and limited to one pre-season scrimmage and the head coach (and any assistant coach involved) will be suspended from the first two contests)

2 days in violation / 2nd occurrence per sport -\$500 fine (**per day**) and team loses two days of practice, limited to one scrimmage, cannot host any events and cannot be the home team during the playoffs and the head coach (and any assistant coach involved) will be suspended from the first two contests)

3 days in violation / 3rd occurrence per sport- \$500 fine (**per day**) and team loses three days of practice, limited to one scrimmage, cannot host any events and cannot participate in the postseason and the head coach (and any assistant coach involved) will be suspended from the first two contests)

OR

The Offending school may choose: \$500 (**per day**) and the team loses three days of practice, limited to one scrimmage, cannot host any events and the head coach (and any coach involved) is suspended from coaching in a minimum of the first 50% of the teams regular season contests and is not allowed to coach in the playoffs.

MIDDLE SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

These regulations apply to all 7th, 8th and 9th grade students participating in Junior High or Middle School programs as well as students participating on exclusively 7th and 8th grade teams under the High School Program. All 9th grade students participating in a high school program will not be restricted by these regulations or the regulations restricting junior high school teams in the National Federation rules books.

A. General philosophy and aims to be considered in the interscholastic activities program for seventh, eighth and ninth grade students:

1. Since there is a great range in individual differences among boys and girls of this age (age; body build; interest; ability; experience; health, and the stages of physiological, emotional and social maturity), the program planned should be based on the principle of "The greatest good to the greatest number of participants involved."
2. The interscholastic athletic program for boys and girls in the 7th, 8th and 9th grades should supplement, rather than serve as a substitute for, an adequate program of required physical education, intramural and physical recreation for all students.
3. The program must be suited to the needs of boys and girls of this age. It must contribute to desirable growth and development of these participants physically, socially and otherwise. The program must be justified on a basis of contribution to the desirable development of the participants. The welfare of the youth concerned is of greatest importance. All other needs and problems should be secondary.
4. This interschool competitive program should be operated from as broad a base as possible to offer experience to many boys and girls.
5. The program should place considerable emphasis on:

Companionship among the participants on a squad and among squads of different schools.

Sportsmanship

Physical skills, techniques and training

Character development
6. The South Carolina High School League Executive Committee favors an interscholastic program but feels this program should be carefully controlled, regulated and limited

B. Rules and Regulations:

1. Students below the seventh grade may not participate in interscholastic athletics to include practices. Students in grades 7 and 8 will not be permitted to participate on varsity interscholastic teams in football, wrestling, lacrosse and soccer.
2. Participation on junior varsity or "B" teams will be left to the local school authorities. These regulations do not forbid an overlapping of the two "graded" groups on such teams. Schools are reminded that a student may not participate on more than one team and participate in more than one football game or two basketball games per week.

3. It is recommended that athletic contests be played with a start time no later than 4:00 pm.
4. All sports are allowed one scrimmage, one jamboree and two tournaments. A team may not play more than a half of a regulation contest in a jamboree. Schools may charge admission for one scrimmage
5. All coaches must be CPR & AED certified. All coaches must verify with their principal completion of the online courses "Concussion in Sports", "Heat Illness Prevention", "Protecting Students from Abuse" and "Sudden Cardiac Arrest" found at www.nfhslearn.com.
6. All schools must use a Wet Bulb Globe Temperature Monitoring (WBGT) to determine safe conditions for practice or competitions during periods of high heat and humidity.
7. Practice in all sports may not exceed two hours per day.
8. The eligibility requirements will be substantially the same as for high schools with the following variations:
AGE - A student who becomes 15 years of age prior to July 1 of the upcoming school year, will not be able to compete on an 8th grade and under team in any athletic activities. For a 9th grade and under team, substitute 16 years of age for 15. A student who becomes too old for a 7th and 8th grade team may be considered as enrolled in the 9th grade for eligibility purposes.

ADVANCED PARTICIPATION - A junior high or middle school student who participates for their team and then is promoted to a high school varsity, junior varsity, or other interschool squad, may not return to junior high or middle school competition during the current year in the same sport if he/she has participated in a game played by the advanced squad.

PLAY-OFFS - No play-off beyond region level is permitted between seventh, eighth and ninth grade teams.

TRAVEL - Junior high and middle schools will not permit their athletic teams to travel more than 150 miles round trip for any contest.

OFFICIALS - Certified athletic officials should be provided in all cases possible. When this is not possible, competent adults should be obtained whom the schools concerned mutually agreed upon in advance. High school students shall not be used as game officials.

Sportsmanship Certificate

Sportsmanship is a key factor in the overall development of student-athletes during their education experience. It is through learning sportsmanship that athletes are able to deal with adversity in a positive way. The South Carolina High School League challenges your school to educate and instill the values of sportsmanship in your student-athletes. Education is the key to success and sportsmanship is not an exception. Student-athletes need to be taught the expectations that are set forth for handling adversity and displaying good sportsmanship.

Our expectation is that student-athletes will play the game with integrity, respect the rules, and show kindness and respect toward opponents, teammates, coaches, and officials. Good sportsmanship goes beyond winning or losing; it's about how athletes handle themselves in every situation.

To receive this certificate student-athletes must meet the following criteria:

- Represents the school team and school with pride and respect at all times.
- Respect for the game and others.
- Shows integrity.
- Encourages others to behave respectfully and responsibly.
- Attended the leadership conference.
- Did not receive any unsportsmanlike penalties during a contest.
- No ejections.

D. Game Rules and Game Conditions:

FOOTBALL

1.

Practice may begin	July 31, 2025 (helmets only)
First practice in pads	August 11, 2025 (helmets & shoulder pads)
Practice in full gear	August 18, 2025
First scrimmage	August 27, 2025
First contest	September 10, 2025
Last contest	November 6, 2025

Helmets Only Practices (First three days in May and first two days in Fall, Pads may not be worn on the shoulders; in girdles and/or below the waist. (No girdles, hip, thigh, knee or tailbone protection),

- No hand shields, arm shields, and/or stand up dummies of any kind may be used during the first three (3) days of practice in May or two (2) days of fall (preseason) practice.

Immersion tubs or other cooling devices must be available for use during periods of high heat and humidity to aid in the prevention of heat related illnesses

2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season game.
3. No more than one practice may be held on any one day. Practice may be held on 6 days in one week during the preseason. After the first legal playing date, schools will be restricted to 5 practice days per week. A school must hold at least fifteen organized practice sessions before playing its first game.
4. Middle school programs may practice in full gear and use all field equipment beginning August 18. **(Note: all potential football players must have the progression prior to being in full gear)**
5. No school team, or individual player, may participate in more than eight games, which shall be scheduled with no more than one game per week. In extreme cases, games may be rescheduled. A minimum of three days must elapse between games.
6. 7th and 8th grade teams shall play eight-minute quarters only.
7. Free substitution is encouraged.
8. No game may end in a tie. The Ten Yard Line Overtime Procedure as printed in the National Federation Football Rules Book will be used.
9. Other than the above, National Federation Rules shall apply.

Participation on an outside football team during the school football season is prohibited. Violation of this policy renders a student ineligible to return to his/her team.

10. Middle school students may NOT take part in varsity practices, if players are wearing any equipment other than helmets. If players are equipped with more than helmets, middle school athletes must hold their practices apart from the varsity team. *(They could be on the same field, but away from the varsity practices.)* Middle school students may not be equipped in pads or have contact drills during spring practice. Middle School teams may not participate in passing leagues.
11. Middle school teams may not participate in 7 on 7 passing leagues or 11 on 11 competitions.

Please refer to the high school rules and regulations pages 47-48 for additional information

VOLLEYBALL

1.	Practice may begin	July 31, 2025
	First scrimmage	August 18, 2025
	Pre-season contest	August 22, 2025
	First contest	September 1, 2025
	Last contest	October 21, 2025
	Regional Invitationals	October 25, 2025

2. The League will sponsor multiple regional invitationals at the conclusion of the regular

season. Schools who are interested in participating will submit an application to the League. Teams will be notified of their selection by October 20, 2025.

3. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season match.
4. Schools are limited to 14 play dates including invitational tournaments.
5. Tri-Matches can be modified to play best two of three sets and if the third set is needed to determine the winner, it can be played to 15 points.

COMPETITIVE CHEER

1.

Practice may begin	July 31, 2025
First contest	September 8, 2025
Last contest	November 8, 2025
2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the competition
3. Schools are limited to 6 competitions.
4. The National Federation Spirit Rule Book and the South Carolina High School League Competitive Cheer Manual will be used for all South Carolina High School League competitions. Please visit www.schsl.org to review the cheer manual.
5. Members of the competitive team must have been a member of a support cheerleading squad during the year.

BASKETBALL

1.

First Practice	November 3, 2025
First Scrimmage	November 10, 2025
Pre-Season Contest	November 21, 2025
First contest	December 1, 2025
Last contest	February 13, 2026
2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season game.
3. At least 15 organized practice sessions must be conducted before your first preseason tournament or regular season contest is played. At least 5 practices must be held prior to the scrimmage.
4. No junior high team, middle school team, or individual may participate in more than 14 regular season basketball games and enter more than 2 tournaments, provided one of the tournaments is a region tournament at the conclusion of regular season play.
5. A team may not participate in games on more than two school days (Monday through Friday) in any week nor participate in more than three games in any seven-day period. A student has the same limitation on playing as does a team.

6. A student will be restricted to one game per day except they may play in two games in one day in an invitational tournament. There must be a minimum of one hour's rest between games.
7. The length of quarters shall be 6 minutes and play will be according to National Federation Rules.
8. Any team member who leaves the bench and approaches/engages in a fracas shall be disqualified from the game.
9. Cheerleaders must be in the bleachers except during full time-outs, end of quarters and half time. Mascots are considered cheerleaders. Megaphones for cheering purposes will be used only by cheerleaders. Jewelry will not be worn at any time.

WRESTLING

1.

Practice may begin	November 3, 2025
First scrimmage	November 10, 2025
Preseason Contest	November 21, 2025
First contest	December 1, 2025
Last contest	January 30, 2026
 2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season match.
 3. The following weight classes will be used: 80, 88, 96, 102, 108, 114, 120, 126, 135, 145, 158, 175, 205 & 285.
 4. Each team is limited to 12 wrestling dates including invitational tournaments.
 5. The League will sponsor multiple regional invitationals.
- Please refer to pages 52-53 for additional information

SOCCER

1.

Practice may begin	February 2, 2026
First scrimmage	February 9, 2026
Preseason Contest	February 20, 2026
First contest	March 2, 2026
Last contest	May 1, 2026
2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season match.
3. Schools are limited to 12 matches and two tournaments.

4. A student will be restricted to one game per day except they may play in two games in one day in an invitational tournament. There must be a minimum of one hour's rest between matches.

TRACK AND FIELD

1. Practice may begin February 2, 2026
First scrimmage February 9, 2026
Preseason Contest February 20, 2026
First contest March 2, 2026
Last contest April 25, 2026
2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season meet.
3. Schools are limited to 12 meets including invitationals.
4. The League will sponsor multiple regional invitationals in the following events:

High Jump	1600 m
Shot Put	4X100 m Relay
Discus	400 m
Long Jump	800 m
100 m Hurdles	200 m
100 m	4X400 m Relay

*NOTE: Hurdle Height will be 30 in. (Girls) and 33in.(Boys)

BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL

1. Practice may begin February 2, 2026
First scrimmage February 9, 2026
Preseason Contest February 27, 2026
First contest March 9, 2026
Last contest May 2, 2026
2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first regular season game.
3. Schools are limited to 12 baseball and 12 softball games and two tournaments.
4. Games may be scheduled for 5 innings.
5. Softball games are limited to 2 hours regardless of score.
Baseball Games:
7 inning games: No new inning starts after two hours from the first pitch. Any inning that runs over the two hour mark will have a drop dead time of 2 ½ hours from the first pitch. (Batter will finish the at-bat)
5 inning games: No new inning starts after one and half hours from the first pitch. Any

inning that runs over the one and half hour mark will have a drop dead time of 2 hours from the first pitch.(Batter will finish the at-bat)

6. The game will end any time after 5 innings, or after 4 ½ innings when a team is 10 or more runs behind and has completed its term at bat. **The game may also be terminated earlier by mutual consent if a greater than 10 run differential exists.**

BOYS GOLF

1.

Practice may begin	February 2, 2026
First scrimmage	February 9, 2026
Preseason	February 27, 2026
First contest	March 9, 2026
Last contest	May 9, 2026
2. Eligibility forms are due at least 7 days before the first match.
3. Schools are limited to 10 play dates.