

**A. BACKGROUND**

1. Various positive factors have motivated schools to create ways of saving existing programs and of establishing new ones, in an effort to increase overall participation in interscholastic sports.
2. Philosophically, the RIIL has traditionally attempted to make reasonable rules for the common good of all student-athletes involved in interscholastic sports. Its rules at times must limit the participation of individual athletes for the sake of the common good. Inasmuch as cooperative team plans seem to shift the emphasis to the accommodation of individual athletes, the RIIL was concerned about how this shift in emphasis might affect the common good of its member schools and their athletes. The future of decision-making regarding the continuation of the cooperative teams are matters such as recruitment, fairness of competition, and displacement of athletes to name but a few. Also, athletic programs have traditionally been the "other half" of a given school's academic program. The RIIL is and has been concerned that an athletic program involving members from several schools who are not involved in a cooperative academic program might be construed as an overemphasis of athletics.
3. Philosophically, too, the RIIL continues to be concerned about its ability to monitor programs which would allow all student-athletes to have outlets for all of their interests. The RIIL has always operated within the category of school teams. Could the RIIL reasonably expect to operate successfully within the category of cooperative teams, or would this shift in category slowly erode the very nature of the RIIL and eventually evolve into town or regional teams, like those in Europe, which would operate outside of the control, values, and organizations of schools and, therefore, of the RIIL?
4. The number and composition of different possible groupings within the category of cooperative team was and has been of great concern. Over the past few years the RIIL has learned that the shift from the interest patterns of schools to those of individual athletes is not amenable to simple formulas with regard to enrollment, geography, and the like. As we have seen a good case can be made by athletes in small and large schools, as well as in urban and rural ones. We have also learned that there is precious little experience with cooperative teams on which to base judgment and decision-making, imaginative schemes of possible requests and this cautioned the RIIL to question its ability to cope with the demands which could be made on school and association personnel to govern what has become an ever-expanding and more and more complicated system of cooperative teams.
5. A shift from school teams to cooperative teams involved corresponding shifts in the way a school handles insurance, supervision, contracts, and legal disputes. We have seen that such a shift has raised money-matter problems with regard to equipment, transportation, game receipts, coaches' salaries, facilities, officials, dues ticket policies, scouting, meetings, and the like.
6. New and complex organizational problems with regard to responsibility and accountability have been faced in such matters as eligibility, communication, educational values and discipline. Self interest and a "win-at-all-cost" spirit may tempt schools and individual athletes to shop around for "the best deal." Moreover, financial constraints must not motivate schools or school systems to proffer plans that would effectively limit the participation of the student-athletes involved.
7. Recognizing its ongoing commitment and responsibility to both member schools and to their individual student-athletes, the RIIL has strived to accommodate the needs of both in these rapidly changing and difficult times. Despite concerns about altering the nature of the Association and the mission of school activities, the RIIL accepted these potential risks in order to serve a small number of students among the Association's participants. The overwhelming motivation of cooperative teams in this matter has been to provide additional students the opportunity to participate in interscholastic sports.

**APPENDIX**

(Cooperative Team Policy Information can be found in Article 3 of the RIII Rules & Regulations)

**RIII APPLICATION FOR COOPERATIVE TEAM SPONSORSHIP**

**(Application deadlines: Fall sports May 1; Winter sports — September 15; Spring sports — January 15)**

Application for: **Initial** \_\_\_\_\_ **Renewal** \_\_\_\_\_ Application Date \_\_\_\_\_

**1** Names of Schools Applying \_\_\_\_\_ **2. City/Town** \_\_\_\_\_ **3. Principals Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
 Host School (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Coop School (2) \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Sport (boy or girl)** \_\_\_\_\_ **Coop School (3)** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Effective Date of Coop** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Name of Coop** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. For Initial Application -Potential Participation (List number of students in each school who are expected to participate on this team.)**

| Grade | Host School (1) | Coop School (2) | Coop School (3) | Total |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| 10    |                 |                 |                 |       |
| 11    |                 |                 |                 |       |
| 12    |                 |                 |                 |       |

**8. Renewal Application- Current Program Status** (List the number of participants included in your program during the sport season preceding this application.) **Include eligibility lists for the previous year**

| Grade | Host School (1) | Coop School (2) | Coop School (3) | Total |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------|
| 9     |                 |                 |                 |       |
| 10    |                 |                 |                 |       |
| 11    |                 |                 |                 |       |
| 12    |                 |                 |                 |       |

**9. Agreement Signatures:** The following signatures certify approval of this cooperative team by a formal vote of the local education authority and the administrators of the schools involved, and it attests that all the information submitted is accurate, all schools have an agreement with respect to insurance, coaching personnel, facilities, equipment, student eligibility and complying with RIII By-laws.

**Dissolving an active RIII approved co-op lies solely between the schools involved.**

| <u>Schools</u> | Board President /Chair/ or Superintendent Signature | Principal Signature | Date  |
|----------------|---|---------------------|-------|
| Host (1) _____ | _____   | _____               | _____ |
| Coop (2) _____ | _____   | _____               | _____ |
| Coop (3) _____ | _____   | _____               | _____ |

**10. Addendums to this Application:** (The following items must accompany this application in order for it to be processed.)

- A. A written statement expressing the reason for formation of this coop.
- B. A written statement from all schools involved that they will adopt a no-cut policy for this coop.
- C. The eligibility lists of previous sport season.

