



Chicago Catholic League & Girls Catholic Athletic Conference



Chicago Catholic High School Athletic Conferences to Expand Membership With New Schools

- *Joining the Girls Catholic Athletic Conference in 2026-27 are Benet Academy, Carmel Catholic High School, Joliet Catholic Academy, Marian Catholic High School, Marist High School, Marmion Academy, Nazareth Academy, and St. Viator High School.*
- *In 2026-27, the Chicago Catholic League welcomes Benet Academy, Carmel Catholic High School, Joliet Catholic Academy, Marian Catholic High School, Marist High School, Nazareth Academy, Notre Dame College Prep, St. Patrick High School, and St. Viator High School.*

CHICAGO, May 5th—The Girls Catholic Athletic Conference (GCAC) and the Chicago Catholic League (CCL) have announced the addition of nine new schools in Benet Academy, Carmel Catholic High School, Joliet Catholic Academy, Marian Catholic High School, Marist High School, Nazareth Academy, Notre Dame College Prep, St. Patrick High School, and St. Viator High School. These institutions are current members of the East Suburban Catholic Conference.

“Both leagues are extremely competitive,” said Thomas Schergen, an executive representative of the GCAC and CCL, and Principal of De La Salle Institute. “With the addition of these tradition-rich East Suburban Catholic institutions, we have set our respective conferences on a continued path of success, and continue to strengthen these premier Catholic athletic organizations. We look forward to having these new members under the Chicago Catholic League and Girls Catholic Athletic Conference banners, both athletically and academically.”

The ESCC was founded in 1974 and its charter members include Carmel Catholic, Holy Cross, Marist, Notre Dame, St. Joseph, St. Patrick, and St. Viator. Between 1982 and 2014, the ESCC adopted Joliet Catholic (1982), Benet Academy (1990), Marian Catholic (1990), Nazareth Academy (2001), and Marian Central (2014) as member schools. In 1991, the ESCC expanded to feature women’s athletic programming, and would later add Fenwick (1994), Bishop McNamara (2000) and Providence Catholic (2000) to represent the conference in women’s sports. Since 1974, member schools have captured 96 team State championships, earned 91 individual State titles, and have inducted more than 230 teams and individuals into the ESCC Hall of Fame.

“The ESCC’s legacy of academic and athletic success, as well as our standards for competitive excellence, align closely with the heritage of the Chicago Catholic League and Girls Catholic Athletic Conference,” said Dan Tully, chair of the Board of Control of the East Suburban Catholic Conference and principal at Notre Dame College Prep. “Bringing our schools together will expand competitive opportunities based on geography and parity, while also maintaining long-standing rivalries for the benefit of our communities, teams, and student-athletes. As faith-based institutions, we strive to offer a comprehensive educational experience, along with high-quality co-curricular programming. The ESCC’s history of achievement dovetails with the rich traditions of the CCL and GCAC, and we look forward to furthering our partnership.”

The Girls Catholic Athletic Conference welcomes seven East Suburban Catholic Conference schools, in addition to current Chicago Catholic League member Marmion Academy, which will transition to a co-ed institution for the start of the 2026-27 school year. This expansion raises the total number of GCAC schools to 24. For its part, the Chicago Catholic League will extend membership to nine current ESCC schools, which will expand the conference to 26 institutions.



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New schools will begin their GCAC and CCL membership at the start of the 2026-27 School Year.

The eight additions to the Girls Catholic Athletic Conference will join 16 continuing members in Aurora Central Catholic High School, De La Salle Institute, DePaul College Prep, Fenwick High School, IC Catholic Prep, Loyola Academy, Montini Catholic High School, Mother McAuley Liberal Arts High School, Providence Catholic High School, Resurrection College Prep High School, Rosary High School, St. Francis de Sales High School, St. Francis High School, St. Ignatius College Prep, St. Laurence High School, and Trinity High School, expanding the GCAC to 24 total schools.

The nine additions to the Chicago Catholic League will join 17 continuing members in Aurora Central Catholic High School, Brother Rice High School, De La Salle Institute, DePaul College Prep, Fenwick High School, IC Catholic Prep, Leo High School, Loyola Academy, Marmion Academy, Montini Catholic High School, Mount Carmel High School, Providence Catholic High School, St. Francis de Sales High School, St. Francis High School, St. Ignatius College Prep, St. Laurence High School, and St. Rita of Cascia High School, expanding the CCL to 26 schools.

Although it is not the oldest high school athletic conference in the State of Illinois, the Chicago Catholic League has been in operation longer than any of its contemporaries. On October 3rd, 1912, representatives of eight parochial schools conferenced in Chicago's Great Northern Hotel—demolished in 1940, and now the site of the Dirksen Federal Building—to found the Catholic League. The charter members of the Catholic League included Loyola Academy, St. Cyril (now Mt. Carmel), DePaul Academy, St. Philip, St. Ignatius, De La Salle, Cathedral, and St. Stanislaus. Learn more about the history of the CCL by visiting chicagocatholicleague.com

The Girls Catholic Athletic Conference was established in 1974, three years before the Illinois High School Association would incorporate women's athletics. Under the early leadership of 12 female athletic directors, the GCAC would flourish into the largest all-girls athletic conference in the country, with membership reaching 36 institutions. At its peak, GCAC schools were located as far south as Chicago Heights, east as 102nd Street near the Indiana border, west as Rolling Meadows, and north as Lake Forest. Learn more about the GCAC at conferences.snap.app/gcac/

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