

ap style sports

In general

boys and girls Use *boys* and *girls* to designate teams. Do not use an apostrophe; the team does not belong to the boys or to the girls, but to the school. In most cases, *boys* or *girls* is used as part of a noun phrase: *The varsity girls soccer team placed third in district. The varsity cross country team finished first at regionals.*

coach Do not capitalize. *"We just didn't play to the best of our ability," varsity girls basketball coach Angie Hermesmeyer said.*

cross country Two words, no hyphen.*

event titles Capitalize official titles of districts and meets, but lowercase shortened titles. *District 26-4A, Big XII Conference, The team advanced to state. The varsity football team won the district championship.*

freshman vs. freshmen When referring to the team, it should be singular. If you are taking about several players, it should be freshmen. *The freshman football team were undefeated. Six varsity players are freshmen.*

halftime Not half time or half-time

junior varsity Capitalize and do not use periods when abbreviated. Always abbreviate when used as a modifier. Otherwise, spell it out. *JV baseball, the junior varsity team.*

midcourt, midfield Not mid-court, mid-field

numerals Spell out one through nine, use figures for 10 and above. Note the exceptions when used as a compound adjective. *8-point lead, first quarter, second-quarter lead, first-round loss, third place, 12th place, No. 2 player, 7-yard gain.*

statistics Use figures and hyphens. *60-yard dash, 23-foot jump, 6-foot-5 center, 35-yard touchdown pass.*

playoff (n.) **play off** (v.)

postseason, preseason No hyphen

pounds For wrestling stories, do not spell out pounds: *Michael Page, 115-lbs division*

semifinal Not semi-final

teams Do not capitalize team designations. The team level goes before the gender. *The varsity boys basketball team, the freshman football team.*

other sports words, phrases

In general

berth	preseason
co-captain	runner-up
defender	semifinal
halftime	sports writer
play off (v.)	teammate
playoff (n., adj.)	timeout

baseball

ballpark	outfielder
ballplayer	passed ball
baseline	pinch hit (v.)
bullpen	pinch hitter (n.)
center field	pitchout
center fielder	RBI
designated hitter	RBIs
doubleheader	rundown
double play	sacrifice
fair ball	sacrifice fly
fastball	sacrifice hit
first baseman	shortstop
foul ball line	shut out (v.)
foul tip	shutout (n., adj.)
ground-rule double	slugger
home plate	squeeze play
home run	strike
left-hander	strike zone
line drive	triple play
line up (v.)	walk-off
lineup (n.)	wild pitch

basketball

backboard	goaltending
baseline	half-court pass
downcourt	hook shot
foul line	jump ball
foul show	jump shot
free throw	layup
free-throw line	man-to-man
frontcourt	midcourt
full-court press	zone

football

ball carrier	lineman
blitz (n., v.)	line of scrimmage
end line	onside kick
end zone	out of bounds (adv.)
fair catch	out-of-bounds (adj.)
field goal	pitchout (n.)
fourth-and-1	place kick
fullback	place-kicker
goal line	quarterback
goal-line stand	running back
halfback	split end
handoff	tailback
kick off (v.)	tight end
kickoff (adj.)	touchback
left guard	touchdown
linebacker	wide receiver

golf

birdie, birdies	fairway
bogey, bogeys	green fee
bogeyed	hole-in-one
caddie	tee (n.)
eagle, eagled	tee off (v.)

soccer

forward	offside
goalie	penalty box
goalkeeper	sideline
midfielder	striker

tennis

advantage	points
deuce	racket
double-fault	serve
love	set
match	tiebreaker
match point	

listing scores

Put the winning score first, regardless if your team won or not. Adding a W or L will indicate if it was a win or a loss. It's redundant to write 20-21 L.

*Hendrickson 55-54 L
Vista Ridge 66-61 W*

***cross country** – The 2017 AP Stylebook hyphenates *cross-country*, but notes this is in contrast to the practices of U.S. and international governing bodies for the sport. Most high school state sports organizations and sports writers do not hyphenate.

writing scores in a story

Still put the winning score first.

*In a 55-54 loss to Hendrickson...
The Cougars bounced back with a 66-61 win over Vista Ridge...*