



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee
From: Colleen Maguire, NJSIAA Executive Director
Date: December 4, 2023
RE: Girls Flag Football Proposal – Pilot Program

Background:

In 2022, girls flag football was first introduced to NJSIAA member schools in the Super Football Conference and Shore Conference through partnerships with the NY Jets and NY Giants. In 2023, the Philadelphia Eagles partnered with schools in the West Jersey Football League while the NY Jets and NY Giants expanded their partnership with schools in the NJIC and Big Central Conference. These NFL teams have provided funding and free uniforms to NJSIAA member schools. During the 2023 season, 83 teams hosted a girls flag football team with over 2,000 student-athletes participating. We anticipate continued increase in both the number of teams and number of student-athletes participating during the upcoming 2024 season.

Proposal:

On behalf of the five football conferences, I propose that NJSIAA host a two-year pilot program during the 2023 – 2024 and 2024 – 2025 school year. During the 2023 – 2024 school year, the conferences will host their regular season and conference tournaments as originally planned. Conferences will also be permitted to continue playing under the rules that have been previously adopted. Member schools will continue to have the authority to determine their own sport participation policies for their student-athletes.

NFHS has announced that they are in the process of forming a girls flag football rules committee and will soon start the process of writing rules for girls flag football. It is anticipated that NFHS rules will be in place for the 2024 – 2025 school year. During the second year of the pilot program, all conferences will be required to adhere to NFHS rules but will continue to have the autonomy to schedule their regular season and conference tournaments at their discretion.

During the pilot program, NJSIAA will solicit feedback from participating member schools to determine if there is interest in submitting a proposal that will adopt girls flag football as a sanctioned sport. If there is interest, then a proposal will be submitted to the Advisory Committee no later than December 1, 2025.

The approval of a two-year pilot program will provide notice to member schools that girls flag football may become an NJSIAA sanctioned sport. The two-year pilot program will also allow time for NFHS to establish a rules committee and write high school girls flag football rules. Lastly, the two-year pilot program will allow time for NJSIAA staff to form a committee that will make recommendations on the maximum number of games, a state tournament format, dates, and qualification/seeding criteria.