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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW JERSEY MAKES HISTORIC REDUCTION IN HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL CONTACT

ROBBINSVILLE, NJ – Player-on-player practice contact for New Jersey high schools has been reduced to the lowest level in the history of football – less contact than mandates or recommendations by the NFL, NCAA, Ivy League, USA Football, Pop Warner, or any other football jurisdiction.

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA), the governing body of New Jersey high school athletics, acting on a proposal by Practice Like Pros and the New Jersey Football Coaches Association (NJFCA), today imposed the following limits on practice-field contact:

- **In-season** full contact will be reduced from 90 minutes per week to 15,
- **Pre-season** full contact will be reduced from unlimited to 6 hours total, including scrimmage(s).
- No change in the existing ban on full contact in spring/summer.

These new rules make New Jersey’s year-round high school practice regulations the most restrictive ever at any level of football.

“Congratulations and thank you to the NJSIAA and NJFCA,” said Terry O’Neil, founder of Practice Like Pros, a national movement dedicated to reducing needless injury in high school football. “This is a Valentine for the 23,000 boys who play New Jersey high school football. The one certain way to mitigate football injury is to limit contact in practice. New Jersey has pioneered a model that is sure to be emulated across the country.”

Larry White, executive director of the NJSIAA, said, “We thank Terry O’Neil and Practice Like Pros for educating us on this issue. When Practice Like Pros and our New Jersey coaches came to us jointly with this recommendation, it was not a difficult decision. The NJSIAA strives to be a leading state association in matters of health and safety for our student-
athletes.”

The new regulations began to take shape in April 2017, when O’Neil made a presentation to the NJFCA’s annual coaches’ clinic at Rutgers University. The NJFCA and Practice Like Pros agreed in July 2018, on a proposal that was submitted to the NJSIAA. Approval was granted last October by NJSIAA’s Sports Medical Advisory Committee and today by its Executive Committee.

A similar contact-limits proposal is moving forward in the state of Michigan. The Football Committee of the Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA), with input and support from the Michigan High School Football Coaches Association (MHSFCA), has made a recommendation to reduce live contact and refine practice limitations based on many of the Practice Like Pros principles. This proposal will be considered for adoption by the MHSAA Representative Council in May. If approved, full-contact limits in Michigan would be similar to many of the new, in-season regulations in New Jersey.

Established in 1918, the NJSIAA (New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association), is a voluntary, non-profit organization comprised of 437 accredited public, private, and parochial high schools. A member of the National Federation of State High School Associations, the NJSIAA conducts tournaments and crowns champions in 32 sports. Championship competition for girls is sponsored in basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, field hockey, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, and volleyball. Boys’ championships are determined in baseball, basketball, bowling, cross country, fencing, football, golf, ice hockey, lacrosse, soccer, swimming, tennis, outdoor track, winter track, volleyball, and wrestling.

The NJFCA, founded 1984, is dedicated to promoting interscholastic football in New Jersey and maintaining high standards in the coaching
profession. See www.njfca.org.

*Practice Like Pros*, founded 2013, is a national movement to reduce needless injury in high school football, endorsed by Dr. Robert C. Cantu, Dr. James Andrews, Archie Manning, Mike Ditka, Dick Vermeil, Tony Dorsett, Anthony Munoz and other progressive minds from football and medical science. See www.practicelikepros.com.

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