



To: NJSIAA Advisory Committee

From: Football Leagues & Conferences Working Group

Date: January 15, 2021

RE: Football Group Champion Proposal

On January 6, 2021, the NJSIAA membership overwhelmingly voted to remove the language in the NJSIAA Constitution that prohibits the Association from declaring statewide champions in football. Approximately 94% of votes submitted were in favor of removing this language. Clearly, this result means that there is a desire to provide our football teams the opportunity all of our other sports already enjoy - to compete for a Group championship.

Below is a proposal that we feel provides the best path to a Group championship in each public and non-public Group. This proposal respects NJSIAA student-athletes' health and safety, honors Thanksgiving rivalries and does not increase the number of games played.

PROPOSAL

Overall:

- The regular season start date will be calculated by counting back 12 weeks from the weekend prior to Thanksgiving.
- The preseason start date will be the fourth Wednesday that precedes the regular season start date.
- There will be a 10-game regular season max for both public and non-public schools, as described below.

Public Schools:

- Regular season games will be played in Weeks 1 – 8. Teams that are not involved in the playoffs may also, at their discretion, play up to two additional regular season games in Weeks 11 and/or 12.
- Teams that play on Thanksgiving Day will receive a 7-game schedule, plus the Thanksgiving game.
- Weeks 9 – 11: Sectional Playoffs
- Week 12: State Semifinals
- Week 13: Thanksgiving weekend
- Week 14: Group Championship games
- All current qualification and seeding criteria will remain in place.
- Teams will be seeded #1 – #16 in each Super Section.
- Teams ranked #17 – #24 in each Super Section will be seeded in a separate regional tournament.
 - Weeks 9 – 11
- Any team ranked below #24 in each Super Section will be able to request crossover games.
 - Weeks 9 and/or 10 (one or two games may be requested)
- Any team losing in the first round of either the sectional playoff, or the separate regional tournament, may request a crossover game.
 - Week 10

Below is a summary of dates for the first scheduling cycle for public schools under this timeline:

School Year	Practice Start	Regular Season (Week 1)	First Round (Week 9)	State Semi-Finals (Week 12)	Thanksgiving (Week 13)	Finals (Week 14)
2022 – 2023	Aug. 10 th	Sep. 2 nd	Oct. 28 th	Nov. 18 th	Nov. 24 th	Dec. 3 rd & 4 th
2023 – 2024	Aug. 9 th	Sep. 1 st	Oct. 27 th	Nov. 17 th	Nov. 23 rd	Dec. 2 nd & 3 rd

Non-Public Schools:

- Regular season games will be played in Weeks 1 – 9. Teams that are not involved in the playoffs may also, at their discretion, play one additional regular season game in either Week 11 or Week 12.
- Teams that play on Thanksgiving Day will receive an 8-game schedule, plus the Thanksgiving game.
- Weeks 10 – 12: first three rounds of playoffs.
- Week 13: Thanksgiving weekend/Group Championship games
 - If a Thanksgiving Day team is participating, then the game will move to Week 14 (same week as the Public Group Finals)
- All current qualifications and seeding criteria will remain in place.
- Any team opting out of the tournament will be able to request one crossover game.
 - Week 10

Below is a summary of dates for the first scheduling cycle for non-public schools under this timeline:

School Year	Practice Start	Regular Season (Week 1)	First Round (Week 10)	Semi-Finals (Week 12)	Finals/ Thanksgiving (Week 13)
2022 – 2023	Aug. 10 th	Sep. 2 nd	Nov. 4 th	Nov. 18 th	Nov. 24 th
2023 – 2024	Aug. 9 th	Sep. 1 st	Oct. 27 th	Nov. 17 th	Nov. 23 rd

Football L&C Working Group:

Big Central – Scott Miller, Brearley, and Ben La Sala, Colonia
 NJIC – Charlie Voorhees, Secaucus
 Shore – Rich Carroll, Middletown No/So, and Dave Ryden, Marlboro
 SFC – Denis Nelson, River Dell, and Dan Vivino, Westwood
 WJFL – Derryk Sellers, Lindenwold
 Non-Public Representative – Rich Hansen, St. Peter’s Prep
 NJFCA – John Jacob, Commissioner