



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee
From: Colleen Maguire, NJSIAA Executive Director
Date: November 8, 2021
RE: Tournament of Champions Proposal

Background:

NJSIAA currently offers a Tournament of Champions in the following sports (the inaugural year for each tournament is in parenthesis): G Tennis (1980); B/G Basketball (1989); B Tennis (1992); G Volleyball (2002); B Lacrosse (2004); Field Hockey (2006); G Lacrosse (2007); B/G Bowling (2007); and Softball (2017). The Tournament of Champions is a separate tournament hosted after the Group championships – all Group championship winners participate (5 or 6 teams depending on the sport) to play to one overall state champion.

Proposal:

NJSIAA staff, in consultation with NJSIAA Leagues and Conferences, propose that the Tournament of Champions for these sports be eliminated after the 2021 – 2022 school year. Staff believes that this proposal promotes one of the primary goals of the NJSIAA, which is to provide positive outcomes for as many student-athletes as possible.

Over the past several years, the Tournament of Champions in almost every sport has seen the same teams participating – especially in the finals – so they are growing less competitive. Some sports have cut short the regular season in order to hold a Tournament of Champions. This results in all schools having a reduced regular season so that a very few number schools can compete in an additional tournament. Lastly, scheduling has evolved, which has allowed teams more flexibility to schedule games beyond their league or conference schedule. Successful programs are often competing during the regular season in addition to possibly meeting in the Tournament of Champions – this scheduling flexibility did not exist when many Tournaments of Champions were first introduced.

While NJSIAA staff does not make this recommendation lightly, the status of our Tournament of Champions has been under review and discussion for many years. Some sports have been recommending the elimination of the Tournament of Champions for a few years while other sports have been encouraging NJSIAA staff to continue with the tournament. However, NJSIAA staff is responsible for organizing these events and it is our responsibility to look at the big picture of our Association. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and start to look forward to the future, we feel now is the appropriate time to eliminate these tournaments and strive for more consistent and normalized seasons across all sports.

NJSIAA Bylaws, Article III, Section 6(B) states the following. If this proposal is approved, this provision will be removed from the Bylaws.

Tournament of Champions competition will be conducted as approved by the Executive Committee and delineated in the regulations of each sport.