



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director

Date: January 11, 2022

RE: Winter Season COVID Modifications

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As a result of the sharp rise in COVID cases over the past three weeks, our schools have experienced an increased level of COVID-related disruption across all sports. There have been several cancelled events due to either positive cases and/or quarantines that result in a school, or an opponent, being unable to field a team. To provide flexibility for our schools to reschedule cancelled events, NJSIAA staff proposes the following rule modifications applicable to the current winter season only.

1. *Waive the 60% rule for post-season qualification (Rules and Regulations, Program Regulations, Section 18).* Cancelled contests may prevent a team from abiding by the requirement that teams play at least 60% of their contests against New Jersey schools, in order to participate in the state tournament. To qualify for a waiver, a school must be able to show that its original schedule, as of the competition start date, had enough NJ-based competition that would have met or exceeded the 60% requirement, had certain events not been cancelled due to COVID. This waiver is only applicable to events cancelled for COVID-related circumstances.
2. *Forfeits (Policies and Procedures, p. 39).* Any event cancelled due to COVID will be considered a “no contest,” unless a League or Conference determines to award a forfeit. If a forfeit is awarded, and accepted, then the forfeit will count as a game played and a team may not play a different opponent on that same date. Forfeits awarded, and accepted, prior to any cut-off date will be included in data used for qualification and seeding.
3. *Basketball weekly game maximum (Rules and Regulations, Specific Sport Regulations, Basketball, Section 7).* Basketball teams may play four games in a week, for four separate weeks, for the remainder of the regular season.
4. *Wrestling weekly match maximum (Rules and Regulations, Specific Sport Regulations, Wrestling, Section 8).* Wrestling teams and individual wrestlers may weigh in for five matches, for four separate weeks, for the remainder of the regular season.

In addition, NJSIAA staff, in consultation with tournament staff and members of the seeding committee, reserves the right to modify the qualification criteria where appropriate as the cut-off date for each sport approaches. Such modifications may include, but are not limited to, a reduction in the number of events required for qualification or used in seeding. Members of the seeding committee may also identify modifications to other criteria used during the seeding process. Modifications, once agreed to by the tournament staff and members of the seeding committee, will be posted to all schools either prior to, or on, the cut-off date.

NJSIAA staff also reserves the right to change host sites across all sports due to COVID-restrictions, or COVID-concerns expressed by the host site. This may result in some events originally scheduled at a neutral site being hosted by a participating school.

Lastly, the COVID-19 State Tournament Policy, as approved in September 2021, remains in effect for the winter season – the policy can be found here:

<https://www.njsiaa.org/sites/default/files/documents/2021-11/njsiaa-state-tournament-policy.pdf>