

Memo

To: Executive Committee of the NJSIAA
From: New Jersey Basketball Coaches Association
Date: 12/5/2022
Re: Boys and Girls Basketball Post Season Opportunity Proposal

Below is a proposal for the NJSIAA Executive Committee to consider which would allow NJSIAA Member School's girls and/or boys basketball programs to participate in the Paragon/ESPN State Champions Invitational.

The NJBCA fully understands that if this proposal is approved, it would require a waiver for coaching outside of the normal Winter Season and request that this waiver be granted based on the following information.

1. The State Champions Invitational is an invitational only event for 8 teams across the country and therefore it is a rare and unique opportunity. Due to the criteria a team must meet to be invited and the limited number of teams that are invited, this waiver may only be applied a few times every decade. It is not a waiver that NJSIAA Member schools would use for yearly.
2. The State Champions Invitational is only for teams that are FULL members of their own state associations and only for teams that participate in and win their state associations State Championship. Therefore, all participating teams are NFHS member schools.
3. There is ZERO cost to the member schools if they are invited to this event as all expenses are covered by Paragon.
4. There is a financial benefit to the NJSIAA (yearly) and the invited Member School (in years they are invited).
5. It is a tremendous honor and rare opportunity for the student athletes of NJ to participate in this invitation only post-season event presented by Paragon and televised on ESPN
6. As per NFHS rules this is not a National Championship Tournament, it is an Invitational Tournament that allows qualified and invited NJ teams the opportunity to compete against the other top State Champions from across the country for the opportunity to be considered the best HS team in the country.
7. Any NJ girls or boys teams, Public or Non-Public, that win an NJSIAA State Championship can be invited to participate. Last year, the first year of the event, most of the teams invited were public school teams. This makes this event unique and a great opportunity for any NJ team to qualify.

8. Although the event is at the end of March/Early April NJ teams, like the other states who have teams that are invited, would cease practice after the NJSIAA Group Championship and request a waiver for a 6-day practice window leading up to the event and to play between 1 and 3 games in the event. (Following NJSIAA practice guidelines)

The NJBCA understands that the NJSIAA may have concerns that this proposal could open the door to all the “pay for play” and “apply to play” type of post season national events. We believe based on the criteria needed to be invited to the State Champions Invitational and the structure of the event that the door will not swing wide open for these types of events and may offer guidelines if another sport wished to have a similar proposal be put into place for their sport. Here are the criteria upon which we believe the State Champions Invitational is unique:

1. It is run and televised by a major Media Outlet (Paragon/ESPN) creating great exposure for our member schools and their athletes
2. It is completely free for the member school all expenses paid (flight, bus, hotel, meals, educational experience) that is invited and there is a financial benefit to that member school of \$2,500
3. It is free for the NJSIAA yearly and has a financial benefit for the NJSIAA of \$2,500 for allowing teams to participate yearly and the NJSIAA will receive an additional \$7,500 if one or more member schools are selected.
4. It is only open to teams that have won a State Championship in their respective state and are NFHS members and full state association members in their respective states
5. It is an invitation only event, there is no “pay for play” or “apply to play” option.

The NJBCA believes this is a special and unique opportunity that may occasionally be available to some of the NJSIAA member school’s girls or boys basketball programs, and we ask the NJSIAA to approve this waiver for use in the rare years one of the programs meets all of the stiff criteria and are invited. We believe we should be in the business of creating and sanctioning opportunities for our student athletes if the opportunities can fit the mission of the NJSIAA and its Member Schools. We think the State Champions Invitational, although a post season national event, does fit that mission due to its unique structure and criteria.

In closing, we ask that the NJSIAA approve this proposal for the rare times a member school’s girls or boys program qualifies for the State Champions Invitational as it is a great opportunity for the student athletes and puts zero burden on the NJSIAA or the potential participating Member school.

cc: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director, NJSIAA