



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director

Date: February 21, 2023

RE: NJSIAA Heat Acclimatization/Football Tournament Regulations

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NJSIAA staff propose the following changes to the tournament regulations for certain sports.

**Heat acclimatization** – In an effort to allow teams which are subject to heat acclimatization protocols additional pre-season practice days, NJSIAA staff recommends an optional 2-day early start for heat acclimatization. The optional 2-day early start does not impact the practice start date or first scrimmage date as the optional 2-days will not count towards the 6-days of practice/1-day of rest rule. The optional 2-day early start is not required but is subject to approval by the school district. This proposal will impact both field hockey and football. Based on feedback from members of both committees, the 2-day early heat acclimatization will allow for additional practice days and intrasquad scrimmages to better ready all members of the team for live competition.

**Football Tournament Regulations (minutes attached):**

The Football Committee recommends the following changes to the tournament regulations:

1. Regional Invitational Tournament (RIT) – the tournament will consist of pairings of 4 teams, so a maximum of 2 games will be played. The losers in the first round can mutually agree to play a 2<sup>nd</sup> game at their discretion. Seeding for the RIT will be based on the United Power Ranking (UPR); however, crossover between Sections and/or Groups may be necessary to complete the 4 team pairings.
2. Public Tournament State Championship Dates – for the 2023-2024 season, all public-school state championship games will be played Week 13 which is Thanksgiving weekend. The non-public state championship games are currently being played this weekend (November 24, 25, or 26, 2023). However, any public state championship game including a school with a Thanksgiving Day game commitment will be played during the week no later than the following Thursday. The day, time and venue will be subject to availability of the NJSIAA state championship hosts, MetLife Stadium and Rutgers University, but their availability is not guaranteed. This will allow public schools that do not have a Thanksgiving Day conflict to finish their season one week earlier.
3. Non-Public Multiplier – for the 2023-2024 season, St. Thomas Aquinas will be added to the non-public multiplier C category. Summit High School submitted a proposal to the committee requesting that St. Thomas Aquinas be added to the list of multiplier schools.



## FOOTBALL SPORTS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

2022 – 2023 SEASON

January 24, 2023 – 10:00am

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Greg Bailey, Football Coordinator

Mike Bartram, State Rules Interpreter

Jason Corley, Long Branch HS Athletic Director, NJSIAA Executive Committee 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President

Gregory Troxell, Phillipsburg HS Superintendent, NJSIAA Executive Committee Representative

Jason Morrell, West Deptford HS Athletic Director

John McKenna, DePaul Catholic Athletic Director

Tarig Holman, St. Thomas Aquinas Coach

Tim Gushue, Shawnee HS Coach

Mike Alberque, St. John Vianney Athletic Director/Assistant Coach

Bill Fitzgerald, Seton Hall Prep Coach

### 1. Season in Review

Colleen presented a proposal to allow for a 2-day early start for heat acclimatization. The early start will be subject to school district approval but will not count towards the 6-day practice/1-day of rest rule. Jason Corley made a motion to approve the proposal and Mike Alberque seconded the motion, all were in favor. Colleen told the committee that the next step is to present the proposal to the Executive Committee for their final approval at its February meeting.

### 2. Tournament in Review

#### *Regional Invitational Tournament:*

Colleen surveyed schools that participated in the Regional Invitational Tournament this past season. The survey results were as follows: 73% responded that they will participate in the tournament during the 2023 season, 65% responded that 3-games were too many and 73% responded that NJSIAA should not award a trophy. The consensus from the comments that were submitted was that 2-games are preferred. Therefore, the Regional Invitational Tournament next year will be structured with pairings of 4 teams – the winners will advance while the losers may mutually agree to play but is not required. Colleen commented that the tournament regulations will indicate that crossover between Sections or Groups may be necessary to fill as many 4-team pairings as possible. The committee was in favor of these updates to the Regional Invitational Tournament.

#### *Public State Semifinals:*

The committee discussed feedback on the public state semifinal games. The NJ Football Coaches Association has inquired as to the possibility of playing these games at the higher seed. Colleen expressed concerns on behalf of her staff and the football tournament staff with logistics that could cause an issue – weather issues, field conditions and administrative oversight. Both Colleen and Greg relayed issues they both dealt with among schools when weather was potentially impacting the sectional finals. Overall, majority of the committee were in support of playing the games at the

higher seed but understood the concerns expressed. Colleen told the committee that she will discuss the status of these games with both NJSIAA and tournament staff to determine how best to proceed.

*State Championship Venues:*

Colleen solicited feedback from the committee on the venues used for the state championship games – MetLife Stadium and Rutgers University. Overall, feedback was positive, but the committee did express interest in hosting more games at Met Life stadium for those matchups that are geographically friendly. Colleen and Greg will solicit availability at both venues to have options available.

3. Season Dates

Colleen provided a handout to the committee of proposed dates for the 2023 season. All dates are corresponding dates to the 2022 season except for the possible early-start for heat acclimatization and the dates of the public state championships. The committee was in support of having all state championship games played over Thanksgiving weekend except for those games that have a school that regularly participates in a Thanksgiving Day football game. Games involving Thanksgiving Day schools will be played the following Wednesday or Thursday. NJSIAA will make every effort to host this game at either MetLife Stadium or Rutgers University but will be dependent on facility availability. This will allow football teams to end their season one week earlier, which is supported by many coaches and administrators.

4. Tournament Staff Updates

Greg Bailey provided general commentary on the success of the 2022 high school football season. Mike Bartram updated the committee on concerns regarding schools wearing illegal uniforms – some teams are wearing light colors, such as grey, which are not allowed by NFHS rules. Mike will be crafting a memo for all member schools and coaches reminding them of the rules. In addition, the memo will include reminders of changes to the uniform rules that will take effect with the 2024 season. Lastly, Mike provided a brief update on behalf of Mark Bitar, State Assignor, who was unable to attend. The use of 7-man crews during the State Championship games went very well and will continue for the 2023 season. There were more crews represented in the state tournament this year and all four football officials' chapters were represented in the 7 state championship games.

5. New Business – Old Business

There were no items noted.

6. Correspondence

Summit High School submitted a request to add St. Thomas Aquinas high school to the multiplier C category. Colleen provided feedback on behalf of the Football Leagues & Conferences Committee which did not support this proposal. Colleen also expressed her concern that the use of the multiplier is moving away from its original intent – the original intent being to complete the schedules of certain non-public schools whose public-school opponents were refusing the game. There are schools in the multiplier categories that do not have any non-public schools on their schedule, which is of concern. Certain committee members understood the concern but felt that St. Thomas Aquinas should be treated in the same fashion as other non-public schools in the C category and that their opponents should be allowed multiplier points. Tim Gushue made a motion to support the proposal submitted by Summit High School, and Jason Morrell seconded the motion. The proposal was approved by a vote of 4 – 2 with one abstention. Colleen will also present this proposal to the Executive Committee for their final approval at its February meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Colleen Maguire, Executive Director