



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director

Date: June 5, 2023

RE: Winter Track & Field Regulations – Public-School Sectional Meets/Individual Entries

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### **Background**

NJSIAA has seen an increase in the number of member schools hosting winter track & field teams, specifically among its public schools. Currently, there are 300 public school winter track & field teams – this compares to 350 public school spring track & field teams. The increase in public school teams has resulted in the public-school sectional meets becoming very time-consuming and very crowded. All public-school sectional meets are held at the Bennett Indoor Athletic Complex in Toms River. During this past season, we received criticism from participating coaches, officials, and tournament staff that the sectional meets now run closer to 6 hours and the facility is very crowded. The increase in participation makes it very difficult to accommodate all sectional meets on the dates scheduled and makes for very long days for our student-athletes, coaches, officials, and tournament staff.

In addition, the tournament regulations need to be updated to specifically address how student-athletes who attends a member school, which does not have a winter track & field team, will participate in either the public-school sectional meets, or non-public school group meets.

The recommendations below are based on feedback from the Winter Track & Field committee and NJSIAA tournament staff.

### **Public-School Sectional Meets**

Currently, each team participating in the sectional meet can enter up to 3 individuals per event – winter track & field hosts 10 events. NJSIAA staff recommends that each team be allowed to enter up to 2 individuals per event. In addition, each team will be allowed to enter one additional individual in up to 3 events – these are 3 “wildcard” entries to be used at a coaches’ discretion. The wildcard entries will provide an equitable opportunity for all schools entering the public-school sectional tournament to allow additional participation. Tournament staff believe that these new entry parameters will bring the timing of the public-school sectional meets closer to a 4 to 4 ½ hour event, which is a much better time frame for everyone involved. Future consideration will be given to an increase in the number of wildcard entries should staff feel that an increase can be accommodated while keeping the meets within a reasonable time frame.

### **Individual Entries**

If a member school enters a student-athlete as an individual entry (i.e., the member school does not host a winter track & field team), then that student-athlete will be seeded in the meet if there is a verified time in MileSplit at an interscholastic event during the current season. This means that any interested student-athlete

will need to enter an interscholastic event as an unattached entry during the season for their time to be used for seeding. Otherwise, the student-athlete will not be seeded in any event.

### **Competition Start Date**

Lastly, winter track & field does not typically host scrimmages due to the cost and viability of securing a facility. NJSIAA rules currently restrict scrimmages to 4 or less participating teams. Therefore, to provide additional regular season opportunities, NJSIAA staff recommends that the competition start date be moved to the same as the competition start date for both ice hockey and swimming – which is one week earlier than the other strenuous winter sports. For the 2023-2024 school year, the competition start date will be Thursday, December 7, 2023 – the practice start date remains Monday, November 27, 2023.