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NJSIAA Boys & Girls Tennis Rule Modifications 2024-25

The following tennis rules are in addition to those found in the NJSIAA Constitution, Bylaws, Rules and Regulations Handbook, Sport Specific Regulations Girls Tennis (Fall) and Boys Tennis (Spring). Coaches should have a copy of these rules and regulations at each match. **Please direct any questions regarding this document to the NJSIAA state rules interpreter.**

1. TEAM MATCH

A Team Match shall consist of five matches: a 1st singles match, a 2nd singles match, a 3rd singles match, a 1st doubles match, and a 2nd doubles match. The team winning the majority of the five matches shall be the winner of the team match.

2. MATCH

A match OFFICIALLY begins when players are introduced and there will be no substitution after that point. Substitution would be allowed only if the team match has been decided and one court has not yet begun play. However, if the weather intervenes, and a match must be rescheduled for a different day, there may be substitution as long as the first point on any court has not been played. (See #11 for Interrupted Play).

A match must consist of the best of three sets. **All NJSIAA competitions will use regulation (ad) scoring and 10-point match tiebreaks in lieu of full 3rd sets**, except for the singles and doubles state finals which will feature full 3rd sets. Coaching during the 10-point match tiebreak will be permitted at the changeovers. New balls are **NOT** used for a 10-point match tiebreak.

3. SCHEDULING OF MATCHES (Priorities)

- A. A school may not schedule or participate in more than one full match at the end of a regular school day. However, prior unfinished match makeups will be allowed.
- B. A school may not schedule or participate in more than two matches on a non-school day.
- C. A school may not play more than 24 regular season matches. Team matches played at various invitational events count as individual matches. Any flight tournaments that have team scoring will count as matches, equal to the number of days of the tournament.
- D. Teams are allowed to play in ONE county or conference tournament, plus the NJSIAA tournament, neither of which counts towards the 24 matches.

Once a team's schedule for the season has been established, the necessity for rescheduling matches due to postponement, tournaments and bipartisan requests will arise. The order of priority should be as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 st - State Tournament matches | 4 th - Conference matches |
| 2 nd - Conference Tournament matches | 5 th - Independent matches |
| 3 rd - County Tournament matches | 6 th - Practices |

The rationale for listing State, Conference and County matches preferentially is those tournaments adhere to strict dates for their conclusions, and it is imperative that matches leading to these deadlines be played on schedule.

4. MATCH PROCEDURES

A. LINE-UP

Each coach shall establish a ladder lineup in writing on the challenge match form (CMF) by a specified date (September 4 for girls, April 2 for boys). The coach is required to present a complete and accurate CMF to the opposing coach at each match after the previously mentioned dates. Failure to have a complete, accurate CMF at a match shall result in a penalty of loss of toss and loss of one game at each position. This penalty must be implemented at the start of play. Furthermore, if a valid CMF is not provided to the opponent's school within 24 hours of the match, the result will be a total forfeit of the match. **To be clear, CMFs are likely to change over the course of the season, but changes based on challenges must be documented.**

1. When establishing the team ladder for the top three singles positions, challenges must be the best of three sets; whether the 3rd set is a 10-point match tiebreak or a full 3rd set is at the coach's discretion.
2. Listing a challenge match as a retirement is not allowed. When the injured player is able to play an entire challenge match, then the new match score can be listed, and the player may be included in the lineup.
3. For the remainder of the team singles ladder, after the top three, challenges may be limited to one full set.
4. Due to differences in skill sets, the singles ladder is not the defining criteria for establishing doubles teams.
5. When establishing the team ladder for 1st and 2nd doubles positions, challenges will be best of three sets; whether the 3rd set is a 10-point match tiebreak or a full 3rd set is at the coach's discretion. For the remainder of the doubles positions, after the top two, challenges may be limited to one full set.
6. Once a ladder is established, a player or doubles pair may move up or down the ladder no more than one position per challenge match.
7. To solidify a new position, a player/pair must have a loss to the player/pair just above on the ladder and a win over the player/pair just below on the ladder.
8. Results of matches played in flight conference/county tournaments will count as challenge matches and may result in changes to the existing ladder.
9. If it is discovered that a match was played with an invalid line-up form, the result will be a forfeiture of all positions from the infraction down through 2nd doubles.
10. All challenge matches must be recorded on the front or back of the CMF. Any player whose name, ladder position, and challenge match information is not on the CMF, may not participate in the match. **To be clear, changes to the ladder likely will occur, but they must be documented.**
11. A player who is absent from competition for a prolonged period (7 + consecutive calendar days), must either compete at their previously established position or compete in challenge matches to establish a new position.

Line-Up Substitutions:

1. If a team is missing its 1st singles player, the 2nd singles player moves up to play the #1 position and 3rd singles moves up to play the #2 position. If the 2nd singles player is missing, the 3rd singles player will move up to play the #2 position. Unless the missing player is out for more than 7 consecutive days or is going to be out for the rest of the season, a coach may choose to keep the doubles teams intact and use a JV player at 3rd singles. However, once 7 days pass or once aware that an injury will be season-ending, a coach must immediately readjust the lineup, breaking up the doubles teams, if necessary.
2. If a team is missing two singles players, then the remaining singles player must move up to play 1st singles and the coach must put the next two players on the singles ladder (#4, 5) at the 2nd and 3rd singles positions. This likely will necessitate breaking up the doubles teams in order to fill the singles positions.
3. If a team is missing one or both players from the 1st doubles pair, then the 2nd doubles team must move up to the #1 slot, **unless challenge matches are recorded that determine otherwise.** If a team is missing one 1st doubles player and one 2nd doubles player, the remaining doubles players must play 1st doubles, **unless challenge matches are recorded that determine otherwise.** If time permits, challenge matches are mandatory to establish that the new 1st doubles team has a win over the new 2nd doubles team.
4. If a team has only 6 players present, the line-up will be three singles and one doubles. If a team

has seven players, it may not forfeit any position.

B. STACKING

The NJSIAA regulations regarding line-ups are quite clear, i.e., the best player scheduled to play, at the time and place of the match, plays 1st singles, second best #2, and third best #3. From the remainder of the squad, two doubles teams will play with the better being #1 and the other #2. The absence of one (1) 'regular' 1st, 2nd, or 3rd singles player does not necessitate the "breaking of the doubles" unless the absence is for a prolonged period (more than seven [7] consecutive calendar days). If it is evident that the player will not be available for at least seven (7) days, or the remainder of the season if less than seven (7) days, then this rule will be in effect immediately.

"Stacking" occurs when a player is deliberately played out of order. Proving that a line-up is "stacked" can sometimes be difficult. The proof cannot be subjective: It must be based on evidence, either oral or written.

CHALLENGE MATCHES: Players are required to give a 100% effort in all challenge matches. When players purposefully lose a match, or retire, to gain an advantage at a lower position, it is unsportsmanlike conduct and is called stacking. Retirements are not allowed, as they do not meet the completed challenge match requirement.

"Stacking or permitting an injured player to start a match and then defaulting are very serious breaches of tennis ethics which could result in censure of the coach and school and/or forfeiture of the tennis match." It is recommended that Athletic Directors review their school's tennis line-up to prevent any such problems. Players and coaches who are aware of such situations must report them to school officials and the NJSIAA Tennis Rules Interpreter.

C. FORFEITURE OF MATCHES

Any violation of Rule #4 will cause forfeiture of all matches from the point of infraction through the 2nd doubles match. Example: 2nd singles is arbitrarily moved to the 1st doubles position. Penalty - forfeiture of 2nd and 3rd singles, and 1st and 2nd doubles.

D. PARTICIPATION

No player shall play twice, i.e., a team shall consist of seven (7) players.

E. COACHING

Teams are allowed to have no more than two (2) coaches speak with players during a given team match. While there may be additional coaches viewing matches, each team must clearly designate to the opposing coach and to the official, when applicable, who will be allowed to communicate with players on court. Each of those coaches must also be listed on the team's official challenge match form. No spectators or other coaches will communicate with players on court during the match.

F. SUBSTITUTION

Substitutions will be permitted after the outcome of the meet has been decided; however, #4 (**A**) shall still apply. Once players on a court have started a match, substitution is not permitted. **This rule would only be applicable for a facility with fewer than 5 courts, where a team match has been decided before the last court(s) begin play.**

5. ATTIRE

Players must wear appropriate tennis attire. SCHOOL UNIFORMS ARE MANDATORY. Each player must wear an identical shirt or identical dresses; each player must wear the same color shorts/skirts (officials: common sense to allow for slightly different dyes or logo sizes). A player not wearing an appropriate uniform may NOT participate. Please contact the NJSIAA, in writing, should a problem exist relative to a school's inability to provide uniforms.

6. EQUIPMENT

Only approved USTA tennis balls shall be used, and three (3) new tennis balls must be provided for each match.

It is required that each court have scorecards for players to use in keeping the set score, adjustable net straps and nets in good condition. Penalty: If scorecards are not provided, the offending/home team will be required to start the match with a one game penalty plus loss of toss, on any court without scorecards. Penalty must be implemented at the start of play.

7. FORFEIT TIME

The issue of tardiness in arriving for a match is not regulated by the NJSIAA. Teams arriving late but close to start time are entitled to a 10 (ten) minute warmup prior to the introductions. All players participating in the varsity match must be present for team introductions at the designated start time for the match.

8. ORDER OF PLAY

The order of play shall be 1st singles, 2nd singles, 3rd singles, 1st doubles, and 2nd doubles. This can be modified by mutual agreement of both coaches. The choice of courts belongs to the home team.

If the courts are at "split" sites, the visiting team may request the matches be played at one site; the rationale being, their responsibility to their players legally and as their coach. Both sites may be used only with the consent of both coaches. Once started, a match may be moved to an alternate site only with the consent of both coaches.

9. WARMUP PERIOD

There will be a maximum warmup period of ten (10) minutes, including practice serves, which may be taken prior to the start of the match. Coaching may take place during the ninety (90) second period between the end of warmup and the start of the match. The warmup is expected to include well-intentioned opportunities for all both sides to hit groundstrokes, volleys, overheads, and serves.

If a match is interrupted by weather conditions for more than 15 minutes or if there is a transfer of sites, a 10-minute warmup is allowed before the match resumes, if either team requests.

10. CONTINUOUS PLAY

Play shall be continuous from the first service to the completion of the match.

- A. A three (3) minute rest period on court between the 1st and 2nd sets, and before a 10-point match tiebreak. Coaching may take place at these times.
- B. During the match, in a game, no more than twenty (20) seconds is to elapse between the end of one point and when the next ball is served.
- C. During the odd-game changeover, coaching is permitted, even after the first game; however, a maximum of ninety (90) seconds shall elapse from the last point of the game just ended to the time when the ball is served for the first point of the next game. The changeover may not exceed ninety (90) seconds.
During a 12-point tiebreak, there are no water breaks or sitting breaks during the changeovers and there is no coaching. Coaching is permitted on the changeovers of the 10-point match tiebreak.
- D. Except during changeovers, **NO** instructional comments may be made. (Violators will be subject to the point penalty system. Rules 18 & 19)
- E. Time violations will be addressed by a warning for the first offense and a point penalty for each subsequent violation.

11. INTERRUPTED PLAY

Whenever a **TEAM MATCH** is postponed after at least one (1) point has been played in any individual match, the entire line-up must remain the same for the rescheduled team match or individual matches will be forfeited. The continuation of interrupted play shall begin at the exact point it was discontinued with regard to score, the person serving, and the side of the court each player was on. A player who is unable to compete at the time of the rescheduled team match must forfeit that individual match.

The ultimate responsibility for terminating play in regard to darkness, weather conditions, or safety hazard rests with the home coach. In the case of tournament play, or any umpired matches, the responsibility rests

with the NJSIAA official, when present.

12. INJURY (Accident, loss of physical ability or condition/blood)

Injury is defined in the USTA regulations, as occurring from such mishaps as collision with a stationary object, i.e., net, post, fence, etc. or being hit with a ball or racquet or other object or a fall. Vomiting, dizziness, blisters or other similar treatable conditions are considered injuries. Only one timeout is permitted for the same injury or for cramping. The injured player will have no more than ten (10) minutes, before play is resumed or a default is declared. Coaches (who were designated at the start of the team match as speaking coaches) may speak with their players during an injury timeout. No allowance is to be made for natural loss of physical condition, as per USTA regulations.

If play is stopped for a bleeding player, it shall be resumed as soon as the bleeding has stopped, the court is cleaned up and contaminated item disposed of. A bleeding timeout may not exceed fifteen (15) minutes. If further bleeding cannot be treated on changeovers or set breaks, the match will be terminated. If the player is injured during the warmup period, a substitute may not replace them.

13. COACHES ARE OFFICIALS

A. Matches played without officials

It is imperative to the game that players be coached to call the lines honestly and to make any call that is in doubt in favor of their opponent. Occasionally, situations will arise where a need for a linesperson occur. The player recognizing the need should inform their coach immediately. The coach, in turn, must contact the opposing coach and together they should inform the players that they will act as observers to establish that calls are either proper or improper.

The coaches will go inside the fence and stand close enough to observe the entire court. The players will continue to make their own calls. If a player feels a bad call has been made, they may appeal to the coaches. If the appeal is upheld, the player making the bad call will lose that point. If the ball is so close that a question exists as to whether it was good or not, then the call shall stand.

If a mutually agreeable third party is present, they may become the linesperson. This is a situation that is not in the best interest of the sport or its players and every attempt, including withdrawal of an offending player, by their coach, should be made to avoid it.

B. Matches played with officials

When a player is overruled by an official, they automatically lose that point. After two overrules by an official during a match, the player will be subject to the point penalty system for any further overrules.

Either school may hire an NJSIAA certified official through the NJSIAA assignor, to deal with on-court situations. The school requesting an official will compensate the official and notify the opposing team that an official will be used.

WHETHER OFFICIATED OR NOT, COACHES ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF THEIR PLAYERS.

14. CALLING OF FOOT-FAULTS

If a player is foot-faulting, the opponent should warn them and notify their own coach. If it continues, both coaches will act as foot-fault judges. They will position themselves where they can see the baseline and call all foot-faults. Foot-faults, when called, must be called for or against all players involved.

15. LOSING TRACK OF SCORE

"In any argument about 'facts' it should be remembered that the position of each side has equal weight." Count all points and games agreed upon by the players and replay only the disputed points or games. When an official is not present, players may request help from their coaches (not spectators or teammates) in establishing the correct score.

Players are reminded that they must call out the score on every serve. When an official is present on the court, **there will be one** warning to the server for not clearly calling the score before each point. After that, there will be a one-point penalty each time the score is not called.

16. 12-POINT TIEBREAK

Sets which reach a 6-6 score shall be decided by playing a 12-point tiebreak. The first to reach 7 points, by a margin of at least two, wins the set.

A. SINGLES

A serves first point from deuce court; B serves points 2 and 3 (*ad and deuce*); A serves points 4 and 5 (*ad and deuce*); B serves point 6 (*ad*) and after they change ends, B serves point 7 (*deuce*); A serves points 8 and 9 (*ad and deuce*); B serves points 10 and 11 (*ad and deuce*); and A serves point 12 (*ad*). If points reach 6-all, players change ends and continue as before: A serves point 13 (*deuce*); B serves points 14 and 15 (*ad and deuce*); etc., until one player establishes a margin of two points. Changes of ends are to be made without any delay other than the twenty (20) seconds allowed between points. There is no coaching allowed during a 12-point tiebreak. The set is recorded as 7-6.

Players change ends for one game to start the next set, with Player B to serve first.

B. DOUBLES

Doubles follow the same pattern, with partners preserving the sequence of their serving turns.

(Assuming A & B vs C & D) Player A serves first point (*deuce*); C serves points 2 and 3 (*ad and deuce*); B serves points 4 and 5 (*ad and deuce*); D serves point 6 (*ad*) and after the teams change ends, D serves point 7 (*deuce*) ... A serves points 8 and 9 (*ad and deuce*); C serves points 10 and 11 (*ad and deuce*); and B serves point 12 (*ad*). If points reach 6-all, teams change ends and continue as before: B serves point 13 (*deuce*); D serves points 14 and 15 (*ad and deuce*); etc., until one team establishes a margin of two points. Changes of ends are to be made without any delay other than the twenty (20) seconds allowed between points. There is no coaching allowed during a 12-point tiebreak. The set is recorded as 7-6.

Pairs change ends for one game to start the next set, with team C & D to serve first.

17. 10-POINT MATCH TIEBREAK

When the score in a match is one set all, one tiebreak game shall be played to decide the match; this is called a 10-point match tiebreak. The tiebreak game replaces the deciding final set. The player/pair who first wins 10 points shall win this match tiebreak and the match, provided there is a margin of two points over the opponent(s). **New balls are NOT provided for a match tiebreak.**

A. SINGLES

A serves first point from deuce court; B serves points 2 and 3 (*ad and deuce*); A serves points 4 and 5 (*ad and deuce*); B serves point 6 (*ad*) and after they change ends, B serves point 7 (*deuce*); A serves points 8 and 9 (*ad and deuce*); B serves points 10 and 11 (*ad and deuce*); and A serves point 12 (*ad*). If points reach 6-all, players change ends and continue as before: A serves point 13 (*deuce*); B serves points 14 and 15 (*ad and deuce*); etc., until one player reaches 10 points and establishes a margin of two points. Coaching may occur on changes of ends during a 10-point match tiebreak, but the switching will last no more than ninety (90) seconds.

B. DOUBLES

Note that in doubles, the order of serving and receiving within the pair may be altered, as in the beginning of each set.

(Assuming A & B vs C & D) Player A serves first point (*deuce*); C serves points 2 and 3 (*ad and deuce*); B serves points 4 and 5 (*ad and deuce*); D serves point 6 (*ad*) and after the teams change ends, D serves point 7 (*deuce*) ... A serves points 8 and 9 (*ad and deuce*); C serves points 10 and 11 (*ad and deuce*); and B serves point 12 (*ad*). If points reach 6-all, pairs change ends and continue as before: B serves point 13 (*deuce*); D serves points 14 and 15 (*ad and deuce*); etc., until one pair reaches 10 points and establishes a margin of two points. Coaching may occur on changes of ends during a 10-point match tiebreak, but the switching will last no more than ninety (90) seconds.

The set shall be recorded as 1-0 on www.njschoolsports.com

18. SPECTATOR INTERFERENCE

Spectators are not allowed to interfere with play. Most spectator interference is of a verbal nature, with applauding of errors and intimidation the most common problems. Spectators are not allowed to coach during play, changeovers, between sets, or any other time. Spectators have no communication with players on court.

Infractions will be penalized according to #19 B as illegal coaching. Team members are considered spectators and may not coach.

If a player feels that spectators are interfering with the match, they should inform their coach immediately and cease play until the coach has contacted the opposing coach and the situation has been resolved. Each coach has the responsibility for controlling spectators associated with their team, with ultimate control resting with the coach of the home team.

If a coach feels that the conduct of the spectators, not their own, is such that there is an unfair advantage given to their opponent, the Athletic Director is directed to contact the Administrator/Athletic Director of the opposing school the day following said match. The match must be completed.

19. PLAYER CONDUCT AT TENNIS MATCHES

- A. Since most high school tennis is played without officials, it is imperative that all participants and coaches exhibit the utmost sportsmanship. Coaches are responsible for the actions of their players and for maintaining a high level of conduct and sportsmanship at all times. It is the coaches' responsibility to prevent difficulties and immature and/or inappropriate behavior, and to handle related problems.

A player is required to call all shots on their side of the court. Any ball which lands so close to the line that you are undecided is your opponent's point. Never enlist the aid of a spectator and never prejudge a ball. There is no excuse for bad line calls, cheating, gamesmanship, or the like. Any player who appears to be deliberately making bad line calls in the opinion of coaches or tournament officials is to be defaulted.

- B. Profanity, obscene gestures, crossing the net, ball abuse, racket abuse, emotional outbursts, delaying play by stalling, threatening an opponent with physical violence, taunting, excessive celebration, being illegally coached, or any other unsportsmanlike act will be penalized as follows:
- 1st offense - Point Penalty
 - 2nd offense - Game Penalty
 - 3rd offense - Default

IMPLEMENTATION OF NJSIAA POINT PENALTY SYSTEMS:

- While normally the imposition of penalties will be in accordance with the basic table, a flagrantly unsportsmanlike act may result in an immediate penalty, even a default, for a first offense.
 - A penalty on a member of a doubles pair is considered to have been imposed on the doubles pair.
 - All penalties are treated as if the points/games actually had been played so far as serving order is concerned.
 - Point penalty is scored as though the player had played and lost what would have been the next point.
 - Penalties may only be imposed by the offending player's coach. If a codeable violation is observed by the opposing coach, they may stop play and summon the other coach to review the situation.
- C. Each coach is responsible for the behavior of their players and is responsible for enforcing the rule as outlined and must inform the opposing coach accordingly. During tournament play, the coach is still responsible for enforcing the rule, but officials also may enforce rules. The coach must inform a tournament official of any warning or penalty imposed during play. The coach should not leave the court area during play to find an official, thus leaving players unsupervised.
- D. During the regular season, any coach NOT enforcing this rule is to be reported in writing by the Athletic Director of the opposing coach to their conference executive board. Copies must be sent to the Athletic Director of the offending coach and to the NJSIAA.
- E. When a player/coach is defaulted (disqualified) by an official or the NJSIAA Tournament Director, or as a result of point penalty procedure for a flagrant verbal or physical act, the additional two (2) match disqualification rule will be in effect. The Individual Tournament will count as one match.

20. WITHDRAWAL OF PLAYER(S)

Sometimes, when a match has already been decided, a coach elects to withdraw player(s) and forfeit the remaining match or matches; this counts as a loss on the individual player's record. This is within the rules of the game, although it is not fair from an ethical point of view, to the opponent. It is more acceptable in tournament play when a team must play another round later that day. Weather, darkness, travel time, sickness, injury, and mutual consent are examples of justifiable reasons for withdrawing players. To arbitrarily withdraw a player(s) is discourteous and should not be done.

21. DISPUTES & PROTESTS

Every attempt should be made to resolve a dispute first by the players, and then by the opposing coaches after being requested by the players, at the time and place it occurs, as quickly as possible. A dispute must either be resolved or become a protest. Upon becoming a protest, the steps outlined should then be used to arrive at a resolution.

In any case the match is to be completed, the proper method to resolve "protests" is as follows:

- A. The coach wishing to file a protest should first make the opposing coach aware that a protest will be made and second consult with their Athletic Director with regard to establishing that it is a protest-able situation and describing the protest in detail.
- B. The Athletic Director of the protesting school should contact the Athletic Director of the opposing school and attempt a resolution.
- C. If the protest involves a conference match, and cannot be resolved at the Athletic Director's level, it should be brought before the conference for resolution.
- D. If the protest involves a county match, then it would be brought before the county Athletic Association if it could not be resolved at the Athletic Director's level.
- E. If the conference/county cannot resolve the protest, then it should be brought to the NJSIAA for resolution within the provisions of the NJSIAA By-Laws, Article VII, Sect. 1.

The NJSIAA tournament director is available as a resource to assist in all situations of this nature.

Resources for resolving disputes incurred in dual matches are:

- USTA - Playing Rules of Tennis
- NJSIAA Tennis Rules and Regulations
- Conference Rules - if applicable
- County Rules - if applicable
- State Tournament Rules - if applicable
- "The Code" - Col. Nick Powell - USTA

DISQUALIFICATION

Participation by an ineligible player in any team match during the regular season results in forfeiture of points achieved by the ineligible player and all players who follow in that team match. If such forfeiture of points would have caused the school and/or player to fail to qualify for a tournament or if an ineligible player participates in a tournament **TEAM MATCH** and/or match, said school/player will be disqualified from the tournament immediately and the last opponent will advance in their place; schools and/or players eliminated prior to the last opponent will not re-enter tournament or competition.

22. INDIVIDUAL vs. TEAM PLAY

There is no regulation with regard to a player(s) competing in independent tournaments while a member(s) of a school team. How this is regulated is strictly "local option." The only regulation is that a player must participate in six (6) days of practices before being allowed to compete in interscholastic competition as a member of the team – that includes scrimmages, matches, and tournaments. Your guidelines as a coach should be fairness to the individual(s) and to the team. Each situation is unique; however, the welfare of the team should not be jeopardized for the benefit of an individual. As a guideline, the NJSIAA tournament director will adhere to the scheduled time and dates for team play and individual play.

PROCEDURE IN THE EVENT OF LIGHTNING

Termination, or temporary suspension, must always take place when an electrical storm is imminent. The decision to terminate or suspend a game/meet/event when an electrical storm is imminent may be made by either the host school or the official. A chain of command and designated decision-maker should be established for each organized practice and competition.

Recognition: Coaches, certified athletic trainers, athletes and administrators must be educated regarding the signs indicating thunderstorm development. Since the average distance between successive lightning flashes is approximately 2- 3 miles, any time that lightning can be seen or thunder heard, the risk is already present. Weather can be monitored using the following methods:

1. Monitor Weather Patterns - Be aware of potential thunderstorms by monitoring local weather forecasts the day before and morning of the practice or competition, and by scanning the sky for signs of potential thunderstorm activity.
2. National Weather Service (NWS) - Weather can also be monitored using small, portable weather radios from the NWS. The NWS uses a system of severe storm watches and warnings. A watch indicates conditions are favorable for severe weather to develop in an area; a warning indicates severe weather has been reported in an area and for everyone to take proper precautions.

Management:

1. Evacuation - If lightning is imminent or a thunderstorm is approaching, all personnel, athletes and spectators must evacuate to available safe structures or shelters. A list of the closest safe structures must be announced and displayed on placards at all athletic venues.
2. Thirty-minute rule - Once lightning/thunder has been recognized, it is mandatory to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard. Given the average rates of thunderstorm travel, the storm should move 10-12 miles away from the area. This significantly reduces the risk of local lightning flashes. Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count must reset the clock and another count must begin.
3. When one contest is suspended on a site due to thunder being heard and/or lightning being observed, all contests/activities on that site must be suspended.

Education on Lightning Danger:

Coaches, athletic trainers, officials, administrators, as well as athletes, must be educated regarding the signs indicating nearby thunderstorm development. Generally speaking, it is felt that anytime that lightning can be seen, or thunder heard, risk is already present.

Criteria for Suspension and Resumption of Activity

Once lightning has been recognized or thunder heard, by an official, a coach, the host site management personnel, or by a lightning detection system, the game must be suspended immediately with all players, coaches, spectators, and officials directed to appropriate shelters.

After the suspension, the plan should include strict, documented criteria for the resumption of activities. It is mandatory to wait at least 30 minutes after the last flash of lightning is witnessed or thunder is heard. Any subsequent lightning or thunder after the beginning of the 30-minute count must reset the clock and another count must begin.

Once the contest has been suspended, the 30-minute mandatory suspension in play is in effect. If the lightning detection system gives an "all clear signal" prior to the end of the 30-minute suspension time, the contest shall not be resumed until the 30-minute suspension time limit has elapsed, per the NJSIAA and NFHS policy. However, if a member school has a Board policy that states no play/no activity may resume until the lightning detection system gives the "all clear signal" even though the 30-minute suspension time has elapsed per NJSIAA/NFHS rule, that Board policy shall supersede NJSIAA/NFHS policy.

Evacuation Plan:

All personnel, athletes and spectators must be clearly informed of available safe structures or shelters in the event a thunderstorm approaches. A list of the closest safe structures should be announced and displayed on placards at all athletic venues when applicable. The person in authority must be aware of the amount of time it takes to get to each structure and the number of persons each structure can safely hold. For large events, time needed for evacuation is increased and there must be a method (i.e., announcement over loud speaker) for communicating the need for evacuation and directing both athletes and spectators to the appropriate safe shelters.

Safe Structures: The most ideal structure is a fully enclosed, substantial building with plumbing, electrical wiring and telephone service, which aids in grounding the structure. A fully enclosed automobile with a hard metal roof and rolled up windows is also a reasonable choice. School buses are an excellent lightning shelter that can be utilized for large groups of people. However, it is important to avoid contact with any metal while inside the vehicle.

Avoid using shower facilities for safe shelter and do not use showers or plumbing facilities during a thunderstorm as the current from a local lightning strike can enter the building via the plumbing pipelines or electrical connections. It is also considered unsafe to stand near utilities, use corded telephones or headsets during a thunderstorm, due to the danger of electrical current traveling through the telephone line. Cellular and cordless phones are considered reasonably safe, and can be used to summon help during a thunderstorm.

When caught in a thunderstorm without availability or time to reach safe structures, you can minimize the risk of lightning-related injury by following a few basic guidelines:

1. Avoid being the highest object. Seek a thick grove of small trees or bushes surrounded by taller trees or a dry ditch.
2. Avoid contact with anything that would be attractive to lightning. Stay away from freestanding trees, poles, antennas, towers, bleachers, and baseball dugouts, metal fences, standing pools of water and golf carts.
3. Crouch down with legs together, the weight on the balls of the feet, arms wrapped around knees, and head down with ears covered.

Pre-Match Sportsmanship Statement

The New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association requires officials to enforce all rules regarding unsportsmanlike conduct by coaches and players.

There will be no tolerance for negative statements or actions between players and coaches. This includes taunting, baiting berating opponents, "Trash-Talking" or actions which ridicule or cause embarrassment to them. Any verbal, written or physical conduct related to race, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion shall not be tolerated, could subject the violator to ejection, and may result in penalties being assessed against your team. If such comments are heard, a penalty will be assessed immediately.