



NJSIAA Newsletter - August 2025

New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association

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An Update from Colleen Maguire, Executive Director

Message from NJSIAA President

Welcome back, members of the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association (NJSIAA). I hope everyone had a chance to recharge and enjoy some time with family and friends.

As we begin the 2025-2026 athletic season, I want to thank you in advance for the dedication and professionalism you bring to our work. As we return, we are reminded of the incredible impact interscholastic athletics have on our students – teaching them teamwork, resilience, sportsmanship, and leadership as well as the important role we play in supporting them. Together, we share the responsibility of providing these opportunities while upholding the highest standards of fairness and integrity.

As this year's President, I look forward to working alongside each of you as we begin this new season. Together, let us continue to uphold the values of sportsmanship, integrity, and excellence that define the NJSIAA. I'm excited for the opportunities ahead and confident that, with our teamwork and commitment, we will have a productive year.

Best wishes for a safe, successful, and inspiring year ahead.

– Judy Finch-Johnson, President.

NJSIAA Executive Committee Officers

President

Judy Finch-Johnson Asst. Superintendent,
Elizabeth Public Schools

1st Vice-President

Kurt Karcich, Principal, Point Pleasant Borough
High School

2nd Vice-President

Dr. Gregory Troxell, Superintendent, Phillipsburg
High School

Past-President

Russell Petrocelli, Principal, DePaul Catholic

Spectator Code of Conduct

For the 2025-2026 school year, all member schools are required to adopt a spectator code of conduct policy in accordance with the following requirements:

1. Policy must be provided to, and signed off by, the parents/guardians of participating student-athletes during the sports registration process.
2. Policy must be posted at all venues hosting interscholastic competition, to the extent reasonably possible.
3. Policy must be made available to NJSIAA staff upon request.
4. Policy must define unsportsmanlike conduct.
5. Policy must include disciplinary actions for policy violations.

Please refer to the Guidelines, Policies and Procedures section of the NJSIAA Handbook for more information (p. 44).

Power Point Formula Updates

Based on feedback from sports committees, athletic directors, coaches, and officers of our leagues and conferences, the power point formula will be updated as follows for the 2025-2026 school year.

1. Out of state opponents – the .500 winning percentage has been eliminated – actual records will be used to calculate residual points for the first "N" number of games played by the opponent. The tournament regulations for each sport will identify the "N" number of games played.
2. The use of the average of all games played has been eliminated – power points will be based on the top "N" number of games played as of the cut-off date. The tournament regulations for each sport will identify the "N" number of games played.

Please note these updates will be uniformly applied to all sports using power points, with the exception of football.

Classifications

Please be reminded that 2025-2026 is the second year of the current two-year classification cycle. The classifications will only be updated to reflect the addition of new varsity programs, the removal of varsity programs that have been dropped, or changes in cooperative sport programs. There are no changes to all other schools that were included in the 2024-2025 classifications.

Please contact Jen Fischer (jfischer@njsiaa.org) with any updates or questions.

Predetermined State Semifinal Hosts

New to 2025-2026, NJSIAA will no longer rely on predetermined hosts for state semifinals in certain sports – soccer, girls volleyball, baseball and softball. The state semifinals will be hosted by the team with the higher power points, and the match-ups will remain as the North I v. North II sectional winner and the Central v. South sectional winner. The tournament regulations for these sports will be updated to reflect this change.

Soccer Mercy Rule

New to 2025-2026, NJSIAA has adopted a statewide mercy rule for boys and girls varsity soccer competition. The mercy rule will allow the game to end at the 20-minute mark of the second half if the goal differential is six (6) or more goals. After the 20-minute mark of the second half, the game will end once the goal differential becomes six (6) or more goals.

Please note this mercy rule is in effect for varsity competition only. Leagues/conferences and schools have the discretion to modify sub-varsity competition.

Gymnastics Tournament Restructure

New to 2025-2026, both the gymnastics team tournament and individual tournament have been restructured. Individuals will no longer compete at the sectional tournaments and will qualify based on their scores during the regular season.

Please review the tournament regulations for more information on how teams/individuals will qualify and how the tournaments will be structured.

NCAA Evaluation Period – B/G Basketball

The NCAA Basketball Evaluation Period will run September 3, 2025, through November 9, 2025, for NJSIAA member schools. During this period of time, a high school coach may be present at an evaluation workout requested by an authorized staff member of the NCAA program.

Please make sure your coaches are knowledgeable of the guidelines that can be found in the Guidelines, Policies and Procedures section of the NJSIAA Handbook (p. 2).

Administrative Assistants Workshop

NJSIAA staff will be hosting an in-person workshop on **Tuesday, October 7, 2025**, for new and/or limited experience administrative assistants. An Alert will be sent on or around September 3 with registration information.

Please note that Administrative Assistants who have previously attended this workshop should not register as the workshop is limited to 60 participants.

Tournament Regulations/ Rule Modifications

All fall sport tournament regulations and rule modifications have been posted to the NJSIAA website – refer to the landing page for each sport. Please make sure that your coaches have access to and are knowledgeable of both documents – majority of the phone calls to our office can be answered by reading the tournament regulations.

Specifically, please refer them to the second page of each tournament regulation – the section titled “New for this year’s state tournament”.

State Tournament Operating Procedures

Copies of the NJSIAA State Tournament Operating Procedures have been included in the fall rule book mailing. This resource provides the mandatory procedures that must be followed by every member school participating in an NJSIAA state tournament.

We also encourage schools to adopt many of the procedures during the regular season as they represent best practices, such as:

- Handshake protocols
- Crowd control guidelines
- Bands/music/noise makers policy
- Signs/banners policy

The online version of the procedures can be found on the NJSIAA website at:

[Tournament Operating Procedures](#)

State Tournament Assignments

Please be reminded that NJSIAA State Assignor(s) will assign all rounds of the state tournament. Higher seeded schools should not contact their local assignor for preliminary round games. However, they will need to contact the appropriate state assignor (as listed in the tournament regulations) to confirm the time, date and location of the event.

Varsity Score Reporting

All football varsity scores must be reported to Gridiron New Jersey immediately following each contest – please email football@njsiaa.org or text Jon Fass at (908) 872-4482.

All other varsity scores must be reported to [NJschoolsports.com](https://njschoolsports.com) immediately following each contest.

Lastly, please remind your coaches to make sure their schedules and results are correct on each site to ensure that United Power Rank (football) and power point data is accurate.

NJSIAA Coaches Handbook

Copies of the NJSIAA Coaches' Handbook have been included in the fall rule book mailing. The handbook has been revamped and updated over the summer so please share with your coaches across all sports.

The manual summarizes many important rules, regulations, policies, and procedures that we want to make sure all coaches understand. The manual also provides a valuable listing of "Do's and Don'ts" which addresses many commonly misunderstood rules that have gotten many coaches in trouble in recent years.

Member schools may request additional copies of the handbook by contacting Rich Baez (rbaez@njsiaa.org).

In addition, an online version can be found on the NJSIAA website at: [Coaches Handbook](#)

Emergency Action Plans

As the 2025-2026 school year starts, member schools are reminded of the importance of establishing Emergency Action Plans that are specific to interscholastic athletic events. The NJSIAA website has been updated with resources to assist member schools – please reach out to Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer, with any questions.

[Emergency Action Plans](#)

NFHS Learn

There are many online courses available on the NFHS Learn website (nfhslearn.com) that cover many different topics for all stakeholders – coaches, officials, administrators, student-athletes, and parents. Many of these courses are free and a complete directory can be found on the NJSIAA website under Current Resources. We also have a directory that is specific to each stakeholder – we encourage you to utilize these resources prior to or during each season.

[NFHS Learn](#)

In addition, NFHS has a new "My Staff" tool that helps athletic directors send and monitor courses for their coaches. The following link provides a tutorial on the new tool:

[NFHS My Staff Tool](#)

Steroid/Banned Substance Testing

Executive Order No. 72, issued in December 2005, requires NJSIAA to test for steroids/banned substances during its state tournament competition. NJSIAA partners with Drug Free Sports to facilitate its testing program.

During 2024-2025, Drug Free Sports administered 501 tests across 17 sports and 64 schools. All sample tests were negative.

All information surrounding NJSIAA's steroid/banned substance testing program can be found on its website under Health & Safety.

[Steroid/Banned Substance Testing Program](#)

Please make sure all coaches and student-athletes are aware of the Drug Free Sport Axis resource which is a free nutrition, health and wellness resource that provides the most up-to-date research on supplements and over the counter and prescription drugs. More information on this resource can be found on the NJSIAA website via the link above.

NJSCA Coaches Clinics

Consistent with 2024-2025, all coaches clinics will be free of charge to coaches of NJSIAA member schools. Please encourage your new, or limited experience, coaches to attend.

Below are the coaches clinics scheduled to date:

- Bowling clinic – October 8
- Golf clinic – October 17
- Fencing clinic – TBD

Coaches must register in advance to attend the clinic – online registration information will be posted via an Alert email and can be found on the Coaches Education web page. Please encourage your coaches to attend these clinics.

[Coaches Clinic Registration](#)

Officials Appreciation

NJ Scholastic Officials Association (NJSOA) will be hosting its fourth annual awards banquet on Sunday, September 14, 2025, at the Pines Manor. At the luncheon, 34 Officials of the Year Awards, 3 Distinguished Service Awards and 1 NFHS Section One Active Official Award will be presented.

The full list of all honorees can be found at:

[Officials Awards | NJSIAA](#)

In addition, NJSIAA will be celebrating officials' appreciation week **October 6 – 12, 2025**. Please encourage your coaches and captains to do something special to thank your officials during this week. The smallest token of appreciation means a lot to these individuals, and it is a great opportunity to teach our student-athletes the importance of gratitude.

Without officials there is no interscholastic competition.

Important Dates and Deadlines

Executive Committee:

September 17
October 15
November 12
December 10

Eligibility waiver deadlines:

September 22
October 24
December 18
January 30
February 20
April 23

Cooperative Sports application deadlines:

Spring sports – September 29
Fall sports – January 22
March – April 15

Annual meeting legislation proposal deadline:

December 1

Fall sports cut-off dates:

Field Hockey – October 25
Football (Public) – October 25
Football (Non-Public) – November 1
Gymnastics (Team) – October 21
Gymnastics (Indiv.) – November 1
Soccer – October 25
Tennis (Girls) – September 22
Volleyball (Girls) – October 25

Fall sports tournament entry periods:

Cross Country – October 1 – October 25
Field Hockey – October 1 – October 15
Football – October 1 – October 15
Gymnastics (Team) – October 1 – October 15
Gymnastics (Indiv.) October 1 – November 2
Soccer – October 1 – October 15
Tennis (Team) – September 1 – September 15
Tennis (Indiv.) – September 1 – September 23
Volleyball – October 1 – October 15