



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Al Stumpf, Assistant Director

Date: September 15, 2025

RE: Basketball Mercy Rule

Proposal

NJSIAA staff, with the support of the Basketball Committee and the Association's Leagues & Conferences, propose adoption of a mercy rule in the sport of boys and girls basketball. The mercy rule will be as follows:

“Upon the start of the third quarter, if the score differential reaches 35 points or more, the clock will stop only for a time out, injury, technical foul or when requested by the officials. Normal timing will not resume during the remainder of the game, with the exception of overtime. Any overtime period will resume normal timing.”

This mercy rule will be in place for all varsity interscholastic contests, including but not limited to regular season, league/conference tournament and state tournament contests. This mercy rule will supersede any previous rules adopted by a league and/or conference. For sub-varsity competition, leagues conferences are allowed to adopt this mercy rule or may modify the rule at their discretion.

Rationale

Statewide adoption of a mercy rule that is applicable to all interscholastic contests will bring consistency across all leagues and conferences and simplify application of the mercy rule for coaches and officials. It is in the Association's best interest to adopt a statewide mercy rule that is easily understood by all participants and site administrators. This will mitigate the risk of confusion or arguments that can take place when member schools are competing in non-league/conference contests.