



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Al Stumpf, Assistant director

Date: September 15, 2025

RE: B/G Fencing Tournament Restructure

Proposal

NJSIAA staff has been reviewing ways to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the state boys and girls fencing tournaments. Currently, we host a team tournament and individual tournament – which start with six district tournaments. The district tournaments have grown and are no longer sustainable under the current structure due to the lack of qualified officials, the increased length of the tournaments and difficulty securing facilities that can adequately host the events.

Therefore, NJSIAA staff, with the support of the Fencing Committee and Fencing Coaches Association, recommend the following changes to the boys and girls team tournament and the boys and girls individual tournament.

Proposed Tournament Structure

1. Team Tournament

- Teams will be classified into north and south sections.
- The top 16 teams by Power Points in each section will qualify – the top 12 highest matches will be used.
- Power Points will be maintained by NJ.com, consistent with other sports.
- All rounds through the sectional final will be hosted by the higher seed.
- The team championship will be hosted at a neutral site – north sectional winner v. south sectional winner.

2. Individual Tournament

- Individual results will be reported to a 3rd party platform – Touch By Touch (TbT) which is already in use by many in the fencing community and is free to member schools.
- The top 36 individuals by weapon, as ranked by TbT, will qualify.
- The individual tournament will be hosted as a single day event.

For schools that do not sponsor a fencing team, a member school will be allowed to enter up to the 3 individuals per weapon in the qualifying event – the NJ Fencing Coaches Centrulo/Santelli Tournament. The top four independent fencers by weapon will qualify for the individual tournament.

This new structure mirrors other NJSIAA sports that feature both team and individual championships.

Rationale

Under the current format, district tournaments combine both individual and team competition, resulting in events that last 5+ hours. Additionally, due to the increasing length and increasing participation in the district tournaments, it has become increasingly difficult to secure facilities and officials to host consistent tournaments.

By aligning the state boys and girls fencing tournaments with the similar format used by other sanctioned sports, the district tournaments will no longer need to be hosted. In addition, the team state tournament will increase the number of participating schools from 18 teams to 32 teams in an advancing bracket tournament that will rely on power point standings during the course of the season. This will bring a new level of excitement to both the regular season and state tournament for student-athletes.

This proposal will make the tournament more efficient, scalable, and equitable, allowing it to better accommodate the changing landscape of the sport.