

NEW JERSEY STATE INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION
1161 Route 130 North **Robbinsville, NJ 08691**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES
September 17, 2025

Roll Call - The meeting of the Executive Committee, held on Wednesday, September 17, 2025, at the NJSIAA Administration Building in Robbinsville, New Jersey, was called to order by the President, Judy Finch Johnson, at 11:02 am.

The following members were present: Jeff Baldino, Mike Bartram, Brian Bosworth, Jeremy Braverman, Anthony Browning, Carl Buffalino, Tony Cattani, Christopher Chiera, Jason Corley, Heather Crisci, Maria Crowley, Barry Fitzgerald, John Fraraccio, Michael Gallo, John Germano, Natalie Gorman, Dr. Brack Healy, Steven Jenkins, Elizabeth Jewett, Kurt Karcich, Jennifer Killough-Herrera, Howard Krieger, Dr. Michael Kuchar, Greg Lasher, Brendan McGovern, Jason Miller, Dr. Anne Mucci, Russell Petrocelli, Michael Raimondi, Senator Paul Sarlo, Steve Shohfi, Dr. Gregory Troxell, Joseph Ursino, Michael Vinella, Dennis Vinson, Paul Vizzuso, Tammy Wagner, Cynthia Wilks, and Sjocquelyn Winstead. Also present: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director; Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer; Tony Maselli, Chief Operating Officer; Al Stumpf, Derryk Sellers and Sandy Mamary, Assistant Directors; Steven P. Goodell, Esq., NJSIAA Counsel. The following sportswriters were in attendance: Jake Aferiat, *NJ Advance Media*; Darren Cooper, *NorthJersey.com*; and Mike McGarry, *Press of Atlantic City*.

Approval of Minutes - A motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Carl Buffalino, to accept the minutes of the June 11, 2025 Executive Committee meeting and the minutes of the June 11, 2025 Reorganization meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Legislative Update (Paul Anzano) - A listing of bills related to high school athletics being considered by the legislature was distributed. Mr. Anzano was unable to attend today's meeting but is available for questions.

Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire

First Ms. Maguire congratulated Executive Committee member, Tony Cattani, Principal at Lenape HS, for being named National Principal of the Year.

Ms. Maguire then thanked Parker McCay for sponsoring the association's Handbook, which was distributed to each committee member.

Annual Report FY 2024-2025 – A copy of the 2024-2025 Annual Report was distributed. Ms. Maguire thanked staff member Dena Maggio for pulling the report together. It provides a terrific overview of all that occurred during 2024-2025.

Executive Committee Subcommittees – A summary of assignments was distributed. Committee members were told to contact Liz Nodeland if they are unable to serve on any subcommittee. Otherwise, NJSIAA staff will be in touch directly when services are needed.

Sports Participation Report – Earlier this month, NFHS released the 2024-2025 sports participation survey. Nationally, NFHS reported a record 8.2 million students playing high school sports last year. Locally, NJ reported close to 282,000 students, which is a slight increase from the prior year. New Jersey continues to rank in the top ten state associations for total participation (currently #9) and offers state championships in 33 sanctioned sports, which is one of the largest in the country.

Ms. Maguire distributed a report summarizing participation for the top 10 boys and girls sports. There is continued annual growth in b/g volleyball, b/g wrestling and b/g golf. Over the past four years, these sports have averaged a 20% increase in participation. The decreasing trend in field hockey, baseball/softball and b/g lacrosse continues, with a 13% decrease in participation over the past four years. Lastly, nationally, girls flag football continues to be the fastest growing emerging sport among state associations. There's approximately 68K girls nationally, 4,000 from NJSIAA member schools.

Student Ambassador Update – A list of current student ambassadors was distributed. Ms. Maguire hosted the first meeting of the 2025-2026 school year on Sunday, September 7. She then thanked Mr. Goodell for attending and giving a comprehensive presentation on the background of NJSIAA's sportsmanship policy, recent examples of the Association's handling of unsportsmanlike activity, and an update on transgender sports participation – both nationally and locally. It was a really fun meeting. The group will meet again in February.

Administrative Assistants Workshop – Last year the association hosted two administrative assistant workshops which were very well attended and very well received. It is a shared goal to make their daily duties more efficient and a good opportunity to meet NJSIAA staff and understand the association's policies, procedures and responsibilities, and ask questions and solicit feedback to better the services provided by NJSIAA staff. Since it was popular, NJSIAA will host another workshop at the office on Tuesday, October 7th. The workshop is free and open to all member schools.

Volleyball State Tournament Reminder – Lastly, Ms. Maguire highlighted an important change to this year's girls and boys volleyball state tournament. The state tournament is moving from a best 2-of-3 format to a best 3-of-5 set format. This change was approved by this committee in May 2024. In addition, member schools are allowed to mutually agree to play a best 3-of-5 set format during the regular season.

There is no competitive advantage or disadvantage to either format. Power points are calculated in the same fashion regardless of the number of sets played. NFHS rules define a match as a best 3-of-5 set format; however, there is a footnote to their rules that allow state modification to play a best 2-of-3 set format. Currently, 48 state associations play a best 3-of-5 set format during both the regular season and state tournament for at least the past 15 years and no state has ever reverted to a best 2-of-3 format.

As noted in the sports participation report, both boys and girls volleyball has continued to see tremendous growth. For instance, over the past four years, girls volleyball participation has grown by approximately 11% (currently 3rd most populous girls sport with over 12,000 girls participating) and boys volleyball has been New Jersey's fastest growing boys sport. Participation has grown by 29% over the past four years with approximately 6,400 boys participating. Under the best 2-of-3 format, matches rarely last longer than 45 minutes and significantly limit participation opportunities so schools with growing rosters have limited playing time available to rotate players and provide opportunities to gain valuable playing experience. NJSIAA staff strongly believe that the sport is best served by increasing participation opportunities to help coaches spread playing time across their growing rosters. Lastly, the change to the state tournament does not mean that NJSIAA will be mandating that regular season be played as best 3-of-5. Any future proposal regarding the regular season will come after review by our volleyball committees and our leagues and conferences. However, please note it is not uncommon to allow flexibility during the regular season so this very well may be our new normal.

Program Review

Ten members of the Program Review committee met virtually on Monday, 9/15, and unanimously endorsed the following four proposals.

Basketball Mercy Rule Proposal – One Reading – Voice Vote – Mr. Stumpf explained the following proposal, which is endorsed by the NJBCA. In the last few years there have been too many

unsportsmanlike games where teams have run up the score. There was one game with a final score of 105-19. There is no learning in these types of games, it's unsportsmanlike, and could lead to issues.

NJSIAA staff, with the support of the Basketball Committee and the Association's Leagues & Conferences, proposed the 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.

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.

A motion was made by Carl Buffalino, seconded by John Germano, to adopt a mercy rule in the sport of boys and girls basketball. Motion carried unanimously.

Fencing Tournament Restructure Proposal – One Reading – Voice Vote – Mr. Stumpf also spoke on behalf of this proposal. NJSIAA staff have been reviewing ways to improve the efficiency and sustainability of the state boys and girls fencing tournaments. Currently, NJSIAA hosts a team tournament and an individual tournament, which starts 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 because 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. Therefore, NJSIAA staff, with the support of the Fencing Committee and Fencing Coaches Association, recommended the following changes to the boys and girls team tournament and the boys and girls individual tournament.

1. Team Tournament
 - o Teams will be classified into north and south sections.
 - o The top 16 teams by Power Points in each section will qualify – the top 12 highest matches will be used.
 - o Power Points will be maintained by NJ.com, consistent with other sports.
 - o All rounds through the sectional final will be hosted by the higher seed.
 - o The team championship will be hosted at a neutral site – north sectional winner v. south sectional winner.
2. Individual Tournament
 - o 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.
 - o The top 36 individuals by weapon, as ranked by TbT, will qualify.
 - o 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 three 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.

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 also make the tournament more efficient, scalable, and equitable, allowing it to better accommodate the changing landscape of the sport. Last, this new structure mirrors other NJSIAA sports that feature both team and individual championships.

A motion was made by Anthony Browning, seconded by Natalie Gorman, to approve the restructured boys and girls fencing team and individual tournament as approved by the Fencing Committee and Fencing Coaches Association. Motion carried unanimously.

Wrestling 30-Match Limit Proposal – One Reading – Voice Vote – On behalf of the Boys and Girls Wrestling Committees, NJSIAA staff recommended an increase to the 30-match regular season limit to 33 matches for the 2025–2026 season. This increase is unanimously supported by the association's leagues and conferences and the wrestling coaches associations and is for the 2025-2026 season only. Future regular season match limits will be determined once all tournament dates are confirmed with host facilities.

This was proposed because the individual state tournament was moved to March 12 – 14 for the 2025-2026 school year (the corresponding dates from this past season would have been March 5 – 7) due to a scheduling conflict with Boardwalk Hall. As a result, in May 2024, the Executive Committee approved a proposal to push the start of the team tournament back by one week to keep the tournaments progressing on a consistent schedule with prior years; therefore, resulting in one extra week of regular season competition. The increase in the regular season match limit will provide wrestlers with the opportunity to continue competing until the start of the team tournament.

A motion was made by John Germano, seconded by Joseph Ursino, to increase the 30-match regular season limit to 33 matches for the 2025–2026 wrestling season (only). Motion carried unanimously.

Wrestling District/Region Alignment Proposal – One Reading – Voice Vote – The wrestling realignment committee, made up of Executive Committee members Kurt Karcich, Dr. Gregory Troxell, Brendan McGovern, and former Executive Committee president Chuck Klaus, met in the spring to review the updated data through the 2024-2025 season. The committee then met again in August to review the realignment of certain schools that fall into the top 16 ranked schools, in accordance with the realignment plan approved by this committee in May 2023 and updated in May 2024. There was only minor movement of teams, and no region or district has more than two of the top teams. The updated alignment is data driven and the committee does an excellent job of providing equitable separation of the highest ranked teams, while prioritizing the best interests of the sport. Mr. Karcich shared that the committee spends a lot of time reviewing the data, looking at travel, trying to keep local rivalries intact, while keeping competitive balance. Nothing is ever perfect and of course transfers and anomalies happen each year among teams, but he is proud of the work the committee did and feels the alignment is fair and based on data.

A motion was made by Steven Jenkins, seconded by Anthony Browning, to approve the wrestling district/region alignment for the 2025-2026 wrestling season, as put forth by the Wrestling Realignment Committee. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)

Transfers Update – Reviewing transfers this summer has kept Mr. Popadiuk very busy. Over 1,800 transfers have been processed from June to today. That number is up approximately 160 transfers from last year. Mr. Popadiuk reviews approximately 4,000 total transfers each year.

Eligibility Updates – Mr. Popadiuk has also been busy reviewing age, credit, and semester waivers that were submitted and heard by the Eligibility Committee and Eligibility Appeals Committee (EAC). The next Eligibility Committee is set for October 1st.

Approval of 2025-2026 Eligibility Appeals Committee – One Reading – Voice Vote – A list of Executive Committee members who agreed to serve on the 2025-2026 Eligibility Appeals Committee was distributed. A motion to approve the 2025-2026 Eligibility Appeals Committee was made by Kurt Karcich, seconded by Russell Petrocelli. Motion carried unanimously.

Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)

Power Point Formula Update – Every two years the current point power points structure is reviewed. This year is the middle of the two-year cycle, so no major updates were made – just two minor adjustments requested by Athletic Directors and coaches. If you want the specific changes, please reach out to Mr. Maselli.

Sports Medical Advisory Committee Update – A list of the 2025-2026 Sports Medical Advisory Committee was distributed prior to today's meeting. This group meets four times per year.

FY 2024-2025 Steroid/Banned Substance Testing Update – Fall steroid testing will begin during the state tournament (testing is not done by NJSIAA during the regular season). The plan/number of tests per sport has been finalized. If your school receives an unfamiliar email from Drug Free Sports, it is most likely legitimate but please reach out to Mr. Maselli to confirm if you are unsure.

Fall Sports Regulations/Modifications – All fall sport tournament regulations and modifications are posted. Winter sports regulations will be posted soon.

Officials Registration and Services Update – Everything is going well with the transition back to Arbiter. Mr. Maselli is happy that staff now have full control of the website functions.

NJSOA Awards Luncheon – September 15th – The NJSOA / NJSIAA event honoring this past year's outstanding officials was held at the Pines Manor in Edison on 9/14 and was a success.

Al Stumpf Assistant Director Update

Soccer Mercy Rule Reminder – A mercy rule was approved for boys and girls soccer last year for all varsity interscholastic contests excluding the state championship final game. Mr. Stumpf had to remind schools of the new policy. Some thought it was optional but it's not, it's mandatory now. The rule is "The game will 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."

NCAA Basketball Evaluation Period – This year's evaluation period is September 3 – November 9th. Mr. Stumpf sent out an alert, detailing what is permitted because he received several reports of social media posts advertising open gyms for college coaches and recruiters to come visit. This evaluation can

only take place if requested by NCAA coach/staff. NJSIAA asked schools participating in illegal advertising to take down their posts. Most situations like that were done by parents, not schools.

Derryk Sellers Assistant Director Update

Gymnastics - New State Tournament Restructure – Seeding for this year's tournament will look different. Qualifying for the team sectional championships changed from four sections to a snake seeding. The top 32 teams with the highest three (3) meet averages will qualify. The top 32 teams will be snake seeded into four sections. The four sectional winners and the next 4 best scores will move on to the state championship. The sectionals and state championships will be conducted with five competing but only three scoring.

NJSCA Clinics – The Bowling Coaches Clinic is scheduled for 10/8 at Howell Lanes, and the Golf Coaches Clinic will take place on 10/17 at the Galloping Hills Golf Course. Mr. Sellers is working on securing a centrally located school to host the upcoming Fencing Coaches Clinic. Bernards HS may be able to do it, but that's not confirmed.

Sandy Mamary Assistant Director Update

Girls Tennis Wildcard Standards – The Tennis Committee proposed a change to the qualifications for the singles/double tournament. To qualify, wild card entries for the tournament must be higher than 5.38 UTR (for singles entries) and 7.0 combined (for doubles entries). The range is 1.0 – 16.5. Using this minimum requirement helps make the tournament more competitive.

NJPSSA Workshop Series – Ms. Mamary is working with the NJ Principal & Supervisors Association to offer a workshop series. She sent out a survey to Athletic Directors asking them to rank a range of ten topics that they'd like to learn more about. Out of 96 responses, 38 chose expectations about sportsmanship as their #1 topic. Each year, four workshops will be offered. Popular workshops may be repeated in future years.

Finance Committee Update – Russell Petrocelli

Approval of Monthly Checks – The June 10, 2025 through September 15, 2025 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Paul Vizzuso made a motion, seconded by Kurt Karcich, to approve the June 10 through September 15, 2025 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell) - Mr. Goodell had two updates to discuss with the committee in closed session but first he praised how well the new transfer rule is working. Out of 1,809 transfers this year, there has only been one legal appeal. That case was a public-school student who transferred for a third time, therefore had to sit. This student requested a hearing, but was denied by NJSIAA, since the rule does not allow appeals of the transfer rule. The student then appealed the decision to the Commissioner of Education, who also denied the request and agreed with NJSIAA's decision. The rule is working effectively and efficiently.

Old Business / New Business – none

Closed Session - A motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Russell Petrocelli, to move in to closed session at 11:41 am. Motion carried unanimously.

Open Session/Adjournment - There being no further business, a motion was made by Jason Corley, seconded by Dr. Gregory Troxell to move to open session and adjourn at 12:10 pm. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire
Executive Director

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