



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Colleen Maguire, NJSIAA Executive Director

Date: October 10, 2025

RE: Girls Flag Football Proposal – Pilot Program/State Adoptions

Background:

In December 2023, the NJSIAA Executive Committee unanimously approved a two-year pilot program for the sport of girls flag football. During the two-year pilot program, all five football leagues and conferences organized interscholastic competition with approximately 4,200 girls competing during the 2024-2025 school year. NJSIAA staff has received positive feedback from its leagues and conferences and consensus support to submit a proposal to the Advisory Committee in December 2025 to adopt girls flag football as a sanctioned sport.

Proposal:

I propose that NJSIAA extend the pilot program for one additional school year. This will allow time for legislation to be submitted to the Advisory Committee in December for their consideration – such legislation will be to adopt girls flag football as an NJSIAA sanctioned sport. If approved by the Advisory Committee, then the legislation will be on the ballot at the Annual Meeting in May 2026.

During this one-year extension of the pilot program, all schools will adhere to the following requirements:

- Student-athletes will meet all NJSIAA eligibility requirements.
- **Interscholastic competition across every league and conference will be played in accordance with NFHS rules and specific state adoptions listed below.**
- NFHS rules require four 12-minute quarters with a 1-minute intermission between quarters.
- Schools will be required to submit complete schedules and timely game results to NJ.com via njschoolsports.com – power points will be maintained during the season.
- Disqualifications will be submitted to NJSIAA staff – leagues and conferences will be expected to adhere to NJSIAA disqualification rules for participation in league or conference tournaments.
- Schools will be required to adhere to the NJSIAA Sportsmanship Policy and Spectator Code of Conduct Policy.
- Student-athletes who choose to wear leggings/sweatpants will be required to have shorts and/or skirts worn over the leggings/sweatpants.

Schools will continue to have the autonomy to adopt their own strenuous sports participation policy. However, if a school allows a student-athlete to participate in two (2) strenuous sports during the spring season, then the school must notify the student-athlete and family in writing that this will no longer be allowable if the proposal to adopt girls flag football is approved at the May 2026 Annual Meeting.

Summary of State Adoptions:

NFHS Rule 1 Section 7 identifies certain rules that may be subject to state adoption. Below is a list of the rules that schools will be required to adhere to during the 2025 - 2026 school year and moving forward.

Field Dimension

NFHS field diagram #1

(goal lines/sidelines must follow field diagram)

Number of Game Officials

1. Regular season – minimum of 3 officials – maximum of 4 officials
2. State tournament – 4 officials

Establish Overtime Procedures

- Coin toss is held before overtime – visiting team calls the toss
- Winner of the coin toss chooses:
 - Offense or defense first, or
 - Which end the overtime is played
- First overtime period:
 - Each team gets one possession consisting of a series of 4 downs (unless a new series is awarded by rule) starting on the 20-yard line
- Second overtime period:
 - Each team will be allowed to run one play from the 3-yard line or 10-yard line
 - 1 point from the 3-yard line
 - 2 points from the 10-yard line
- During the regular season, a maximum of 3 overtime periods will be played.
- During the state tournament, the second overtime period procedure will continue until a winner is declared
- The order of offense and defense flips with each overtime period
- Each team gets 1 timeout per overtime period (non-cumulative)
- During each overtime period, when the defensive team secures possession, the ball is dead, and the possession is over

Establish a Running Clock Rule

Once the score differential reaches 19 points or more in the 2nd half, the clock will stop only for a score, time out, penalty or injury – normal timing will not resume.

Establish a Suspended/Interrupted Game Rule

Games interrupted/suspended due to reasons beyond anyone's control (i.e., electrical storms, torrential rains, etc.) shall be continued at the site of the interrupted game unless otherwise agreed upon by the competing schools.

Leagues and conferences shall have established guidelines on how to resolve suspended games if the competing schools do not agree. For non-league and conference games, NJSIAA will follow the same Suspended Football Games guidelines found in the NJSIAA Guidelines, Policies and Procedures – see p. 46.

Length of Halftime

5 minutes *

*May increase to a maximum of 10 minutes upon mutual agreement of both schools prior to the start of the game and upon communication to all officials prior to the start of the game.

Lastly, upon adoption, all schools will be required to adhere to NFHS rules around uniforms, including the use of flags which are subject to state adoption (see below), during the 2026-2027 season.

Determine the Style and Measurements of Flags

- One-piece quick release belt
- 3 flags – 1 on each side and 1 in the center of the back
- Must be 1 ½” wide by 14” long
- Must be solid color that is contrasting to the player’s shorts
- Must be solid color that is contrasting to the opponent’s flags
- Excess flag belt must be tucked into the shorts and must not be visible