



**FOOTBALL SPORTS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**  
**2025 – 2026 SEASON**  
January 27, 2026 – 11:00am

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Greg Bailey, Football Coordinator  
Mike Bartram, State Rules Interpreter  
Mark Bitar, State Assignor  
Greg Troxell, Superintendent, Phillipsburg  
Anthony Browning, Woodbury Athletic Director  
Bill Tracy, St. Joseph Metuchen Athletic Director/Coach  
Brian Dunn, No. Valley Old Tappan Coach  
Steve Everette, Burlington Township Coach  
Nick Campanile, DePaul Catholic Coach  
Jason Dagato, Marlboro Coach  
Eddie Suri, Hasbrouck Heights Coach

1. Season in Review

*Week 0 Start Date*

Colleen explained that for the 2026-2027 season, Week 0 falls on the weekend prior to Labor Day. However, she has received outreach asking if schools can still plan to open on the Thursday even though it is not a holiday weekend – previously, opening day had been Friday when Week 0 is not Labor Day weekend. The committee unanimously supported to continue to allow a Thursday start to allow schools flexibility for travel or other local concerns. Mark commented that leagues and conferences should ensure that game scrimmages are scheduled for Wednesday to ensure there is no confusion of the status of games scheduled on the opening day – Thursday.

*Non-Public Multiplier:*

Colleen presented the list of non-public multiplier schools by category as proposed by the Football Leagues & Conferences for the 2026-2027 season – the same criteria is in place for determining which schools fall under which category. Colleen commented that the fluidity during the season of these categories has worked well and has ensured that multiplier schools are accurately accounted for during the season. The committee unanimously endorsed the recommended list of non-public multiplier schools by category.

*Classifications – Non-Playoff Eligible Teams:*

Due to an increase in the number of teams participating in the Super Football Conference non-playoff eligible division (Ivy division), the Football Leagues & Conferences recommend that these teams not be included when dividing the groups into north and south sections. For the 2026-2027 season, there will be 18 total teams in the Ivy division – the majority of teams are classified as Group 5, Group 4 or Group 3 but all fall in the north section. By excluding these teams from the section sort, then there will be an equitable number of teams eligible for the state tournament in each section across each group. Previously, the south section was at a disadvantage because more eligible playoff teams were classified in their section. The committee unanimously endorsed this recommendation.

2. Post-Season in Review

*Public School Seeding:*

Colleen discussed feedback and concerns about the modified seeding procedures that were used during the past season. While the modified seeding procedures did address some travel concerns raised in prior years, there were unintended consequences that many felt outweighed the travel concerns – such as losing a higher seed and/or home game. Colleen received a recommendation from the Football Leagues & Conferences to revert to the traditional snake seeding methodology that had previously been used. The committee discussed the pros and cons to each methodology, with some citing specific examples from this past season. After discussion, the committee unanimously endorsed reverting to the traditional snake seeding methodology for the 2026-2027 season and moving forward.

*Dates – Thanksgiving Day Teams:*

Colleen solicited feedback from the committee regarding the mid-week state championship games for match-ups involving traditional Thanksgiving Day teams to address some criticism that came to her attention. Overall, the committee felt it was important to allow these teams adequate time to prepare for the state championship game and recommended staying with the mid-week game. Moving the game earlier in the week would put the Thanksgiving Day team at a disadvantage while pushing the game to later in the week would not be fair to the opponent who would have to wait two weeks between the state semifinal and state championship.

3. Season Dates

Colleen provided a handout to the committee of proposed dates for the 2026-2027 season, which primarily reflect corresponding dates to the 2025-2026 season.

4. Tournament Staff Updates

Greg briefly updated the committee on the NFHS Football Committee meeting held earlier in the month in Indianapolis.

Mike reminded the committee of his availability to review uniform proofs prior to ordering to ensure they are compliant with NFHS rules.

Mark reported that the use of 7-man crews starting at the public sectional finals continues to be well received and worked very well. He also commented that he was pleased that all four football officials' chapters were represented in the 7 state championship games.

5. New Business – Old Business

There were no items noted.

6. Correspondence

Colleen received three correspondences that were reviewed by the committee – these are summarized below.

*Non-Public State Tournament – Morris Catholic:*

Consideration be given to add a Non-Public C classification and rebalance the non-public classifications based on strength. The committee did not support this proposal nor see the need to add a Non-Public C classification.

*Week 0 – Thanksgiving Day Teams – Dumont High School:*

Allow traditional Thanksgiving Day teams to schedule 9 games prior to the cut-off – Dumont believes these teams are at a competitive disadvantage at the cut-off. The committee did not agree with, or support, this proposal.

OSI Percentage for a Loss – Shawnee High School:

Increase the percentage a team receives for a loss from 50% to either 60% or 65%. The committee recommends that more time be spent reviewing this proposal to identify if other options may need to be considered as well. The committee agreed that changes should not be adopted for next season as divisions and schedules are done – this proposal could have a significant impact on these schedules.

Steve commented on behalf of the NJFCA Executive Committee that they have reviewed the proposal – they have concerns but that they are also looking at other options to help enhance the proposal.

Colleen told the committee that the proposal is tabled for now pending further review and feedback.

Respectfully submitted,  
Colleen Maguire, Executive Director