



## **Proposal # 1 – Girls Flag Football, proposed by NJSIAA Staff**

On behalf of NJSIAA staff, Colleen Maguire presented this proposal, which was unanimously pushed forward by the Advisory Committee. Flag football is growing in New Jersey. In 2022, girls flag football was introduced to NJSIAA member schools through partnerships with the NY Jets, NY Giants and Philadelphia Eagles. During the 2022-2023 school year, 83 teams hosted a girls flag football team with over 2,000 student-athletes participating. Participation has continued to grow each year across the state. During the 2024-2025 season, over 140 NJSIAA member schools hosted girls flag football with approximately 4,200 girls participating. Nationally, girls flag football is the fastest growing emerging sport as reported by the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and continued growth is anticipated among NJSIAA member schools.

NJSIAA staff, in conjunction with the football leagues and conferences, proposed to officially add Girls Flag Football to the list of NJSIAA sanctioned sports and to add the below Specific Sport Regulations section to the NJSIAA Constitution and Bylaws. By approving the addition of Girls Flag Football as its own sport under the Specific Sports Regulations, the framework is in place to officially recognize Girls Flag Football as a sanctioned sport starting with the 2026-2027 school year.

### **RULES AND REGULATIONS AMENDMENT (The following section is proposed to be added to the NJSIAA Rules and Regulations, Specific Sport Regulations.)**

#### **Girls Flag Football**

Section 1 Rules National Federation Flag Football Rules, unless modified herein, shall govern all NJSIAA games.

Section 2 Start of Practice Provided for in Program Regulations, Section 6.

Section 3 Start of Regular Schedule Provided for in Program Regulations, Section 8.

Section 4 End of Season Provided for in Program Regulations, Section 10.

Section 5 Transfers A student who transfers after the NJSIAA Competition Start Date for each sport, regardless of whether the transfer was the student's first transfer, shall be ineligible to participate in any post-season championship competition at the new school.

Section 6 Scrimmages There is no maximum limit to interschool scrimmages per week. However, a player may not scrimmage on three (3) consecutive days. From the start of the regular season until the end of the State Tournament, regular season interschool scrimmages count toward the maximum number of games allowed.

Section 7 Games Per Week Games may not be played on three (3) consecutive days.

Section 8 Maximum Games Provided for in Program Regulations, Section 15.

Section 9 Quarters Per Day A player shall not play in more than five quarters during the same calendar day. This would include freshman, sophomore, junior varsity and varsity competition. NOTE: Overtime periods are a continuation of the 4th quarter.

*CL: Violations of this section result in ineligible participation and forfeiture of the game.*

A motion was made by Steven Jenkins, seconded by John Fraraccio, to endorse Girls Flag Football as a NJSIAA sanctioned sport starting with the 2026-2027 school year and adding the Flag Football Specific

Sport Regulations section detailed in the 1/21 Executive Committee meeting to the NJSIAA Constitution and Bylaws. Motion carried unanimously. This proposal will now move forward to be reviewed by the membership at NJSIAA's two March sectional meetings. The membership can leave as is or recommend changes before final approval for the annual meeting ballot.

### **Proposal # 2 – Cooperative Sports – Girls Wrestling Tri-Op, proposed by Joe Ward**

On behalf of the GMC and Big North Conferences, Joe Ward, Athletic Director at Woodbridge HS, explained this proposal, which was unanimously pushed forward by the Advisory Committee. Schools are looking to improve the sport of girls wrestling and fill out all weight classes at meets. This is the opposite of ice hockey which formed tri-ops because of declining numbers. This was proposed to help the sport grow. The proposal is as follows:

#### *Current Bylaw Article III, Section 7. Cooperative Sports Programs C.3.*

In Cooperative Sports Programs involving Ice Hockey, three public schools or three non-public schools may combine to form a tri-school Cooperative Sports Program with a maximum thirty (30) student-athlete roster, if their respective leagues approve. Public schools may not combine with non-public schools.

#### *Change to Bylaw*

In Cooperative Sports Programs involving Ice Hockey **and Girls Wrestling**, three public schools or three non-public schools may combine to form a tri-school Cooperative Sports Program with a maximum thirty (30) student-athlete roster, if their respective leagues approve. Public schools may not combine with non-public schools.

#### *Rationale*

This bylaw change is being proposed in order to allow student-athletes in the sport of girls wrestling to compete as a full team, comprised of all weight classes, and to help formulate teams to help grow the sport of Girls Wrestling so schools can eventually have their own individual teams.

A motion was made by John Fraraccio, seconded by Steven Jenkins, to endorse three public schools or three non-public schools being allowed to form a tri-school Cooperative Sports Program, with a maximum thirty (30) student-athlete roster in Girls Wrestling, if their respective leagues approve. Public schools may not combine with non-public schools. Motion carried unanimously. This proposal will now move forward to be reviewed by the membership at NJSIAA's two March sectional meetings. The membership can leave as is or recommend changes before final approval for the annual meeting ballot.

### **Proposal # 3 – Lacrosse Shot Clock, proposed by Dr. Tony Negrin & Matt Kovachik**

After a lengthy discussion, the Advisory Committee unanimously pushed forward a proposal set forth by Delbarton School to adopt a shot clock for boys and girls lacrosse beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. Sponsors of the legislation feel this adoption will promote fairness, increase player development and minimize officials' discretion. Logistic questions were asked and concerns were expressed about paying additional clock workers with already limited budgets. Dr. Healy shared that students are used as line operators in volleyball, and Mr. Kovachik shared that officials offered to do it too. Mr. Frazier shared that there was thorough discussion in the Advisory Committee meeting about the financial impact of this proposal.

The proposal submitted contained multiple letters of support and rationale in favor of a lacrosse shot clock from lacrosse coaches and administrators, including NJSIAA State Rules Interpreter Keith Glock and NJSIAA Assignor Jack Lally. Mr. Jenkins asked if the shot clock would be mandatory for sub-varsity. The answer is no, varsity only, but it's up to schools if they want to use it for JV.

A motion was made by Brendan McGovern, seconded by Michael Raimondi, to endorse the adoption of a shot clock for boys and girls lacrosse. Motion carried unanimously. This proposal will now move forward to be reviewed by the membership at NJSIAA's two March sectional meetings. The membership can leave as is or recommend changes before final approval for the annual meeting ballot.

#### **Proposal # 4 – Basketball Shot Clock, proposed by Kris Grundy and Nick Mariniello**

On behalf of the NJ Basketball Coaches Association (NJBCA), Montgomery HS and Christian Brothers Academy, Kris Grundy and Nick Mariniello presented a proposal to mandate the use of a 35-second shot clock in boys and girls basketball games, including the State Tournament, at the Varsity level only. It is encouraged for member schools to use it at the younger levels to develop players and coaches when they are promoted to the varsity level, but it will not be required. The Advisory Committee recognized the financial impact of this proposal and discussed it at length, then ultimately endorsed the proposal by 8-2 vote.

Implementation Year would be the 2027-2028 School Year so approval now will give more than ample time for School Districts to budget for expenses. Proponents of this proposal have been working with NJ State approved vendors and are confident they can get an economical cost for implementing shot clocks into gyms across the state. In addition, this timeline will give member schools more than ample time for Shot Clock Operators to be trained. Operating a shot clock is a minimal learning curve. It involves managing a single button for resets—a task that can be taught in minutes. School staff, volunteers, or student managers can easily be trained to handle this task if that is the choice of the district. The complexity of implementation has been overstated; the reality is far simpler. Assignors from across the state have expressed this is not only a beneficial rule improvement but would be able to provide training and use either novice officials or seasoned officials who are no longer active to operate the shot clock, they can assign shot clock operators if a school so chooses like they do for football.

#### Reason for Proposal:

There are 32 states that have adopted a high school basketball shot clock. New Jersey has arguably the best high school basketball product in the United States. Every level of basketball from USA Basketball, All NCAA Divisions and Professional Leagues both in the USA (NBA, WNBA) and around the World (FIBA) have adopted a shot clock.

NFHS Basketball Rules Committee. The implementation of the 35-second shot clock was approved by state adoption for the 2022-23 season. This presents an opportunity for New Jersey to follow many other states towards progressive initiatives that positively improve the quality of play.

In addition we feel the implementation of the shot clock will have the following positive and long lasting effects on NJ high school basketball:

1.) Aligns New Jersey with National Standards: Universal alignment of basketball rules across the State of New Jersey amongst amateur levels. College and High School Basketball in the state would mirror each other with the same fundamental principles. This would produce a fluid structural system that is clearly identifiable. Thirty-two (32) states have already implemented the shot clock including several nearby or bordering states and others are proposing to move to implementing a shot clock in the near future. Adopting a shot clock would help New Jersey stay competitive and showcase the high level of talent our state consistently produces.

2.) Promotes Better Pace and Flow: A shot clock eliminates stalling and keeps the game moving, creating more possessions, more action, and a more exciting experience for players and fans alike.

3.) Builds Essential Life Skills: Competing with a shot clock enhances critical life competencies: communication, leadership, decision-making under pressure, and resilience. These transferable skills extend beyond the hardwood, helping prepare young men and women for success in college, careers, and community life. Players learn to execute more efficiently and make smarter decisions under time pressure

4.) Referees Will Benefit and Improve: Referees support the implementation of a shot clock. It simplifies their responsibilities and minimizes subjective calls such as the 5-second closely guarded rule, which often leads to inconsistent enforcement and unnecessary confrontations. With a shot clock in place, officials can focus more on the flow of the game, improving accuracy and game management while fostering a better playing environment.

5.) Prepares Players for the Next Level: College basketball uses a shot clock, and players who compete out of state or in national showcases are already accustomed to it. By not using one here, we put our athletes at a disadvantage when adjusting to faster-paced, time-managed play.

Discussion ensued. Mr. Grundy and Mr. Mariniello explained that several assignors are in favor of this rule too – it eliminates the five-second closely guarded rule. In a survey sent out by NJBCA, 85 percent of coaches who responded voted favorably. And just like how volleyball moved to five sets because that's the format in college, this change would better prepare those planning to play collegiate basketball. Carl Buffalino expressed as a coach he is philosophically opposed to the proposal since it takes away what he would want to do as a coach. Mr. Grundy recognized this and used to feel same way, but feels as the game has evolved, the style of play needs to be picked up. Participation numbers are going down – people won't want to see a 32-32 score. Also feels 30 seconds is a lot of time. Mr. Grundy did share there have been concerns expressed to him in Bergen County about operating the clock. John Germano questioned how much the game will speed up since first the mercy rule was adopted, now this but Ms. Maguire explained these are two different issues. The Mercy Rule was to provide uniformity since everyone was applying different rules throughout the state.

A motion was made by Michael Raimondi, seconded by Brendan McGovern, to endorse mandating a 35-second shot clock in boys and girls basketball games, including the State Tournament, at the Varsity level only. Motion carried unanimously. This proposal will now move forward to be reviewed by the membership at NJSIAA's two March sectional meetings. The membership can leave as is or recommend changes before final approval for the annual meeting ballot.

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### **Executive Director Update – Colleen Maguire**

**Wrestling Update** – Girls wrestling continues to see tremendous growth. As a result, new to this year is the addition of 12 district tournaments. Ms. Maguire thanked all the schools who volunteered to host a district which will be held on the Sunday after the boys district. The district and region alignment has been posted via an Alert email and can also be found on NJSIAA's website. This alignment will look a little different from the boys. The goal was to balance the number of participants across all districts – not the number of schools (some may have 12 wrestlers while some may have 1 or 2), so there is a varying number of schools in each district. Each district has approximately 140 – 145 participants. Long-time tournament director, Howie O'Neil, has done a great job balancing the participation across all districts.

The association has been soliciting the names of all school board approved wrestling coaches for both boys and girls teams via an online form. These lists will be relied on during the state tournaments – especially when issuing credentials for the individual state championships in Atlantic City. Each year there are reports of club coaches or other individuals who are not school board approved in the corner at events so any coach who is not on the list provided by the school will be removed from the facility and the credential will be revoked.

The individual tournament continues to grow. This year will be advancing 48 additional girls wrestlers. NJSIAA tournament staff work hard to ensure everyone around the floor area is approved to be there.

**Competitive Balance Policy Update** – A results summary of the competitive balance policy for football was distributed. This is the first year that the policy is in effect, for the sports of football, boys basketball and girls basketball. The summary lists fourteen schools which met the success factor – points assigned for each win in the state tournament. Ms. Maguire thanked Mr. Popadiuk for his help reviewing the information. After review, six schools were determined to be non-traditional schools who meet the requirements to be placed in a higher classification group. All six schools have been notified. A similar review of the basketball season will be distributed in the spring.

**NJSIAA Hall of Fame – Class of 2026** – NJSIAA is pleased to announce the following individuals who have been selected for the Hall of Fame Class of 2026.

**5 Student-Athletes**

Audrey Gomez – Girls Basketball – St. John Vianney High School  
Jack Cust, Jr. – Baseball - Immaculata High School  
Janet Marie Smith-Leet – Cross Country – JP Stevens High School  
Jonathan Taylor – Football – Salem High School  
Lisa Sweeney Van Ackeren – Softball - Rancocas Valley Regional High School

**1 Coach**

Tara Madigan – Girls Soccer - Northern Highlands Regional High School

**1 Contributor**

Bill Bruno – NJSIAA Assistant Director

Also being honored on that day is Executive Committee member/Past President Steve Shohfi. He will receive the 2026 Award of Honor recipient for his longtime service on the Executive Committee, his service on the eligibility appeals committee and several other ad hoc committees and his efforts helping the association navigating the COVID-19 pandemic.

The induction ceremony will be held at the Westin at Forrestal Village in Princeton on Sunday, March 29, 2026. Anyone wishing to attend should reach out to Liz Nodoland.

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**Chief Compliance Officer Update (Paul Popadiuk)**

**Eligibility Updates** – Spring eligibility waiver requests are due soon. 2/1 is the academic credit deadline to be eligible for athletic competition during the second semester.

**Disqualification Updates** – Nine teams (3 ice hockey, 2 girls basketball and 4 boys basketball) are ineligible for NJSIAA state tournaments due to having three or more disqualifications this season.

**Fall Cooperative Sports Program Application Deadline** – Applications for fall cooperative sports programs are due January 22, 2026.

**Bylaws – International Student Policy Clarifications – Second Reading – Roll Call Vote** – This proposal was presented and reviewed in the December 10, 2025 Executive Committee meeting (and detailed in the December 2025 meeting minutes). There being no further discussion or questions, a motion was made by Kurt Karcich, seconded by Dr. Gregory Troxell, to amend NJSIAA Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 M.2 to allow international students who are housed with district staff to play on the sub-varsity level and also permit international student athletes to participate alongside varsity athletes, without their results counting toward the varsity outcome in the following sports that may not have sub-varsity levels:

Cross Country, Gymnastics, Bowling, Swimming/Diving, Fencing, Golf and Track & Field. A roll call vote was taken. Final Vote: Yes: 38; No-0; Abstain-0. Motion passed second reading unanimously.

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### **Chief Operating Officer Update (Tony Maselli)**

**Ice Hockey Updates** – With the exception of some disqualifications, the season is moving along smoothly.

**Sports Medical Advisory Committee (SMAC) Updates** – The committee focused on developing a NJ concussion video for officials. There will possibly be another one for coaches in the future.

**Fall Steroid Testing** – 148 fall athletes were tested. One person tested positive, and now unable to participate in high school sports for 365 calendar days. The student is not appealing this decision.

**ArbiterGame Workshops** – ArbiterGame, a division of Arbiter, asked NJSIAA to schedule a few training workshops for schools to learn more information about their platform and their capabilities, including scheduling contests.

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### **Al Stumpf, Assistant Director Update**

**Basketball and Fencing Update** – Entry forms open next week for both the basketball and fencing tournaments. This past weekend, the qualifying tournament for independent fencers took place (fencers without a school program). This was the largest turnout to date - 49 entered – 24 qualified for NJSIAA 's individual state championship, which will be held on 3/7. It was moved to this date to accommodate Hunterdon Central HS already hosting a NJSIAA wrestling event on the originally scheduled date.

**Unified Basketball and Bowling** – Unified Basketball opens next week. The Unified Bowling Championships were moved to 3/3 per the request of Special Olympics since they have a conference on the originally scheduled date.

**National Girl & Women in Sports Day (NGWSD) Event** – Mr. Stumpf thanked staff member Dena Maggio for her work in planning this event. 321 girls will be honored.

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### **Derryk Sellers, Assistant Director Update**

**Bowling Update** – The season is rolling along 😊. There was a change this year to how team rankings for the state tournament qualification are calculated using the PowerPoint system. Last year it factored in the top four (4) individual scores per match, but this year a five-bowler format is being utilized for both match play and PowerPoint calculations. This change was bumpy for schools at the beginning of the season, but now they are adjusting.

**Winter Track Update** – The Bubble has been renovated. The bad news is there are no bleachers or chairs allowed. The good news is it's not cold inside anymore. Mr. Sellers reported the relays went great.

**NJSCA Coaches Clinics** – 180 coaches attended the tennis clinic on 1/9 at Princeton University. It was a great clinic – coaches reported they learned a lot. Mr. Sellers thanked the university for hosting.

**NJSCA Hall of Fame / Awards Luncheon – January 11, 2026** – Mr. Sellers was excited to share information about the inaugural Bill Bruno Coaching Award given out at this year's event to a coach who embodies the morals and values that Bill Bruno represented. The inaugural recipient was Abraham Clark

coach, Michael Smith, and he couldn't have been a more perfect choice. He reached out to Bill's wife, who presented the award so the two could learn more about each other. Jeremy Braverman applauded this award and shared nice words about Mr. Bruno, since Mr. Bruno was his first boss.

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### **Sandy Mamary, Assistant Director Update**

**Swimming & Diving Update** – The team tournament will be seeded next week. The criteria for back ledges have been distributed to all facilities.

**NJPSA Workshop Series** – 96 people have signed up for last workshop in the NJPSA series, titled Athletics and School Finance. The Union City BA will be the guest speaker. Power point presentations for the first three workshops were previously sent to the committee. Ms. Mamary has received a lot of positive feedback from Athletic Directors and Executive Committee members for this workshop series.

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### **Finance Committee Update – Judy Finch-Johnson**

**Approval of Monthly Checks** – The December 9, 2025 through January 19, 2026 checkbook was approved by the finance committee and all checks were approved per policy before they were disbursed. Barry Fitzgerald made a motion, seconded by Kurt Karchich, to approve the December 9, 2025 through January 19, 2026 check registers. Motion carried unanimously.

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**Report of Counsel (Steven P. Goodell)** – Mr. Goodell emailed a litigation update to the committee prior to the meeting.

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**Old Business / New Business** – none

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**Adjournment** - There being no further business, a motion was made by Dr. Gregory Troxell, seconded by Steve Shohfi at 12:03 pm, to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Colleen Maguire  
Executive Director

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