



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director

Date: April 13, 2026

RE: NJSIAA Football Tournament Regulations

On behalf of the Football Committee and the Football Leagues and Conferences Committee, NJSIAA staff recommends the following updates to the football tournament regulations.

Week 0 Start Date

Traditionally, when Week 0 falls on Labor Day weekend, schools have been allowed to play on Thursday. For the 2026-2027 school year, Week 0 falls on the weekend preceding Labor Day weekend. However, schools would still like the flexibility of playing on Thursday to assist with their staffing availability. Both committees unanimously endorsed designating the Thursday of Week 0 as the opening day for all levels of competition moving forward.

Public School Snake Seeding - Update

The Football Leagues and Conferences Committee solicited feedback on the modified seeding procedures that were used during the 2025-2026 season. The overall feedback indicated that the modified seeding procedures did address some travel concerns, the unintended consequences outweighed the benefits of the reduced travel concerns – there were several instances of schools losing a higher seed and/or home game. Both committees unanimously endorsed reverting to the traditional snake seeding methodology for the 2026-2027 season and moving forward.

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 the north/south section alignment exclude these schools to ensure that there is an equitable number of schools eligible for the state tournament in each section across each group. The Ivy division schools are all in the north section and this led to a disadvantage for the schools in the south sections – the north sections had less playoff eligible schools classified. Both committees unanimously endorsed excluding the Ivy division schools from the north/south section alignment.

Non-Public Multiplier Schools

Below is the list of non-public schools that will start the 2026-2027 season in the following categories. There are no changes to how the multiplier will be calculated when a public school competes against one of these schools. In addition, consistent with prior year, if a non-public multiplier school loses to a non-multiplier school during the regular season, then they will move down a category or no longer be considered a multiplier school. This allows necessary fluidity during the course of the season to ensure the integrity of the multiplier values.

A (80% of SI)	B (75% of SI)	C (70% of SI)	D (70% of SI)
Bergen Catholic DePaul Catholic Don Bosco St. Joe's (Montvale) St. Peter's Prep	Delbarton Paramus Catholic Red Bank Catholic St. Joe's (Metuchen)	Pope John St. Augustine Seton Hall Prep	Donovan Catholic Holy Spirit St. John Vianney St. Thomas Aquinas

Season Dates – 2026 – 2027 School Year

Below is a list of regular season start dates and state tournament dates:

Week 0 – Thursday, August 27, 2026 (all levels)

Week 1 – Thursday, September 3, 2026

Public – First Round – Friday, October 30, 2026, or Saturday, October 31, 2026

Non-Public First Round – Friday, November 6, 2026, or Saturday, November 7, 2026

State Championships – Friday, November 27, 2026 – Sunday, November 29, 2026 *

State Championships – Thanksgiving Day team – Wednesday, December 2, 2026

*Dependent on facility availability at Met Life Stadium and Rutgers University.