



To: NJSIAA Executive Committee
From: Paul Popadiuk, Chief Compliance Officer
Date: May 14, 2025
RE: NJSIAA Bylaws and Handbook Changes Proposal

The NJSIAA Chief Compliance Officer was tasked with reviewing the NJSIAA Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines, Rules and Procedures to ensure accuracy and consistency. There are a number of areas that are not worded correctly, not within the spirit of the rule, need to be amended in order to clarify our practices or address new areas of need. In consultation with NJSIAA staff and counsel, the NJSIAA Chief Compliance Officer recommends the following changes to the NJSIAA Bylaws, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines, Rules and Procedures. Each recommended change is supported by a brief rationale statement.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS

[Additions are underlined, and deletions are ~~struck through~~.]

Bylaws, Article VII, Protests

Section 2

There shall be a committee consisting of the Executive Director or designee, the President, and a member of the Executive Committee who shall meet at the call of the Executive Director to hear any disputes and grant interim relief pending a decision on the matter by the Eligibility Committee, Controversies Committee or Executive Committee.

Any relief granted will expire at the end of the next Executive Committee meeting unless extended by resolution of the Executive Committee. The President and Executive Committee member, if they act in such capacity, shall be disqualified from discussion and voting on such matter before the Executive Committee.

Article XIII, Hearing Procedure

Section 6

~~In emergent circumstances where time will not permit a controversy to be heard by the Controversies Committee. The Executive Committee may hear such a controversy and render a decision thereon in an informal manner after all involved parties are provided with notice and an opportunity to present their positions before the Executive Committee.~~

In emergent circumstances where time will not permit a matter to be heard by the Executive Committee or Controversies Committee, the Executive Director may convene a Protest Committee to hear such matters and render a final decision thereon in a formal manner after all involved parties are provided with notice and an opportunity to present their positions before the Protest Committee. The Protest Committee will consist of the Executive Director or designee, the President, and a member of the Executive Committee.

Rationale: *This clearly defines the role of the Protest Committee when there is no time to convene The Executive or Controversies Committees.*

NJSIAA Rules and Regulations, Specific Sport Regulations

4. Disqualification

- a. Any student-athlete or coach disqualified before, during or after an interscholastic event for unsportsmanlike and flagrant verbal or physical misconduct will be disqualified from the next two (2) regularly scheduled games/meets, with the exception of football which will carry a one (1) game disqualification, at that level of competition and all other game(s)/meet(s) in the interim at any level in addition to any other penalties which the NJSIAA or a league/conference may assess.

CL 6: The Executive Director or designee has the authority to (1) issue disqualifications for violations of the NJSIAA sportsmanship policy, (2) issue disqualifications to players who leave the bench area during an altercation, and (3) correct a reporting error in a previously submitted disqualification report. These actions may be taken after an event has been completed.

Rationale: *This clarifies that directors have the authority to issue disqualifications, which is consistent with our practice.*

- f. Any varsity team accumulating three or more player or coach disqualifications prior to the team's participation in an NJSIAA tournament will not be permitted to participate in same. Seeded teams will forfeit their right to compete if a disqualification limit is reached prior to the start of the tournament for the team.

CL 1: Although there are no appeals for disqualifications, the Commissioner of Education has ruled that the NJSIAA should hold a hearing if a school requests a waiver from the three-disqualification rule. In appropriate cases, the Executive Committee may grant a waiver from the strict application of the three-disqualification rule when the overall objectives of the Association and its member schools will not be undermined. The burden of proof is on the party requesting the waiver to show why the waiver should be granted. In emergent circumstances, the Protest Committee may hear the waiver request.

Rationale: *This clarifies the parameters for a waiver of the three disqualification rule, consistent with past practice.*

Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 G, Enrollment

~~CL 2: A short period of enrollment at any school will not be treated as entrance to that school and/or subsequent transfer will be recognized as uninterrupted enrollment at the original school absent any appeal from the previous school.~~

Rationale: *This clarification is no longer needed with the new transfer rule.*

Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 K, Transfers

6. A student's second or subsequent transfer:
Students who transfer a second or subsequent time will be subject to a 30-day period of ineligibility (or ½ the Maximum Number of Contests, whichever is less) for all NJSIAA sanctioned sports in which the student participated during the 12 months preceding the transfer.
8. General Application:
 - a. This Transfer Rule applies to all athletes at all levels of participation (not just varsity athletes) and is applicable to all NJSIAA-sanctioned sports in which the student participated during the 12 months preceding the transfer. Transferring students may participate in a new sport without penalty.
 - b. The period of ineligibility will begin on the Competition Start Date of each sport. For students who transfer after the Competition Start Date, the period of ineligibility will begin on the date of

~~enrollment~~ transfer and will not include any days or games occurring after a school's last regular season game prior to the start of the playoffs.

- c. When calculating the period of ineligibility using the Maximum Number of Contests, NJSIAA will round down to the nearest whole number if the number of contests is not divided evenly. For example, if the Maximum Number of Contests were 14, then the calculation for a Senior Transfer (14 divided by 3) would be 5.67 and rounded down to a 5 contest sit.

9. Exceptions:

Immediate eligibility, without penalty, will be granted for transfers resulting from DCP&P placement, HIB transfers, ~~and~~ military transfers and transfers resulting from a school's closure or elimination of a sports program.

CL1: Transfers resulting from a school's closure or elimination of a sports program must occur before the earlier of (1) the start of the next school year, or (2) the Start of Practice Date of the sports season in which the transfer occurs.

CL2: A transfer that is exempted from penalty as set forth in Section 4.K.9 above is nevertheless counted as a transfer for purposes of determining the number of transfers a student has accrued.

Rationale: Students should not be penalized for their second or subsequent transfer, or senior transfer, if it occurs due to the school closing or sport being eliminated. This corresponds with past practice. Changing the word enrollment maintains consistency with language in our definition of a transfer.

Bylaws, Article V, Section 4 D, Athletic Recruitment

2. Athletic recruitment is defined as any effort to, proselytize, pressure, urge or entice a student to transfer to a school for athletic purposes. It is a violation for a member school to engage in athletic recruitment or for a student-athlete to transfer to a school as a result of athletic recruitment. Athletic recruitment includes, but is not limited to:
 - a. Using mail, letters, brochures, or news media to compare high schools and to solely point out the athletic assets of the sender;
 - b. Engaging in proselytizing interviews or communications, ~~initiated~~ by school personnel or associates;
 - c. Offering athletic scholarships, free tuition or other monetary assistance, either from the school directly or indirectly through some affiliated body or individual, to induce a student to attend the school for athletic reasons.

Rationale: It does not matter who initiates the contact for it to be a recruiting violation. Language is now consistent with our Recruitment Violations Chart.

NJSIAA Rules and Regulations

Program Regulations:

Section 9 Contest Rules

All contests involving member schools must be played according to the rules of the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS). This applies to all sports for which rules are formulated by that Association, with the following exceptions:

Bowling	–	US Bowling Congress
Fencing	–	United States Fencing Association <u>NCAA</u>
Golf	–	USGA
Tennis	–	USTA

Rules indicated will govern all sports unless modified by NJSIAA.

Rationale: *Fencing is governed by NCAA Fencing Rules.*

Section 15 Maximum Games

The maximum number of games does not include participation in one county or league/conference-based tournament, and the NJSIAA state tournament. A county or league/conference-based tournament is defined as a single elimination tournament with a minimum of 8 teams and maximum of not to exceed 32 teams, limited to a maximum of five games. Teams may still participate in both a county and a league/ conference tournament, but one of these tournaments will count toward the maximum number of games.

CL 1: In the event that a member school does not have a county or league/conference-based tournament available in a particular sport, the member school may choose one tournament in which the maximum number of games will not count. The tournament must be approved by NJSIAA. ~~organized by a member school(s) and the competing schools in the tournament must all be NJSIAA member schools.~~ This option is not available for schools that are eligible to compete in a county or league/conference-based tournament in a particular sport but choose not to.

~~A waiver of the maximum game limitation is granted in all sports, except football, only when one additional game is needed to decide a county, conference or tournament championship.~~

Rationale: *This is no longer applicable.*

Section 16 Withdrawal/NJSIAA Tournaments

1. Schools that withdraw from the tournament before seeding will not be subject to any penalty.
2. Schools that withdraw from the tournament after having been seeded will be subject to a fine, unless truly extraordinary circumstances are present.
3. Schools that withdraw from the tournament after the brackets have become official will be subject to a fine, unless truly extraordinary circumstances are present. In addition, the program will be placed on probation for one year.
4. Schools that withdraw from the tournament at any point while on probation will be fined and barred from participating in the tournament for the following school year, unless truly extraordinary circumstances are present. In addition, the program will be placed on an additional year of probation.
5. Schools that repeatedly withdraw from tournaments across multiple sports may be referred to the Controversies Committee.
6. Schools will be fined if a student-athlete withdraws from an individual tournament after the brackets (seeding) have become official, unless truly extraordinary circumstances are present.

~~Any member school and/or student athlete withdrawing from competition after having officially entered an NJSIAA tournament in any sport will be disqualified from all remaining NJSIAA tournament competition in that sport in that season and may be barred from participating in NJSIAA tournament competition in that sport during the next school year unless truly extraordinary circumstances were present.~~

Rationale: *Clarifies our practice.*

Specific Sport Regulations:

Girls Volleyball (Fall), Boys Volleyball (Spring)

Section 14 Match

1. Match format, regular season. During the regular season, teams will be allowed to play either a best of 5-match or best of 3-match format. For a best of 5-match format, the fifth (5th) set is scored to fifteen (15). For the best of 3-match format, all three (3) sets are scored to twenty-five (25).

CL: Teams must mutually agree to play a best of 5-match format prior to scheduling the match.

2. Match format, regular season tournaments (single or multiple days). Tournaments (single or multiple days) may be modified as per Note 2 of Rule 1-2. Games may be modified requiring fewer points to win but not raised to require more points to win.
3. Match format, state tournament. During the state tournament, teams will play a best of 5-match format.

Rationale: *As per NFHS rules.*

Swimming

Section 17 Officials

~~A minimum of three (3) NJSIAA registered officials is required for all championship swimming meets. Four (4) officials will be assigned to the sectional state semifinals and finals.~~

~~A minimum of two (2) NJSIAA registered officials shall be used for all other varsity meets.~~

Cross Country

Section 10-167 N/A

~~Section 17 Officials It shall be required that at least three (3) NJSIAA registered track officials be used to officiate in any County, Conference, Invitational, Championship or NJSIAA meets involving four or more teams. Whenever possible, all officials in these meets should be registered.~~

Rationale: *NJSIAA does not regulate the number of officials per event.*

~~Winter~~ **Indoor Track**

~~Spring~~ **Outdoor Track**

Rationale: *NJSIAA is changing all references from Winter/Spring Track to Indoor/Outdoor Track*

Boys Wrestling

Section 25 Skin Infection/Contagious Disease - Before being permitted to wrestle, any wrestler ~~previously~~ judged not fit to wrestle must present, at weigh in, the original NJSIAA skin lesion form signed by an MD, DO, PA or APN, certifying that an exam took place pertaining to that condition within the last seven (7) days, clearing that contestant for competition.

CL: Before the dual/individual meet begins, the referee shall perform skin checks, or verify skin checks have been performed by a designated, on-site, meet appropriate health professional. NFHS Rule 3-1-4a; 3-1-5a.

Girls Wrestling

Section 25 Skin Infection/Contagious Disease - Before being permitted to wrestle, any wrestler ~~previously~~ judged not fit to wrestle must present, at weigh in, the original NJSIAA skin lesion form signed by an MD, DO, PA or APN, certifying that an exam took place pertaining to that condition within the last seven (7) days, clearing that contestant for competition.

CL: Before the dual/individual meet begins, the referee shall perform skin checks, or verify skin checks have been performed by a designated, on-site, meet appropriate health professional. NFHS Rule 3-1-4a; 3-1-5a.

Rationale: *As per SMAC recommendation.*

Guidelines, Policies and Procedures

STATE ADMINISTRATIVE CODE REQUIREMENTS FOR QUALIFICATION OF COACHES

The *New Jersey Administrative Code* sets forth qualifications for the coaching of public-school pupils. These qualifications are found at *N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-5.16*, as follows:

***N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-5.16* Athletics Personnel**

- a. Any teaching staff member employed by a district board of education shall be permitted to organize students for purposes of coaching or for conducting games, events, or contests in physical education or athletics.

- b. School districts may employ any holder of either a New Jersey teaching certificate or a substitute credential pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:9B-7 to work in the interscholastic athletic program provided the position has been advertised. The 20-day limitation noted in N.J.A.C. ~~6A:9B-7.4(a)~~ 6A:9B-7.3(a) shall not apply to such coaching situations.

Rationale: Code number update.