



2026-2027 Football Tournament Regulations

NJSIAA reserves the right to adjust, change or cancel dates, times, and locations for any round of competition during NJSIAA state tournaments. Schools entering the tournament will not be granted a change of date/time due to any conflicts with school trips, proms, banquets, SATs, unless agreed upon by both schools. During the spring tournament season, we will make every effort to accommodate schools that have a conflict with their graduation.

Member schools will not be eligible to participate in any NJSIAA Tournaments if it has violated the NJSIAA Constitution, Bylaws, Rules, Regulations, Guidelines, Policies, or Procedures. Any student-athlete who transfers after the competition start date will not be eligible for this tournament.

State tournament sites will not be declared unsuitable merely because conditions are less than perfect unless Leagues or Conferences have ruled such sites unsuitable for League or Conference play. However, NJSIAA reserves the right to move an event to another facility if the playing conditions are not considered suitable for that competition, or if the facility will significantly limit anticipated attendance at the event.

Schools are to be reminded of the 3-team DQ rule for state tournament eligibility, which states “Any varsity team accumulating three or more player or coach disqualifications prior to the team’s participation in the state tournament will not be permitted to participate in the state tournament. The 3-team DQ rule is not applicable during participation in the state tournament.

The NJSIAA will follow the procedure below for schools that are disqualified from state tournament competition:

1. If a school is disqualified, either for the use of an ineligible player or violating the 3-team DQ rule, from state tournament competition after the tournament has been seeded but prior to the bracket being final, then the bracket will be reseeded and the next ranked school who entered the tournament will be included.
2. If a school is disqualified, either for the use of an ineligible player or violating the 3-team DQ rule, from state tournament competition after the tournament has been seeded and after the bracket is final, then the bracket will not be reseeded, and no additional school will be included.
3. If a school is disqualified from state tournament competition due to the use of an ineligible player during the state tournament, then the school will be removed from the tournament immediately and their last opponent will advance in their place.

Schools participating in any NJSIAA tournament are responsible for the actions and behaviors of their spectators. Schools are required to provide adequate staff security to ensure there is proper oversight of their spectators. In addition, schools are financially responsible for any damage to the property or premises caused by their student-athletes, staff, or spectators (spectators include, but are not limited to, cheerleaders, marching band participants, students, and other fans).

NJSIAA requires Certified Athletic Trainers at all its tournament events. The ATC must document all injuries on an injury report form. This form must be available to the NJSIAA upon request.

Member schools that are not willing or able to comply with NJSIAA tournament regulations and any relevant procedures found in the state tournament operating procedures handbook should not enter the tournament. Member schools are encouraged to review NJSIAA tournament regulations with the school administration. Coaches must have a copy of the tournament regulations as well as a copy of the rule modifications (if any) available at all contests. Copies of these documents are available on the NJSIAA website.

NJSIAA Football Tournament Staff

NJSIAA Director of Football

Colleen Maguire

(609) 259-2776

cmaguire@njsiaa.org

Football Coordinator

Greg Bailey

(973) 703-1492

gbailey@njsiaa.org

NJSIAA Rules Interpreter

Mike Bartram

(609) 351-1902

njfbrules@gmail.com

NJSIAA State Assignor

Mark Bitar

(973) 800-4608

mark.bitar@gmail.com

Football Important Dates

Event	Dates	
Practice Start Date *	August 10, 2026	
First Scrimmage	August 17, 2026	
Opening Day (Week 0 – All Levels)	August 27, 2026	
Opening Day (Week 1)	September 3, 2026	
Post-Season Transfer by Date	September 3, 2026	
Entry Form – Open	October 1, 2026	
Entry Form – Close	October 15, 2026	
Officials Conflict of Interest Form:	October 15, 2026	
Cutoff (Public)	October 24, 2026	
Tournament Seeding (Public)	October 25, 2026	
Cutoff (Non-Public)	October 31, 2026	
Tournament Seeding (Non-Public)	November 1, 2026	
Regular Season Competition Ends	November 29, 2026	
Post Season Meeting	November 29, 2026	

*This includes heat acclimatization – there is no early optional start for heat acclimatization.

Football Tournament Dates

Public Tournament	Date	Location
Round 1	October 30 or 31, 2026	Higher Seed
Round 2	November 6 or 7, 2026	Higher Seed
Sectional Finals	November 13 or 14, 2026	Higher Seed
State Semifinals	November 20 or 21, 2026	Higher UPR Ranking
State Finals	November 28 or 29, 2026	MetLife
Non-Public Tournament	Date	Location
Round 1	November 6 or 7, 2026	Higher Seed
Round 2	November 13 or 14, 2026	Higher Seed
State Semifinals	November 20 or 21, 2026	Higher Seed
State Finals	November 28 or 29, 2026	MetLife

New for the 2026-2027 Season

1. NJ.com is the official statistician for NJSIAA football. GRIDIRON NEW JERSEY IS NO LONGER THE OFFICIAL STATISTICIAN. All schedules, rosters and results must be submitted to njschoolsports.com.
2. Schools in the Super Football Conference Ivy division are excluded from the sectional sort within each group. This ensures the number of playoff eligible teams are equally split between sections in each group.
3. The seeding procedures for the public schools state tournament has been updated – see p. 5.
4. The non-public multiplier categories have been updated – see p.9.

Maximum Games/League & Conference Scheduling Framework

1. The maximum games to be played by any team is 14 games – August 27, 2026 (Week 0) through November 29, 2026 (season end date).
2. Public schools:
 - a. Non-Thanksgiving teams – 9 games (week 0-8)
 - b. Thanksgiving teams – 8 games (week 0-8), plus Thanksgiving game
3. Public schools may play a maximum of 5 games after the cut-off date, excluding Thanksgiving. *
4. Non-Public schools:
 - a. Non-Thanksgiving teams – 10 games (weeks 0-9)
 - b. Thanksgiving teams – 9 games (weeks 0-9), plus Thanksgiving game
5. Non-public schools may play a maximum of 4 games after the cut-off date, excluding Thanksgiving. *

***Games scheduled by schools after the cut-off date may not be played on a Friday.**

Regular Season Contact Limits

NJSIAA schools will be limited to 15 minutes of full contact per week once their regular season starts. A school's regular season start date is the date of that school's first regular season game. The period prior to the first regular season game is considered pre-season and all pre-season full-contact requirements must be adhered to. Please note that the 15 minutes of full contact per week requirement will be in place for the remainder of the school's season, which includes the championship playoffs. It is a recommendation that schools utilize the "Practice Like a Pro" technique, which is not included in the 15 minutes of full contact per week requirement.

Full contact is defined as contact in which players are being tackled to the ground. Thud contact is defined as contact in which players are not being tackled to the ground.

- Pre-season full contact is reduced to a total of 6 hours.
- A scrimmage counts towards one hour of full contact.
- A maximum of 3 full contact scrimmages are allowed during the pre-season.
- One additional "thud" only scrimmage is permitted.
- In-season full contact is limited to 15 minutes per week. *
- There is no limit to "thud", tackling onto a tackling crash mat, or use of tackling dummies.

*A school's in-season period begins the Monday following their first regular season game.

Whenever team(s) or individual(s) from two or more schools practice at the same site, it will be designated as a scrimmage, unless some extraordinary circumstance has been approved by NJSIAA. Joint practices will count towards the maximum of 3 full contact scrimmages allowed during the pre-season.

Games Per Nine-Days, Quarters Per Consecutive Days Rule

A team may not play more than two football games in a period of nine days. A player may not participate in more than five (5) quarters on consecutive days. This includes freshman, sophomore, junior varsity, and varsity competition.

Point Differential/Running Clock Rule

For all levels of play, during both the regular season and NJSIAA state tournament games, if the score differential reaches 33 points or more in the 2nd half, the clock will stop only for a score, time out, penalty or injury.

Exchange of Game Film

The NJSIAA expects every school to adhere to the following policy regarding the exchange of game film:

1. Regular season league/conference games – Refer to the league/conference policy in place regarding

- film exchange.
2. Regular season non-league/conference games – Game film exchange is to be mutually agreed upon by both teams prior to the scheduling of the game. The NJSIAA will have no oversight of the exchange of game film for these games.
 3. NJSIAA State Tournament games – All regular season and state tournament games must be made available for exchange to all opponents upon their request during every round of the state tournament via an appropriate exchange method. Please note this means that the entire regular season and every state tournament game must be exchanged with all opponents. Upon seeding of the state tournament, all regular season games must be made available no later than 5:00pm on the day of the seeding meeting and must remain available for the entirety of the post-season tournament. All state tournament games thereafter must be made available within 12 hours of the conclusion of each game.
 4. Regular season games after the cut-off date – For any regular season game scheduled after the cut-off date, game film exchange is to be mutually agreed upon by both teams prior to the scheduling of the game. NJSIAA will have no oversight of the exchange of game film for these games.

During the NJSIAA State Tournament, all regular season and state tournament games must be exchanged via the Qwikcut or Hudl platforms only – hard copy or other exchange methods are prohibited.

To qualify for the Tournament

1. Teams must be competing on a varsity interscholastic basis and sixty percent (60%) of the games played on or before the cutoff date must be against New Jersey schools.
2. The United Power Ranking system will be used to qualify all teams for the tournament.
3. State Tournament – the 16 highest public school power ranking totals in each Super Section and group will qualify for the State Tournament.
4. Each non-public school bracket may be filled up to 16 teams. If more than 16 teams enter the state tournament, then the 16 highest non-public school power ranking totals in each group will qualify for the State Tournament.
5. Games played after the cutoff date will not be included in the United Power Ranking calculation.
6. Any player with two (2) or more disqualifications in the current season, prior to the start of the NJSIAA State Tournament will not be permitted to participate in the tournament.
7. Any varsity team accumulating three (3) or more player or coach disqualifications prior to the start of the NJSIAA State Tournament will not be permitted to participate in the tournament. Seeded teams will forfeit their right to compete if the disqualification limit is reached prior to the start of the tournament for the team.

Entry Procedure

1. The tournament entry form must be submitted online only during the period listed above.
2. The Officials Conflict of Interest form must be completed by October 15, 2026.
3. All varsity schedules & rosters must be entered in njschoolsports.com by the start of the season. Rosters must be checked and updated, if necessary, by the start of the tournament. We cannot guarantee any roster changes made after the start of the tournament will make it into the tournament program.
4. All varsity scores must be reported to www.njschoolsports.com within two hours of the completion of each contest. If you encounter problems, please contact hssupport@nj.com.
5. For those schools not timely reporting their game results, as indicated above, a warning will be given the first time the school fails to comply. Future failures to timely report results may be subject to a \$150 fine.

Entry Fee

- \$90.00 per team, payable to the NJSIAA (please note Football State Tournament)
- Forward all entry fees to the NJSIAA, 1161 Route 130 North, Robbinsville, NJ 08691
- Withdrawal from the tournament on or after the seeding date, but prior to the brackets becoming final, is subject to the \$90 entry fee and a \$150 fine.
- Withdrawal from the tournament after the tournament brackets become final is subject to the \$90 entry fee and a \$300 fine. In addition, the team may not be eligible for participation in next year's state tournament.

Tournament Seeding (Public Schools State Tournament)

1. The top 16 teams within each North and South Super Section will qualify for the NJSIAA State Tournament.
2. The tiebreaker rule will be applied where necessary (See Tiebreaker Rule below).
3. Next, the Super Section will be subject to a Head-to-Head Rule from top to bottom and will end when #16

did not lose to #17 (See Head-to-Head Rule below).

4. Once the Head-to-Head Rules have been applied, the top 16 teams will be “snaked” by final ranking into two sections for each Super Section. (See Snaking Procedures below)
5. Once snaking is completed all brackets are FINAL and NO further movement will occur.

Snaking Procedures:

The highest ranked team in each Super Section will be the #1 seed in their traditional section based on Northing number. The teams will alternately be seeded in pairs between brackets (NI and NII or Central and South) and end with the #16 ranked team per the Super Section as the #8 seed in the #1 UPR ranked team's traditional section.

For instance, Team A is the #1 UPR ranked team in the North Super Section and its traditional section is North I. Therefore, the North I and North II sections will be seeded as follows:

North I	North II
Team A	#2 final UPR rank
#4 final UPR rank	#3 final UPR rank
#5 final UPR rank	#6 final UPR rank
#8 final UPR rank	#7 final UPR rank
#9 final UPR rank	#10 final UPR rank
#12 final UPR rank	#11 final UPR rank
#13 final UPR rank	#14 final UPR rank
#16 final UPR rank	#15 final UPR rank

Tournament Seeding (Non-Public State Tournament)

For Non-Public Schools, at the conclusion of Week 9, the top 16 teams per Group will qualify for the NJSIAA State Tournament. NJSIAA will designate a Seeding Committee, comprised of public-school administrators representing the Super Football Conference, Big Central Conference, Shore Conference and West Jersey Football League, which will seed both Non-Public Group A and Non-Public Group B.

The seeding committee will rely primarily on head-to-head results while also considering results against common opponents, and strength of schedule (with specific reference to the non-public multiplier level of opponents and the number of non-public multiplier schools played); however, other criteria may be taken into consideration.

Tiebreaker rule:

If there is a tie for qualification or seeding, then the following tie breaking criteria will be applied:

1. Head-to-Head
2. Common Opponents
3. OSI Ranking
4. Power Point Power Rank
5. Coin Flip

When there are two or more teams tied (either for qualification or seeding), then the above tie breaking criteria will be applied to determine which team will either qualify and/or which team will receive the highest seed among the tied teams. The tie breaking criteria will start over with #1 and be applied to the remaining teams to determine which team will receive the next highest seed – this process will continue for all remaining teams until all ties have been broken.

Head-to-Head Rule (Top 16 Qualifiers per Super Section):

Head-to-Head rule will apply from the “top-down” beginning with the highest ranked team in each Super Section. The criteria for this rule are as follows (refer to example on p. 13):

1. Head-to-Head results receive consideration only when a lower ranked team has defeated the higher ranked team immediately above them.
2. If team A, directly below team B, has defeated team B head-to-head, team A would move ahead of team B within that respective Super Section.

3. Teams can only move ahead of a team they have defeated that are directly above them in their Super Section.
4. Movement of more than one seeding slot can occur, 1 "jump" at a time providing the teams defeated are directly above them with no "space" in between.

Brackets

1. All State Tournament brackets will be posted to www.nj.com. Public State Tournament brackets will be posted on Sunday, October 25, 2026, and Non-Public State Tournament brackets will be posted on Sunday, November 1, 2026.
2. All State Tournament brackets do not become official until 12:00pm the following day.

Tournament Rules & Information

1. NFHS Football Rules along with any NJSIAA Football Rule Modifications will govern this tournament.
2. All public and non-public state championship games will be played at Rutgers University or MetLife Stadium. Dates and times of all games will be based on facility availability.
3. Teams submitting a tournament entry form agree to play at any predetermined multi-game site for any round when deemed necessary by NJSIAA staff. Teams not agreeing to play at a predetermined multi-game site will not be eligible for participation in the state tournament games the following season.
4. The home field of the higher seeded team will host all games up to the State Championship games.
5. Those games where a designated site other than the home site of the higher seed is used, the higher seeded team will be the "home" team, wear dark-colored jerseys, and use the "home" bleachers.
6. Equal accommodation must be made available for both team spotters at all state tournament games.
7. The game site will not be changed because of wet or muddy conditions at a particular field. It must be anticipated that similar conditions may be present across all fields at that time of year. However, NJSIAA staff reserves the right to move a game to another site if the field conditions are not considered to be suitable for competition, or if the facility will significantly limit anticipated attendance of the game.
8. NJSIAA will not cover the costs related to the rental of bleachers, maintenance, or ground costs (including snow removal). All such costs must be at the expense of the participating teams. Any exceptions must be authorized in writing in advance by the NJSIAA.
9. All tickets and costs associated with preliminary round games will be the higher seeded school's responsibility.
10. Any host school electing to play at another site will be responsible in full for any rental or custodial costs.
11. All host schools for preliminary round games will be responsible for paying all officials. The preliminary round games should be treated like regular season games. The host school will set the day and time of the game.
12. For the public sectional finals and public state semifinals, the NJSIAA will be financially responsible and will retain all gate receipts. All tickets for these games will be sold by the NJSIAA via Hometown ticketing.
13. For the public sectional finals and public state semifinals, host schools will be provided with a stipend reimbursement check for all event workers. Police bills can be submitted directly to NJSIAA for payment. Any exceptions to the allowable event staff/police security must be approved by the NJSIAA.
14. The NJSIAA State Assignor reserves the right to change the requested start time for all public sectional final and public state semifinal games.
15. All games played at Rutgers University and MetLife Stadium will be selling tickets through the box office at each facility.
16. All bench personnel for this tournament must be approved by the school district. Fans, private coaches or club coaches are not permitted on the sidelines.

Game Ball Procedures:

1. The game ball will be changed by the officials upon each change of possession.
2. Each school should supply three approved footballs for use during each round of the playoffs, except for the state championship games.
3. Each team shall provide a designated person (age 12 or older) to be available on the sideline with drying towels available for the officials use.
4. Each school must introduce the designated person to the sideline official before the start of the game and the start of the second half.
5. NJSIAA will provide Wilson G.S.T. footballs for the state championship games.

Postponed Football Game:

It shall be the decision of the Site Manager (normally the Athletic Director of the higher seed school) as to whether a game should be postponed, or moved to an earlier start time, because of inclement weather. Any decision to postpone, or move to an earlier start time, must be communicated to the opposing school no later than 12:00pm on the scheduled date of the game. Determination of the date and time of any postponed game is the responsibility of the Site Manager and must be communicated to the opposing school no later than 12:00pm on the originally scheduled date of the game.

Participating schools must mutually agree to move the game to an earlier date. If schools do not mutually agree to an earlier date, then the game will be played when originally scheduled or postponed. NJSIAA will not be involved in the decision of the Site Manager to postpone a game or move to an earlier start time.

Overtime Procedures:

NJSIAA has adopted a 25-yard line procedure to determine a winner in regular season games at the varsity level which end regulation play in a tie. The 25-yard line procedure will utilize the National Federation OVERTIME PROCEDURE in the National Federation Football Rule Book with the following modifications:

1. At the end of regulation playing time, the referee, in the presence of the field captains, shall toss a coin which the visiting team shall call. All other regulations as detailed in the National Federation Football Rules then prevail.
2. To start the overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, 1st and 10, from the 25-yard line of their opponents unless a penalty shall cause the ball to be placed elsewhere.
3. It is possible for a team to earn or be awarded a first down during a team's possession; thus, giving them an additional four (4) downs during their possession to move the ball ten (10) yards for a new series or to score. Since it is possible to earn a first down, the line to gain equipment must be used during the 25-yard line procedure.
4. The defense may score during the OVERTIME PROCEDURE. The ball remains alive if there is a change of possession. Any foul which occurs after a change of team possession, is automatically refused. If there is a change of possession and the team in possession fouls and subsequently scores, the score is canceled, and A's series has ended. If neither team scores after a change of possession, A's series has ended. If B scores, they are the winners, and the game is over. If a foul occurs before the change of possession, it will be treated as any foul is treated in regulation. If there is an inadvertent whistle after a change of possession, the team with the ball will have the option of accepting the play or to replay the down. This will also be the end of A's series.
5. Each team will be permitted only one (1) time-out during each overtime period. Any unused time-outs from regulation or a previous overtime period WILL NOT be transferred over.
6. Except as specifically provided above, the 2026-2027 National Federation Football Rules, as adopted by NJSIAA, shall prevail. There is no need to use the scoreboard time during the 25-yard line procedure.
7. In the event of a tie during the regular season, a maximum of 3 series will be played. In the 3rd series, teams must utilize the 2-point try.
8. During the NJSIAA State Tournament, the maximum three (3) series overtime limit will not be enforced. The overtime series will continue until a winner is determined using the 2-point try in the third and subsequent periods if necessary.

Officials Assignment & Fees

Round 1 (Public and Non-Public Schools)

- NJSIAA will assign 6 game officials – to be paid by the higher seeded school.
- NJSIAA will assign 1 game clock operator – to be paid by the higher seeded school.
- Higher seeded school will secure and pay for the chain crew.
- If applicable, a play clock operator will be assigned to the game upon request.

Round 2 (Public Schools Only) and Rounds 2 and 3 (Non-Public Schools Only)

- NJSIAA will assign 6 game officials – to be paid by the higher seeded school.
- NJSIAA will assign 1 game clock operator – to be paid by the higher seeded school.
- NJSIAA will assign 3 chain crew personnel – to be paid by the higher seeded school.
- If applicable, a play clock operator will be assigned to the game upon request.

Sectional Finals (Public Schools Only)

- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 7 game officials.

- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 1 game clock operator.
- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 3 chain crew personnel.
- If applicable, NJSIAA will assign and pay for 1 play clock operator.

State Semi-Finals (Public Schools Only)

- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 7 game officials.
- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 1 game clock operator.
- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 3 chain crew personnel.
- If applicable, NJSIAA will assign and pay for 1 play clock operator.

State Championship Games (Public and Non-Public Schools)

- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 7 game officials.
- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 1 game clock operator and 1 play clock operator.
- NJSIAA will assign and pay for 3 chain crew personnel.

It is the Athletic Directors responsibility to confirm all assignments of game officials.

Awards

Sectional Champions:

A team trophy and sixty (60) certificates to the Sectional Champion in each Section and Group.

State Group Champions:

A team trophy and sixty (60) certificates for the State Champion in each Group.

United Power Ranking System

The United Power Ranking system will be the sole criteria used to qualify for any NJSIAA tournament, except as noted for the Non-Public Group A and Group B. Once each team's OSI and Power Points calculations are determined, they'll be ranked by their standing within their section.

For example, Team A has the best OSI in its section. Team B has the second best OSI in its section. Team C has the third best OSI in its section. Team D has the fourth best OSI in its section. Team E has the fifth best OSI in its section.

Team A also has the most power points in its section. Team B is 4th in power points. Team C is 5th in power points. Team D is second in power points. And Team E 6th power points.

With OSI accounting for 60% of a team's UPR and power points accounting for 40%, here are the breakdowns for calculating UPR:

Team A: $1(.6) + 1(.4) = 0.6 + 0.4 = 1$
 Team B: $2(.6) + 4(.4) = 1.2 + 1.6 = 2.8$
 Team C: $3(.6) + 5(.4) = 1.8 + 2.0 = 3.8$
 Team D: $4(.6) + 2(.4) = 2.4 + 0.8 = 3.2$
 Team E: $5(.6) + 6(.4) = 3.0 + 2.4 = 5.4$

Therefore, Team A (1) is first in this section, while Team B (2.8) in second, Team D (3.2) in third, Team C (3.8) is fourth, and Team E (5.4) is fifth.

The United Power Rank (UPR) will be based on a weighting of two rating systems: Power Points and the Opponent's Strength Index (OSI). The UPR will use a formula that will weigh Power Points at 40% and the OSI at 60%. Please note that all games played will count towards playoff qualification.

Any undefeated team with 7 or more wins against NJSIAA member schools, and no ties, that does not fall in the top 16 of their Super Section after all ranking criteria has been applied, will automatically replace the #16 team. The ranking criteria includes, but is not limited to, tiebreakers and the head-to-head rule. If multiple teams with 7 or more wins, and no ties, do not fall into the top 16 of a Super Section, then each team will replace the lowest ranked team based on the undefeated teams' UPR standings.

Any public-school team with less than 2 wins against NJSIAA member schools will automatically be ineligible for the State Tournament – this requirement is not applicable to non-public schools. Lastly, 7 games will be the minimum number of games used when averaging both the Power Points and OSI totals for use in the UPR system. For instance, if your team only plays 6 games, then both the Power Points and OSI totals will be divided by 7 games for UPR purposes.

The UPR will be made officially available at www.nj.com beginning with the conclusion of Week 2. For Weeks 2 – 7, the UPR will be available no later than Tuesday at 12:00pm. For week 8, the UPR will be available no later than 10:00am on Sunday.

Please notify Colleen Maguire (cmaguire@njsiaa.org) if any Week 8 Saturday game involving public schools is scheduled to start at 4:00pm or later.

Power Points:

NJ.com will maintain a weekly update of the Power Point totals beginning with Week 2. All games will count towards a team's final Power Point average. A team's final Power Point total will be divided by the number of games played (i.e., 7, 8 or 9) prior to, but including, Week 8. However, the final Power Point total will only include Residual Points for your opponent's first seven games played and will be capped at 18 points. Below are examples of how residual points are calculated.

1. Team A is 5-2, Team B is 4-3, and they play each other in their 8th game. After Team A wins the game, their record improves to 6-2, while Team B falls to 4-4. Because residual points are calculated using an opponent's first seven games played, Team A receives 12 residual points (4 x 3), and Team B receives 5 residual points (1 point for each of their opponent's wins through their first seven games).
2. Team A is now 6-2, and plays Team C, who is 7-0. After a Team A victory, their record improves to 7-2, while Team C falls to 7-1. Team A receives 18 residual points (residuals are capped at 18), while Team C receives 5 residual points (because Team A has 5 wins through its first seven games).

Opponent's Strength Index (OSI):

A team's OSI will be the average value of their opponent's Strength Index for all games played. Please see p. 12 for a detailed explanation of the Strength Index. NJ.com will maintain a weekly update of each team's OSI beginning with Week 2. Opponent's Strength Index points will be awarded as follows:

1. For wins, 100% of the opponent's SI rating
2. For losses, 50% of the opponent's SI rating
3. For ties, 75% of the opponent's SI rating

Upon conclusion of Week 8, the OSI points received from each opponent will be added together and divided by the number of games played (i.e., 7, 8 or 9). This average value of their opponent's SI ratings will be the 60% value used by each team in the United Power Rank formula. All SI ratings will be locked on Tuesday, October 20, 2026; however, the results from Week 8 games will count towards a team's OSI.

Non-Public Multiplier:

When a public school loses to a non-public multiplier school, the following percentages of the opponent's SI rating will be used:

- A – 80% of the opponent's Strength Index rating
- B – 75% of the opponent's Strength Index rating
- C – 70% of the opponent's Strength Index rating
- D – 70% of the opponent's Strength Index rating

If a public school defeats a non-public multiplier school, then they will receive full value of the opponent's Strength Index rating – consistent with any other win.

Category A (5 schools)	Category B (4 schools)	Category C (3 schools)	Category D (4 schools)
80%	75%	70%	70%
Bergen Catholic	Delbarton	Pope John	Donovan Catholic
DePaul Catholic	Paramus Catholic	St. Augustine	Holy Spirit

Don Bosco	Red Bank Catholic	Seton Hall Prep	St. John Vianney
St. Joseph (Montvale)	St. Joe's (Metuchen)		St. Thomas Aquinas
St. Peter's Prep			

All other schools listed in the NJSIAA classifications (both public and non-public) are considered non-multiplier schools. During Weeks 0 – 8, if an A, B, or C category school is defeated by a non-multiplier school during the season, then the school will be moved to the D category. During Weeks 0 – 8, if a D category school is defeated by a non-multiplier school, then the school will be removed from the D category and will be considered a non-multiplier school. When a non-public multiplier school is removed from the D category, then opponent's will not receive 70% percent of the removed school's Strength Index rating; they will receive 50% of the Strength Index rating – consistent with any other loss.

This scenario will not apply to games played between approved multiplier schools at the start of the season, and as listed in these tournament regulations, nor will it apply to games played against out of state/non-member opponents.

There will be no multiplier values in effect for non-multiplier schools. A public school may receive multiplier values for two (2) games against non-public multiplier schools listed by category above. If a public school plays more than two games against non-public multiplier schools, then the public school will receive the two (2) highest combination of the multiplier values and natural power points.

Non-Public Multiplier Criteria:

The teams in each multiplier category are reviewed annually by the NJSIAA Football Committee and changes may be made based on this review. The annual review primarily relies on historical results against public schools.

Non-Playoff Eligible Teams:

Teams participating in a non-playoff eligible division within their league and/or conference (i.e. Super Football Conference Ivy division), will not appear in the UPR rankings found at NJ.com.

Non-playoff eligible teams participating in a non-playoff eligible division may not compete against a playoff eligible team prior to the cut-off date – Saturday, October 24, 2026.

Out of State/Non-Member Opponents:

Games played against out of state/non-member opponents will be included in the United Power Rank calculation. In order to assign a Strength Index value to an out of state/non-member opponent, NJ.com will consult MaxPreps national rankings. NJ.com will identify the closest NJSIAA member school, per the rating column, both ABOVE and BELOW the out of state/non-member opponent. The Strength Index for these two NJSIAA member schools will be averaged – the average Strength Index will be the value assigned to the out of state/non-member opponent. The starting Strength Index value for all out of state/non-member opponents will be posted upon conclusion of Week 2, in conjunction with the release of the UPR.

For purposes of adjusting the out of state/non-member opponent's Strength Index, the same process will be used before the game is played and then placed in the weekly Strength Index formula. This ensures that Strength Index values for NJSIAA member schools appropriately adjust for an out of state/non-member opponent and receive the appropriate value.

There will be an interim update to an opponent's Strength Index rating upon conclusion of Week 5 while an opponent's final Strength Index rating will be updated no later than Tuesday, October 20, 2026.

Power points will be awarded based upon the out of state/non-member opponent's first 7 games.

Power Point Calculation

1. **Quality Points** – Each school will receive the following Quality points for a win or a tie from all games played up to, and including, week 8:
 - Win = 6 points
 - Tie = 3 points

- Loss = 0 points

2. **Residual Points** – Each school will receive the following Residual points from their opponent's first seven games played only based on the result of the games:

- For every win, a school will receive the following points for each of their opponent's wins or ties:
 - Win = 3 points*
 - Tie = 1.5 points
 - Loss = 0 points

*Total residual points from your opponent's wins will be capped at 18 points.

- For every tie, a school will receive the following points for each of their opponent's wins or ties:
 - Win = 1.5 points
 - Tie = .75 points*
 - Loss = 0 points

*No points will be awarded when the school's game is their opponents only tie, the school has already been awarded points for that tie.

- For every loss, a school will receive the following points for each of their opponent's wins or ties:
 - Win = 1 point
 - Tie = 0 points
 - Loss = 0 points

Forfeits:

When a forfeit win is awarded to a school prior to the game, the school affected must accept the forfeit unless they can replace the game. The substituted game must be played the same week to replace the forfeit. If a team cannot play, for any reason, they must accept a forfeit loss. The exception of natural disasters will be determined by the NJSIAA.

Once a school starts its regular season competition, then all scheduled games are expected to be played. No scheduled game can be "mutually dropped" by both teams. Games must either be played, or a forfeit be declared. If there are extenuating circumstances that would prevent two schools from playing a scheduled game, then the League or Conference must submit a written summary of the circumstances to NJSIAA that necessitated the need to mutually drop a scheduled game.

When a forfeit win is awarded to a school after the game is played (i.e. due to a rule infraction such as an ineligible player), the opponent will receive a win and the forfeiting school's record will be updated to reflect the forfeit loss(es) and the opponent's record will be updated to reflect the forfeit win(s). All residual points will be based on the updated records.

Power Point Examples

Example 1 (Win)

Team A defeats Team B

Team A record: 5-2

Team B record: 7-0

Team A earns a total of 24 points: 6 points for the win, 18 residual points

Example 2 (Win)

Team A defeats Team B

Team A record: 5-2

Team B record: 5-1-1

Team A earns a total of 23.5 points: 6 points for the win, 17.5 residual points

Example 3 (Tie)

Team A ties Team B

Team A record: 5-1-1

Team B record: 4-2-1

Team A earns a total of 9 points: 3 points for the tie, 6 residual points

(1.5 points per Team B win only, there are no points for Team B's tie as Team A is their only tie)

Example 4 (Tie)

Team A ties Team B

Team A record: 5-1-1

Team B record: 4-1-2

Team A earns a total of 9.75 points: 3 points for the tie, 6.75 residual points
(1.5 points per Team B win plus .75 for Team B tie against another opponent)

Example 5 (Loss)

Team A loses to Team B

Team A record: 2-5

Team B record: 4-3

Team A earns a total of 4.0 points: 0 points for the loss, 4 residual points

Strength Index (SI)

The Opponent's Strength Index (OSI) will be the average value of a team's opponent's Strength Index (SI) for all games played. The Strength Index will be calculated on a weekly basis and will move based on the game results in relation to the expected outcome of the game.

The Strength Index for all games played during 2025-2026 season will be averaged and then re-balanced by 1/3 to move closer to a Strength Index rating of 60 – this will be the 2026-2027 starting Strength Index. Prior to the start of the season, the 2026-2027 starting Strength Index will be posted to NJ.com upon submission of all regular season schedules (please see requirements on page 4). Please note that the Strength Index numbers will be calculated and rounded to the hundredths decimal place (i.e. two decimal points).

For any new program that does not have a 2026-2027 Strength Index rating, they will be assigned a starting SI of 20 points for the season. For any new cooperative sports program, the starting SI rating will default to the highest end of season SI rating from the most recent prior season of the participating teams. When an existing cooperative sports program is dissolved, each school's stand-alone SI rating will be determined by the NJSIAA.

For instance, Team A's UPR was 90 at the end of the season. Therefore, 90 minus 60 equals 30 so Team A will move down by 1/3 of 30 (or 10 points) to a starting SI value of 80 points. Team B's UPR was 39 at the end of the season. Therefore 60 minus 39 equals 21 so Team B will move up by 1/3 of 21 (or 7 points) to a starting SI value of 46 points.

All teams with a Strength Index of 0 or a negative value at the end of the 2025-2026 season will have a starting SI rating of 20 points...no team will start the 2026-2027 season with a SI rating of less than 20 points. For purposes of the OSI calculation only, no opponent will be valued at less than a 20-point SI rating.

For all games up to and including Week 7, a team's SI will move weekly based on the game results compared to the expected outcome of each game. The expected outcome of a game is determined by the SI values prior to the start of the game. For every point off the expected outcome, teams will move by 1/5 (or .2) in the appropriate direction depending on the game result. However, please be reminded that a school's own SI rating has no bearing on its OSI calculation that is included in the United Power Ranking system.

For example, team A's SI is 70 and Team B's SI is 50...the expected outcome of the game is a 20-point difference in favor of Team A.

1. If the game result is a 20-point win by Team A, then there is no change in either Team's SI.
2. If the game result is a 10-point win by Team A (10 points less than the expected outcome), then Team A will move down by 2 points (10 points X .2 = 2 points) and Team B will move up by 2 points.
3. If the game result is a 40-point win by Team A (20 points more than the expected outcome), then Team A will move up by 4 points (20 points X .2 = 4 points) and Team B will move down by 4 points.
4. If the game result is a 5-point win by Team B (25 points more than the expected outcome in favor of Team B), then Team B will move up by 5 points (25 points X .2 = 5 points) and Team A will move down by 5 points.

The Strength Index ratings will be final and will lock on Tuesday, October 20, 2026; however, please note that

all games played will count towards playoff qualifications. The final Strength Index ratings will be used in the average calculation that will determine a team's OSI rating which is 60% of a team's UPR. Therefore, a team's OSI rating will be updated weekly during the season, but the value of the opponent's SI will be updated and locked on Tuesday, October 20, 2026.

Forfeits:

When a forfeit win is awarded to a school prior to the game, the school affected must accept the forfeit unless they can replace the game. The SI value for each school will remain unchanged and the SI values will go unchanged. The substituted game must be played the same week to replace the forfeit. If a team cannot play, for any reason, they must accept a forfeit loss. The exception of natural disasters will be determined by the NJSIAA.

Once a school starts its regular season competition, then all scheduled games are expected to be played. No scheduled game can be "mutually dropped" by both teams. Games must either be played, or a forfeit be declared. If there are extenuating circumstances that would prevent two schools from playing a scheduled game, then the League or Conference must submit a written summary to NJSIAA of the circumstances that necessitated the need to mutually drop a scheduled game.

When a forfeit win is awarded to a school after the game is played (i.e. due to a rule infraction such as an ineligible player), the SI values for the forfeited game will not be recalculated. However, the OSI will be updated to reflect the new win-loss result.

Head-to-Head Rule (Top 16 Qualifiers per Super Section)

The Head-to-Head rule will apply from the "top-down" beginning with the highest ranked team in each Super Section only. Once a Super Section is divided into two Sections, there will be no jumps within a Section.

Below are examples of how this rule will be applied.

1. If team A, directly below team B, has defeated team B head-to-head, team A would move ahead of team B within that respective Super Section. Example:
 - a. In Group 2, Central/South Super Section, Team A is the #3 ranked Team and Team B is the #4 ranked team.
 - b. Team B defeated Team A in the regular season.
 - c. Team B will now become the #3 ranked Team
 - d. Team A will now become the #4 ranked team.
2. Teams can only move ahead of a team they have defeated that is directly above them in a Super Section. Example:
 - a. In Group 4, North I/North II Super Section, Team A is the #13 ranked team and Team B is the #15 ranked team.
 - b. Team B defeated Team A during the regular season
 - c. Team B did NOT play OR lost to the #14 ranked team.
 - d. Team B will remain the #15 ranked team and Team A will remain the #13 ranked team because there is "space" in between them.
3. In Super Sections, movement of more than one seeding slot can occur, 1 "jump" at a time providing the teams defeated are directly above them with NO "space" in between. Example:
 - a. In Group 1, Central/South Super Section we have Team A #6 ranked team, Team B #7 ranked team and Team C #8 ranked team.
 - b. Team C (#8) has defeated Team B (#7) and Team A (#6)
 - c. Team B (#7) DID NOT play Team A (#6)
 - d. Team C is now the #1 ranked team
 - e. Team A is now the #2 ranked team
 - f. Team B is now the #3 ranked team