



CIF SOUTHERN SECTION

FOOTBALL (8)

2026-2027



SEASON
PREVIEW





Official Football

Wilson. Contact: Craig Kalb - craig.kalb@wilson.com



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**This ball is discontinued*

**The official ball rule is mandatory for all CIF-SS playoff rounds.*

Contracted through: June 30, 2026

Official Ball Rule:

Should a school fail to provide the correct game ball, the game will always be played. Teams/schools failing to utilize the correct official ball in CIF-SS playoffs will be reported by officials to CIF-SS and will not be allowed to host their next available home playoff game. Penalty will carry over to the next season if not enforceable this season due to elimination.



TO: CIF SOUTHERN SECTION FOOTBALL COACHES
FROM: JOE HOGGATT, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER
CAILEY SANCHEZ-COLLADO, PROGRAM COORDINATOR
RE: 2026 CIF SOUTHERN SECTION FOOTBALL SEASON
DATE: JULY 20, 2026

FOOTBALL SEASON PREVIEW

We hope the contents of this season's preview will answer many of your questions and be useful throughout the upcoming year. Please share this information with the other members of your coaching staff. Good luck in the upcoming season. If I can be of assistance to you during the year, please do not hesitate to contact me at the CIF-SS office.

Table of Contents

Football Calendar Dates	3
Advisory Committee Members	4
CIFSSHOME.org Requirements	5
Ball Program Memo	7
Rules Section	8
NFHS Rules & Points of Emphasis	8
Start of Fall Practice	10
Physical Conditioning	12
Football Full Contact Practice Rules	13
Football Points of Interest	14
Tie Breaker	14
Mercy Rule	15
CA ED Code Regarding Equipment Reconditioning	15
Player Conduct	16
Coach Ejection	28
Playoff Information	22
Improved Media Relations for High School Football	25
Health & Safety	28
Extreme Heat and Air Quality Policy	29
Air Quality and Sports Participation	32

2026-2027 FOOTBALL CALENDAR DATES

FIRST PRACTICE (Blue Book bylaw 2203) 8 and 11

Week 0 Games – Saturday, August 1, 2026

Week 1 Games – Saturday, August 8, 2026

Week 0 Games – The first official day of football practice is August 1, 2026. The period of July 27 – July 31 will serve as a five-day acclimatization period (Bylaw 503.K(1)) for prospective members of a high school team (see page 13 for more details).

Week 1 Games – The first official day of football practice is August 8, 2026. The period of August 3 through August 7 will serve as a five-day acclimatization period (Bylaw 503.K(1)) for prospective members of a high school team.

During the first three days of the acclimatization period practice or testing activity of July 27 through July 29 (zero week) and August 3 through August 5 (week 1), helmets shall be the only protective equipment student athletes may wear. During the next two days of practice or testing activity of July 30 through July 31 (zero week) and August 6 through August 7 (week 1), helmets, and shoulder pads shall be the only protective equipment student athletes may wear.

Participants shall not engage in more than one on-field practice per day during the five-day acclimatization period. On-field practices shall last no longer than two hours. The acclimatization period may include various facets of football training (teaching techniques, chalks talk, pass patterns, etc.) but MAY NOT include any body contact such as tackling or blocking. During acclimatization there will be no equipment used such as blocking or tackling dummies, pads, etc. Student athletes may practice in full pads on the sixth day of practice or testing activity.

All conditioning sessions will be held at the school's regular practice field. No workouts will be permitted at beaches, mountain resorts, or military sites.

QUESTION: When will schools be allowed to fit equipment?

ANSWER: Schools may fit equipment prior to the conditioning period as long as it is during the summer and not during the dead period. Uniforms may not be issued prior to the conditioning period.

Schools will be permitted to issue uniforms and equipment on the first day of conditioning after which a time may be designated for individual and team photos. No conditioning in any type of uniform will be permitted.

The first official day of practice in full pads **cannot** occur before:

Week 0 Games – Saturday, August 1, 2026

Week 1 Games – Saturday, August 8, 2026

The two-week dead period is mandatory.

LAST ALLOWABLE CONTEST

11-Person October 30, 2026

8-Person October 31, 2026

PLAYOFF DATES (8 & 11)

First round	November 6, 2026
Second round	November 13, 2026
Semi-finals	November 20, 2026
Finals	November 27/28, 2026

11-MAN CIF STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

Southern Regional Games – Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5, 2026

State Championship Bowl Games – Friday, December 11 and Saturday, December 12, 2026

2026-2027 FOOTBALL COACHES ADVISORY COMMITTEES

The CIF-SS is continuing to utilize the concept of advisory committees for virtually all sports. The role of the advisory committee, comprised of coaches in their respective sports and an administrator from the CIF-SS office, may or may not include the following:

-  Meetings
-  Recommendations for playoff sites, procedural changes and rule changes.
-  Assistance to coaches and/or officials' organizations
-  Liaison between coaches and the CIF-SS office

We ask that if you have suggestions or questions, make use of this channel of communication, and contact one of the committee members. We will be meeting on a regular basis during the current football season and your items will become part of our agenda. For your reference, members of this year's Football Coaches Advisory Committee are:

8 PERSON FOOTBALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Member	School	E-Mail Address
Austin Fry	Santa Clarita Christian	afry@sccs.org
Wade Ranson	Cate School	wade_ransom@cate.org
Perry Skaggs	Football Management	skaggsbiggs11@gmail.com
Ben Soto	Cate HS	Ben_soto@cate.org
Elliott Turner	Milken Community	eturner@milkinschool.org

11 PERSON FOOTBALL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Committee Member	School	E-Mail Address
Ken Batdorf	Norte Vista HS	Kenneth.batdorf@alvord.k12.ca.us
Jim Benkert	Simi Valley HS	Coachjb21@aol.com
Ryan Bolland	Buena HS	ryan.bolland@venturausd.org
Jason Bornn	Saugus HS	jbornn@hartdistrict.org
Mark Carson	Rio Hondo Prep HS	rhp athletics@rhprep.org
Mark Cunningham	Football Management	Markcunningham@iusd.org
Mike Enright	Rancho Alamitos HS	Merancho13@hotmail.com
Dominic Farrar	Charter Oak HS	dfarrar@cousd.net
Steve Hagerty	West Covina HS	shagerty@wcusd.org
Raul Lara	Mater Dei HS	rlara@materdei.org
L.D. Matthews	Rancho Mirage HS	lmattews@psusd.us
Jason Negro	St. John Bosco HS	jnegro@bosco.org
Carter Paysinger	Santa Monica	cpaysinger@smmusd.org
Nicholas Rogers	Cajon HS	Nicholas.Rogers@sbcusd.k12.ca.us
Jeff Steinberg	Beaumont HS	jsteinberg@beaumontusd.k12.ca.us
James Vondra	Antelope Valley HS	jvondra@avhsd.org
Jahmal Wright	Culver City HS	jahmalwright@ccusd.org

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CIFSSHOME REQUIREMENTS

SCHEDULES & SCORES Complete your schedule in CIFSSHome prior to your season as well as update scores following each contest
Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your entire season schedule into CIFSSHOME (www.cifsshome.org) as well as update the scores immediately following your contests.

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director). Once you are logged in:

- On the left panel, click on "Teams", select "Football"

To Add a game:

- On the left panel, click on "Events", select "Add Event", choose Game under "Event Type", choose date of game under "Event Date", choose **Football** under "Sport", choose Varsity under "Level", type the opposing school name in "Add Opponent", choose the type of game under "Select Game Type", click on Home, Away or Neutral under "Location", choose "Start Time"
Click on "Save" to add one game or "Save & Duplicate" for multiple games.

- To Submit your score:

- On the left panel, click on "Teams", select "Teams Manager", scroll down to **Football** and click on VR to add Varsity scores
Click on "Post Result" button, enter your team's score, enter the opponent's score, result should auto populate with either "W", "L" or "T" based on the correct match score entered. If the game was a forfeit, click on the Yes box, enter the set scores in "Notes".

VARSITY COACHES

Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your Football coaches (Head & Assistants) into CIFSSHOME (www.cifsshome.org) no later than **MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026** to ensure your coaches receive all pertinent emails from the CIF.

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the "Users" tab, click on "User Manager", click on the  in the upper right hand corner to add Coaches and Assistant Coaches. Enter the information requested on the "Add School User" page. Choose "Active" to provide the coach with access to CIFSSHOME or "Inactive" for directory purposes only. Choose Yes or No to give the coach access to all sport, click **Submit**.

Choose the applicable options on the Assign Coach to Team page, click Save or Add Another to add additional coach(s).

VARSITY TEAM INFORMATION (TEAM PHOTO) due no later than **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2026**.

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the "Teams" tab, click "Teams Manager", click on "Football", click on the "Team Photo" tab,
Click on the  under "TEAM PICTURE", choose the file, click **Submit**.

VARSITY TEAM INFORMATION (ROSTERS)

Attention Athletic Directors/Coaches: It is very important that you enter your entire Football Varsity roster into CIFSSHOME (www.cifsshome.org) no later than **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2026**.

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

- Click on the "Teams" tab, click on "Teams Manager", click on "Football", select 

You can UPLOAD your roster using the instructions below (1) or you can enter each player one by one (2).

Required roster information for Football is:

First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, Number, Position, Height, Weight & Eligibility

(1) To ADD roster players one by one:

- Click on  and complete fields required for Football.

(2) To Import a Roster using an Excel sample file:

- Download the [sample file](#) and delete the "contents only".

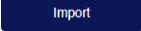
- Copy and paste or type your roster information into the file as the contents and save the file to your computer.

- Only an excel file **(xls)** can be uploaded that is the exact same format as the sample file.

- Columns for information not required for your sport may be left blank, but the HEADER INFORMATION MUST REMAIN EXACTLY AS THE SAMPLE.

- **Required Columns for Football are:**

First Name, Last Name, Birth date, Year, Number, Position, Height, Weight & Eligibility

- Click on to find your file,  then click  on

- To confirm the roster has been uploaded, your players' names will be uploaded in the "Official Roster" section.

- Click on the  next to the player's name to view each player's information.

FOOTBALL 8 AT LARGE APPLICATION

Attention Athletic Directors/ Coaches: Please follow the instructions below to enter your school as an At Large Entry for Football.

The At Large Application is to be submitted by your school no later than **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2026 NO LATER THAN 11:00 P.M.**

Log in @ www.cifsshome.org (If you do not have a log in & password as a coach, check with your Athletic Director).

Once you are logged in:

- On the left panel, click on the "Forms" tab, select "At Large Petition"

- Select "Football" from the drop down menu, then click "Add"

TEAMS MUST HAVE A .300 OR BETTER OVERALL RECORD TO MEET THE AT LARGE CRITERA (APPROVED 4.16.26 @ CIF COUNCIL MTG)



2026 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES

1-5-3c (9) – The committee has approved the wearing of play cards on both the forearm/wrist and belt areas of the body.

9-4-7 – The committee approved new rules language that no player may use the hand(s) to slap the opponent's head.

Rules Reminders:

1-5-1d (5)a - 4, 5 (NEW) — Committee clarifies and restricts attachments on tooth and mouth protectors, effective with the 2026 season.

1-5-2d (NEW), 1-5-3c (6) — Arm sleeve specifications developed to guide manufacturers, players and coaches effective with the 2027 season.

2026 Football Editorial Changes

1-1-8; 1-5-1d(5)a - 4, 5; 1-5-3a(2); 2-15-1; 2-32-6; 3-5-7g; 4-1-3; 5-3-1; 8-2-2; 8-2-3; 8-2-4; 8-2-5; 9-4-3p; 9-8 PENALTY; 10-4-2; 10-4-2b; 10-4-4a; 10-5-3; SIX-PLAYER RULES DIFFERENCES; NFHS OFFICIAL FOOTBALL SIGNALS.

2026 Football Points of Emphasis

- 1. Flagrant and Unsportsmanlike Fouls**
- 2. Helping the Runner**
- 3. Sideline Management and Control**
- 4. Identification of the NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls**

Prohibition on Slapping the Head Now Applies to All Players in High School Football

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (July 8, 2026) — In an ongoing focus on minimizing risk of injury in high school sports, the NFHS Football Rules Committee strengthened a rule related to illegal personal contact. Both revisions recommended by the committee were subsequently approved by the NFHS Board of Directors.

The Football Rules Committee is composed of one member from each NFHS member state association that uses NFHS playing rules, along with representatives from the NFHS Coaches Association and NFHS Officials Association.

Previously, Rule 9-4-7 stated that defensive players could not use the hand(s) to slap the blocker's head. This year, the Football Rules Committee approved language to apply the prohibition equally to the offense and defense.

“By eliminating the words ‘defense’ and ‘blocker’s’ from the rule prohibiting slapping an opponent’s head, the prohibition now applies to all players,” said Bob Colgate, NFHS director of sports and sports medicine and liaison to the Football Rules Committee.

The other revision approved by the committee for the 2026 NFHS Football Rules Book concerns play cards worn primarily by quarterbacks. Previously, play cards could be worn only on the wrist or arm. This year, the committee approved wearing the play cards on the belt as well.

“The Football Rules Committee added the belt to the choices for players as the belt poses no health risk issue to the player and poses no danger to the opponent,” Colgate said.

“From a rules perspective I believe the committee feels like the high school football game is in pretty good shape,” said Steve Roberts, chair of the NFHS Football Rules Committee and associate executive director of the Arkansas Activities Association. “The two proposals that passed do not present significant changes to the game but do clarify and add options to enhance the overall value of the sport to all participants.”

The four points of emphasis identified by the committee for the 2026 season are Flagrant and Unsportsmanlike Fouls, Helping the Runner, Sideline Management and Control, and Identification of the NFHS Authenticating Mark on Game Balls.

In addition to the two major rules revisions noted above and several editorial changes, two rules changes approved in 2025 will become effective during the next two seasons.

Last year, the committee approved two new additional requirements in Rule 1-5-1d(5) for tooth and mouth protectors, which are required in high school football. **Effective in 2026**, tooth and mouth protectors a) shall not include any attachment(s) that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth, and b) shall not include anything that is a health or risk issue and could pose danger to themselves or other players.

A new item was added to Rule 1-5-2d regarding a change in arm sleeve specifications. The new language, **effective with the 2027 season**, states that “arm sleeves, whether attached to a shirt or unattached, manufactured to enhance contact with the football or opponent, must meet the SFIA specification at the time of manufacture. Arm sleeves must have a permanent, exact replica of the SFIA arm sleeve seal (meets SFIA specification), that must be visible and appear legibly on the exterior of the arm sleeve.”

The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), in working with football arm sleeve manufacturers and the NFHS, has developed the new football arm sleeve performance specifications to be **effective with the 2027 season**. The new specifications closely align with the current NFHS rules for football gloves.

A complete listing of the football rules changes will be available on the NFHS website at www.nfhs.org. Click on “Sports” at the top of the home page and select “Football” and then “Rules.” The print version of the 2026 Football Rules Book will be available for purchase in late April at www.NFHS.com, and the digital version will be available in April via NFHS Digital at www.NFHS.org.

According to the 2024-25 NFHS High School Athletics Participation Survey, 11-player football is the most popular high school sport for boys with 1,029,588 participants in 14,269 schools nationwide. In addition, there were 35,097 boys who participated in 6-, 8- and 9-player football, along with 4,969 girls in all four versions of the game for a grand total of 1,069,654.

CIF SOUTHERN SECTION BLUE BOOK BYLAWS

Following are key Blue Book bylaws coaches should review with their assistants and participants in reference to the CIF-SS rules and regulations as defined in the 2026-2027 Blue Book.

START OF FALL PRACTICE

As fall practice begins, the following information is intended to remind you of some rules related to the start of fall practice and games. Keep in mind that the Practice Allowance Blue Book Bylaw 506 is in effect during the season of sport which begins with the first official practice (see bylaw 2203 for specific dates).

1223.3 SUMMER DEAD PERIOD

A summer dead period must be declared by the school district and/or principal for all sports. The dates of the dead period must be forwarded to the Southern Section Commissioner. The dead period must be the same for all sports at all levels and must be two (2) consecutive weeks, fourteen (14) days between the end of school in the spring and the first day of school in the Fall. No class could be offered, which could circumvent the rule. There are no exceptions to the summer dead period.

During the dead period, NO weightlifting would be permitted. No running or other types of conditioning would be allowed. No coordinated workouts by ANY staff or volunteer members associated with the school are allowed.

2200. AGE REQUIREMENT

A student under 15 years of age may not participate in an interscholastic contest or scrimmage against the varsity team of another school. This Bylaw may be waived by Section action provided the Section adopts criteria for such a waiver which shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Participant must be at least 14 years of age;
- B. A signed consent statement from the parents or legal guardian, allowing participation at the varsity level;
- C. A statement from the head coach that the student-athlete has the physical and mental maturity to compete at the varsity level;
- D. A statement of compliance must be given by the principal to the respective Section office verifying that all required documentation has been completed and is on file in the appropriate school office. There is a 14-year-old Football tab on www.cifsshome.org that needs to be completed and submitted electronically to the CIF Southern Section prior to a 14-year-old student's participation on a varsity football team. The purpose of this form is to establish a database on the number of students participating. Please complete the form if you have any 14-year-old students playing varsity football.

Students may not compete on a freshman team after he/she has reached their 16th birthday on or before June 15th, or on a sophomore or frosh/soph team after he/she has reached their 17th birthday on or before June 15th.

2201. NUMBER OF FOOTBALL PRACTICE DAYS

Bylaw 2201 requires each individual on the team to have 10 days of practice before playing in a game. With the bylaw on acclimatization (503.k(1)), the first 5 of those will be conditioning no matter when the student starts, on their 6th practice they can be in full pads. Each athlete is required to have, in sequence, 3 days in helmets followed by 2 days in helmets/shoulder pads followed by a minimum of 5 days in full pads prior to playing in a scrimmage or game.

- A. There shall be no football games until the squad has had 14 days of practice before the first game. Each individual student on the team must have had at least 10 days of practice before being allowed to compete in a game. (The opening date of football practice may be determined by each Section.) No Sunday practice is permitted. (See Bylaw 504.M for exception.)

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE ...

B. Once acclimatization period is completed, football teams are limited to two days per week of full contact practice with no more than 45 minutes of full contact on each of those days during the season of sport. For purposes of this Bylaw, each team's season of sport is defined as the first day of practice, as allowed by the Section, until the final contest for the team. All full contact practices are prohibited in the off-season, which includes team camps. Full contact practice is defined by state statute as a practice where drills or live action is conducted that involves collisions at game speed where players execute tackles and other activities that is typical of an actual tackle football game. For the purposes of this Bylaw, refer to the definition of "Live Action" as defined by USA Football (see below for excerpt from CIF Blue Pages). Live Action as defined by USA Football (as taken from the CIF Blue Pages):

A drill run in game like conditions and is the only time that players are taken to the ground. Thud is a drill run at an assigned speed through the moment of contact with no pre-determined winner. Contact remains above the waist, and players stay on their feet. Thud is considered full contact by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).

Question: What are the allowable activities that would NOT be considered full contact?

Answer: All the activities below are NOT considered full-contact and would NOT count against the day/time limitations:

C. A team is allowed two days per week of full contact practice, with no more than 45 minutes of full contact on each of those days. This includes live action and thud. A team may participate in air, bags/blocking sleds and control drills at any time unless the Section has implemented more restrictive rules. A team may continue to dress in full pads for practice when conducting any of these drills defined below:

- **Air** – Players run unopposed without bags or any opposition.
- **Bags/Blocking Sleds** – Activity is executed against a bag/blocking sleds shield or pad to allow for a soft-contact surface, with or without the resistance of a teammate or coach standing behind the bag.
- **Control**: Drill is run at assigned speed until the moment of contact with a pre-determined winner. Contact remains above the waist, and players stay on their feet allowing an exit for the ball carrier when one is involved in the drill.

For purposes of this Bylaw, the season of sport for each team is defined as the first day of practice, as allowed by the Section, until the final contest for that team.

Allowable Activities During the Off-Season:

- No full contact practice is allowed during the off-season. Please consult Section Bylaws for allowable off-season activities.
- For the purposes of this Bylaw, the off-season is defined as the team's last football contest of the season until the first day of practice the following school year as set by the Section.

Allowable Activities for Team Camps:

- No full contact practice is allowed during the off-season.
- Team camps are considered practice.
- If allowed by the Section, a team may participate in air, bags/blocking sleds and control drills (see above for definitions of these activities) while attending a team camp. A team may continue to dress in full pads for practice when conducting any of these drills at a team camp. Please consult Section and School District rules regarding the use of school equipment in the off-season.
- For purposes of this Bylaw, the off-season is defined as the team's last football contest of the season until the first day of practice the following school year as set by the Section.

Question & Answer's for Bylaw 2201 (continued on next page)

Q: What is the implementation date for this bylaw?

A: To comply with AB2127, this bylaw will be implemented immediately.

Q: May teams continue to use Thud as a training drill?

A: Yes. However, the time spent on Thud drills is considered full-contact and would count against the team's allotment in both for both days and minutes.

Q: Does unused time carry over to the 2nd day of allowable full contact?

A: No. Teams are allowed 2 days per week of full contact with no more than 45 minutes on each of those days. If a team does not use the entire 90 minutes of full contact on one day, it may not carry over those unused minutes to the next day.

Q: Is a team allowed any type of contact outside of the two days per week with no more than 45 minutes on each of those days?

A: Yes. A team may still engage in Control drills. See the Policy Page for Bylaw 2101 for the definition of Control.

Q: If allowed by the Section, may a team in the off-season engage in drills that are not considered full contact?

A: Yes. However, no full-contact practice is allowed during the off-season at any time.

Q: Is full contact allowed at team camps?

A: No. According to AB2127, team camps are considered practice so full contact would be prohibited.

Q: May teams attend a full-contact team camp outside of California?

A: No. AB2127 and CIF Bylaw 2201 apply no matter where the team camp is conducted.

Q: May teams attend a team camp that only utilizes activities that are not considered full contact?

A: Yes. Teams may attend a team camp and participate in drills that are not considered full contact such as Air, Bags/Blocking Sleds and Control.

Q: Are players allowed to attend individual camps and participate in full-contact drills?

A: Yes. However, schools should consult their Section and School District (or school) policies regarding the use of school equipment by individuals. Also, schools may not use individual camps to circumvent AB 2127 and Bylaw 2101 regarding team camps.

2202. SCRIMMAGE LIMITATIONS

- 2202.1 A Team must complete a minimum of 10 days of practice prior to competing in an interscholastic scrimmage or football carnival. Neither the interscholastic scrimmage nor carnival for the team or an individual, may be on the tenth day of practice. Two or more sessions in one day count as one day's practice for the team or an individual.

2203. PHYSICAL CONDITIONING/ACCLIMATIZATION PERIOD

A high school shall not conduct a physical conditioning practice session during the summer prior to the opening date of authorized football practice, unless so authorized by the appropriate CIF Section. The start date for fall football practice, for each individual school, will be determined according to the following:

- 2203.1 **Week 0 Games – The first official day of football practice is July 27, 2026.** The period of July 27 – July 31 will serve as a five-day acclimatization period (Bylaw 503.K(1)) for prospective members of a high school team.
- 2203.2 **Week 1 Games – The first official day of football practice is August 3, 2026.** The period of August 3 through August 7 will serve as a five-day acclimatization period (Bylaw 503.K(1)) for prospective members of a high school team.
- 2203.3 During the first three days of the acclimatization period practice or testing activity of July 27 through July 29 (zero week) and August 3 through August 5 (week 1), helmets shall be the only protective equipment student athletes may wear. During the next two days of practice or testing activity of July 30 through July 31 (zero week) and August 6 through August 7 (week 1), helmets, and shoulder pads shall be the only protective equipment student athletes may wear.

Participants shall not engage in more than one on-field practice per day during the five-day acclimatization period. On-field practices shall last no longer than two hours. The acclimatization period may include various facets of football training (teaching techniques, chalks talks, pass patterns, etc.) but MAY NOT include any body contact such as tackling or blocking. During acclimatization there will be no equipment used such as blocking or tackling dummies, pads, etc. Student athletes may practice in full pads on the sixth day of practice or testing activity.

2203.4 All conditioning sessions will be held at the school's regular practice field. No workouts will be permitted at beaches, mountain resorts, or military sites.

QUESTION: When will schools be allowed to fit equipment?

ANSWER: Schools may fit equipment prior to the conditioning period as long as it is during the summer and not during the dead period. Uniforms may not be issued prior to the conditioning period.

2203.5 Schools will be permitted to issue uniforms and equipment on the first day of conditioning after which a time may be designated for individual and team photos. No conditioning in any type of uniform will be permitted.

2203.6 The first official day of practice in full pads **cannot** occur before:
Week 0 Games – Saturday, August 1, 2026
Week 1 Games – Saturday, August 8, 2026

2203.7 The two-week dead period is mandatory.

2213. ORGANIZED TEAM PRACTICE

Organized team practice shall be interpreted as meaning the association of a coach with potential team members for the purpose of learning or practicing the skills of football. (**Note:** A school may not conduct a practice of any type on Sunday. Assembling a football squad of selected members for a "skull session" or for the purpose of reviewing game films is not permitted.)

2213.2 FOOTBALL PRACTICE SITE

All football practice sessions are to be conducted **on campus or the regular home practice field of the school**. No school or its allied organizations, such as booster clubs, may provide housing and/or meals free of charge to athletes during regular football practice prior to the opening of school.

3510. FREELANCE PLAYOFF ENTRY QUALIFICATION

Any freelance school wishing to enter the playoffs must submit its schedule to the Commissioner for approval in of conditions under which the team may qualify for the playoffs. Freelance Petition's must be completed in CIFSSHome (www.cifsshome.org) prior to the start of each season of sport for evaluation.

512. SCOUTING PROHIBITIONS – PRACTICE SESSIONS

Scouting of any type, which would include personal viewing, written notes, audio tape, motion pictures, video reproduction and/or any other type of reproduction, such as still pictures, etc., shall not be taken in any sport of a member school's practice sessions by anyone without written consent of the participating school(s).

Question: What is allowed with regard to scouting a contest or scrimmage?

Answer: There will be **NO** restrictions on the part of member schools regarding the filming/video taping of any contest or one allowable scrimmage. Home schools will maintain game management rights and responsibilities.

CIF SOUTHERN SECTION SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

Following are key points/highlights coaches should review with their assistants and participants in reference to the CIF-SS rules and regulations.

GAME FILMING

Please share these suggested guidelines for filming with your game photographer:

- Picture should be clear and player's numbers readable.
- Picture should include enough players on both teams to recognize offensive and defensive formations. During kick plays the camera should follow its own team

2206.1 TIE-BREAKER SYSTEM

The "25-Yard Tie-Breaker System" is authorized for use in the Southern Section for playoffs as follows:

- 2206.11 Respective leagues have the option of adopting the plan for use
- 2206.12 If adopted, all ties within league must be resolved with the "25-Yard Tie-Breaker System"
- 2206.13 If adopted, the plan may be used for the V, JV or Frosh/Soph levels, or any combination of
- 2206.14 By mutual consent, the plan may be used for non-league contests
- 2206.15 The "25-Yard Tie-Breaker System" will be used for all CIF-SS playoff contests
- 2206.16 May not be used beyond the last allowable playing date to determine entry into the playoffs

TIE GAMES

The twenty-five yard line tiebreaker system will be used in all divisions and all games, **(including finals)**, of the CIF Southern Section football playoffs, when games end in regulation time with the score tied. Although the ball will be placed on the 25-yard line for tiebreakers, we will adopt the National Federation 10-yard tiebreaker rules, with the exception that teams will be able to make first downs and have the opportunity to score on a defensive interception or fumble recovery. Complete details for the 10-yard line tiebreaker are listed in the NFHS Football Rules Book.

HOW THE TIE-BREAKER WORKS

If the score at the conclusion of regulation play is tied, there will be a timeout. The captains of the two squads will meet at midfield, with the officials, for a flip of the coin. The winner of the toss will have the option to defend a goal or to determine possession.

Then, each team will have the opportunity to score from the 25-yard line and the team which outscores the other in the "overtime" session will be the winner, following the rules of football.

.... For example, the team on offense first will have one series of downs in which to score a touchdown (and try to kick for a one-point conversion or a run-pass for a two-point conversion) or kick a field goal. The other team will have one series of downs in which to equal, or surpass, the points scored by the first team. If the second team on offense does not equal or surpass the first team on offense, the first team on offense wins. If the second team scores more points than the first team, the second team wins. If the second team scores an equal number of points, the whole procedure is repeated until a winner is determined.

CA EDUCATION CODE RE: FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT RECONDITIONING

17578. The governing board of each district maintaining a high school shall provide for annual cleaning, sterilizing, and necessary repair of football equipment of their respective schools pursuant to Sections 17579 and 17580.

17579. All football equipment actually worn by pupils shall be cleaned and sterilized at least once a year. Football equipment used in spring training shall be cleaned and sterilized before it is used in the succeeding fall term.

17580. Any contract with a dealer or craftsman for the repair of football equipment belonging to the district or state college shall specifically state or describe the materials to be used by the dealer or craftsman in repairing such equipment.

2208. MERCY RULE

A mercy rule will be in effect for all football contests in the C.I.F. Southern Section, which includes pre-season games, league games and playoff games, including Championship Finals. This means that if one team has a lead of 35 points or more at the end of three quarters, there will be a running clock for the 4th quarter until the end of the contest. If schools wish to invoke a running clock prior to the start of the 4th quarter, they can do so by mutual agreement of both schools. I have attached the relevant rule to this memo, so you can see the details.

This item has been approved for statewide adoption, for both regular and post-season contests. This is in accordance with NFHS Football Rules 3-1-2 and 3-1-3.

1. Prior to the 4th Quarter, by mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, a *“running clock”* may be used if the point differential between the two teams reaches 35 or more.
2. If at the start of the 4th Quarter or at any time during the 4th Quarter, the point differential is 35 or more points, a running clock shall be used for the remainder of the contest.
3. Once the *“running clock”* is in effect during the 4th Quarter, it shall remain in effect for the balance of the contest, even if the team that is behind subsequently scores to make the deficit less than 35 points.
4. The *“running clock”* will be administered as follows:
 - A. The game clock will start with the snap or legal touch of a free kick on the first play following the establishment of the pertinent point differential, and continue to run uninterrupted when:
 - A 1st down is awarded to either team, including following a change of possession.
 - The ball or runner is out-of-bounds.
 - A legal or illegal forward pass is incomplete.
 - A play results in a touchback.
 - An inadvertent whistle occurs.
 - During all penalty enforcements.
 - B. The game clock shall be stopped for:
 - A score (including touchdown: try; field goal; safety).
 - The free kick following a fair catch or awarded fair catch.
 - A charged team time-out.
 - A coach-referee conference.
 - An official's time-out (injury; equipment; 1st down measurement; other, as required);
 - C. Following a stoppage for any reason in B. above, the game clock will start when the ball is next:
 - Marked ready-for-play; or
 - Legally touched on the free kick following a score, a fair catch or awarded fair catch

503.M PLAYER CONDUCT

Statewide Sportsmanship and Ejection Policy applies to all sports

Player:

A player who is ejected from a contest (for reasons other than fighting or leaving the bench area during a fight) shall be ineligible to participate in the remainder of that contest (event) and his or her team's future contest (s) as outlined below:

First Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate in the team's next contest. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's next contest. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the player would be ineligible for the team's first contest the following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the first contest of their next season of sport.

Second Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate in the team's next three (3) contests. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's next three (3) contests. If the season concludes prior to the player serving the three (3) contests suspension, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for the team's following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for their next season of sport.

Third Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's remaining contest that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the player would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the next season of sport as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

A player who is ejected from a contest for fighting or leaving the bench area during a fight* shall be ineligible to participate in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contests as outlined below:

First Ejection: Player (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct) is ineligible to participate in the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the duration of the suspension. If the season concludes prior to the player serving the full suspension, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for the team's following season. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for the number of contests remaining on the suspension for their next season of sport. *NFHS Rules indicate automatic one game suspension for leaving the bench.

Second Ejection: Player is ineligible to participate for the remainder of that season. Players may remain on the bench for the duration of that contest and may be on the bench in street clothes for the team's remaining contests that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the player would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. If the player is a senior, he or she would be ineligible for up to six (6) contests for their next season of sport as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

Before a player may return to participate in a contest following a multiple game suspension for any of the above infractions, the school principal must inform the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter that they have met with the student-athlete, his or her parent/guardian/caregiver and coach to discuss future behavioral expectations.

Question: *Sometimes an official will reverse their initial call at the conclusion of the contest. Can the official reverse his/her original call?*

Answer: If, in the review of the report filed by the official, it is determined that he/she made an incorrect ruling, the official may rescind the initial ejection. (Approved May 2020 Federated Council)

QUESTION:	What must be submitted to the Section office before a student can be cleared to rejoin his/her team?
ANSWER:	The Section office will provide a form on their website that must be uploaded to CIFSS Home. The school must also indicate the date(s) of the contest in which the player will not be in attendance in the "School Action" portion of the misconduct.
QUESTION:	What is meant by attendance at a contest?
ANSWER:	Attendance is defined as being present at the location/site of the contest, which includes at the team bench/area, in the stands/spectator area, any location where the contest can be observed at any time, inside a gymnasium, stadium or playing area. The intent of this rule is that the ejected person is not present at the location/ site of the next contest.
QUESTION:	What happens when a student engages in Fighting/Assaultive Behavior during an athletic contest that is not observed by game officials?
ANSWER:	In cases when a student engages in Fighting/Assaultive Behavior that is not observed by game officials, it is the expectation of the CIF Southern Section Executive Committee that the building principal of the school involved will impose a minimum three- game suspension for the students who commit such offenses.
QUESTION:	What happens if a student or coach receives a red card, misconduct of any kind, or an ejection during the last game of the season?
ANSWER:	The game suspension(s) carry over to the first game(s) at the beginning of the subsequent season. For example, a sophomore soccer player receives a red card the last game of the 2020 season. He/she will serve a game suspension the first game of 2021 season. Suspensions carry over and must be served before the individual becomes eligible to compete in that sport. See next Q&A for answers regarding seniors.
QUESTION:	What if a senior (12 th grade) student receives a red card, misconduct of any kind or an ejection during the last game of the season?
ANSWER:	If a senior (12 th grade) student receives a red card or misconduct during the last game of the season, he/she must serve the penalty in the NEXT sport in which he/she participates. If the student does not participate in any other sports, the CIF Office WILL need a letter from the principal indicating the corrective action taken with that student. This letter will be uploaded to the ejection report in CIF-SS Home.
QUESTION:	When a team has multiple player conduct issues within a game which will affect their ability to field a full team at that level in the next contest, can the school bring players up from a lower level to fill the roster?
ANSWER:	No. If a level of sport involved in multiple player conduct issues to the extent where, it affects their ability to safely field a team, the subsequent game shall be forfeited.

503.M COACH EJECTION

Statewide Sportsmanship and Ejection Policy applies to all sports

A coach who is ejected from a contest (for reasons other than fighting) shall be disqualified from participating in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contest (s) as outlined below:

First Ejection: Coach is disqualified from participating in the team's next contest. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for the team's next contest. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the coach would be ineligible for the team's first contest the following season.

Second Ejection: Coach is disqualified from participating in the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for the team's next three (3) to six (6) contests. If the ejection occurs in the last game of the season, the coach would be ineligible for the team's first three (3) to six (6) contests the following season.

Third Ejection: Coach is disqualified from participating in the remaining contests of that season. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for the remaining contests of that season. If there are six (6) or fewer contests remaining in the season, the coach would be disqualified from participating in up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

A coach who is ejected from a contest for (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct) shall be disqualified from participating in the remainder of that contest and his or her team's future contests as outlined below:

Ejection for (Fighting/Assaultive Behavior/Gross Unsportsmanlike Conduct): Coach is disqualified from participating for the remainder of that season. Coach must immediately vacate the playing area and the vicinity in and around the contest and refrain from having any communication with the team or other coaches for the remainder of that contest and for all of the team's remaining contests that season. If there are fewer than six (6) contests remaining in the season, the coach would be disqualified from participating for up to six (6) contests for the team's following season as determined by the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter.

Before a coach may return to participate in a contest following a multiple contest disqualification, for any of the above infractions, the school principal must inform the CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter that they have met with the coach to discuss future behavioral expectations.

Spectator:

If a spectator is ejected from a contest, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that person does not attend that team's next contest. If the same spectator is ejected a second time, it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that person does not attend any of the remaining contests for that season.

Appeal Process for All Multi-Game Ejections:

The school principal may appeal the penalties listed above in writing to the League Commissioner/President (for a regular season contest not including the final contest prior to Section playoffs) or CIF Section Commissioner with jurisdiction in the matter (for the final contest prior to Section playoffs and all playoff contests). The appeal must be received by the Section within 48 hours of the date of the ejection. Reasons for the appeal may only include misidentification of the ejected player or a misapplication of the rule. There will be no appeal regarding the judgement of an official. Note: There is no appeal process for single game ejections.

Note: There is no appeal process for single game ejections.

QUESTION:	Under what scenario may a school appeal a multi-game ejection? (<u>Single game ejections are not subject to appeal</u>)
ANSWER:	A school may only appeal a multi-game ejection for misidentification of a player(s) or coach(es) involved. *There is no appeal to the CIF Southern Section regarding the judgement of an official, in any circumstance.
QUESTION:	When will appeals for multi-game ejections (Non-league contests, playoff contests) be reviewed by CIF Southern Section administrators?
ANSWER:	Appeals for multi-game ejections will only be reviewed during regular business hours. Monday – Friday, 7:30 am – 4:00 pm.

PLAN FOR ALTERCATIONS

- Coaches on the sideline should immediately yell “Red Alert”, step two yards onto the field, facing their sideline/bench area with arms outstretched and yell “Red Alert”.
- Use the “Red Alert” phrase that alerts all players that an altercation has started and to follow their procedure
- Instruct all players on the sideline to immediately turn to their bench, take a knee and remove their helmets.
- Players on the field should sprint to their sideline, take a knee and remove their helmets.
- No athlete should attempt to interfere and/or join the altercation.
- A designated coach may need to go onto the field to assist the game officials, usually the Head Coach.

Developing a procedure for case an altercation occurs and reviewing it with your football team prior to the start of your first contest. Practice the procedure during scrimmages. League play, and post season playoffs can help prevent disqualifications and possible forfeits.

WHEN CAN A BAND PLAY?

While there is no specific rule cited in the 2026 National Federation of High Schools Football Rule Book, or in the 2025-2026 C.I.F. Southern Section Blue Book regarding this issue, the standard procedure for football contests, as interpreted by this office and the California Football Officials Association is as follows:

A band can play during a contest, but only during breaks in the action. For example, between plays, during timeouts, between quarters, half-time, and so on. If a band is playing during the game, it is considered unsportsmanlike conduct by the team whose band is playing. The playing of music during the game can be a distraction to the competing teams, and the officials, and can result in placing teams at an advantage or disadvantage as a result. It is the expectation of the C.I.F., and the game officials, that the administration of the offending school will make sure that the band adheres to this standard. If the playing of music during game action continues, then the officials have the authority to penalize the offending team 15 yards for unsportsmanlike conduct, each and every time it happens.

GAME ANNOUNCER SUGGESTIONS

The following information is provided for the benefit of the public-address announcer at your home playoff games: this capsule summary was developed by the late John McDonough and has been found to be very useful to our member schools.

1. Remember, you are NOT a radio announcer and should not give a play-by play account of the game. This is an insult to the intelligence of the spectators. In a normal game you will be speaking about 25 percent of the time and be QUIET about 75 percent of the time. The crowd came to see the game, not to hear your opinions about it.
2. Give the down and distance before each play. Simply say, "Third and eight on the Homestead 42."
3. When the ball is snapped, do not say, "Jones has the ball and is going around left end." Again, you are insulting the intelligence of the spectators. Merely give his name – "Jones is the ball carrier."
4. When the play is over, give the name of the man, or men, who made the tackle, and set up the down and distance again.
5. After a long run, pass, or kick, give the total yardage, but make no comment. Such comments as "What a beautiful run" are in bad taste. The crowd can see that it was a good run and as a PA announcer you must be 100 percent impartial.
6. NEVER try to outguess the officials. If you think you see a penalty, do not mention it. If one of the officials throws a yellow flag, simply say, "There is a flag on the play." Then wait – do not try to explain the foul. When the referee gives his signal, interpret it to the crowd. Get a copy of the rulebook or a program, which has the signals. If it is an unusual play, the arrangements you made prior to the game will get this information to you to pass on to the spectators.
7. Never use the names of officials during the game. You should read their names prior to the game. Do not say, "The foul was called by Head Linesman Jones" or "Referee Smith is explaining the foul to the captain Brown".
8. Never comment on the penalties that are called, or the work of the officials, whether you think it is good or bad.
9. Never comment on the sportsmanship, or play, of either team, or either coach.
10. Never designate the player who committed a penalty. You probably will be wrong anyway, and this type of announcement tends to make the game get out of hand.
11. If a player is injured, give his name. You are not a doctor, so do not try to diagnose his injuries. If you get a later report on the player's condition, give it with no comment. Never try to explain how a player was injured. This can be misconstrued by the crowd as an unsportsmanlike act on the part of an opponent and cause an unfortunate situation.
12. If the crowd starts to boo the visiting team, or the officials, to an extreme degree, say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, these people are our guests tonight, let's treat them as such."
13. A few minutes before the end of the game, preferably during a time out, thank the people for coming, announce convenient routes for leaving the stadium and remind them to drive carefully on the way home.

In summary, the public address announcer just covers the facts of the game, as impartially and objectively as possible. You should not give opinions of your own because the spectators are present and should be free to form their own opinions. A radio announcer gives his opinions because the listener is seeing the game through his description, but you are a public address announcer, and this is a totally different art.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOLS RELATED TO OFFICIALS

It is **required** that:

1. When contacted by official at least 24 hours in advance, the host school will have available someone who will handle the needs of the officials assigned to the contest.
2. The host school have available someone who will handle the needs of the officials assigned to the contest. This should include, but not be limited to, facility orientation, locker room assignment and parking.
3. The officials' locker rooms be open at halftime and immediately after the game.
4. At the completion of the contest, the officials' locker and dressing facilities remain secured for at least 30 minutes in football and 20 minutes in all other sports. Coaches and other school officials should not enter an officials' dressing area for the purpose of complaints.
5. Coaches do not approach or confront the officials at the completion of a contest.
6. Coaches and school officials do not make public statements to the new media criticizing officials.
7. School officials be alert to potential problem situations and, when necessary, provide security for officials to and from their dressing facilities and to the parking area after the contest.
8. Athletic administrators convey to their coaching staff that if there is a problem regarding the officiating, it should be handled first through the Area Officials' Liaison and secondly by the CIF Southern Section Office if the problem is serious in nature.
9. A representative from the host school shall handle financial matters prior to the start of the contest. This task should not be handled by the coach.
10. The participating schools should enforce the principles of Victory with Honor and Education Code 48900 and 48915 with regards to fan and spectator behavior. Schools are strongly encouraged to remove and sanction any spectator who engages in abusive verbal or physical behavior or who uses profanity.
11. Schools not in compliance with numbers 1-10, will be reported to their Area Liaison by the officials association within five (5) school days. Regardless of the infraction, the contest will be played.

The safety and security of officials is a prime concern of the CIF Southern Section. It is recommended that each school put together a packet to be sent to the liaison providing information to officials pertaining to the game including but not limited to:

-  Map of School
-  Location and availability of facilities
-  Parking
-  Officials' security arrangements
-  Contact person with phone number and availability.
-  Officials shall be paid in a timely fashion.

DRONES

Drones are not allowed during any 11 or 8-person football contests at all levels. Although there is not an actual State CIF rule against the use of drones, the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) in its June 21st, 2016, Summary of Small Unmanned Aircraft Rule states "Small unmanned aircraft may not operate over any persons not directly participating in the operation." Based upon this federal ruling the CIF State Office has instructed our section to deem it a safety hazard and to not allow drones.

A Drone flying to get pregame images for a later TV broadcast well before the start of a game and the arrival of the crowd would be an example of a drone flight within the FAA rules and outside of our concern for safety.

8 MAN FOOTBALL 2026-2027 SCHOOLS IN LEAGUES

ENT LEAGUE

1 AGAPE

Academy Careers & Exp
Hesperia Christian
Lucerne Valley
PAL Charter Academy

1 EXPRESS

Avalon
Calvary Chapel/ Downey
Legacy College Prep
Southlands Christian
Vista Meridian Academy

ENT LEAGUE

1 FRONTIER

Hillcrest Christian/ TO
Laguna Blanca
Malibu
Villanova Prep

1 HERITAGE

Desert Christian/ Lan
Faith Baptist
Lancaster Baptist
Santa Clarita Christian

ENT LEAGUE

1 SUMMIT

Calvary Baptist
Cornerstone Christian/W
Public Safety Academy
River Springs/ Hemet
United Christian Academy

1 TRI-VALLEY

Cate
Chadwick
Flintridge Prep
Poly/ Pasadena
Sage Hill
Thacher

Propose (2) 8-man brackets; 2 automatic entries per league; addiitional spots filled with top At Large entries in each divisions

28 Schools in Leagues

5 Freelance Schoools

33

FREELANCE TEAMS

California Lutheran
CSDR
Hillcrest Christian/ TO
Lighthouse Chrsitian
Milken Community

FREELANCE (LEAGUE)

YES

YES

8.11.2026

PETITION IN CIFSSHOME

YES

YES

8 PERSON PLAYOFF INFORMATION

Please familiarize yourself with the following information in this bulletin.

- 1 The 8-Man Football Playoffs will consist of 2 divisions.

The Division 1 and Division 2 playoff brackets will be a maximum of 16 teams. Only the champions of each league will be guaranteed automatic entry into the playoffs in each division, with the remaining berths in each draw filled by at-large teams, using the criteria listed below.

2. Guaranteed entries will only be accepted from leagues where members have **PLAYED** at least 3 league contests (forfeitures will not be accepted).
3. The remainder of the bracket will be filled by at-large teams, which include freelance teams, as well as league schools who do not qualify automatically.
4. No team may qualify for the playoffs, either as a guaranteed entry, or as an at-large team, unless they have actually played 6 contests (no forfeits).

NOTE: Should the number of guaranteed playoff entries fail to complete a full bracket, this will necessitate the inclusion of at-large teams. The following criteria and procedures will be used to accomplish this task.

(1) Leagues will have the option of entering at-large teams for consideration should they desire (see process below).

(Blue Book Rule 3519.7) In the sport of Football, individual schools will be evaluated and placed into divisions on a yearly basis utilizing a formula based entirely on current regular season results. Final power rankings, and divisional placements, will be determined and released at the end of the current regular season. Seeding of all playoff brackets in each division will follow the final power rankings in that division, regardless of league affiliation or league finish. For example, in the First Round, the #1 seed, determined by the final power rankings for that division, will play #16, the #2 seed will play #15, etc. The higher seeded team will host the first-round contest and then CIF Southern Section Bylaw 3504, Host Team After the First Round, will be followed for all subsequent contests.

AT LARGE ENTRY

Once Automatic Qualifiers have been placed into a division, any remaining spots will go to the highest ranked .500 teams in that grouping. If there are not enough .500 teams, then the highest rated sub .300 team(s), will be taken.

**TEAMS MUST HAVE A .300 OR BETTER OVERALL RECORD TO MEET THE AT LARGE CRITERIA
(APPROVED 4.16.26 @ CIF COUNCIL MTG)**

NOTE: YOU MUST SUBMIT THE "AT-LARGE ENTRY FORM" IN CIFSSHOMES (www.cifsshomes.org) TO BE CONSIDERED.

AT LARGE ENTRY DUE DATE:

8-Man Football At Large entry is DUE
no later than 11:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 31, 2026.

IMPROVED MEDIA RELATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL

I ADVANTAGES – PURPOSE

- A. Increased school notoriety
 - 1. Give the school's name greater public recognition.
 - 2. Increase awareness of the athletic program
 - 3. Generate community interest and support for the school as a whole
- B. Increased attendance at game
- C. Increased recognition for individual athletes
 - 1. Make outstanding achievements known on community, state and national levels
 - 2. Allow athletes to have a greater chance at receiving awards
 - 3. Increase interest in college recruiters and give athletes more scholarship opportunities

II BASIC KEYS TO IMPROVED MEDIA RELATIONS

- A. Report all varsity scores.
 - 1. Make sure to have a responsible person (student, assistant coach, faculty member, booster club member, etc.) email in scores after each athletic event
 - 2. Report to all media in your coverage area
 - a) Local newspaper(s)
 - b) Major metropolitan newspaper(s)
 - c) Local radio station(s)
 - d) Local television station/cable TV outlet
 - e) Post email addresses for the above where they are easily accessible after any event. Be sure to take a copy on road trips
 - 3. Always be prepared to report league and overall records for BOTH teams when emailing scores
 - 4. Always report all Scores to www.cifsshhome.org, www.Scorebooklive.com and www.maxpreps.com first!
 - 5. Major Daily Metropolitan Newspapers in CIF-SS Coverage Area:
 - a) In all areas: Los Angeles Times – eric.sondheimer@latimes.com; and Southern California News Group - bpatterson@scng.com
 - b) In the 310 area: South Bay Daily Breeze – sports@dailybreeze.com
 - c) In the 562 area: Long Beach Press-Telegram - jdavis@scng.com and Whittier Daily News – frobledo@scng.com
 - d) In the 714/949 area: Orange County Register – preps@ocregister.com and Daily Pilot – Andrew.turner@latimes.com
 - e) In the 909/951 area: Riverside Press Enterprise – ejohnson@scng.com and San Bernardino Sun – Daily Bulletin – sports@inlandnewspapers.com
 - f) In the 818 area: Glendale News Press – grant.gordon@latimes.com sports@sgvn.com and L.A. Daily News – ehanson@scng.com
 - g) In the 626 area: San Gabriel Valley Tribune - frobledo@scng.com and Pasadena Star News – frobledo@scng.com
 - h) In the 661 area: Antelope Valley Press - sports@avpress.com and Santa Clarita Signal - twhyte@signalscv.com
 - i) In the 619, 760 & 858 area: San Diego Union Tribune – john.maffei@sduniontribune.com
 - j) In the 760 area: The Desert Sun – andrew.john@desertsun.com
 - k) In the 805 area: Santa Barbara Independent – sports@independent.com; Ventura County Star – vcssportsdesk@vcstar.com
- B. Maintain accurate rosters for all varsity teams
 - 1. Always include the following: Number, Name, Position, Height, Weight, Year in School
 - 2. Always have programs for home varsity contests. Make sure they include complete and accurate rosters for BOTH teams

3. Always provide programs at no charge to members of the media covering your event
4. Keep accurate statistics throughout each season of sport
5. Update each week
6. Report outstanding statistical performances when reporting game scores
(Note: If you know the game is being covered in person, this may not be necessary. This is a general guideline for minor sports which aren't regularly covered)
7. Watch for CIF-SS Bulletins and follow directions for reporting statistical information to the section office when requested

Maintain all-time school records and make available to the media upon request. (A great item for programs, a must for media guides)

C. Use of facilities

1. Always provide a seat in the press box or at the scorers table for working members of the media
2. Keep in mind that the press box and/or scorer's table should be reserved for authorized game personnel (announcer, spotter, scoreboard operator, timer, stat crew, etc.). Cheer and socializing should not be allowed in the press box or at the scorers table
 - a) This is a WORKING area. Maintain a professional atmosphere at all times Schedule announcements
3. Schedule announcements are a sure way to gain media attention, as well as provide the public with the information they need to attend your games
4. Complete schedules well in advance of each season
5. Release schedules to local media as soon as they become complete
6. Meet the CIF-SS Master Schedule dates to CIFSSHOME, unit assignor and area liaison be sure your school is Included

III PERSONAL MEDIA RELATIONSHIPS

A. Coaches

1. Make yourself accessible to the media whenever possible, but know your limits
 - a) You are entitled to a 10 minute "cool-down" period after a contest. USE IT! Don't try to answer any questions until you are composed and ready to concentrate
 - b) Remember, nothing is "off the record". Anything you say can and probably will be printed
 - c) Try to set a consistent day and time when you can be reached during the week and make it known to the reporters covering your team
2. Assist reporters with statistics, records and general information about your athletes

B. Student-Athletes

1. Coaches should instruct players on the "do's" and "don'ts" of media interviews at an early team meeting
 - a) Review good interview techniques – straight and to the point. Be informative, don't "ramble" or get off the subject. Answer the questions asked
 - b) Stress the importance of good media relations
 - c) Remind players to stress the "team concept"
 - d) Prepare students to be ready when questions are asked and not fearful or under duress when the situation arises
 - e) Player interviews on the high school level can be a great learning experience – they should be enjoyable as well
2. Set policy on player interviews and stick to it
 - a) Where and when
 - b) Notify media of such policies

C. Maintain an accurate up-to-date list of coaches' office, mobile phone numbers and school email addresses

1. This is especially important for "walk-on" coaches

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2. Provide this list to your regular media outlets

IMPROVED MEDIA RELATIONS FOR HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL (continued)

IV MISCELLANEOUS TIPS AND IDEAS

- A. Be acquainted with the CIF-SS Media Department and its services
 1. Contact Thom Simmons, Assistant Commissioner, at 562-493-9500 or email him at thoms@cifss.org or Communications Coordinator, Alysha Colladay at alyshac@cifss.org.
 - a) Report outstanding performances by your teams or athletes
 - b) Provide information on school activities, facts on athletes, coaching milestones, etc.
 2. General CIF-SS Media Department Services
 - a) CIF-SS quarterly Bulletin; Maintenance of All Time CIF-SS records; Broadcast approval for all contests; Media contact for championship events; www.cifss.org; social media sites. Brianna Sutrisna, Digital Media Coordinator brianas@cifss.org.
- B. Communicate ideas for feature articles on coaches, athletes or teams to local media outlets. If you think one of your team members might make an interesting feature video/article subject, let your local sports editor, beat writer, streaming outlet or local program producer in on it. They are in constant search of these types of items
- C. Answer all written requests for information about your program
 1. CIF-SS Requests, Playoff Information forms
 2. Local newspaper, radio and TV questionnaires
 3. State and national magazine questionnaires
- D. Maintain a file of information forms on coaches and athletes. These may serve as a valuable reference when coaches or athletes are not available for interview
 1. Forms should include age, height, weight, previous involvement in athletics, other sports, etc.
 2. Include mobile and work phone numbers for parents in case of emergency
- E. Maintain a photo file of individual athletes
- F. Schedule a "Media Day" prior to the season
 1. Excellent opportunity to get photo requirements out of the way
 2. Notify and invite all local media outlets
 3. Have team dressed in game uniform with accurate numbers
 4. Provide complete roster, schedule and additional information such as final stats and results of previous season
- G. Call on your resources – get the help you need
 1. School journalism department
 - a) Make "Sports Information Director" out of an interested student
 - b) Involve students in keeping stats, taking photos, video content etc. Reward them by taking them on a road trip, honor at banquet, possibly earning a letter
 2. Request the school journalism or school broadcast program publish/post programs, schedule, media guide, posters, press release, etc.
 3. Tap the booster club for assistance. Many parents would like to be involved...provide the opportunity
- H. Create Social Media Platforms. (Facebook, X/Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, etc.) and keep updated on a daily basis.

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HEALTH AND SAFETY

It is the expectation of the CIF Southern Section that your Athletic Coaches and Administration will take every measure to ensure the health and safety of your student athletes.

The following are key points of emphasis coaches should review with their staff and players in reference to CIF Southern Section rules and regulations in the 2026-2027 CIF Southern Section Blue Book. This list is not all-inclusive but only highlights key areas. For necessary forms and additional information regarding Heat Safety, Hydration and other Sports Medicine resources, please go to www.cifss.org and click on the "Sports Medicine" tab on the blue toolbar.

Additional resources can be found at www.cifstate.org under the "Sports Medicine" tab on the white toolbar.

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION

An annual physical examination, or a statement by a medical practitioner, is required for a student to take part in any authorized school practice session and/or pre-season conditioning period. This physical examination will be valid for a period of one year from the date of the examination. A student will be excused from this physical examination only if there is compliance with the Education Code (parent's refusal to consent). CIF Health and Safety Committee strongly recommends schools use the Pre-Participation Examination form that is endorsed by five major medical societies, American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Society for Sports Medicine, American orthopedic Sports Medicine and the American osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine. All CIF schools must have school board approved forms.

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

A student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at the time for the remainder of the day. A student-athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in education and management of concussion and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider. If a licensed health care provider, trained in education and management of concussion determines that the athlete sustained a concussion or a head injury, the athlete is required to complete a graduated return to play protocol of no less than seven (7) full days from the time of diagnosis under the supervision of a licensed health care provider. On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be signed and returned by all athletes and the athlete's parent/guardian/caregiver before the athlete's initial practice or competition. (Approved May 2010 Federated Council/Revised January 2015 Federated Council)

Question: What is meant by "licensed health care provider?"

Answer: the "scope of practice" for licensed health care providers and medical professionals is defined by California state statutes. This scope of practice will limit the evaluation to a medical doctor (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO).

STERIOD PROHIBITION

All schools shall adopt policies prohibiting the use and abuse of androgenic/anabolic steroids. All member schools shall have participating students and their parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver agree that the athlete will not use steroids without the written prescription of a fully licensed physician (as recognized by the AMA) to treat a medical condition.

NOTE: Article 1-12.N. (Revised May 2005 Federated Council)

SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST PROTOCOL

A student-athlete who passes out or faints while participating in, or immediately following, an athletic activity or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or immediately following an athletic activity, must be removed immediately from participating in a practice or game for the remainder of the day. A student-athlete who has been removed from play after displaying signs and symptoms associated with sudden cardiac arrest may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider and receives written clearance to return to play from that health care provider. On a yearly basis, a Sudden Cardiac Arrest information sheet shall be signed and returned by all athletes and the athlete's parent/guardian/caregiver before the athlete's initial practice or competition.

EXTREME HEAT AND AIR QUALITY POLICY FOR THE CALIFORNIA INTERSCHOLASTIC FEDERATION

As per **CA State Law AB 1653** and CIF Bylaw 503 K. Heat Illness and Air Quality Index Protocols, **all CIF member schools must adhere to the CIF Heat Illness Prevention and Heat Acclimatization Policies as outlined below.**

Extreme Heat Procedures:

The WetBulb Globe Temperature (WBGT) is a measure of the heat stress in direct sunlight, which takes into account: temperature, humidity, wind speed, sun angle, and cloud cover (solar radiation). This differs from the Heat Index, which takes into consideration temperature and humidity and is calculated for shady areas. The WBGT is especially valuable in environments where people are physically active, such as sports, as it provides a better assessment of the risk of heat-related conditions during physical exertion. The CIF requires that schools use the WBGT for the most accurate measurement.

Depending on your Category Region (see map below), it is mandated for the benefit of the health and safety of our student-athletes that practice/games be canceled, or delayed until cooler when WBGT exceeds these levels:

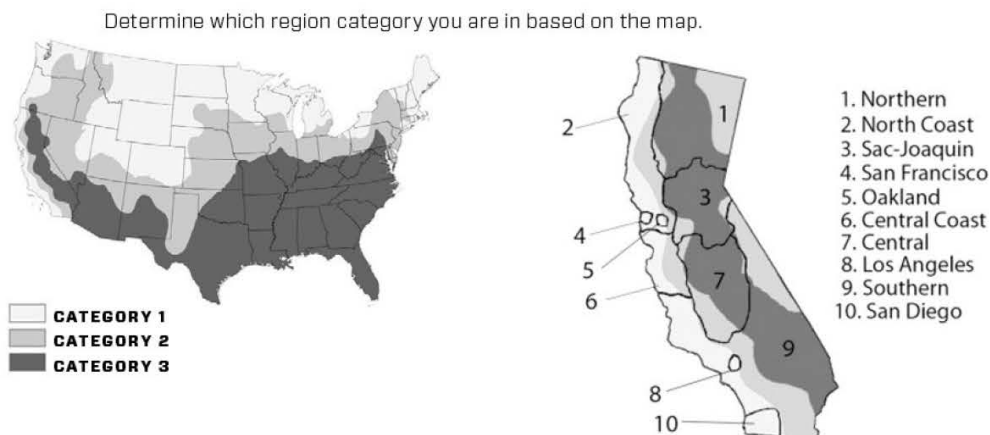
- Region Category 1 >86.2°F
- Region Category 2 >89.9°F
- Region Category 3 >92.0°F

STEP 1

Find your Region Category

Based on the following map, schools should select the category that best fits their region to follow the required guidelines shown below.

The majority of states fall under just one category or two at the most. However, due to its diverse climate across the state, California encompasses all three categories: light gray - Category 1 / medium gray - Category 2 / dark gray - Category 3. (See image below).



STEP 2

WBGT Readings (Note: Temperatures listed in the chart below are calculated using a WBGT and are **not** basic air temperatures) Please see Step 3 below for samples of WBGT readings.

Cat 3	Cat 2	Cat 1	Outdoor Activity Guidelines
<82.0°F <27.8°C	<79.7°F <26.5°C	<76.1°F <24.5°C	Normal Activities – Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 3 min each during the workout.
82.2 - 86.9°F 27.9 - 30.5°C	79.9 - 84.6°F 26.6 - 29.2°C	76.3 - 81.0°F 24.6 - 27.2°C	Use discretion for intense or prolonged exercise; Provide at least three separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 min each.
87.1 - 90.0°F 30.6 - 32.2°C	84.7 - 87.6°F 29.3 - 30.9°C	81.1 - 84.0°F 27.3 - 28.9°C	Maximum outdoor practice time is 2 h. Provide at least four separate rest breaks each hour with a minimum duration of 4 min each. For Football/Field Hockey: players are restricted to helmet, shoulder pads, and shorts during practice. If the WBGT rises to this level during practice, players may continue to work out wearing full pads without changing to shorts.
90.1 - 91.9°F 32.2 - 33.3°C	87.8 - 89.6°F 31.0 - 32.0°C	84.2 - 86.0°F 29.0 - 30.0°C	Contests are permitted with additional hydration breaks. Maximum outdoor practice time is 1 h. No protective equipment may be worn during practice, and there may be no conditioning activities. There must be 20 min of rest breaks distributed throughout the hour of practice.
≥92.1°F ≥33.4°C	≥89.8°F ≥32.1°C	≥86.2°F ≥30.1°C	No outdoor workouts/contests. Delay practice/competitions until a cooler WBGT is reached.

STEP 3

Schools without a WBGT should use the link below from the NOAA for a WBGT reading

<https://digital.mdl.nws.noaa.gov/?zoom=7&lat=35.28787&lon=-79.36779&layers=F000BTTF®ion=0&element=8&mxmz=true&barbs=false&subl=TTFFFF&units=english&wunits=nautical&coords=latlon&tunits=localt>

EXAMPLE @2:30 PM

AUGUST 31, 2023

CATEGORY 1 SCHOOL

Outside Air Temp 87° F

WBGT Reading =80

AUGUST 31, 2023

CATEGORY 2 SCHOOL

Outside Air Temp 97° F

WBGT Reading =82

AUGUST 31, 2023

CATEGORY 3 SCHOOL

Outside Air Temp 92° F

WBGT Reading =81

CIF Fall Outdoor Sports Acclimatization Policy

Given the extreme heat issues typically experienced at the start of the Fall sports season, heat acclimatization is crucial for high school athletes to help them adapt to hot weather conditions and reduce the risk of heat-related illnesses. The following is a four-step plan for heat acclimatization in outdoor high school sports:

1. **Gradual Increase in Activity:**
 - Start with light workouts in cooler conditions to prepare athletes for increased heat exposure.
 - Gradually increase the intensity and duration of practice sessions over 10-14 days.
2. **Hydration Education:**
 - Teach athletes the importance of staying hydrated and recognizing signs of dehydration.
 - Encourage regular water breaks during practice and games and always provide access to water.
3. **Modify Practice Schedules:**
 - Schedule outdoor practices during cooler times, like early morning or late evening.
 - Allow frequent breaks and shade to help athletes cool down and recover.
4. **Monitor Athlete Health:**
 - Educate coaches, trainers, and athletes on the signs of heat-related illnesses (heat exhaustion and heat stroke).
 - The school will have available a method to institute whole-body cooling to treat a student-athlete with exertional heat illness, especially heat stroke (e.g., ice tub, “taco tarp”, ice towels) which is easily accessible at all practice and contest venues.

Safety should always be the top priority when acclimating high school athletes to hot weather conditions. This plan helps athletes adapt while minimizing the risk of heat-related issues.

For All Outdoor Fall Sports

Five-Day Acclimatization Period. Preseason practice shall begin with a five-day acclimatization period for all Fall student-athletes. All student-athletes, including those who arrive at preseason practice after the first day of practice, are required to undergo a five-day acclimatization period. The five-day acclimatization period shall be conducted as follows:

- (a) Participants shall not engage in more than one on-field practice per day during the five-day acclimatization period. On-field practices shall last no longer than two hours.

For Football Only

- (b) During the first three days of practice or testing activity, helmets shall be the only protective equipment student-athletes may wear. During the next two days of practice or testing activity, helmets, and shoulder pads shall be the only protective equipment student-athletes may wear. Student-athletes may practice in full pads on the sixth day of practice or testing activity.

Air Quality and Sport Participation:

CIF Position Statement Sports Medicine Advisory Committee

	US AQI Level	PM2.5 ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$)	Health Recommendation (for 24 hour exposure)
	Good 0-50	0-12.0	Air quality is satisfactory and poses little or no risk.
	Moderate 51-100	12.1-35.4	Sensitive individuals should avoid outdoor activity as they may experience respiratory symptoms.
	Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups 101-150	35.5-55.4	General public and sensitive individuals in particular are at risk to experience irritation and respiratory problems.
	Unhealthy 151-200	55.5-150.4	Increased likelihood of adverse effects and aggravation to the heart and lungs among general public.
	Very Unhealthy 201-300	150.5-250.4	General public will be noticeably affected. Sensitive groups should restrict outdoor activities.
	Hazardous 301+	250.5+	General public at high risk of experiencing strong irritations and adverse health effects. Should avoid outdoor activities.

Pictured: Air quality index chart with corresponding PM2.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$.

Recent catastrophic and historical fires in California continue to raise numerous questions regarding safe participation in sport and practice for young athletes. This position statement serves as a resource to coaches, administrators, parents and students who have questions about participation in outdoor activity during periods of diminished air quality for California high school sport.

Healthy athletes are at increased risk for inhaling pollutants in the air. Physical activity increases ventilation and the number of pollutants that are inhaled are increased compared to periods of rest. During physical activity, air is often inhaled directly into the mouth, bypassing the built-in nasal filtration system. Deep inhalation diffuses pollutants into the bloodstream more quickly during exercise. These risks are increased if an athlete has a pre-existing medical condition such as asthma or a cardiac condition.

A valid and reliable standardized national air quality resource is the National Weather Service (NWS) Air Quality Forecast System. This system provides constant monitoring of ozone, particulate matter and pollutants with accurate and advanced notice to prevent the adverse effects of decreased air quality.

The key component of the standardized air quality resource is the NWS Air Quality Index (AQI). The AQI provides real time monitoring and alerts in response to changing air quality levels. Five different pollutants are tracked in this system including the following: 1) ground level ozone 2) particle pollution 3) carbon monoxide 4) sulfur dioxide 5) nitrogen dioxide. Ground level ozone and particulate matter are the most concerning pollutants for outdoor physical activity. The AQI is reported as a single number based on a scale of 0 to 500 with 0 being completely safe and 500 indicating the most hazardous levels of air pollution.



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Consistent with this national reporting system and consistent with the National Collegiate Athletic Association Committee on Competitive Safeguards and Medical Aspect of Sport, the CIF Sports Medicine Advisory Committee offers the following general guidance to institutions seeking to make decisions about the appropriateness of practice or competition in questionable air quality situations. With recent severe fires within the state of California, both regional and statewide authorities have often established alerts to cancelling sport events or practices because of local risk. CIF recommends following these guidelines. If specific guidelines have not yet been provided, the following are useful guidelines consistent with NCAA and NFHS position statements on air quality.

- 1) Monitoring of local AQI and associated air quality alerts, especially during times of extreme environmental conditions is recommended. Advice and monitoring is best done by the primary athletics health care providers (athletic trainers, school nursing staff, team physicians) who have training in such monitoring. Schools may choose to delegate this responsibility to a staff member with knowledge of AQI.
- 2) Member schools should consider shortening or cancelling outdoor athletic events (practices or competition) in accordance with AQI recommendations. Exposure to air should be managed more carefully for students with pre-existing lung or heart conditions. When the AQI rises above 100 schools should consider removing such athletes at risk from practice or competition.
- 3) At AQI values above 150 serious consideration should be given to rescheduling the activity or moving it indoors if possible. Prolonged exposure and heavy exertion should be avoided.
- 4) School Emergency Action Plans may guide the emergency care response in these circumstances and the staff should be made aware of this plan.
- 5) The Preparticipation Physical Examination for Sport will be used as a tool to identify students at risk for smoke inhalation exposure such as asthma, cardiac disease and respiratory disease.
- 6) Emphasize to student athletes that the wearing of masks, such as for protection against COVID-19 does not protect against exposure to hazardous air quality. Consequently, wearing masks will not allow competition or practices when AQI is at hazardous levels.

There are now validated online applications to smart phones which can track not only AQI in a town or city, but also AQI regionally near each neighborhood within each town or city. Consistent with NFHS, California Air Quality Board and California Environmental Protection Agency, the CIF recommends using the www.airnow.gov application for this purpose. The AQI may even be checked periodically during a day of competition or practice in case of changing conditions. The application was created with the collaboration of the Environmental Protection Agency and contains not only air quality data but also current fire conditions, webcams and email notifications consistent with local and regional up to date conditions.

References

- 1) Air Quality Position Statement. NCAA Sports Science Institute, Sept 2018
- 2) NFHS Position Statement on Physical Activity, Air Quality and Wildfires, April 2019
- 3) CIF North Coast Section. Air Quality Index Rules, Bylaw 1003H.
- 4) US Environmental Protection Agency. Air Now website www.airnow.gov

UPDATED 10/19/23



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