2026 IMPORTANT FOOTBALL CALENDAR INFORMATION

TO: **Athletic Directors and Head Football Coaches**

FROM: **Joe Hoggatt, CIF Southern Section Assistant Commissioner**

DATE: **March 3, 2026**

RE: **2026 Important Football Calendar Information**

The following are some of the CIF Southern Section calendar dates and important information for the upcoming 2026 football season:

2026 CONTEST DATES

FOOTBALL, 11

0 Week – August 21 – If you have a bye in your schedule – Season begins with a 0 Week game
(Scrimmages still allowed prior to 0 Week contests)

Week 1 – August 28 – Same as above, if you do not have a bye in your schedule
(Scrimmages still allowed prior to Week 1 contests)

Week 10 – October 30 (Last Allowable Contest)

FOOTBALL, 8

0 Week – August 21 – If you have (2) byes in your schedule – Season begins with a 0 Week game
(Scrimmages still allowed prior to 0 Week contests)

Week 1 – August 28 – If you have (1) byes in your schedule – Season begins with a Week 1 game
(Scrimmages still allowed prior to Week 1 contests)

8 Person Football schools may compete in 9 games within the 11 week schedule (August 21-October 31).

Week 9 – October 31 (Last Allowable Contest)

- C.I.F. Southern Section Playoffs -

1st Round – November 6
2nd Round – November 13
Semifinals – November 20
Finals – Friday, November 27 and Saturday, November 28 (Thanksgiving Week)

- State C.I.F. Playoffs -

Southern Regional Games – Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5
State Championship Bowl Games – Friday, December 11 and Saturday, December 12

NUMBER OF FOOTBALL PRACTICE DAYS - Blue Book Rule 2201

A. There shall be no football games until the team 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.)

PHYSICAL CONDITIONING PRACTICE - Blue Book Rule 2203

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.

BYE WEEK - Blue Book Rule 2216

2216.1 If a school chooses to schedule a "0" Week contest, bye week practices must be conducted as follows:

The bye week is from Monday through Saturday. Practices must be conducted without pads. Players are allowed to wear helmets during the bye week, similar to the first three days of the fall conditioning period. (See Rule 2203.3 for further clarification.)

QUESTION: What medical coverage is required for regular season football contests?
ANSWER: The host school shall designate and provide a medical practitioner for all regular season (non-league and league) football contests.