

## CIAC Football Committee

March 6, 2025

### Agenda

1. Review and Approval of the Football Committee Minutes 1/9/25
2. 2025 NFHS Football Rules Changes
3. Review of Success in Tournament Factor..  
*The Football Committee uses a “success in tournament” formula for use in placing teams in division for the CIAC Football State Tournament. The CIAC Board of Control has provided the option to any team sport to adopt “success in tournament” for tournament placement if the sport committee so desired. The “success in tournament” formula will be applied to all schools of choice as defined by CIAC rules (more than 25 gender-specific students attend from out-of-district). The Football Committee will use the “success in tournament” for placement during the 2024 season.*
  - a. *All schools will be placed in divisions based on their enrollment as of October 1 of the previous school year as reported to CIAC and/or the State Department of Education.*
  - b. *The Football Committee will set a pre-determined number of schools in each division.*
  - c. *The “success in tournament” factor will then be applied to all schools of choice – “success in tournament” is defined as having reached the semi-finals during the last three years. If a school has reached the semi-finals in one of those three years that school will be moved up two divisions. If a school has reached the semi-finals in two of those three years that school will be moved up three divisions.*
  - d. *After all moves are made the committee will re-balance the divisions to conform to the pre-determined number of schools in each division.*
  - e. *Every year, the Football Committee will follow the same process as outlined, reviewing data for the past three years and moving schools as appropriate.*
  - f. *Use of “success in tournament” only applies to schools of choice as defined by CIAC rules. All other schools will remain in the division as determined by their base enrollment.*
4. Connecticut High School Football Alliance Proposal
5. Instant Replay for State Championship Games
6. Opting Out of State Tournament
7. Future Agenda Items

CIAC Football Committee

Minutes

1/9/2025

I FINANCIAL REPORT - The full financial report was not available for the meeting.

II MINUTES - The committee approved the minutes from the 9/19/24 meeting.

III REVIEW OF THE 2024 CHAMPIONSHIPS -

- a. Gregg reviewed the attendance and gate receipts for the championships.
- b. \$30,000 to host the championships at CCSU
- c. \$38,000 to host the championships at Retnschler
- d. Does holding a championship game at 6:30 pm hurt attendance?
- e. We can not play at three different sites because we don't have enough staff.

IV ALLIANCE PROPOSAL

- a. The proposal was distributed to the committee for discussion.
- b. Schedules are done already and divisions can change by the start of the season.
- c. Other sports don't have a requirement to play in your division.
- d. Would a change disrupt a successful tournament?
- e. The committee will take up this question at a future meeting.
- f. The CIAC does not have oversight over the Alliance

V FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- a. Difficult situation with a team opting out of the tournament. The committee would like to discuss this issue in the future.
- b. Vote on the Alliance proposal
- c. Questions about new rules

VII NEXT MEETING - The next meeting will be Thursday, Feb 27, 2025



## **2025 NFHS FOOTBALL RULES CHANGES**

**Committee Clarifies and Restricts Attachments on Tooth and Mouth Protectors 1-5-1d(5)a - 4, 5 (NEW)** – Items that are attached to the tooth and mouth protector that do not serve a purpose and function in protecting the teeth or mouth will not be allowed. Items that are a part of the tooth and mouth protector that are a health or risk issue to the player and can pose a danger to themselves or other players, will not be allowed.

**Arm Sleeve Specifications Developed to Guide Manufacturers, Players and Coaches Effective with the 2027 Season 1-5-2d (NEW), 1-5-3c(5)** – The Sports and Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), in working with the football arm sleeve manufacturers and the NFHS, has developed new football arm sleeve performance specifications to be effective with the 2027 playing season. These new specifications closely align with the current rules for football gloves.

**Electronic Equipment Approved to Permit Non-Audio and Still Images to Assist with Relaying Plays from the Sideline to Players 1-5-3c(2)** – This change allows for the use of some additional equipment, but continues to preclude in-helmet communication. This would allow for fixed electronic signs with play signals as well as non-audio methods but still would not permit the players between the numbers to watch video.

**Rules Additions Further Prohibit the Use of Video and Audio Devices by Players 1-5-3c(3) (NEW)** – No player participating in the game will be allowed to wear any type of audio or video device in order to record or transmit audio or video.

**Forward Fumbles Out of Bounds to be Returned to the Spot of the Fumble 3-4-3, 4-3-1 EXCEPTION (NEW)** – A situation potentially giving an unfair advantage to a fumbling team was revised. When a forward fumble goes out of bounds or is ruled out of bounds between the goal lines, the ball shall be returned to the spot of the fumble.

**Further Clarifications Made to Rule 10-4 in Specific Situations 9-6 PENALTY, 10-4-4b (DELETED)** – The committee continues its revisions and clarifications within the penalty enforcement rules to ensure consistency, particularly among illegal participation fouls.

**Rules for 6-Player Football Revised to Permit Advancement of a Fumbled Snap Six-Player – Rule 2 and 7, Six-Player – Rule 7** – The committee clarified that as long as there is a change of possession from the snap receiver to another player on offense, the ball can be advanced beyond the line of scrimmage.

## **2025 EDITORIAL CHANGES**

1-5-1b(2)b(1); 1-5-1b(3)b(1); 2-32-16d; 2-33-1, 2; 2-41-9b; 6-1-9; 7-2-5b EXCEPTION 2; 7-5-12; 9-4-3 (NEW); 9-8-1g; 10-3-1, 2; 10-4-2; 10-4-4a; 10-5-3; PENALTY SUMMARY;

## **2025 POINTS OF EMPHASIS**

1. Illegal and Improperly Worn Player Equipment
2. Sportsmanship
3. Defenseless Player / Targeting

***\*\*As of February 6, 2025***



# CT HS Football Alliance Proposal to CIAC Football Committee

September 16, 2024

## Background

Established in 2017, the Connecticut High School Football Alliance, comprised of six leagues throughout the state, has provided teams with competitive, non-league matchups. Since 2017, the Alliance has scheduled 432 games. In fact, in the last two years, 11 of the 12 state champions have played "Alliance games" during the regular season.

In addition to its scheduling prowess, Alliance members generate important discussions about pertinent issues and changes with the sport of high school football and continues to work collaboratively to address issues and opportunities.

Over these eight-plus years, the Alliance has solicited some productive feedback from its stakeholders (administrators, coaches, and the media).

- It is clear, football programs want to play 10 regular season games, including Thanksgiving Week.
- The state's current playoff structure, comprising six divisions with 8 teams in each, has been well received, and has provided more teams the chance to compete for a playoff spot, especially in the final few weeks of the regular season.
- Most, if not all, conferences, despite not having their own league playoffs, along with "independent" teams still have challenges filling out their schedules with "good" matchups (based on classification), and often need the Alliance to schedule games "within their state classification."
- Typically, the best teams win state titles, but the "ranking of teams for the purposes of playoffs" varies from year-to-year as some teams and leagues' regular-season schedules are not consistent in terms of strength of schedule. For example, the number-one ranked team in Class L in 2023 played only one "Class L/LL" team during the regular season.

## PROPOSAL

**Every football program has to play a minimum of four varsity games\* in its class or above during the regular season in order to qualify for the CIAC postseason; or any two games set forth by the Connecticut High School Football Alliance scheduling committee.**

*\* Any cooperative team will be held of a standard of 50 percent of the games set for playoff participation. For example, co-ops would be required to have to play two games if this proposal passed.*

## **Proposal to Implement Instant Replay in the CIAC State Championship Football Games**

**Introduction:** Considering the growing demand for accuracy and fairness in high-stakes sports games, we propose the implementation of instant replay technology for the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) State Championship Football games. This proposal aims to enhance officiating precision, provide a fairer playing field, and improve the overall experience for players, coaches, and fans.

**Rationale:** The primary purpose of instant replay is to ensure that crucial decisions made during high-stakes games, such as State Championship football games, are as accurate as possible. Given the immense pressure of championship-level games, ensuring fair play and reducing errors is critical. This technology is already widely used in professional and college sports leagues and has proven to be effective in reducing controversial decisions and improving game integrity.

### **Benefits of Instant Replay:**

1. **Accuracy:** Instant replay helps officials make more accurate decisions by reviewing key plays in real-time. This can ensure that game-changing calls—such as touchdowns, fumbles, and penalties—are correctly assessed.
2. **Fairness:** By minimizing errors in officiating, the use of instant replay helps ensure that games are decided by the players' performance, not by officiating mistakes.
3. **Fan Engagement:** Instant replay can enhance the fan experience, especially in high-stakes games like the CIAC State Championship. Fans will have the ability to review key moments in the game, providing transparency and promoting greater enjoyment.
4. **Coaching Confidence:** Coaches will have greater confidence in the officiating, knowing that there is a system in place to correct any potentially game-altering mistakes. This will allow coaches to focus more on strategy rather than disputing calls.
5. **Player Safety:** Instant replay could be used to review potentially dangerous or illegal plays, such as targeting or other safety violations, ensuring the safety of the players.

### **How Instant Replay Would Work:**

1. **Challenges:** Each team would be allowed a limited number of challenges (e.g., two per game) to request a review of a questionable play. If the challenge is successful (i.e., the call on the field is overturned), the team would retain the challenge. If the challenge is unsuccessful, the team would lose the challenge.
2. **Review Time:** The review process would be kept within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., 90 seconds) to prevent delays and maintain the flow of the game.
3. **Final Decision:** After reviewing the play, the IRO would communicate the final decision to the on-field officials, who would then inform the teams and the audience of the ruling.

**Implementation:**

1. **Pilot Program:** A trial period could be established, where instant replay is implemented in a select number of CIAC State Championship games or during key postseason games to assess the feasibility and effectiveness of the system.

**Conclusion:** Implementing instant replay in the CIAC State Championship Football games will enhance the accuracy of officiating, promote fairness, and improve the experience for players, coaches, and fans. By adopting this technology, the CIAC can ensure that critical decisions are made with the highest level of precision, helping to maintain the integrity of the game and providing a better experience for everyone involved.

**Recommendation:** We recommend proceeding with the pilot program in the upcoming CIAC State Championship Football season to evaluate the effectiveness of instant replay and ensure that the technology benefits the teams, officials, and fans alike.