

Central Connecticut Conference

February 20, 2026

CIAC Football Committee
30 Realty Drive
Cheshire, CT 06410

Dear Members of the CIAC Football Committee,

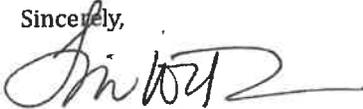
On behalf of the Central Connecticut Conference, I am sharing the attached proposal that outlines a revised structure for the high school football season. The CCC has reviewed this concept and is supportive of its goal and overall direction. We respectfully request the CIAC Football Committee's review and consideration.

The proposal is grounded in two priorities that we believe may be supported by others across the state. First, it seeks to create a more equitable and meaningful end of season experience for all football programs by expanding postseason opportunities. Second, it preserves the long standing tradition of Thanksgiving week rivalry games, allowing schools and communities to continue those contests as the culminating event of the fall season if they choose.

By adjusting the calendar and postseason structure, this model will allow championship level contests to be played earlier in November, when conditions are more favorable for student-athletes and spectators. At the same time, it provides every team with the opportunity for additional competitive games and appropriate matchups. The approach also reduces the overlap of football into the winter season, which supports multi-sport participation and better timing for student athletes transitioning to winter programs.

We appreciate the committee's thoughtful review of the proposal details and welcome any feedback or questions that may help advance the conversation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Trish Witkin, CMAA
Commissioner
Central Connecticut Conference

Avon, Berlin, Bloomfield, Bristol Central, Bristol Eastern, Conard, East Catholic, East Hartford, Enfield, E.O. Smith, Farmington, Glastonbury, Hall, Hartford Public, Lewis Mills Maloney, Manchester, Middletown, New Britain, Newington, Northwest Catholic, Plainville, Platt, RHAM, Rocky Hill, Simsbury, Southington, South Windsor, Tolland, Wethersfield, and Windsor.



South-West Conference, Inc.



115 School Road • Weston, CT 06883
Christopher Cipriano – President
James D'Amico – Vice President

February 26, 2026

Dr. Glenn Lungarini
Executive Director, CAS-CIAC
10 Realty Drive
Cheshire, CT 06410

Dear Glenn,

At the February 19, 2026 meeting of the Southwest Conference, league principals reviewed and discussed the CCC proposal recently submitted to the CIAC for football schedule realignment. With a unanimous vote, league principals endorsed this proposal with the understanding that starting and ending the football season earlier is in the best interest of our student-athletes. We are hopeful that the CIAC and its relevant committees will find an opportunity to bring this proposal to reality for the betterment of high school athletics in our state.

Sincerely,

Christopher Cipriano
SWC President
Head of School, Notre Dame Prep

Mark Berkowitz
SWC Co-Commissioner
Athletic Director, Weston HS

Michael Santangeli
SWC Co-Commissioner
Athletic Director, Barlow HS

Bethel, Brookfield, Bunnell, Immaculate, Joel Barlow, Kolbe-Cathedral, Masuk,
New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Notre Dame, Pomperaug, Stratford, Weston

FOOTBALL SEASON PROPOSAL

RATIONALE: The present football system provides a 6 division championship format that highlights 48 teams throughout the state based on a 10 game schedule. The postseason allows for teams to play 11-13 games depending on their success in the tournament. The postseason tournaments are played after Thanksgiving, which places the most important games of the year in bad weather situations.

The following proposal would provide more equitable season length for all teams along with playing the most important games in better weather with more spectators which provides a better environment and appreciation for the student athletes. The format also maintains the option for Thanksgiving rivalries to end the season.

FORMAT

REGULAR SEASON

The Connecticut high school football season would begin the same date as Fall Golf. Teams will play a 9 game regular season schedule that will determine their postseason positioning. Using the 2026 school year for an example, below is the schedule for the season.

August 10 - August 14 - Conditioning for 5 days.

August 15 - First day of contact practice

August 28 - First date to play

September 3 - October 31 - Regular Season

POSTSEASON

The present postseason format provides additional games for teams who have continued success. If a team makes the postseason for 4 consecutive years during a student athlete's career, they can have the opportunity to play up to 12 more games than a player who does not make the playoffs. The additional preparation, reps, along with the postseason feel, supports the continued success of a program and creates more hurdles for teams who are not used to making postseason play.

The proposed postseason format would provide a postseason experience for every team. Teams can choose to opt out if they choose. The regular postseason playoffs would continue as normal. After the top 8 teams, teams would be paired in groups of 4. They would play 2 rounds no matter winning or losing their first game, which would guarantee every team 11 games if they choose.

Example: Group #9-12; (9 plays 12 and 10 plays 11. Winners would play in the championship game and the losers would play in the 3rd place game.) Teams would be placed in 4 team pods until everyone is provided a matchup. If a team opts out, we will provide a first game bye to the top seed and they will play the winner of the other matchup.

This will provide teams with games to prepare for before their Thanksgiving Bowl game, if they maintain one.

November 6-7 - Postseason

November 13-14 - 2nd weekend Postseason

November 20-21 - Championship Weekend

November 24-26 - Rivalry games

SUPPORTING REASONING FOR NEW FORMAT

- Guarantees 11 games for any team that chooses
- Provide equitable matchups for every team to end their season
- Allows for full week preparation period for end of season contests
- Plays championship level events in better weather to highlight the student athletes by increased attendance and better playing conditions
- Removes overlap of the football season into the winter season, which puts the student athletes at a clear disadvantage for the winter season
- Maintains the Thanksgiving rivalry week matchups, if schools and communities decide to play, which adheres to CT legislation PA 24-151
 - Rivalry games would be an opportunity to highlight teams who earned state championships or other seasonal accomplishments along with maintaining traditions for the communities.