

CIAC Football Committee

April 23, 2026

Agenda

1. Minutes 1-20-26/CCC Proposal
2. State Championship Sites
3. Review Success in Tournament Process

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 2025 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. Size of Divisions
5. Possible Sub-Committee to Review Use of Instant Replay at Championship Games
6. Continued Use of OTA’s
7. Future Agenda Items

CIAC Football Committee
Minutes
1/20/2026

- I. MINUTES - The committee accepted the minutes from the 5/6/25 meeting
- II. FINANCIAL REPORT - A financial report was distributed. The report is still incomplete based on the fact of all bills are not paid.
- III. REVIEW OF 2025 CHAMPIONSHIPS -
 - A. The CHSCA and the Committee wishes for better communication about the change of sites. Coaches need to understand that the CIAC communicates to the athletic directors.
 - B. Due to the weather, some teams felt a little rushed because we had to attend four games at a single site.
 - C. The sites for the future are under consideration.
 - D. Chris distributed feedback from coaches from the teams in the championships.
 - E. The committee discussed the feedback and discussed future sites for the championships.
 - F. Glenn Lungarini gave an overview of the costs for our facilities at our championship games
 - G. The committee discussed the idea of exploring different options for the season and playoffs
- IV. REPORT FROM WINTER NFHS MEETING -
 - A. Chris provided an update on several rules under consideration, some of which the NFHS plans to change.
- V. INSTANT REPLAY - The committee will look at this in the future
- VI. NEXT MEETING - Thursday, February, 26, 2026 - 2:00 pm

Meeting summary

Quick recap

The meeting focused on reviewing a proposal to modify the high school football season format, presented by Chris Meyers and Mark Fritz from Newington and Plainville High Schools respectively. The proposal included starting the season two weeks earlier, eliminating bye weeks, and restructuring the playoff system with 9 regular season games followed by additional postseason play. Multiple concerns were raised by committee members, including medical committee approval requirements, potential heat exposure issues, impact on family summer time, and challenges with scheduling championship games at existing venues. After extensive discussion of potential issues including weather, contact time limitations, and division restructuring, the committee voted to reject the current proposal but requested that the concerns and questions be compiled and sent back to the presenters for future consideration.

Next steps

- Gregg: Collect questions and concerns from committee members regarding the football season proposal, collate them, and send them to the CCC and SWC as feedback for the proposal authors.
- Gregg: Obtain and provide the exact feedback from the Sports Medicine Advisory Committee (SMAC) regarding the medical/health considerations of the proposal, particularly about the 11-game season and contact rules.
- iPad (Jim): Gather records of the football tournament brackets and team performance for the last 10 years, and analyze team rankings (e.g., using MaxPreps) to explore potential reclassification of divisions based on team strength rather than only school size; share findings with Gregg.

Summary

Event Ticket Sales Update

Gregg announced that 1,000 tickets had been sold for an upcoming event, with plans to stop sales at around 1,050 tickets including free attendees. He advised fans to purchase tickets online early to avoid missing out, as walk-up sales would be limited. The meeting appeared to be waiting for more attendees to join before proceeding with the main discussion.

High School Football Season Proposal

The meeting focused on reviewing a proposal for modifying the high school football season schedule. Chris Meyers and Mark Fritz presented the proposal, which aims to improve the football experience by starting the season earlier, implementing a 9-game regular season, and adding playoff and additional games to ensure teams end on a positive note. The proposal also seeks to maintain the traditional Thanksgiving Day games for championship teams while allowing other teams more time before their games. The group discussed moving the proposal forward for official consideration and vetting, though no final decision was made during the meeting.

Football Season Format Proposal Review

The group discussed a proposal for a new football season format, with Mark and Chris presenting ideas based on informal conversations with other coaches and administrators. Tom raised concerns about the medical committee's approval for an 11-game season and starting the season two weeks early, noting previous restrictions on similar changes. Gregg explained that the medical committee would need to review the proposal, similar to their consideration of contact time changes six years ago. The discussion highlighted the need for further vetting through various stakeholders, including the season limitations committee, coaches association, principals, and ADs, before any final decisions could be made.

Early Football Season Schedule Discussion

The committee discussed a proposal to move the football season earlier, with the Board of Control having approved it for review by the football committee. Tom raised concerns about scheduling traditional rivalry games without off-weeks, particularly for teams without established Thanksgiving traditions. Chris suggested that schools could potentially add a ninth game to accommodate rivalry matches, though this would be determined by individual conferences. Ian noted that moving the season earlier might not actually address weather concerns, as heat-related issues typically occur in August rather than on Thanksgiving, and raised questions about the impact of post-season games on team rosters.

Early Summer Practice Schedule Impact

The group discussed concerns about the impact of an early summer practice schedule on student-athletes who participate in multiple sports. Chris and Mark explained that summer practices were designed to help acclimate students to the earlier start date and align with existing football programs' conditioning routines. Gregg highlighted the potential benefits for athletes who compete in winter sports, noting that the schedule change could provide much-needed rest time after the football season ends.

Sports Scheduling System Proposal Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing a proposal for a new sports scheduling system involving a pool of teams with 9-11 games followed by playoff matches. Coach DiNunzio raised concerns about team commitment during a 3-week period and questioned how to handle scenarios where teams opt out of the playoff system. Chris suggested potential solutions including using divisional pods and adjusting team placements to maintain balanced playoffs. The committee concluded they would need to gather feedback from various groups including the Season Limitations Committee, Health Committee, principals, and athletic directors before making any decisions about the proposal.

Football Format Change Concerns

VJ expressed concerns about a proposed football format change from an athletic director's perspective, highlighting issues with heat exposure in August, encroachment on summer family time, challenges for non-12-month employees, and the importance of maintaining Labor Day weekend as a sacred contest-free period. While acknowledging the significant work put into the proposal by Chris and Mark, VJ recommended that the committee would need concrete answers to detailed questions before considering moving forward with vetting the proposal. VJ concluded by suggesting that any vetting process should wait until there is 100% certainty about the legal process for implementing the format change.

High School Football Schedule Changes

The group discussed a proposal to change the high school football season schedule, with Christopher expressing concerns about the proposal's scope and potential to create divisions between urban and suburban schools. Tom highlighted issues with the proposal's impact on championship sites and player safety, particularly regarding the extended 11-week competition period without breaks. The group agreed that any significant changes should be developed through collaboration with coaches, athletic directors, and administrators rather than being proposed by external parties.

2026 Football Season Proposal Rejected

The group discussed and ultimately rejected a proposal for the 2026 football season, citing concerns about contact time, division structure, and the need for further consultation with the medical committee and state legislator. The motion to reject the proposal was seconded and approved by the group. Gregg was tasked with compiling the concerns and questions raised during the discussion to send back to the proposal committee.