

## **NJSIAA Bylaws: Article III Section 7**

### **Cooperative Sports Programs**

- A. The Executive Committee shall approve all Cooperative Sports Programs (CSP) upon the recommendation of the Cooperative Sports Committee (CSC) or the Cooperative Sports Appeals Committee (CSAC). Such Cooperative Sports Programs will be based upon an agreement between the cooperating schools whereby one of the two schools shall have the complete responsibility as the Local Education Agency (LEA) for the conduct of the specific sport(s), which will be available to the students at both schools.

*CL 1: Cooperative Sports Program applications should be signed by an officer of the Participating League or Conference, and indicate whether the League or Conference endorses or not endorses the application. The Participating League or Conference is defined as the entity that schedules the regular season games for that particular sport.*

*CL 2: This section establishes a process by which Cooperative Sports Program applications are processed, reviewed, and appealed. A CSP is an exception to the general requirement that students play sports at the school at which they are enrolled. A CSP is not to be used to place students in another school's program simply because the student(s)' school does not offer the particular sport. Both schools must demonstrate a need for and commitment to the CSP.*

- B. The purpose of a Cooperative Sports Program is to provide opportunities for participation when none would otherwise exist, as for instance when a school lacks a particular program or when a school has declining enrollment in a particular program. Under no circumstances is a CSP to be used for purposes of creating a stronger or more competitive team, or as an excuse for eliminating an otherwise viable athletic program.

Cooperative Sports Programs should be comprised of schools from the same Participating League or Conference or General League or Conference. Crossover to other Leagues or Conferences is only permitted after efforts have been exhausted to partner with a school within the same League or Conference. If a CSP is comprised of schools from different Leagues and Conferences, then approval must be received from all Leagues and Conferences involved.

- C. Schools may enter into a Cooperative Sports Program for any sport and for any Group size. However, the following conditions must be met in order for a Cooperative Sports Program application to be considered by the CSC:
1. A public high school can only enter into Cooperative Sports Programs with another public high school while non-public high schools can only enter into such programs with another non-public high school.
  2. A member school may enter into Cooperative Sports Programs with more than one other school for more than one sport; however, a member school may only enter into one Cooperative Sports Program for a particular sport.
  3. In Cooperative Sports Programs involving ice hockey, three public schools or three non-public schools may combine to form a tri-school Cooperative Sports Program with a maximum thirty (30) student athlete roster, if their respective leagues approve. Public schools may not combine with non-public schools.
  4. A Cooperative Sports Program is for a two year period with an automatic two year renewal. Written notification of automatic renewal must be submitted by the sports specific

deadlines indicated below.

Completed applications and required written documentation must be submitted to the NJSIAA office by the following sports specific deadlines:

**Fall sports – January 15<sup>th</sup>; Winter sports – April 15<sup>th</sup>; Spring sports – September 15<sup>th</sup>**

D. The total enrollment used for classification purposes of the Cooperative Sports Program will be determined based upon the most current year joint pupil enrollment of grades 9, 10, and 11. One hundred percent (100%) of the partner school's enrollment shall be added to the LEA's enrollment for the purpose of postseason playoff classification. In addition, the Cooperative Sports Committee may place a CSP in a more competitive classification if necessary for competitive balance. Such classification of the CSP will not affect either school's classification in any other sport.

E. Cooperative Sports Committee (CSC):

The President of the Executive Committee shall nominate a Cooperative Sports Committee of no less than five members and a chairperson, none of whom shall be members of the NJSIAA Executive Committee. The CSC will approve or disapprove each Cooperative Sports Program application. Approved applications will be presented at the next Executive Committee for final approval.

The CSC will also make classification determinations at the time of approval of the Cooperative Sports Program. The CSC will take into consideration the combined enrollments as well as other factors determined by the Committee.

The LEA, Partner school or Participating League or Conference may appeal any such decision by the CSC. Such appeal will be heard by the Cooperative Sports Appeal Committee per Article III, Section 10.E.

*CL 3: The CSC will meet three times per year and their decisions will be based on written documentation submitted to the committee. Such meetings will occur within 45 days after each deadline prescribed in Article III, Section 7.C(4). Decisions of the CSC will be communicated to the applying schools within 10 business days of the meeting date.*

*CL 4: The CSC may change the classification determination previously made. Such change in classification will coincide with the automatic renewal period.*

F. Cooperative Sports Appeals Committee (CSAC):

The President of the Executive Committee shall nominate a Cooperative Sports Appeals Committee of no less than five members and a chairperson, all of whom shall be members of the NJSIAA Executive Committee. All appeals from initial decisions of the CSC shall be determined by the Cooperative Sports Appeals Committee. The CSAC will not hear appeals of the classification determination made by the CSC.

The CSAC shall consider Cooperative Sports Program matters, in accordance with the following procedures:

i. The CSAC shall decide an appeal on either written submission or at a hearing.

ii. The CSAC shall meet to determine any pending appeals on days corresponding with the regularly scheduled meetings of the Executive Committee.

iii. Four members of the CSAC shall constitute a quorum. The Chairperson shall

be a non-voting member of the Committee except where there is a tie to vote on any appeal. A member shall not vote on any appeal, the outcome of which would affect the schedule of that member's school.

If the CSAC approves a Cooperative Sports Program application, then they will make the classification determination at the time of approval. The CSAC will take into consideration the combined enrollments as well as other factors determined by the Committee.

- G. The LEA, Partner school or Participating League or Conference may appeal any such decision of the CSAC. Such appeal will be heard by the Executive Committee and such decision will be considered final.
- H. Cooperating schools may include all school names on their uniforms; however, the LEA name will be used by the NJSIAA for classifications and seeding brackets.
- I. Either the LEA or Partner school may exit a Cooperative Sports Program at any time during the time period covered by the approved application. Written notice must be submitted to the NJSIAA and the other participating school(s). Upon early termination, the participating schools will be reclassified to their natural classification as a single school.
- J. A Cooperative Sports Program for a particular sport will cover all levels of competition (i.e. freshman, J.V. and varsity). However, either school may establish a stand-alone sub-varsity team while continuing in the cooperative program in that same sport.
- K. The Executive Committee shall be authorized to adopt appropriate guidelines, not inconsistent with the provisions of this Section, so as to implement the Cooperative Sports Programs.
- L. No Cooperative Sports Program shall be allowed unless approved by the Executive Committee after prior approval by the Boards of Education of the cooperating schools.