

## **Executive Summary - MIAA Football 2025 Modifications**

The goal of this proposal is to provide more equitable experience for the student athletes in the sport of football and to offer a post-season tournament for the teams who demonstrate a specific level of excellence during the regular season. The proposed modifications put more emphasis on the regular season for the 274 MIAA schools participating in football, still rewards the top performing teams, and aims to make the football tournament align closer to the intended benefits of the MIAA Statewide Tournament Plan.

### **10-Game Regular Season, 8-Team Playoff**

- The season will begin one week later, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday preceding Labor Day, (8/21/2025)
- The pre-season practice calendar will remain the same.
- The sample calendar (attached) includes week 1A for 2025 only.
- Schools can schedule a maximum of 10 games before the playoff seeding.
- Schools must play 8 games to be eligible for the playoffs.
- The regular season ends on Thanksgiving.
- The top Eight teams per division (64 schools) qualify for the post-season.
- The MIAA Power Rating formula will determine the top 8 seeds per division.
- Teams who do not qualify for the playoffs have completed their season.
- Practices after Thanksgiving will be prohibited from having live contact.
- The playoffs will begin on Tuesday following Thanksgiving. The higher seeds will host the quarterfinal game, unless they lack lights and/or field is ruled unplayable.
- The Semi-Final will be played the Sunday following the quarterfinal at neutral site
- The Super Bowls will be held on the second Saturday following Thanksgiving.

### **Supporting Data for an 8 Team Playoff**

- Currently 210 schools (76.7%) are required to play a consolation game(s) or a take a bye(s) in November (week 9 & 10) so an additional 64 schools (23.2%) can qualify for the tournament.
- The past four seasons, 71 (37%) of the 192 teams seeded 9 through 16 entered the tournament without a winning record. This number would be higher if we did not have the rule that requires teams to win 3 games to be tournament eligible.
- The past four seasons, 222 of the 256 (86.7%) first round games have been won by the higher seeded team in the 16-team tournament.

### **Recommendation**

- A study should be done to review the adjusting the start of each athletic season (Fall, Winter, Spring) one week later. This would be a benefit to football and all spring sports, and it would not hinder any other sport or season.

## Benefits

- The plan provides an equitable experience for all student-athletes in football.
- The plan maintains the integrity and importance of the regular season like other MIAA sports.
- The plan eliminates consolation games and by weeks for 210 of the 274 football schools in November.
- The plan shifts emphasis back to the regular season, thus only inconveniencing the 23% of teams who qualify for the tournament.
- The tournament will serve only as culminating athletic activity for those who have demonstrated a specific level of excellence during their regular season.
- The plan enhances the accuracy of the power rating formula by increasing the number of games played by 25% and completing all league/rivalry games before seeding the tournament.
- Adjusting the start of the season to a week later keeps the length of the season the same.
- The plan creates early season opportunities for new regional rivalries to be developed as recommended in the Statewide Tournament Plan.
- This is a proven post-season tournament format used in Connecticut (CIAC), who also plays on Thanksgiving, since 2010.
- The plan will allow league games to be played toward the end of the season, thus keeping athletes engaged as the season develops.
- Thanksgiving will once again be the pinnacle of the season for all schools. It will also provide additional motivation for potential playoff teams, opponents of prospective playoff teams, and the communities of these schools.
- Teams in the state finals will no longer have a reason not to play their best players on Thanksgiving.
- The plan allows schools to schedule all levels of the football program prior to the start of the season.
- The plan removes the administrative burden of hosting regional consolation meetings.
- Only teams with a winning record will qualify for the tournament.
- Half of the playoff qualifiers (32 Teams or 12% of the teams) will be eliminated on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving.

### 2025 Calendar

2025	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>August</b> Preseason					<b>21</b> Helmets	<b>22</b> Helmets	<b>23</b> Helmets
<b>August</b> Preseason	<b>24</b> Off Day	<b>25</b> Uppers	<b>26</b> Uppers	<b>27</b> Uppers	<b>28</b> Full Pads	<b>29</b> Full Pads	<b>30</b> Full Pads
<b>September</b> Preseason	<b>31</b> Off Day	<b>1</b> Labor Day	<b>2</b> practice	<b>3</b> practice	<b>4</b> practice	<b>5</b> practice	<b>6</b> practice
<b>September</b> Week 1A	<b>7</b> Off Day	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>   <b>13</b> Game Week	
<b>September</b> Week 1	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>   <b>20</b> Game Week	
<b>September</b> Week 2	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>   <b>27</b> Game Week	
<b>October</b> Week 3	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>   <b>4</b> Game Week	
<b>October</b> Week 4	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>   <b>11</b> Game Week	
<b>October</b> Week 5	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>   <b>18</b> Game Week	
<b>October</b> Week 6	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>   <b>25</b> Game Week	
<b>October</b> Week 7	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>   <b>1</b> Game Week	
<b>November</b> Week 8	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>   <b>8</b> Game Week	
<b>November</b> Week 9	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>   <b>15</b> Game Week	
<b>November</b> Week 10	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>   <b>22</b> Game if not Playing Thanksgiving	
<b>November</b> Week 11	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> Thanksgiving	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

### 8-Team Playoff

<b>December</b> Post-Season	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Quarterfinals	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>December</b> Post-Season	<b>7</b> Semifinals	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> State Finals	<b>13</b>