



To: NJSIAA Program Review Committee

From: Colleen Maguire, Executive Director

Date: May 3, 2024

RE: Volleyball Best of 5 Match Proposal

Background

NFHS rules currently allow states to adopt a best of 5-match or best of 3-match format for both regular season and post-season competition. NJSIAA is currently one of three state associations that has adopted a best of 3-match format with all other state associations utilizing a best of 5-match format.

Both boys and girls volleyball continues to be one of the fastest growing sports within the Association. Since the 2018-2019 school year, boys volleyball has seen a 37% increase in the number of teams (currently 198 teams) and a 52% increase in the number of participants (currently 6,850 student-athletes) while girls volleyball has seen an 11% increase in the number of teams (currently 323 teams) and a 15% increase in the number of participants (currently 11,687 student-athletes).

According to NJ.com, the Association's Official Statistics Partner, over the past two complete seasons, 75% of total boys and girls regular season contests ended after 2 matches – the final score reported as 2-0. Many contests last approximately 30 – 40 minutes, which is a significantly less period of time to provide participation opportunities per contest than sports with a comparable regular season maximum number of contests, such as basketball, baseball and softball.

Rationale

NJSIAA staff firmly believes that it is time for the Association to move to a best of 5-match format that will reflect the tremendous growth of the sport but to also provide additional match/matches to increase participation opportunities for student-athletes. However, NJSIAA staff recognizes that there may be logistical challenges for some member schools to adopt a best of 5-match format without adequate notice. Therefore, this proposal provides both flexibility for those schools interested in hosting best of 5-matches to increase participation opportunities and

adequate notice that the state tournament will be moving to a best of 5-match format in two years.

Proposal

In order to provide member schools with flexibility and increase participation opportunities, NJSIAA staff recommends the following policy for varsity regular season contests.

1. **Starting with the 2025 – 2026 school year, the NJSIAA state tournament will move to a best of 5-match format for all rounds.**
2. Starting with the 2024 – 2025 school year, schools will be permitted to mutually agree in advance to play a best of 5-match format. The host school must notify their assignor in advance and agree to the fee that will be paid to the officials when a best of 5-match format will be played. There is no limit to the number of contests played under the best of 5-match format during the regular season. The results for these contests should be reported to NJ.com as played (i.e. 3-0, 3-1, 3-2).

It is important to note that there is no impact on the power point calculations when reporting results for matches played under a best of 3-match or best of 5-match format.

Leagues and Conferences have the autonomy to use either a best of 3-match or best of 5-match format for their tournaments starting with the 2024 – 2025 school year.

Lastly, NJSIAA staff may seek approval to adopt a best of 5-match format for all varsity regular season competition starting with the 2026 – 2027 school year at a later date – this will allow time to solicit feedback on the best of 5-match format.