



2026

Football

Information

[FOOTBALL SPORTS PAGE](#)

- [Committee Member Listing](#)
- [Committee Meeting Dates](#)
- [Tournament Dates](#)





2026 Football Tournament

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Tentative Tournament Dates

- a) Cut-Off Date: October 31, 2026
- b) Bracket Release: November 1, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.
- c) Tournament Begins: no earlier than Thurs. Nov. 5 **
- d) State Finals: TBD

2. Rosters: The number of uniformed team members eligible for football tournament participation may vary based upon the following requirements: All athletes have been declared eligible according to MIAA rules by their High School Principal; only athletes who dress regularly as a member of the varsity team may be on the post-season squad; and only uniform players will be allowed on the sidelines. Teams may only dress a maximum of 85 players.

3. Schedules: Team schedules must adhere to the following guidelines to be eligible for the State Tournament:

- **Minimum and Maximum Game Limitations**

Beginning September 10, 2026, through the established Cut-Off dates, teams must schedule and compete in the minimum of 7 games and a maximum of 8 games.

- **Minimum Games Won to Qualify for Tournament Play**

To qualify for Tournament Play, teams must have won no less than three (3) games during the 8-week Qualifying Period. After teams are power ranked, any team with less than three (3) wins will be replaced in the brackets by the next power ranked team with a minimum of three (3) wins. Once the bracket is filled, no more teams will be placed for Tournament Play.

- **Out of State Opponents**

For the game to count against an out-of-state opponent, the opponent must meet all TMC and MIAA requirements. If the criteria are met, power ranking value will be used based upon the approved MIAA Power Ranking System.

If an out-of-state opponent has played more than the MIAA Tournament maximum at the time of seeding, the results of that opponent's first eight games will be used for power ranking purposes.

- **Forfeited Games**

For power ranking purposes, if a game is determined, by rule or by the Seeding Committee, to be a forfeit the score will be entered as 14-0.

If a team forfeits their season, MIAA Handbook Rule 18 must be followed.

- **Postponed Games**

Postponed contests should be immediately re-scheduled on the first day the teams do not have a scheduled competition (MIAA Handbook Rule 32.4).

- **Cut-Off Date**

The football cutoff date is Saturday, Oct. 31. In the event of a postponement of a game, due only to weather or other emergencies, the game can be played on Sunday, Nov. 1. The game should be scheduled as early in the day as possible, morning preferred.

4. Power Ranking and Bracket Release

Teams will receive a power ranking for tournament seeding purposes using the MIAA Power Ranking System. In the event no games are postponed to Nov. 1, final records will be posted at 8:00 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 1. Schools will have until 12:00 p.m. (noon) Nov. 1 to make corrections to any posted team record. After 12:00 p.m., brackets will be compiled and released at 1:00 p.m.



2026 Football Tournament

Cutoff Date	Working time **	Bracket Release
Saturday, Oct. 31	Sunday, Nov. 1 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.	Sunday, Nov. 1 – 1:00 p.m.

Working Day/Time: **

- By 8:00 a.m., staff will produce and publish a report on MIAA.net with each team's record (*broken down by division, listed alphabetically by school*), and all schedules and score data as reported to Arbiter throughout the season. No power rankings data will be published at this time.
 - Schools will have until 12:00 p.m. to correct any errors in final team records. The final and completed brackets will be released at 1:00 p.m. on MIAA.net.
- ** Should a game be postponed from Oct. 31, final brackets will not be posted until 1 hour after the final game is completed on Sunday, Nov. 1.

5. Non-Playoff Scheduling Committees

Non-Playoff Scheduling Committees will assume jurisdiction for implementing games for non-playoff qualifying teams and teams eliminated from the playoffs. Each Non-Playoff Scheduling Committee will appoint a chair as a point of contact. These committees will consist of the following representatives:

West Region

- Representatives from District 1 on the MIAA Football Committee and representatives from each league in the West section.

Central Region

- Representatives from District 2 & 3 on the MIAA Football Committee and representatives from each league in the Central Section.

North Region

- Representatives from Districts 4, 5 and 6 on the MIAA Football Committee and representatives from each league in the North section.

South Region

- Representatives from Districts (6 - geographically in the Southern area of the state), 7, 8 and 9 on the MIAA Football Committee and representatives from each league in the South section.

6. Assignment of Officials

For Non-Playoff Games and Non-Playoff Games between teams eliminated from the State Tournament (Weeks 9 & 10), the officials will be assigned by the home team commissioner.

Round of 16 & Round of 8 Games

Five field officials and one clock operator will be assigned for all games through the Round of 8.

Round of 4 (State Semi-Final) & State Finals

Seven field officials and one clock operator will be assigned to all state semi-final and state final tournament games. Note the following abbreviations for official's positions R=Referee, U=Umpire, HL=Head Linesman, LJ=Line Judge, FJ=Field Judge, BJ=Back Judge, SJ=Side Judge, and C=Clock Operator.

The following conditions must be adhered to:

- a. Only officials who are registered and on the MIAA List of Approved Officials will be assigned playoff games.
- b. All Officials must have at least 5 years varsity experience and officiated at least 40 games in that period.
- c. All Officials must have worked at least 4 varsity high school games during the Fall Season.



2026 Football Tournament

- d. Officials are to be assigned positions they usually work.

Chain Crews:

- a. For the Round of 16 and the Round of 8 home teams will provide 4-person chain crews. The Chain Crew must report to the Head Linesman assigned to the game no later than 15 minutes prior to game time.
- b. State Semi & State Final Tournament Games (Weeks 11 and 13) - The Head Linesman assigned will provide the chain crew for both games. The chain crew will be football officials. If the Head Linesman cannot provide a chain crew, he must notify the Tournament Director immediately.

QUALIFICATION AND SEEDING

1. Seeding Process

- Teams will be seeded using the official MIAA Power Ranking System.

2. Other Information

- If a game ends in a tie after regulation time, all football games will adhere to the NFHS Resolving Tied Games procedure in the 2026 NFHS Football Rules, referenced in #6 below and/or on the MIAA Football Page to determine the winner of the game.
- Seeding Tiebreaker
 1. Head-to-Head competition
 2. The higher average of each team's opponents' ranking, based on the MIAA Power Ranking Formula.
 3. League Champion
 4. Coin Flip

TOURNAMENT GAME ADMINISTRATION

1. Rules:

All games will be played under NFHS Football Rules.

2. Game Sites:

- a. All games will be at home site of higher seed for the Round of 16 and Round of 8.
- b. If home team site is not acceptable the following will apply:
 - Home school AD finds an acceptable site.
 - Lower seed will host the game.
 - If both sites are not acceptable, the Tournament Administrator will place the game at an acceptable site within MIAA site policy.
- c. The MIAA will provide sites for State Semi-Finals and State Finals as defined by TMC Site Policy.
- d. Home field venues must meet the following standards from the MIAA handbook:
 - Condition of playing surface
 - Crowd Control
 - Seating capacity
 - Ticket sales control
 - Locker rooms
 - Acceptable lights for night games

3. Home Team/Higher Seed: (determines sideline)

The Home Team for all games will be the higher seed.

4. Uniforms

The higher seeded/home team will wear colored jerseys and lower seeded/away team will wear white jerseys throughout the entire tournament.



2026 Football Tournament

5. Official Ball:

Preliminary, Round of 16 & Round of 8 – Ball of choice, supplied by participating schools.

Round of 4 and State Finals

The Wilson GST football will be the official ball. Two game balls will be provided by the Tournament Director to each team participating in the Round of 4 prior to competition. All game balls must be approved by the Head Official at midfield prior to the beginning of the game.

6. Overtime/Tied Games

(NFHS Rules Resolving Tied Games below will be used in all tournament and regular season games. More information can be found in the official 2026 NFHS Football Rules and/or the MIAA Football Page [CLICK HERE](#))

An overtime period is untimed play after a regulation game has ended with the score tied. During an overtime period each team has an opportunity for an offensive series of downs. However, an overtime period may include only one offensive series of downs if the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown. **

- **Note #1:** As referenced below in 5-1-1, “If the defensive team gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team’s series of downs is ended.” This specific reference (above) refers to the very rare situation where a loose ball bounces back toward/into the end zone of the offensive team.

When the score is tied at the end of the fourth period, the referee will instruct both teams to return to their respective team boxes. There will be a three-minute intermission during which both teams may confer with their coaches. All game officials will assemble at the 50-yard line, review the overtime procedure, and discuss how penalties, if any, including any carry-over penalties from the regulation game will be assessed to start the overtime procedure. (8-3-5, 8-3-6) At the end of the three-minute intermission, the head linesman will go to the team on the side of the field where the line to gain equipment is located and the line judge will go to the other team. They will inform the coaches of any special penalty enforcements that apply. **(NFHS Rule reference 3-1)**

At the coin toss in the center of the field the visiting team’s captain shall be given the privilege of choosing "heads" or "tails" before the coin is tossed. The winner of the toss shall be given his choice of defense or offense first, or of designating the end of the field at which the ball will be put in play for this set of downs. The loser will have his choice of the other options. The referee will indicate the winner of the toss by placing a hand on his shoulder. To indicate which team will go on offense, the referee will have that captain face the goal toward which his team will advance and indicate this with the first-down signal. The other team captain will face the offensive captain with his back toward the goal he will defend. **(NFHS Rule reference 3-2-1)**

Each team shall be permitted one time-out during each overtime period (a series for A and a series for B). The team scoring the greater number of points in the overtime shall be declared the winner. The final score shall be determined by totaling all points scored by each team during both regulation time and overtime periods. **(NFHS Rule reference 3-5-1)**

To start the overtime, the offensive team shall put the ball in play, first and goal, on the defensive team’s 10-yard line or succeeding spot if carry-over penalty has been administered (15-yard line for six-player football) anywhere between the hash marks. The first offensive team shall have a series of four downs. That series shall be terminated by any score by the offensive team or if the defensive team has possession of the ball.

- A field-goal attempt is permitted during any down.
- If the defensive team gains possession, the ball becomes dead immediately and the offensive team’s series of downs is ended. **(Note #1)**



2026 Football Tournament

- After the first team on offense has completed its series of downs, the first team on defense will become the offensive team with the ball in its possession at the same 10-yard line anywhere between the hash marks.
- The same end of the field will be used for possessions by both teams during the two sets of downs to ensure equal game conditions and conserve time.
- If the score remains tied after each team has been given one series of downs in an overtime period, then the procedure shall be repeated with other overtime periods until a game winner is determined. In this case, there shall be an intermission of two minutes. At the subsequent meeting of team captains, the loser of the overtime coin toss will be given first choice of the options. If additional overtime periods are required, then first options will be alternated with no coin toss. **(NFHS Rule reference 5-1-1)**

If a safety is scored by the offensive team****, the succeeding spot will be the 10-yard line in possession of the team that was on defense, provided the defensive team has not had its series of downs (the temporary overtime score is: Team A-2; Team B-0). When the defensive team gains possession of the ball, the down and series immediately end for the offensive team. **(NFHS Rule reference 5-1-3)**

- **Note #2:** An offensive safety can only occur in the case of B (defense) being penalized for an illegal batting or kicking of the ball out of the endzone)

The offensive team shall be awarded a new series of downs when any one of the following occurs:

- a. Offensive team recovers a scrimmage kick (field-goal attempt) between the goal lines after it has been touched first by the defensive team beyond the neutral zone.
- b. Defensive team is guilty of roughing the kicker, place-kick holder, snapper or passer. **(NFHS Rule reference 5-2-1)**

The line to gain is always the goal line regardless of whether or not a penalty enforcement places the ball more than 10 yards from the goal line to start a new series. **(NFHS Rule reference 5-3-1)**

If the defensive team scores a safety or touchdown, the game is ended. **(NFHS Rule reference 8-1)**

- see **Note #1** above

If the team on offense scores a touchdown, it is entitled to the opportunity for a try unless the points would not affect the outcome of the game or playoff qualifying. **(NFHS Rule reference 8-3)**

Post scrimmage kick enforcement is not applicable in this procedure. **(NFHS Rule reference 10-4-3)**

7. Halftime

The home team will accept responsibility for the organization and administration of the halftime program. This program shall be conducted within the time limits established by the rules of the game.

State Semi-Finals and State Finals – Halftime information will be provided by the Tournament Director to participating schools in advance.

8. Medical Coverage

As per MIAA Handbook rule 69.2 “A licensed physician, licensed athletic trainer or certified EMT must be in attendance and on duty for all interscholastic football games. For all varsity football games, each team must employ a licensed physician, licensed athletic trainer or certified EMT to be with their team.” This applies to all games through the Round of 8

State Semi-Finals and State Finals – Should it be necessary; MIAA will provide Medical Coverage according to MIAA Handbook Rules. If a school has provided its own medical coverage, he/she shall be responsible for the members of that team (see MIAA Handbook Rules 56.3).



2026 Football Tournament

9. Film Exchange

Schools must make available to their opponents, films, or tapes of any three of their games that the opposing coach desires. This exchange must take place by 3:00 pm on Sunday of each playoff week.

10. Postponements

Tournament game postponements due to inclement weather or other unusual circumstances will be the decision of the Tournament Director in consultation with the MIAA Executive Football Liaison and Host Site Administration. The rescheduling of a postponed game will be determined by the Tournament Director in consultation with the MIAA Executive Football Liaison and administration of the participating schools.

11. Administrative Supervision

All member schools participating in the MIAA Football Tournament are required to provide school personnel to assist in maintaining the control and conduct of student spectators at all MIAA Football Tournament sites in which their team is a participant (see page 8).

12. MIAA Drone Policy – Prohibiting the Use of Drones (Unmanned Aircraft Systems or UAS's)

Unless granted special permission by the MIAA Executive Director, the use of drones (UAS), for any purpose, is not permitted at any MIAA tournament event. This prohibition applies to all fields of play, courts, arena, mats, gym floor, or pool, and covers a ban on the entire facility being used as part of the MIAA event, including the spectator stands and parking areas.

13. SAT/SAT Subject Tests

- Games may be scheduled for a Saturday - the same date as an anticipated SAT Test Date. Schools are encouraged to be aware of this date and collaborative if scheduling a game on this date. A listing of all dates and sports that may take place on scheduled College Board exam dates can be found on the MIAA website. College Board dates can be found here - <https://www.collegeboard.org/>
- The **College Board** offers an SAT® Program Alternate Test Date Policy. As stated in their published material:

The SAT Program will consider granting an alternate test date when the following criteria are met:

 - *The conflicting event must be unexpected. Regularly scheduled sporting events or previously scheduled school activities, such as a prom, are not considered unexpected. An event such as an academic or athletic competition, in which students have advanced through the competition or into post-regular season competition, can be considered an unexpected event.*
- SAT School Day: Allows high schools to administer the SAT to students during the school day, thus avoiding weekend athletic conflicts.



2026 Football Tournament

NON-PLAYOFF GAME SCHEDULE

For teams that do not qualify for the MIAA Football Tournament and teams that are eliminated from the MIAA Football Tournament

The MIAA Power Ranking System will be used as a guide for the Non-Playoff Scheduling Committee.

If a team does not wish to play in week 9 and/or 10, the Scheduling Committee must be notified by the athletic director by Saturday at 10:00 pm on the weekend of week 8 (10/31) and/or week 9 (11/7)

SCHEDULES

Non-Playoff Schedules for Weeks 9-10 will be developed by the Scheduling Committees by the process below. Please note – Non-Playoff Schedules developed by the Scheduling Committees will be considered final:

- Games based on league/rivalry games, competitive matchups, and home/away considerations. The Scheduling Committee will avoid rematches whenever possible.
- Week 9 will be completed after bracket release at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 1 **
- Week 10 will be set on Sunday, November 8; Time: TBD

** If a game is postponed from Saturday, Oct. 31; brackets will be released approximately one hour after the conclusion of the final game; non-playoff seeding committees will communicate procedure, time and plans should this situation present itself. (see Cutoff Date and Section 4 above for more information)

Teams that are eliminated from the State Tournament will have their remaining schedules determined by the Scheduling Committees.

In addition to these games, teams in all sections can play on Thanksgiving Day as the final game of the season.

No member of a school may schedule their own non-playoff games. Scrimmages cannot be played during weeks 9 & 10 and games not assigned by the non-playoff Scheduling Committee are not permitted in weeks 9 & 10. The Non-Playoff Scheduling Committee will give consideration for vocational schools to align vocational opponents for week 10. *If a school/team does not adhere to these guidelines the team/school will be removed from the opportunity for post-season play in the next year.*

All non-playoff games during Weeks 9-10 will be managed as regular season games per MIAA Handbook guidelines. Officials shall be assigned by the home team commissioner.



2026 Football Tournament

MIAA Football Tournament Sportsmanship Responsibility of Competing Schools Compliance Policy & School Monitor Job Description

As part of MIAA continuing efforts to promote the concepts of sportsmanship and provide the on-site atmosphere that will keep interscholastic athletic events in an educational perspective, the Football Committee has adopted the following regulations relative to participation in the MIAA Football Tournament.

These regulations specifically provide the requirement that all member schools who elect to enter the MIAA Football Tournament, after meeting the necessary requirements, will provide for the presence of school personnel that will assist the efforts of on-site management in maintaining control and conduct of their student spectators at all games in the tournament in which their team is a participant. This is a requirement for entrance into the tournament.

These school staff members, designated as school monitors, shall be appropriately identified. They are to report by name to the Site Manager and seat themselves in their school-student section. Vests or other identifiable symbols will be supplied by the MIAA and worn by school staff members, designated as school monitors, for the State Finals. The Site Manager shall review the functions of school monitors as listed below:

- A. SIT WITH STUDENT POPULATION OF THEIR SCHOOL
- B. DISCOURAGE ALL UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR AND ACTIVITY THAT PROVOKES OR RESULTS IN UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR BY OTHERS OR IS RETALIATORY TO UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOR OF OTHERS.
- C. KEEP STUDENT POPULATION IN THEIR OWN AREA
- D. ASSIST IN ENFORCING TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS RELATED TO SIGNS, BANNERS, NOISEMAKERS, RADIOS, ETC.
- E. PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO THE SITE MANAGEMENT PERTAINING TO ENTRANCE AND EGRESS OF STUDENT SPECTATORS

Schools not working to supply school monitors for their scheduled game will have this action of noncompliance subject to review by the Football Committee. Noncompliance may lead to ineligibility for the State Football Tournament the following year.

This requirement for participation in the State Football Tournament has been approved by the Board of Directors in the interest of good sportsmanship and of conducting the tournament in an educational atmosphere.

Non-Discrimination Statement

MIAA does not discriminate in its educational programs or activities on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, age, religion or religious creed, disability or handicap, sex or gender, gender identity and/or expression, sexual orientation, military or veteran status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, state or local law. Retaliation is also prohibited.