

# Football Tournament Bulletin

## STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS – DECEMBER 4-6, 2025 – NAVY-MARINE CORPS MEMORIAL STADIUM

DATE	EVENT	DATE	EVENT
August 13	First Practice Date	November 6-8	Tournament First Round
September 5	First Play Date	November 13-15	Tournament Second Round
November 1	Last play date for seeding consideration	November 21/22	State Quarterfinals
November 3	Tournament seeding date	November 28/29	State Semifinals
November 8	Last Play Date	December 4-6	State Championships
November 24	Team Tournament Roster Forms Due		

### I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- A. The Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletic Association is the official governing body for the Football tournament. Plans for the tournament were formulated by the State Football Committee and approved by the Board of Control.
- B. Schools choosing to enter the tournament have the responsibility for reading and adhering to the rules and regulations stated on page 1 (Section I) of this publication as well as those appearing within this Football Bulletin. Unless specifically stated, all rules and regulations stipulated in the NFHS Football Rule Book will be followed.
- C. Eligibility rules for all participants are defined in MPSSAA Bylaw .02, found in the current MPSSAA Handbook.
- D. General regulations for all state tournaments are contained in MPSSAA Bylaw .07, found in both the current Handbook and in the front section of this publication.
- E. By State adoption, Maryland has adopted the following rule regarding the use of running time. After the first half, any time the score differential reaches 35 points or more, the following changes, and only these changes, will be made regarding rules determining when the clock will and will not be stopped.
  1. Once a 35-point differential exists in the second half, the clock will only be stopped when:
    - (a.) An official's timeout for an injured participant.
    - (b.) A charged (team) time-out occurs.
    - (c.) A score occurs that reduces the point spread to less than 35 points (in which case regular timing procedures will be used).
    - (d.) A period ends.
  2. The use of this rule does not preclude the use of Rule 3-1-3 which reads, "A period or periods may be shortened in any emergency by agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee. By mutual agreement of the opposing coaches and the referee, any remaining period may be shortened at any time or the game terminated."
- F. By State adoption, Maryland has adopted the following rule regarding the use of the coaches box. The coaches box is extended, for coaches only, to the 10-yard line.

### II. REGION AND STATE TOURNAMENT QUALIFYING

- A. Point System Criteria
  1. In each of the six classifications, the eight teams in each region according to the MPSSAA point system will compete in two regional rounds, with two region participants advancing to state play.
  2. Point system for tournament selection
    - (a.) Classification Win Points
      - i. For defeating a Class 4A and 4A/3A schools = 8.0 points

- ii. For defeating a Class 3A and 2A schools = 7.0 points
  - iii. For defeating a Class 2A/1A and 1A schools = 6.0 points
- (b.) Nonmember schools will be placed in the proper classification according to member school enrollments based on the enrollments of grades 9, 10, and 11, comparable to MPSSAA classifications. An all-boys or all-girls school enrollment will be multiplied by two.
- (c.) Policy concerning unplayed games
  - i. Disbandment or failure to start the season on time will result in a non-game and shall automatically reduce the divisor of the disbanded team's opponent by one game.
  - ii. Disbandment after any part of the schedule has been played will be recorded as a win for the disbanded team's opponents.
- (d.) Winning team bonus points will be determined as follows:
  - i. A team playing a 9-game schedule shall receive 1.00 points for each game won by a defeated opponent who also plays a 9-game schedule.
  - ii. A team playing a 9-game schedule shall receive 1.125 points for each game won by a defeated opponent who plays an 8-game schedule.
  - iii. A team playing an 8-game schedule shall receive .889 of a point for each game won by a defeated opponent who plays a 9-game schedule.
  - iv. A team playing an 8-game schedule shall receive 1.00 points for each game won by a defeated opponent who also plays an 8-game schedule.
  - v. For each game tied by a defeated opponent, a team shall receive 50 percent of awarded points.
  - vi. For each game tied by a tied opponent, a team shall receive 25 percent of awarded points.
  - vii. For each game won by a tied opponent, a team will receive 50 percent of awarded points.
- (e.) When an MPSSAA member school plays a nonmember opponent who will not play the tiebreaker, the MPSSAA school shall receive points as follows:
  - i. 4A and 4A/3A—4.0 points
  - ii. 3A and 2A —3.5 points
  - iii. 2A/1A and 1A —3.0 points
- (f.) MPSSAA member schools whose opponents play more than a 9-game schedule will:
  - i. determine points from results of first 9 games if member school appears on the opponent's schedule from the first to and including the 9<sup>th</sup> game.
  - ii. determine points by counting back 9 games from and including the game in which member school appears on opponent's schedule.
- (g.) The total accumulated points will be divided by 8 or 9, depending on the number of games played. Nine is the maximum divisor and eight is the minimum divisor to qualify for state participation. A team must count all regular season games when using the point system criteria to determine representation.
- (h.) When a MPSSAA team plays the same opponent twice during the regular season, only the first game should count to determine team record and points. No points (bonus or win points) for any teams will be awarded based on the second game.
- (i.) If the point system results in a tie, the following procedures will be used in sequence to break the tie.

- i. If either team has defeated the other in regular season play, the winner shall be rated above the loser in the standings. If three or more teams are tied and not equally affected by this procedure, criteria two through six are to be utilized.
  - ii. The team with the most bonus points accumulated.
  - iii. The team with the smallest score difference in losses among common opponents.
  - iv. The team with the fewest average points allowed for its entire schedule.
  - v. The team whose defeated opponents have the highest point average.
  - vi. If the above procedures do not break the tie, it shall be broken by the flip of a coin.
- (j.) Should a team discontinue play during the course of the season, all opponents shall receive points as would have been awarded for a victory over the team. A school shall not receive points for a team scheduled in place of the withdrawing team after the season has begun.

**B. Seeding Information**

1. The tournament will be officially seeded on Monday, November 3 by the State Football Committee. After the first two rounds of regional play, the tournament will be reseeded into State Quarterfinals based on the MPSSAA point system in regular-season play to seed the remaining teams.
2. It is critical that all teams complete their schedules by November 1 because the point system affects both playoff and non-playoff teams.
3. Regular-season forfeits by non-tournament team(s) that would affect the point standing of eligible team(s) must be officially confirmed in writing before the completion of the seeding meeting.
4. Prior to Monday, November 3 at 2 p.m., a region contestant will be replaced by the team from said region with the next highest point average, and the region re-seeded, under the following conditions:
  - (a.) A team that elects to withdraw or is disqualified.
  - (b.) A correction of an error which causes a recalculation of points.
5. The deadline for changes in the order of seeding shall be Monday, November 3 at 2 p.m. Any withdrawal or disqualification after will result in a forfeit.

**III. REGION AND STATE TOURNAMENT**

**A. Tournament Organization**

1. The MPSSAA State Football Championship Tournament will consist of five rounds following the conclusion of a 9-game regular season. The first two rounds will consist of regional contests, evolving into eight State Quarterfinalists.
2. In subsequent rounds, if a team withdraws or is withdrawn from the tournament for any reason, the team last defeated shall replace the withdrawing team.
3. All games that end in a tie shall use the National Federation tiebreaker to determine the winner.
4. Criteria for game sites: All region and state contests, except the state finals, shall be played on the home field of the higher-seeded team provided it meets the criteria below. When a school cannot meet the criteria for a game site, the State Football Committee may designate another site in that region.
  - (a.) Adequate seating and rest room facilities.
  - (b.) A safe and playable turf.
  - (c.) A working scoreboard.
  - (d.) Host schools shall contact visitors and officials regarding accommodations for sufficient, accessible and shower-equipped dressing rooms.

5. The HOME TEAM (higher seed) will wear the DARK JERSEY. The AWAY TEAM will wear the WHITE JERSEY.
  6. Upon arrival for a game, each team will be assigned a team dressing room. Assigned personnel will be on duty in the dressing room at all times.
  7. Game sites that limit seating to one side of the stadium must assign the home team to that side of the field.
  8. Should a game be postponed for extreme weather conditions, it will be rescheduled. Thursday games will be moved to Friday; Friday games will be moved to Saturday. When a schedule/or site change is necessary, the region tournament director, in consultation with both schools, will establish the best schedule, site, and game combination to expedite the tournament in that particular region. When conflicts occur, the Supervisors of Athletics for the competing schools will make the final decision.
  9. The athletic director, facility manager, or other administratively-appointed member of the host school will serve as Game Director. The responsibilities for all the region games and the State Quarterfinal and Semifinal games are as follows:
    - (a.) Clear with the Game Manager on matters of policy and/or interpretation.
    - (b.) Hire and supervise all personnel necessary for game administration.
    - (c.) Establish a team gate separate from the spectator gate.
    - (d.) Introduce the official medical personnel to both coaching staffs (Refer to Page 5, Section VI).
    - (e.) Issue press box passes by the space available. Occupants could be team spotters, announcers, photographers, and representatives of the press and radio stations.
  10. The official ball of the MPSSAA State Tournament is the Wilson WTF 1003 GST. A game ball will go to each team participating in the State Quarterfinals, Semifinals and Finals. The State Football Committee is requiring the use of a Wilson Ball with the NFHS authenticating mark during all state tournament contests (QF, SF, Finals).
- B. General Policies
1. Admission to contests
    - (a.) Admission will be by paid admission, MPSSAA complimentary tickets, and MPSSAA complimentary passes. There are no refunds on purchased tickets.
      - i. Individuals 7 years of age and older will be charged admission.
      - ii. Complimentary tickets will be issued by the game manger to representatives of the working media assigned to the contest.
      - iii. Complimentary passes will be issued to school coaches, administrators, Supervisors of athletics, and Superintendents of schools. The pass will admit the bearer only and is not transferable. A valid driver's license must be displayed with the pass for proper identification.
    - (b.) Sideline passes will be issued to coaches, medical personnel, and managers. Only those persons with sideline passes will be permitted on the sideline.
    - (c.) Cheerleaders from each of the participating schools will be admitted free of charge only if they are in complete uniform and accompanied by a coach.
  2. The public address system will be staffed by and under the direction of the host school.
  3. Public address comments must be in good taste according to broadcast protocol. Comments not in good taste, nonprofessional, favor one team, or inflammatory, are not permitted.
  4. Raffles, 50/50 drawings, or any other games of chance may not be conducted in connection with any MPSSAA playoff contest.

## 5. Bands

- (a.) A participating school's band may provide musical entertainment. The game director must be notified 48 hours in advance of the scheduled game if a participating school band to provide a band for the game. The band must be in full uniform, accompanied by the band director, and prepared to perform.
  - (b.) The designated band will take the field five minutes prior to the start of the game to play the National Anthem only.
  - (c.) During a 20-minute halftime intermission, the visiting team's band shall take the field for seven minutes, followed by the home team's band, which shall also be limited to seven minutes. Both bands should clear the field five minutes prior to the second-half kickoff. Should only one band or no bands participate, the halftime shall be 15 minutes. In any case, the field will be cleared five minutes prior to the second-half kickoff.
- 6. Only fixed signs and banners of a positive nature will be allowed at playoff games.
  - 7. Game concessions for region games and state semifinals shall be awarded to the host school. In return, the host school shall be responsible for postgame cleanup.

## IV. REGION TOURNAMENT

### A. Tournament organization

- 1. The first round of the regions will be structured as follows:
  - (a.) No. 1 vs. No. 8 Seed      No. 2 vs. No. 7 Seed
  - (b.) No. 4 vs. No. 5 Seed      No. 3 vs. No. 6 Seed
- 2. The winners of the first round shall advance to the second round as follows:
  - (a.) The winner in each classification and region of the No. 1 versus No. 8 seeded game will play the winner of the No. 4 versus No. 5 seeded game.
  - (b.) The winner in each classification and region of the No. 2 versus No. 7 seeded game will play the winner of the No. 3 versus No. 6 seeded game.
  - (c.) A re-seed for the State Quarterfinals will occur once the first two region rounds have been determined.
- 3. Regional Round Game Times:
  - (a.) Regional Round 1 & 2 - The school system of the hosting school shall set the game times on Thursday, Friday, or Saturday.
  - (b.) Games on Thursday or Friday shall be scheduled no earlier than 5 p.m. Saturday games will begin at 12 p.m. or later. The MPSSAA reserves the right to authorize a local educational agency to schedule games earlier than 5 p.m. for legitimate facility or official shortage issues.
  - (c.) All game times and dates will be locked by Monday at 2 p.m.
- 4. Responsibilities of the region football director (listed on the MPSSAA website):
  - (a.) Contact the athletic directors of the eight schools participating in the region tournament to confirm date, site, and time of the contests and clarify arrangements for inclement weather.
  - (b.) Verify all sites in their region have officials assigned to work the contest.
- 5. A TEAM ENTRY FORM utilized for State Semifinals and Finals must be filled out by teams winning their regional second round game. Instructions on filling out the TEAM ENTRY FORM is available on mpssaa.org.
- 6. Individuals 7 years of age or older will be charged an admission of \$6.

## V. STATE TOURNAMENT

### A. State Quarterfinals

1. The eight remaining teams (two from each region) from each classification shall advance to a State Quarterfinal round.
2. The eight regional teams will be seeded 1-8 based on their regular season point average used to seed each region. Ties among teams in the State Quarterfinals will be broken utilizing the criteria found in Section II. A. 2. i. found on page 23.
3. Unless a specific alternate plan has been approved, all State Quarterfinal games will be played at the site of the higher seed.
4. State Quarterfinal games shall be scheduled no earlier than 6:30 p.m. on Friday. Saturday games will begin at 12 p.m. or later.
5. A six-man crew, a three-man chain crew, and a timekeeper from the association local to the higher seeded team will be assigned to the State Quarterfinal contest.
6. A plaque and certificates will be awarded to each of the winning State Quarterfinalist teams.

### B. State Semifinals

1. The winners of the State Quarterfinal round shall advance to the State Semifinals.
  - (a.) The winner in each classification of the No. 1 versus No. 8 seeded game will play the winner of the No. 4 versus No. 5 seeded game.
  - (b.) The winner in each classification of the No. 2 versus No. 7 seeded game will play the winner of the No. 3 versus No. 6 seeded game.
2. Unless a specific alternate plan has been approved, all State Semifinal games will be played at the site of the higher seed.
3. State Semifinal games shall be scheduled no earlier than 1 p.m. on Friday. Saturday games will begin at 12 p.m. or later.
4. A six-man crew, a three-man chain crew, and a timekeeper will be assigned by the MPSSAA office to the State Semifinal contests.

### C. State Championships

1. The winners of the State Semifinal round shall advance to the State Championships.
2. The State Finals are scheduled for December 4-6, 2025, in Annapolis at the Navy-Marine Corps Memorial Stadium. Directions and fan information are posted on the MPSSAA web site <mpssaa.org> in "Football State Championship Central".
3. A six-man crew, a three-man chain crew, and a timekeeper will be assigned by the MPSSAA office to the State Final contests.

### D. General Policies

1. The State Football Committee will determine the schedule for all contests.
2. Persons 7 years of age and older will be charged admission as follows:
  - (a.) Quarterfinals - \$6.00
  - (b.) Semifinals — \$8.00
  - (c.) Finals — \$10.00

- 3. The MPSSAA will provide two leather balls for each of the quarterfinal, semifinal and final games. A game ball will go to each of the participating teams.
- 4. Officials will be assigned through the MPSSAA office.
- 5. A room will be provided for the officials assigned to each state game which will serve as a dressing room and waiting room.
- 6. A trophy will be presented to each team at the end of the championship game. Individual awards will be given to the coach following each final game and should be presented to team members at an appropriate school function.
- 7. The MPSSAA will receive all revenues and pay all expenses.

Projected MPSSAA Football Championship Dates					
2026	December 3-5	2027	December 2-4	2028	Nov. 30- Dec. 2

STATE FOOTBALL COMMITTEE AND REGIONAL DIRECTORS ARE LISTED ON [MPSSAA.ORG](https://www.mpssaa.org)

# 2025 Football Classification Alignment

Class 4A West			Class 4A North			Class 4A South			Class 4A East		
1.	Clarksburg	Mtg	1.	Bethesda-CC	Mtg	1.	Bladensburg	PG	1.	Annapolis	AA
2.	Gaithersburg	Mtg	2.	James Hubert Blake	Mtg	2.	Charles H. Flowers	PG	2.	Broadneck	AA
3.	Northwest	Mtg	3.	Montgomery Blair	Mtg	3.	Dr. Henry A. Wise	PG	3.	Glen Burnie	AA
4.	Quince Orchard	Mtg	4.	Paint Branch	Mtg	4.	Duval	PG	4.	Meade	AA
5.	Richard Montgomery	Mtg	5.	Wheaton	Mtg	5.	Eleanor Roosevelt	PG	5.	North County	AA
6.	Seneca Valley	Mtg	6.	High Point	PG	6.	Parkdale	PG	6.	Dundalk	B Co
7.	Walter Johnson	Mtg	7.	Laurel	PG	7.	Suitland	PG	7.	Bowie	PG
8.	Winston Churchill	Mtg	8.	Northwestern	PG						

Class 4A/3A West			Class 4A/3A North			Class 4A/3A South			Class 4A/3A East		
1.	Frederick	Fre	1.	Digital Harbor	Balt	1.	Albert Einstein	Mtg	1.	Arundel	AA
2.	Gov. Thomas Johnson	Fre	2.	Mergenthaler	Balt	2.	John F. Kennedy	Mtg	2.	Crofton	AA
3.	Tuscarora	Fre	3.	Dulaney	B Co	3.	Sherwood	Mtg	3.	Old Mill	AA
4.	Urbana	Fre	4.	Kenwood	B Co	4.	Springbrook	Mtg	4.	Severn Run	AA
5.	Marriotts Ridge	How	5.	Parkville	B Co	5.	Walt Whitman	Mtg	5.	Severna Park	AA
6.	Col. Zadok Magruder	Mtg	6.	Perry Hall	B Co	6.	Oxon Hill	PG	6.	North Point	Cha
7.	Thomas S. Wootton	Mtg	7.	Woodlawn	B Co	7.	Potomac	PG	7.	Great Mills	StM
8.	South Hagerstown	Was							8.	Leonardtown	StM

Class 3A West			Class 3A North			Class 3A South			Class 3A East		
1.	Linganore	Fre	1.	Catonsville	B Co	1.	Chesapeake	AA	1.	Baltimore City College	Balt
2.	Oakdale	Fre	2.	Franklin	B Co	2.	South River	AA	2.	Baltimore Polytechnic Inst.	Balt
3.	Damascus	Mtg	3.	Milford Mill Academy	B Co	3.	St. Charles	Cha	3.	Patterson	Balt
4.	Northwood	Mtg	4.	New Town	B Co	4.	Guilford Park	How	4.	Overlea	B Co
5.	Rockville	Mtg	5.	Westminster	Car	5.	Reservoir	How	5.	Patapsco	B Co
6.	Watkins Mill	Mtg	6.	Atholton	How	6.	Chopticon	StM	6.	Towson	B Co
7.	North Hagerstown	Was	7.	Centennial	How	7.	James M. Bennett	Wic	7.	Aberdeen	Har
						8.	Stephen Decatur	Wor	8.	Edgewood	Har

Class 2A West			Class 2A North			Class 2A South			Class 2A East		
1.	Glenelg	How	1.	Eastern Tech	B Co	1.	Northeast	AA	1.	North Caroline	Cin
2.	Howard	How	2.	Lansdowne	B Co	2.	Huntingtown	Cal	2.	Crossland	PG
3.	Long Reach	How	3.	Carver Vocational-Technical	Balt	3.	Northern	Cal	3.	Fairmont Heights	PG
4.	Mount Hebron	How	4.	Manchester Valley	Car	4.	La Plata	Cha	4.	Frederick Douglass	PG
5.	Oakland Mills	How	5.	Winters Mill	Car	5.	McDonough	Cha	5.	Gwynn Park	PG
6.	River Hill	How	6.	Bel Air	Har	6.	Thomas Stone	Cha	6.	Largo	PG
7.	Wilde Lake	How	7.	C. Milton Wright	Har	7.	Westlake	Cha	7.	Parkside	Wic
8.	Poolesville	Mtg	8.	North Harford	Har				8.	Wicomico	Wic

Class 2A /1A West			Class 2A/1A North			Class 2A/1A South			Class 2A/1A East		
1.	Owings Mills	B Co	1.	Hereford	B Co	1.	Edmondson-Westside	Balt	1.	Southern	AA
2.	Randallstown	B Co	2.	Elkton	Cec	2.	Forest Park	Balt	2.	Calvert	Cal
3.	Century	Car	3.	North East	Cec	3.	Paul Laurence Dunbar	Balt	3.	Henry E. Lackey	Cha
4.	Liberty	Car	4.	Rising Sun	Cec	4.	Chesapeake	B Co	4.	Hammond	How
5.	South Carroll	Car	5.	Fallston	Har	5.	Sparrows Point	B Co	5.	Kent Island	QA
6.	Middletown	Fre	6.	Harford Tech	Har	6.	Central	PG	6.	Queen Anne's	QA
7.	Walkersville	Fre	7.	Joppatowne	Har	7.	Friendly	PG	7.	Easton	Tal
8.	Williamsport	Was				8.	Surrattsville	PG			

Class 1A West			Class 1A North			Class 1A South			Class 1A East		
1.	Allegany	All	1.	Pikesville	B Co	1.	Benjamin Franklin	Balt	1.	Patuxent	Cal
2.	Fort Hill	All	2.	Western Tech	B Co	2.	Frederick Douglass	Balt	2.	Bohemia Manor	Cec
3.	Mountain Ridge	All	3.	Loch Raven	B Co	3.	Green Street Academy	Balt	3.	Perryville	Cec
4.	Northern	Gar	4.	Francis Scott Key	Car	4.	Lake Clifton	Balt	4.	Colonel Richardson	Cin
5.	Southern	Gar	5.	Brunswick	Fre	5.	Reginald Lewis	Balt	5.	Cambride-SD	Dor
6.	Clear Spring	Was	6.	Catoctin	Fre	6.	Havre de Grace	Har	6.	Kent County	K
7.	Hancock	Was	7.	Boonsboro	Was	7.	Patterson Mill	Har	7.	Washington	Som
8.	Smithsburg	Was	8.	SEED School	MD				8.	Snow Hill	Wor