

BY-LAW ARTICLE IV

Classification

Classification for all schools, in and out of state, in all sports, will be made for each two (2) years (years ending in an even number) according to the succeeding plan. Enrollment figures will be used from the October 1, 2017 report as submitted to the NHIAA Executive Director from NHIAA member schools as well as out-of-state athletic associations. The enrollment figures submitted to the NHIAA must be the same as those reported by the School/District to the Department of Education as their official enrollment figures for that year. Consequently, the enrollment figures must reflect an accurate count based on the criteria specified by the DOE. School enrollment will be verified for accuracy against the DOE official figures.

Sect. 1: Schools are classified for each two-year cycle based on the October enrollment of the previous (odd) year. New schools coming in without full enrollment will be subject to placement by the Classification Committee based upon actual and projected enrollments for that cycle period. Actual divisional alignments and school enrollments are found in the specific sport By-Laws in this handbook.

Sect. 2: Individual sports committees may recommend how many divisions their respective sport should play.

Sect. 3: Alignment by Sport

The following sports shall be aligned into divisions by their respective Sports Committee based upon enrollments and petitions subject to the approval of the Classification Committee.

4 DIVISIONS (I, II, III, IV)	baseball, basketball, football, golf, alpine skiing, soccer, softball
3 DIVISIONS (I, II, III)	cross country, field hockey, boys ice hockey, boys lacrosse, girls lacrosse, outdoor track, fall & winter spirit, tennis, girls volleyball, wrestling
2 DIVISIONS (I, II)	indoor track, nordic skiing, swimming and diving, unified sports
1 DIVISION (I)	bass fishing, bowling, gymnastics, girls ice hockey, boys volleyball

Sect. 4: Petitioning

- A. Schools may petition up/down by sport during the realignment process that is created for two (2) years. Individual sports committees will decide on petitions while considering petitioning criteria. To ensure equity of competition and safety of student athletes, all petitions must be approved by the Classification Committee and ratified by the NHIAA Council – petitions are not automatic.

- B. A school wishing to petition up/down in a division must present their case through the Executive Director to the respective sport committee who will in turn, make a recommendation to the NHIAA Classification Committee. All petitions must be recommended by the Classification Committee and approved by the NHIAA Council. The school must demonstrate that it can compete effectively in the higher/lower division schools may petition up as many divisions as they choose and may only petition down by one division in that sport. The sports committee must also address the following criteria; school enrollment, win/loss records, number of students in the program, feeder programs, regional opponents (reduce transportation) and other rationale.

(Effective 2022-23 cycle) (CM 5.20)

- C. Should a program be approved to petition to a lower division, the following will apply:
1. Ineligible for tournament play during the first year of the classification cycle.
 2. Eligible for tournament the second year of the classification cycle.
 3. Teams making the post season tournament during the second year of the classification cycle will be ineligible to petition to a lower division during the next classification cycle.
 4. Ice hockey programs may petition down and shall not be held to the provisions of 1-3 above.

Note: The classification process for an upcoming cycle is completed during the fall the year prior to implementation. Schools may petition any fall, winter, and spring sports program to a lower division during the classification process in accordance with this by-law. All petitions ratified by the NHIAA Council, are still subject to the provision set forth in this by-law. Therefore, if a team who has received approval to petition down for the upcoming cycle makes the post season tournament during second year of the current classification cycle, their petition will automatically become null and void.

- D. Petitions will be heard at the start of each two-year classification cycle. If a school faces a significant change in enrollment or other extraordinary event, it should follow the appeal process outlined in By-Law Article IV, Sect. 5.

Sect. 5: Divisional Alignment Appeals

- A. A school may appeal its divisional alignment if enrollment changes or other issues (i.e. school size, history, ability to compete, win/loss records, etc.) warrant such a request.
- B. The school must present its case to the relevant sport committee.
- C. The sport committee will then make its recommendation to the Executive Director.
- D. The Executive Director will present his/her recommendation to the Classification Committee.
- E. The Classification Committee will then present its recommendation to the NHIAA Council. The decision of the NHIAA Council is final and no further appeals will be heard.

Sect. 6: Minimum and Maximum Number of Games

Each school will be allowed to schedule contests outside of their division each season if they choose. In sports that seed teams for tournaments, each school must play at least the minimum number of games as determined by the NHIAA (see By-Law Article XXXVIII: Corresponding Dates for All Sports) against teams in their division, in order to qualify for the tournament. All other games, up to the maximum number of games allowed, may be played outside of a school's respective division, with all games counting toward final season record. (CM 5.2013) The limit on contests outside of division will be waived in the following sports that do not seed teams for tournaments: cross country, gymnastics, indoor track, outdoor track, skiing and wrestling.

Sect. 7: Standings

Standings will be kept by division for tournament seeding purposes.

- E. For sports utilizing the NH Index Plan the following will apply:
- The rating will be determined by the total number of points divided by the total number of games played. The chart below indicates how many points will be awarded for wins.
 - Home and Away is determined by the schedule and not where the game is played. (Home and away is used in consideration during the tie-breaking procedures.)
 - **Points for ties (field hockey, ice hockey and soccer):** Teams will receive $\frac{1}{2}$ of the point value that would have been awarded if the team won.

Division I	Number of Points for a win
Division I & II	4
Division III	3
Division IV	2
Division V & VI	1
Division II	Number of Points for a win
Division I	5
Division II & III	4
Division IV	3
Division V	2
Division VI	1
Division III	Number of Points for a win
Division I & II	5
Division III & IV	4
Division V	3
Division VI	2
Division IV	Number of Points for a win
Division I, II & III	5
Division IV & V	4
Division VI	3
Division V	Number of Points for a win
Division I, II, III & IV	5
Division V & VI	4
Division VI	Number of Points for a win
Division I, II, III, IV & V	5
Division VI	4

- F. Sports not utilizing the NH Index Plan are the sports of golf, football, unified sports and any sport in which team standings are not kept for seedings purposes.
- Golf and Unified Sports will be awarded one (1) point for a win and zero (0) points for a loss, regardless if the match is played home or away.
 - **Football:** Please refer to By-Law Article XX: Football, Sects. 6, 7 and 8.

Sect. 8: Out-of-State Schools

- A. Out-of-state schools will be aligned in the same manner as New Hampshire schools.
- B. Limitations on out-of-state contests, held by particular sports committees, will remain at the discretion of those committees, within the division minimum and maximum number of games.

Sect. 9: Cooperative Teams (CM 5.2017): The formation of a cooperative team must be consistent with the NHIAA's long standing dedication to fairness and competition. Cooperative teams provide opportunities for students to participate in NHIAA sanctioned sports for the common good of all student-athletes involved in interscholastic athletics. It is understood that cooperative teams are the result of thoughtful, deliberate discussion and decision-making among the leaders of schools and the districts involved. If the school boards, superintendents, school principals, and athletic administrators of the petitioning schools are of one mind that a cooperative proposal is good for their students, schools, and communities, the NHIAA will consider their position. Recognizing that student athlete participation in "individual sports" are afforded opportunities to compete, cooperative agreements for individual sports will not be considered.

PURPOSE: The objective of cooperative teams is to provide educational based athletic opportunities for schools that may not be able to provide those experiences for their students.

The approval of cooperative teams will be consistent with the NHIAA's dedication to fairness in competition. Therefore, schools may apply for the establishment of a cooperative team under the following conditions:

- A. An application shall be filed with the NHIAA no later than the last day to play “the previous year” of the sport of which the cooperative team is being sought. (See Application Guidelines – AD Forms Online)
- The application must provide but not be limited to:
- Funding for the sport
 - Coaches eligibility
 - Transportation arrangements to practices and contests
 - Use of facilities
 - Procedure for dissolution of the agreement by a school
 - Administration of the program
- B. No more than three (3) schools can form a cooperative team.
- C. Each school participating on a cooperative team must be a member of the NHIAA.
- D. The combined 9-12 enrollment of all the schools involved will not exceed the 9-12 enrollment of the largest member high school in New Hampshire.
- E. The name of the cooperative team must include the name of all of the schools involved.
- F. The school boards and the administrations of all of the participating schools must approve the establishment of a cooperative team.
- G. PROCESS FOR APPROVAL: Each sport specific committee will make a recommendation regarding the formation of a cooperative team. If endorsed by the sports specific committee, the application is presented to the NHIAA Classification Committee. If approved, the final action on the application will come from the NHIAA’s Executive Council.
- H. Upon approval of the cooperative team, the Classification Committee will place the team within a division based upon the combined enrollment of all of the schools involved. If a cooperative team wishes to petition their classification status, they may do so by following By-Law Article IV: Classification, Sect. 4: Petitioning. *Cooperative teams being added in the second year of a classification cycle will be classified solely on their combined enrollment, and afforded the ability to petition during the reclassification cycle.*
- I. The Classification Committee reserves the right to review the status of all cooperative teams.
- J. One (1) school administration (principal and athletic director) shall be designated as the NHIAA liaison for the cooperative team. The eligibility standards (beyond what currently is required by the NHIAA) for a student athlete participating in a cooperative team shall be agreed upon by the administrations involved.
- K. Every cooperative team will acknowledge a NO CUT POLICY on the application form.
- L. A denial of a cooperative proposal by a sports specific committee may be appealed to the Classification Committee. A cooperative proposal denied by the Classification Committee may be appealed to the NHIAA Council. All appeals must be submitted within 14 days in writing to the Executive Director. The decisions of the NHIAA Council in all matters pertaining to the approval or denial of cooperative proposals are final and are not subject to further appeal. The process is in lieu of the process contained in By-Law Article V, Sect. 1.B. (CM 11.2018)
- M. If the cooperative team application is approved, upon completion of the two (2) year period, the schools may reapply for the continuation of the cooperative team. There shall be no limit to the number of two (2) year periods for which schools can apply for approval of a cooperative team.
- N. Unified Sports: Cooperative team procedures may be waived for the creation of Unified Sports Teams. The NHIAA Executive Director is empowered to grant permission for schools to create and or renew cooperative Unified Sports Teams when such consolidation allows for schools to have Unified Teams who lack a large enough intellectually disabled population of student athletes to be able to meet the minimum requirements to field a team as defined in the Unified Sports By-Law and Policy and Procedures Manual. A school denied approval to establish or renew a cooperative team in Unified Sports by the Executive Director may appeal for approval to the Classification Committee. The decision of the Classification Committee is final and cannot be appealed. Cooperative teams shall be required to submit the renewal information to include the number of athletes and partners at each school. (CM 5.2015)

Sect. 10: Tournament Selection Requirement

- A. Less than or equal to 70% of schools in a division shall qualify for the tournament in all sports. (See each sport regarding their selection.) (CM 5.2015; 5.2016)
- B. **The wins/losses for all teams shall count and if a non-tournament team is seeded, they will be omitted and teams moved up to take the 70% allotted. (Requirement effective 2023-24.) (CM 5.20)**

# of Teams in a Division	70% Make Tournament #
5	3
6-7	4
8	5
9	6
10-11	7
12	8
13-14	9
15	10
16-17	11
18	12
19	13
20-21	14
22	15
23-24	16
25	17
26-27	18
28	19
29	20
30	21
41	28

Classification of Schools

Schools may compete with any classification according to that sport's specific by-laws, during the regular season but may qualify only in their own classification based on point rating for that competition. These enrollment numbers were compiled from information submitted by Principals of NHIAA member schools as of October 1, 2019.

DIV. I (900+) 20 Schools		DIV. II (525-899) 21 Schools		DIV. III (286-524) 23 Schools		DIV. IV (1-285) 25 Schools	
Pinkerton	3283	Hollis/Brookline	857	Kearsarge	508	Newmarket	280
Nashua South	1901	Oyster River	839	Gilford	489	Franklin	278
Nashua North	1735	Milford	833	Monadnock	479	Derryfield	269
Exeter	1649	Man. West	804	Fall Mountain	475	Farmington	253
Concord	1530	Merrimack Valley	795	Prospect Mountain	454	Epping	251
Bedford	1505	Kingswood	794	Winnisquam	448	Woodsville	218
Dover	1474	Bishop Guertin	793	Campbell	439	Littleton	217
Londonderry	1458	Pembroke	763	Somersworth	433	Moultonborough	168
Man. Memorial	1430	Souhegan	751	St. Thomas	402	Wilton-Lyndeborough	163
Keene	1382	Hanover	743	Newfound	391	Por. Christian at Dover	155
Man. Central	1331	Kennett	739	Berlin	378	Sunapee	155
Spaulding	1308	Con-Val	718	Conant	373	Pittsfield	152
Merrimack	1226	Coe-Brown	691	Hillsboro	367	Gorham	138
Salem	1175	Sanborn	651	Belmont	358	Hinsdale	136
Portsmouth	1119	Plymouth	644	Raymond	351	Nute	134
Alvirne	1115	Bow	638	White Mountains	348	Groveton	131
Timberlane	1100	John Stark	618	Mascoma	345	Profile	129
Winnacunnet	1087	Lebanon	606	Trinity	324	Concord Christian	112
Goffstown	1071	Pelham	605	Hopkinton	320	Colebrook	111
Windham	997	Stevens	555	Newport	316	Lisbon	107
		Laconia	542	Inter-Lakes	305	Lin-Wood	97
				Bishop Brady	304	Canaan, VT	74
				Mascenic	293	Holy Family	58
						Mt. Royal	47
						Pittsburg	32