

FORMAL FEE PROPOSAL: HIGH SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL OFFICIALS COMPENSATORY ADJUSTMENT

TO: NJSIAA Officials Fee Committee

FROM: New Jersey Volleyball Officials Chapters (North, Central, and South)

DATE: July 30, 2026

This formal proposal is submitted collectively by the New Jersey High School Volleyball Officials Chapters. We are pleased to acknowledge a relative agreement between the volleyball officials and the NJSIAA Officials Fee Committee on the vast majority of fee structures. This includes a modest adjustment on fees for Best-of-3 Varsity matches, Sub-Varsity matches, and Best-of-3 Line Judges.

However, a critical disagreement remains concerning two specific items: the fee for Best-of-5 Varsity matches, which the committee set a baseline of \$115.00 for the 2025-2027 seasons, and Best-of-5 Line Judges, which the committee has set a baseline pay of \$70.00. This proposal is broken down into these two main areas: fees for Best-of-3 matches and fees for Best-of-5 matches.

Best of 3 Fees Proposal 2027-2029

Current 2025-2027		Proposed 2027-29	
Bets of 3 - Varsity	\$88.00	Bets of 3 - Varsity	\$96.00
Best of 3 - Line Judge	\$62.00	Best of 3 - Line Judge	\$70.00
Best of 3 - Sub-varsity	\$62.00	Best of 3 - Sub-varsity	\$70.00

Best of 5 Fees 2027-2029

Currently, the fee for officiating a stand-alone Best-of-Five Varsity match is set at \$115.00, which was established without input from local officiating chapters or assignors. This rate fails to reflect the reality on the court: empirical data shows matches routinely exceed three sets, recent rule changes have extended match durations, and official shortages continue to strain resources statewide. For officials across New Jersey, compensation for these expanded match formats is a top priority.

While other high school sports have introduced shortened contest structures and mercy rules such as running clocks in basketball and soccer, volleyball has moved in the opposite direction by adopting a rigorous, college-equivalent Best-of-Five format at the varsity level. Expecting officials to absorb increased time commitments without corresponding compensation jeopardizes labor sustainability, retention, and, ultimately, contest quality.

To ensure labor sustainability, protect student-athlete safety, and maintain the integrity of New Jersey high school volleyball, we formally request that the fee for a stand-alone Best-of-Five Varsity match be adjusted to \$150.00 for the 2027–2029 cycle.

Given the unique demands of this format, we welcome a collaborative representation model to negotiate a fair resolution. Should an agreement not be reached, we request the opportunity to engage a mutually agreed-upon arbitrator to help mediate an equitable outcome for all parties.

Empirical Data Analysis: The Extended-Match Reality

Tournament tracking data demonstrates directly that in high-stakes varsity play, matches are highly competitive and routinely extend to four or five sets.

A. Girls' Volleyball Tournament Longitudinal Data (2025-26 Season)

- 33.57% of all 2025-26 tournament matches extended to 4 or 5 sets
 - 19.23% required 4 sets; 14.34% went to a full 5 sets
- 28.57% of State Semifinals and Finals matches required a 5th set to determine a winner,

B. Boys' Volleyball Tournament Longitudinal Data (2025–2026)

- 37.10% of all tournament matches required 4 or 5 sets (29.84% required 4 sets; 7.26% required 5 sets)
- 58.34% of matches required 4 or 5 sets in the State Semifinals and Finals

Match Duration Inflation & The 2025 Rule Change

- **The 2025 Ball Handling Rule Mandate:** Anecdotal information from sources at all levels of volleyball offers compelling evidence that the implementation of the new relaxed ball-handling rule (which eliminates many traditional double-contact whistles to promote continuous play) has extended rallies significantly. This change has lengthened sets by 8 to 15 minutes each. Over a 4- or 5-set match, this adjustment adds 30 to 60 minutes of continuous, live-action labor to a single match.
- In previous years, the NJSIAA Group Finals have been scheduled with 90-minute intervals to accommodate the best-of-three format. This past year, all matches were scheduled at 120-minute intervals, which proved insufficient time in some instances. An example would be the 2026 boys finals when the Group 1 match went more than two hours, and the Group 3 finals were delayed by at least 30 minutes
- **Proposed Sub-Varsity Format Adjustment:** To further mitigate these operational delays and ease late-night facility and travel demands, we recommend adopting a sub-varsity match format guideline:

In all sub-varsity interscholastic volleyball contests, when a match is scheduled to precede or follow a best-of-five Varsity match, the third set of the sub-varsity match shall be played to 15 points (win by 2 points, no cap) rather than 25 points. This aligns sub-varsity play with standard NFHS options used in other states."

Rationale: This adjustment directly addresses transportation logistics, bus driver availability, and extended facility/time commitments faced by coaches, athletes, and officials when best-of-five varsity matches run long, without compromising the developmental athletic experience for sub-varsity players.

Labor Supply Realities & The Risk of Severe Referee Shortages

Imposing a sub-market fee structure without the consent of officiating chapters threatens the infrastructure of high school volleyball in New Jersey:

1. **Alternative Market Pressures:** College volleyball in and around New Jersey offers an alternate setting for officials. All college matches, both men and women, are the best-of-five format. In the 2026-2027 seasons, Division 3 matches will pay R1 & R2 \$185.00 per match, and Junior Colleges will pay \$175.00 per match. The rates are currently being negotiated for the 2027-28 season and will likely increase further.
2. **Independent Contractor status** - NJSIAA officials are independent contractors. As such, they can set the times and parameters under which they choose to work. **As evidenced in this past boys' tournament, there was a severe shortage of officials, which left 17 first-round matches with only one official.** Chapter evidence across the state indicates that the fee was a primary driver in this lack of participation by officials.
3. **Current pay scales** - The central group has an agreement with their conferences for \$135 per official for a best-of-5 match in 2026. The Skylands Conference has determined that its pay scale for a best-of-5 match will also be \$135 per official this year. Multiple county/conference tournaments - Bergen, Morris, Somerset - have embraced fee schedules that range from \$135 to \$150 while others have opted to keep the best-of-three format to help ensure the appropriate staffing levels throughout their tournaments.

Best of 5 Fees Proposal 2027-2029

Current 2025-2027		Proposed 2027-29	
Bets of 5 - Varsity	\$115.00	Best of 5 - Varsity	\$150.00
Best of 5 - Line Judge	\$70.00	Best of 5 - Line Judge	\$100.00

We stand ready to meet with the committee to review the source data and find a collaborative path forward that respects the officials, the schools, and the student-athletes we serve.

Should you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the topics included in this memo, please reach out to any of the chapter presidents below for clarification.

Respectfully submitted,

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