

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, 2025 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, esports, 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. Divisional Alignment Appeals may only take place at the beginning of the alignment cycle. (CM5.25)
- C. The school must present its case to the relevant sport committee.
- D. The sport committee will then make its recommendation to the Executive Director.
- E. The Executive Director will present his/her recommendation to the Classification Committee.
- F. 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 XXXIX: 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 5.13) 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.

- A. 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 ½ 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

B. 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 XXI: 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 5.17): 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. Submission of written minutes shall be included in the request.

- 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. Classification of Cooperative Teams:

- 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.*
- If a cooperative team is dissolved in the second year of a classification cycle, the Classification Committee will not reclassify the team(s). It must be understood that entering into a cooperative agreement is for the full two-year classification cycle, or, in the case of a mid-cycle approval, for the remaining year of the classification cycle. (CM 5.23)

- 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 11.18)

- 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 5.15)

Sect. 10: Tournament Selection Requirement

- A. Less than or equal to 70% of teams in a division shall qualify for the tournament in all sports. (See each sport regarding their selection.) (CM 5.15; 5.16)
- 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 2022-23.) (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, 2025.

DIV. I (850+) 20 Schools		DIV. II (550-849) 17 Schools		DIV. III (281-549) 23 Schools		DIV. IV (1-280) 29 Schools	
Pinkerton	2979	Oyster River	796	Laconia	543	Franklin	279
Nashua South	1697	Bishop Guertin	767	Kearsarge	485	Inter-Lakes	279
Nashua North	1545	Man. West	756	Monadnock	475	Derryfield	270
Dover	1423	Kingswood	727	Pelham	466	Newmarket	266
Bedford	1367	Pembroke	718	Gilford	442	Mascenic	263
Spaulding	1346	Merrimack Valley	715	Sanborn	433	Newport	263
Man. Memorial	1345	Hollis/Brookline	713	Stevens	432	Bishop Brady	227
Concord	1329	Souhegan	709	Fall Mountain	430	Epping	225
Exeter	1329	Hanover	693	Somersworth	411	Farmington	225
Keene	1263	John Stark	657	Prospect Mountain	408	Woodsville	221
Londonderry	1219	Coe-Brown	650	Winnisquam	372	Portsmouth Christian	166
Man. Central	1106	Plymouth	643	Newfound	368	Littleton	161
Salem	1069	Lebanon	642	Belmont	347	Nute	157
Goffstown	1032	Bow	639	Trinity	345	Hinsdale	156
Merrimack	1013	Milford	613	St. Thomas	341	Moultonborough	155
Winnacunnet	988	Kennett	612	Hillsboro-Deering	340	Wilton-Lyndeborough	153
Portsmouth	983	Con-Val	603	Campbell	337	Sunapee	150
Alvirne	955			White Mountains	327	Gorham	142
Timberlane	934			Raymond	326	Profile	136
Windham	884			Berlin	324	Pittsfield	135
				Mascoma	317	Concord Christian	120
				Hopkinton	309	Groveton	111
				Conant	307	Colebrook	89
						Lisbon	83
						Holy Family	75
						Lin-Wood	67
						Mount Royal	48
						Canaan, VT	46
						Pittsburg	27