2026 Football Playoff Seeding Process

The CIF San Diego Section 11-Man Football Playoffs shall be conducted in seven divisions, with 8-Player Football being conducted in one division (Division VI). All divisions, with the exception of the Open (four teams), Division I (Eight Teams), Division V (Sixteen Teams), Division 5-AA (eight teams) & Division VI (Four Teams), will be 12-team brackets.

Individual schools will be evaluated and placed into divisions on a yearly basis utilizing a formula based entirely on current regular season results. Final rankings, and divisional placements, will be determined and released at the end of the current regular season. Seeding of all playoff brackets in each division will follow the final rankings in that division, regardless of league affiliation or league finish.

Each league will have one Automatic Qualifier (AQ), the league champion. In the event of a tie for the league championship, the conference tiebreaker will be used to determine which team receives the AQ as the league champion. League champions are guaranteed admission into the playoffs but are not guaranteed a home game.

The Commissioner's Office and Advisory Committee will take the end of regular season rankings and place teams in divisions based on their ranking in

the following order:

Teams 1-4 = Open Division

Teams 5-12 = Division 1

Teams 13-24 = Division 2

Teams 25-36 = Division 3

Teams 37-48 – Division 4

Teams 49-64 = Division 5

There are only four instances where seeding will deviate from the rankings. One, if teams that opted into Division 5AA are ranked in the top 64, they will not be included in the bracket. In that instance each team ranked after the Division 5AA team will move up one spot to complete the bracket. The second instance is if a league champion is not in the bracket based on their ranking. In that case the league champion will replace the lowest ranked, non-league Champion. The Third would be if the higher ranked team lost to the team immediately behind them in the rankings. In these cases the lower seeded team would move up one position and the higher ranked team would move down one position. Teams can only move one position in the final rankings. This step will be taken prior to setting the Final 1 - 64 order of playoff teams. The fourth would be if a Team's End of Regular Season Ranking placed them in a Division/Playoff Bracket more than 1 "Playoff Pool" down from their

assigned Division/Playoff Pool, they would be placed as the last seeded team in the Division in which they are permitted to participate in for that year's playoffs. The team that is displaced would move down to the #1 seed in the next Division/Playoff Bracket.

> *For example any team currently assigned to "Playoff Pool" #1, whose end of season ranking puts them at number 38 in the Section, would be placed as the #12 seed in the Division 2 Playoff Bracket. The team it displaces would move down to the #1 Seed in Division 3.*