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2016 NJSIAA Football playoff brackets

Football

Eligibility hearing set to determine Wayne Hills' playoff fate, bracket seeds



Wayne Hills takes to the field for Friday night's high school football showdown at Wayne Valley. 10/28/2016 (Steve Hockstein | For NJ Advance Media)

Steve Hockstein | For NJ Advance Media

1 / 24

By Patrick Lanni and Matthew Stanymyre | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com on November 11, 2016 3:39 PM, updated November 11, 2016 4:34 PM

Wayne Hills' postseason fate is still in limbo — and for that matter, so is the whole bracket.

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The next step in a complex and unprecedented case will take place Tuesday at 10 a.m. when the NJSIAA holds an eligibility hearing at its Robbinsville headquarters to determine whether or not the three players in question did or did not violate the organization's transfer rule.

If the players are found to be ineligible, the NJSIAA said that it will act upon the violations.

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"Pending the outcome of this hearing, tournament seeding and schedules may once again be modified," NJSIAA Executive Director Steve Timko said in a statement Friday. "All schools seeded in the group tournament have been notified about the potential for schedule changes.

"While these ongoing revisions to the tournament schedule are unfortunate, the NJSIAA has been obliged to act, based on the initial information shared by the school district," Timko continued.

Put another way, the NJSIAA may still reinstate the tournament disqualification and nix Wayne Hills' pursuit of a ninth state title.

The hearing and the wholesale restructuring of the North 1, Group 4 bracket come after the powerhouse football program was **stunningly granted a stay** by Acting Education Commissioner Kimberly Harrington late Thursday in response to an emergency appeal that challenged the NJSIAA's decision to **disqualify the team** from the playoffs.

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The stay was put in place to give the three players in question — brothers Hunter, Tyler and Jaaron Hayek — "due process" to prove their residency situation.

Darren Del Sardo, an attorney representing the Hayek family, said this week "the NJSIAA ignored its own constitution and bylaws" by ruling his clients ineligible more than a year after their transfers from St. Joseph (Mont.) to Wayne Hills in October of 2015.

"These kids are eligible," Del Sardo said. "They actually have the eligibility forms that were submitted back in 2015. There's never been any question until the eve of a playoff game. There's nothing to substantiate any of it. They're residents in Wayne these kids."

After Thursday's ruling, according to the NJSIAA, Wayne Hills was placed back into the North Jersey, Section 1, Group 4 playoff at its original seed, atop the bracket, creating upheaval for the other teams in the section. Wayne Hills will face the winner

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of Monday's play-in game between Roxbury and Northern Highlands.

On Friday, NJSIAA spokesperson Michael Cherenson clarified the seeding possibilities — including one important distinction — the game between Roxbury and Northern Highlands is not a play-in game, and its outcome is, essentially, meaningless to the playoff bracket.

If Wayne Hills is allowed to compete in the tournament, it will be the top seed and Roxbury will be the eighth seed. However, if Wayne Hills is ineligible, all seeds will bump up and Roxbury will be seven and Northern Highlands will be the eight.

"The coaches are all in agreement and everything was done mutual consent and approval," Cherenson said. "Everybody is on the same page."

"We're in uncharted territory here for sure," said Roxbury athletic director Stuart Mason. "We weren't happy to be in a play-in game because our team earned the right to be in. The latest decision was created with empathy on all sides. It's the best solution right now."

All first round games in the section will be played next weekend and the semifinals have been moved to the weekend after Thanksgiving.

Tuesday's hearing will now determine — perhaps once and for all — how the North 1, Group 4 section will unfold.

"The NJSIAA has notified attorneys for the Wayne Township Public Schools and the family of those players whose eligibility is in question that the association will convene a hearing ... consisting of five members of the NJSIAA Executive Committee," Timko said in the statement Friday. "The committee will determine eligibility status providing due process as required by the acting commissioner. Parties are entitled to be represented by counsel, all witnesses will be sworn, and the right of cross-examination will be provided."

Patrick Lanni may be reached at planni@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter @PatLanniHS. Find NJ.com on Facebook.

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FootballNJ

2 days ago

reports from neighbors in the area said that the apartment has had "lots" of activity this weekend.

1 Like Reply



inthegame3

2 days ago

@FootballNJ I figured there would be if the stories are true about the residence.

Like Reply



fb401402

3 days ago

Hope no one gets hurt in that game - especially any kids from Roxbury.

Like Reply



calpal

3 days ago

All on the same page? NJSIAA rep states that the game between Roxbury and Northern Highlands is not a play in game and essentially is meaningless. Roxbury AD states - we are happy to be in a play in game. Also, Why wait until Tuesday - why not Monday.

Like Reply



Nj sport

3 days ago

No it says we weren't happy

Like Reply



calpal

3 days ago

@Nj sport Thanks - first order of business today - eye dr. appointment

Like Reply



FootballNJ

3 days ago

It's kind of weird how they actually believe they live there. We understand their is video of them living in the other residence. Why the whole conference suffers because of the actions of the Wayne team is a travesty to hundreds of kids, their families, the school administrations as well as the many two sport athletes that now will be delayed going into winter sports.

By allowing this stay, it doesn't change the decision of the NJSIAA... it just slightly delays the inevitable of WH being ousted. ..for the rest of us whose teams want to play without the BS, let's go back to the game we love.

1 Like Reply



FootballNJ

3 days ago

It's kind of weird how they actually believe they live there. We understand their is video of them living in the other residence.

Like Reply



Tommy Football

3 days ago

Ken Palzewski started all this the wayne valley prinicipal who was the hills principal whose son was the qb at hills who was benched for Tommy Skiba. So now he has a vendetta.

Like Reply



upogmahone

3 days ago

@Tommy Football Doesn't matter who blew the whistle. If they cheated they cheated, no matter who started it.

2 Like Reply



Tommy Football

3 days ago

But they didn't cheat, which is why it was overturned and hills was put back into the playoffs. Now a hearing will take place and further proof will be provided that the kids are indeed Wayne residents.

Like Reply



charlielab

3 days ago

TommyBoy is obviously someone's little brother on the team. Failing to grasp that nothing was overturned and the order was just stayed to allow due process shows the level of intelligence. This case is all about the transfer process and the 30 day sit requirement. Residing in Wayne is not the point

1 Like Reply



MarkJ25

3 days ago

Just ignore him the way he's ignoring the facts.

1 Like Reply



nvrhsot

7 hours ago

@Tommy Football Just a minute. If the families did not cheat, why the hearing?

This crap goes on all the time. Families shop for schools just because they want their kids to be on a winning team.

Like Reply



nvrhsot

8 hours ago

@Tommy Football quite a conspiracy

Like Reply



johnwadd

3 days ago

It's uncharted territory - not uncharted.

Like Reply

This comment has been deleted



West Easterly

3 days ago

@Tommy Football Delusional. Hills self-reported - you know what that means right?

1 Like Reply

This comment has been deleted



West Easterly

3 days ago

@Tommy Football pay attention. He supported hills in the appeal. Hills AD is behind the internal investigation. Your conspiracy theories are laughable - bribed? Get a grip - cheaters got caught and outed by their own administration.

1 Like Reply



UF

3 days ago

@Tommy Football "Bribed?" With what? He was making \$157k at Hoboken. Probably at around \$175k in Wayne.

Like Reply

West Easterly

3 days ago



@Tommy Football I voted for Trump and you obviously are okay with cheating, at least when it comes to Hills. I wonder why that is?

Like Reply



PrivateJoker

3 days ago

@Tommy Football You got caught, take it like a man for a change.

Like Reply

This comment has been deleted



PrivateJoker

3 days ago

@Tommy Football You obviously live and die by high school football. You know they don't live in Wayne, just a B.S. apartment scam. They live in Woodland Park. Nice try.

1 Like Reply



Tommy Football

3 days ago

They've been going to Wayne hills and live in Wayne since 2015 according to the board of education.

Like Reply



West Easterly

3 days ago

@Tommy Football They enrolled in October of 2015 and started renting the apt at the same time. They left St Joes because of playing time and still live in Woodland Park. You are learning so much today.

1 Like Reply



Tommy Football

3 days ago

Thanks for proving my point that they live in an apartment in wayne since October 2015.

Like Reply



West Easterly

3 days ago

@Tommy Football They didn't move and they don't live in the apartment. You cannot rent an apt to play football in a new school district - that's the rule around athletic advantage. Put your google skills to work and find the NJSIAA rules before you spout off.

1 Like Reply



Tommy Football

3 days ago

Why are you saying they don't live there?

I'm not quite understanding that

Like Reply



West Easterly

3 days ago

VARSAITY ACES UPDATE: The drama continues. Roxbury/Northern Highlands NOT a play-in game. Everyone waiting on Hills' hearing Tues

Like Reply

This comment has been deleted



West Easterly

3 days ago

@Tommy Football Old news. Over 6 years ago and Timko is still there. I'm no fan of the NJSIAA but don't think for a minute Hills aren't cheaters.

2 Like Reply



njfan01

3 days ago

I feel bad for the other 7, and now 8, teams involved. These teams have had to get ready for multiple opponents in a 3 day period. What does a hearing on Tuesday do to the "play-in" game on Monday? Why does Roxbury have to play in this made up game if it had qualified in the top 8 fair and square? And no one is talking about how Northern Highlands could potentially play 13 games in they make it to the championship, doubtful, but a slight slight chance. These 8 teams should be playing this weekend now have to sit and wait. What happens if this Rox/NH game is played on Monday and WH is ruled ineligible on Tuesday? WH has created a huge mess...WH is the one that self-reported the issue. If they did nothing wrong as their administration and lawyers are saying, then why self-report this to begin with? The blame all lies with them.

Like Reply



PrivateJoker

3 days ago

@njfan01 I'm sure they self reported it because they were told that if they didn't the group that discovered the violation would have reported it instead.

1 Like Reply



West Easterly

3 days ago

@PrivateJoker @njfan01 It was self-reported by the Hills principal and new AD who conducted the investigation. See my other comment below.

1 Like Reply



mercfan

3 days ago

NJSIAA is an independent agency they do not report up to the Department of Education. Based on past experience the NJSIAA is not going to overturn their decision. The only way this gets overturned if the family can prove to a court that they submitted valid paper work on time.

It's weird that they moved into the district in October 2015 and the issue of a valid Change of Address is coming up this year. Unless the original paperwork was forged and the school just discovered it this month.

Like Reply



PrivateJoker

3 days ago

All the attorney keeps saying is that they have the paperwork. So what, the paperwork is a lie. The family lives in Woodland Park. Dad wasn't happy with the playing time the twins were getting at St. Joe's so he goes ahead and rents an apartment (which by the way is in a complex managed by a WH coach) and says the kids are living there with him now. Now dad is claiming he and his wife split and the kids for some reason get pulled out of their home and are living with him in a small apartment? Come on. Nobody has been living in the apartment and I think a quick conversation with neighbors at both locations will confirm that.

4 Like Reply



West Easterly

3 days ago

@PrivateJoker has every detail correct. And the reason this is coming up now is that the AD who signed off on the transfer in October 2015 is gone and the new AD is the one who started the investigation.

4 Like Reply



upogmahone

3 days ago

@West Easterly @PrivateJoker kudos to the new AD

2 Like Reply

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