

WTHJ

QUARTERLY ISSUES

1Q - 2016

Final N.J. snowfall totals from monster blizzard of 2016



By [Len Mellisurgo](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

[Email the author](#) | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on January 24, 2016 at 5:41 PM, updated January 25, 2016 at 9:41 AM

With just a little more snow, four communities in northern New Jersey could have made history by topping an elusive record that has stood for 117 years.

Bernards Township, Long Valley, Succasunna and Wharton were each blanketed with 30 inches of snow during the **historic East Coast blizzard** that battered New Jersey and other states along the Atlantic coast this weekend.

That's the highest number on the final list of snowfall accumulations across the Garden State released Sunday afternoon by the National Weather Service. The snowfall totals are technically unofficial until they go through a verification process and get certified by the weather service.



Why (almost) no one predicted monster blizzard's big surprise

But if these numbers hold up, all those massive piles of snow on the streets of Morris and Somerset counties would still be several inches short of the state's all-time snowfall record — 34 inches, which fell in the resort city of Cape May way back in 1899, according to records compiled by New Jersey State Climatologist David Robinson at Rutgers University.

Some other places that ended up with massive amounts of snow this weekend are **Whitehouse Station, with 29.6 inches**, Madison, with 29, and Netcong, also with 29.

FINAL SNOWFALL TOTALS

To find out how much snow fell in your area, click the colored markers closest to your town. To zoom in on your area, click the + sign at the bottom of the map.

Note: These are unofficial totals reported by the National Weather Service and the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network. Not every town in the state is included below, because snow is not measured by trained weather spotters in every town.

Note: The National Weather Service was unable to confirm an earlier snowfall report of 33 inches in Morris Plains, so when it released its list of final numbers late Sunday afternoon, Morris Plains was not included.

*Len Melisurgo may be reached at LMelisurgo@njadvancemedia.com. Follow him on Twitter [@LensReality](#). Find NJ.com on **Facebook**.*

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Where did January rank in N.J. snow history?



By [Len Melisurgo](#) | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

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on February 02, 2016 at 8:03 AM, updated February 02, 2016 at 12:32 PM

Before the **big blizzard of 2016** struck, New Jersey was on the verge of having one of its **least snowy Januarys** on record.

All it took was one big snowstorm to reverse that scenario.

January 2016 turned out to be the seventh snowiest January by inch count in the Garden State, according to records compiled by the office of New Jersey State Climatologist David Robinson at Rutgers University.



Flood watch issued for Wednesday

Thanks to the blizzard, the statewide snowfall average last month was 20 inches, Robinson said. Broken down by region: **North Jersey** had 20.4 inches, **Central Jersey** had 23.1 inches and **South Jersey** picked up 18.2.

The most snow ever recorded in January in North Jersey was 36.6 inches, back in 1925, while the most in Central Jersey was 30.8 inches, in 2011, and the most in South Jersey was 24.1 inches, in 1918, Robinson's records show. The biggest statewide average in January was 23.1 inches, in 2011, followed by 21.9 inches, **in 1996** and 1905.

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Updated N.J. snowfall totals as of Sunday morning



By [Myles Ma](#) | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

[Email the author](#) | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on January 24, 2016 at 6:30 AM, updated January 24, 2016 at 7:36 PM

UPDATE: Final numbers are in. See them here.

The blizzard of 2016 left more than 30 inches of snow in some areas, according to the latest snowfall totals compiled by the National Weather Service.

The snow was **expected to stop by sunrise Sunday morning**, so many of the totals compiled overnight may be final. Morris Plains looks like an early leader, with 33 inches measured as of 10:30 p.m. Saturday night.

The Morris County community wasn't too much of an outlier: Newark Airport and parts of Hunterdon County saw nearly as much.

Now to dig out of it.

The **potentially record-setting** storm caused **power outages, roof collapses, scores of car crashes and thousands of flight cancellations.**



Final N.J. snowfall totals from monster blizzard of 2016

Note: These are unofficial totals reported by the National Weather Service and the Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network. Not every town across the state is included in this list and some towns are reported less frequently.

ATLANTIC COUNTY

- Atlantic City International Airport – 13.4 inches as of 1 a.m.

BERGEN COUNTY

- Allendale — 21.0 inches as of 9:47 p.m.
- Franklin Lakes - 25.3 inches as of 8:30 p.m.
- Lyndhurst — 22 inches as of 9:55 p.m.
- Ridgewood — 18 inches as of 10 p.m.
- Tenafly - 24 inches as of 10:05 p.m.

MURKIN COUNTY

- Florence – 22.5 inches as of 3:30 a.m.
- Mount Holly - 20.5 inches as of 1 a.m.
- Mount Laurel – 18 inches as of 9:30 p.m.

CAMDEN COUNTY

- Bellmawr – 20 inches as of 3:40 a.m.
- Gloucester City – 20 inches as of 3 a.m.
- Gloucester Twp. - 18 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Lindenwold - 13.9 inches as of 11 p.m.
- Berlin - 13 inches as of 9:45 p.m.

CAPE MAY COUNTY

- Wildwood Crest - 9.8 inches as of 7:15 a.m.
- Woodbine - 7.8 inches as of 7 a.m.
- Cape May - 7 inches as of 7 a.m.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY

- Millville – 10.5 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Newport – 13.5 inches as of 10 p.m.
- Upper Deerfield – 11.2 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Vineland - 13 inches as of 9:45 p.m.

ESSEX COUNTY

- Cedar Grove – 19.4 inches as of 11 p.m.
- Millburn - 23.5 inches as of 9:15 p.m.
- Newark Airport – 28.1 inches as of 10 p.m. (*an unofficial record*)
- West Orange - 21 inches as of 10:30 p.m.

GLOUCESTER COUNTY

- Franklinville – 13 inches as of 9:30 p.m.
- Williamstown - 14.3 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Turnersville - 13 inches as of 9:30 p.m.

HUDSON COUNTY

- Harrison - 23 inches as of 9:30 p.m.
- Hoboken - 26 inches as of 10:05 p.m.
- Kearny – 26.5 inches as of 12:55 a.m.
- North Bergen – 26.3 inches as of 11 p.m.

HUNTERDON COUNTY

- Flemington - 28.3 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Whitehouse – 29.6 inches as of 8 p.m.
- Whitehouse Station - 26.6 inches as of 8:45 p.m.

MERCER COUNTY

- Ewing - 18.5 inches as of 12:45 a.m.
- Hamilton Township - 20 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Hopewell - 23 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Lawrenceville - 22.4 inches as of 10 p.m.
- Pennington - 20.5 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Princeton - 22 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Robbinsville - 16 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Trenton - 22 inches as of 9:45 p.m.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY

- Cheesequake - 16 inches as of 11 p.m.
- Cranbury 17.1 inches as of 10 p.m.
- East Brunswick - 24 inches as of 8 p.m.
- Metuchen - 27.7 inches as of 9:30 p.m.
- Monroe - 23 inches as of 8 p.m.
- Perth Amboy - 23 inches as of 8 p.m.
- South Plainfield - 19 inches as of 8 p.m.

MONMOUTH COUNTY

- Aberdeen Township - 18 inches as of 8 p.m.
- Howell Township - 26.5 inches as of 12 a.m.
- Manalapan - 22 inches as of 10:30 p.m.
- Millstone Township - 21.8 inches as of 2 a.m.

MORRIS COUNTY

- Butler - 22.5 inches as of 8:05 p.m.
- Morris Plains - 33 inches as of 10:30 p.m.
- Marcella - 18 inches as of 9:22 p.m.

Note: The National Weather Service was unable to confirm the snowfall report of 33 inches in Morris Plains, so when it released its list of final numbers late Sunday afternoon, Morris Plains was not included.

OCEAN COUNTY

- Bayville - 15 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Brick - 20 inches as of 10:45 p.m.
- Manahawkin - 13.5 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Toms River - 17 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Whiting - 18.5 inches as of 9:45 p.m.

PASSAIC COUNTY

- Bloomingdale - 22.6 inches as of 9:45 p.m.
- Haskell - 19.5 inches as of 8 p.m.
- Ringwood - 21.7 inches as of 11:15 p.m.
- Wayne - 17 inches as of 8 p.m.

WALEM COUNTY

- Elmer - 12 inches as of 9:45 p.m.

SOMERSET COUNTY

- Bridgewater – 24.5 inches as of 11 p.m.
- Basking Ridge – 20 inches as of 10:30 p.m.
- Kingston – 18.5 inches as of 9:45 p.m.

SUSSEX COUNTY

- Vernon – 14 inches as of 8:25 p.m.

UNION COUNTY

- Elizabeth – 27.9 inches as of 9:15 p.m.
- Roselle Park – 27.5 inches as of 10 p.m.
- Westfield – 24.0 inches as of 10:03 p.m.

WARREN COUNTY

- Allamuchy - 20 inches as of 9:22 p.m.
- Hackettstown - 22 inches as of 9 p.m.

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Is winter threat over after February snow dud?



By [Len Melisurgo](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

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on February 28, 2016 at 7:16 AM, updated March 01, 2016 at 3:40 PM

With only one day remaining and **no big snowstorms brewing in the forecast**, February is going to turn out to be a big snowfall dud for New Jersey.

Statistics show most areas of the Garden State have gotten only four to five inches of snow this entire month — three to four inches below the normal statewide accumulation of 8.1 inches — and February is usually the snowiest month of the year.

In fact, this entire winter's snowfall total to date would be far below normal had it not been for the big blizzard in January. That storm erased the snowfall deficits New Jersey had in December and February.

Is winter finished with us?

Although the meteorological winter comes to a close on Monday (it runs from Dec. 1 through the end of February), the astronomical winter still has three weeks left. With only a scant amount of snow this entire month and **warm temperatures on tap later this weekend** and early next week, does that mean New Jerseyans can pack up their snow shovels and put their snow blowers into storage?

"I wouldn't say we're definitely free and clear yet. Any time in March there's still a possibility of getting significant snow," said Al Cope, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service's regional office in Mount Holly. "We're not out of the woods yet in terms of snow."

Fellow meteorologist Sarah Johnson agrees.

"It's certainly possible we can still get more wintry weather," she said. "You can still get snowstorms well into the meteorological spring."

In the past, New Jersey has been hit with significant snowstorms in March, and even some light accumulations as late as April. Back in 1914, the state received 22.7 inches of snow in March, the most ever recorded during that month, according to data compiled by New Jersey State Climatologist David Robinson at Rutgers University.

Just last year, New Jersey was blanketed by **11.7 inches of snow in March**, more than seven inches above the normal statewide average of 4.3 inches for the month.

During the second week of March in 1993, New Jersey was hit with 10 to 20 inches of snow during a powerful winter storm, records from the National Climatic Data Center show. In March 1958, a big snowstorm dumped 10 to 20 inches of snow across most of New Jersey, with some pockets of 20 to 30 inches. Another storm dropped similar amounts of snow in March 1958.

And don't forget the "**Great Blizzard of '88**," which clobbered New Jersey, New York and most of the northeastern United States with huge amounts of snow during the second week of March in 1888. That was one of the most damaging blizzards in U.S. history.

Some months down, some months up

For New Jersey, the three-month meteorological winter of 2015 to 2016 got off to a dismal start in terms of snow. Most parts of the state got either no snow at all or just a dusting in December, when **temperatures were soaring** and daily record highs were being broken in droves.

Snowfall in January was on the light side — until **the monster blizzard hit** near the end of the month, dumping a solid foot to two feet of snow over most of the Garden State and up to 30 inches in some spots. That was followed by a February sprinkled with several light dustings of snow and **two big storm systems** that ended up dumping heavy rain instead of snow.

The sparse snowfall in December and February was offset by the huge snowfall in January, pushing most of New Jersey above its normal snowfall accumulations during those three months combined.

"A lot of places got at or above their average annual snowfall with the one blizzard," Johnson said. "That happens some seasons. You can get one or two blockbuster snows and be at or above average for the year."

Here's a look at how much snow has fallen so far this season in three cities in different regions of the state.

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Thousands in N.J. without power after storm; flooding still possible in areas



By **Craig McCarthy** | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

[Email the author](#) | [Follow on Twitter](#)

on February 25, 2016 at 7:05 AM, updated February 25, 2016 at 3:54 PM

In the wake of an unusual February storm that brought **heavy rains throughout New Jersey**, the National Weather Service warns that a number of rivers and creeks are running high Thursday, which may lead to possible flooding in some area of the state.

A flood warning has been issued for the areas around the Rockaway River in Morris County with the river approaching its flood stage until Friday morning or until the warning is cancelled, according to the NWS. The forecast calls for the river to rise above its flood stage by this evening but to recede by midnight.

A flood warning has also been issued for Somerset County, effective through 4:15 p.m. Thursday, because streams and creeks in that region are running high and some are now over their flood stage, the National Weather Service said. The warning will continue "until enough water drains downstream and no longer poses a threat to residents in the area."

The weather service is warning drivers not to drive vehicles into areas where water covers the road.

"The water depth may be too great to allow your car to cross safely," the weather service said in its flood warning. "Move to higher ground."



N.J. residents document destructive storm on social media (PHOTOS, VIDEO)

A flood warning was issued for Somerset and Mercer counties until 10:15 a.m. with several creeks and streams at or above their flood stage including the Millstone River in Somerset County. Additional counties in North Jersey, Essex, Union, Passaic and Bergen, were under a flood advisory until 7 a.m.

While the likelihood of more weather similar to Wednesday night is low, the NWS expects scattered wind gust up to 45 mph through the day.

Thousands of homes in New Jersey, mainly in South Jersey, are still without power Thursday still **after strong winds swept through the area** overnight bringing down tree branches and power lines.





Neptune Township PD
@NeptunePolice

Follow

A large tree fell into a home on Jeanne Dr. Fallen branches and downed wires continue to be reported around town.

11:37 PM - 24 Feb 2016

18 11



Action News on 6abc
@6abc

Follow

Tree falls through day care roof in Vineland, NJ

6abc.cm/24qqiga

10:59 PM - 24 Feb 2016

5 8

A handful of schools had delayed openings due to the power loss. Here are the closures for **Monmouth and Ocean counties**. There are no school delays in **Bergen County**, however a few hundred are without power.

Fewer than 90 homes in Passaic County have power loss but the **Pequannock River is just below its flood stage**.

Flooding on a few roads in Union County may cause delays Thursday morning. The same **goes for Middlesex County**, specifically the East Brunswick area.

A few hundred **are without power** in Morris County. There are road closures at **10 locations in Somerset County** due to flooding and downed power lines.

As of 9 a.m. less than 100 **homes were without power** in Essex County.

The storm, which triggered tornado watches in 16 counties across the state, caused flight delays and lead to tractor trailer restrictions on many Garden State bridges.

There a slight chance of showers continuing into the abnormally warm Thursday. It is currently 50 degrees throughout the state but by 5 p.m. forecasts call for the temperature to drop into the lower 40s.

It will be cloudy and windy all day. Winds will continue into the night with gusts up to 28 mph. Lows will be in in the upper 20s but the windchill will make it teens at times.

Friday is shaping up to be a calm but cool end of the week. It will still be a bit blustery but forecasts call for a sunny day with highs in the upper 30s. Wind are expected to start to die down overnight.

The weekend is looking sunny with highs breaking into the 40s on Saturday and pushing into the 60s in some areas.

Reporter Len Melisurgo contributed to this report.

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More Philadelphia Weather

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Tornado watch issued for 16 N.J. counties as powerful storms move in



By [Len Melisurgo](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

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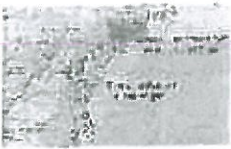
on February 24, 2016 at 4:04 PM, updated February 24, 2016 at 11:18 PM

Strong thunderstorms will be moving across New Jersey and parts of Pennsylvania this evening, and some have the potential to spawn a tornado, the National Weather Service said Wednesday afternoon.

The weather service has issued a tornado watch for Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Cape May, Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer and Salem counties in New Jersey, as well as several counties in southeastern Pennsylvania in the Philadelphia region.

UPDATE: As of 7:30 p.m., the tornado watch has been expanded. It now includes Monmouth, Middlesex, Ocean, Somerset, Hunterdon, Morris, Warren and Sussex counties, and it is now effective until 1 a.m. Thursday.

In addition, a flash-flood warning has been issued for parts of Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Somerset and Sussex counties, effective through 2:30 a.m. Thursday. This warning also applies to Bucks County in southeastern Pennsylvania.



Downed trees, power outages as storm blows through N.J.

At 10:30 p.m., a strong batch of thunderstorms was moving over those areas of New Jersey and Pennsylvania, rapidly dumping between 1 and 1.5 inches of rain, the weather service said. Combined with the heavy rain that fell earlier in the day, the ground is badly saturated, so the additional rain will cause excessive runoff that could quickly flood streets in some areas.

A tornado watch means tornadoes are possible in or near those counties. A tornado warning would be issued only if a funnel cloud was spotted by someone on the ground or on weather radar.

With winds blowing at different speeds or in different directions in the atmosphere, strong updrafts could occur during regular thunderstorms, "and that could lead to the formation of a tornado," said Lance Franck, a meteorologist at the weather service's regional office in Mount Holly.

Before the tornado watch was issued, the weather service said New Jersey could be hit with **severe thunderstorms Wednesday evening**, and wind gusts could go as high as 50 mph, particularly in coastal areas.

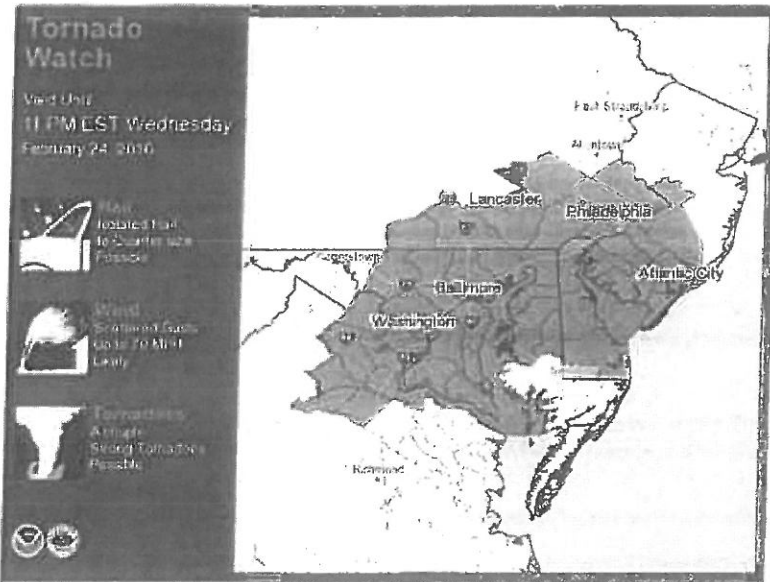
A wind advisory is in effect for Atlantic, Cape May, Monmouth and Ocean counties from 6 p.m. to midnight.

Some parts of the region could get as much as two inches of rain by the time the storm system moves away Thursday morning.

Even if no tornadoes develop in our region, Franck said some straight-line winds in thunderstorms Wednesday night could gust up to 60 mph or even stronger and can cause serious damage.

The nasty weather heading our way is part of a huge storm system that has produced severe thunderstorms and several tornadoes in Virginia and North Carolina Wednesday afternoon, killing two people, overturning cars and knocking out power to tens of thousands of homes and businesses, according to the Associated Press and **AccuWeather**.

The western edge of the same storm system has been dumping snow in states across the Midwest, disrupting flights and **prompting blizzard warnings**.



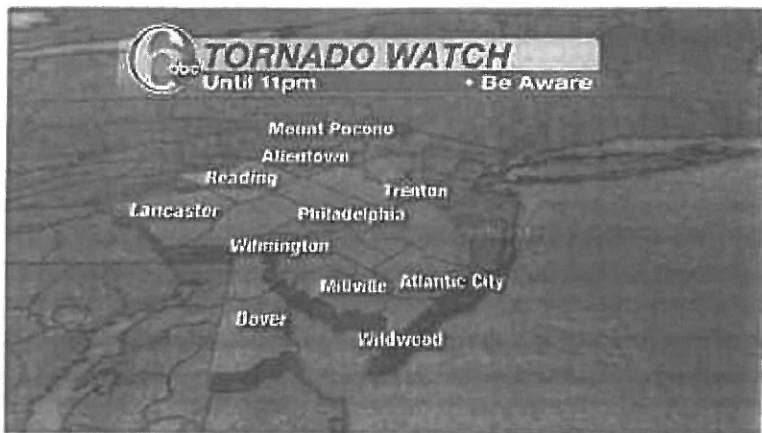
NWS Tornado
@NWStornado

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A tornado watch has been issued for parts of DE, DC, MD, NJ, PA, VA until 11 PM EST

3:18 PM - 24 Feb 2016

137 55



Cecily Tynan
@CecilyTynan

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TORNADO WATCH UNTIL 11PM

For most of the viewing area. Conditions favorable for a possible tornado.

3:32 PM - 24 Feb 2016

63 26

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New Jersey Pizza Madness: Vote for winner in head-to-head matchups



By **Erin O'Neill** | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

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on March 24, 2016 at 11:30 AM, updated March 24, 2016 at 3:14 PM

March Madness **opened with a dramatic weekend**, delivering **stunning upsets** and a half-court buzzer-beater to the rabid fans who eagerly anticipate the men's college basketball tournament every year.

No **New Jersey team is left standing** in the Big Dance but the residents of this state — who take their food as seriously as they take their sports — don't need **NCAA basketball** to find a reason to get wild. Want to provoke a heated argument between a group of New Jerseyans? Ask them which Garden State pizzeria serves up the best slice.

New Jersey food dude **Pete Genovese again waded into the fight** over where you can find the tastiest pies in the state earlier this year, when he offered up his latest ranking of the best pizzerias in the state. Vesta Wood Fired Pizza & Bar in East Rutherford took top honors on that list, but which pizzeria would you have ranked No. 1?

While your March Madness bracket is likely busted, take another shot at choosing a winner in NJ Advance Media's "Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup."

The first round of this Jersey-style pizza bracket includes the top 16 picks from Genovese's N.J. Pizza Power Rankings. The competition pits De Lorenzo's Tomato Pies in Robbinsville against Liberty Hall Pizza in Lambertville and matches Santillo's Brick Oven Pizza in Elizabeth against Nancy's Towne House in Rahway.

Cast your vote for your favorite pizzeria in each of the head-to-head matchups by 11:59 p.m. Friday and the eight winners will move on to the next round. The list will continue to be narrowed down through voting, with the championship matchup scheduled for voting on April 4.

Let the games begin!

New Jersey Pizza Madness Schedule

Sweet 16 Voting: Closes 11:59 p.m. Friday

Elite Eight Voting: Noon Monday to 11:59 p.m. Tuesday

Final Four Voting: Noon March 31 to 11:59 p.m. April 1

Finals Voting: 11 a.m. to 11:59 p.m., April 4

Updates every minute - [View full tournament](#)

No. 1 vs. No. 16

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

The Vault (Bordentown)	52.78%
Vesta Wood Fired Pizza & Bar (East Rutherford)	47.22%

No. 8 vs. No. 9

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

Star Tavern (Orange)	71.77%
Dozzino (Hoboken)	28.23%

No. 4 vs. No. 13

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

De Lorenzo's Tomato Pies (Robbinsville)	69.63%
Liberty Hall Pizza (Lambertville)	30.37%

No. 5 vs. No. 12

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

Talula's Pizza.Bar.Bread (Asbury Park)	51.6%
Kate & Al's Pizza/ Pete's Pizza (Columbus Farmers Market, Co)	48.4%

No. 2 vs. No. 15

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

Santillo's Brick Oven Pizza (Elizabeth)	60.88%
Nancy's Towne House (Rahway)	39.12%

No 7 vs. No. 10

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

Bruno's Pizza (Clifton)	61.73%
Razza (Jersey City)	38.27%

No. 3 vs. No. 14

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

Bricco Coal-Fired Pizza (Westmont)	53.45%
Pizza Town U.S.A. (Elmwood Park)	46.55%

No. 6 vs. No. 11

Pizza Madness Sweet 16 Matchup (Poll Closed)

Mancinni's Coal-Fired Pizza (Montclair)	54.87%
Angelo's Pizzeria (Haddonfield)	45.13%

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New Jersey needs a statewide paid sick leave policy | Editorial



Protesters demonstrate in support of mandatory paid sick day policies ahead of a scheduled fundraiser for Gov. Chris Christie last month. (Matt Rourke/Associated Press)

By Star-Ledger Editorial Board



Email the author | Follow on Twitter

on April 29, 2016 at 6:30 AM, updated April 29, 2016 at 7:57 AM

There are still 1.25 million workers in New Jersey who don't get paid when they stay home sick.

That's just bad business, according to the New Jersey Policy Perspective. The think tank studied the economic impact on companies that don't offer paid sick leave, and found that these employers are leaving \$104 million on the table annually.

The businesses in the six sectors with the largest workforces (food services, sales, etc.) would save up to \$126 million a year if they enacted paid sick leave.

The main reason, plainly, is that healthy workers boost productivity.

The sensible answer is to have a statewide policy requiring employers to offer paid sick-time. It makes little sense to wait, to force businesses to navigate a hodgepodge of local laws, and to leave so many low-paid workers without this basic protection. A bill making its way **through the Legislature** would allow employees to accrue one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. That sounds like a good place to start.



Mandatory paid sick leave would work well for NJ | Editorial

The Eagleton Center **surveyed** 289 businesses in Jersey City, the first of our 12 cities to make paid sick leave mandatory. There, 42 percent reported improvements in worker productivity, turnover rate, and hire quality after the first year of the policy. Studies in Connecticut and California found basically the same thing.

As Jersey City mayor Steve Fulop put it, "Good social policy and good economic policy isn't a one-or-other choice."

It's valid to suggest that the business owner can best judge what policy works best. But too many low-income workers show up sick – often out of fear they could lose their job - so earned sick leave is also an issue of humanity and public health. And now we know: It makes good business sense.

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Top wind gusts across N.J. reach 70 mph



By [Len Melisurgo](#) | [NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

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on April 03, 2016 at 11:12 AM, updated April 05, 2016 at 7:38 AM

Large **trees have been knocked down**, outdoor patio furniture has been toppled, and garbage cans have been blowing around neighborhoods like small toys Sunday morning as powerful wind gusts have been whipping all across New Jersey.

How strong are those winds?

As of 11 a.m., the two windiest spots in the Garden State were Bass River State Forest in Burlington and Ocean counties, which recorded a gust as high as 74 mph, and East Windsor in Mercer County, which had a gust of 71 mph, according to preliminary wind speeds reported by the National Weather Service and the New Jersey Weather & Climate Network at Rutgers University.



Strong winds knock out power to thousands

Powerful gusts were also reported in Port Norris in Cumberland County (67 mph), Beach Haven in Ocean County (64 mph), Berkeley Township in Ocean County (60 mph), South Jersey Regional Airport in Burlington County (60 mph), Sea Girt in Monmouth County (58 mph) and Wantage in Sussex County (58 mph).

A high wind warning remains active for Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Passaic and Union counties until 2 p.m. Sunday, and a wind advisory remains in effect for the rest of the Garden State through 4 p.m.

The weather service said winds should gradually get calmer as the afternoon progresses, but some areas of the state could still get hit with frequent gusts of 25 to 40 mph in the early afternoon.

Brush fire risk and light snow

The weather service has issued an alert for an elevated risk of brush fires or wildfires in Hunterdon, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris and Somerset counties throughout the day on Sunday because of the gusty winds and dry air over the region.

Earlier this morning, some sections of the state were hit with brief thunderstorms, and some had bursts of light snow. The biggest snowfall totals reported by the weather service were 2.7 inches in Highland Lakes, Sussex County, 2.4 inches in West Milford, Passaic County, and 1.1 inches in High Point, Sussex County.

A trace of snow was reported at Newark airport, and 0.1 to 0.3 inches of snow were reported in Tenafly, Vernon, Wantage and Lolland Township.

WIND GUSTS ACROSS NEW JERSEY

Here's a look at the top wind speeds reported in each county as of noon on Sunday:

Atlantic County

Mullica Twp.: 55 mph
Wading River: 55 mph
New Gretna: 50 mph
Hammonton: 48 mph
Atlantic City Marina: 42 mph
Egg Harbor Twp.: 37 mph

Bergen County

Teterboro Airport: 49 mph
Lyndhurst: 46 mph
Allendale: 43 mph
Wood-Ridge: 41 mph

Burlington County

Bass River State Forest: 74 mph
Jobstown (Springfield): 60 mph
South Jersey Airport: 60 mph
Wrightstown: 51 mph
Silas Little: 49 mph
Red Lion: 47 mph
Tabernacle: 47 mph

Camden County

Cherry Hill: 28 mph
Sicklerville: 28 mph

Cape May County

West Cape May: 52 mph
Dennis Twp.: 47 mph
Woodbine: 47 mph
Cape May Court House: 40 mph

Cumberland County

Port Norris: 67 mph
Millville: 54 mph
Upper Deerfield: 49 mph
Greenwich: 46 mph
Bivalve: 43 mph

Essex County

Newark Liberty Airport: 55 mph
Livingston: 45 mph

Hancock County

Hogansburg Twp.: 55 mph
Honey Hollow: 46 mph

Sewell: 42 mph
South Harrison: 42 mph
Clayton: 39 mph

Hudson County

Bayonne: 51 mph
Jersey City: 48 mph

Hunterdon County

Frenchtown: 45 mph
Pittstown: 45 mph
Kingwood: 43 mph
Glen Gardner: 42 mph

Mercer County

East Windsor: 71 mph
Hamilton: 49 mph
Hopewell: 46 mph

Middlesex County

South Brunswick: 52 mph
New Brunswick: 29 mph

Monmouth County

Sea Girt: 58 mph
Cream Ridge: 54 mph
Oceanport: 51 mph
Long Branch: 45 mph
Howell: 37 mph
Wall Twp.: 34 mph
Holmdel: 31 mph

Morris County

Parsippany: 44 mph
Chatham Twp.: 42 mph
Millington: 40 mph

Ocean County

Beach Haven: 64 mph
New Gretna: 63 mph
Berkeley Twp.: 60 mph
Harvey Cedars: 56 mph
Point Pleasant: 51 mph
Seaside Heights: 45 mph
West Creek: 39 mph
Toms River: 26 mph

Passaic County

Passaic: 46 mph

Salem County

Woodstown: 47 mph

Somerset County

Bridgewater: 58 mph
Somerset Airport: 55 mph
Basking Ridge: 50 mph
Hillsborough: 46 mph
Skillman: 46 mph

Sussex County

Wantage: 58 mph
High Point Monument: 53 mph
High Point: 38 mph

Union County

Linden Airport: 54 mph
Hillside: 48 mph

Warren County

Allamuchy: 44 mph
Alpha: 43 mph
Stewartsville: 43 mph
Mansfield: 37 mph
Pequest: 35 mph
Hope: 33 mph
Hackettstown: 28 mph

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No rail strike: NJ Transit and unions reach settlement



By **Larry Higgs** | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

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on March 11, 2016 at 7:00 PM, updated March 13, 2016 at 11:14 PM

NEWARK — NJ Transit officials and its rail unions have reached a tentative agreement on their long-simmering contract dispute, a day before a planned strike that threatened to paralyze the region.

No immediate details on the settlement were announced Friday night, or when union members might vote on the proposed accord, but for now commuters can breathe a deep sigh of relief. Gov. **Chris Christie** added there would be no immediate fare hike.

Union spokesman Stephen Burkert first announced the settlement Friday night.

"Thankfully for the commuters of NJ Transit, the crisis is averted," Burkert said. "We're going home to our families."

Speaking at press conference immediately afterward, Christie also would not get into details of the proposed settlement until union officials had a chance to review its points with membership.

"That's the appropriate thing to do," he told reporters.

Christie, who had been in Newark most of the day, said he had been confident there would be a settlement and called "all the hysteria" of the recent days "ginned up" by the media.

"These things," he said, "always come down to the end."

Christie called the deal, which will go through 2019, "fair and reasonable" for the unions and the taxpayers. "I'm pleased," he said. The governor added that he expected union ratification to happen in the immediate future.

Christie said he had been involved negotiations the past month and "very intensely in the last two weeks."

He also said there was never any feeling on either side of bad faith.

Neither side here was spoiling for a fight," he remarked

While he said there would be no immediate fare increases, the governor added there was always a need for "periodic, responsible fare increases" in the future because salary and health benefit costs can only increase over time. He also urged future governors to keep making responsible increases.



NJ Transit commuters pay highest fares

With the tentative accord, NJ Transit riders on Monday can expect service as normal.

Commuters at Penn Station were relieved to hear the news as the Friday night rush hour was ending.

Mike Borik, 50, who lives in Scotch Plains, broke into a smile when he heard the strike had been averted.

"That's great. That's unbelievable," he said.

Richard Scott, 62, of Princeton Junction who works in the financial industry, said he was relieved.

"I was trying to work out some complicated strategies for next week that did not involve taking vacation," he said.

A strike would have affected 105,000 daily riders to New York who would have had limited options to get to work Monday, and would have cost businesses millions. The **last NJ Transit strike** was in March 1983. It lasted 34 days.

The nation's third-largest commuter railroad system, NJ Transit had acknowledged that its contingency plans would only have been able to accommodate 38 percent of its riders on shuttle buses hired to run from five park and ride lots set up across the state. The remaining riders, nearly 65,000, would likely have funneled as many as 10,000 cars an hour onto roads within 25 miles of New York during morning and evening rush hours, officials had said, jamming them into the already congested Lincoln and Holland Tunnels, and George Washington Bridge.

Many commuters had talked of taking the week off, working from home, or finding hotels in New York.

The rail unions, representing 4,200 workers who have been on the job since 2011 without a new contract, threatened to **walk out at midnight** on Sunday over wages and how much employees **pay in health insurance premiums**.

Two emergency federal labor boards convened by President Obama over the last several months had favored the unions' proposals. In the most recent recommendation, the Presidential Emergency Board had recommended workers pay 2.5 percent of their straight time pay up to 40 hours a week toward their insurance premiums.

NJ Transit had rejected the proposal early in the negotiations, saying it came with a \$183 million price tag. According to union officials, NJ Transit proposed to have employees pay 10 to 20 percent of their health insurance premiums, which they argued would wipe out any salary increase and was more than what workers at other commuter railroads pay.

The unions had been seeking an 18.4 percent pay raise over 6 ½ years, while the agency proposed a 10.9 percent raise over 7 ½ years.

*NJ Advance Media staff writers **Kelly Heyboer**, **Paul Milo**, and **Ted Sherman** contributed to this report.*

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